The Morgan RedisCOVERS a Splendid Library
Left Behind by Claude III de Laubespine

*Poetry and Patronage: The Laubespine-Villeroy Library Rediscovered*
October 16, 2020 through May 16, 2021

New York, NY (October 7, 2020) – The Morgan Library & Museum proudly presents *Poetry and Patronage: The Laubespine-Villeroy Library Rediscovered*, opening October 16, 2020, and running through May 16, 2021. The exhibition brings together some of the most spectacular bindings from the library of Claude III de Laubespine, one of the great collectors of the French Renaissance, for the first time in almost 450 years.

Young, handsome, and highborn, Laubespine lived in luxury after marrying an heiress and obtaining the favor of King Charles IX. His brilliant career at court was cut short in 1570, when he died at the age of 25, leaving behind a splendid library. He bequeathed his books to his sister, Madeleine de Villeroy, a patron of the poet Pierre de Ronsard, who praised her, her husband, and the library of her husband’s country estate. The library was eventually dispersed, and only recently have the books been identified and properly appreciated for their superb quality and fine bindings. Showcasing these exquisite examples of Renaissance ornamental design alongside related artwork and literary memorials of Laubespine, *Poetry and Patronage*...
will evoke the sensual pleasure and literary connoisseurship implicit in a noble library of that era.

Highlights in the exhibition include a copy of Jacopo Vignola’s *Regola delli cinque ordini d’architettura* (1564) in a magnificent and mysterious binding, which, former Morgan Director Frederick Adams declared, sent “a tingle of pleasure down the spine.” Also included in the exhibition is *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499), by Francesco Colonna, one of the greatest illustrated books of all time. Three copies are on display, one of which is in a luxurious gold–powdered binding: it was a centerpiece of Laubespine’s library, a fitting representation of his collecting ambitions.

“We are pleased to present *Poetry and Patronage: The Laubespine-Villeroy Library Rediscovered*, an exhibition that revisits the central role of bindings in our collection and one of the most splendid libraries of the French Renaissance. The exhibition takes a close look at the art of connoisseurship through the detailed task of reuniting an exquisite set of bindings that have been separated for over four centuries.” said the Morgan’s Director, Colin B. Bailey.

The exhibition’s guest curator is the renowned bookbindings scholar Isabelle de Conihout. The organizing curator, John Bidwell, Astor Curator of Printed Books and Bindings at the Morgan, said, “Isabelle’s research in the history of the Laubespine-Villeroy library has greatly enhanced our understanding of book collecting during the French Renaissance. Now more than ever we can see that fine bindings were works of art in their own right, reflecting the knowledge, wealth and taste of the connoisseurs who commissioned them.”

An array of engaging public programs will accompany the exhibition. Please visit [www.themorgan.org](http://www.themorgan.org) for further details. An exhibition catalogue is available in the Morgan bookstore.

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The Morgan Library & Museum
225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street
New York, NY 10016
Organization and Sponsorship

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About the Morgan Library & Museum

A museum and independent research library located in the heart of New York City, the Morgan Library & Museum began as the personal library of financier, collector, and cultural benefactor Pierpont Morgan. The Morgan offers visitors close encounters with great works of human accomplishment in a setting treasured for its intimate scale and historic significance. Its collection of manuscripts, rare books, music, drawings, and works of art comprises a unique and dynamic record of civilization, as well as an incomparable repository of ideas and of the creative process from 4000 BC to the present.

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