PATRICK J. KEARNEY

A CATALOGUE
OF THE PUBLICATIONS OF
RENÉ BONNEL
(1884 - 1975)

René Bonnel’s Ex-Libris

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Appears to the contrary, this little catalogue was for the most part completed prior to receiving from a friend in Paris a Xerox copy of Claudine Brécourt-Villars’ article and catalogue ‘René Bonnel, un franc-tireur de l’édition des années folles’ (Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale de France, no. 7, January 2001). Ms. Brécourt-Villars lists all of the works to be found below, with the notable exception of Les Dix livres de cuisine d’Apicius which in fairness is not a clandestine work, nor in the strict meaning of the word is it an erotic one either. She also includes a handful of others that may not have been published by Bonnel. I have added these to the end of my list, together with my reasons for thinking why they should be excluded. As usual I will be happy to make corrections should I be wrong in my assumptions.

Bonnel seems to have published just three non-clandestine works: the Apicious, already mentioned; Alcide Bonneau’s translation of Forberg’s De figuris Veneris, reprinted from the Liseux edition of XXXX, and a partially original collection of erotic poems by Théophile Gautier.
A bookseller in Paris named S. Goudemare issued a catalogue devoted to Bonnel’s openly published works in 1991 which he called ‘La Bande à Bonnel,’ presumably a tongue-in-cheek reference to ‘La Bande à Bonnot,’ a group of pre-WWI French anarchists led by Jules Bonnot, the alleged inventor of the getaway car. Unfortunately, I’ve not been able to locate a copy of Goudemare’s catalogue, and I’d be grateful for any assistance in doing so.

Since the above paragraph was written, M. Alexandre Dupouy of Les Larmes d’éros/éditions Astarté (58 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris) generously provided me with a copy of Sylvain Goudemare’s catalogue. To my chagrin, it did not, as I had fondly anticipated, provide a list of Bonnel’s non-clandestine publications, and I am forced to the conclusion that with the one or two exceptions to be found noted below there wasn’t a ‘respectable’ side to his business. ‘La Bande à Bonnel’ is actually a catalogue of books written, edited and published by the ‘Bonnel Gang’ which included Bonnel himself, and Pascal Pia, Eddy du Perron, André Malraux and others. It is nevertheless a catalogue of great interest and provided me with a new entry which I had overlooked, to be found listed under ‘Baudelaire’ below.

All references below to Pascal Pia are for the excellent second edition of his Les Livres de l’Enfer published at Paris in 1998 by Arthème Fayard.

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3. **APOLLINAIRE, (Guillaume)** [?Pascal Pia]. - Cortège priapique. *La Havane* [Paris]: *Au Cabinet des Muses* [René Bonnel & René Picart], 1925. 4to. pp. 25. With a Preface signed ‘Leger Alype’ [i.e. Pascal Pia].
Limited to 125 copies on *papier des Manufactures Impériales du Japon.* [Bibliothèque Nationale: Rés. m. Ye. 690.]


Louis Roux]. *Saint Domingue: A La Boutique de poésie* [René Bonnel & Pascal Pia], 1928. 8vo., ‘sous étuis.’ Limited to 128 copies.

This is the second edition of this novel. The wrappers were printed in burlesque imitation of the *Bibliothèque Rose* series of children’s books published by Hachette.


The front wrapper has the imprint: ‘*Paris: Édition réservée aux souscripteurs, M.CM.XXXV*’. 

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17. **JARRY, (Alfred).** - Les Silènes. Avec un frontispiece gravé à l’eau-forte [by Demetrius Galanis]. *Papeete: Le Bibliophiles Creoles* [1926], 4to. pp. 64. Limited to 104 copies, of which 100 were on vergé de Rives B.F.K and 4 on *Japon.* [Bibliothèque Nationale (2 copies): Enfer 1049 and 1490.]


22. **LOUYS, (Pierre).** - Pybrac. Poésies. *Cythère: Au Coq Hardi,* 1927. 16mo. pp. 98. The titlepage is illustrated with an erotic vignette by Foujita. Limited to 105 copies, of which 5 were on *Japon* and 100 on *Arches.* [Bibliothèque Nationale: Enfer 1400.]


[1932.] 4to. pp. [92], unnumbered. Limited to 165 copies, plus 5 \textit{hors commerce}.


- The first edition of \textit{Trois filles de leur mère} was printed on paper watermarked with the author’s name spelled backwards - “Syuol Erreip.” A short while afterwards, a contrafaçon was struck off, identical in all respects to the true first except that it lacked this watermark. Who was responsible for this piracy is unknown, and even the claim that Bonnel and Pia did the first is speculation; G. Legman, in a letter to the compiler dated November 2 1987, wrote that he believed the original edition to have been “done by a bookseller on the Seine quais in Paris.”


The police prevented publication of this surrealist work in 1928 when they raided the printer on another matter. They discovered the sheets and, presumably, the illustrations by Yves Tanguy, and seized everything. The book was eventually published in a discrete and limited edition in 1954 by Eric Losfeld, with the title on the wrapper prudently changed to *Les Rouilles enragées.*
Doubtful Publications

My suspicions concerning the following titles stem mostly from the fact that Pascal Pia either neglects to mention that Bonnel published them, states without hesitation that somebody else did or omits them altogether. Pia evidently knew Bonnel well; the two were friends for many years and collaborated on a number of publishing projects. It seems unlikely that he would be ignorant of any of Bonnel’s clandestine ventures.


Listed by Brécourt-Villars, who provides no information on repository copies or her source of information concerning this edition. Pia (2nd ed., p. 102-103) describes the first edition of these erotic poems, which were published in 1921 by Simon Kra and limited to 150 copies. There is no copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Pia makes no reference to a later edition.

33. **MAUPASSANT, (Guy de)**. – *A la feuille de Rose*. Maison turque, comédie de mœurs (mauvaises) en un

Concerning this edition, Pia (2nd ed, p. 690) makes no mention of Rene Bonnel, but provides the addresses of the two printers used for the text and the plates, and the publisher. However the similarity between the imprint of the present volume and the edition of Verlaine’s Hombres listed above is certainly suggestive.

35. STENDHAL. - Les Ecrits érotiques de Stendhal. 1801. Bruxelles 1832. 4to. Unpaged, but pp. [52]. Limited to 98 copies. [Bibliothèque Nationale: Rés m. Z. 521]

Pia (2nd edition, p. 226) states that this work was printed in 1927 [Brécourt-Villars gives 1928] “par les Artisans Imprimeurs pour le compte d’un editeur occasionnel M. L. Ch…”.

for the plates. Limited to 150 copies, 21 on Japon ancien À la forme et 129 on Japon impérial. [Bibliothèque Nationale: Rés P. Ye. 2877].

Not in Pia, but published in 1926 at Paris by René Bonnel and illustrated by Frans de Geetere according to a sale catalogue, Paris, Drouot, March 3rd 1987, lot no. 275.

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