

The Saint-Aubin 'Livre de caricatures'

drawing satire in eighteenth-century Paris

Series:

SVEC

Volume:

2012:06

VolumeEditors:

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Publication Date:

2012

ISBN:

978-0-7294-1044-1

Out of public sight for over a hundred years, the *Livre de caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises* is a remarkable work. This collection of comic and satirical drawings was created by a Parisian luxury embroiderer, Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, at a time of rigid press censorship to entertain a small group of family and friends. For today's reader the *Livre* provides not only a series of richly imaginative and varied drawings, but also a fascinating and intriguing commentary on pre-Revolutionary Paris.

In this first comprehensive study of the *Livre de caricatures*, which includes over 190 illustrations, an international team of scholars investigates the motivations and operations behind the making of the book, and the many facets of Parisian life that it illuminates. Embracing politics and religion, theatre, fashion and connoisseurship, and the court of Versailles and the Parisian streets, the scope of the *Livre* is immense. The work's unique quality is evident in its humour – whimsical, fantastical, challengingly allusive, but not without a sharp political edge when targeting clerics, the court and Louis XV's mistress, Madame de Pompadour.

Known within the Saint-Aubin family as the *Livre de culs*, the *Livre* delights in the transgression of social convention and the keen deflation of vanity and pretence. Contributors explore this irreverent image of eighteenth-century Paris in all its glory. In today's world, the visual satire of the *Livre de Caricatures* continues to resonate, instruct and entertain.

Colin Jones and Juliet Carey, Introduction

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Price Sterling (£):

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French Studies

[...] this volume offers a rich analysis of a unique object, sneaking a glimpse into the private life and sense of humour of a family of artists in eighteenth-century Paris, and through them a deeper understanding of the political and cultural happenings that affected the lives of ordinary Parisians.
