

Robert

Dr JACQUES LACAN

**DE LA PSYCHOSE
PARANOÏAQUE**

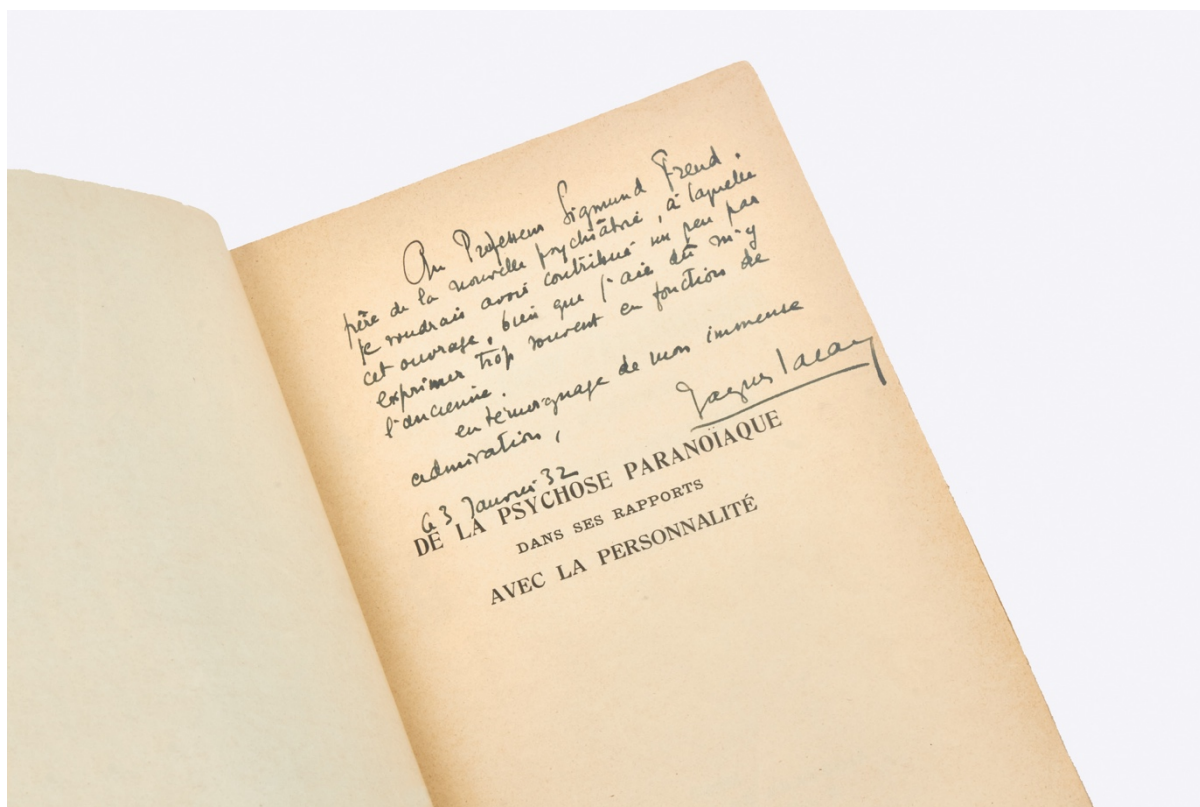
**DANS SES RAPPORTS
AVEC LA PERSONNALITÉ**



LE FRANÇOIS, ÉDITEUR - PARIS

1932

JACQUES LACAN. — DE LA PSYCHOSE PARANOÏAQUE DANS SES RAPPORTS AVEC LA PERSONNALITÉ



Lacan's doctoral published thesis *On paranoid psychosis in its relationship to personality*, Librairie E. Le François|Paris 1932|16 x 23 cm|paperback, sold by Librairie Le Feu Follet, Paris, sold at the New York Book Fair, April 2025, \$130,000

Catalogue Description

Presentation copy from Lacan to Freud

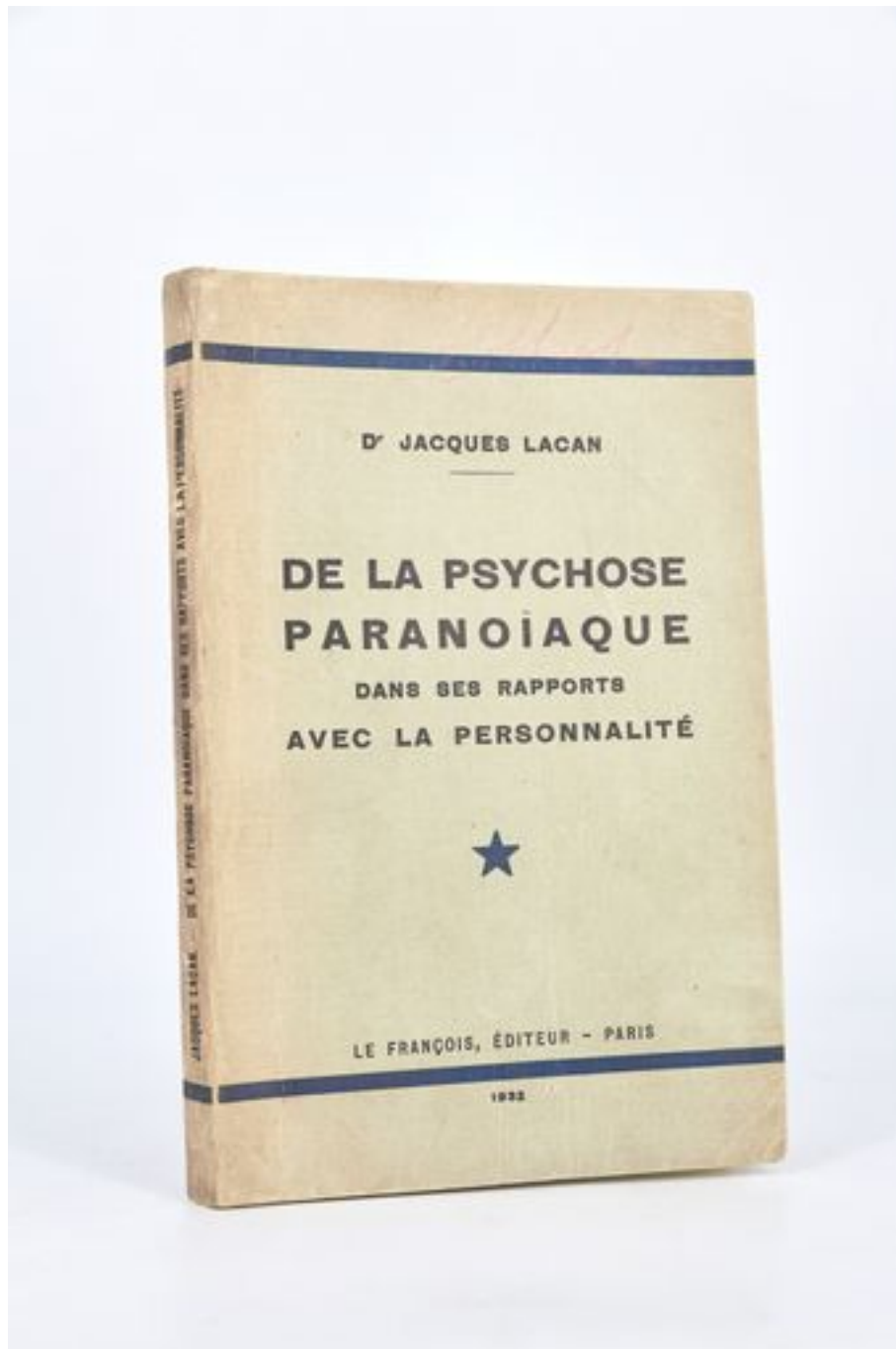
One of the most important and significant bibliophilic items in the history of psycho-analysis

Investigation into the most precious of the 20 known copies of Jacques Lacan's thesis: "De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité".

Until now, the existence of this dedication was only assumed thanks to the response of its illustrious dedicatee: Sigmund Freud. Yet it remains the only direct interaction between the two founders of the science of psychoanalysis.

First edition of Jacques Lacan's doctoral thesis. The most precious of the 20 known copies gifted by the author. The copy's existence was hitherto only evidenced by the thanks Sigmund Freud sent Lacan after receiving it.

Exceptional association copy inscribed by Jacques Lacan: "Au Professeur Sigmund Freud, père de la nouvelle psychiatrie, à laquelle je voudrais avoir contribué un peu par cet ouvrage, bien que j'aie dû m'y exprimer trop souvent en fonction de l'ancienne./en témoignage de mon immense admiration,/Jacques Lacan / le 3 janvier 1932 [sic]" ["To Professor Sigmund Freud, father of the new psychiatry, to which I would like to have contributed a little through the writing of this work, although I had to express myself too often according to the old [psychiatry]./as a token of my immense admiration,/Jacques Lacan/the 3rd of January, 1932 [sic]"]



Lacan's thesis "already in a general way assimilated the theories of psychoanalysis" (Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, tr. Barbara Bray, Columbia University Press, 1997) and marks a major step forward in taking Freudian teachings into account in psychiatry. It constitutes a starting point for a new conception of psychoanalysis as an autonomous science instead of a mere practical method.

"With Marguerite [*the main case study of his thesis, "Aimée"*], Lacan tried out a kind of 'primal analysis' in the course of which he became a Freudian both theoretically, through his interpretation of the texts, and clinically, by listening in on a case of psychosis. [...] [*Aimée*] made it possible for him to reintroduce into France, and at the same time put a new spin on, Freud's teachings but also for female paranoia in general." (Roudinesco)

Although it is obvious there would be no Lacan without Freud, quoted over 60 times in this groundbreaking thesis by the future leader of one of the main schools in French psychoanalysis – the opposite is equally true. **The author of the *Discours de Rome* prescribing a "return to Freud" is still regarded by the scientific community as the principal "spokesman" for Freudian thought.** Louis Althusser goes so far as to attribute to Lacan the unity and scientific consistency of Freud's work:

"Lacan saw and understood Freud's liberating breakthrough. He understood it in the full sense of the term, taking him at his word in his rigor and forcing him to come to its own consequences, without truce or concessions (...) we owe him the essential" (*Revue de l'enseignement philosophique*, June-July 1963) "Without that triple labor of ideological critique and epistemological elucidation, which was practically inaugurated in France by Lacan, Freud's discovery, in its specificity, will remain outside our reach" (*Writings on Psychoanalysis*, tr. Jeffrey Mehlman).

In 1932, psychoanalytical theory is still a "methodological transposition of the practice (therapy)" according to Althusser. A remarkable conceptual resource, Freudian teachings found application to many fields of thought including psychiatry "based on a recasting of the heredity-and-degeneration theory", notes Roudinesco.

"Now, for the first time in the history of the French movement, Lacan inverted the process and produced a novel confrontation between dynamism and Freudianism: a close encounter of the second kind. Not only did he refuse to incorporate psychoanalysis into psychiatry; he also showed the absolute necessity of putting the Freudian unconscious first in any nosography derived from psychiatry" (Roudinesco).



It is no coincidence Lacan began his thesis at the very moment he was translating Freud, and more specifically his study on paranoia: *Certain Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality* (*Über Einige Neurotische Mechanismen Bei Eifersucht, Paranoia Und Homosexualität*). Like Freud himself, he was immediately confronted with the terrible lack of conceptual terms capable of transcribing Freud's scientific revolution. As Althusser notes: "Freud had to think his discovery and his practice in imported concepts borrowed from the then dominant energy physics, political economy, and biology of his time" Whilst translating Freud, Lacan struggled with the same linguistical conundrum: *Trieb* (drive) is still translated as *instinct*, *Trauer* (mourning) as *tristesse* (sorrow), and *Regung* (motion) as a simple *tendance* (tendency).

“Theoretically Freud set up shop on his own, producing his own concepts, his 'domestic' concepts, beneath the cover of imported concepts borrowed from the state of existing sciences and, it must be said, within the horizon of the ideological world in which those concepts were immersed”

For Althusser, this reuse of “outdated concepts” was one of the main causes of the misunderstanding and misuse of Freud's theories. Despite Lacan's disagreements with the orthodoxy of the *Association psychanalytique internationale*, **Althusser credits Lacan with the theoretical formalization of psychoanalysis.**

Yet this inscription by a young, unknown PhD student to the undisputed Master, already pointed out the inadequacy between old concepts and new science: **“the new psychiatry, to which I would like to have contributed a little [...] although I had to express myself too often according to the old.”** Written well before Lacan's elaboration of a theoretical structure for psychoanalysis, **this inscription remained his only direct interaction with Sigmund Freud.**

In *Qui va là? Correspondance(s) Freud/Lacan*, psychoanalyst Daniel Bartoli, invents an epistolary dialogue based on their writings to make up for the absence of direct exchange between the two thinkers. He justifies this confrontation with the following observation: **“The Freudian model is presented as a fragmented construction that tends to take account every erratic phenomenon [...]. Lacan's attempt is to specify and formalize the discourse of psychoanalysis.”** This thesis, by its academic nature, and even more so through the monumental work on the Aimée case, is precisely the cornerstone of Lacan's theoretical construction as described by Althusser: “returning to Freud to seek out, discern, and delineate in him the theory from which all the rest emerged, the technique as much as the practice.”

“If I did not subject my patient to psychoanalysis, the omission, which was not made voluntarily on my part, circumscribes both the scope and the value of my work”

Much more than an acknowledgment of the difficulties pertaining to the practice, Lacan's inscription to Freud lies at the heart of the “new psychiatry”. For both Lacan and Freud, it represents a break from the former conceptions of psychiatry, and this thesis marks one of Jacques Lacan's last interventions in the field. Lacan concludes the thesis with these words:

“If I did not subject my patient to psychoanalysis, the omission, which was not made voluntarily on my part, circumscribes both the scope and the value of my work”.

An admission which allowed Elisabeth Roudinesco to determine the place his thesis occupies in Lacan's own itinerary:

“It is still a work of psychiatry, but already a psychoanalytical text.”

By offering his thesis on psychiatry to the father of psychoanalysis, Lacan completed the break that had already been partially made by his work.

Towards an acknowledgment of the “father”

The place of this dedication in the chronology of Lacan's inscribed copies is itself a valuable source of information on the progression of Lacan's position: he still wavered between his allegiance to an established science represented by “classical” psychiatry and an awareness of the emergence of a new science – still at the time restricted in France to its practical effectiveness.

The rare copies offered by the author are all carefully dated and bear witness to a change in Lacan's own view of his work and his peers (cf. further).

The first copy is offered to his parents, in a magnificently psychoanalytical inscription where he expresses his emotional gratitude – and the second to J. R. Cuel, a scientist he had just met but who had been adored by Lacan's “father in psychiatry” Trénel whom he cites in his inscription as “our master Trénel”. Marc Trénel played an essential role in Lacan's early psychiatric training and had just passed away, thus finding a symbolic transference. Next came his peers and friends who are all somehow linked to a certain Viennese psychoanalyst: notably Guillaume de Tarde, son of Gabriel de Tarde whom Freud admired, Angelo Louis Marie Hesnard who published the first French study of Freud (*La Psychanalyse des névroses et des psychoses*), Oskar Vogt, founder of the journal *Zeitschrift für Hypnotismus* with Sigmund Freud, and above all Marie Bonaparte to whom Lacan sent his work with a deferential inscription on November 22, 1932.

Lacan circled around the great master without ever directly approaching him. It was only after the unsuccessful reception of his thesis that the young doctor finally decided to turn to God rather than to his saints:

“At the time, it was ignored by the first generation of French psychoanalysis [...] Lacan was furious. But he was so sure his entry into the world of psychoanalysis had been a success that he sent a copy of his thesis to Freud himself, showing that he sought recognition from the master no matter how reticent his French disciples might be.”

Obviously Roudinesco had no knowledge of the inscription's content and merely assumed that “the young stranger had commended [his thesis] to him, no doubt with great ardor”. Only Freud's laconic but attentive reply “Thank you for sending your thesis” written from Vienna proved the existence of this daring inscription.

“The psychoanalytic technique suitable for these cases is, by the masters' own admission, not yet mature. This is the most topical problem in psychoanalysis, and we must hope that it will find a solution. For if technical results were to stagnate at their current level, the doctrine would quickly wither away.”

Cronos vs Oedipe

However, the importance of this dedication lies less in its fervor – which is a matter of circumstance – than in its clear affirmation of Jacques Lacan's new and definitive orientation. Initially conceived under the aegis of classical psychiatry, his thesis revealed itself to be on a completely different scale, that of a **“new psychiatry, to which [he] would like to have contributed”**. For the author himself, however, this revelation came after the defense of his thesis. A radical transformation which even provoked a “growing attitude of rejection [of his thesis which] is understandable when one realizes how different Lacan's subsequent development was from what had been suggested in his thesis [...] Lacan's career was not to be in a psychiatry based on psychoanalysis. And so far did he come to forget that his thesis was his first venture into the field of Freudianism that he dated it 1936”. This error in the date, noted by Roudinesco, is eerily similar to a confusion Lacan made when dating his inscription to Freud in this copy.

The young doctoral student had indeed made one of the first errors he would later be familiar with and dated his inscription to Freud from January 1932 instead of 1933. He thus placed this deferential tribute to the **“father of the new psychiatry”** before the one he made to his biological parents (October), even before the publication of his thesis (September), and no doubt even mistakenly dating it from the time of the thesis's writing, i.e. at the same time he was translating Freud for the *Revue de Psychanalyse française*.

Opponents of Lacan would attribute this error to an excusable confusion between the “old” year 1932 and the just-begun “new” one. This would be to ignore the importance of the “slip of the tongue” (*lapsus*) to Jacques Lacan, who used this key notion revealed by Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* to propose a restructuring of language around the Freudian unconscious.

As early as 1933 (or was it “1932”?), Lacan's inscription is a formidable mise en abyme of the Cronos/Oedipus dynamic that would be at the forefront of the two men's intellectual confrontations. Freud as the **“father”** devouring the son before his birth, Lacan killing the father by designating him as such and expressing his desire (“*je voudrais*”) to replace him, and their shared burden of an outdated linguistic heritage from which they must **“express”** a new science. **All this, in an early and only known exchange between the two founders of psychoanalytic science.**

An unfair trade

To further underline the importance of this first and last correspondence, we should add another important detail: Freud sent his quick reply to Lacan on a postcard January the 18th, after receiving the thesis and wrote two different addresses. A peculiarity that hints at another symbolic missed act of the dissident son or hesitant

father.

A book inscribed quite late – and its inscription bearing a (mistakenly) early date: **this back and forth between recognition and disassociation emerges throughout the history of this copy and prefigures the ever-ambiguous relationship between Freudism and Lacanism.**

The year after this inscription, Lacan became a member of the Société psychanalytique de Paris founded by Marie Bonaparte. He was appointed president in 1953, before being ousted a year later following his famous “return to Freud” which inspired Althusser and definitively established the science of psychoanalysis, protecting it from all deviation and corruption. However, the child prodigy’s “revolution” provoked a veritable split among psychoanalysts.

“Forty years after his thesis was published, Lacan said it was the Aimee case that had led him to psychoanalysis, and that in it he was applying Freudianism “without realizing it.” We know now the truth was more complex than that [...] by that time he already had a sound knowledge of Freudian theory and was using it quite consciously. [...] he became a Freudian at the same period as when he first met Marguerite, and by the time he wrote up Aimee’s case he had already in a general way assimilated the theories of psychoanalysis” writes Roudinesco who would no doubt have added this copy’s inscription as formal proof, had she known about it.

Several unique features make this copy the most psychoanalytical of bibliophilic items, and a privileged witness to the greatest discovery on the human mind in the history of science: Lacan’s inscription and Freud’s brief reply are the only known exchanges between two of the century’s greatest scientists; **this iconic inscription remained almost unknown to this day; it contains an early declaration of filiation to Freud later disavowed by Lacan himself; it also contains a lapsus, a dating error illustrating one of Lacan’s future major contributions to the theory of the unconscious.**

Publishing process and inscribed copies

“Lacan’s ambition is immense: founding a new science obviously requires great means. His thesis therefore develops an encyclopedic culture. Not only did he challenge the entire system of psychiatry and naturalistic psychology of his time, but he also called on philosophy and sociology to bring his undertaking to fruition.” (Florent Gabarron-Garcia, *Lecture épistémologique de la thèse de Lacan*)

The history of publication and distribution of this essential synthesis of “psychiatric clinic, Freudian doctrine and surrealism” is as chaotic as it is mysterious. **While the number of copies printed is unknown, the undoubtedly quite limited print run for a thesis has been further reduced over the years by the vagaries of publishing.**

First edition copies of Lacan's doctoral thesis are divided into two issues, the first before the defense and the second a few days later.

Although the “achevé d'imprimer” (imprint) of the entire edition is dated October 1, 1932, the 1st copy inscribed to his parents only dates from October 23, one or two weeks before the thesis defense, which took place between November 2 and 7 (his university files have been lost, according to David Monnier). These first copies were mainly gifted by the author to friends and colleagues, and almost no uninscribed “first issue” copy remains.

After his doctorate, “At least from 8 November 1932 until 31 October 1933, Lacan became by decree Head of the Child Neuropsychiatry Clinic at the Sainte-Anne Hospital.” (David Monnier, *Le livret militaire, le dossier étudiant et la carrière médicale de Lacan*, in *L'Évolution Psychiatrique*, 2025).

It was during his time at Sainte-Anne that Lacan decided to have the covers and title pages of the copies on sale reprinted exclusively by the bookseller-publisher Le François, adding his title “Chef de clinique à la Faculté de Médecine de Paris” [*chief resident at the Faculty of Medicine of Paris*] under his name. The first inscribed copies of this “second issue” date from October 1933, one year after the first issue inscribed copies were sent out. A few copies of this re-issue are still on the market, but they remain very rare (less than fifty copies have been recorded).

This rarity of copies cannot be explained solely by the limited print run, which nevertheless must not have exceeded 100 to 200 copies – the majority of the remaining stock was put back on sale with Lacan's title as chief resident at the Faculty printed on the front cover. **Jacques Lacan himself increased scarcity a few years later by buying unsold copies from his publisher Le François to destroy them.**

The story of the destruction of the copies, often cited by booksellers, has undergone distortions and transformations over time. It is undoubtedly useful to re-establish the sequence of events. Contrary to what is often stated, destruction was not immediate and did not only concern first issue copies. Similarly, Jacques Lacan's motivations are not those often mentioned.

It was only in 1952, 20 years later, that Lacan decided to destroy the remaining copies of his thesis. He had in fact just accepted as a patient a certain Didier Anzieu – son of Marguerite Anzieu, alias “Aimée” who had been the main subject of study for his thesis. Some biographers even credit Lacan with a relentless search for copies of his thesis to eradicate, even in the libraries of his students. In his essay *Le Fils d'Aimée*, Marcel Turbiaux revisits this episode:

“Élisabeth Roudinesco thinks Lacan ‘repressed’ Anzieu's name, but in the end, didn't he know who he was dealing with – which would explain Lacan's hasty agreement to be Didier Anzieu's analyst, a haste that surprised Didier Anzieu himself? This is what Didier Anzieu would eventually come to think: “I was making the rounds of tenured

psychoanalysts with the aim of undertaking didactic psychoanalysis. I was waiting for the green light from the ad hoc Commission. Lacan anticipated the official response, which he guaranteed would be positive, and invited me to start with him without delay. No doubt he was interested in having the son of his former patient on his couch [...]. He was careful not to reveal this 'little detail' to me – namely, that my mother had been his thesis case – had I been aware of this detail I would necessarily have disqualified him as a possible analyst” (V. n.31). On the other hand, as Jean Allouch suggests, it may well have been when he was directly confronted (in 1952) by Didier Anzieu, that Jacques Lacan bought back the remaining copies of his thesis from his publisher, twenty years after publication.” (Marcel Turbiaux, *Le Fils d’Aimée*. In *Bulletin de psychologie*, 2000)

Although he described it in his lectures as “his beautiful thesis”, Lacan remained reluctant to have his seminal work reissued. He waited until 1975 to publish a second augmented edition with an added warning: “Thesis published with some reluctance. On the pretext that teaching requires the detour of half-saying [midire] the truth. Adding: on condition that the error is rectified, this demonstrates the necessity of the detour. The fact that this text does not require it would justify the reluctance.” As a result, there are almost no first edition Lacan theses left on the market apart from the few sold by Le François with new covers and title pages before the author's destructive fever. Between re-sale copies with reprinted covers and those removed by the author, the rare remaining first issue copies can be listed with a certain degree of accuracy.

We have been able to trace 20 inscribed copies (all translations our own):

◇ 23 October 1932, to **Alfred and Émilie Lacan**: “To Papa and Maman, this great work by the one who remains – somewhere in them and somewhere in him – their little boy. Jacquot This 23rd October, 32”

◇ 24 October 1932, to **J.R. Cuel**: “To Cuel, whose scientific personality was first praised by our master Trénel, and whose encounter did not disappoint me, as a sign of very special sympathy. Jacques Lacan 24 Oct., 32”

◇ 24 October 1932, to **Pierre Migault**: “To my comrade and friend Pierre Migaud in memory of ten years. This 24th Oct., 32”

◇ 3 Nov. 1932, to **Dr. Sophie Morgenstern**: We have not been able to examine this copy (maybe the copy that went on sale in 2011 with the inscription “to a [female] colleague”).

◇ 17 November 1932, to **Marcelle and Guillaume de Tarde**: “To Marcelle and Guillaume de Tarde, who share my heart and my mind. Jacques Lacan, this Nov. 17, 1932”

◇ 22 November 1932, to **Marie Bonaparte**: “To H.R.H. Princess George of Greece, as a token of my respectful admiration. J. Lacan, 22 Nov., 32” (discovered by our esteemed colleague Dominique Courvoisier)

◇ 26 November 1932, to **Angelo Louis Marie Hesnard**: "To Professor Hesnard as a sign of my respectful sympathy. 26 Nov., 32"

◇ 25 November 1932, to **Dr. Oskar Vogt**: We have not been able to examine this copy.

◇ 3 January 1933, to **Sigmund Freud**: "To Professor Sigmund Freud, father of the new psychiatry, to which I would like to have contributed a little through the writing of this work, although I had to express myself too often according to the old [psychiatry]. As a token of my immense admiration, Jacques Lacan. The 3rd of January, 1932 [sic]"

◇ 23 January 1933, to **Dr. Maurice Martin-Sisteron**: We have not been able to examine this copy

◇ 23 January 1933, to **Dr. Jean Picard**: "As a token of a friendship based on the deepest intellectual esteem. January 23rd, 1933"

◇ 23 January 1933, to **Dr. Ernst Kretschmer**: [in German] "To Herr Professor Dr. Kretschmer. With excellent regards from an unknown, indebted student, Jacques Lacan, 23rd Jan., 33"

◇ 24 February 1933, to **Lise and Paul Deharme**: "To Lise and Paul Deharme, this Feb. 24th, 33"

◇ 9 July 1933, to **Marcel Boll**: "To Marcel Boll, as a sign of courteous contradiction Jacques Lacan this July 9th, 33"

◇ September 1933 to **Eugène Minkowski**: We have not been able to examine this copy.

◇ 21 October 1933, to **Arnould**: "To Arnould. This ambitious essay. Jacques Lacan. This October 21st, 1933, better late than never... and sorry." (Copy with statement "chief resident" on the cover)

◇ 25 October 1933, to **Pierre Verret**: "*To Pierre Verret, in memory of a collaboration. Jacques Lacan. This 25th October, 33*" (we do not know if the copy includes the above mentioned statement)

◇ undated [1952] to **Maurice Henry**: "A little bit of Maurice Henry would have done my 'Aimée' good; a lot of Maurice Henry, full stop, would have saved her. Jacques Lacan Twenty years later. Nobody leave and everybody sign [other signatures including Sylvia Bataille]"

We are also aware of two other copies with no information on the date and content of the inscription: One sent to **Dr. Gaston Ferdière** that went on sale in 2001. One signed copy kept at the **Henri Ey** Library. To these 20 exceptional copies must therefore be added the few others without an inscription which are for the most part in second issue. They occasionally appear on the market, but their lack of individual specificities makes it difficult to identify them precisely.

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History of Sigmund Freud's library in J. Keith Davies & Gerhard Fichtner *Freud's Library, A Comprehensive Catalogue*, 2004

Sigmund Freud's library was divided up in several stages following his emigration to London in 1938:

“Parts of Freud's original library [...] were dispersed as a result of his emigration to London 1938. Freud selected from his library and chose to dispose of a large part, apparently in order to keep the size of the transport to England smaller. These books went to the Jewish Viennese bookseller Paul Sonnenfeld, who also emigrated to England in 1939. He kept a number, but passed on the greater part to the Viennese antiquarian bookseller Heinrich Hinterberger, who sold them on to the New York State Psychiatric Institute, and which are now housed in the New York Health Sciences Library.

Those books which Sonnenfeld kept and took with him to London were later sold, in part to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., some to private buyers. An account of these books is given by Kurt R. Eissler (Eissler 1979). A small number of volumes have returned to the Vienna Freud House (Lobner 1975). Before his emigration, and also in London, Freud had often given books to colleagues, friends, as well as to institutions. So a not insignificant number of books now may be found in private hands, which carry Freud's ownership signature or dedications to him.

Only a few years ago, a collection of offprints and books with dedications to Freud came onto the antiquarian book market from a private collection, that apparently had been donated by Freud, long before his emigration, to the Vienna Psychoanalytic Ambulatorium, as they still bear the (partially erased) stamp of this institution. Whether these were saved from the Nazi confiscations, or were improperly held can no longer be clarified.”

This unique copy, a seemingly innocuous academic work by a completely unknown author, has survived Freud's lack of interest, his exile, Nazi book burnings, the contempt of Lacan's peers, the indifference of readers, the destructive remorse of the author, as well as the many losses and accidents that occurred over time.

Yet it is the witness and sole object recording the historic meeting between the inventor of psychoanalysis and its first theorist – who would turn Freudian teachings from their Founding stage into an established Science. Undoubtedly one of the most important and significant bibliophilic items in the history of this science.