

Spotlight on a Burgundian Masterpiece

Droits d'Armes de Noblesse –
laws of war, rules of fighting, and heraldry
compiled by Gilles Gobet, alias *Toison d'Or*
King of Arms of Maximilian of Austria,
Duke of Burgundy



Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books
Basel/Stalden
info@guenther-rarebooks.com
www.guenther-rarebooks.com



Droits d'Armes
de
Noblesse:
A
Burgundian
Masterpiece

on view at
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Cy commence le prologue
de ce present traicte intitule
des droiz deemes.

A la loenge de
dieu nostre be-
noit createur
a l'onneur des
princes z a l'exaucement
de vertue z de noblesse. Je
qui pour ma petitesse no-
mee ne me doy ay en ce re-

tit volume rassemble et
mie ensemble aucuns re-
tre traictiez ausquelz ray
adiouste plusieurs choses
seruans a tous desirant
sauoir quelle chose est no-
blesse dont elle print sa
naissance z commencement.
qui fut le premier noble
homme z quelle chose il co-
ument faire a l'omme pour



This codex, the *Droits d'Armes de Noblesse*, contains 14 different texts compiled under the direction of Gilles Gobet, King of Arms of Maximilian of Austria, duke of Burgundy – alias *Toison d'Or*.

The manuscript was illuminated by the so-called Bruges Master of 1482 for Claude de Neufchâtel (d. 1505), soldier, knight, and diplomat in the service of the duke of Burgundy. He likely acquired it before 1491 – the year he was invested with the Order of the Golden Fleece.

360 x 250 mm, 208 leaves, vellum.
With 1 full-page and 10 half-page miniatures, 63
coats of arms (f.Ir).



en ceste pratique. Tou
tesuoyes ce que ya est as
semble est extrait et tire
hors des escriptures tant
saintes z diuines comme
legales z hystoriques en
semble les opinions dau
cuns santes et experts en y
cellui art qui me ont sem
ble consumer a raison no
obstant que you ou gaires
soient au iourd'hui qui se
lon le contenu des regles
ya nostre gouuernement
leur noblesse. Mais il le
fault imputer au teps
qui regne de present qui
est lan mil m^e m^e z J.
Un autre vendra se dieu
plaisst qui la ressource
par vertu z les leuera en
honneur hors de la fage
ou aucuns populaires se
ont par long temps tenu.
Amen.



Coat of arms of Claude de Neufchâtel (d. 1505), knight of the Golden Fleece since 1491.
As the collar of the Order was not added here, the manuscript was likely made before
1491. The final text in the codex was written and dated in 1481.

Droits d'Armes, compiled under the direction of Gilles Gobet, illuminated by the Master of 1482.
Flanders, Bruges, after 1481 and before 1491.



The Luxembourgier Claude de Neufchâtel (d. 1505) was seigneur du Fay, viscount of Baume, seigneur of Epinal and marshal of Burgundy. He played an important role in the diplomacy after the disaster at Nancy (1477) and became the confident of archduke Maximilian of Austria and his wife Mary of Burgundy. His palace in Luxembourg city, the Hôtel du Fay or Hôtel de Bourgogne, is currently the official residence of the prime minister of Luxembourg.



7.

→ **E**n saintes con-
 ces de iherusalem
 et de france es
 queles au iour
 d'hy par lordonnance de
 dieu regne loys de charles
 cousin chere amé
 et par tout le monde redoub-
 te soit donne gloire et loe
 sur toutes seignouries ter-
 riennes. Tres hault prince

Je suys appelle par mon droit
 nom honnorez souet prie
 de challon en prouence
 docteur en decret souuent
 menu ay eu volente de
 faire aucun liure Premie-
 rement en louneur de dieu
 de sa douce mere et de vostre
 haulte seignourie Mais
 les raisons pourquoy iay
 entrepris de ceo faire sont

This miniature shows Honoré Bovet (d. c.1410), the author of the second text, entitled *L'Arbre des batailles*, who offers his book to the 'crowns' of Jerusalem and France ... *au iourdhui ... regne Loys de Charles cousin germain...* Text and miniature are adapted to the late 15th century and seem to refer to the years between 1481-1483.

Both kings are presented as sharing the same throne. In 1481 Charles IV of Anjou bequeathed the title King of Jerusalem to his cousin Louis XI (d. 1483).

Illuminated by the Bruges Master of 1482 after 1481 and before 1491 (f. 1r)



Our ms., f.1r



Ms.230, f. 10r

There is a second version of this scene that is quite similar to ours and illuminated by the same artist (Yale University, Beinecke Library, ms. 230). In that manuscript, the text is offered to two monarchs, one older than the other. They are said to be Emperor Frederick III and his son Maximilian, duke of Burgundy. From 1483, father and son shared power and ruled jointly. The superb miniatures in both versions offer great comparative material that may throw light on the artist's interpretations and the wishes of his patrons.



The presentation in our miniature (f. 1r) is attended also by two heralds, identified by the insignia on their tunics: left is the herald of the King of Romans and right, the herald of the King of France.



Donc fait et
 creé un empe
 reur de nouuel
 sont deux ma
 nières L'une par election &
 sept electeurs tant seculiers
 comme prelatz de sainte e
 glise. Et lautre se fait par
 force & puissance de gens
 darmes et darmz. Ou aussy
 puet il auoir si grant reno
 mee par le monde de bonne

vie & de la proesse & d'auiliace
 de son corps quil est uigiez
 de tous ostee dignes de em
 pereur Et par ainsi sans
 constrainte pour ceste bonne
 renommee les citez du pays
 & de lempire se mettent en
 son oberissance. La pmiere
 maniere doncques de faire
 nouuel empereur est qui
 se fait par election & les e
 lecteurs sont sept quatre

The texts deal with the laws of war, the rules of fighting, and heraldry in different European countries. They also discuss the election of the Holy Roman Emperor. That text is introduced by an elegant miniature of his coronation (f. 143).

The emperor is chosen by seven electors: the archbishops of Mainz, Cologne, and Trier, and by the prince-electors of Brandenburg, duke of Saxonia and the count palatine of the Rhine, all identified by their coats of arms.

Here, the seventh elector, the King of Bohemia, is absent.

360 x 250 mm, 208 leaves, vellum (f. 143r).



The fine miniature of the Coronation of the emperor by six electors, instead of seven – is as occurred when Maximilian was crowned King of Romans, April 1486. That title was a claim to become emperor. Even though Maximilian succeeded his father in 1493, he was never crowned as such by the pope, but from 1508 he was *defacto* Holy Roman Emperor.

360 x 250 mm, 208 leaves, vellum
(f. 143)



Dit que ie
me trouua
a par moy
de laire de
toutes par
seu: occupacion modame
tenu en memoire on dit
de senecoue quil escriuit
a son am lualle qui dist
en ceste maniere que on
suet sans cierge est la

mort de lame z sepulture
de lomme duiant. Aussi
me souue de on dit de
apostre qui dist q'on seuse
est cause de tout pechiez
Et moy deuant me que
de dechoir en icellu m
comment me donray
grant peine pour trouue
aucune occupacion en la
quelle ie puisse plus hon

The subtly illuminated texts discuss chivalric protocol, heraldry, rights and privileges, and the laws of war in Spain, France, Burgundy, and England. It was the prerogative of the herald to guard the chivalric codes for which the medieval courts (Burgundy par excellence) and nobility were famous.

At this time, Europe's most important herald was *Toison d'Or*, Giles Gobet, King of Arms to Maximilian, sovereign of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

Collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece bestowed upon a knight while his lady also receives a chain.

Miniature by the Master of 1482. Flanders, Bruges, after 1481 and before 1491 (f. 109r)



Close up: *Collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece bestowed upon a knight while his lady also receives a chain.* The couple are given their honours by figures seeming to be Maximilian of Austria, duke of Burgundy and his wife Mary of Burgundy.

Miniature by the Master of 1482.
Flanders, Bruges, after 1481 and
before 1491 (f. 109r)



Our ms. f. 109r



ms.230, f. 108r

The same scene is also included in the Yale manuscript. The Duke of Burgundy presided over the Order of the Golden Fleece. When Mary of Burgundy died in 1482, the couple's son, Philip the Handsome (1478-1506), became the Order's president (from 1485). In the Beinecke manuscript both the heralds of the Empire and of France are also present.

Miniatures by the Master of 1482 (f. 109r and f. 108r)



Comme il soit
 vray selon les
 anciennes es-
 criptures nous
 trouuons que par ce text
 victorieux prince & prince
 empereur Julius cesar
 senoble ordre des heraulds
 qui est a dire seigneur
 vneux fust premier esta-
 ble des tres vaillans et
 saiges preudhommes die

cheualiers. Apres ce que
 les benefices de fortune
 & leurs vaillances ilz fu-
 rent aux cages demis que
 eurent passe les mettes &
 les honneurs de plus ne
 pouoir les armes excera-
 tes Et ceulx establiert
 ordonna & deputa aux Ju-
 gement des batailles et
 questions des guerres leur
 donnant seignoueries et

Coronation, or investiture, of the King of Arms of France, Montjoie, in the presence of a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. The throne-chair is decorated with the fleur-de-lis. The miniature opens les droiz des mareschaulx de France tant en paix comme en guerre (f. 174r).



Elm



La maniere de faire chay
 a oustrance seos lordonace
 faite par les roys d'angle
 terre Et le fist r composa mo
 si thomas duc de clocestre
 conestable d'angleterre.
Cest hault tres
 excellent r es
 traus seigne
 richard par la
 grace de dieu roy d'angleterre
 r seigneur d'yrlande tho

mas duc de clocestre vire
 conestable d'angleterre
 honneur r toute obeissance
 Comme plusieurs batailles
 dedens liex armes aient
 este faites en vire royaume
 ou temps de mon fr et pece
 vire aveul comme en vire
 temps r de present plus q
 ne furent long temps deiat
 r que bn est apparant de pr
 en auoir Et pour ce que d

The text on the rules of knightly combat opens with a miniature of a duel within a *champ fermé*, with heralds as referees (f. 153r).



Deu devant t'haute
 excellez z viussat
 prince montres
 redoubte seigne
 monsi^r le duc de bouregon
 que conte de flandres d'ar
 tois de bouregonie pala
 tin h^r de salnis z de mali
 nes z par deuant monsi^r
 le mareschal de bouregon
 que comme representant
 en ce cas la persone de

monsi^r sambonne deffedat
 que deez cy se presente avec
 son cheual ou ses cheuaux
 en estat z habit de gentil
 homme z de homme qui
 doit entrer en champ pour
 combater contre raoul de
 gemes appellat en nom
 de dieu z de medame saite
 marie z de samit george le
 bon cheualier z cest mardy
 vo^r iours du mois de septebre



Duel with halberds in front of a palace decorated with a tapestry presenting the arms of Burgundy (f. 169r).

200
E. 111. 7



Apres ce q nous
 auont de scriyt
 les preuileges
 et serement des
 vrs dames & heraults. Il
 reste maintenant sauoir
 quelz droitz & prouffiz ilz
 ont en iouster touenoiz &
 behourz qui se font a pla
 sance pour noblesse & hon
 neur acquerre. si est ass
 quant on prince ou on

autre grant seigneur po
 la premiere fois qui se ac
 me pour entree en champ
 pour iouster ou touenoier
 soit en bataille ou en lices
 Il doit donner le heaume
 & la soubrreste soef et les
 parremens de son cheual a
 vrs dames & heraults. /
Q Item quant deux ge
 tilz hommes ou cheualiers
 entrent en lices pour faire



Rights and rules for tournaments
 (f. 190r).



Em^{re} B



Due mettre fin
 et conclusion a
 ce presc traictie
 Intitule de lof
 fice darmes et noblesse no^r
 voulont touchier z mettre
 par escript que douient co
 gnoistre les roys darmes
 et heraulx touchant des
 obseques z funeraillies des
 nobles hommes de toutes
 dignite: sicomme ou topz

passé len souloit d'ice z es
 quelles se demostrent a
 ppetuite la descente des le
 gnaitez desdis nobles hom
 mes dont de present on nen
 use pou ou neant z se on en
 use aucunement si ny tict
 on nulle regle Car les uns
 font par deuotion ceures a
 mis enterree a simple lu
 minaire z a petite parens
 Les autres les font a grat.

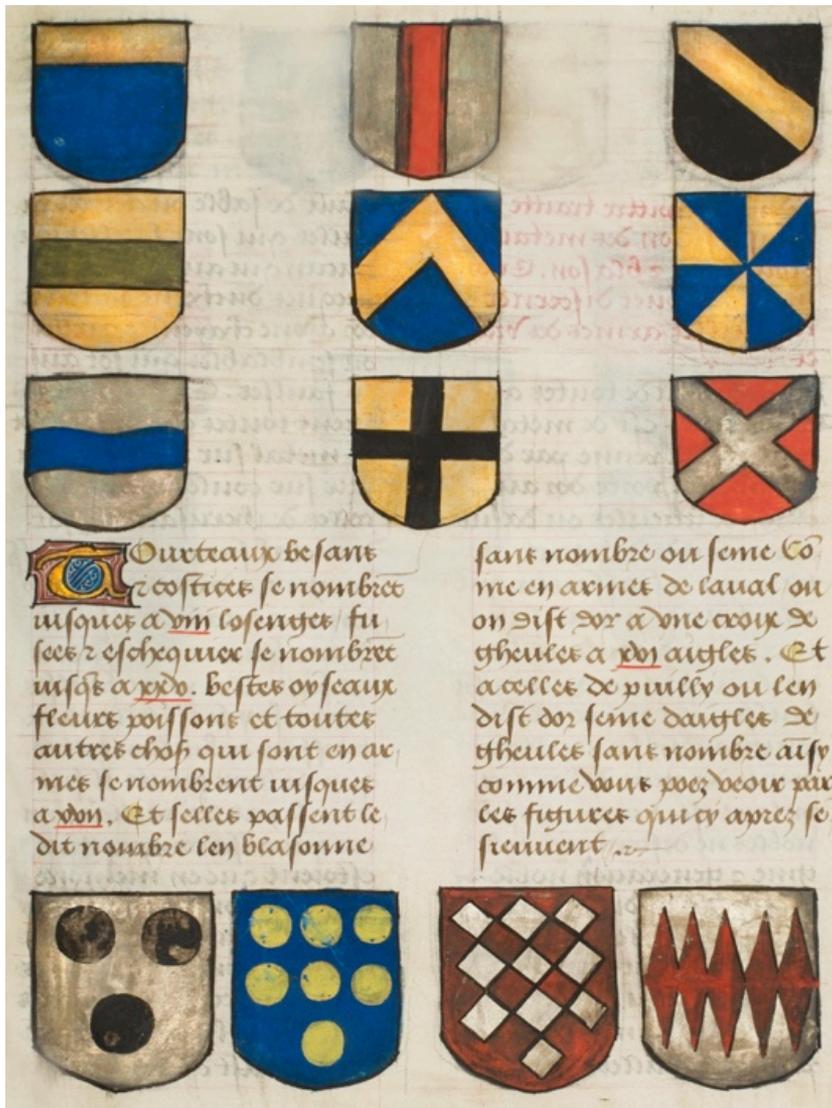
The inspiration for this compilation may be discovered in the ideals of the Order of the Golden Fleece, founded by the Duke of Burgundy “for the reverence of God ... and to honour and exalt the noble order of knighthood, and also ... to do honour to old knights ... To do, each day, the deeds pertaining to chivalry” (f. 195r).



Statut royaux
touchant le
fait de la guerre
re prins en la
chambre du tresor a Paris
par phelippe saint terre
quant il sen vint marier
a madame margueritte
de frandres assavoir ce
qui touche et appartient
a l'office du mareschal de
loft. du mareschal des logis

et aussi du prevoist des mareschaulx. et de ce qui appartient a son office.
Et premierement ledit mareschal de loft est la seconde personne de l'armee et doit estre au deslogier acompaignie du tiers de l'armee du prince et doit tenir devant tous mareschaulx l'auantgarde comme chief. Aussi puet

The author of the final text dated his writing in 1481 (f. 199v). On a previous leaf (f. 196v), another author identifies himself as the father of Gilles [...], but leaves the family name unmentioned: this must be Gilles Gobet, herald of archduke Maximilian and Toison d'Or from 1468 until 1492.



The chivalric ideals described in this codex were shared by many of the medieval courts across Europe.

They were ideals to be preserved and transmitted for the future.

This fascinating compilation of European noble codes considerably influenced the concept of common laws regarding war among nations, which was famously further developed in Hugo Grotius' *De belli ac pacis*, 1625.

The manuscript at hand has not been seen in public since 1971. As the above shows, it undoubtedly represents a most important Burgundian, if not European, cultural heritage.



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