



# Spotlight a Crown on a Career



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Manuskripte und seltene Bücher

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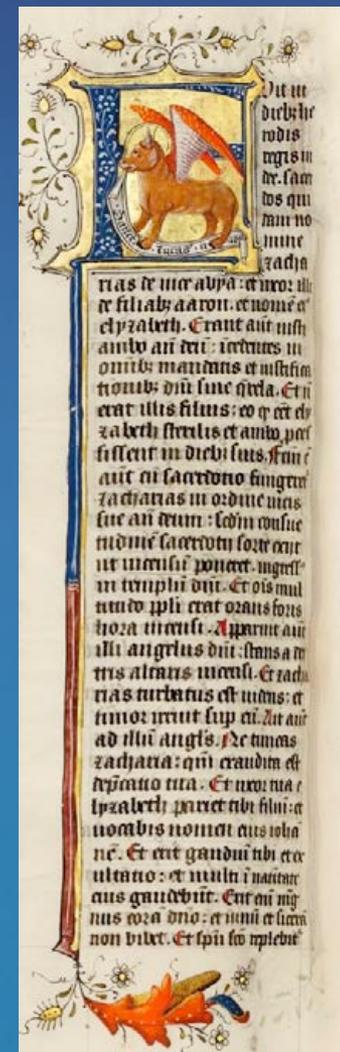
God in Heaven, Bible of Wouter Grauwert,  
Utrecht, ca. 1440 – now Swiss private collection.

Since Jörn Günther opened his  
Spalenberg office in Basel 8  
years ago, I have been  
commuting weekly from the  
Lower Rhine to the Upper Rhine  
and back.

What a pleasure it was!  
And still is.

Holding all of Günther's  
manuscripts in my hands was a  
true privilege and the crown on  
a career of 40 years.

But, time flies...  
Suddenly I became 65, and then  
66...and my thoughts began to  
wander – not to '*Ruhestand*' but to  
spending more time at home –to be  
able to travel and write more!



Born in Utrecht, raised near the German border, I accepted in 1983 the position of curator in medieval manuscripts and early printed books at the Utrecht Catharijneconvent. The greatest challenge in Utrecht was organizing the exhibition on the *Golden Age of Dutch Manuscript Painting* based on the work of Prof dr. James H. Marrow, a great and magnanimous scholar, a true friend, and a faithful visitor to study our manuscripts in Basel.

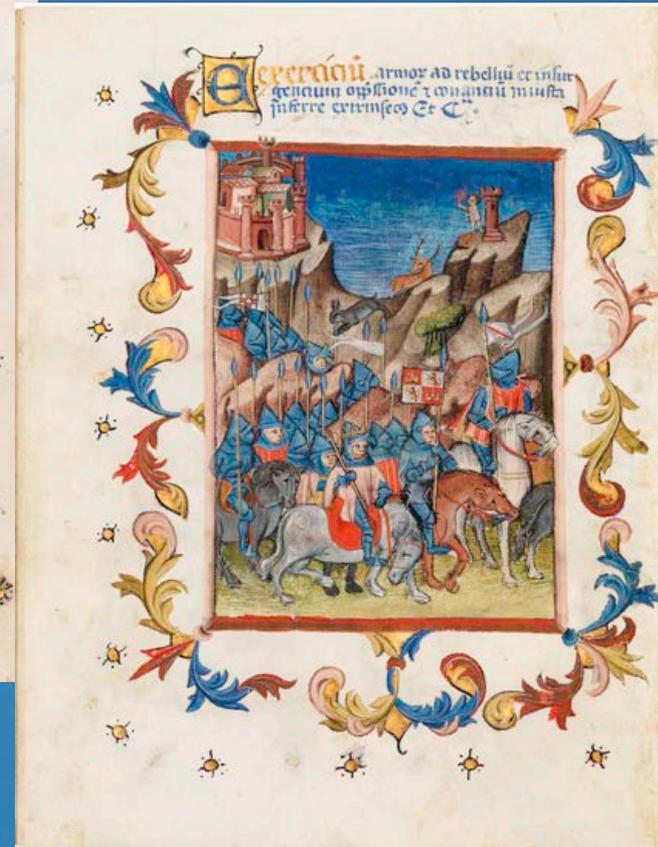


Early research brought me to Haarlem and books and libraries in that North-Holland town continued to attract my interest. The so-called Jason Master illuminated only few manuscripts, but two of his best manuscripts came to us in Basel, one soon after the other.

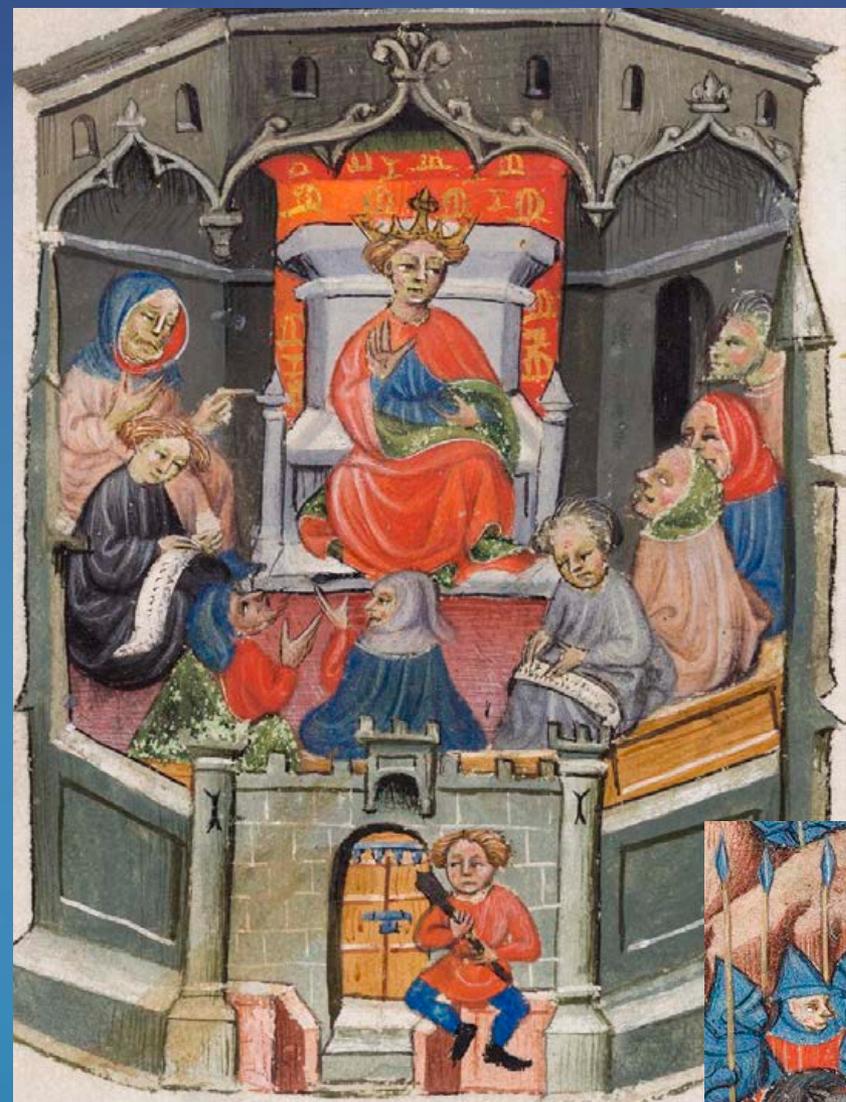
One is now in the Museum in Mettingen, the second in a Swiss private collection.



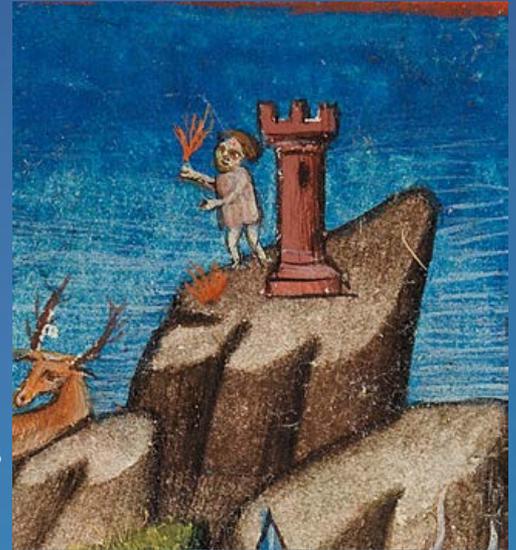
One of the first manuscripts I analysed was the Compendium of Juan II, King of Castile and Leon, made ca. 1425.



This unpublished, royal text is about the duties of the crowned king, in this case Juan II of Castile and Leon, judge, ruler, and warrior.  
Spain, c. 1425



The king in his alcazar, negotiating behind closed doors... Juan had just reached his '*maioritat*' in 1425, see the '*M*' above his throne.



We see here the crowned king leading his army. The manuscript is a '*Fundgrube*' for all things Spanish. Our company just saw such an *atalaya* during our most recent '*Betriebsausflug*' to Madrid.



Among the genre “Books of Hours”, many fine or even superior examples of illumination passed through Günther’s in Basel. The De Croix Hours is a supreme masterpiece, which reigns over even the loveliest examples in being utterly exceptional. Its beauty is highlighted here in the crowned Virgin and Child.

It is now in a Swiss private collection.



The De Croix Hours includes both worldly and royal details, but no figure is more celebrated than the most royal of all:

Virgin and Child standing on the crescent moon between the symbols of the evangelists. Two cherubim hold a crown over her head, all within a blaze of golden light.

See our [Spotlight](#) on this sold book.



In the Breviary made for the Archbishop of Cologne, Herman von Hessen (1450-1508), the family's patroness Elisabeth, *Stammutter* of the Landgrafen von Hessen, is highlighted. Cologne, c.1480-1488

now: Cologne, Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln





The bishop of Cologne, the Lords of Guelders and of Cleves in a Compilation of Twelve Chronicles in the vernacular.

Lower Rhine-Maasland, c. 1453-1461

This extraordinary codex with 28 drawings bears the coat of arms of William II, Lord of Bergh, 1404-1465.





Denste in oestlant tijt in frantsche  
Volene in staten lant  
Die mij lere hont gijr thant  
Brandeborch is camerant **Sassen die drager**  
Niem is staentse te sijn e lant **Uffbeert!**  
Die palenshrene is droppit  
Van des keppers hont gijr  
Dit sijn die gene geloenes my  
Die den roenschen toynsk maken  
Die opten stou tompit taken  
Is hij wer dach dan der none  
Die geest on die paubet te lone  
Dun sal hij van rechtse stonden  
Der heiligen kerken recht houden  
En dair gone fetten lijff ende goit  
Doit hij myn lijf mysoit  
En bruct sijn keppertijcke geloff  
Dan hij meynedich wort off

The Emperor and the Electors  
in the same Compilation of  
Twelve Chronicles. Lower  
Rhine-Maasland, c. 1453-1461.

The manuscript returned to the  
castle of s'Heerenbergh, which  
today is a private museum  
where an exhibition will be  
devoted to this manuscript next  
year.





**D**onc faire et  
 cetera un empe  
 reur de nouvel  
 sont deux ma  
 nières. L'une par election de  
 sept electeurs tant seculiers  
 comme prelatz de sainte e  
 glise. Et l'autre se fait par  
 force et puissance de gens  
 darmes et d'armes. Ou aussi  
 puet il auoir si grant reno  
 mee par le monde de bonne

vie et de la proesse d'auxillie  
 de son corps quil est uigiez  
 de tous ceste dignes de em  
 pereur Et par ainsi sans  
 contrainte pour ceste bonne  
 renommee les citez du pays  
 et de l'empire se mettent en  
 son obeissance. La premiere  
 maniere doncques de faire  
 nouvel empereur est qui  
 se fait par election et les e  
 lecteurs sont sept quatre

In the *Droits d'Armes de Noblesse*,  
 large codex dealing with the  
 laws of war, the rules of fighting,  
 and heraldry, the election of the  
 Holy Roman Emperor is  
 discussed and depicted in 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.

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

Bruges, before 1491



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 ultra-fascinating codex is now in a French private collection.

The manuscript was illuminated by the so-called Bruges Master of 1482 for Claude de Neufchâtel (d. 1505), an able diplomat in the service of the Duke of Burgundy. He was elected to the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1481 and invested in 1491, but the regalia of the order were never added here.



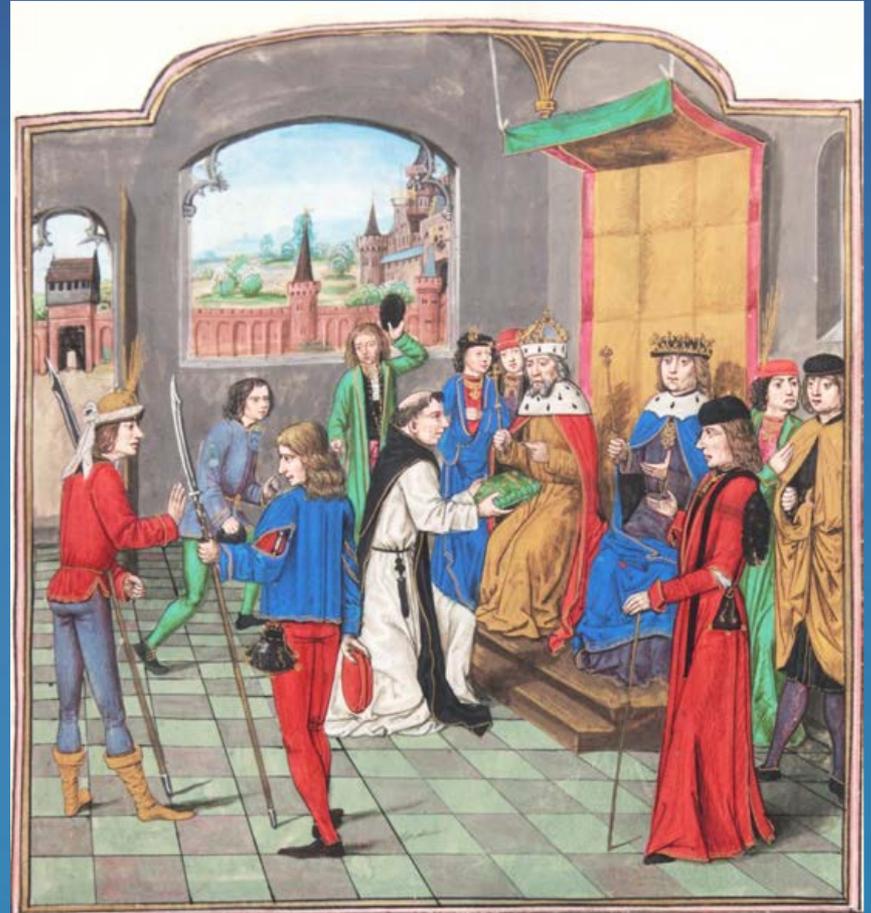
**E** saintes con-  
 ces de iherusalem  
 et de france es  
 queles au iour  
 d'huys par lordonnance de  
 dieu regne loys de charles  
 cousin tchemam t'sbien ame  
 et par tout le monde redoub-  
 te soit donne et loe  
 sur toutes seignouries ter-  
 riennes. Tres hault prince

Je suys appelle par mon droit  
 nom honnoree souet prie  
 de challon en prouence  
 docteur en decret souuent  
 men 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

Honoré Bovet (d. c.1410), the author of  
 the second text in the same manuscript,  
 entitled *L'Arbre des batailles*, offers his  
 book to the 'crowns' of Jerusalem and  
 France ... Both the text and the  
 miniatures are adapted to the late 15<sup>th</sup>  
 century and 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 of King of  
 Jerusalem to his cousin Louis XI (d.  
 1483).

Illuminated by the Bruges Master of 1482 after  
 1481 and before 1491.



There is a second version of this scene that is 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. Both versions offer great comparative material.

Beinecke, Ms.  
230, f. 10r



The book presentation in our miniature 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.



Such manuscripts are the pinnacle of medieval art and culture. The codex of the deeds of the great knight *Jacques de Lalaing* was presumably written by *Toison d'Or*, the king of arms and herald of the Order of the Golden Fleece, here portrayed by Simon Bening in Bruges c. 1520 and possibly made for Charles I, *seigneur de Lalaing* (d. 1525). The manuscript is now in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 114.



Tournaments, chivalry, the finest costumes, and courtly love: all of Burgundian courtly society's values are painted into this book in its exquisite miniatures showing the deeds of Jacques de Lalaing.

The knight rides in full armour and greets the King and Queen of France – and two secret lady lovers.

The manuscript is now in the J. Paul Getty Museum, ms. 114.



Duke Philip the Good and behind him Charles the Bold are shown in the same manuscript.

The dukes did not become kings, but Burgundy has always fascinated me and, although Basel will be missed, I hope to spend many enjoyable days in Burgundy.



The splendour of Burgundy,  
the world of knights,  
troubadours, and excellent  
university professors  
introduced me to the study of  
medieval manuscripts: a path I  
will continue follow for the  
years to come.

I would like to thank all of  
those who in any way  
contributed to these fine years,  
but most of all  
Jörn Günther who made it all  
possible.



Jörn Günther not only acquired all of these great manuscripts but also brought us into contact with many interested bibliophiles with whom we could share our fascination for medieval books and society.

So there is no better way to show gratitude! May all such beauty continue to inspire us on our paths!

Basel, December 2019,  
Helen C. Wüstefeld



# Spotlight

The Crowns  
in My Work  
Were the Crowns  
on My Work!



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