

# Medieval Grants of Arms and their Illuminators<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** *This essay deals with the relevance of medieval grants of arms in art history, focusing on the aspects of innovation and quality. The first part discusses the origins of innovative prototypes that did not yet match the quality of later grants of arms. The second part presents a selection of qualitative landmarks in the history of grants of arms and the artists responsible for decorating them. Finally, some concluding remarks will be presented.*

## THE ORIGINS OF MEDIEVAL GRANTS OF ARMS

Early grants of arms are not impressive because of their artistic quality, but because of their innovative character. Of course, this is not only true for grants of arms alone, but is a widespread phenomenon. Absolute claims about the step-by-step development of grants of arms are next to impossible to prove. Before I turn to the extant grants and their decorations, however, it is necessary to define the objects in question:

- The term »grant of arms« describes charters that have been given to a grantee (a physical person or an institution), usually by royal or imperial authorities, or by their authorised representatives (e.g. the counts palatine in Germany, or the kings of arms in England), either to grant or augment a coat of arms, or in order to grant and confirm the use of an existing or new coat of arms. In addition, other acts of grace such as ennoblements can be part of a grant of arms' *dispositio*<sup>2</sup>.

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1 This essay is based on a more extensive paper to be published in German: Martin ROLAND, Wappen – Kunst. Zur kunsthistorischen Relevanz von mittelalterlichen Wappenbriefen, in: Petr ELBEL, Andreas ZAJIC (eds.), *Wappenbriefe und Standerhöhungsurkunden als Ausdruck europäischen Kulturtransfers? Beiträge zur diplomatischen Norm und sozialen Praxis im späten Mittelalter*, Troppau 13.–15. März 2013. I would like to thank Marcus Meer for the translation and Elizabeth Danbury for emending my text significantly.

2 On grants of arms, see Martin ROLAND, Andreas ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden des Mittelalters in Mitteleuropa*, in: *Archiv für Diplomatik* 59 (2013), pp. 241–432, pp. 338–391. On the definition in particular, see *ibid.*, pp. 338–339.

- »Illuminated« with regard to grants of arms is meant to indicate that at least the heraldic figure is depicted.

## THE ROLE OF THE IMAGE AT THE BIRTH OF GRANTS OF ARMS

Art historians take great interest in the question of whether the medium of the image played a significant part in the making of grants of arms from their origin. Was the image an essential part of the constitution of this type of charter? What was the driving force behind its development?

When looking at the oldest extant illuminated grants of arms (1316, 1338, 1339, 1355), it appears that a depiction of the granted coat of arms was part of the original concept<sup>3</sup>. However, things are not quite as simple as that. In 2013, Andreas Zajic and I addressed the questions outlined above in light of three grants, from 1305, 1311 and 1318, although it is unclear as to whether these grants actually existed (which is a common problem), and whether these grants – if they were issued – were in fact illuminated with a depiction of the granted coat of arms<sup>4</sup>.

Until quite recently, the first non-illuminated grant was thought to have been made by Charles I of Hungary for Master Donch, Count of Zolyom (Zvolen) on 23 October 1327. This quite inconspicuous document, given as a reward for military merit, granted the Count of Zolyom the privilege of gilding his weapons, coat of arms, crest, and banner<sup>5</sup>. The armorial device to be gilded was not described and consequently not depicted.

Not long ago, attention was drawn to a charter issued by Rudolf I, count palatine of the Rhine, on 15 December 1294<sup>6</sup>, investing the reeves (*Vögte*) of Plauen – Henry the Older and Henry the Younger – as well as the reeves of Weida and Gera with a shield and banner (*clipeum et bannirum sive vexillum*) which they had previously received from the Count's ancestors. The resemblance of the of arms of the issuer and the recipients suggests – at first glance – a making of the act which corresponds to that of the later grants of arms<sup>7</sup>, of the older type<sup>8</sup>.

There is, however more to this case. The grantees had evidently held their coat of arms, which resemble to the Palatine lion, since 1244, and therefore long before grants of arms first

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3 That these examples are indeed part of the origins of this development is far from certain. However, even if none of them is in itself an innovative step forward in the development of grants of arms (and there were others, earlier illuminated grants of arms that are now lost) this does not affect the validity of the points made in this essay.

4 ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2), p. 341 (King Albert I to the Diocese of Gurk, 11 January 1305), pp. 356–357 (King Henry VII to Gottfried Zeis in relation to the latter's knighting and ennoblement, 1311 [1312]), and pp. 356–357 (Louis IV to Petermann zum Jungen, 9 February 1318).

5 Budapest, Magyar Országos Levéltár, DL 50.507 (ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* [as in no. 2], pp. 357–358).

6 *Regesta imperii* VI, 2: Adolf von Nassau 1291–1298, ed. by Vincenz SAMANEK, Innsbruck 1948, p.165, no. 480, available online: *Regesta imperii* online, [http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1294-12-15\\_1\\_0\\_6\\_2\\_0\\_488\\_480](http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1294-12-15_1_0_6_2_0_488_480) [accessed 30/06/2017]. In more detail: Martin ROLAND, *Wappen und Urkunden im Mittelalter. Die Schnittmenge in Thüringen mit einem Schwerpunkt im Vogtland*, in: *Zeitschrift für Thüringische Geschichte* 69 (2013), pp. 93–129, esp. pp. 93–101: the »proto« grant of arms of 1294.

7 This precaution is necessary since the charter from 1294 did not mention the term *arma* (coat of arms) at all.

8 In the case the older type of grants of arms, the grantee is clearly politically tied to the issuing authority by means of the escutcheon's imagery, whereas the younger type is quasi-neutral. (ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* [as in no. 2], pp. 340–341 and accordingly p. 355).

appeared. In 1294, when coats of arms had already entered the legal sphere, the count palatine, in order to integrate the case into the legal framework, claimed that it had been his ancestors who had performed the investiture, and that he himself was now merely confirming it. Against this claim made in the *narratio* it has to be said that the arms of the named reeves were – with the exception of the tincture colours and tinctures – identical to the arms of the neighbouring counts of Everstein, with whom the family also had feudal ties. In light of this argument, the similarity of the reeves' lion to the Palatine lion has to be considered coincidental. In contrast to later, fully-fledged grants of arms it has to be noted that, despite the German king, Adolf of Nassau, being present, it was not he who issued the grant, but the higher ranking of the two parties affected by this »clash« of arms.

The charters mentioned so far are relatively inconspicuous in that they deal with coats of arms and thus with embellished military heraldry. The medium of the image is therefore intrinsic to the matter, making it unsurprising that non-illuminated charters did not have a significant impact.

A further finding adds to the complexity of the issue. By the grace of the French king Louis X *le Hutin* (1314–16), and following a request from the bishop of Bayeux, permission was granted (*de gratia concedimus*) to the »poor blind« (*pauperes cecī*) of the city to use the bishop's coat of arms (his family's coat of arms augmented with an episcopal staff), crowned with a royal fleur-de-lys as a sign of special protection. How this was supposed to look was illustrated on the charter (*sub hac forma*). While the charter itself is lost, an enrolled copy made in the royal chancery still exists, including a depiction of the granted emblem<sup>9</sup>.

In this case, an existing coat of arms and a heraldic element referring to the king merged into a single graphic symbol – a procedure constitutive for grants of arms of the older type<sup>10</sup>. It has to be mentioned, however, that the emblem granted to the »poor blind« was a graphic sign and not a »proper« coat of arms.

The first charter that can be classified with certainty as an illuminated grant of arms is an augmentation of arms issued on 11 March 1316 by Bernard de Coucy (*Bernardus de Cucuiaco*), papal vicar-general for Tuscia, to the town of Viterbo, to which he felt indebted. The charter was »designed« *ad hoc* and honoured the town, whilst the granted emblem or heraldry documented the political allegiance of the town (fig. 1)<sup>11</sup>.

To sum up, it is necessary to differentiate the role played by the image. When heraldry turned from a private matter into an element of feudal law, and subsequently into a princely prerogative, sporadic charters documenting the granting (and transferring) of arms began to appear<sup>12</sup>. Since coats of arms are a visual means, non-illuminated charters could hardly suffice. The image consequently entered grants of arms from two directions: firstly, there was a unique

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9 Paris, Archives nationales, JJ 52, fol. 35r. The digitised register is available through the database »Archim«: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/archim/tresor-chartes.html> [accessed 30/06/2017]. For the page, see [http://www.culture.gouv.fr/Wave/image/archim/JJ/PG/frchanjj\\_jj052\\_0036r.htm](http://www.culture.gouv.fr/Wave/image/archim/JJ/PG/frchanjj_jj052_0036r.htm) [accessed 30/06/2017].

10 See above, no. 8.

11 11 March 1316, Viterbo: Viterbo, Biblioteca Comunale degli Ardentī, Serie Pergamene sciolte, no. 220, collocazione 364, ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2), pp. 341–344 and fig. 28. The arms are blazoned in the *dispositio*, which also explicitly refers to the depiction.

12 One can assume that heraldic matters normally took place in the sphere of performative action rather than the sphere of the written word.





Fig. 1: 1316, Bernard de Coucy to Viterbo (see no. 11). <http://monasterium.net/mom/IlluminierteUrkunden/collection>

charter by means of which the French king, acting on his own authority, granted use of a specific visual symbol to a particular group of people. Second, the earliest »proper« illuminated grant of arms – in the sense of the definition outlined above – was written and illuminated in Italy. The combination of depicted coats of arms and a legal entity frequently granting arms to their subjects had not been found until then.

## THE PATH TO A FIRST IMPERIAL GRANT OF ARMS

The desire of authorities issuing grants of arms to confer and depict coats of arms as symbols of political reference, which was the main intention of the older type of grants of arms, continued. There is as yet no evidence as to whether the popes continued to practise this. Louis the Bavarian – elected king of the Holy Roman Empire in 1314, widely acknowledged after the Battle of Mühldorf in 1322 and made Emperor in 1328 – apparently first issued a grant of arms in 1328 to Castruccio Castracani<sup>13</sup>. Although the original document is now lost, its visual concept must have been striking<sup>14</sup>; nevertheless the central message, the politically expressive coat of arms, apparently was not part of the design.

The next imperial attempt is dated 24 June 1329 in Pavia, upon Louis' return from his coronation in Rome. He granted imperial fiefdoms to Henry II Reuß, reeve of Plauen, Henry IV and Henry V, reeves of Gera, Henry XI and Henry XII, reeves of Weida, naming them *principales ministeriales*<sup>15</sup>. This charter was executed by an Italian scribe and featured an enlarged initial letter »L« (for *Ludovicus*) with two imperial eagles separated by a fess of penwork ornament. An Italian was thus the first person to place a coat of arms into the decoration of royal and imperial charters. He seems to have been deliberately indecisive in his approach, hiding the image that is meant to act ideologically within the decoration. He chose a place often inhabited by meaningless drolleries.

The next step was taken half a year later. On 1 January 1330, Louis the Bavarian gave a charter to Berthold VII, count of Henneberg-Schleusingen (1272–1340), in Trent (Trento)<sup>16</sup>. In this case, not only the arms of the Emperor but also the arms of the grantee are part of the decorated initial. The relationship between content and decoration is now straightforward:

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13 Giovanni Villani reports in his Florence chronicle that Louis IV on 15 February 1328 in Rome had augmented the arms of Lucca's ruler, Castruccio Castracani degli Antelminelli, as a reward for the latter's services during the conquest of Pisa, by adding the Bavarian lozenges; for more detail, see ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2), p. 345.

14 The charter does not seem to have been a common engrossment of the chancery but – like other charters that Louis had issued during his campaigns, for example duplicate copies (*Doppelausfertigung*) for Castruccio – was decorated with gilt majuscule letters and coloured penwork ornament in the first line (ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* [as in no. 2], pp. 344–345).

15 Greiz, Thüringisches Staatsarchiv, Gemeinschaftliches Hausarchiv der älteren Linie Reuß, Schrank I, Teil I, Fach I, no. 2. For details, see ROLAND, *Wappen und Urkunden* (as in no. 6), pp. 103–108 and figs. 6 and 7b.

16 1 January 1330, Trient: Meiningen, Thüringisches Staatsarchiv, Gemeinschaftliches Hennebergisches Archiv, Urk. 225 (old: CCXX); in detail, see ROLAND, *Wappen und Urkunden* (as in no. 6), pp. 102–103, figs. 5 and 7c, and ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2) p. 346, p. 392, and fig. 36.



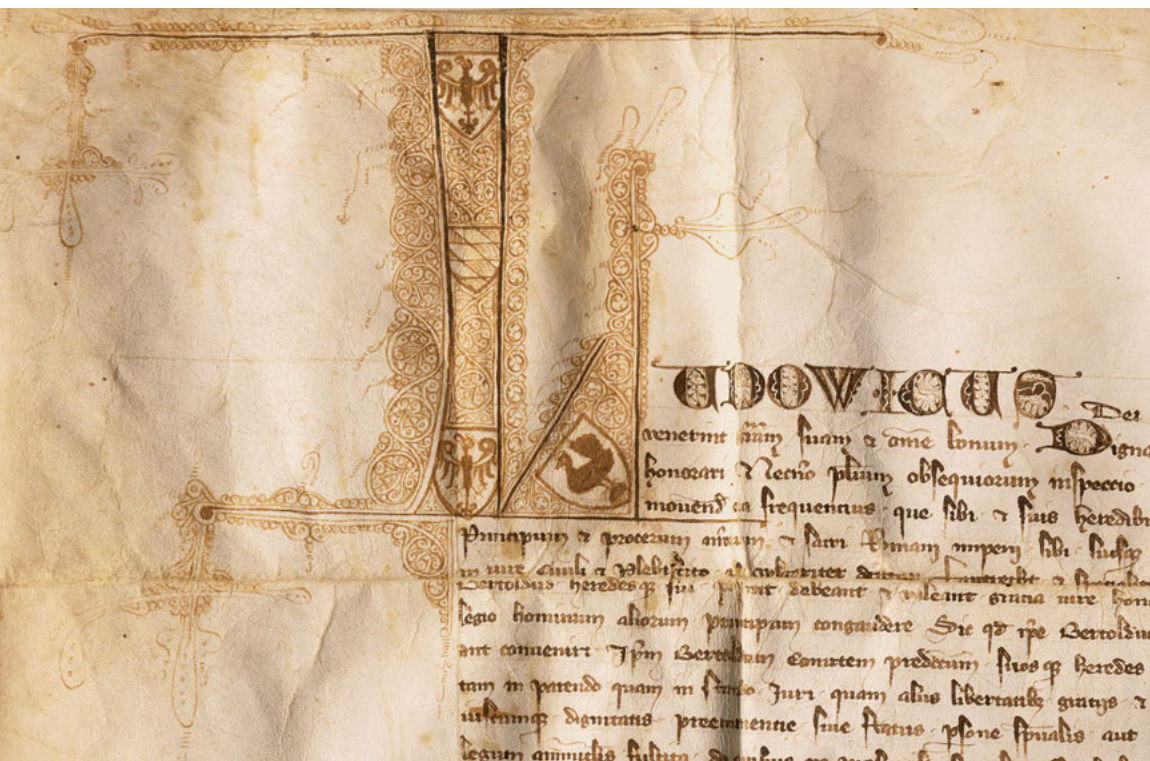


Fig. 2: 1330, Emperor Louis the Bavarian to Berthold of Henneberg, written by notary Leonhard von München (see no. 16).  
<http://monasterium.net/mom/illuminierteUrkunden/collection>

The initial letter in the Henneberg-Schleusingen charter is without a doubt historiated<sup>17</sup>, notwithstanding the fact that coats of arms are depicted instead of figures (see fig. 2).

The initial letter of this charter was decorated by Leonhard of Munich, who had been a notary in the imperial chancery since January 1329<sup>18</sup> and in subsequent years became the illuminator of many visually appealing charters<sup>19</sup>. The actual importance of the initial letter is, however, found in the coat of arms depicted: the shaft of the initial »L« is covered with an escutcheon bearing the imperial eagle on the top and the bottom, while the middle is decorated with Bavarian lozenges (uncoloured). While Louis' arms reappear in the decoration of the initial letter and the borders in a considerable number of later charters, the depiction of the canting arms of the grantee, a black hen, in the triangular bend of the »L« is unique. However, Hen-

17 A historiated initial establishes a link between the letter's decoration and the content of the decorated text. This is commonly achieved by means of figures. For a definition, see Christine JAKOBI-MIRWALD, *Buchmalerei. Terminologie in der Kunstgeschichte*, Berlin 2015 (fourth, revised edition in collaboration with Martin Roland), pp. 56–57.

18 Helmut BANS, *Studien zur Kanzlei Kaiser Ludwigs des Bayern vom Tag der Wahl bis zur Rückkehr aus Italien (1314–1329)*, Kallmünz 1968, pp. 191–200 (Mundator H 45); Christa WREDE, *Leonhard von München, der Meister der Prunkurkunden Kaiser Ludwigs des Bayern*, Kallmünz 1980, pp. 15–18.

19 See ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2) pp. 392–399 and figs. 18, 25, 36, and 37; WREDE, *Leonhard von München* (as in no. 18).

neberg's coat of arms was neither politically significant nor recently granted. The arrangement of the arms (of both the emperor and the grantee) corresponded exactly to the positions of the figures in the historiated initials that Leonhard of Munich executed between 1332 and 1339<sup>20</sup>. Again, it has to be stressed that the charters mentioned above are by no means grants of arms, but the first steps on the way towards the example to which we will now turn.

## THE FIRST IMPERIAL GRANT OF ARMS

It was not until the Carbonesi grant of arms from 1338 (fig. 3)<sup>21</sup> that there was a breakthrough: The granted arms combine the imperial eagle and the Bavarian lozenges, and were executed as a coloured pen drawing, which in comparison with other products of Louis' chancery and later grants of arms, appears quite simple. In contrast to the curial example from 1316, the *dispositio* does not blason the coat of arms, but instead refers to the depiction: *arma depicta presentibus et inserta*. This is remarkable, since the image was thereby given a legally binding function. The escutcheon is placed in the centre and thus dominates the overall appearance of the grant. With later developments in mind, this arrangement can be regarded as the birth of the design that came to be characteristic of imperial grants of arms in the next two and a half centuries<sup>22</sup>.

## THOUGHTS ON THE IMAGE PLACED IN THE CENTRE OF THE GRANT

Faced with the long-lasting influence of this design, a brief digression is in order: where did the idea of placing the coat of arms in the centre of the charter, surrounded by text, come from? After all, this would have required an additional amount of planning that was not normally part of the production of charters or books.

From the point of view of diplomatics, the placing of monograms has to be mentioned. Being part of the eschatocol, they are clearly separated from the main text. From Emperor Frederick II onwards there existed, however, charters in which the monogram appears to be surrounded by text (normally parts of the eschatocol that were not emphasised visually)<sup>23</sup>. In the case of inserted charters, occasionally the monogram of the transcribed document is entirely

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20 In more detail, see ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2), pp. 393–396 and fig. 37.

21 8 February 1338, Reutlingen (Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Manoscritti Gozzadini 74/a): The grant of arms was first published by Friedrich BOCK, *Der älteste kaiserliche Wappenbrief*, in: *Archivalische Zeitschrift* 41 (1932) pp. 48–55; cf. also WREDE, Leonhard von München (as in no. 17) pp. 84–85. For a more detailed discussion and references to further reading, see ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2) p. 346 and fig. 18.

22 A change in the visual appearance only begins to develop during sixteenth century when the form of booklets was used in many cases.

23 Munich, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Württ. Extr. 1909, A 133 and KS. 609. Cf. *Regesta imperii* V, 1: *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Philipp, Otto IV., Friedrich II., Heinrich (VII.), Conrad IV., Heinrich Raspe, Wilhelm und Richard 1198–1272*, vol. 1, revised and complemented by Julius FICKER, Vienna – Cologne – Weimar 1881, no. 751, available online: *Regesta Imperii Online*, [http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1214-10-23\\_1\\_0\\_5\\_1\\_1\\_1347\\_751](http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1214-10-23_1_0_5_1_1_1347_751) [accessed 30/06/2017]. Something similar occurred under King Rudolph I, where in a document dated 27 March 1277 the monogram is placed in the middle of the list of witnesses, which forms a coherent block of text with the main text: Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, AUR, sub dato, available online: *monasterium.net*, [http://monasterium.net/mom/AT-HHStA/SbgDK/AUR\\_1277\\_III\\_27.1/charter](http://monasterium.net/mom/AT-HHStA/SbgDK/AUR_1277_III_27.1/charter) [accessed 30/06/2017].



Fig. 3: 1338, Emperor Louis the Bavarian grants a coat of arms to the brothers Boniface and Egesius de Carbonesibus, counts of San Giovanni in Persiceto (near Bologna) (see no. 21). <http://monasterium.net/mom/illuminierteUrkunden/collection>





Fig. 4: 1355, Santacroce grant, overall view (see no. 33). <http://monasterium.net/mom/IlluminierteUrkunden/collection>

surrounded by text, as a charter of King Henry VII demonstrates<sup>24</sup>. From Louis the Bavarian onwards, the convention was to leave dedicated space for the Imperial monogram within the actual text<sup>25</sup>.

In legal manuscript codices the main text is often placed in the centre of the folio, surrounded by the corresponding glosses<sup>26</sup>. Yet this complex arrangement is a matter of the text and not of the image, for when such codices are illuminated (for example in the well-known cases from Bologna), the miniatures are always placed above the main text, and the initials at the beginning of the text, whether of a gloss or in the main text.

While both explanations have merit, a third one seems better, at least at first sight, namely a notarial instrument issued in December 1028 in Bari that confirmed the morning gift of *Magister* Mel to his new wife Alfarana<sup>27</sup>. In the middle of the text a space has been left blank into which a coloured pen drawing depicting the newly-married couple was inserted. This case is the oldest extant illuminated charter that contains a visualisation of the legal process recorded in the text. It remains, as far as we know, without successors. Leonhard of Munich would hardly have had this charter in mind when he conceived the Carbonei grant of arms in Reutlingen in 1338, which make the similarities even more remarkable.

Contemporaries could hardly have foreseen that this design, with some space left blank in the middle for the depiction of a coat of arms, was to become conventional. The grant of arms issued by John, king of Bohemia, on 9 August 1339 in Wrocław (Breslau) is visually different<sup>28</sup>; the coat of arms is placed, as the text explicitly mentions, beneath the text. This became a design primarily used in Scandinavia.

## BATCH PRODUCTION AND THE DEPICTION OF MATERIAL OBJECTS

The next extant grant of arms was issued on 25 May 1355 in Pisa by the chancery of John's son, Charles IV (reigned 1346–78). This grant, discussed below, is an outstanding example and possibly the most perfect grant of arms ever issued. It is therefore necessary to regard subsequent

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24 31 May 1309, Constance: Schaffhausen, Staatsarchiv, Urk. 49/3. Cf. *Regesta Imperii VI*: Kurt-Ulrich JÄSCHKE, Peter THORAU (eds.) *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Rudolf, Adolf, Albrecht, Heinrich VII. 1273–1313*, vol. 4: Heinrich VII. 1288/1308–1313, 1. Lief.: 1288/1308 – August 1309, Vienna 2006, no. 165, available online: *Regesta Imperii Online*, [http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1309-05-31\\_5\\_0\\_6\\_4\\_1\\_207\\_165](http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1309-05-31_5_0_6_4_1_207_165) [accessed 30/06/2017].

25 Heinrich VON SYBEL, Theodor VON SICKEL, *Kaiserurkunden in Abbildungen*, Berlin 1891, pp. 316–319 and Lieferung 9, plate 17, available online: <http://geschichte.digital-sammlungen.de/kaiserurkunden/online/angebot> [accessed 30/06/2017]; WREDE, Leonhard von München (as in no. 18), pp. 108–110 (no. 2 in the catalogue). For another example, in which, however, space for the monogram has been reserved on the far right and not in the middle, see Udo ARNOLD, Marian TUMLER, *Die Urkunden des Deutschordenszentralarchivs in Wien*, vols. 1–3: *Regesten*, Marburg 2006–2009, (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, 60), no. 1594, available online: *monasterium.net*, <http://monasterium.net/mom/AT-DOZA/Urkunden/1594/charter> [accessed 30/06/2017].

26 A similar design is frequently used for manuscripts of the glossed bible.

27 Bari, Archivio del Capitolo Metropolitano, Perg 14, cf. Martin ROLAND, *Illuminierte Urkunden im digitalen Zeitalter. Maßregeln und Chancen*, in: Antonella AMBROSIO, Sébastien BARRET, Georg VOGELER (eds.), *Digital diplomacy. The computer as a tool for the diplomatist?*, Cologne 2014, pp. 245–269, pp. 323–332 (figures in colour), esp. pp. 246–253 and figs. IV a–d.

28 Trento, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Principesco Vescovile, sezione latina, caps 39, no. 7bis; for more detail see ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2), pp. 347–348 and fig. 29.



ones as »generic«<sup>29</sup>. A grant of arms issued to the brothers Hans and Claus Conczman von Staffurt by Charles' son Wenzel<sup>30</sup> will serve as an example for this »generic«, formal type. It is interesting because of its content: as far as we know, this was the first illuminated grant of arms to be issued in the vernacular (German rather than Latin), and is also the oldest example of the younger type of grants of arms<sup>31</sup>. Furthermore, it is the oldest grant to depict a complete heraldic achievement.

Wenzel's grant of arms, given to Francesco Gonzaga on 2 December 1394, is an entirely different case<sup>32</sup>. An upright rectangle and a narrow strip extending to the bottom line of the text were left blank and filled with a banner displaying the armorial bearings granted by the king. It is not so much the irregular contour of the blank parts (which we saw before in the grant of arms from 1355) but rather the fact that a material object is depicted, namely the military flag explicitly mentioned in the text.

The decades between 1290 and 1340 are to be regarded as a creative phase of »trial and error«. In subsequent years, however, standards developed that saw their first peak during the reign of Charles IV.

## ARTISTIC QUALITY AND THE ARTISTS RESPONSIBLE

As well as innovation, it is the quality of the composition and execution that matters. An important aspect of an adequate composition is that the image is not »just pretty«, but fulfils the task at hand. The person commissioning the grant would expect, for example, that the arms be properly and recognisably depicted. Works of especially high quality were normally created by artists whose names are known, or who were associated with a specific group of illuminated manuscripts.

### THE SANTACROCE GRANT OF 1355

On 25 May 1355, the Paduan lawyer Giacomo Santacroce was appointed a member of the imperial household, elevated to the hereditary aristocracy and granted a coat of arms<sup>33</sup>. This is one of few imperial examples in which, in addition to a coat of arms, further privileges (in this case an ennoblement) were granted. The arms are blazoned in the *dispositio* and depicted on the charter (fig. 4).

The position of the miniature follows the example of the 1338 grant of arms. However, it is not just the coat of arms that is depicted, but the unevenly shaped miniature, which resembles

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29 On other grants of arms by Emperor Charles IV and King Wenzel, see ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2), p. 353 and pp. 359–361.

30 Karlsruhe, Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe, D 426; ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2), p. 359 and fig. 19.

31 See above, no. 8.

32 Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, D. IX, busta 384; ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2) p. 361 and fig. 20.

33 25 May 1355, Pisa: Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Inv.-Nr. 2042. This charter has been dealt with extensively in ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2), pp. 349–53 and fig. 30a, b, 31.



an initial (a symmetrical uncial »M«), displays the enthroned emperor on the right and the grantee on his knees on the left, raising an oversized shield that is – in the manner of a grant – touched by the emperor. The miniature is a felicitous synthesis of a handover scene like those in the historiated initials of Emperor Louis<sup>34</sup>, and a clearly recognisable depiction of the heraldically relevant elements, that is, the arms' charges, like those on the Carbonesi grant of arms (fig. 3). The arms (argent, a lion rampant, gules, crowned or, with a fillet or) clearly express a close relationship with the ruler (the red lion rampant of the House of Luxembourg became the emblem of the Kingdom of Bohemia).

The charter's size of 28x40cm is impressive, and indeed the objective was to create something outstanding. Giacomo Santacroce and John of Neumarkt, chancellor to Charles IV, worked with great skill. About the lawyer from Padua we know little, about the chancellor, on the other hand, we know much: he was one of the most important commissioners of manuscripts during the booming book-illuminating trade in Bohemia under Charles IV<sup>35</sup>. What makes this grant extraordinary is the quality of the painting. The intriguing question as to the exact identity of the person who commissioned this remarkable decoration remains unanswered.

## WILLIAM ABELL AND HIS ARTISTIC ENVIRONMENT

The leading English illuminator William Abell (whose name is known from written sources) like many of his colleagues, worked primarily on books, but many illuminators decorated administrative records as an extra source of income and thus also painted grants of arms<sup>36</sup>. The original grant to the London Company of Drapers<sup>37</sup> issued by William Bruges, Garter King of Arms<sup>38</sup>, on 10 March 1439 did not survive, but a notarial certified copy exists, that was issued on the following day by John Daunt in the presence of Garter King of Arms (fig. 5). The coronation of the Virgin Mary in the inner field of the initial, which refers to the guild's patron saint, and the coat of arms placed at the centre top, supported by two large kneeling angels, are closely connected to the grant's contents. Three of the margins are covered with a lavish, beautiful painted border, which Kathleen Scott has attributed to the »Master of Duke

34 This was briefly mentioned above, p. 139.

35 Cf. Gerhard SCHMIDT, *Malerei bis 1450. Tafelmalerei, Wandmalerei, Buchmalerei*, in: Karl Maria SWOBODA (ed.), *Gotik in Böhmen*, Munich 1969, pp. 167–321 and pp. 423–444, esp. pp. 179–182.

36 Jonathan J. G. ALEXANDER, William Abell »lymnour« and 15th Century English Illumination, in: Artur ROSEN-AUER, Gerold WEBER (eds.) *Kunsthistorische Forschungen Otto Pächt zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, Salzburg 1972, pp. 166–172. I discuss this issue in more detail in Martin ROLAND, *Die Funktion des Bildes bei mittelalterlichen Bruderschafts- und Zunfturkunden*, in: Andreas TACKE (ed.), *Material Culture – Präsenz und Sichtbarkeit von Künstlern, Zünften und Bruderschaften in der Vormoderne/Presence and Visibility of Artists, Guilds, Brotherhoods in the Pre-Modern Era*, Petersberg 2017 (forthcoming).

37 The charter is still in the possession of the London Drapers' Company; on the relevant literature, see ROLAND, *Funktion des Bildes* (as in no. 36), section 3a.

38 On the office of the Garter King of Arms, see Antony WAGNER, *Heralds of England. A History of the Office and College of Arms*, London 1967, p. 40, pp. 60–61. On William Bruges, see Adrian AILES, *Bruges, William (c.1375–1450)*, in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2004, available online: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50120> [accessed 30/06/2017].



Fig. 5: 1439, Grant of arms to the Company of Drapers (see no. 37).

<https://www.pinterest.at/pin/AYY0oWQMhgtr-qxHttvWIDfGC4x-eQLCT3h1SjpcJbi9Xz6DMwpr4>

Humfrey's Psalter<sup>39</sup>. This is the earliest surviving grant of arms from England and – most astonishingly – at the same time of incomparable quality. While this is not an achievement *ex nihilo* – since there is a rich tradition of illuminated royal charters – it is unique since it is the first surviving illuminated (English) grant of arms<sup>40</sup>.

In comparison, the grant of arms to the London Haberdashers in 1446<sup>41</sup> is simpler, although the quality of the execution is equal. The patron saint, St Catherine, is seen in the inner field, the coat of arms is presented in the top centre by an angel, and an ornulent border are common to these grants. This charter, together with two nearly identical documents from 1446, constitutes the core of the works left by Abell. The charters issued to King's College, Cambridge<sup>42</sup>, and

39 Kathleen L. SCOTT, *Later Gothic Manuscripts, 1390–1490*, 2 vols., London 1996 (A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, 6), vol. 2, p. 240.

40 For a more detailed survey of this development see the German version of this article (as in no. 1).

41 16 July 1446, London: Roger Legh, Clarenceux King of Arms, grants arms to the Haberdashers' Company, ALEXANDER, William Abell (as in no. 36), p. 167, no. 7; SCOTT, *Later Gothic Manuscripts* (as in no. 39), pp. 264–265 (including an updated list of works attributed to Abell).

42 Cambridge, King's College, Muniments A 20 (alternative signature: KC-18); Richard MARKS, Paul WILLIAMSON, *Gothic Art for England 1400–1547*, Exhibition in the London Victoria & Albert Museum, London 2003, p. 162, no. 20. On both charters, see ALEXANDER, William Abell (as in no. 36), pp. 166–167.

Eton College<sup>43</sup> are two of the most widely known illuminated charters. This is also because members of both chambers of the English parliament were there depicted for the first time.

Jonathan Alexander has attributed to William Abell a charter for the London Tallow Chandlers' Company, granted by Garter King of Arms John Smert on 24 September 1456<sup>44</sup>. The issuer is depicted at the centre of the initial. Fine foliate tendrils with small gilded or coloured leaves extend from the initial to the upper border (spray border) while to the left the armorial achievement is displayed; the crest consisting of three quarters of an angel's figure holding a platter with the head of John the Baptist (Johannesschüssel). Kathleen Scott had good reason to separate the Abingdon Missal and the charter of 1456 from Abell's oeuvre, and attribute them to a colleague, whose quality exceeds even Abell's skills<sup>45</sup>.

From the 1440s to the 1460s there appears to have been a surge of demand for illuminated grants in England: in particular, the London guilds competed for the most lavishly decorated grant of arms (and other charters), recruiting the most skilled illuminators available.

### THE MASTER OF THE »HANDREGISTRATUR« OF FREDERICK III

The artistically more advanced »Meister der Handregistratur« appeared in Vienna almost simultaneously with William Abell. His eponymous opus dates from 1446<sup>46</sup>, and his hitherto known extant products (1446–1463) have been discussed elsewhere<sup>47</sup>. In this essay, two more grants of arms are attributed to this master who was able to depict the reflections of light upon various surfaces so skilfully that an almost haptic effect is created. Occasionally, objects were painted as though they were actually placed on the page. Such characteristics of style cannot be explained without reference to contemporary contact with the most recent developments in Flemish art.

On St Margaret's Day (likely 13 July) 1454, King Ladislaus the Posthumous issued a grant of arms to Nicolaus Flins de Puzck, *nobilis de terra Brussie*, burgess of Bratislava, and his brothers John, Peter, Erasmus and Donatus, and their descendants, as a token of aristocracy (*hec arma seu nobilitatis insignia*) (fig. 6a)<sup>48</sup>. As was customary in Hungary, the depiction of the coat of arms was placed at the beginning of the text. The text is comparatively brief, since the blason is missing, and instead, only a reference to the visual depiction is made. For this reason, the square

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43 Eton College, ECR 39/57: A payment made out to Abell for this charter justifies the identification of name and work of the illuminator, see Eton College, Quincentenary Exhibition, Eton 1947, p. 13, no. 89 (Henry Marten, Noel Blakston). – Elizabeth Danbury recognized another charter for Eton (1442 January 25) executed by Abell: Eton College, ECR 39/8, see Elizabeth DANBURY, *Décoration et enluminure des chartes royales anglaises au Moyen Âge*, in: *Bibliothèque d'école de chartes* 169 (2011), pp. 79–107, p. 99 with ill. 7.

44 This charter is still in possession of the Tallow Chandlers' Company in London, see ALEXANDER, William Abell (as in no. 36), p. 167, no. 13.

45 SCOTT, *Later Gothic Manuscripts* (as in no. 39), p. 265 and p. 279–281.

46 Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Hs. Weiß 10 (Böhm 19); For a seminal study on aspects of art history, see Michaela KRIEGER, *Der Buchschmuck der »Handregistratur« Friedrichs III. im Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*, in: *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 47 (1993/94), pp. 313–329 and pp. 455–457.

47 ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2), pp. 380–384 and figs. 34b–d on the entire group, and p. 380 (including no. 311) and fig. 34a on the »Handregistratur«.

48 Bratislava, Archív hlavného mesta Bratislavy, 462 – Zbierka erbových listín, Inv. No. ZA 39.





Fig. 6: 1454, Coat of arms from the Flins charter (see no. 48) (a) with details of the frame from the Krems (1443 – see no. 50) (b) and Perotti (1440 – see no. 49) (c) charters; all by the master of the ›Handregistratur‹ of Frederick III. <http://monasterium.net/mom/IlluminierteUrkunden/collection>

image area is placed to the left of the text. The masterly skills of the painter are exemplified by the gem-clad wooden frame, which surrounds the deep blue ground-colour of the miniature.

On 23 June 1460 in Vienna, Emperor Frederick issued a formally uncommon grant of arms to Nicolas (Niccolò) Perotti, Archbishop of Sipoto<sup>49</sup>. The emperor elevated the family's possessions (Isola Centipera) to a county, and augmented the coats of arms of all descendants of Nicolas' father Francesco by quartering the shield with a black (imperial) eagle in the first and fourth quarter. Frederick had previously created the petitioner poet laureate in Bologna, and now he used another solemn privilege to reward the humanist, who accompanied the papal legate Cardinal Bessarion to the North Alpine parts of the Empire. Beneath the area left blank for the heraldic miniature is another area filled with the imperial monogram; after the grant of arms and ennoblement of Giacomo Santacroce in 1355, this is, to my knowledge, the first case of such a prominent design for a grant of arms. As with the earlier case, an explicit heraldic reference to the grantor of the coat of arms is made here too. The craftsmanship of the Master of Frederick III's »Handregistratur« expresses itself in the decoration of the frame, which is very similar to a later grant of arms given to the Austrian city of Krems<sup>50</sup> (fig. 6b and 6c).

That this *avantgarde* master was by no means overlooked in Central Europe is evident in the grant of arms, elevating the status of Caspar Pernwert (19 December 1465, Wiener Neustadt), which must have been inspired by the master's earlier products<sup>51</sup>.

## MASTER OF FREDERICK'S BREVIARY OR VALENTIN NOH?

In 2013, I attributed two grants of arms to the master of Frederick's Breviary (»Meister des Friedrichsbreviers«), albeit with some reservations<sup>52</sup>. The first was given by King Vladislaus II of Bohemia to the cloth makers of Laun/Louny in 1473, and depicts St George fighting the dragon (fig. 7a)<sup>53</sup>. It is the delicate filigree work in the margins of the armorial miniature that link it to the early years of the Austrian phase of the Master of Frederick's Breviary (c. 1475/80), since the filigree work as well as the facial types correspond, for the most part, to the epony-

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49 Florence, Archivio di stato, Diplomatico normale, Regio acquisito, sub dato. This document was pointed out to me by Daniel Luger via Andreas Zajic. On the grant of arms, see Giovanni MERCATI, *Per la cronologia della vita e degli scritti di Niccolò Perotti archivescovo di Sipoto*, Rome 1925, pp. 7–8, p. 13, p. 51 and plate III.

50 1 April 1463, Wiener Neustadt: Krems Stadtarchiv, Urk. 395, cf. ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2), p. 383.

51 This charter was auctioned in the Vienna Dorotheum on 2 June 2014 (lot 40).

52 ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Illuminierte Urkunden* (as in no. 2) pp. 384–386. On this book painter, see the summary in Martin ROLAND, Buchmalerei, in: Artur ROSENAUER (ed.), *Spätmittelalter und Renaissance*, Munich 2003 (*Geschichte der bildenden Kunst in Österreich*, 3), pp. 521–546, p. 527, p. 537 and p. 541–542 (no. 283).

53 7 July 1473, Grottau/Hrádek [nad Nisou]; Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Allgemeine Urkundenreihe, sub dato; discussed for the first time in Dénes RADOCSEY, *Wiener Wappenbriefe und die letzten Miniaturen von Buda*, in: *Acta Historiae Artium Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 19 (1973), p. 61–73, esp. 72 and fig. 15. A depiction can also be found in Martin ROLAND, Andreas ZAJIC, *Les chartes médiévales enluminées dans les pays de l'Europe centrale*, in: *Bibliothèque d'école des chartes* 169 (2011), pp. 151–253, fig. 38b.





Fig. 7: 1473, Clothmakers of Laun (see no. 53) (a) and copper engraving of Master E.S. (see no. 55) (b).

mous breviary<sup>54</sup>. As was customary for him to do, the Master copied copper engravings made by Master E. S., in this case the dragon fallen onto its back, from Lehrs 146 (fig. 7b)<sup>55</sup>.

The second piece I discussed was a grant of arms by Emperor Frederick III to the Old Town (*Altstadt*) of Prague<sup>56</sup>, which did not contain any figural elements. The general idea of the image (*Bildidee*) obviously refers back to a possible application of the coat of arms as a banner (*Streitpanyren*) mentioned in the *dispositio*: The image area is pierced by the shaft of a lance, and the attached banner covers most of the area. The tip of the lance, however, overlaps the upper frame of the miniature<sup>57</sup>. Again, I would like to draw attention to the filigree work and also to the creasy drapery.

54 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 68, fols. 1v–2r; cf. ROLAND, *Buchmalerei* (as in no. 51), pp. 541–542 (including the figure).

55 Cf. Gerhard SCHMIDT, *Die zwei Stile des »Meisters des Friedrichsbreviers«*. Ein spätgotischer Buchmaler kopiert Stiche des Meisters E. S., in: Jeffrey F. HAMBURGER, Anne S. KORTEWEG (eds.), *Tributes in Honor of James H. Marrow. Studies in Painting and Manuscript Illumination of the Late Middle Ages and Northern Renaissance*, London 2006, pp. 441–452. – The sequencing of the prints follows Max LEHRs, *Geschichte und kritischer Katalog des deutschen, niederländischen und französischen Kupferstichs im 15. Jahrhundert*, vol. 2: Meister E. S., Text- und Tafelband, Vienna 1910. An easily accessible depiction can be found in: Horst APPUHN (ed.), *Meister E. S. Alle 320 Kupferstiche*, Dortmund 1989, fig. 148, or in ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Chartes médiévales enluminées* (as in no. 53), fig. 38d.

56 5 June 1475, campaigning near Neuss (am Rhein); Praha, Archiv hlavního města Prahy, Sbírka pergamenových listin I, č. 22. For a depiction, see ROLAND, ZAJIC, *Chartes médiévales enluminées* (as in no. 53), fig. 38a.

57 Here one has to recall the Gonzaga case of 1394 (see above, p. 145 where military insignia had been depicted as objects, too).



It was Milada Studničková<sup>58</sup> who attributed both documents, together with other Bohemian grants of arms<sup>59</sup>, to Valentin Noh<sup>60</sup>. The figural elements should also be mentioned along with the characteristic filigree work and the high standard of the painting. Furthermore, the confirmation of the grant of arms for the Old Town of Prague by Vladislaus II (18 April 1477, Prague), which is almost indistinguishable from the original grant<sup>61</sup>, and the grant of arms to the furriers of the Old Town in Prague (28 April 1473, Prague)<sup>62</sup> – the earliest example from this group – must not be omitted.

The face of Archangel Michael in the grant of arms to Taus, his straight nose, small mouth and full lips, his narrow eyes and blonde hair flowing down his back, is akin to the depiction of St George by the cloth makers of Laun, and finds an equivalent in the figure of St Vitus in the prayer book of Vladislaus<sup>63</sup>.

## ULRICH SCHREIER

Another member of the same generation was Ulrich Schreier, an illuminator from Salzburg who produced a considerable body of work in his workshop between 1460 and 1490<sup>64</sup>. He signed some of his works, although the grant of arms to the Bavarian town of Weißenburg<sup>65</sup> is attributed to him based on stylistic comparison. While it is formally similar to the coat of arms

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58 Milada STUDNIČKOVÁ, *Die mittelalterlichen Wappenbriefe in den Böhmisches Ländern und ihre Beziehung zur Buchmalerei*, in: ELBEL, ZAJÍC (eds.), *Wappenbriefe und Standeserhöhungsurkunden* (as in no. 1).

59 A grant of arms by Vladislav to Taus/Domažlice (4 August 1481, Prague: Pilsen, Státní oblastní archiv v Plzni, Město Domažlice, L20; cf. Státní oblastní archiv v Plzni Archiv města Domažlice [1325–1845] L20, available online: <http://monasterium.net/mom/CZ-SOAP/AMDomažlice/L27/charter> [accessed 30/06/2017]), and to Graupen/Krupa (13 January 1478, Prague: Prague, Národní archiv, České gubernium – guberniální listiny, no. 404; cf. Národní archiv České gubernium – guberniální listiny, Praha [993–1526] 404, available online: <http://monasterium.net/mom/CZ-NA/CGL/404/charter> [accessed 30/06/2017]).

60 His filigree corresponds to the master of the Fredric's breviary, who was also from Bohemia, to a remarkable extent. The creasy draperies, too, are for the most part the same, which means that apart from the reception of printed models there are no criteria remaining that can be named to attribute grant of arms to either artist. Common sense suggests, however, that the named miniatures should be attributed to the very book painter, who was continuously working in Prague and Bohemia.

61 Cf. Jiří FAJR (ed.), *Europa Jagellonica 1386–1572. Art and Culture in Central Europe under the Jagiellonian Dynasty. Exhibition Guide*, Kutná Hora 2012, p. 136 (nos. II.41 and II.42); here two more grants of arms are discussed: One given to the butchers of Laun, again displaying a banner but on it the Bohemian lion, thus following the customs of grants of arms of the older type (140-1, no. II.51: 16 October 1478, Prague); the grant of arms to Rakonitz/Rakovník is not depicted (no. II.52: 12 February 1482, Prague), the arms of the city do not bear any human-like figures, however.

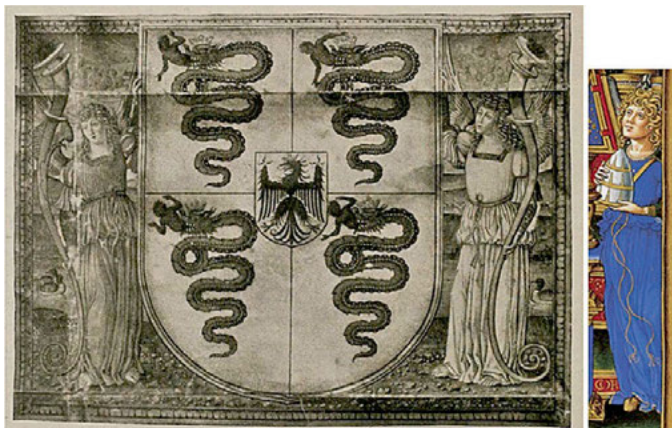
62 Prague, Archiv hlavního města (Stadtarchiv), PGL II-137, accessible online: <http://katalog.ahmp.cz/pragapublica/permalink?xid=48EA8A57B66211DF820F00166F1163D4> [accessed 23/06/2017].

63 Prague, Národní knihovna České republiky (National Library), XIII. H. 3b, fol. 217v; see the database on <http://www.manuscriptorium.com/> [accessed 30/06/2017] for further details on this manuscript dated 1477.

64 This has been extensively analysed by Michaela SCHULLER, *Ulrich Schreier und seine Werkstatt. Buchmalerei und Einbandkunst in Salzburg, Wien und Bratislava im späten Mittelalter*, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Vienna, 2009; for a summary, see ROLAND, *Buchmalerei* (as in no. 52), pp. 154–162, pp. 521–546, here p. 159 (colour plate), p. 529 and p. 542–543 (catalogue no. 284).

65 21 September 1481: Weißenburg, Reichsstadtmuseum; SCHULLER, *Ulrich Schreier* (as in no. 64), p. 62 and pp. 211–212.

Fig. 8a and 8b: 1497, Juxtaposition of the grant by Maximilian I to the sons of the duke of Milan, painted by Giovan Pietro Birago (see no. 67) and a detail of the Sforza Hours (see no. 69).



granted to Taus, the style of the supporting angel's semi-figure is almost identical to the figure on fol. 7v of the *Greiner Marktbuch*, one of Schreier's later and most important works<sup>66</sup>.

### GIOVAN PIETRO BIRAGO AND THE MILAN RENAISSANCE

After having focussed on Central European examples, I will conclude this paper with a European *grand tour* of grants from the chancery of Emperor Maximilian. In a charter granted on 5 June 1497 in Füssen (Bavaria) or 23 July 1497 in Imst (Tyrol), he awarded a coat of arms to those descendants of Duke Lodovico Sforza (*il Moro*) who would not succeed as dukes of Milan<sup>67</sup>.

An older attribution of this document, which perished in World War Two, to the famous renaissance book painter Pietro Birago was recently confirmed by Paul Wescher<sup>68</sup>. Indeed, the angels acting as supporters in the grant of arms and similar celestial beings depicted in the

66 Grein, Stadtarchiv. For a summary, see ROLAND, Buchmalerei (as in no. 52), p. 543 (catalogue no. 284) and the colour plate on p. 159.

67 Formerly Milan, Archivio di Stato; cf. Regesta Imperii, XIV: Hermann WIESFLECKER, Manfred HOLLEGER (eds.) *Ausgewählte Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter Maximilian I. 1493–1519*. vol. 2, part 1–2: 1496–1498, Cologne 1993, no. 5009 (5 June 1497, Füssen), available online: Regesta Imperii Online, [http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1497-06-05\\_1\\_0\\_14\\_2\\_0\\_1348\\_5009](http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1497-06-05_1_0_14_2_0_1348_5009) [accessed 30/06/2017] and no. 5101 (23 July 1497, Imst), available online: Regesta Imperii Online, [http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1497-07-23\\_2\\_0\\_14\\_2\\_0\\_1441\\_5101](http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1497-07-23_2_0_14_2_0_1441_5101) [accessed 30/06/2017]. The abstract follows enrolled copies. For a draft with a blank space instead of the executed miniature see Milan, Archivio di stato, ducali-reg 62, fol. 37ff. The 5009 abstract also mentions an attached sketch. The available information does not suffice to reconstruct the original transactions. The original was found by Francesco MALAGUZZI VALERI, *La corte di Lodovico il Moro*, vol. 3: *Gli artisti lombardi*, Milan 1917, p. 157 (a brief mention without further details regarding date and legal contents) and 164 (fig. 178: the miniature only).

68 Paul WESCHER, Giovanni Pietro Birago, in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 10 (1968), available online: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-pietro-birago\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-pietro-birago_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29) [accessed 30/06/2017]. Extensive (but without mention of the charter) Laura Paola GNACCOLINI, *Giovan Pietro Birago miniatore per re Mattia Corvino*, in: *Arte Lombarda* 139 (2003), pp. 135–153.

*Sforza Hours*<sup>69</sup> in London are absolutely identical (fig. 8)<sup>70</sup>. Birago was also responsible for the decoration of a privilege by which the duke conferred Cusago to his wife Beatrice d'Este as a gift<sup>71</sup>. This is another example of the great tradition of illuminated ducal charters in Lombardy.

## THE GHENT–BRUGES SCHOOL

The sixteenth century also saw an ever-increasing amount of richly decorated grants of arms. This is true for the Empire, Hungary, England and Spain, but certainly also for other parts of Europe.

To take one grant of arms (almost) at random, we turn to that issued by Emperor Maximilian I (on 10 February 1517) to the parish church of St Mary in Bozen (Bolzano), and to the parish priest Ulrich Lehensdorffer, chaplain to the Emperor and senior of the Order of St George<sup>72</sup>. In the middle of the text a tall rectangular area is marked out. Flower blossoms, birds, snails, butterflies and caterpillars are depicted on the beige ground, together with a coat of arms with an inescutcheon for Austria and a Madonna with rays of light, standing upon a crescent moon. The shield's red cross pattée in the silver base refers to the Order of St George. In this case, the place of issue, Antwerp, gives a clue as to the grant's style. The so-called Ghent–Bruges School had come to represent painted artwork of the highest possible standard in terms of haptic presence, which expresses itself here in the flowers, plants and animals that appear to have been hand-placed on the border. The stylistic differentiation of works produced by the school is one of the most controversial and most difficult tasks of style criticism, one that I am not going to undertake<sup>73</sup>. The figure of Mary seems to belong to a specific style associated with a miniature in the prayer book of James IV of Scotland and his wife Margaret Tudor (fol. 243r)<sup>74</sup>. Whether the prototypes used by the illuminator of the grant of arms are to be found in the œuvre of this master, or even with Gerard Horenbout, and whether these can indeed be clearly distinguished, has to remain open for debate. The quality of the figure is considerable, but it cannot compete with that of the aforementioned pieces of the highest standard possible.

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69 Bona of Savoy (1449–1503), second wife of Galeazzo Maria Sforza (1444–1476), was the commissioner of these impressive hours (London, British Library, Ms. Add. 34.294). Politically, she opposed Lodovico il Moro, the grantee of the mentioned grant of arms and the 1494 diploma (see below), which does not appear to have bothered the artist.

70 London, British Library, Ms. Add. 34.294, fols. 196v and 203v; likely executed between 1490 and 1494.

71 London, British Library, Ms. Add. 21.413. Cf. most recently Giordana MARIANI CANOVA, *The Italian Miniature*, in: Jonathan J. G. ALEXANDER (ed.), *The Painted Page, Italian Renaissance Book Illumination 1450–1550*, London 1994, pp. 21–34, esp. p. 32 and no. 65: »The 1491 marriage contract between Lodovico il Moro and Beatrice d'Este combines Biragesque ornamentation with echoes of Leonardo«. Cf. also the online catalogue of the British Library: [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?index=0&ref=Add\\_MS\\_21413](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?index=0&ref=Add_MS_21413) [accessed 30/06/2017].

72 Bozen/Bolzano, Stadtmuseum, Wappenbrief 1517 II 10; cf. Gustav PFEIFER, *Wappen und Kleinod. Wappenbriefe in öffentlichen Archiven Südtirols*, Bolzano 2001, p. 37, no. 6. The charter also grants the use of a seal and red wax (*Rotwachs-freiheit*).

73 In addition to Michaela KRIEGER, *Gerard Horenbout und der Meister Jakobs IV. von Schottland. Stilistische Überlegungen zur flämischen Buchmalerei*, Vienna – Cologne – Weimar 2012, also the comprehensive overview in Thomas KREN, Scot MCKENDRICK, *The Renaissance. The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe*, Los Angeles – London 2003, needs to be mentioned.

74 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 1897. The book painter of this piece is referred to as the master of Jacob IV of Scotland. Cf. Michaela KRIEGER, Gerard Horenbout (as in no. 73), p. 48 and plate 3.



This is also true in the case of the border, which is covered with flower blossoms, snails, a bird and other animals.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are many layers and subtleties to the early development of illuminated grants of arms. On the one hand, one has to take into account non-illuminated »proto-grants of arms« such as that from 1294. On the other hand, there were illuminated grants of visual emblems, which were not coats of arms in the heraldic sense of the word, for example the French charter from 1315.

While innovation and quality of execution are by no means mutually exclusive, to find them together is indeed a rare occurrence: Exceptions include the grant of arms to Jacopo Santacroce in 1355 in the Holy Roman Empire, and, in England, the grant of arms to the Drapers' Company in 1439.

What holds true for illuminated charters in general also holds true for grants of arms: there were dedicated specialists, for example Leonhard of Munich, and there were accomplished book painters engaged for special tasks. Grants of arms (and more generally illuminated charters) are an important source for art history, since they are normally dated and the location of their creation is known, and thus mark fixed points in the historical development of style.

For heraldry and diplomatics illuminated grants of arms are of importance because they make clear that both issuer and grantee desired to have more than a mere legal document. The charter – also by virtue of its artistic splendour – was supposed to make a lasting impression on any contemporary or future beholder. This function grants of arms fulfil with distinction, as even nowadays they serve – inwardly – as objects of self-identification for the identification of their recipients (including individuals, families, cities and professional associations), and provide a means of representation in the public sphere.

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Torsten Hiltmann/Laurent Hablot (eds.)

# Heraldic Artists and Painters

In the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times



**THORBECKE**

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