

**Lists of Members of the Order of the Golden Fleece**  
**In French, manuscript on paper**  
**Low Countries (?), c. 1765-67**

*iv (modern paper) +34 + iv (modern paper) folios on paper (with watermark similar to Heawood no. 3704, "Pro Patria": 1723), contemporary pagination in Arabic numerals, top outer recto and verso, 1-12, and top outer recto, 13-31, leaving the first two leaves unnumbered, and then modern pagination, top outer recto, for the remainder of the volume, 33-63 (collation, i<sup>10</sup> ii<sup>14</sup> iii<sup>10</sup> [structure uncertain; modern binding is too tight to permit an examination of the current quire structure, but the distribution of watermarks indicates this quire structure]), frame-ruled in lead with full-length vertical bounding lines (justification, pp. 1-43, 270-273 x 158-163 mm. and pp. 45-64, 261-265 x 149-158 mm.), written in an elegant, well-formed cursive script in dark brown ink in twenty-one to twenty-five long lines, spiralling pen flourishes in the same ink fill empty spaces at the bottoms of pages, a rectangle in the same ink around a name marks an error (p. 46), marginal marks and underlining of names added in pencil, possibly by one or more later owners. Bound in modern quarter red morocco with gilt edges by René Laurent of Brussels (his stamp, "R. LAURENT REL.," in top outer verso of first flyleaf), marbled paper on the sides, spine with five raised band lettered in gilt, "NOMS DES CHEVALIERS DE L'ORDRE DE LA TOISON D'OR," upper edge of paper gilt, upper half of fore-edge of original 34 folios colored in mottled red, armorial bookplate in upper corner of front pastedown. Dimensions 306 x 190 mm.*

This elegant and attractive manuscript contains two complementary lists of members of the Order of the Golden Fleece, one of the most renowned of all chivalric orders. A rarity on the market, it is of historical interest as a partial record of the Order's membership, extending from its inception to the eighteenth century. This may have belonged to a member of the Austrian branch of the Order, whose Knights are named in the second list.

## PROVENANCE

1. Though Heawood does not identify a place of origin for this paper, the "Pro Patria" watermark would tend to suggest that it originated in the Netherlands: the rampant lion and maid of Dordrecht within a palisade was an emblem of the Netherlands and a common watermark in Dutch paper mills during the seventeenth century (see Churchill, 1935). Here they surmount a reversed capital letter "D," which offers a clue as to the particular mill at which this paper was produced, though it does not appear in Heawood, Churchill, or Gravell. The countermark, consisting of the royal monogram "GR" surmounted by a crown, may indicate that this paper was produced for the British market.

Although the two lists within this volume could conceivably have been copied at different times, the use of the same paper and of an essentially unchanged script and mode of formatting throughout tends to point to the lists having been copied around the same time. Each list occupies a potentially free-standing booklet terminating in multiple empty leaves; the first list occupies a booklet of two quires and the second list occupies the third quire, with the first page of the list correlating to the quire's first leaf. Though both booklets are ruled in the same manner, the first booklet is ruled with a slightly more space for text. The first list appears to have been left unfinished. It trails off in the midst of the names of Knights inducted in 1624, leaving a substantial empty space on

the page that the scribe would most likely have filled with a spiralling pen flourish, as he does elsewhere, if he intended to add no more to the page; five blank leaves follow. Given the incomplete nature of this list, it appears possible that it might have been copied after the second list and that it might have been abandoned for the same reasons that the second list was never updated beyond 1765. This would most likely place the date of this manuscript sometime between the end of 1765 and 1767, the next year in which the Sovereign of the Austrian branch of the Order, Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor, selected new members of the Order.

The formality and care with which this manuscript has been copied may indicate a personal investment in the Order on the part of its owner. Two Knights of the Order connected to the Low Countries died between the end of 1765 and 1767, Claude Lamoral, Prince of Ligne (d. 1766) and Ferdinand-Gaston Joseph, Duke of Croÿ (d. 1767), and it is possible that one of them might have been the manuscript's original owner, or even copyist, based on the manuscript's probable time of production. An alternative original or early owner is suggested by the marginal pencil marks and underlining within the manuscript. Among the names singled out in some way with pencil marks, the rulers of Hornes stand out; all of their names have been underlined. This concerted attention may indicate that this manuscript belonged to a member of that family. Following the War of Spanish Succession at the beginning of the eighteenth-century, the Houses of Croÿ, Ligne, and Hornes were all subjects of the Austrian Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor and thus members of the Austrian branch of the Order (see below).

2. N. O. L. Vernimen, his armorial bookplate: "EX LIBRIS N.O.L VERNIMEN." The Brussels-based binder of the book, René Laurent, was active in the decades before World War II (Diehl, 1980, vol. 1, p. 135), so the manuscript would have been in Vernimen's hands during or after that period.

## TEXT

First unnumbered leaf, recto, *Registre contenant les noms des toutes les chevaliers créé depuis l'institution de l'ordre de la Toison d'or*; [Second unnumbered leaf, blank];

pp. 1-34, incipit, "La premiere creation et institution de l'ordre de la Toison d'or fut faites en la ville de Bruges le 10 janvier 1429. Par très haut très digne et très puissant Prince Monseigneur le Duc Philippe de Bourgoigne Chef et Souverain du dit Ordre et furent denommé seulement vingt quatre chevaliers quoique la ditte jnstitution est de trente sans le chef. Voici leurs noms. Messire Guillaume de Vienne Seigneur de St George et de Ste Croix. Trepassé 1435 ... ["L'an 1581 furent elus par le Roy Philippe Second Duc de Bourgoigne"] ... Messire Louis Comte d'Egmond Prince de Gavre. Messire Alexandre de Croy Prince de Chimay"; [pp. 35-43, blank but ruled; p. 44, blank];

This text lists members of the Order of the Golden Fleece, beginning with those selected at its founding in 1430 and trailing off in the midst of those selected in 1624. The list is organized chronologically according to the twenty-three chapter meetings at which new members were elected between 1431 and 1559. For nearly every Knight inducted while Philip the Good was Sovereign of the Order, the text either notes the Knight's year of death or his previous expulsion from the Order. Following the cessation of elections of members at chapter meetings after the 1559 meeting at Ghent, those members selected by Sovereigns of the order between

that year and 1624 are listed under a single heading dating the appointments to 1581 and attributing them to Philip II of Spain.

pp. 45-56, *Liste des chevaliers créés de feu Sa Majesté Impériale Charles Six comme aussi de Sa Majesté Impériale or glorieusement régnante*, incipit, "Le premier creation par Charles Six le 9 janvier 1712. Le Duc Mutinensis. Le Duc de Guastalla ... ["L'an 1765 le jour de St. Andre..."] ... Le Comte Gabriël Bethlem. Le Marquis de Deynse"; [pp. 57-64, blank but ruled].

This text lists members of the Austrian branch of the Order of the Golden Fleece, beginning with those selected at its split from the Spanish branch and reclamation of the Order in 1712 and concluding with those selected in 1765. The list is organized chronologically by the dates of members' induction.

There is no critical edition of the text as it appears in this manuscript. A list of the members of the Order of the Golden Fleece complete as of 1962 has been published in the catalogue for the exhibition, *La Toison d'or: cinq siècles d'art et d'histoire*, held in that year at the Musée Groeninge (Musée Communal des Beaux-Arts) in Bruges (pp. 34-81). This list organizes inductions into the Order by date and Order Sovereign and, where applicable, chapter meetings and branches of the Order. The Society of the Golden Fleece has published a list of the Order's members as of 2000 on its website. Examined alongside these later lists, this manuscript preserves much of the same content, though some of the years of decease or of chapter meetings vary slightly from those recorded in the published lists and the names of several Knights are lacking or different, particularly among the sixteenth-century Order members. The names listed as 1581 selections of Philip II often do not follow the chronological order given in the published lists.

Lists of the Order's members, past and present, may be found preserved within collections of materials pertaining to the Order, such as those of François-Joseph de Bors d'Overen (1728-1770), author of the *Prospectus de l'histoire de l'Ordre de la Toison d'or* (Brussels, 1768), whose collection now resides in Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique. Such lists may also be found in richly illuminated armorial manuscripts, which present the arms of the Order members within a summary of the chapter meetings and Knights elected by the members or selected by the Sovereign. Jean-Jacques Chifflet printed an armorial of this sort for the Order in 1632. According to the Schoenberg Database, eleven armorials of the Order have been on the market in the last century, but there is no clear indication of any manuscripts resembling this one having been on the market during the same time.

The epitome of late medieval aristocratic chivalric ideals, the Order of the Golden Fleece was founded in 1430 by Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy (1396-1467) "for the reverence of God and maintenance of our Christian Faith, and to honor and exalt the noble order of knighthood" (Boulton, trans., 1987 [2000], p. 361). It was instituted as a Burgundian alternative to the influential Order of the Garter, founded in 1348 by Edward III, and it was designed to strengthen the allegiance of Philip's vassals and ties with foreign states friendly to his realm. The Order of the Golden Fleece originally included twenty-four knights in addition to the Sovereign of the Order, a position held by the Duke of Burgundy and his successors. The 1431 statutes, drawn up for the Order's first chapter, fixed the number admitted at thirty-one (including the Sovereign). In 1516, Charles V increased membership by fifty-one, including himself as Sovereign, and Philip IV later increased it by a further ten members. After the election in 1559 of a new Knight of the Order against the will of the sixth Sovereign of the Order, Philip II of Spain, Philip ceased convening the members of the Order for chapters, thereby undermining

the members' ability to elect new members. From this point onward, the Sovereign of the Order appointed its new members.

Following the death of Spain's last Habsburg monarch, Charles II, controversies over his heir, Philip, Duke of Anjou, led to the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714) and to the splitting of the Order into two branches: the Spanish branch accepted Philip, who was crowned Philip V of Spain, as the Sovereign of the Order, while Charles VI, Holy Roman Emperor and Philip's rival for the Spanish throne, proclaimed himself Sovereign of the Order in 1712. Since that date, there have been two Orders with separate members and Sovereigns. Since control of the so-called Catholic Netherlands (comprising most of modern-day Belgium and parts of the modern-day Netherlands) passed from Spanish hands to the Austrian Habsburgs during the War of Spanish Succession, the Austrian branch's membership also included Knights from these regions.

## LITERATURE

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

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Society of the Golden Fleece (with many links)

<http://www.antiquesatoz.com/sgfleece/>

Knights of the Golden Fleece, House of Burgundy

<http://www.antiquesatoz.com/sgfleece/knights1.htm>

Knights of the Golden Fleece, House of Habsburg

<http://www.antiquesatoz.com/sgfleece/knights2.htm>

Knights of the Golden Fleece, Austrian branch

<http://www.antiquesatoz.com/sgfleece/knights3.htm>

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