Remembering Kortrijk:

Civic Pride & Cultural Memory in Flanders c. 1302 – c. 1348

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Employing an interdisciplinary methodology across three case studies, this thesis examines the development and manifestation of civic pride and cultural memory in fourteenth-century Flanders. Object, text, and image are brought together to explore how the guilds of West Flanders and their descendants saw themselves in the context of their communities and constructed complex political and cultural narratives that portrayed them as active participants in the tragedies and triumphs of their time.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ... 4

COVID-19 Statement ... 5

Terminology & Abbreviations ... 6

0.0 Introduction ... 7

0.1 The Structure ... 15

0.2 Social Memory and Collective Memory ... 19

0.3 Historical Context ... 25

1.0 Text: Constructing victory in the literary sources and the *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos* ... 30

1.1 The Historiography of the Early Source Material ... 36

1.1.1 The Chronique Artésienne ... 41

1.1.2 The Branche des Royaux Lignages ... 46

1.1.3 The Annales Gandenses ... 51

1.1.4 The Spiegel Historiael ... 56

1.1.5 The *Chronique Rimée de Philippe le Bel* ... 61

1.1.6 The Continuatio Prima Guilelmi de Nangiaco Chronici ... 63

1.1.7 The Oesterreichische Reimchronik ... 67

1.1.8 The Chronicon Comitum Flandrensium ... 68

1.1.9 The *Istorie fiorentine* ... 70

1.2 Reintroducing the *Passio* ... 76

1.2.1 Adam Usk and the Rediscovery of the Passio ... 78

1.2.2 The ”mock Passion” as a Literary Genre ... 85

1.2.3 The Many Pericopes of the Passio ... 90

1.3 Inventing the Invective: A New Examination of the *Passio* ... 96

1.3.1 King Philip’s Court ... 97

1.3.2 The Flemish Rebuke ... 100

1.3.3 A Crusade Against Flanders ... 103

1.3.4 Peter Coninck and the Death of Robert of Artois ... 106

1.3.5 The Cowardice of Pierre Flote ... 109

1.3.6 The Marking of the Dead and the Tribes of the French ... 112

2.0 Object: The Courtrai Chest ... 115

2.1 The Rediscovery: From a farmer’s corn bin to the Warden’s lodgings ... 117

2.2 A Contentious Historiography ... 120

2.3 The Narrative Cycle 125
2.3.1 Scene I: The Arrival of the Rebellion 127
2.3.2 Scene II: The Key And The Town 129
2.3.3 Scene III: Gathering Lines & Skirmishes 132
2.3.4 Scene IV: The Courtrai Castle & The Ypres Militia 134
2.3.5 Scene V: The Flemish Phalanx 137
2.3.6 Scene VI: The Aftermath 137
2.4 Reemphasizing Courtrai 142
2.5 The Hands That Carved the Chest 149
2.6 Composition and Authenticity 155
2.7 Provenance 164
2.8 Trajan's Column & The Courtrai Chest: A Comparative Analysis 166
2.8.1 A Tale of Two Wars 169
2.8.2 The Chest & The Column 173
2.9 Stylistic and Iconographic Analysis 180
2.10.1 A Tale of Two Chests 181
2.10.2 Netherlandish Bas Relief Carving 186
2.10 Memory, Commemoration, and Memorialization 189
3.0 Image: The Leugemeete Chapel 198
3.1 Written Evidence of the Leugemeete's Function 202
3.2 The Guilds in Ghent circa 1330 209
3.3 Iconography 216
3.3.1 Guild Iconography 217
3.3.2 Christ in Resurrection 228
3.3.3 The Family Portrait 230
3.3.4 Eponymous Saints 232
3.3.5 The Three Figures 235
3.4 Authenticity 236
3.5 The Leugemeete as Guild Space: For Charity and Memory 241
3.5.1 The Leugemeete as Hospital 243
3.5.2 The Leugemeete as Edifice 246
Conclusion 254
Bibliography 260

Primary Sources 260
Archival Material 260
Printed Material 261
Secondary Sources 263
Appendix 281

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Christopher Pickvance, who embodied the kindness, excellence, and confraternity that shine from our profession's very best.

COVID-19 Statement

This was not the thesis I wanted to write.

The onset and severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, still unresolved, changed this research and its researcher in ways that would have been unthinkable at this PhD's outset in 2017. While a sufficient degree of fieldwork across the UK and Belgium was carried out between 2017 and early 2020, the lockdowns and quarantines of 2020 to 2021 meant that second and third archival passes—and the reassessment of archival and site-specific work already undertaken—was made impossible. Planned trips to undertake a more significant material analysis of the Courtrai Chest in New College, Oxford, alongside similar work on chests in York and Essex in the Spring of 2020 were scrapped. A third visit to the municipal archives in Ghent, and a first visit to the state archives in Ghent, were not possible.

Due to the global and regional lockdowns a significant swath of primary sources—nearly the entire literature review—were unable to be consulted outside of purely digital contexts. The kindness of senior scholars across the UK, France, and Belgium enabled the bare minimum of due diligence to be done via pictures and scans of certain primary sources where possible, but further iterations on this comparative work would benefit greatly from extended stays in the appropriate archives. The logistical, emotional, and mental impact of the pandemic meant very little generative work was done in 2020 and the first half of 2021; during the move from the United Kingdom back to the United States in January 2022 (due to the inability to maintain our visa), the entirety of my research library was lost in transit. This meant that the most vital period of writing-up was conducted adrift from MEMS and completely cut off from any kind of analogue institutional support.

That any research was conducted and written up between March 2020 and October 2022 is testament to the resiliency and kindness of the scholarly network in which I so gratefully find myself, and the steadfast determination of my supervisor.

Terminology & Abbreviations

The geographic and linguistic purview of this thesis is such that it is necessary to preface it with a cursory overview of the terms and abbreviations found therein. This is largely for the sake of clarity, but also due to the inherent political nature of the languages themselves. The relationship between French and Flemish placenames is a symbolically charged affair, and so a conscious effort has been made to be both cognisant of and amenable to this reality. The title features the Flemish *Kortrijk*. The text will use the French *Courtrai* (throughout, for consistency's sake). The English appellate "Battle of the Golden Spurs" will be replaced in certain places by its Flemish cognate, "Guldensporenslag", and very seldomly as the French "Bataille des éperons d'or" (save for when engaging directly with French historiography). Achieving parity is not the goal—nor would it even be possible—but I hope to keep these terms as tethered as possible to their cultural and linguistic contexts. To that end, the term "Courtrai Chest" will be favoured ahead of its earlier name "Oxford Chest".[1] The Latin text "Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos" will be abbreviated simply to *Passio*. The "Godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel" will be referred to by its colloquial name, "Leugemeete".[2] Similarly, the "Franco-Flemish War of 1297 to 1305" will be shortened to "Franco-Flemish War".

[1] This will be explained in greater detail in the second chapter of this thesis; p. 113.

[2] The origins of this nickname will be explored in the third chapter; p. 185.

0.0 Introduction

Using an interdisciplinary approach to a variety of source material, this thesis examines a set of urban communities in fourteenth-century Flanders, their respective cultural memories of warfare and civic unrest, and their extant records—literary, visual, and architectural—that commemorate their civic and military engagements. It aims to examine the authors and agents of the extant histories and testimonies of the Franco-Flemish War (1297 – 1305), focusing on the accounts and narratives in which the Flemish celebrate their victory. The field of urban studies is large, and the subfield of medieval urban studies is significant and growing still.[3] This thesis will seek to enrich our understanding of both specific historical artefacts and the communities that produced them. The presence and the unexpected success of the Flemish guilds on the battlefields of the early fourteenth century would be remembered as a catalyst for an unprecedented period of civic and cultural prosperity in Flanders. The cultural artefacts that were designed to speak to and commemorate this victory thus serve as active agents and currents for maintaining civic memory and pride. This thesis will analyse the relationship between those artefacts, the communities that created them, and the victories they commemorate.

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[3] Both foundational and new research in this field from which this thesis draws includes Max Weber, "The Nature Of The City", in *Classic Essays On The Culture Of Cities* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 23–46; Henri Pirenne, Hans van Werveke, *Histoire Économique Et Sociale Du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1969); William J. V Neill, *Urban Planning And Cultural Identity* (London: Routledge, 2004); Peter Arnade, Martha C. Howell and Walter Simons, "Fertile Spaces: The Productivity Of Urban Space In Northern Europe", *The Journal Of Interdisciplinary History*, 32.4 (2002), pp. 515–548; Marc Boone, "Cities In Late Medieval Europe: The Promise And The Curse Of Modernity", *Urban History*, 39.2 (2012), pp. 329–349; Boone, Marc and Jelle Haemers, 'The "Common Good": Governance, Discipline, and Political Culture', in *City and Society in the Low Countries (1100–1600)*, ed. Bruno Blondé, Marc Boone, and Anne-Laure Van Bruane, Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 93–127; Miri Rubin, *Cities Of Strangers: Making Lives In Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

The Franco-Flemish War (1297 – 1305), though now hardly remembered in popular memory outside of present-day Flanders, was a pivotal turning point for every polity involved. While many who live outside of France are aware of Bastille Day (14 July), the Feestdag van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap (11 July) which celebrates Flemish national pride as a holiday and commemorates the Battle of the Golden Spurs (1302), known as the *Guldensporenslag* in Flemish, when the Flemish first defeated the French.[4] Due to its economic and demographic exceptionality, many of the historical phenomena that came to define what Johan Huizinga (1872 – 1945) labelled as the "calamitous" fourteenth century; a "waning" or "autumnal" era of the Middle Ages , entering a state of decline after the Great Famine and Black Death—that could be foreshadowed in the violence endured c. 1300 by the people in the County of Flanders.[5] Although these assessments have drawn more attention to the period in question, this Gibbon-like narrative nevertheless lends itself to a potentially simplistic view of the 'darkness' of the High Middle Ages.[6] More recently, scholars such as Frederik Buylaert have charted the rise of Flemish urban centres, and that by the turn of the fourteenth century, "cities such as Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres had accumulated so much economic, demographic, and political power that they began to dominate political decision-making in the county."[7] Emerging

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[4] The Flemish National Day proudly takes its date from the Battle of the Golden Spurs (July 11, 1302), as well as the nationalist 'freedom rhetoric' which has dominated regional politics since 1945, see Harry Van Velthoven, "Recensie Van: Herdenking, Verbeelding En Identiteit. Nationale Feestdagen En De Mythes Van Het Taalpolitieke Conflict In Brussel, 1945-1995 / Jan Fransen (2005)", WT. *Tijdschrift Over De Geschiedenis Van De Vlaamse Beweging*, 65.4 (2006), pp. 333–336.

[5] Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages: A Study of the Forms of Life, Thought, and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Harmondsworth: Peregrine, 1924).

[6] R. L. Colie, "Johan Huizinga And The Task Of Cultural History", *The American Historical Review*, 69.3 (1964), pp. 607–630; Robert Anchor, "History And Play: Johan Huizinga And His Critics", *History And Theory*, 17.1 (1978), pp. 63–93.

[7] Frederik Buylaert, "Lordship, Urbanization And Social Change In Late Medieval Flanders", *Past And Present*, 227.1 (2015), pp. 31–75, p. 34.

academic discourse presents the perceived apocalyptic events of the fourteenth century not as bookends of a previous age, but as emblematic of earlier historical trends.[8] Decades before the population upheaval of the Black Death from 1347 onward , Flanders was ravaged during the Great Famine of 1315 – 1317 which was one of the most significant episodes of population collapse in the continent's history.[9] The state of Flanders circa 1290 was one of social disquiet, with pro-French and pro-Flemish movements dominating local and regional politics.[10] These factions will be unpacked fully in the third section of this thesis, but the fierce social and commercial competition that had propelled Flemish cities throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, leaving them primed for economic ascendancy and civil strife by the turn of the fourteenth.[11]

David Nicholas attributes the emergent eminence of the Flemish counts to the political makeup of Merovingian Flanders, where—before the region became a singular county in 864—Flemish *gouws* (i.e. districts) were a smaller communal unit that allowed for greater local authority to consolidate, as opposed to the contemporary *civitas* of southern Europe.[12] Baldwin I (c. 830 – 879) was the first count of Flanders, appointed as such by Charles the Bald (13 June 823 – 6 October 877) in 864 in order to consolidate regional power in the face of repeated

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[8] For further work on the crisis of the early fourteenth century and its historical precedents, see Christopher Dyer, 'The Crisis of the Early Fourteenth Century: Some Material Evidence from Britain', *Écritures de l'espace social*, 101 (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2010), pp. 491–506; Bruce Campbell, 'The Agrarian Problem in the Early Fourteenth Century', *Past & Present*, 188 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 3–70.
[9] Sam Geens, "The Great Famine In The County Of Flanders (1315-17): The Complex Interaction Between Weather, Warfare, And Property Rights", *The Economic History Review*, 71.4 (2017), pp. 1–25, p. 5.
[10] David Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders* (New York: Longman Publishing, 1992), pp. 186–195, p. 190.
[11] Jan Dumolyn and Jelle Haemers, "Patterns Of Urban Rebellion In Medieval Flanders", *Journal Of Medieval History*, 31.4 (2005), pp. 369–393, p. 371.
[12] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 13.

Viking raids in the territory.[13] Nineteenth and early twentieth-century historians situated the initial narrative evolution of Flanders in a purely French context, due to its emergence from *Francia*.[14] The exploits of the Flemish margraves dominates the historical and cultural narrative of the county from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, with the counts heavily participating in the First and Second Crusades, and being key regional players in the Latin East.[15] By the late thirteenth century, this power had been greatly curbed by the ascendancy of the Capetians, namely the ventures of Philip IV who worked tireless to integrate Flanders into the French geopolitical sphere of influence. As early as 1288, a French administrative officer had been installed in Ghent to, as Nicholas puts it, "allegedly […] provide relief from a despotic prince but actually to put Flanders under royal administration".[16] This action on the part of Philip was due to the rising political competition between the Capetians and the Plantagenets, which partially bore itself out in the constant overtures either side made to the materially and commercially rich Flanders—the tightening administrative grip of Philip was met by Count Guy of Dampierre (c. 1226 – 7 March 1305) issuing new privileges for English merchants in the county.[17] This tit-for-tat escalation resulted in Philip courting the Flemish nobility with decreased taxes and the confiscated property of those Flemings still loyal to Guy.[18]

[13] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, pp. 14-15.
[14] David Defries, "The Emergence of the Territorial Principality of Flanders, 750–1050", *History Compass*, 11.8 (2013), pp. 619–631, p. 624; For an overview of the political historiography circa 1950, see Jan Dhondt, *Les Origines de la Flandre et de l'Artois* (Arras: Centre d'etudes régionales du Pas-de-Calais, 1944); François-Louis Ganshof, "Les Origines du Comté de Flandre", *Revue Belge de Philologie Et D'HIstoire*, 16.1 (1937), pp. 367–385.
[15] Jonathan Phillips, "The Murder of Charles the Good and the Second Crusade: Household, Nobility, and Traditions of Crusading in Medieval Flanders", *Medieval Prosopography*, 19 (1998), pp. 55–75, p. 56.
[16] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 187.
[17] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 187.
[18] Walter Prevenier, "Motieven voor leliaardsgezindheid in Vlaanderen in de periode 1297–1305", *De Leiegouw*, 19 (1977), pp. 273–288, p. 274.

Guy of Dampierre was the instigating thorn in Philip's side that not only entrapped the Dampierre family between their powerful and mutually antagonistic neighbours, but ultimately lead to the military escalation and civil unrest of the Franco-Flemish War.[19] His aggressive political manoeuvring culminated in fully aligning himself with the Plantagenets when, during the Treaty of Lier (31 August 1294), he arranged the marriage of his daughter Philippa (d. 1306) to the future Edward II.[20] This move was made all the more significant by the start of the Anglo-French War (1294 – 1297), which saw Edward I attempt to defend Gascony—and the wine trade that was so integral to the English economy—from Philip's royal annexations.[21] During the conflict, Guy once again overstepped his bounds and accepted an offer from the city of Valenciennes, the most important city in Avesnes Hainault, to formally annex them into the County of Flanders.[22] This was clearly a step too far even for Philip, who responded by placing all of the five main cities of Flanders under French administrative control, summoning Guy to Paris to be chastised in front of a gathering of representatives of the five cities, and his entire fief of Flanders revoked pending a fine.[23] By the time relations between England and France had relatively cooled in 1297, Guy and his sons were imprisoned in Paris and the Flemish nobility were so utterly beholden to Philip that scarcely a handful would be present on the fields of Courtrai some eight years later.[24] Of these, the most notable would Guy of Namur (1270 – 13

[19] The events in question will be unpacked in the first and second chapters of this thesis.
[20] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 187.
[21] Adam Christian Drake, "Edward I and the Anglo-French War: The Relief of Gascony, 1294–97" (unpublished doctoral thesis), Northumbria University, 2021; Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 189; For an overview of the impact of the Anglo-French War on the English wine trade, see Margery K. James, "The Fluctuations of the Anglogascon Wine Trade during the Fourteenth Century", *The Economic History Review*, 4.2 (1951), pp. 170–196; Mavis Mate, "The Impact of War on the Economy of Canterbury Cathedral Priory, 1294–1340", *Speculum*, 57.4 (1982), pp. 761–778.
[22] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 189.
[23] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 189.
[24] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 189; Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 179.

October 1311), Lord of Ronse and Count of Zeeland, who was Guy of Dampierre's son from his second marriage. Also lending his name to the rebellion would be William of Jülich (d. 18 August 1304), a nobleman and archdeacon of the prince-bishopric of Liège. Two other noblemen who played a smaller role in the overall campaign but feature prominently in the early narratives of the Battle of the Golden Spurs are the Limburgish knight Hendrik van Lontzen who had been appointed the marshal of Bruges prior to the battle in 1302, and the Zeelander nobleman Jan van Renesse (1249 – 16 August 1304) who commanded the Yprois rearguard who defeated the French sally from the Courtrai garrison during one of the pivotal moments of the battle.[25] Peter de Coninck (d. 1332), a weaver and political agitator from Bruges, as well as craft butcher Jan Breydel (c. 1264 – 1328), are two notable leaders of the rebellion who were neither noted knights nor relatives of the Dampierres, but rather active participants in the Bruges political landscape.[26]

Forty years before the protracted military and economic events of the 100 Years' War (24 May 1337 – 19 October 1453), Flanders was torn between its powerful and aggressive belligerents–namely Plantagenet England and Capetian France—in a series of military clashes that turned a perennially cold war hot and stoked the embers for decades of upheaval and political unrest.[27] The momentous and utter defeat of the French at the hands of the Flemish militias during the Battle of the Golden Spurs (11 July 1302) marked a significant turning point

[25] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 197.
[26] A further discussion of both men, especially Peter de Coninck, will occur in the first chapter.
[27] For new and foundational work on the 100 Years' War and Flanders' role in it, see: Anthony Emery, *Seats Of Power In Europe During The Hundred Years War* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2016); Anne Curry, The Hundred Years' War (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995); Clifford J. Rogers, "The Military Revolutions Of The Hundred Years' War", *The Journal Of Military History*, 57.2 (1993), pp. 241–278.

in the history of Flanders as well as the balance of power in medieval Europe.[28] In a single day of fighting, the Flemish militia slew over a thousand French knights—amassing a trove of hundreds of golden tournament spurs from which the battle takes its name.[29] The cultural memory of this battle and its legacy stands at the centre of this investigation. The unexpected communal triumph on the fields of Kortrijk generated newfound civic identity and strength in Flanders, just as it exposed major weaknesses in the military capacity of Capetian France. As a result, generations of Flemish people would cultivate the collective memory of their civic pride through the curation of rituals, the rewriting of histories, and the design of works of art and architecture that recalled the Battle of the Golden Spurs at Kortrijk. With this fashioning of Flemish cultural memory, especially in its celebration of its heroes and the organisation of the guilds who supported them, would come new, proto-nationalist narratives rich with anti-French propaganda.

As much as ethno-nationalist historiographies and far right political groups would insist that the greatness of the guilds and the exceptionality of the county are the inheritance of those born in that small enclave of Belgium today, any proponent of such rhetoric will be sorely disappointed by the aims and conclusions of this thesis. Contemporary interest in the Franco-Flemish War today, and in the Battle of the Golden Spurs in particular, stems from a far-right appropriation of both medievalism and nineteenth-century ethno-nationalist historiography. For example, the far right-wing Flemish youth group *Schild en Vrieden* take their name from the

[28] Eric Sangar, "Courtrai, the Battle of the Golden Spurs 1302: Famous Battles and How They Shaped the Modern World: From Troy to Courtrai", *Pen & Sword*, pp. 121–135, 2018.
[29] J. F. Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs (Courtrai, 11 July 1302)*, ed. by Kelly DeVries, trans. by David Richard Ferguson (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), p. 192.

supposed shibboleth uttered during the Bruges Matins (18 May 1302)—an infamous nocturnal massacre that the Flemish garrison forcibly ousted from Bruges during the leadup to the Battle of the Golden Spurs. [30] Similar to the alt-right fascists in the USA who chant *deus vult*, they galvanize their hateful views using the iconography, aesthetics, and calls of an imagined medieval nationalist identity.[31] The myth of medieval Flanders as a unique progenitor of an exceptional nation state will be dismissed out of hand. Instead, space will be given to its disparate inhabitants—people who brooked no singular cause nor monolithic worldview—and found solace by accessing and projecting their shared humanity. The people of medieval Flanders were no more or less exceptional than any of their neighbours. It was through their common experiences, not some ideological birthright, that they pushed the limits of possibility and achievement when they defeated Philip IV's armies in 1302.

This same *caveat lector* can be applied to much of the nineteenth-century historiography addressed in this thesis. The wave of medievalism and the scholarly attention that preceded it which swept over the young country—the new Belgium—in the wake of its 1830 founding follows a very telling line.[32] The field of medieval studies remains a steadfast ally of revanchist ethnonationalism, and it is often invoked as the rallying cry of white supremacists

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[30] This cry used by the Flemish to disambiguate between friend and foe during the Bruges Matins, as well as the role the Matins played in sparking the punitive French expedition that joined the Flemish in battle before the walls of Kortrijk, will be explored in detail in the second chapter; Emmanuel Dalle Mulle, 'The Populism and Sub-State Nationalism Nexus in Flanders', *H-Nationalism*, 28 October, 2020. <https://networks.h-net.org/node/6659948/pdf> [Accessed 18 March, 2022]; Jules Frederichs, "Note Sur Le Cri De Guerre Des Matines Brugeoises", *Compte-Rendu Des Séances De La Commission Royale D'histoire*, 62.3 (1893), pp. 263–274.

[31] For a recent and superlative overview of alt-right medievalism, see: Louie Dean Valencia-García, *Far-Right Revisionism And The End Of History* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

[32] Patrick J. Geary and Gábor Klaniczay, eds., *Manufacturing Middle Ages: Entangled History of Medievalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. (National Cultivation of Culture 6.) Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013, pp. xiii, 436.

the world over.[33] While racism and nationalism confronts the field and its continued relevance today, the degree to which the historical context and individual subjects of this research have been misused and abused are numerous enough to warrant an entirely separate thesis. Instead, this thesis will situate the types of artefacts that are so routinely appropriated by radical bad actors in their historical, material, and artistic contexts—thus revealing them not as jewels in the crown of Western culture, but as the common inheritance of craftsmen and civic-minded individuals the world over. To that end, the methodological apparatus and terminological framework of this research will now be introduced.

0.1 The Structure

This thesis adopts a tripartite structure that focuses on three different case studies related to the commemoration of the Battle of the Golden Spurs and its legacy as part of the Franco-Flemish War. In each case, previous approaches to these case studies have examined these texts, objects, and images from within specific, disciplinary views. For example, both military historians and art historians have examined the Courtrai chest, but their publications are often divorced from significant contextualisation and comparison beyond their respective fields. While this has resulted in a solid amount of secondary source material related to each cultural artefact, it means that this is the first effort to establish a syncretic dialogue between

[33] For a depressingly brief overview of the uses and abuses of medievalism, see: Bettina Bildhauer and Chris Jones, The Middle Ages In The Modern World (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); "Problems With Continuity: Defining The Middle Ages For Medievalism Studies - Medievalists.Net", Medievalists.Net, 2022 <https://www.medievalists.net/2013/06/problems-with-continuity-defining-the-middle-ages-for-medievalism-studies/> [Accessed 20 June 2022]; Matthew Gabriele and David M Perry, The Bright Ages: A New History Of Medieval Europe (HarperCollins, 2021); Lawrence Goodman, "Jousting With The Alt-Right | Brandeis Magazine", Brandeis Magazine, 2022 <https://www.brandeis.edu/magazine/2019/winter/featured-stories/alt-right.html> [Accessed 20 June 2022].

(what this thesis will demonstrate are) three inexorably tethered historical phenomenon. Second is a matter of record-setting. This thesis will strive to function as much as a point of source and data aggregation as an inflection point in the ongoing scholarly discourse. While the Franco-Flemish War was the subject of significant (and significantly Flemish) attention throughout the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it has not been revisited sufficiently recently enough—outside of the occasional work on the Battle of the Golden Spurs, to which the last significant contribution was by Kelly DeVries in 2006.[34] Another issue which this thesis seeks to address is one of scope. A potentially disjointed conjunction of different fields and points of interest will be streamlined by focusing on three core case studies, each concerned with their unique manifestations of memory and memorialisation.

Part one begins with a new study of the *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos* (c. 1302), one of the earliest extant sources for understanding the legacy of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, alongside a new examination of the literary corpus of early texts that account for our understanding of what occurred during and immediately after the event in question.[35] Written by an anonymous clergyman in Bruges as an invective "mock passion" (this genre will be carefully addressed in due course) soon after the violence it narrates, this text is believed to be the earliest extant chronicle pursuant to the battle and speaks directly to an undeniably anti-French perception of the events that also lionises the Flemish militia in the immediate aftermath of July 11, 1302. Scholarly focus on this so-called *Passio* has not yet ventured beyond a surface level inquiry into the text and its significance for understanding how the Flemish

[34] Kelly DeVries, *Infantry Warfare In The Early Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006).
[35] The most recent edition of the chronicle containing the mock passion being Adam Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk: 1377-1421*, trans. by Chris Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

perceived and constructed their sense of civic pride through their defeat of the French at Courtrai.[36] This thesis will attempt to situate the *Passio* within the broader context of the Franco-Flemish War as an early witness to the emergence of a new, brave, bold, and proud Flemish communal identity, built in part in opposition to the corrupt, colonizing, and even sacrilegious conquest of their own cities by the wealthy and misguided French crown. It will also situate the *Passio* within its genre, explore the character and motivations of Adam of Usk, the fifteenth-century scribe who copied the only known redaction of the text. It will show that although the *Passio* is not a chronicle, its polemical narrative both reflects and projects an account of the Flemish victory as a deserving, divinely-sponsored sign of their special and superior status, where the Flemish people are represented as the worthy leaders of their County, and who have every right to fight back against their hubristic, invading Capetian enemies.

The second case study will contain an extensive reassessment of the material and artistic components of the Courtrai Chest (1302 – 1308), also known as the Oxford Chest. A new iconographic reading of the chest's carved frontispiece will be introduced, alongside extensive documentary contextualisation. Questions of its provenance and re-emergence in the early twentieth century will be considered, as well as an updated theory as to potential paths of import from Western Flanders to New College, Oxford, where it was rediscovered in 1905. In particular, several competing theories regarding its inclusion in a Flemish diplomatic mission

[36] J.M. De Smet, "Passio Francorum secundum Flemyngos. Het Brugse spotevangelie op de nederlaag van de Fransen te Kortrijk", *De Leiegouw*, 19 (1977), pp. 289–320; Catharina Peersman, "Constructing identity: language and identity in the narration of the Franco-Flemish conflict (1297-1305)", in *Past, Present and Future of a Language Border: Germanic-Romance Encounters in the Low Countries (Language and Social Life)*, ed. by Catharina Peersman, Gijsbert Rutten, Rik Vosters (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), pp. 91–114, p. 93.

will be addressed, as well as claims of forgery that have been uncritically repeated since the 1950's.[37]

The third and final case study will turn to the no-longer extant Godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel (Chapel of Saint John and Saint Paul) in Ghent, also known as the Leugemeete, which served as a charity as early as 1316 and was patronised by the craft guilds soon thereafter. Demolished in 1911, extensive archival material recorded in the nineteenth century and capturing the building's complex suite of murals that potentially date from as early as the 1330s survive. Based on the extant antiquarian records, this thesis also offers the first-ever attempt at a digital reconstruction of the Gothic wall paintings in situ, which will be used to explore the relationship between the visual culture of the chapel and the Flemish people, especially the confraternities, who used it. Of potential relevance to this thesis is the lost series of murals depicting parading guild confraternities once located along the upper register of the nave. This decorative scheme, alongside an assessment of the building's layout and larger visual programme, commemorates the bravery and good citizenship of a myriad of Flemish craft guilds in the wake of their victory at the Battle of the Golden Spurs.[38] This chapter will argue that the proud, heroic legacy of the Flemish militias who fought and defeated the French could be glorified through the performance of civic parades as triumphant ritual re-enactments.

[37] E. T. Hall, "The Courtrai chest from New College, Oxford, re-examined", 61, (1987), pp. 104–107; A. Van De Walle, R. Heughebaert, "The Flemish chest of Courtrai, a multiscientifical study conercing a unique medieval diplomatic coffer, material culture, diplomatic coffer", *Medieval Europe Basel* (3rd International Conference of Medieval and Later Archeology, (2002), pp. 400–405; R. Didier, "Sculptures, style et faux", in *Festchrift fur Peter Bloch*, ed. by H. Krohm and C. Theuerkauff (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1990).

[38] Jeannine Baldewijns, Lieve Watteeuw , "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete met vourstelling van de stedelijk milities (1861-2004)", *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent*, LX, (2006), pp. 337–367, p. 337; Carina Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting in the Southern Antiquity Netherlands* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepolis, 2011), p. 47.

Moreover, the painting of these processions inside this church represent and remember these military triumphs as permanent and venerable fixtures in the urban sphere, transforming the city into a perpetual place of civic pride, one that would be honoured and upheld by the subsequent members of the local community.

Despite the dearth of relevant surviving cultural artefacts produced in Flanders in the early fourteenth century, these three case studies present rich opportunities for analysis and discussion of the ways in which the Flemish commemorated and glorified the Battle of the Golden Spurs. In each case, the subjects—the *Passio*, the Courtrai chest, and the lost murals of the Godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel—are in need of much more scholarly attention. Moreover, this selection casts a wide net across different media, e.g. a text, an object, and a series of now-lost images that represent rituals. Together, it is hoped that the structure of this thesis will contribute to a deeper understanding of the Flemish communities who created and used these cultural artefacts. With an interdisciplinary approach to this tripartite structure, this thesis aims to establish a syncretic dialogue through examining three different ways of constructing a collective Flemish history and identity through the glorified narratives of violence.

0.2 Social Memory and Collective Memory

An exploration of how these texts, objects, images, spaces, and rituals remember and commemorate the Franco-Flemish War stands at the heart of this research project.[39] The

[39] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.5

academic field of memory studies in the Middle Ages is considerable.[40] The breadth of the discipline is largely due to the interdisciplinary nature of memory studies itself. Sociology was the most significant stakeholder in the early formation of the field, with Émile Durkheim introducing the concept of "représentations collectives" in his 1912 work *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*.[41] This concept, that memory could be a collectively constructed (as opposed to an individual or personal) phenomenon, was further refined by his student Maurice Halbwachs in two works: *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire* in 1925, and *La Memoire Collective* in 1950.[42] In the 1980s, Hobsbawm and Ranger's work on *The Invention of Tradition* revealed how history could be invented and reinvented, constrcted and deconstructed by nationalistic collective cultures.[43] A decade later in 1995, Cathy Caruth's edited collection of essays on *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* was an inflection point in the wider interdisciplinary field of memory studies.[44] In it, scholars applied their studies of memory to a wide range of traumatic and violent twentieth-century historical events, ranging from the experience of the AIDS crisis to the bombing of Hiroshima.

[40] For recent and related studies of medieval memory in and around Flanders and France, see Elma Brenner, Mary Franklin-Brown and Meredith Cohen, *Memory And Commemoration In Medieval Culture* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013); Lucie Doležalová, *The Making Of Memory In The Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Elisabeth Van Houts, "Medieval Memory In Theory And Practice: Some Exploratory Thoughts In The Guise Of A Conclusion", *Gesta*, 48.2 (2009), pp. 185–191; Herman Braet, *Medieval Memory. Image And Text* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2004); Michael Rowlands, "The Role Of Memory In The Transmission Of Culture", *World Archaeology*, 25.2 (1993), pp. 141–151; Jeffrey K. Olick, Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices", *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), pp. 105–140.
[41] Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms Of The Religious Life* (London, New York: Macmillan, 1912); Barbara A. Misztal, "Durkheim On Collective Memory", *Journal Of Classical Sociology*, 3.2 (2003), pp. 123–143.
[42] Halbwachs' most famous work was published posthumously in 1950, as he was murdered in the Buchenwald concentration camp in 1945; Maurice Halbwachs, *La Memoire Collective* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1950); Maurice Halbwachs, *Les Cadres Sociaux De La Mémoire* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1925).
[43] *The Invention Of Tradition*, ed. by Eric John Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
[44] *Trauma: Explorations In Memory*, ed. by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1995).

Returning to the high medieval period and collective memories of glorified violence, many scholars have relied on these and other approaches to memory studies to examine the history of the Crusades.[45] For example, Megan Cassidy-Welch has recently and thoroughly explored the narration and rhetoric of victory and defeat in crusader chronicles, asserting that the collective memory and narration of these successes and failures were fluid, creative acts.[46] Her assertion that memory is a fluid, creative act deeply grounded in historical context and in service of narrative coherence will be reinforced in each of this thesis's core case studies.[47] Throughout his career as an art historian, Jaroslav Folda has explored similar constructions of Crusader identities and memories through visual and devotional culture.[48] As Halbwachs said, cultural artefacts (which come in a variety of forms) have the potential to calcify, reflect, and transmit memory and they must be firmly grounded in their own historical context.[49] To that end, this thesis aims to examine the 'social memory' of the Flemish communities in the wake of the Battle of the Golden Spurs. For James Fentress and Chris Wickham, who have worked on aspects of social memory in the Middle Ages for decades, "a memory can be social only if it is capable of being transmitted, and, to be transmitted, a memory must first be articulated. Social

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[45] William J. Purkis, "Crusading And Crusade Memory In Caesarius Of Heisterbach's Dialogus Miraculorum", *Journal Of Medieval History*, 39.1 (2013), pp. 100–127; Suzanne M. Yeager and Nicholas Paul, *Remembering The Crusades: Myth, Image, And Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012); Nicholas L. Paul, "Crusade, Memory And Regional Politics In Twelfth-Century Amboise", *Journal Of Medieval History*, 31.2 (2005), pp. 127–141;

[46] Megan Cassidy-Welch, *War And Memory At The Time Of The Fifth Crusade* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2019); *Remembering The Crusades And Crusading*, ed. by Megan Cassidy-Welch (New York: Routledge, 2017); *Crusades and Memory: Rethinking the Past and Present*, ed. by Megan Cassidy-Welch (New York: Routledge, 2015); Megan Cassidy-Welch and Anne E. Lester, "Memory And Interpretation: New Approaches To The Study Of The Crusades", *Journal Of Medieval History*, 40.3 (2014), pp. 225–236.

[47] Cassidy-Welch, *Memory And Interpretation*, p. 231.

[48] Jaroslav Folsa, *Crusader Art in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, 1982).

[49] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. by Lewis A. Cooper, trans. by Lewis A. Cooper (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p.38.

memory, then, is articulate memory."[50] In this sense, the articulations of social memory, specifically that of the Flemish communities in the wake of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, are the three main case studies addressed in this thesis.

The frontiers of the field of social memory continue to be developed by sociologists, historians, political scientists, literary critics, anthropologists, psychologists, and art historians.[51] Mary Carruthers' interrogation of the origin, definitions, and historical context of memory provides an essential reference for this project.[52] Her work on medieval memory, building off of that of Frances Yates, provides a vital starting point for any discourse engaging with concepts of memory, be they social or collective.[53] Specifically, her disambiguation between "heuristic" versus, "iconographic" and "hermeneutic". [54] That is, the essential difference between *interpreting* a memory, and *retrieving* a memory. This is an echo of Yates's earlier assertion that art, and its ability to recall memory, is a "systematising process".[55] Carruthers also focuses on this reconstruction of memory, showing how acquiring and accessing memory is an ongoing process, rather than a static achievement, and she explains how this process of reconstruction is enacted via the act of reading, writing, and seeing.[56] She summarises this relationship using the example of an illuminated manuscript: "The ornamentation of a medieval page does not consist of images to be memorized precisely. Instead, they are presented as examples and

[50] James Fentress, Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), p. 47.
[51] Olick and Robbins, *Social Memory Studies*, p. 106.
[52] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[53] Frances A. Yates, *The Art Of Memory* (London: Routledge, 1955).
[54] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 23.
[55] Yates, *The Art of Memory*, p. 14.
[56] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 34.

invitations to the further making of such images".[57] Memory, in this case, resides not in the object itself but the mind of the beholder.

From the *Passio*, Courtrai Chest, and the Leugemeete, these cultural artefacts commemorate different aspects of the Franco-Flemish conflict. While all of them certainly celebrate the bravery and perceived heroism of the Flemish elites as well as the guilds who comprised the militia and denigrate the actions of the French as militarily weak and morally sacrilegious, they each represent Flemish civic identity in a specific way that recalls and alludes to the original function of the cultural artefact in question. Although each example is now long-divorced from its original context (or lost), these triumphant site-specific commemorations of Flemish victory helped propagate positive, propagandistic views of the recent wars, constructing and reconstructing social memory as subsequent generations re-examine and re-use these artefacts as new arbiters of civic pride. In each instance, the at times elusive original historical and political context of these case studies will be taken into careful consideration, but subsequent studies and interventions in their histories also need to be appraised in their role in reconstructing and redefining the social memory of the Franco-Flemish War.[58] In the end, these cultural artefacts of medieval warfare were (and continue to be) used as tools and weaponised as propaganda by later historians and political leaders.

In his book *On Collective Memory*, Halbwachs deconstructs the relationship between collective memory and society, claiming that there "exists a collective memory and social

[57] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 335.

[58] James W. Pennebaker, Becky L. Banasik, *'On the Creation and Maintenance of Collective Memories: History as Social Psychology '*, in Collective Memory of Political Events , ed. by James W. Pennebaker, Dario Paez, Bernard Rimé (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers , 1997), p. 4.

frameworks for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection."[59] This is also integral to any analysis of the aforementioned source material, as the makers of the cultural artefacts considered need to participate in the "act of recollection" in order to transmit social memory. Rather than limit this thesis by concerning it solely with written accounts, or visual representations, or material culture, it examines three different types of vehicles for the production of cultural memory that survive from fourteenth-century Flanders. This aims to create an inclusive framework that allows room for a comparison between various types of cultural records that would otherwise be lost when confining the body of evidence to a singular medium or disciplinary lens. Fentress and Wickham similarly work to erode such calcified barriers, writing: "A medieval sermon was like a fresco or a stained-glass window: it taught through a succession of visual images."[60] In this way, the evocative portrayal of the Battle of the Golden Spurs presented in each case study could also be read as a collective self-portrait, reflecting social memory that simultaneously creates and affirms a contemporary aspiration of the triumphant Flemish people, independent of their vanquished French adversaries.[61] Pennebaker and Banasik have also discussed how "events are commemorated when people have the economic resources and social or political power to do so."[62] The cities of Flanders, especially Ghent, would prosper in the immediate aftermath of the Franco-Flemish War—despite ensuing plague and famine—and continue to thrive as one of the most prosperous city-

[59] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 38.
[60] Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 50.
[61] Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 56.
[62] Pennebaker and Banasik, *On the Creation and Maintenance of Collective Memories*, p.15.

states in fourteenth-century Europe.[63] Their prosperity, in turn, could be honoured through the continuous recollection and commemoration of what would be remembered as the pivotal military victory at the Battle of the Golden Spurs. This feedback loop—of material security informing cultural memory and vice versa—enabled the urban communities of medieval Flanders to define, refine, and affirm their civic pride.

0.3 Historical Context

Before introducing the historiographical apparatus, or the core case studies they will support, it is important to establish the broader historical context surrounding the time period in question. Each subsequent case study will feature more in-depth contextualisation, but it is necessary to preface this entire inquiry with the appropriate historical baseline. This is especially necessary, as the conflict which lends this thesis its name, the Franco-Flemish War, cannot be viewed in a vacuum. Simply put, it did not suddenly start in 1297, nor did it definitively end in 1305. While these dates hold political and documentary legitimacy, this thesis will demonstrate that the social and cultural ramifications of the war continued well into the fourteenth-century. Beginning in the middle, on July 11, 1302 a confederation of Flemish militia, led by Flemish noblemen Guy of Namur (c. 1272 – 13 October 1311) and William of Jülich (d. August 18 1304), defeated the pride of the French aristocracy in a pitched battle outside the walls of Courtrai, Flanders. The Battle of the Golden Spurs, as the event was soon named, served as a high-watermark of the Flemish rebellion during the Franco-Flemish War of 1297 to 1305. Though the conflict was bookended by decisive French victories (namely the

[63] Pennebaker and Banasik, *On the Creation and Maintenance of Collective Memories*, p.15; David Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 206.

rapid annexation of the territory in 1297 and the resounding Flemish defeat at the Battle of Mons-en-Pévèle in 1305), the repercussions of their defeat in 1302 effectively prevented Philip IV from pursuing such an aggressive form of foreign policy for over two years.[64] David Nicholas, in his exhaustive review of medieval Flanders eponymously entitled *Medieval Flanders*, wrote, "The battle of Courtrai has entered legend as a milestone in the Flemish national struggle and as the first major battle in which urban infantry defeated cavalry lead by nobles. Germanic Flanders was never to be part of France."[65] Though Nicholas is correct in so much as France was never able to assert the same level of administrative control of the territory as it had in Gascony, Flanders would continue to struggle to extricate itself from its southern neighbours for decades to come. To quote Raoul C. van Caenegem, "Pierre Dubois believed prior to the battle that Philip the Fair had the resources to conquer the world. Afterwards he wrote: 'I do not think that nowadays anyone in his right mind can possibly think that a single monarch can rule the world.'"[66] The reverse was true for the embattled Flemings, with the victory being immediately codified in prose and iconography.[67] The Battle of the Golden Spurs was the euphoric high point of the war for the Flemings, as evidenced by the fact that two of the three case studies in this thesis on the memory of the conflict were explicitly born from it. For this reason, a more complete historiographical breakdown of the battle, including its emergent narratives, will feature in the *Sources* section.

[64] David Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders* (New York: Longman Publishing, 1992), pp. 186–195.
[65] David Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 193.
[66] Raoul C. van Caenegem, *'1302: Le désastre de Courtrai. Mythe et réalité de la bataille des Eperons d'or by Raoul C. van Caenegem'*, Speculum, 78.2, (2003), pp. 617–620.
[67] The *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos* and the Courtrai chest, respectively.

Flanders was a hotbed of political tension and uncertainty at the turn of the fourteenth century. The conflict between Philip IV (r. 1285 – 1314) and his Plantagenet rival Edward I (r. 1272 – 1307) from 1294 to 1303 was geographically relegated to Aquitaine, Gascony, and Flanders—with Philip enjoying considerable successes across the board.[68] However, Flanders was unique in its economic diversity and civic pride.[69] The traditional semi-autonomous governments of its major urban centres (namely Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres), though invested with authority from the Count of Flanders, were complex communal systems comprised of patricians, burghers, and guilds that existed in a constant state of competition with each other for French and German (Imperial) markets, and struggled to assert their authority over neighbouring lands and villages. [70] This is competition is most clearly illustrated by attempts to regulate certain wool and textile exports, with a concerted effort being made by the Hanse of the Seventeen towns—particularly Ghent and Ypres—to crack down on cheaper striped cloths being produced in smaller centres such as Poperinge and Dendermonde, which were effectively undercutting the price of the 'coloureds' (high-quality dyed textiles) in French markets.[71] During the 1302-1305 conflict between Flanders and France, these regional tensions manifested in patrician, pro-French urban centres having their food imports cut off by rural, pro-Flemish farmers. The *Leliaert* and *Clauwaert* factions, as they were known in the fourteenth century, came to represent the two facets of the Flemish response to French interests in the

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[68] Robert Fawtier, *The Capetian Kings of France*, trans. by Lionel Butler, R. J. Adam (Hong Kong: The MacMillan Press, 1978), pp. 36–37.
[69] David Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City* (London: Longman, 1997), p. 15.
[70] Steven A. Epstein, *Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 54–55.
[71] Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City*, p. 175.

region.[72] The result of this societal tension is best recorded in the *Annales Gandenses*, in which the nameless Franciscan friar wrote for his entry for the year 1302, “About this time there was such a dearth and famine in Ghent, that the humbler folk were in general eating bread made from oats; for while the town of Ghent was on the king’s side, the parts all round about were for Guy and William, so that corn and other food could only be smuggled in secretly. There was such dissension in Ghent, for the common folk favoured the count, and the leliaerts and rich the king, so that often civil war between them was to be feared.” During the Bruges Matins—a nocturnal uprising that was the catalyst for the later battle at Courtrai—there was a parity between the number of Flemish and French noblemen taken captive. When it comes to burghers, the class which has been credited with funding much of the anti-French activity in Flanders, Belgian historian J.F. Verbruggen’s research revealed that, “out of 134 wealthy burghers—whose political persuasion can be ascertained in 1302—fifty-nine were supporters of the King of France, while seventy-five burghers were still active in public life and supported the rebels.” He goes on to clarify that the dedication of the seventy-five “pro-Flemish” burghers is suspect as many of them had been receiving a yearly income of 20 pounds from the king right up until 1302.

The immediate cultural zeitgeist in the wake of Courtrai saw the emergence of decidedly pro-Flemish narratives. These narratives reflected the diversity of public life in Flanders at the time, ranging from poems, to frescos, to chronicles. I will now briefly discuss two such narratives in order to contextualize the later Courtrai chest. Firstly, the *Passio Francorum*

[72] It should be noted that the *Annales Gandenses* does not use the word ‘Clauwaert’; rather the phrase “amici comitis” or “friends of the count”.

secundum Flemingos, a Latin prose parody from Bruges that is dated as having been written between September 29, 1302 and April 4, 1303, is an example of anti-French sentiment that 'in highly Biblical Latin, [narrates] the defeat of the French and more specifically ridicules the death of the French commander-in-chief, the Count of Artois. With its 195 short lines, the *Passio* documents the mood shortly after the Battle of the Golden Spurs, reflecting the bitter aftertaste of the French occupation and the exhilarating experience of unexpected freedom.[73] The *Passio* is an excellent barometer of the mood in Flanders before the defeats of 1304 and concessions of 1305 due to its clerical origins and widespread appeal. Simply put, the poem was written to be read and catered to the anti-French sentiment that was only exacerbated by the French defeat. Its existence also speaks to how divisive the ethno-political aspects of the conflict had become, as it ribalds the character of Robert of Artois as a proxy for both the character of Philip IV and the Capetian domains themselves.[74] After the prose parody, the earliest extant Flemish source is the *Annales Gandenses*, which was written in 1308—three years after the Flemings had been forced to reckon with the limits of their political aspirations.

[73] Peersman, "Constructing Identity", p. 93.
[74] According to the *Annales Gandenses*, a rumour quickly spread to Paris that played with the name of one of the chief Flemish instigators, Pieter Coninck. Roughly translated, his name in French was "Peter the King". This was in turn used as a play on words, with people saying that (since Coninck was a weaver by trade) Philip had been defeated and a weaver crowned king.

1.0 Text: Constructing victory in the literary sources and the *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos*

This section will begin by introducing the early primary accounts of the Franco-Flemish War and then proceed to unpack the historical narrative surrounding the events that occurred leading up to, during, and after the Battle of the Golden Spurs, culminating in a new study of the *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos*. It aims to interrogate the relationship between different perceptions of the victory exhibited across various early accounts of the battle in question. This analysis is essential, as all three case studies in this thesis engage with the immediate and constructed memory of the Franco-Flemish War, and the victory of the guilds on the fields in front of the fortifications of Kortrijk becomes a dominant setting for the objects, texts, and artistic programmes generated by Flemish communities. While certain non-Flemish sources will be referenced and analysed in order to establish a more complete overview of the events as they might have transpired, the source analysis that follows does not intend to line up competing versions of the battle and throw them against one another; this work has already been done by other scholars.[75] It will include sources that discuss what transpired across Flanders in general, and examine specific locales when possible (such as Ghent and Bruges). All of this will also serve as essential cultural and historiographical groundwork which will undergird the proceeding case studies, functioning as a pool of sources which will be repeatedly drawn from throughout this thesis.

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[75] Verbruggen, as part of his 1952 book on the battle, spends a significant amount of time breaking down the respective sources of the battle. Catharina Peersman undertook a much more recent and specific survey of the sources, focusing on the roles of language and identity in the respective narratives. See Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 40; Peersman, "Constructing Identity", p. 93.

I suggest that the earliest written accounts of the Battle of the Golden Spurs can be divided into two broad categories: explanatory and exculpatory. Many chroniclers evidently felt the need to explain not necessarily *how* the battle unfolded but *why* it unfolded the way it did. As their justifications differ wildly between accounts, creating a singularly coherent, consistent version of events that consults every sources is impossible, as Verbruggen originally intuited in his research throughout the 1950s. If we situate the discussion within Verbruggen's framework of the "two accounts" theory (that being an assertion that there exist two separate socio-political accounts of the battle which exist independently of one another), then applying a critical lens to the established corpus of sources can be viewed as a deconstructionist intervention in what has been a well-established structuralist historiography. Returning instead to engaging with the sources on their own terms, the emphasis here is not on the discord between different versions of the events, but rather their unique historical and cultural context and how this has shaped the construction of a specific narrative. This thesis aims to provide critical engagement with the primary source material as part of its role in the construction (and reconstruction) of cultural memory in medieval Flanders and beyond.

A new study of the *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos*, an invective Latin account of the battle compiled soon after the Battle of the Golden Spurs c. 1302, will feature in this opening chapter. Written by an anonymous Flemish author from Bruges who conveys a nuanced understanding of the events that suggest an eye-witness experience or at least access to a ell-informed perspective of the political landscape, the *Passio* casts the French as vengeful,

prideful, and ultimately, inept villains.[76] The author goes so far as to ridicule the death of the French commander-in-chief, Count Robert II of Artois (1250 – 11 July 1302). With only 195 lines of prose, the *Passio* presents some insight into the immediate reception of the battle in a Flemish urban centre, reflecting the bitterness in Bruges towards French occupation and a relishing in the delight of their defeat. For this reason, the *Passio* serves as a helpful barometer for the burgeoning civic pride cultivated in Flanders before the subsequent defeats of the failed maritime invasion of Zeeland in 1304 and the formal concessions that followed their frustrations at the Battle of Mons-en-Pévèle later that same year.[77] If the *Passio* recalls the euphoric victory of the Battle of the Golden Spurs in hindsight after these losses to Capetian France, its structure speaks to how divisive and nationalistic the conflict had become. And if its compilation of the *Passio* predates the end of the Franco-Flemish War, then it represents one of the earliest witnesses to an emerging sense of Flemish pride (and anti-French sentiment) developed in the wake of the victory.

In addition to the c. 1302 *Passio*, which will be the focus of the discussion later in this chapter, the earliest extant primary sources that include at least some accounts of the Battle of the Golden Spurs and which will be present in this analysis of the cultural aftermath of the conflict pre-1350 are as follows:

[76] Peersman, "Constructing Identity", p. 94.
[77] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 195.

1. Anonymous, *Chronique Artésienne*, c. 1304; a detailed chronicle written in the vernacular French (and first-person voice) by a burgher from Arras who was an eye-witness to some of the events of the Franco-Flemish War.[78]
2. Guillaume Guiart (d. c. 1316), *La Branche des Royaux Lingnages* (c. 1306 – 7); a metrical, rhymed chronicle written by a burgher in Orléans who fought in the Franco-Flemish War and who dedicated his work to King Philip IV.[79]
3. Anonymous, *Annales Gandenses* (c. 1310); composed by a Franciscan friar in Ghent, who addresses numerous events related to the Franco-Flemish War and its aftermath.[80]
4. Lodewijk van Velthem (c. 1260/1275 – c. 1317/1326), *Voortzetting van de Spiegel Historiael* (c. 1313–16; writing in vernacular Middle Dutch, this scholar's continuation of Jacob van Maerlant's *Speculum* contains one of the lengthiest narrative descriptions of the Battle of the Golden Spurs .[81]

[78] Edited by Joseph Jean de Smet, *Corpus chronicorum Flandriae, sub auspiciis leopoldi Primi, serenissimi Belgarum regis* (Brussels: M. Hayez, 1841); Frantz Funck-Brentano, *Chronique Artésienne (1295-1304) nouvelle édition, et Chronique tournaisienne (1296-1314) : publiée pour la première fois d'après le manuscrit de Bruxelles* (Paris: A. Picard, 1899).
[79] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, Français MS 5698; Edited in Guillaume Guiart, *Branche des royaux lignages. Tome 8 / . Chronique métrique de Guillaume Guiart, publiée pour la première fois, d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du roi, par J.-A. Buchon*, ed. by Jean Alexandre Buchon (Paris: Verdière).
[80] No longer extant, for editions see; *Annales Gandenses*, ed. By Frant Funck-Brentano (Paris: Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1896); *Annales Gandenses*, trans. by Hilda Johnstone (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1951).
[81] Ludo Jongen, Miriam Piters, *Ghi Fransoyse sijt hier onteert* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2002); BHSL.HS.2749/3-4; Lodewijk van Velthem, *De Guldensporenslag*, ed. by W. Waterschoot (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979); Lodewijk van Velthem, *Lodewijk van Velthem's Voortzetting van den Spiegel Historiael (1248-1316), op nieuw uitgegeven door Herman Vander Linden en Willem de Vreese, Eerste Deel. Académie Royale de Belgique, Commission Royale d'Histoire*, ed. by G. Huet (Brussels: Hayez, 1938).

5. Geoffroi de Paris (d. c. 1320), *Chronique Rimée de Philippe le Bel* (c. 1313 – 17); a rhymed Latin chronicle written by a Parisian burgher that is said to be drawn from memory.[82]
6. Anonymous, *Continuatio Prima Guilelmi de Nangiaco Chronici* (c. 1316); this Latin chronicle would be appended to the works of Guillaume de Nangis' (d. 1300) by the Benedictine monks of Saint-Denis.[83]
7. Ottokar von Stiermarken (c. 1265 – 1322), *Oesterreichische Reimchronik*, c. 1310, a verse chronicle in vernacular German and compiled in Tyrol by an Austrian knight who worked in the service of Ottokar von Liechtenstein.[84]
8. Willem Procurator (b. c. 1295), *Chronicon*, c. 1322; written in Latin by a monk at the Benedictine abbey of Egmond near Bergen (in North Holland) who saw fit to include the events of 1302 in his chronicle.[85]
9. Bernard of Ypres, *Chronicon Comitum Flandrensium*, (c. 1329); a Cistercian monk based at Clairmarais near Saint Omer, Bernard included an account of the Battle of the Golden Spurs in his addition to the *Chronicon*.[86]

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[82] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, Français MS 146 f. 63ra-88rc; Geffroi de Paris, *Six Historical Poems of Geffroi de Paris*, trans. by Walter H. Storer, Charles A. Rochedieu (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1950); Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden* Spurs, p. 49.
[83] Guillaume de Nangis, *Chronique de Guillaume de Nangis*, ed. by François Guizot (Paris: J. L. J. Brière, 1825); BnF MS 10134; BnF MS 67.
[84] Ottokar von Stiermarken, *Oesterreichische Reimchronik*, ed. by J. Seemuller (Hanover: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Deutsche Chroniken, 1890).
[85] Willelmus Procurator, Chronicon, ed. by C. Pijnacker Hordijk (Amsterdam: Werken uitgegeven door het Historisch Genootschap, 1904); For recent work on its significance see M. Gumbert-Hepp, *Willem Procurator. Kroniek. Editie en vertaling van het Chronicon van Willelmus Procurator*, ed. by J. P. Gumbert (Hilversum: verloren, 2001).
[86] *Chronicon Comitum Flandrensium*, *Corpus Chronicorum Flandriae*, ed. by J. De Smet (Brussels: CRH, 1837).

10. Giovanni Villani (c. 1276-1348), *Istorie fiorentine*, c. 1306 — 1348; a Florentine banker working in Flanders soon after the conflict, Villani included a lengthy account of the Battle of the Golden Spurs in his vernacular Italian chronicle.[87]

Each of these texts will be analysed briefly with reference to their framing and representation of cultural memory. They also will be discussed in light of how later scholars framed these medieval author's intentions. A thorough analysis of each source will be present, save for two. Both Jean de Winterthur's (c. 1300 – 1348) *Chronicon* and Gilles le Muisit's (1272 – 15 October 1352) *Chronicon* will be relegated to supporting, contextual positions as both source are insufficiently lengthy enough to warrant inclusion in this breakdown.[88]

The chronological terminus for this corpus of primary sources ends circa 1348 (thus including the *Istorie fiorentine* as the final text included in this corpus). The decision to exclude accounts compiled after this date is predicated upon two things: proximity and fidelity. That is to say, their closeness to the events in question (in 1302), and degree to which said events feature in each respective account. The advent of the Black Death would be an easy bookend to the far side of these sources (Villani himself having succumbed to it), but it must be stressed that the intent of this section is to gauge the reception and development of the cultural impact of the Battle of the Golden Spurs within Flanders. To that end, most of the sources analysed in this section are either believed to be eye-witness accounts of the events in question or they

[87] Giovanni Villani, Istorie fiorentine di Giovanni Villani, cittadino fiorentino, ed. by Pietro Massai (Florence: Societè tipografica de' classici italiani, 1802); Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 30.
[88] This limitation is also due to the inability to consult the necessary archival material during the Covid pandemic; Jean de Winterthur, *Die Chronik Johanns von Winterthur*, ed. Friedrich Baethgen and Carl Brun (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1955); Gilles Le Muisit, *Chronique et annales de Gilles le Muisit, abbé de Saint-Martin de Tournai (1272-1352)*, ed. Henri Lemaître (Paris: Librairie Renouard, H. Laurens, 1906).

date to this early period of history writing. At the very least, the authors of these sources could be seen as conduits for articulating the battle and defining its legacy.

While the term “living memory” is a much more modern concept, one of the central aims of this thesis is to demonstrate the degree to which social memory in fourteenth-century Flanders was constructed and, in addition to the *Passio*, these ten sources represent the most immediate, nascent, and seminal stage of the narratives that emerged during and after the Franco-Flemish War.[89] Alongside the execution of the Courtrai Chest soon after the events of 1302, and the design of the wall painting cycle of the Leugemeete Chapel occurring from c. 1330, an investigation into these early literary records will help to reveal the channels for the invention and transmission of the commemoration of the Battle of the Golden Spurs in the medieval Flemish imagination.

1.1 The Historiography of the Early Source Material

Before interrogating the extant primary sources positioned closest to the events of the *Guldensporenslag*, a careful overview of the relevant historiography—to peel back the layers of how historians have framed these medieval historians— is warranted. The writing of the history of the Franco-Flemish War, and the Battle of the Golden Spurs in particular, can be broadly categorised via three phases. The first phase was marked by the aggregation of extant primary sources and an engagement with the battle in strictly utilitarian terms. This is encapsulated in Gustav Köhler’s (1839 – 1923) monograph of 1893, which modelled a narrative of the battle

[89] Vladimir Zinchenko, "Living Memory", *Journal Of Russian and East European Psychology*, 46.6 (2008), pp. 80–91; Paul John Eakin, *How Our Lives Become Stories* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019).

favouring almost exclusively Flemish accounts.[90] A retired Prussian general, Köhler's work—though highly problematic by modern standards due to the selection bias it wears so proudly on its sleeve—was integral in presenting a useful corpus of sources upon which other scholars could build. This can be contrasted with the work of Maurice de Maere d'Aertrycke (30 November 1864 – 25 December 1941) who, writing nearly fifty years later in 1933, overtly changed certain sources to tell a more "cohesive" narrative.[91] This period was defined not only by the belief that there was a singular "true" account of the battle, but that this intrinsic truth could be revealed via the consultation of "correct" sources.

The second phase of the historiography could be hallmarked by a more rigorous and inclusive study of the formation of competing French and Flemish accounts in the aftermath of the battle, and was heralded by Henri Pirenne (23 December 1862 – 24 October 1935) in two articles published in 1898 and 1899.[92] Pirenne argued not in presenting a singular holistic account of the battle, but rather distinguishing between sources based upon the intrinsic biases of their authors irrespective of "national obligation".[93] This methodology was a direct refutation of Frantz Funck-Brentano's (15 June 1862 – 13 June 1947) earlier work which, operating within the highly selective framework of the first phase, rejected nearly every source due to their paucity of specific primary witnesses. The sole exception to this was the *Chronique Artésienne*

[90] Gustav Köhler, Die Entwickelung des Kriegswesens und der Kriegführung in der Ritterzeit von Mitte des 11. Jahrhunderts bis zu den Hussitenkriegen (Breslau, 1886).
[91] Maurice de Maere d'Aertrycke, *La Bataille des éperons d'or* (Namur: 1933); Maurice de Maere d'Aertrycke, *Mémoire sur la guerre de Flandre de 1302 et de 1304* (Bruges: Plancke, 1913); Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 31.
[92] Henri Pirenne, ' L'Ancienne chronique de Flandre et la Chronographia regum Francorum', *Compte-rendu des séances de la commission royale d'histoire*, 2.8, (1898), pp. 199–208; ' Note sur un passage de Van Velthem relatif à la bataille de Courtrai', Compte-rendu des séances de la commission royale d'histoire, 2.9, (1899), pp. 202–222; La Version Flamande et La Version Francaise de la Bataille de Courtrai (Brussels: F. Hayez, 1890).
[93] Henri Pirenne, *La Version Flamande et La Version Francaise de la Bataille de Courtrai* (Brussels: F. Hayez, 1890).

which, having himself published an edition in 1841, Funck-Brentano viewed as the only worthy account due to its author's purported activity in the French militia around Flanders.[94] During this time, Julius Frederichs attempted to write a definitive account of the battle, pulling from the methodologies of Köhler, Pirenne, and Funck-Brentano in what would have been a portent of later syncretic accounts of the battle had Frederichs not used his critical discussion of the primary sources to once again impose a hierarchy of utility predicated upon what he considered "useful texts".[95] These were chiefly composed of excerpts from Guiart and Lodewijk van Velthem, using the former to contextualise the beginning and aftermath of the battle, and the latter to understand the battle proper.[96]

The third and latest phase in the historiography related to the history of the Battle of the Golden Spurs marked a turn from establishing cohesive, definitive accounts of the battle to focusing almost exclusively on individual sources for their own merit. This approach was present in Leo Delfos' (3 September 1895 – 24 December 1967) 1931 overview of the battle's primary sources.[97] It was established as the default way of addressing the battle's troubled history by Ferdinand Lot who, in 1946, attempted to synthesise Pirenne and Funck-Brentano's competing timelines and conclusions.[98] In doing so, he acknowledged (like Pirenne before him) the existence of two separate, diverging categories of accounts of the battle; one French, one

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[94] Frantz Funck-Brentano, *Chronique Artésienne (1295-1304) nouvelle édition, et Chronique tournaisienne (1296-1314) : publiée pour la première fois d'après le manuscrit de Bruxelles* (Paris: A. Picard, 1899); Frantz Funck-Brentano, *Mémoire sur la bataille de Courtrai (1302, 11 juillet) et les chroniqueurs qui en ont traité, pour servir à l'historiographie du règne de Philippe le Bel* (Paris: Institut de France, 1893).
[95] Julius Frederichs, 'De slag van Kortrijk', *Nederlandsch museum*, 36 (1893), pp. 257–95.
[96] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 33.
[97] Leo Delfos, 1302: Door Tijdgenoten Verteld (Antwerp: Patria, 1931).
[98] Ferdinand Lot, *L'art Militaire et les Armées au Moyen Age en Europe et dans le Proche Orient* (Paris: Payot, 1946).

Flemish. He also employed Funck-Brentano's hierarchical estimation of certain sources which includes the complete dismissal of French defeat due to corruption or treachery.[99] Jan Frans Verbruggen's 1952 ground-breaking monograph entitled *The Battle of the Golden Spurs: Courtrai, 11 July 1302*, from which this thesis draws deeply, can be viewed as the pinnacle of this third and final phase of scholarly engagement with the primary sources. He acknowledges the fraught historiography while ultimately perpetuating Pirenne and Lot's "two version" hypothesis.[100] This book stands out as it was, at the time, the most comprehensive breakdown of the primary sources surrounding the battle and was published during the 650 anniversary of the conflict. Years later, 1996, another concise analysis of the battle can be found in Kelly DeVries' 1996 *Infantry Warfare In The Early Fourteenth Century*.[101]

The year 2002 would serve as an opportunity of reflection and revitalised interest in the Battle pf the Golden Spurs, as it marked the seven hundredth anniversary. One act of commemoration included the translation, undertaken by DeVries and David Richard Ferguson, of Verbruggen's monograph into English while also precipitating the publication of yet another book by Verbruggen himself, *1302: Opstand in Vlaanderen*.[102] The latter was a general, more popular historical account of the Franco-Flemish War. Being a keystone in the national mythos of Flanders, the battle has engendered itself to innumerable printings of popular pamphlets and

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[99] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 37.
[100] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 40.
[101] The book draws heavily from his dissertation, which was itself a historiographical overview of victory and defeat in the southern Low Countries during the fourteenth century; Kelly DeVries, *Infantry Warfare In The Early Fourteenth Century*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006); Kelly DeVries, *Perceptions of Victory and Defeat in the Southern Low Countries During The Fourteenth Century* (University of Toronto: ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1987).
[102] J. F. Verbruggen, Rolf Falter, *1302: Opstand in Vlaandere*n (Tielt: Lannoo, 2002).

passion projects alike.[103] 2002 also brought about the first book in English entirely dedicated to the battle, though it struggles under the weight of the scholarship from which it draws.[104] Also published that year was *1302: Feiten & Mythen van de Guldensporenslag*, an edited collection of essays by Belgian academics that revisited much of the historical and cultural context of the battle.[105] It represents a broad encapsulation of Flemish scholarly consensus circa 2002. It even contains a chapter by Luc Devliegher that provides an admirably thorough overview of the Courtrai chest.[106]

All of these considerations—the fractured nature of the corpus of extant texts combined with its fraught historiography—means that proposing a unified theory of the events that transpired on July 11, 1302 is misguided at best and disingenuous at worst. The extant sources describing the Battle of the Golden Spurs are not unique in their paucity or inconsistency—military historians are still trying to unravel even the most well-known of medieval martial clashes. However, the previously mentioned historiographical emphasis on competing accounts, combined with the fact that the victorious side on the Groeninge that day ultimately lost the war, makes an already muddled narrative even more difficult to follow. I suggest that the earliest accounts can be divided into two broad categories: explanatory and exculpatory. As these justifications differ wildly between accounts, creating a singularly coherent, internally

[103] For an example of one such pamphlet, see: Bruyne, Arthur, *De Guldensporenslag, 11 Juli 1302* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 1952).
[104] Randall Fegley , *The Golden Spurs of Kortrijk: How the knights of France fell to the foot soldiers of Flanders in 1302* (Jefferson N.C.: McFarland, 2002).
[105] Marc Boone, Eric Bournazel, Bert Cardon, Serge Dauchy, Philippe Despriet, Luc Devliegher, Dirk Heirbaut, Bart Stroobants, Jo Tollebeek, Jan Frans Verbruggen, *1302: Feiten & Mythen van de Guldensporenslag*, ed. by Raoul C. van Caenegem (Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 2002).
[106] Boone et al, *1302" Feiten & Mythen*, pp. 262–282.

consistent version of events that consults every early source is impossible.[107] If we situate this new framework in the context of Pirenne, Lot, and Verbruggen's acceptance of the "two accounts" theory, then applying a critical lens to the established corpus of sources can be viewed as a deconstructionist intervention in what has been a well-established structuralist historiography. By pivoting away from perpetuating "definitive" accounts of the battle and returning instead to engaging with the sources on their own terms we can interrogate them to the fullest extent possible, without the need to fit them into a wider narrative of concrete facts. The emphasis here is not on the antagonisms that exist between the sources, but on the contributions and merits of each source as they originated in their unique historical and cultural context. As the aforementioned historiography has made abundantly clear, the scholarly impetus up until this point has been on reconciling—however heavy-handedly—the competing accounts of the Battle of the Golden Spurs. This thesis will instead seek to provide a deconstructionist lens through which the historical corpus can be viewed, resulting in a critical re-engagement of the primary source materials that have, over the course of the last two centuries, been viewed only as competing fractional accounts of a mythological whole.

1.1.1 The Chronique Artésienne

It is from the *Chronique Artésienne* that scholars attempt to piece together the earliest known account of both the Bruges Matins and the Battle of the Golden Spurs. It also punctiliously incorporates the content of various letters and accounts; aggregating lists of known actors and notable casualties. The bulk of this work, of translating and ordering

[107] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 38.

documents from individual French chancelleries, was done in with the aim of reinforcing King Philip IV's suzerainty over Flanders.[108] This goal is unambiguous; the chronicle opens with a 1295 letter from Count Guy of Dampierre of Flanders, in which he defends his political overtures to King Edward II of England.[109] The account then highlights the worsening diplomatic relationship between Philip IV and Edward II in 1297, creating a contrast that immediately implicates Dampierre's allegiance to the French throne.[110] The bulk of the chronicle is concerned with the French annexation of the county of Flanders between 1297 and 1304; placing a special focus on the actions and entourage of Count Robert of Artois.[111] It jumps from 1300 to 1302, where it entitles its account of the Bruges Matins as an event in which the French were "betrayed in their beds" by the people of Bruges.[112] Of the calamity of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, the anonymous author prefaces his lists of the high-ranking dead by lamenting on the number of counts, princes, and bannermen lost to this "misadventure" ("mesaventure").[113] The account ends abruptly in September of 1304, a clear indication of its *terminus ante quem*, with Philip IV going on pilgrimage to Boulogne after his victory during the Battle of Mons-en-Pévèle (18 August 1304).[114]

This diligent, bureaucratic chronicle survives in a single extant manuscript, split Into three sections and catalogued as such at the Royal Library of Brussels.[115] The *Chronique Artésienne* makes up the later section of the manuscript, being preceded by a copy of an

[108] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 46.
[109] Funck-Brentano, *Chronique Artésienne*, p. 8.
[110] Funck-Brentano, *Chronique Artésienne*, p. 9.
[111] Funck-Brentano, *Chronique Artésienne*, p. 21.
[112] "chil de Bruges trairent nos gens en leur lis"; Funck-Brentano, *Chronique Artésienne*, p. 35.
[113] "qui furent mort a chele mesaventure"; Funck-Brentano, *Chronique Artésienne*, p. 49.
[114] Funck-Brentano, *Chronique Artésienne*, p. 93.
[115] Royal Library of Brussels, MS. 14561-14564; Funck-Brentano, *Chronique Artésienne*, p. vi.

apocryphal letter from Aristotle to Alexander the Great on the marvels of India, a similar letter by Perimenis, and finally by an abridged chronicle of the kings of France from Charles the Bald to Saint Louis.[116] In the forward to his 1899 edition of the chronicle, which was the second edition of the chronicle, Frantz Funck-Brentano praised its "precision" and "exactitude", writing "s'il est vrai que les *Annales Gandenses* forment la chronique la plus intéressante du commencement du XIVe siècle, la *Chronique Artésienne* en est la plus exacte."[117] Funck-Brentano attributes this to the assumption that the Chronique's author served in the French royal army, but this perspective is not borne out in the recounting of the events themselves.[118] He also contrasts the exactitude of the chronicle with the "number of errors" found in the only previous iteration assembled by Joseph Jean De Smet in his edition of the *Recueil des Chroniques de Flandre* published in 1865.[119]

Funck-Brentano and Molinier have dated this chronicle to no earlier than 27 September 1304 due to the narrative's sudden halt in its discussion of events after this date.[120] The writing of the chronicle has been dated to 1304, due to its sudden culmination at this date and the chronology of its contents, and this invariably leads to a degree of intimacy between its writer and the events which he is documenting.[121] Verbruggen remarks that this source is particularly

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[116] Funck-Brentano, *Chronique Artésienne*, pp. vi–vii.
[117] Funck-Brentano, *Chronique Artésienne*, p. I.
[118] Verbruggen concludes that the author was from Arras, and that nothing in the text inherently necessitates nor suggests that the source draws from a first-hand account of the events which is describes; Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 45.
[119]*Recueil Des Chroniques De Flandre*, ed. By Joseph Jean De Smet (Bruxelles: [Commission Royale d'Histoire], 1865); Funck-Brentani, p. i.
[120] Auguste Molinier, 'Chronique artésienne (1295-1304), appelée aussi Chronique de Guy de Dampierre', *Collections numériques de la Sorbonne*, 3 (1903) p. 91.
[121] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 45; Funck-Brentano, *Mémoire*, p. 252; Auguste Molinier, *Chornique Artésienne*, p. 91.

biased, which is odd given the extreme bias to be found throughout later sources as well.[122] On the contrary, given its proximity to the events of 1302 the *Chronique* lacks many of the later embellishments of its predecessors—on both sides of the conflict.[123] There is also an air of uncertainty surrounding the events as they are depicted within the source given that the chronicle ends circa September 1304, the Treaty of Athis-sur-Orge (June 23, 1305) was not to be signed for nearly another year. Though the Battle of Mons-en-Pévèle (August 18, 1304) would later be seen as the deciding clash which ended the conflict on favourable French terms, it would have been unclear exactly as to what extent the war was over—if it was over at all. The account of the battle itself is short; shorter even than the list of French noblemen killed over the course of the battle which it provides in admirable exactitude.[124] The account is more matter-of-fact than many of its antecedents, describing the French defeat as the result of a series of compounding mistakes undertaken by multiple actors:

> lesquels fossés il avoient fait soutieument, et en pluiseurs lius cordis deseure les fossés, et en y avoit de couvers d'erbes et de clooies, si que pour nuire à no gent, et ne pooient nos gens combater à aus s'il n'entroient en ches fossés et en ches mais pas. Et la entra mesire d'Artois et se bataille, et mesire Raous de Neele, connestables, et li .ij. mareschal, et mesire Jakes de Saint-Pol, et mesire Jehans

[122] Auguste Molinier, *Chronique Artésienne*, p. 91.
[123] Of all the extant material produced within the first ten years of the battle (a list that includes the Chronique Artésienne, Chronique Métrique, and Annales Gandenses), the author appears the least interested in constructing some mythologised version—or even a complete narrative—of the battle. Whereas Guiart is embarking upon an exculpatory account that divests fault from the personage of Philip IV to his captains and dishonourable foe, and the Ghentois Friar Minor is singing the praises of Flemish victory, the Chronique Artésienne is almost conspicuously straightforward and to the point. All subsequent narrative accounts of the battle emphasise its immediate and enduring shock—as a miraculous victory or stunning defeat; Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden* Spurs, p. 40.
[124] *Chronique Artésienne*, pp. 49–50.

> de Brulas, et mout grant plenté de gent qui estoient ordené à leurs batailles, et de pluisers autres chevaliers et leur gens, qui ne tinrent mie conroi de leurs batailles pour le hardement et le proueche qu'il beoient à faire à chelui jour, que tout y morurent.[125]

The account balances the "skilfulness" with which the Flemings dug their ditches with the poor decision-making and tactical breakdown of the French—attributing most of the French casualties to drowning and suffocation.[126] These observations effectively diminish the possibility for praising the enemies of Capetian France and emphasize the role of environmental conditions instead. The rather short overview of the battle, combined with an emphasis on the roll of deceased nobility caused Verbruggen to praise this *Chronique* for offering "the best chronological list of secondary events for the period."[127] The *Chronique Artésienne* is bereft of these flourishes. Both the *Chronique Artésienne* and the *Passio* are unique in that they are the only two sources that come to us *before* the Franco-Flemish War reached its conclusion. They are remarking upon events that were—to a very significant extent—still unfolding. This should save the chronicle from the criticisms of omission stemming from its lack of discussions surrounding several later key aspects of the battle, namely the date of the French arrival at Courtrai and the skirmishes that followed, of which historians have been critical.[128] The memory being constructed in the *Chronique Artésienne* is one of loss. It seeks to preserve the

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[125] Chronique Artésienne, pp. 49–50.
[126] "Et li pluiseur tuoient li uns l'autre, car il kaoient ès fossés et là il noioient et estaignoient li uns l'autre.", *Chronique Artésienne*, pp. 49–50.
[127] *Chronique Artésienne*, p. 40; Verbruggen, *Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 47.
[128] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 48; R. L. Wagner, 'La bataille de Courtrai, 1302. Essai de critique des sources francaises', *Mémoires Acad Sciences Arts et Belles Lettres de Caen*, 10, (1942), pp. 357–426, p. 410.

actions of specific individuals—not least the Count of Artois—and contextualise the defeat experienced by the French during the Battle of the Golden Spurs within a wider narrative that begins with betrayal and ends with salvation.[129]

1.1.2 The Branche des Royaux Lignages

If the *Chronique Artésienne* represents one of the most concise narrative accounts of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, then Guillaume Guiart's (d. c. 1316) *Chronique Métrique* is one of the most bombastic. This lengthy rhymed chronicle survives in a single extant manuscript at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.[130] Like the Artesian author of the former chronicle, the Orléanais Guiart saw combat during the war, serving as a sergeant over a group of other townsmen sent from Orléans to fight on behalf of the French; before he suffered a career-ending injury in August 1304 where he was wounded.[131] In his *Branche*, Guiart proudly refers to his wounds in the elliptical third-person voice when he praises a certain sergeant from Orleans who led a "heroic assault" and suffered injuries to his right leg and left arm, noted in lines 19,881-906, before transforming into a "ministrel de bouche".[132] Guiart's long and detailed 25,510 octosyllabic verse poem covers a wide period from the reign of Philip Augustus (21 August 1165 – 14 July 1223), focusing on his victory at the Battle of Bouvines (1214) to his present day ruler, Philip IV. He declares his name and birthplace in the prologue and confirms

[129] Referring to Guy of Dampierre's feudal overtures to Edward II in 1296-97 and Philip IV's 1204 pilgrimage that bookend the account.
[130] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fonds fr. MS 5698.
[131] Wagner, *La bataille de Courtrai*, p. 52.
[132] *Chronique Métrique*, p. 7; R. D. A. Crafter, "Materials for a study of the source of Guillaume Guiart's la branche des royaus lingnages"", Medium Ævum, 26.1 (1957), pp. 1–16, p. 1; Natalis De Wailly, "Notice Sur Guillaume Guiart.", Bibliothèque De L'école Des Chartes, 8.1 (1847), p. 16; Michael Livingston, "Note: An Army On The March And In Camp – Guillaume Guiart's Branche Des Royaus Lingnages", *Journal Of Medieval Military History*, 2019, pp. 259–272, p. 261.

his intense period of researching a variety of historical material “night and day” in the abbey library at Saint-Denis, stating in lines 30-36: “Selon les certaines croniques / C’est-a-dire paroles voires / Don’t j’ai transcrites le mémoires / A Saint-Denis, soir et matin / A l’exemplaire du latin/ Et a droit ramenées / Et puis en rime ordenées.”[133] The Latin source in question is assumed to be the *Philippide* of Guillaume le Breton (1165 – 1225), though it is possible Guiart leaned more heavily on the vernacular *Grand Chroniques de France*.[134] Guiart’s *Chronique* survives in a single extant manuscript at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.[135]

His call to French military service is echoed in his writing, where he paints the conflict as a defensive action protecting the French “frontière”.[136] He also depicts himself as the ideal candidate for this recollection in line 60: “Par quoy j’ai talent et courage”.[137] This period of intense activity, culminating in an equally intense period of writing, is what, for Livingston, is why this “Orléanais *sergent* came into his poetic literacy late in his life”.[138] Verbruggen insinuates that part the impetus behind his account stemmed from a general lack of sources sufficiently critical of the Flemish cause throughout the war, or at least at that moment in time when he was wounded in Arras of August 1304.[139] By the time he sits down to tell the story of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, Guiart is doing so from a place of indignancy. This could be due to the Flemings glorifying their victory at Courtrai and not speaking of their defeats at Furnes

[133] *Chronique Métrique,* p. 7.
[134] Crafter suggests this in his 1957 analysis of both Guiart and his sources, invoking a side by side comparison of the *Grand Chroniques and the Royaux Lingnages*; Crafter, *Materials*, p. 5.
[135] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fonds fr. MS 5698; Crafter, *Materials*, p.1.
[136] “Se nous ci le veoir asséon/O le bon Jacques de Béon/Pour défendre celes frontières/Chevaliers de plusiers manières.”; *Chronique Métrique*, p. 249.
[137] *Chronique Métrique*, p. 7.
[138] Livingston, *Note: An Army On The March And In Camp*, p. 260.
[139] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 53.

(1297), Arques (1303), Gravelines (1304), and in Zeeland (1304)—which notably resulted in capture of Guy of Namur by the Franco-Holland alliance.[140] This hypothesis infers some ongoing dialogue between the rebels and their enemies—that a French irregular would be aware of the existence of some heroic harangues produced and propagated by his Flemish counterparts, which might then explain Guiart's more Franco-centric panegyric.

Guiart's account also explicitly mentions the presence of the Flemish *goedendag*, a spiked club that would become known as the iconic weapon of the militias and features heavily in the visual programme of the Courtrai Chest.[141] He writes:

> Les godendaz et les coingnies,
>
> Metent à mort ès herberiages
>
> Cheavliers, escuyers et pages
>
> Qui n'ont de quoi il se défendent.
>
> [The goedendags and the cleavers,
>
> Gave out death among the fields to
>
> Knights, squires, and pages
>
> who had nothing with which to defend themselves.][142]

This passage is emblematic of his general treatment of the battle, punctuated by Flemish violence and poor judgement on the account of the French leaders. He notably makes no

[140] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 53.
[141] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 199
[142] *Chronique Métrique*, p. 227.

mention of the ditches anywhere in his account. He was apparently not present at the battle himself, and this fact is evident in his general lack of awareness when it comes to the Flemish lines as he misplaces the French garrison and identifies neither the Flemish reserves (the Yprois militia lead by Jan van Renesse) or what happened to the Flemish crossbowmen during the fighting.[143] Verbruggen goes so far as to suggest that this indicates Guiart formed his entire account of the battle from documents already available at Saint-Denis.[144] Crafter's work circa 1957 postdates that of Verbruggen's 1952 publication, and the former's acknowledgement that—even unveiling an entirely separate document from which Guiart drew inspiration—the chronicler still likely included first-hand accounts, can be seen as the most likely scenario.[145] Even if he relied solely upon the records of St Denis, Guiart's account of the battle draws from his personal familiarly with both the weapons and the men who wielded them in the Franco-Flemish War. His previously mentioned fascination with the *goedendag* is emblematic of his general treatment of the Flemish side. He writes:

> Lors s'armèrent destre et senestre,
>
> Poissoniers, tisseranz, laniers,
>
> Bouchers, foulons, cordouanniers,
>
> Et puis aveuques les maçons
>
> Mestiers de toutes estaçons

[143] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 59; Crafter, *Materials*, p. 4.
[144] Crafter, *Materials*, p. 60.
[145] Crafter notes that Guiart most likely pulled from these eyewitness accounts most heavily between 1296 and 1303, as Guiart as personally involved in Philip IV's 1304 campaign, and so most deviations from the copied histories pre-1304 would have been from these first-hand accounts; Crafter, *Materials*, pp. 4, 13.

Qui le roi courroucier désirent.

[When arming right and left,

Fishmongers, weavers, laniers,

Butchers, fullers, cordwainers,

And then confess the masons

Professions of all stations

Who the wrathful king desired.][146]

Guiart's highly specific detailing of the precise professions present within the Flemish guild militias is contrasted by the nobility he attributes to the French side—a juxtaposition that is manifested by the "roi courroucier" (wrathful king) that Guiart describes, who is none other than Peter Coninck.[147] His profession-specific description of the Flemish lines also frames the "villainous and cruel" actions being committed against the French as decidedly unchivalrous.[148] He also specifically mentions Bruges ("En Bruges, I traitier voulons, / Où bouchers, teliers et foulons / A tel traïson s'enhardirent / Que Francois en leur liz murtrirent"), invoking the memory of the Bruges Matins to further compound his narrative representation of the Battle of the Golden Spurs at Courtrai being not a pitched battle so much as a one-sided massacre of the French nobility by their social inferiors.[149]

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[146] *Chronique Métrique*, p. 225.
[147] The French misattribution/ribbing of Coninck's name will be further explored in the *Passio*, where it is weaponized by the Flemish against their enemies.
[148] *Chronique Métrique*, p. 226.
[149] *Chronique Métrique*, p. 226.

It Is Guiart's attempt to Instil In his royal audience the magnitude of the disparity between the Flemish and French sides that results in one of the first of many cases of views of the Battle of the Golden Spurs that bisect along national lines. For Guiart, and nearly every French account of the battle to follow, the identity of the Flemish as a militia composed of tradesmen and burghers that formed their militia would be ridiculed and disgraced as unworthy opponents of Philip's army. Guiart implies that they did not know how to fight properly, or honourably, and could only engage in mindless and dishonourable of violence both on and off the battlefield. According to Guiart, the Flemish men who fought at the Battle of the Golden Spurs were murderers, not warriors. This is contrasted by the Flemish sources, who transversely frame the auxiliary nature of their militias as something to be lauded.

1.1.3 The Annales Gandenses

Composed in Ghent soon after the conclusion of the Franco-Flemish war, the *Annales Gandenses* provides a concise, comprehensive , and decisively pro-Flemish account of not only the Battle of the Golden Spurs, but the entire period of conflict with France. lead Auguste Molinier (1851-1904) to chastise its anonymous author for being "hostile aux Francais et flamand de coeur."[150] The original manuscript disappeared in the early nineteenth century (it was last recoded in Hamburg in 1824), though is thought to have consisted of 48 folios at the time of its disappearance.[151] There exists a 1720 record of the Annales in the library of the author and book-collector Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach (1683-1734) in Maestricht, and in

[150] "Hostile to the French, and Flemish at heart."; Auguste Molinier, "Les Capétiens, 1180-1328", in *Les Sources de l'histoire de France - Des origines aux guerres d'Italie (1494)* (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1903), p. 201,
[151] *Annales Gandenses*, p.xxvi.

the introduction to his 1823 edition Charles Frederick Hartmann mentions that the manuscript came into the possession of John Christopher Wolff, a professor in Hamburg, who then donated it to the state library there.[152] The manuscript appears to have disappeared after his death in 1828.[153] The chronicle is written in highly competent Latin and gives accounts of the period from 1297 to 1310. Johnstone cites Hartmann as claiming the original manuscript consisted of "48 folios of parchment, of small quarto size, the annals occupying the first 47"—the second half was continued in a second hand, consisted of the early fifteenth-century French poem *Le Bréviaire des nobles*.[154]

Very little is known about the text's author. He identifies himself as a Franciscan living in Ghent, and that he began writing it in 1308 when he was not very busy and wanted to entertain his brethren.[155] There has been some speculation that, given the period and the prevalence in the chronicle of the account of Philippa, daughter of Guy of Dampierre, betrothal to Edward I (to which Foulkes was a witness), this could correspond to a "Frère Foulkes de Gand, custode des Frères Mineurs en Flandres".[156] In the introduction to her edition of the chronicle, Hilda Johnstone pushes back against this, insisting that the indignance present in the text of Phillipa's repudiation and the unsuccessful betrothal could be expected of any loyal Flemish subject.[157] This thesis will pull extensively from Hilda Johnstone's 1951 translation, which itself was informed by Frantz Funck-Brentano's earlier 1896 edition due to the disappearance of the

[152] *Annales Gandenses*, p.xxvi.
[153] Herman Van Goethem, "De Annales Gandenses: Auteur En Kroniek. Enkele Nieuwe Elementen.", *Handelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent*, 35.1 (1981), pp. 53–54; *Annales Gandenses*, p. xxvi
[154] Johnstone, p. xxvi; Winthrop H. Rice, "Deux Poèmes Sur La Chevalerie : Le Bréviaire Des Nobles D'alain Chartier Et Le Psaultier Des Vilains De Michault Taillevent", *Romania*, 75.297 (1954), pp. 54–97.
[155] "Cum quodam tempore occupationibus non urgerer"; *Annales Gandenses*, p. 1.
[156] Joseph Kervyn de Lettenhove, Histoire De Flandre (Bruges: Beyaert, 1898), p. 407.
[157] *Annales Gandenses*, p. xi.

original manuscript.[158] As Johnstone indicates in her introduction, when Funck-Brentano wrote his edition he had access to both previous editions (namely by De Smet circa 1837) and the manuscript itself.[159] As one of the most comprehensive historical accounts of the Franco-Flemish War the *Annales* will feature heavily in both this chapter and the subsequent case study on the Courtrai Chest, where it will help inform a fresh art historical analysis of the chest's visual programme. As it pertains to the Battle of the Golden Spurs, the chronicle provides both a narrative and quantitative account of the campaign.[160] This will be drawn upon more fully when analysing the frontispiece of the Courtrai Chest. In the context of this study of the *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos* and other early texts concerned with the Franco-Flemish War, the *Annales* provides an invaluable insight into general atmosphere of the county and the socio-political situation within Ghent in particular. Of the immediate reaction within that city in the wake of the Flemish victory, the *Annales* says:

> Die crastinal post bellum predictum, audientes mane aliqui de communitate Gandensi, favorabiles Guidoni et Wilhelmo, de ipso bello rumores, elevantes vexilla eorum per villam discurrebant, statimque tota villa, attonita de rumore crescent, signa bellica Guidonis et Wilhelmi sequebatur, signis regis in terram dejectis.
>
> [On the morrow of the said battle, some of the commonalty of Ghent who were supporters of Guy and William, got news of the battle early in the morning, and

[158] Frantz Funck-Brentano, *Annales Gandenses* (Paris : A. Picard, 1896).
[159] *Annales Gandenses*, p. xxvii; *Chronicon Comitum Flandrensium*, *Corpus Chronicorum Flandriae*, ed. by J. De Smet (Brussels: CRH, 1837).
[160] DeVries, *Infantry Warfare*, p. 12.

> raising their banners began to march about the town. Soon the whole town, thunderstruck as the rumours multiplied, cast the king's standards to the ground and began to follow those of Guy and William.][161]

Note here the author's emphasis placed on the participation of the *communitate Gandensi*, "the commonality of Ghent", who rushed to fight with Guy of Namur and William of Jülich. This is a marked change from the official position of the city just twenty-four hours before; the same city that exiled the hundred-strong militia which departed to aid the rebels on the fields of Courtrai.[162] Moreover, the significance of Ghent declaring for the rebels should not be understated—it had been a bastion of French support since the outset of the conflict as early as 1296 and was ruled directly by Philip IV.[163] It is interesting to note that the first members of the community to strike out in support of the rebellion "raised their banners and began to march around the town".[164] This could suggest that this support arose from the craft guilds, who are known to have used civic marches as political praxis.[165] The Friar Minor has an impressive grasp of the mercurial political situation within the county, and an equally keen insight into the very delicate position the rebellion's leaders found themselves in off the back of their miraculous victory:

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[161] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 32.
[162] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 29.
[163] David Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders* (New York: Longman Publishing, 1992), p. 189.
[164] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 33.
[165] See Jelle Haemers' work on the *wapeninghe*; Jelle Haemers, "Ad petitionem burgensium. Petitions and peaceful resistance of craftsmen in Flanders and Mechelen (13th-16th centuries)", in *Los grupos populares en la ciudad medieval Europea*, ed. by Jelle Haemers, Jesus Telechea Solorzano, Béatrice Arizaga Bolumboru(Logrono: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2014), pp. 371–394, p. 381.

> [So John, Guy, and William, taking with them a great army from the town and territories of Ghent and Ypres, but leaving the men of Bruges behind because they had done so much in the siege of the castle of Courtrai and in the battle, and had gone to such expense, whereas the other towns had as yet done hardly anything for the count, besieged the castle and town of Lille about the end of July, making a fierce attack on both.][166]

This passage makes clear the internal political pressures facing the Flemish rebellion in the wake of their monumental victory. The two days of celebratory feasting held during the 12th and 13th of July must have been a period of considerable assessment for the likes of Guy and William, girding their momentary elation with a sober understanding that the conflict was far from over.[167] The *Annales* also suggests that the victory had a legitimising effect on the part of the anti-French parties involved, as evidenced by the arrival of John of Namur (1267-1330) in the county within a fortnight of the battle.[168] The rebellion had transitioned from a frantic stage of levying and incitement on the part of Guy and William to a near county-wide insurrection centred upon the eldest son of the imprisoned Count Guy. The fact that this new force which set out from Courtrai consisted largely of Yprois and Ghentois contingents does well to illustrate the degree to which the rebels had consolidated their powerbase amongst the three most powerful cities in the county. Their immediate target in the wake of Courtrai, the royal bastion of Lille, similarly stresses their anxiety of French retribution. As one of the most comprehensive historical accounts of the Franco-Flemish War, dictated from the point of view

[166] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 33.
[167] Verbruggen and Falter, *Opstand*, p. 167.
[168] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 33.

of a Ghentois eyewitness, the *Annales* will feature heavily in both the first and second chapters, where it will help inform a fresh art historical analysis of the Courtrai Chest's visual programme.

1.1.4 The Spiegel Historiael

Lodewijk van Velthem's vernacular Middle Dutch redaction of the *Spiegel Historiael*, the *Voortzetting van de Spiegel Historiael*, is not only a useful record for gleaning insight into the contemporary perception of the conflict at the turn of the fourteenth century, but this Middle Dutch chronicle also provides an incredibly detailed account of the Battle of the Golden Spurs with over twelve hundred lines of verse dedicated to the battle.[169] Born in the principality of Brabant sometime between 1265 and 1275, Lodewijk appears to have lived in both Paris and Ghent before serving as parish priest at Zichem (near Diest) circa 1304.[170] He occupied the same position in Velthem circa 1313.[171] These postings imply a certain degree of education, and familiarity with and access to the institutional resources located at each location. As for his historiographical contribution, his *Voortzetting* is a continuation of Jacob van Maerlant's (c. 1230-1288) similar continuation of Vincentius de Beauvais' (c. 1184-1264) *Speculum Historiale*.[172] The extant *Spiegel Historiael* is highly fragmentary, with parts 1-4 not surviving intact, but a complete manuscript of the fifth part as well as a fragment considered to be a copy

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[169] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 88.
[170] Bart Besamusca, Remco Sleiderink, Geert Warnar, "Lodewijk van Velthem, Ter inleading" in *De boeken van Velthem: auteur, oevre en overlevering*, ed. by Bart Besamusca, Remco Sleiderink, Geert Warnar (Hilversum: Verloren, 2009), pp. 7–30, p. 14.
[171] Verbrggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*,p. 88; Jongen and Piters, p. 21.
[172] Jongen and Piters, *Ghi Fransoyse,* p. 21.

of Lodewijk's autograph are extant.[173] It is in the fifth part where Lodewijk's account of the Franco-Flemish War is situated.

Lodewijk's literary interests were known to include Arthurian canon, which in turn influenced his writing of epic strophic poetry, such as the *Lancelotcompilatie* (c. 1320) as well as the *Boec van Merline* (1326), which some scholars have claimed might account for his interest in the Battle of the Golden Spurs as well as some of his more florid prose.[174] These literary flourishes include the presence of ominous birds, a grey toad emerging from the Flemish lines to spit poison in the direction of the French, and the Count of Artois's pet wolf attempting to remove his master's armour.[175] A particularly dark moment occurs when, during mass, Robert of Artois misplaces his communion wafer.[176] The presence of these supernatural occurrences reveal divine intervention, a commonplace and conventional trope in chronicles of the period.[177] However, the sheer volume of these moralising and symbolic flourishes present in the *Spiegel* certainly distinguishes it from this corpus of contemporary chronicles, save for the *Passio*. It could also indicate that Lodewijk is writing for a much wider—lay—audience than

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[173] Leiden, UB, BPL 14 E; Remco Sleiderink, "Lodewijk can Velthem", in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. By R. G. Dunphy (Brill, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), p. 1041.
[174]Nationale Bibliotheek van Nederland, KW 129 A 10; Orlanda Soei Han Lie, *The Middle Dutch Prose Lancelot* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1987), p. 27; Marjolein Hogenbirk, "Is hij het? Lodewijk can Velthem en de compilator", in *De boeken van Velthem: auteur, oevre en overlevering*, ed. by Bart Besamusca, Remco Sleiderink, Geert Warnar (Hilversum: Verloren, 2009), pp. 47–72; Ulrike Wuttke, "Dit es dinde van goedge ende quade: Eschatologie bei den Brabanter Autoren Jan van Boendale, Lodewijk van Velthem und Jan van Leeuwen (14. Jahrhundert)", aculteit Letteren en Wijsbegeerte (Gent: Universiteit Gent 2012).
[175] Lie, *The Middle Dutch Prose Lancelot*, p. 27; Velthem, II.I.IV:288, c. 2, v. 1501.
[176] "Ic sal Gode op een andren tijt/Ontfaen, alse gehent es die strijt./Des mach hi sijn al sonder hope./Het quam oes .i. padde gecropen/ Al grau, uten Vlamscen here.", II.I.IV:296, c. 2, vv. 1675–79.
[177] Verbruggen, *Battle of the Golden* Spurs, p. 94; For reading medieval chronicles as texts and their respective emphasis on narrative and rhetoric, see: Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore : The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Matthew Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

many of the other sources.[178] His narrative arc of the battle is in an altogether rhetorically and symbolically heightened register than his contemporaries, with the historical events of the clash becoming almost a stage upon which he can flex his dramatic prowess.

Catharina Peersman has argued that Lodewijk's work is based on reliable source material, pointing to Mike Kestemont's 2010 stylometric analysis in an attempt to disambiguate between "observed details" and "narrative invention", ultimately concluding that Loedewijk had access to an existing description of the battle written shortly after the event.[179] Kestemont further refined this stylometric analysis in 2013 via a methodology that consisted of isolating the sections of text that were thought to have been written solely by Lodewijk, then contrasting those against known copying, in order to identify and quantify the number of "authorial switches.[180] Much of the scholarship surrounding Lodewijk has been concerned with disentangling him from his predecessor in the Spiegel, Jacob van Maerlant, in the context of the romantic invention present in the fifth section of the chronicle.[181] Richard Trachsler has suggested, by way of his analysis of a specific episode in the *Spiegel Historiael* in which King Edward I holds calls for a "Round Table" meeting, that Lodewijk "embellished or invented parts

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[178] Sleiderink, *Lodewijk van Velthem*, p. 1041.
[179] Peersman, p. 95; Mike Kestemont, "Velthem et al. A stylometric analysis of the rhyme words in the account of the Battle of the Golden Spurs in the fifth part of the «Spiegel historiael»", in *Queeste: tijdschrift over middeleeuwse letterkunde in de Nederlanden*, 17 (Hilversum: Verloren, 2010), pp. 1-34.
[180] Mike Kestemont, "Arthur's Authors. A Quantitative Study of the Rhyme Words in the Middle Dutch Arthurian Epic", in *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 142 (Verlag), pp. 1-33, p. 11
[181] For this process, see; "Joost van Driel, Een streven naar kunst, Formele vernieuwingen in de Middelnederlandse literatuur omstreeks 1300", *Spiegel der Letteren*, 53.1, (2011) pp. 1-28; *Ludo Jongen, Miriam Piters, Ghi Fransoyse sijt hier onteert': de Guldensporenslag, Lodewijk van Velthem: Kritische editie van de Middelnederlandse tekst uit de Voortzetting van de Spiegel Historiael* (Leuven: Davidsfonds Leuven, 2002); Joseph Adrianus Anthony Maria Biemans, *Onsen speghele ystoriale in Vlaemsche : codicologisch onderzoek naar de overlevering van de "Spiegel historiael" van Jacob van Maerlant, Philip Utenbroeke en Lodewijk van Velthem, met een beschrijving van de handschriften en fragmenten* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997).

of the event," enjoying its obvious alignment with Arthurian legend, but this does not mean it should be discounted by historians as it "still remains an instructive piece of evidence."[182]

Due in part to these literary flourishes, Verbruggen felt the need to defend Van Velthem, writing "even the best source chronicles of the Middle Ages described such signs and miracles".[183] In his eyes, the narrative flourishes found throughout the chronicles hide the truth of the account.[184] To that end, the additional flourishes added by Lodewijk to his *Spiegel* are not just literary departures from historical writing; they convey and cultivate the cultural memory of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, offering edifying, moralising messages about its Flemish heroes and French villains. For instance, Lodewijk's Middle Dutch description of the clergy refers to them as wolves:

> Temet datmen hem die wapen anstac,
> Quam die wolf diese emmer ave trac
> Metten clauwen ende metten tanden.
>
> [Gravely did they bless their weapons,
> When the wolf emptied their buckets
> With his claws and teeth.][185]

[182] Richard Trachsler, 'Orality, literacy and performativity of Arthurian texts', in Handbook of Arthurian Romance : King Arthur's Court in *Medieval European Literature*, ed. by Leah Tether, Johnny McFayden (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), pp. 273–291.
[183] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 94.
[184] See Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).
[185] Velthem, II.I.IB:295, c. 2, vv. 1645–7.

Here he engages in a very specific literary trope; namely the late medieval association of wolves and clergy or nobility.[186] A closer reading of the text could lean on allusions to Isaiah 11:6 –9 ("the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb"), with the loyal animal warning its master of impending disaster while also insinuating that the Count of Artois is, himself, an unthreatening lamb. He is also, as any good storyteller (in word and perhaps in voice) is wont to do, building up to the battle by layering on aspect after aspect of omen and portent. Recent research on Dudo of Saint-Quentin's (965 – 1026) *Historia Normannorum* (c. 1015) suggests that some chronicles could have had an aural component.[187] This idea, that the *Spiegel Historiael* is designed record history as well as entertain its lay audience, creates a unique parallel to the aims of the *Passio*.

Approaching the *Spiegel Historiael* as a text intended to be broadly read and entertain as much as inform suggests the presence of a readership eager to consume new forms of narrative historical accounts packaged in the trappings of a genre they were already familiar with, and that this process was ongoing as early as 1316. By presenting his continuation to the *Spiegel* in an Arthurian context, Velthem is mythologising the events of the Franco-Flemish War in a way his reader would be primed to understand.[188] For these reasons, Lodewijk van Velthem's *Spiegel Historiael* stands as both an informative narrative account of the conflict and a useful comparison to the case studies in this thesis. Like the *Passio*, the *Spiegel Historiael*

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[186] Aleksander Pluskowski, *Wolves and the Wilderness in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), p. 134.
[187] Benjamin Pohl, 'Poetry, punctuation and performance: Was there an aural context for Dudo of Saint-Quentin's Historia Normannorum?', *Tabularia* [Online] (2016), in *Autour de Serlon de Bayeux : la poésie normande aux XIe - XIIe siècles* <http:// journals.openedition.org/tabularia/2781> [accessed 20 August 2021].
[188] The literature on medieval Arthuriana is exhaustively long, but for a recent overview conducive to understanding the cultural context behind Velthem's *Spiegel* see *The Arthur of the Low Countries: The Arthurian Legend in Dutch and Flemish Literature*, ed. by Bart Besamusca, Frank Brandsma (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2021).

reflects the burgeoning perception of the Battle of the Golden Spurs as an epic victory for the people and polity of Flanders. This version of history, presented by an educated Brabantine priest and poet, provides yet another channel to cultivate the commemoration of the Franco-Flemish War as a divinely sanctioned victory for the worthy people of Flanders and a disastrous punishment for the political and ecclesiastical leaders of Capetian France.

1.1.5 The *Chronique Rimée de Philippe le Bel*

This octosyllabic rhymed chronicle of about 8,000 lines (composed as early as 1314 and before 1317) accounts for important events between 1300 and 1317 that shaped the royal history of Capetian France during its most tumultuous period of succession. It survives in a single manuscript, containing the chronicle followed by a collection of six historical poems, four in French and two in Latin, with some dedicated to King Louis X (4 October 1289 – 5 June 1316), King Philippe V (1293 – 3 January 1322), and Pope John XXII (1249 – 4 December 1334) written by one "Mestre Geffroi de Paris".[189] The chronicle itself is unfinished, stopping in 1316.[190] Of the author nothing is known outside of his attribution to these works, but given his capabilities in both Latin and French, and his ready access to historical sources it is assumed that he was a clerk.[191] The contents of the manuscript outside of the *Chronique* include: *Les Avisémens pour le Roy Loys* (fol. 46-50), *Du Roy Phelippe qui ores règne* (fol. 50), *De Alliatis* (fol. 50, verso), *De la Création du Pape Jehan* (fol. 51), *Un Songe* (fol. 52), *Des Alliés* (fol. 53), and *De la Comete et de*

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[189] Geoffroi de Paris, *Six Historical Poems of Geffroi de Paris, Written in 1314-1318*, trans. by Walter H. Storer and Charles A. Rochedieu (Chapel Hill: Vanderbilt University, 1950), p. v; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS 146.

[190] Jean Misrahi, "La Chronique métrique attribuée à Geoffroy de Paris", ed. Armel Diverrès (Book Review), *Romance Phililogy*, 12 (1958), pp. 342-346

[191] Georges Lefebvre, "Un publiciste du XIVe siècle", review of *Six Historical Poems of Geffroi de Paris, Written in 1314-1318*, trans. by Walter H. Storer and Charles A. Rochedieu, *Annales*, 9.5 (1954), pp. 547-548, p. 547

l'Eclipse de la Lune et du Soulail (fol. 54), and *La Desputoison de l'Eglise de Romme et de l'Eglise de France pour le Siege du Pape* (fol. 55).[192] The contents of the documents have been dated as having all been composed between 1314 and 1317, given Geoffroi's stated entries.[193] The *Chronique* was first published in in 1827.[194] Extracts from the miscellaneous poems were latter published by Paulin Paris in 1836.[195]

Of the Flemings themselves Geoffroi has a relatively high opinion, describing them as skilled opponents who weathered the tides of battle with tact and determination:

Flamens assaillent durement;

Et li Flamens fort se deffendent,

Et au miex qu'il pusent se vendent

Et les reculent à grant force.

[The Flemings' assault was hard;

And the Flemings strongly defended,

And in the middle they stunk and stuck

And they retreated with great force.][196]

This juxtaposition, between the steadfastness of the Flemish and the "stinking" and perfidy of the French is emblematic of Geoffroi's portrayal of the French knights as reckless and

[192] Geoffroi de Paris, p. v.
[193] Natalis de Wailly, "Memoire sur Geffroi de Paris", in *Memoires de l'Institut National de France. Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (Paris: 1849), pp. 493-585
[194] Geffroi de Paris, *Chronique métrique de Godefroy de Paris : suivie de La taille de Paris, en 1313*, ed. by J. A. Buchon (Paris: Verdiere, 1827).
[195] Paulin Paris, *Les Manuscrits Francois de la Bibliothèque du Roi* (Paris: Paris, 1836).
[196] Geoffroi de Paris, *Chronique Rimée*, lines 1136 – 139, p. 100.

unintelligent (for riding into the marsh and getting stuck in the mud). The Flemish avoid the mud—God therefore approved of the defeat of the French. Geoffroi's rather short account of the Battle of the Golden Spurs has been widely criticised as factually impaired.[197] This is due to Geoffroi stating that the Flemings had named a new king, so great was their hatred of Philip IV; that king being Peter de Coninck ("Lor roy qu'il firent ot nom Pierre, / Un gras villain, felon et grant, / et ot seurnon de tisserrant").[198] Geoffroi also confuses the dates of several of the earlier clashes between France and Flanders.[199] The fact that these errors are the only novel contribution of Geoffroi to the account of the battle, and that the rest of his account largely follows the narrative put forward by other French chroniclers, leaves the chronicle bereft of any great contribution to the emerging memory of the battle. However, if Geoffroi is viewed not as a primary contributor but instead as a collector and perpetuator, the inclusion of an account of his battle in his chronicle is notable in so far as it struck him as something his audience—an educated urban lay community in Paris—would find particularly interesting. Moreover, his shifting of the blame from the entirety of the French force onto the shoulders of the nobility could speak to anti-patrician sentiment among the burghers of Paris fifteen years after the battle.

1.1.6 The Continuatio Prima Guilelmi de Nangiaco Chronici

[197] Pirenne, La version flamande et la version française de la bataille de Courtrai, p. 118; Verbruggen, The Battle of the Golden Spurs, pp. 60-61
[198] Geffroi, *Chronique métrique*, p. 27
[199] Verbruggem, The Battle of the Golden Spurs, p. 62; Pirenne, La version flamande et la version française de la bataille de Courtrai, p. 118.

One of the most well-known and respected thirteenth-century historians, Guillaume de Nangis (d. 1300), the custodian of the library at the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Denis, wrote his ambitious *Chronicon*, a Latin prose chronicle that provides a summary of world history until 1300. This continuation of Guillaume of Nangis's *Chronicon* was written by an anonymous Benedictine monk in the abbey of Saint-Denis c. 1316.[200] Nangis's finished his world chronicle in 1297 and died in 1300.[201] An anonymous Dyonysian monk appended his continuation Guillaum's *Chronicon* around 1316. This continuation appears alongside a new translation of Nangis' Latin chronicle into vernacular French.[202] The autograph manuscript of the continuation survives in a single extant codex that now resides in the British Library, although twenty-one other copies are known to have survived.[203] The French continuation in question also instigated a rich textual transmission history throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with over thirty copies of these versions known to have survived, no scholarly editions of the pre-1350 entries have been undertaken.[204]

The author of the *Continuatio* provides only a brief summary of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, notable in its lack of excuse for the defeat of the French—specifically the lack of the

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[200] Continuatio Chronici Guillelmi de Nangiaco, ed. Daunou and Naudet, in *RHF*, 20 (1840); Per Förnegård, "ANALYSE COMPARATIVE DE DEUX REMODELAGES DU CHRONICON DE GUILLAUME DE NANGIS (XIIIE/XIVE S.): RÉÉCRITURES LEXICO-SYNTAXIQUES" in *The Medieval Chronicle*, 9 (Brill: 2014), pp. 161-187

[201] Förnegård, p. 161

[202] Ibid.

[203] London, British Library, Royal MS 13 E IV; Daniel Williman and Karen Corsano, The World Chronicle Of Guillaume De Nangis (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), p. v; Jean-Baptiste de La Curne, "Mémoire sur la vie et les ouvrages de Guillaume de Nangis et ses continuateurs", *Mémoires de littérature, tirez des registres de l'Académie royale des inscriptions et belles lettres,* 8 (1733), p. 560-578; H. François Delaborde, "Notes Sur Guillaume de Nangis*", Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, 44 (1883), pp. 192-201; Hercule Géraud, "De Guillaume de Nangis et de ses continuateurs", *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, 3 (1842), pp. 17-46.

[204] Noël De Fribois, *Abregé des croniques de Franc*, ed. By Kathleen Daly, *Société de l'histoire de France* (Paris: Champion, 2006).

streams or ditches that are prevalent in other contemporary French accounts.[205] Their framing of the Franco-Flemish war is one of a pan-Flemish uprising "insurgentibus primo minoribus in majores" instigated by the actions of King Philip IV and his chief administrator in Flanders, Jacques de Châtillon (d. 11 July 1302).[206] Similarly to the account of Geoffroi de Paris, the continuator of the *Chronicon* places blame upon the French nobility, castigating them for "pompously and imprudently" running into battle.[207] The folly of the French is juxtaposed by a stirring portrayal of the Flemings:

> Quos Brugenses cum lanceis adjunctis et exquisite ge-
> neris, quod gothendar vulgo appellant, viriliter
> impetentes, in mortem dejiciuntquoquot illo impetu
> obviam habuerunt.
>
> [Those from Bruges with lances joined and exquisitely armed,
> with what they commonly call gothendar, manly
> rushing in, they cast down as many to death by that attack
> which they had to meet.][208]

The "gothendar" here is another reference to the *goedendag*, and its presence cements the Flemings as being well-armed and well-lead. When this is taken into account alongside the lack of treachery present in the narrative of the *Continuatio*, the folly of the French knights becomes

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[205] Verbruggen, The Battle of the Golden Spurs, pg. 81

[206] "rising from the lesser to the greater"; Guillaume de Nangis, Chronique latine de Guillaume de Nangis, de 1113 à 1300, avec les continuations de cette chronique, de 1300 à 1368. Tome 1, ed. Hercule Géraud (Paris: Renouard et Cie, 1843), p. 330.

[207] "pompatice et incubate absque belli ordine irrueunt"; Guillaume de Nangis, *Chronique*, p. 331.

[208] Guillaume de Nangis, *Chronique*, p. 331.

even more pronounced. This iteration of the memory of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, being written by a Dyonysian monk in Saint-Denis circa 1316, turns the French defeat into something of a parable. A warning against hubris and pride, and a reminder to never underestimate ones enemies. This is not to say that no credit is given to the French. Count Artois is quite literally lionized, his military folly reframed at the lost moment as a heroic death:

> Sed et Attrebati comes egregius
>
> illustrisque pugnator succurrere suis accelerans, dum
>
> in hostes tamquam leo rugiens immergit viriliterque
>
> decertat, triginta vel amplius sauciatus vulneribus, ut
>
> postmodum testate sunt oculi qui viderunt, tandem,
>
> proh dolor!
>
> [But also the excellent count of Artois
>
> and the illustrious fighter hastening to the aid of his own, while
>
> like a roaring lion he dives into the enemy and manfully
>
> he fights, wounded by thirty or more wounds, as
>
> afterwards the eyes that saw, at last,
>
> testified alas!][209]

This distinction—that the French knights as a whole were foolish, yet as individuals were heroic—allows the *Continuatio* to be critical of the French defeat while also ensuring to not besmirch the French side entirely. The addition of a testament here, invoking the "eyes that

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[209] Guillaume de Nangis, *Chronique*, p. 331.

saw", shifts emphasis entirely away from the aforementioned competency of the Flemish. The anonymous continuator walks a fine line in his task of updating Guillaume's *Chronique* in the wake of the catastrophic defeat of the French; forced to recount the folly of the flower of French chivalry, yet determined to find heroism in their demise.

1.1.7 The Oesterreichische Reimchronik

This account of the battle was written by Ottokar von Stiermarken, a knight in the service of Ottokar von Liechtenstein, and was composed in Tyrol sometime around 1316-1318.[210] As a factual account of the battle it is lacking; Ottokar himself appears to be aware of this, saying he was informed by an eye witness, but that said witness did not have a clear view of the battle as they were too busy fighting.[211] He does not elaborate further on the identity of this witness, but later makes mention of reading these things, as opposed to hearing them ("als ich han gelesen").[212] In addition to the lack of specific details, his account invents Flemish victories whole cloth, citing a battle that occurred between the Bruges Matins (May 18) and the Battle of the Golden Spurs (July 11), of which no other record exists.[213] While this "ghost battle" might engender a sense of loyalty to the Flemings, the chronicler condemns the Flemish treachery of digging—and actively concealing—ditches in the night before the battle, while also erroneously mentioning a "weaver from Ghent" who lead the uprising ("ich horte, daz er waere

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[210] Ottokar von Stiermarken, "Oesterreichische Reimchronik", ed. Joseph Seemüller, *Deutsche Chroniken*, 1.2 (1890); Josph Seemüller, "Das Münchener bruchstück der Österreichischen reimchronik", *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 38 (1894), pp. 368-376; Verbruggen, The Battle of the Golden Spurs, p. 49
[211] Ottokar von Stiermarken, p. 849-50; Ibid., p. ixx; Verbruggen, The Battle of the Golden Spurs, p. 49
[212] Ottorkar von tiermarken, p. 849, vv. 64,053.
[213] Ottokar von Stiermarken, p. 848-50; Fris, De slag bij Kortrijk, p. 59-61

von Gende ein webaere").[214] That being said, later historians have commended Ottokar's attempt at ostensibly referring to only eyewitness accounts.[215] Verbruggen does not share this view, condemning the account as "of no value: there is not one single correct and accurate piece of information in it, except that the Flemings did not take any captives".[216] If nothing else, this account demonstrates the limitations of the resources Ottokar had access to while compiling his version of the battle some fourteen years after the fact. News of the battle may have travelled far afield, but the specificities of it did not.

1.1.8 The Chronicon Comitum Flandrensium

Also known as the *Genealogiae Comitum Flandriae Continuatio Flandrensium*, this chronicle, written by Bernard of Ypres in 1329, adopts a general view of the Franco-Flemish Way as remembering the ostensibly unifying victory of the people of Flanders at the battle of the Golden Spurs in the run-up to the recent violence of the Peasant's Revolt (1323–1328).[217] Writing and appending episodes to the well-known *Genealogiae*, which was originally compiled in eleventh-century Ghent and provides an overview of the dynastic history of the counts of Flanders, Bernard's redaction begins in 1214 (with the Battle of Bouvines) and goes on to provide what Verbruggen refers to as "one of the most simple and excessive Flemish versions of the Battle of the Golden Spurs".[218] The short chronicle survives in three different versions,

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[214] This is most like a case of Ottokar confusing Peter de Coninck as being from Ghent, as opposed to Bruges; Ottokar von Stiermarken, p. 852; Verbruggen, The Battle of the Golden Spurs, p. 50
[215] Pirenne, *La Version flammande*, p. 36; Funck-Brentano, mémoire, p. 292; Delfos, *1302 door tijdgenooten verteld*, p. 94.
[216] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 50.
[217] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 111.
[218] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 11; For an overview of the *Genealogiae*, see: Jeff Rider, "Composing a Historical Compilation in the Twelfth Century: The Author's Manuscript of the Genealogia

each with varying terminuses: the first continues to the death of Robert II (d. 1111), the second to the death of Baldwin VII (d. 1119), and the third to the death of Theodoric (d. 1168).[219] The manuscript containing Bernard of Ypres' continuation has been edited by De Smet.[220]

When he mentions the Battle of the Golden Spurs, Bernard identifies the Yprois contingent and their location positioned between the rear of the Flemish lines and the French-garrisoned castle, then recounting a speech given jointly by Guy, William, and Jan van Renesse where the soldiers are told to: "fight for their wives and children" and not "let them be pierced by the sword" (Pugnate pro uxoribus et liberis vestris… quin omnes gladio perdodiantur).[221] This reflects the anxiety of violence being inflicted upon the families of those present at Courtrai and, therefore, an emphasis being places on the defence of the community as much as in furtherance of the political aspirations of the county's nobility. It frames the battle—and the wider war—as a purely defensive action on the part of the Flemish. The account also specifies the presence of a heroic Cistercian monk named Wilhelmus de Savetinghe aiding the Flemings during the course of the battle; a giant man who "plucked men from their horses" with a great club and reportedly slew over six hundred French soldiers by his own hand.[222] This self-insert, a Cistercian hero helping to aid the beleaguered Flemings, might serve as an extension of the

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Flandrensium comitum (or Flandria Generosa) from Saint-Bertin", *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture*, 4.4 (2014), pp. 1–49.

[219] Georges Declerq, "Geneaogia comitum Flandrensium", ed. by R. G. Dunphy, *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle* (London and Boston, 2010), pp. 666-67; Arras, BM, 685; Boulogne-sur-Mer, BM, 102; Brussels, KBR, 8675-89; Dijon, BM, 322; Douai, BM, 318; Douai, BM, 319; Leiden, UB, BPL 20; Lincoln, Cathedral Library, 98; London, BL, Cotton Fragments, vo.1.

[220] "Chronicon Comitum Flandrensium", ed. by Jean Joseph De Smet, in *Corpus Chronicorum Flandriae*, 1, CRH (Brussels, 1837).

[221] "Chronicon Comitum Flandrensium", p. 216.

[222] "omnes nobiles percussos et evulsos de equis eorum trucidavit… sexcentos homines honorum interfecit."; "Chronicon Comitum Flandrensium", pp. 243–44.

political goodwill that Bernard—himself a Cistercian—feels towards the Flemish cause. The close links between the Cistercians and their lay patrons in Flanders adds another layer to Bernard's interest in seeing his order represented in the battle's narrative, aside from solely being a matter of regional allegiance; he would have benefited from the patronage of these communities for years prior.[223]

Much of the rest of Bernard's account is concerned with Philip IV's subsequent dealings with the papal curia, with a specific emphasis being placed on how much the French king's defeat at Courtrai disadvantaged his footing with Pope Boniface VIII.[224] This reveals layers of anti-French sentiment within Bernard's writing, laid bare when he refers to Philip IV as "sus regem" or "pig king".[225] Although this *Chronicon* devotes only a handful of pages to the Battle of the Golden Spurs, Bernard of Ypres' interest in the conflict's broader political ramifications of the battle and elements of specific mythologising—specifically the focus on the monastic support for the Flemish cause—enables his chronicle to act as a lens through which we can see the story of the battle, already nearly three decades old by the time of his writing, warped to accommodate a fast-changing European society, enduring and engaging in revolt.

1.1.9 The *Istorie fiorentine*

[223] For the patronage of the Cistercians, see; Erin L. Jordan, "Gender Concerns: Monks, Nuns, and Patronage of the Cistercian Order in Thirteenth-Century Flanders and Hainaut", *Speculum*, 87.1 (2012), pp. 62–94.
[224] "Chronicon Comitum Flandrensium", pp. 243–44.
[225] "Chronicon Comitum Flandrensium", p. 247.

The latest literary account of the Battle of the Golden Spurs written before the outbreak of the Black Death also provides one of the longest descriptions of it.[226] Written by the Florentine banker-turned-chronicler Giovanni Villani (c. 1276–1348), this well-travelled businessman, diplomat, and Guelph was in Bruges between 1302 and 1304, then in Ghent until 1307 as part of the envoy delegated by Philip IV to collect the indemnity fines due after the Treaty of Athis-sur-Orge (1305), and Verbruggen credits Villani with giving the most detailed account of the battle that exists outside of Flemish sources—that is to say of all accounts that "adopt the French version of events".[227] After his return to Florence in 1308, he spent the remainder of his life occupying a number of civil offices—during which time his chronicles were written.[228] It is uncertain exactly when Villani himself died, but his brother, Matteo, was his continuator, and died in 1348 of the Black Death, famously leaving the date of the passing of the disease blank in his autograph manuscript, writing "The plague lasted until [blank]".[229] His account of the Battle of the Golden Spurs is considered by Verbruggen to be "the most detailed of the sources that adopt the French version of events", but Pirenne challenged the alleged closeness of Villani to the events of which he spoke, especially when the chronicler claimed he had visited later battlefields (namely Mons-en-Pévèle) before the bodies were even buried.[230]

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[226] Giovanni Villani, "Historie fiorentine", ed. L. A. Muratori, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. 13 (1728); Giovanni Villani, *Istorie Fiorentine di Giovanni Villani, Cittadino Fiorentino, Fino All'Anno MCCXLVIIV* (Milano: Societa Tipografica De'Classici Italiani, 1802).

[227] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 64; Marino Zabbia, *Villani, Giovanni – Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani – Volume 99* (2020) https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-villani_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/?fbclid=IwAR3w_s7Lvarjow-Uq8Zu6SKlGB6tgFSqREThBr3XMVQ3hG9GPnLuV_xMiuY [Accessed 21/10/2021]

[228] Zabia, *Dizionario Biografico deali Italiani*.

[229] Kenneth Bartlett, *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance* (Toronto: Heath and Company, 1992), p. 38.

[230] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 64; Pirenne, "La Version flamande", p. 43; Villani, "Historie fiorentine", ed. Muratori, p. 4.

The *Istorie fiorentine*, in which his account of the Battle of the Golden Spurs is located, is an early part of Villani's *Nuova Cronica*, the oldest manuscript of which is presently in the Vatican Library.[231] The *Cronica* is divided into twelve books, the first six of which cover Biblical times up to the year 1264, and the second six covering the years from 1264 up until Villani's time. As for his account of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, he is quite thorough—beginning with an overview of the conflict between Philip IV and Edward I in 1297 that heralded the first phase of the Franco-Flemish War (entitled, "Come il conte d'Artese sconfisse I Fiaminghi a Fornes, e come il Re d'Inghilterra passòe in Fiandra").[232] He returns to the battle itself in 1302, entitling it as a "disavventurosa sconfitta" (a "frightening defeat").[233] In his account, Villani notably characterises the Flemish cause as a "rebellion in Bruges".[234] Villani is well-informed when it comes to the leaders of the Battle; discussing at length the personages of Guy of Namur, William of Julich, Count Guy of Flanders, and of course Philip IV. He was staunchly anti-French (or at the very least despised Philip IV for his debasement of coinage and antagonistic relations with the Pope), but—as Verbruggen remarks on at length—seems to adopt a "French" version of accounts.[235] This observation is predicated upon his inclusion of the term *goedendag*, which does not appear in early Flemish accounts (as they prefer instead the term "*gepinde staf*", his reference to Pieter de Coninck by the Francophonic "Piero le Roy", and attributes French defeat to the "treachery of the ditch".[236] Villani refers to Coninck as "Piero le Roi" (as it appears in the

[231] Vatican Library, BAV Chigiano L VIII 296.
[232] "How the count of Artois fought the Flemings at Fornes, and how the King of England passed into Flanders"; Giovanni Villani, *Istorie Fiorentine di Giovanni Villani, Cittadino Fiorentino, Fino All'Anno MCCXLVIIV* (Milano: Societa Tipografica De'Classici Italiani, 1802), p. 84.
[233] Villani, *Istorie Fiorentine*, p. 89.
[234] Villani, *Istorie Fiorentine*, p. 89.
[235] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 65.
[236] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 65.

text); Villani uses French placenames where he can, and Italianate names and surnames throughout. His translation of “de Coninck” to “le Roi” can just as easily be ascribed to the internal consistency of his account as it could be to Villani coming across this information from a French source. Regardless of his source, he eschews Flemish proper names wherever possible (even though he himself lived in both Bruges and Ghent). While this view could be indicative of his lack of access to Flemish accounts at the time, or his unease with Flemish (as opposed to French and Italian), or a combination of the two in light of having compiled the account well after his tenure in Flanders had ended, it should not be afforded too much importance, or likewise over read-into. In a similar vein, Villani’s inclusion of the term *goedendag* should not be seen as indicative of having solely referenced French accounts, as while Guiart certainly seems to have originated the term, its “Flemish” foil, *gepinde staf*, is completely lacking from the *Annales Gandeses* (primarily due to the chronicle being in Latin, but its author appears entirely disinterested in the weapons employed by either side during the battle), is certainly present in the *Spiegel Historiael*, but van Velthem was notably *not* Flemish, nor apparently privy to any Flemish colloquialisms, and employs the term “enen gepinen stave” primarily as a useful descriptor and secondarily to fulfil the rhyme of the preceding line (“so quaemt al te hulpe den grave”), and *is* present in the *Chronicon Comitum Flandrensium*—which Verbruggen himself attributes as a “Flemish” source.[237] This is indicative of two things: the uniqueness of Villani’s account, and the historiographical friction generated when trying to squeeze a certain source into a specific typology.

[237] Guiart, *Branche des royaux lignages*, p. 210; Velthem, *Spiegel Historiael*, 2.288; Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 111.

Just as Bernard of Ypres' *Chronicon* frequently alludes to the role of Ypres and the Yprois people, Villani's account highlights the role of numerous Italians within the Franco-Flemish War. This includes a lengthy dialogue whereby the captains of the mercenary companies accompanying the French, consisting of Jean de Burlats, Simone di Piemonte, and Bonifatio da Montova, approach the French commanders (including the Count of Artois), and suggest a course of action.[238] In this dialogue, Villani offers an evocative description of the Flemings:

> Noi conosciamo il costume de'Fiaminghi; e' sono usciti di Cortrai come gente disperata d'ogni salute, o per combattere o per fuggirsi, e sono accampati di fuori, e lasciati nella terra lore poveri arnesi e vivanda.
>
> [We know the customs of the Flemings: they stand there as desperately and most determined men: they have left behind their food and possessions […] The Flemings, who are used to eating and drinking much, will then have to remain on an empty stomach and will be forced to leave the battlefield without being able to maintain their good battle array.][239]

This passage reveals several key observations of the Flemish disposition leading up to the battle, ostensibly from the second-hand sources to which Villani had access and perhaps even layered from within his own memory of living in Flanders. The first is a generally positive opinion the non-French commanders had of the Flemish force, particularly in regards to their determination and battle array. As both DeVries and Verbruggen suggest, the unwillingness of the Flemish line to break in the face of the French cavalry charge was one of, if not the,

[238] Verbuggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 68.
[239] Villani, *Istorie Fiorentine*, p. 65; Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 68.

deciding factor in their overall victory.[240] His imagined dialogue also alludes to the desperateness of the Flemish position directly leading up to the battle; having arrived with perilously few provisions or possessions aside from what they immediately required on the field. Within Villani's account, this dialogue—a concise acknowledgement of the Flemish side and the proposition of advice that French decidedly did not follow—serves to exculpate the Italian crossbowmen involved in the battle from any charges of cowardice or ineptitude. It is uncertain how many crossbowmen were present on the French side during the Battle of the Golden Spurs. Though the Genoese crossbowmen were the most famed throughout the period (and would have been well within the capacity to have been hired by the French), Verbruggen points to how that, between the Bruges Matins (May 18, 1302), and the Battle of the Golden Spurs (July 11, 1302), there would have been very little time for Robert of Artois to hire and acquire a full contingent of Genoese crossbowmen; leading Verbruggen to suggest that, despite Villani's account—which is the sole account to make mention of the crossbowmen's identity in detail—they were most likely French.[241] This is only compounded by the general lack of information surrounding the identities and practices of the Genoese throughout the period.[242] Modern digital models place the travel time between Genoa and Paris (as an arbitrary example—it is unsure where specifically the French forces coalesced before entering Flanders) at roughly thirty days.[243] While this would, theoretically, make the time required to send a

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[240] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 129.
[241] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 194.
[242] For an overview of recent scholarship on the Genoese crossbowmen, specifically at Crécy but also more generally, see; Kelly DeVries, Niccolò Capponi, "The Genoese Crossbowmen at Crécy", in *The Battle of Crécy: A Casebook*, ed. by Michael Livingston and Kelly DeVries (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), pp. 441–446.
[243] Scheidel, W. and Meeks, E. (May 2, 2012). ORBIS: The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World. Retrieved 26 Oct, 2021, from http://orbis.stanford.edu.

messenger to Genoa and return with a contingent of crossbowmen possible, it certainly seems unlikely. A delegation departing from Lombardy would be several days longer still. This is not discounting Genoese/Lombard garrisons stations—permanently or temporarily—geographically closer to France, or that Philip IV already had some in his employ, but there is admittedly no evidence for either. However, what Villani's account reveals is that, circa his writing of his chronicle some twenty to thirty tears after the fact, there was the *perception* that an Italian contingent had been present at the battle, and that this association was sufficiently negative as to warrant Villani coming to the defence of his maligned countrymen. Moreover, this suggests that the memory of the battle was alive and well outside of Flanders and France circa the middle of the fourteenth century.

1.2 Reintroducing the *Passio*

This short work occupies only a single foliated page, yet the so-called *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos* contains a seething account of the events surrounding the Battle of the Golden Spurs, laced with tongue-in-cheek pericopes that suggest and support the ferocious stoking of righteous anger against the French in the wake of the Flemish victory. This account, which will serve as the first case study featured in this thesis, bridges the gap between the extant corpus of literary sources, introduced in the previous sections. The anonymously-penned prose of the *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos* was, even upon its discovery by the chronicler Adam of Usk (c. 1352-1430) circa 1406, a most "extraordinary" find.[244] Detailing events which transpired over a century prior, the short work occupies only a single foliated

[244] Adam Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk: 1377-1421*, ed. by C. Given-Wilson, trans. by C. Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 219.

page yet contains a seething interrogation of contemporary events ensconced within layers of biblical allusion and literary tradition. To quote its most recent English translator Chris Given-Wilson: "the subtlety of this mock-passion—which celebrates the Flemish victory over the French at Courtrai on 11 July 1302, and was presumably written in the early fourteenth century—cannot always be conveyed in translation."[245] The entire passage is shot through with snappy wordplay, tongue-in-cheek pericopes, and linguistic gymnastics that suggest a brilliant mind chewing through recent events.[246] When scholars refer to this recently-resurfaced text, it is treated only to a brief literary or linguistic review as nearly every work engaging with it has been an attempt at contextualisation and categorisation.[247] While the presentation of the *Passio* is frequently limited to the unique genre conventions to which it so closely subscribes, mainly due to its challenging nature as both a highly literary and theological text, its adaptation of an unusual genre reveals a deeply-felt collective antagonism towards the French in the immediate aftermath of the Battle of the Golden Spurs; what Catherina Peersman calls a "bitter aftertaste of the French occupation".[248]

The *Passio* is said to survive in a single copy of Adam of Usk's *Chronicon* (1377–1421), which itself is a continuation of Ranulph Higden's (d. 1364) *Polychronicon*.[249] Higden, a Benedictine monk at the monastery of St. Werburgh in Chester, wrote his Latin world chronicle sometime in the mid fourteenth century; the work was so well received that it was translated

[245] Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 219.
[246] Given-Wilson points out how large a role assonance plays in conveying the comedy of the poem. These include 'infelix' and 'in celis' (Matt. 16:, and 'uilis Dei' for 'filius Dei'. See: Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 219.
[247] De Smet, "Passio Francorum secundum Flemyngos", pp. 289–320.
[248] Peersman, "Constructing Identity", p. 93.
[249] British Library, MS 10104.

into English as early as 1387.[250] A detached quire of Usk's *Chronicon* was discovered among the manuscripts of the duke of Rutland in Belvoir castle in 1885 and it is this section which contains the *Passio*.[251] Given-Wilson suggests they originally came from the same manuscript as both are written on vellum, with folios measuring approximately 37 x 25 cm with considerably wide margins.[252] The *Passio* is fully incorporated into the text of the *Chronicon*, with no line breaks or indentation to account for rhyme or meter. It occupies half of the recto of a single folio, and most of its verso.[253]

1.2.1 Adam Usk and the Rediscovery of the Passio

Adam of Usk was a product of Oxford, having studied civil and canon law sufficiently enough to have been made a notary public by Pietro Pileo di Prata, Archbishop of Ravenna (r. 1370–1387) by 1381.[254] He read and taught law there for a further decade.[255] He was also a proud Welshman, and as such the Welsh revolt in September 1400 was "a pivotal event" in his

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[250] For Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, see: *The British Museum Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts*, 1836-1840 (London: British Museum, 1843), p. 12; J.G. Edwards, 'Ranulf, monk of Chester', *English Historical Review*, v. 47 (1932), p. 94; John Taylor, *The Universal chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 114–17, p. 154; David Woodward, 'Medieval Mappaemundi', in *The History of Cartography, vol. 1: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. by J.B. Harley & David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 286–370 (pp. 312–313, 364–365); James Freeman, 'The Manuscript Dissemination and Readership of the Polychronicon of Ranulph Higden, c. 1330-c. 1500' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2013), pp. 7, 68, 70, 130, 142, 150, 151, 174, 180, 210, 248-49; Cornelia Leer and Keith D. Lilley, 'Universal Histories and their Geographies: Navigating the Maps and Texts of Higden's Polychronicon' in Universal chronicles in the High Middle Ages, ed. by Michele Campopiano and Henry Bainton (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2017), pp. 274–301, p. 287; Quan Gan, 'A Study of the four manuscripts of the Polychronicon in the British library, with special focus on British Library, Additional MS 10104' (University College London: unpublished MA research, 2018).
[251] Usk, *Chronicon*, p. xxxviii; For an overview of the Duke of Rutland's collecting sensibilities, see: House of Commons Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Rutland*, vol. 1-4 (Cambridge: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1888).
[252] Ibid., p. xxxix.
[253] The author is indebted to Professor Given-Wilson for providing copies of the folio containing the *Passio*; See Appendix, E.
[254] Usk, p. xiv.
[255] Ibid.

life.[256] He travelled widely, serving as a papal chaplain and auditor in Rome from 1402 to 1406.[257] It was there that he lost most of his wealth and possessions in the aftermath of a riot in 1406, after which he departed and declared his allegiance to the Avignon claimant Antipope Benedict XIII (1328–1423)—an act which saw him summarily excommunicated by Pope Gregory XII (c. 1326–1417).[258] His mobility and political engagement can be credited as a significant contributing factor to his discovery of the *Passio* in St Mary's (Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk te Brugge) in Bruges circa 1406, for, being penniless and effectively temporarily exiled from England due to his political affiliations, he spent two years wandering through Flanders, France, and Normandy while awaiting royal pardon.[259] He writes of the years 1406-1407:

> Per dictum biennium, per Flandriam, Franciam, Normanniam et Britaniam, multorum espiscoporum, abbatum et procerum consiliis satis inde lucrando, perlustraui patrias. Et bis interim, per Wallicos in quibus fiduciam habui, totaliter, saltem altera uice, dormiens usque ad braccas inclusiue, spoliatus fui.
>
> [During these two years I wandered through the lands of Flanders, France, Normandy and Brittany, making enough to live on from the payments which various bishops, abbots, and noblemen gave me for counsel. Twice during this time I was stripped clean by Welshmen in whom I had placed my trust—

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[256] Ibid., p. xxiii; For an analysis of the formation of national identity in medieval Wales, see: Michael Richter, 'National Identity in Medieval Wales', *Medieval Europeans* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998); Huw Pryce, 'British or Welsh? National Identity in Twelfth-Century Wales', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 116 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 775-801.
[257] Ibid., xxv.
[258] Ibid., p. xxxii; Mandell Creighton, *A History of the Papacy from the Great Schism to the Sack of Rome*, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1907); *A Companion to the Great Western Schism: (1378-1417)*, ed. Joëlle Rollo-Koster, Thomas Izbicki, in Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 17 (Leiden: Brill, 2009)
[259] Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 213.

> particularly on the second occasion, when I was asleep, and everything was taken, even my breeches.][260]

The *Passio*, with its strong anti-royal, antiauthoritarian narrative presented in an intellectual package that spoke to both clerk and cleric alike, would perhaps have resonated particularly keenly with Usk; the through-line of independence and victorious underdogs striking a particularly poignant note while Usk was begging for charity from his peers and being waylaid by his own countrymen.[261] The degree to which he fully appreciated the historical elements of the *Passio* is uncertain, especially concerning regional characters such as Peter Coninck, but it is no great leap to think that the same spirit that undergirded his support for the Glyndŵr Rising (1400-1415) would be simpatico with the Flemish struggle depicted in the *Passio*.[262] Usk used his international position to levy support for Welsh communities during the conflict. In 1405 he petitioned the pope for funds to restore the monastery of St Benedict in Usk after it and much of the wider town were burned during the war.[263] He also describes the early actions taken by the Welsh rebel Gruffudd ab Owain Glyndŵr (c. 1375–1412) in surprisingly passive, if not praising, terms:

> Tota illa estate Oweyn Klyndor cum pluribus Wallie proceribus, regni exules et regis proditores habiti, in montanis et siluestribus delitentes, aliquando

[260] Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 214.
[261] Steven Justice, *Adam Usk's Secret* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), p. 18.
[262] Antonio Gransden, *Historical Writing in England: 550-1307 and 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), p. 177; Alicia Merchant, *The Revolt of Owain Glyndŵr in Medieval English Chronicles* (Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 2014), p. 39.
[263] Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 193.

> depredando, aliquando insidias et insultus eis inferentes interficiendo, partes WestWalie et NorthWalie non modice infestarunt.
>
> [All this summer Owen Glendower and several of the Welsh chieftains, whom the king regarded as traitors and outlaws from his kingdom, severely devastated West and North Wales, taking refuge in the mountains and woodlands before emerging either to pillage or slaughter those who tried to attack or ambush them.][264]

This is an example of Usk's complexity as a narrator.[265] His description of the revolt in relation to the king is especially telling, as it frames the account in terms that allow him to maintain an air of feigned ambivalence. According to Alicia Marchant, this delicate balance is frequently broken as Usk's "narrative objectivity has completely collapsed and Adam Usk becomes the central character in his chronicle history".[266] This is reinforced in his accounts of 1401, where he outright refers to the English as invaders and goes on to list Welshmen killed at their hands.[267] He was also anxious regarding royal edicts supressing the speaking of Welsh ("decretum destruccionis lingue Wallice"), of which he himself was almost certainly a native speaker.[268] Though accounts of the revolt sporadically appear throughout his *Chronicon*, he invariably takes the side of the common man; lamenting on the destruction of property and the loss of life inflicted by either side during the conflict. Returning to the period in which Usk discovered the *Passio*, it would have almost certainly been soon after the Battle of Pwll Melyn (5 May, 1405).

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[264] Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 135.
[265] Merchant, p. 39
[266] Ibid.
[267] Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 145.
[268] Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 146.

This would have been even more meaningful an event for Usk, as apart from being Welsh himself the battle took place directly adjacent to his home (giving rise to the dual appellate of "the Battle of Usk").[269] The catastrophic defeat of the Welsh rebels during the battle renders Usk's discovery of the *Passio* somewhat bittersweet; an indigent chronicler stranded hundreds of miles away from his home, dutifully continuing his work while watching monumental events unfold at a distance.

The scholarly treatment of the *Passio* is both limited and demonstrative of the liminal space it occupies between disciplines—a popular prose passion couched within a larger historical chronicle. It was deemed profane enough to warrant exclusion from Edward Maunde Thompson's edition of Usk's chronicle circa 1904.[270] The previously-mentioned 1997 Given-Wilson translation is its most recent editorial iteration within English scholarship, and the lack of English-language analysis of the text between the two editions could perhaps explain the lack of scholarly engagement with the material outside of the Dutch-speaking world. Catharina Peersman's chapter "Constructing Identity: Language and Identity in the Narration of the Franco-Flemish conflict (1297-1305)" in *Past, Present and Future of a Language Border: Germanic-Romance Encounters in the Low Countries* situates the poem amongst the other early sources of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, and even her limited engagement with the *Passio* leans on its earliest Belgian scholarship.[271] She argues that such varying and partisan accounts of the battle formed the foundational basis for a processes of mythmaking that plagues Belgian

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[269] Davies, R. R., *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr* (Oxford: OUP Oxford), p. 240.
[270] Adam Usk, *Chronicon Adae de Usk: A.D. 1377-1421*, ed. by Edward Maunde Thompson, trans. by Edward Maunde Thompson (London: Oxford University Press, 1904).
[271] Peersman, "Constructing Identity", p. 93.

identity politics to this day.[272] Though her critical reading is predicated upon a linguistic approach to this socio-historical phenomenon, and aims to unpack the philological divergences that occur from the outset of the battle's aftermath, a by-product of her research is the conclusion that the history of the Battle of the Golden Spurs is a vague and continually shifting record—seemingly defying concrete attempts to emphatically state exactly what happened. Much like Verbruggen, Peersman meticulously picks through source after source; the fact that she is afforded a mere chapter to do what Verbruggen did with a book, as well as the core divergence of her linguistic analysis with his historical one, means that there are of course considerable methodological differences between the two. A criticism of her work can also be attributed to the topical nature of her chapter: a bulk of analysis culminates in condensing a series of sources into a concrete timetable of "mythmaking" that seeks to trace the process by which the events of the conflict transitioned from historical fact to national paean.[273] However, as has already been demonstrated by Verbruggen's scepticism of early primary sources and even later historiographies, many early histories were themselves attempts at mythologizing and explanation.[274] Verbruggen's process can nonetheless be further refined by taking into account Peersman's socio-linguistic framework. When Verbruggen writes, "This is not to say that a Flemish rebellion was unavoidable. An able administrator would have been able to make good very many things. However, the King of France appears to not have had much confidence in Flemish sentiments"[275] it is important to realise that any narrative which insinuates a single

[272] Peersman, "Constructing Identity", p. 91.
[273] Peersman, "Constructing Identity", p. 97, Table 2 "Phases in the canonization process".
[274] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 31.
[275] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs* ,p. 21.

‘Flemish rebellion’ or ‘Flemish sentiment’ is succumbing to the very historical paroxysms that Verbruggen does so much to unpack in his historiographical analysis.

This raises another aspect of the mock-passion’s modern reception, as even though it is sufficiently well-known throughout the Low Countries it has managed to escape extensive scholarly review.[276] The most comprehensive monograph on the poem is J.M. De Smet’s *Passio Francorum secundum Flemyngos. Het Brugse spotevangelie op de nederlaag van de Fransen te Kortrijk* published in the July 1977 volume of the provincial and local history journal *De Leiegouw*.[277] De Smet remarks on the “over 150” pericopes to be found within the text (a much less conservative number than the diplomatic “over ninety” Peersman mentions in her chapter), though he only goes so far as to lay out fifteen specific examples within the body of his article—though one gets the sense that he would have gladly gone on had he the time or space within the journal.[278] The printing of the *Passio* that accompanies his article contains many more pericopes situated amongst its end notes. The density of the pericopes makes for a staggeringly impressive formula: 190 lines of prose divided by De Smet’s upper number of 150 pericopes—most which constitute entire lines—makes for a text that is nearly entirely biblical allusion. This is the largest single factor for its attribution as being “written by and intended for educated religious men.”[279] It must also be noted that the text of the *Passio* published

[276] One notable illustrated printing occurred immediately after the Battle of the Scheldt (October 2 – November 8, 1944) in Antwerp after it was liberated from Nazi occupation during the Second World War, as a testament to both the enduring Flemish fascination with 1302 and its use as a nationalist rallying cry throughout the twentieth century. See; *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos. [Boekversiering: Helene van Coppenolle]* (Antwerp: Standaard-Boekhandel, 1944).
[277] De Smet, J.M., “Passio Francorum secundum Flemyngos. Het Brugse spotevangelie op de nederlaag van de Fransen te Kortrijk”, *De Leiegouw*, 19 (1977), p. 289–320.
[278] De Smet, “Passio Francorum”, pp. 289, 296–297; Peersman, “Constructing Identity”, p. 93.
[279] Peersman, “Constructing Identity”, p. 93.

alongside De Smet's article is 195 lines long, and is the version which Peersman references in her article.[280] As the surviving folio of the *Chronicon* clearly demonstrates, Usk went to no undue length to differentiate the text of the *Passio* from the rest of his chronicle—incorporating it wholesale into the body of his writing with little regard for any original structure (though there of course exists no evidence for what the text Usk was copying would have looked like either way).[281] The text printed alongside De Smet's monograph is formatted such that it allows for the space necessary to include a wrote Dutch translation alongside the Latin original, which, as the two are presented as dual columns within the journal, means Usk's Latin lines are hardly more than a half dozen words long. This translation is contrasted by the treatment given by Given-Wilson to the text who, with the added luxury of publishing the entire *Chronicon* as a page-by-page translation, was able to present the Latin and its English equivalent in a near identical format as the original. That is in no way a mark against De Smet, nor is it a mark for Given-Wilson—rather it is important to preface a closer reading of the text by observing the editorial interventions imposed upon the extant copy of the *Passio* by previous scholars.

1.2.2 The "mock Passion" as a Literary Genre

The genre of the *Passio* is part of what has kept previous historians from engaging with it to the fullest extent possible, but it is also what makes this text unique amongst the corpus of extant narratives of the Franco-Flemish War. Its title invokes the Christian tradition of

[280] The transcription of Given-Wilson's edited English translation of the *Passio* is included in the appendix of this thesis, for clarity of reference. Any lines given will be in reference to this transcription. See; Appendix 1.1.
[281] Appendix, 1.2.

memorialisation, referring to its narrative explicitly as a "passion".[282] The stoic origins of the term, as a pejorative relating to "affliction" or "seizure", underwent a transformation during the medieval period during which times the Christian ideals of suffering and passion—in the vein of Christ's suffering and passion—were elevated, emphasised, and reflected in aspirational hagiographical "passios".[283] In this context, referring to something explicitly as a "passio" is to situate it in a very specific tradition. A tradition that includes impassioned martyrs such as Polycarp and Perpetua.[284] Various writers have used this hagiographical genre as a means by which to interact with particularly subversive or polemical topics, taking the well-established form and twisting it to their own parodical agendas. Some of the more stark examples come from the Reformation, whereby even the genre of "hagiography" itself was an intensely political mode.[285] The existence of the *Passio* attests to medieval precedents. Paul Lehmann compiled an early survey of extant "mock passions" in his 1922 *Die Parodie im Mittelalter.[286]* Within it, he includes four mock passions: a 1289 text celebrating Edward I's punishment of a

[282] For an overview of the genre of traditional Christian Passions, see: Ellen Aitken, *Jesus' death in Early Christian Memory: The Poetics of the Passion* (Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); Peter Parshall, "The Art of Memory and the Passion", in *The Art Bulletin*, 81.3 (1999), pp. 456–472; Thomas Bestul, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1996).
[283] Erich Auerbach, *Literary Language & Its Public In Late Latin Antiquity And In The Middle Ages*, trans. by Ralph Manheim (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 70; "Passio Judaeorum Pragensium secundum Johannem rusticum quadratum", ed. Paul Lehmann, *Die Parodie im Mittelalter, mit 24 ausgewählten parodistischen Texten*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1963), 211–16.
[284] For an overview of the martyrdom of Saint Polycarp, see: Paul Hartog, "The Christology of the Martyrdom of Polycarp: Martyrdom as both imitation of Christ and election by Christ", in *Perichoresis*, 12.2 (2014), pp. 137–151; Sara Parvis, "The Martyrdom of Polycarp", in *The Expository Times*, 118.3 (2006), pp. 105–112; Leonard Thompson, "The Martyrdom of Polycarp: Death in the Roman Games", in *The Journal of Religion*, 82.1 (2002), pp. 2–-52; For an overview of the martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicty, see: Thomas Heffernan, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Joyce Salisbury, *Perpetua's Passion: The Death and Memory of a Young Roman Woman* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Judith Perkins, "The 'Passion of Perpetua': a Narrative of Empowerment", in *Latomus*, 53.4 (1994), pp. 837–847; Brent Shaw, "The Passion of Perpetua", in *Past & Present*, 139 (1993), pp. 3–45.
[285] Such as the 1521 *Passio Lutheri*, see: Rebecca Sammel, "The 'Passio Lutheri': Parody as Hagiography", *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 95 (1996), pp. 157–174.
[286] See; Lehmann, "Die Parodie", p. 211.

regent, the 1302 *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos*, a 1306/1307 text celebrating Edward I's victory over Robert the Bruce, and the 1389 *Passion of the Jews of Prague*.

The first of these four passions, the *Narratio de Passione Iusticiariorum*, dates from 1289.[287] It survives in two manuscripts, held at the British Library and Oxford, respectively, and was included in an edited transcription of the former by Hilda Johnstone and Thomas Tout in 1906.[288] Of the four passions featured in this section, it is both the earliest and shortest of its kind, numbering 107 lines of prose text (as opposed to the 110 lines of the Flemish *Passio*). Known more colloquially by its anglicised name, *The Passion of the Judges*, the mock-passion takes its inspiration from the corruption scandal of 1289 when Edward I, returning from Gascony, enacted a suite of anti-corruption measures that saw a number of high ranking officials—including the ten judges that lend the passion its name—removed from power in a very severe and public fashion.[289] Similarly to later passions, the *Narratio* is not concerned with overt moralising so much as it is interested in relentlessly mocking its subjects. The political fallout for many of the judge's named in the poem was suspiciously brief (one of whom was reinstated in his position in less than a year), but it is in their public humiliation that the author of the text found their muse.[290]

[287] T. F. Tout, Hilda Johnstone, *State Trials of the Reign of Edward the First, 1289–1293* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1906), p. 94; London, British Library, Add. MS. 31826; All Souls College, Oxford, MS. 39, f. 109b.
[288] Ibid.; London, British Museum, MSS. 31826, fol. 54; Oxford, All Souls College, MS. 39, fol. 109b.
[289] Ralph V. Turner, 'The Reputation of Royal Judges under the Angevin Kings', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 11 (1979), 301–316, p. 304.
[290] Tout and Johnstone, *State Trials*, p. 94.

The second passion, the *Passio Scotorum Perjuratorum*, can be dated to 1307.[291] While it is mentioned by both Newman and Lehmann, the only significant historical engagement with the text—and its first publication in full—came after it was shown to the Marquis of Bute from amongst the collection of the Public Library of the Reigate Church in Surrey.[292] The manuscript in which it was copied contains a *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, ascribed to Stephen Byrchington (1382-1407), and a collection of anonymous Scottish chronicles, one of which being a copy of Brutus's *Chronicle of England*; it was from these that Bute was sent two pieces, the *Gesta Scotorum*, within which was the *Passio Scotorum Perjuratorum* itself.[293] The *Gesta* is a short Latin chronicle celebrating the Scots' homage to the English, its origin being fourteenth-century England.[294] The chronicle survives in two manuscripts: London, Lambeth Palace Library MS. 99 and the aforementioned Reigate, Parish Church of St. Mary, Cranston Library Item 1117.[295] It should be noted that the *Passio Scotorum* is only extant in the Reigate manuscript. Returning to its critical resurfacing circa 1885, Bute labelled its chief characteristics as "cruelty" and "profanity".[296] As with all of the other mock-passions being discussed in this chapter, it is essentially a comic narrative that employs biblical pericopes (namely from scripture and the

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[291] This is due to the last event it references, being the execution of Thomas and Alexander Bruce, occurring in February 1307, and the assumption that Edward I would not have been written about so light-heartedly after his death. This suggestion on the part of Bute provides a useful terminus post quem, but there is little evidence to assume that the author of such a transgressive text would be swayed to adopt a more serious tone when writing about the late king posthumously. See; Marquis of Bute, "Notice of a Manuscript of the Latter Part of the Fourteenth Century, Entitled Passio Soctorum Perjuratorum", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 19 (1885), 166–192, p. 185.
[292] Marquis of Bute, "Notice", p. 166.
[293] Marquis of Bute, "Notice", p. 166.
[294] Kennedy, Edward Donald, "Gesta Scotorum contra Anglicos", in: Encyclopaedia of the Medieval Chronicle, ed. by: Graeme Dunphy, Cristian Bratu. Consulted online on 15 November 2021 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2213-2139_emc_SIM_000970.
[295] London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 99, fols. 203r to 206r; Reigate, Cranston Library, Item 1117, fols. 274r–279v
[296] Marquis of Bute, "Notice", p. 166.

Book of Judges) throughout. It also deals with a clash of two distinct kingdoms, one oppressing the other, in a manner that is reminiscent of the *Passio*.

Dating roughly eighty years after the Flemish *Passio*, the *Passion of the Jews of Prague* is a medieval parody that also employs the structural and genre conventions of a passion to ridicule its eponymous subjects. Similarly to the *Passio*, the *Passion of the Jews of Prague* contains a "virtuosic pastiche of authoritative texts, such as the Gospels and the Easter liturgy, that would have been known by heart to much of the intended audience".[297] Unlike the *Passio*, it seeks to memorialise not a militaristic triumph, but an Easter pogrom that devasted Prague's Jewish community in the spring of 1389.[298] Newman classifies it in terms similar to that of the *Passio*: an ambitious literary source that is attempting to make sense of a certain event, as opposed to a handful of surviving chronicle entries which are more concerned with its mere description.[299] The fact that this extant corpus is heavily weighted towards England—with two out of the four originating in England during the reign of Edward I—prompted Lehman to suggest that the genre was itself of English origin and then spread throughout Europe during the fourteenth century.[300]

Newman suggests the theory of English origination of the genre is reinforced via the marriage of King Richard II (1367–1400) to Anne of Bohemia (1366–1394) in 1382, creating a

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[297] Barbara Newman, "'The Passion of the Jews of Prague': The Pogrom of 1389 and the Lessons of a Medieval Parody", *Church History*, 81 (2021), 1–26, p. 1.
[298] For an overview of the 1389 pogrom, see: Milan Žonca, "'…and the order was upset': Easter, the Eucharist, and the Jews of Prague, 1389", in *The Medieval Roots of Antisemitism*, ed. Jonathan Adams, Cordelia Heß (New York: Routledge, 2018); Evina Steinova, "Passio Iudeorum Pragensium: Tatsachen und Fiktionen über das Pogrom im Jahr 1389", in *'Avigdor, Benesch, Gitl' - Juden in Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien im Mittelalter* ed. Helmut Teufel, Milan Repa, Pavel Kocman (Prague: Klartext-Verlag, 2016).
[299] Newman, "The Passion", p. 181.
[300] Newman, "The Passion", p. 181.

strong cultural link that neatly accounts for the 1389 Prague passion.[301] In this context, the Flemish *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos* is given a position as an early adopter of a what was at that point a quintessentially English tradition. This is indicative of the strong socio-economic ties between England and Flanders circa 1302.[302] However, the fact that the *Passio Francorum* is the second earliest extant mock-passion, neatly sandwiched between the 1289 *Narratio* and the 1307 *Passio Scotorum*, complicates the typology put forward by Newman and Lehmann. Firstly, it must be pointed out that the entire corpus is composed of only two English passions. Secondly, of the two earliest examples one is markedly not English, and its Flemish identity is central to its entire narrative premise. The most likely instance is that the genre of mock-passion originated not in one place (namely England), but arose contemporaneously within similarly educated, Latinate communities on both sides of the Channel. That there are no French precedents for the specific genre of mock-passion is surprising, and perhaps once again indicative of the textual ties between England and Flanders during the Franco-Flemish War.

1.2.3 The Many Pericopes of the Passio

The most striking facet of the *Passio* is also the most ephemeral, and difficult to quantify or definitively calculate. This is the pervasive number of Biblical pericopes staggered throughout the text, often back-to-back, and hinging on wordplay and insinuation that makes delineating between the text of the *Passio* and the texts from which it draws incredibly challenging. They are not exegetical commentary but, to quote John Chijioke Iwe in his analysis

[301] Newman, "The Passion", p. 184.
[302] This cross-channel connection will be further explored in the context of the importation of the Courtrai chest from Flanders to England in the second case study of this thesis.

of *Jesus in the Synagogue of Capernum,* "find [their] significance or meaningful interpretation within a textual unit".[303] Any methodology seeking to disentangle and contextualise these pericopes is met with a host of questions: When counting pericopes, does one refer to the number of instances in the text of the *Passio* outright (being the given line), or the number of potential allusions in any given line? Multiple instances of pericope can refer to a plurality of scriptural references. For example, the lines:

> Dici ei Petrus, 'Scriptus est enim, "Nonoccides, quia qui gladio percutit, gladio peribit".' Et ipse Petrus, extracto gladio, abscidit auriculam eius dextram.
>
> Peter said unto him, 'Truly it is written, "Thou shalt not kill; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword". ' Then this same Peter drew his sword and smote off his right ear.[304]

This instance refers outright to Exodus 20:13 ("Thou shalt not kill"), but also Matthew 26:51 ("And behold one of them that were with Jesus, stretching forth his hand, drew out his sword: and striking the servant of the high priest, cut off his ear."), but *also* Matthew 26:52 ("Then Jesus saith to him: Put up again thy sword into its place: for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword."). [305] To that end, is this a single pericope (as it relates to singular event in the narrative of the *Passio*)? Two pericopes, as it references two separate sources of scripture? Or three pericopes, as it pulls from three instances of scripture across two sources—being that Matthew 26:51 and Matthew 26:52 can be counted as separate and distinct from one another?

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[303] John Chijioke Iwe, *Jesus in the Synagogue of Capernaum: The Pericope and its Programmatic Character for the Gospel of Mark* (Rome: Editrice Pontifica Università Gregoriana, 1999).
[304] Appendix 1.1, lines 58-61; See Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 222.
[305] Exodus 20.13; Matthew 26.51; Matthew 26.52.

As previously mentioned, De Smet is the most generous when parsing the mock-passion, ascribing 192 direct or inferred pericopes.[306] So sensitive is he to the mere potential of pericope that he goes so far as to attribute "rex Francorum" as an allusion to "rex Judeorum".[307] Given-Wilson, for his part as transcriber and translator, is more inflexible—merely noting clusters of pericopes as and when they occur in the form of outright scriptural references. This accounts for the difference in pericope-count between De Smet and Given-Wilson, and Peersman's (apt) hesitation at giving a firm number. Much as knowledge of biblical scripture is a necessary prerequisite to understanding the humour of the *Passio*, the structure of the *Passio* is made much easier to follow if the reader has already memorised the scriptural passages on which it leans so heavily. For example, there are at least eighteen pericopes that allude to the Gospel of Matthew, which accounts for roughly 40% of the allusions contained within the text.[308] These pericopes are at best humorous and at worst sacrilegious, given the dissonance between the projection of biblical scripture against a backdrop of recent political, militaristic events. In classical rhetoric, a core component of creating lasting "visual" images is that they be striking.[309] In this context, the *Passio* creates a causal loop whereby the very presence of the pericopes cements in its audience a more lasting image of its narrative.

While the presence of biblical pericope, combined with the genre identifier of "passio", would at first glance insinuate a level of profanity or subversion (as the *Passio* has been identified to be as such by modern translators, notably the aforementioned Thompson

[306] De Smet, "Passio Francorum", pp. 317–19.
[307] Ibid., p. 296
[308] Appendix, Graph 1.1.
[309] Peter Parshall, "The Art of Memory and the Passion", *The Art Bulletin*, 81 (1999), 456–472, p. 456.

translation of Usk's *Chronicon*), this is more of an exercise in projecting post-medieval conceptions of "secular" and "sacred" texts rather than interfacing with the taboos and societal norms of fourteenth-century Flanders. Barbara Newman provides a useful framework with which this juxtaposition can be fully contextualised in its contemporary societal and literary environment, writing: "But for us, the secular is the normative, unmarked default category, while the sacred is the marked, asymmetrical Other. In the Middle Ages it was the reverse".[310] This supposition explains Thompson's decision to exclude the *Passio* from his translation of Usk's work, and transforms the shock modern readers might feel when Pieter Coninck quotes John 18:22 while slicing off pieces of Robert of Artois' face into a more humorous—if not equally dark—sense of grim satisfaction.[311]

Returning to the *Passio*, then, the staggering number of pericopes which it contains are not—as De Smet would suggest—the definitive aspect of the text.[312] Rather, they are emblematic of its core function: creating and retaining a specific collective memory.[313] To paraphrase Maurice Halbwachs, the *Passio* provides a framework in which the "rest" can be located: in this instance, the "rest" being a memory of the causes and outcome of the Franco-Flemish War circa 1302.[314] When an orator recites the *Passio*, they are invoking a precise explanation of events. In this sense, the reproduction is as explanatory as it is commemorative.

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310 Barbara Newman, *Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular Against the Sacred* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), p. viii.
311 Appendix 1.1, line 63; Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 223.
312 Though it should be said that De Smet does attempt to situate it within a larger, if vague, tradition of medieval parody; De Smet, *Chronicon*, p. 291.
313 "Collective" in this sense pertaining to their origination not from the recollection of a single individual, but as Marucie Halbwachs states, "the truths on which they are built are atemporal in nature, and that the figure and the remembrance of the individual who had discovered them passes into the background"; Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 89.
314 Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 91.

Why did the French annex Flanders? Because of Philip IV's grand ambitions. Who sought to defeat the Flemish? Robert of Artois and Pierre Flote. Why did they fail? Because of their hubris. Who lead the Flemish to victory? Pieter Coninck. Why was he victorious? Because he was godly and virtuous. To this end, the *Passio* is not a celebratory text as much as it is an instructive one. It is meant to educate the educated, to invoke pericope and recent history in the service of conveying an incisive narrative that seeks to explain *why* things happened as much as *what* precisely happened. Its plot is simple because it presupposes an existing familiarity with the source material. Its audience has lived through these events, so conveying the specificities of them is of a secondary consideration. In this instruction can be found catharsis, through what Newman describes as "the primeval order of sanctified violence, they blame, shame, and ridicule its victims, encouraging readers to identify with the torturers, not the tortured".[315] This is unarguably most stark in the instance of Newman's case study of the *Passion of the Jews of Prague*—particularly for modern readers—but is true of every entry into the genre throughout the late thirteenth and fourteenth century. Mock-passions are vessels of remembrance, reflection, intellect, and play. What they are not, however, are exercises in empathy.

Though the author of the *Passio* was undoubtedly *literatus*, as indicated by their keen knowledge of both Latin and scripture, the possibility that their intended audience was not as sufficiently educated as themselves must not be dismissed out of hand. Much as the cultivated laity (that is to say, those who read recreationally) relied on minstrels and other court

[315] Newman, *Lessons of a Medieval Parody*, p. 10.

entertainers for pithy oratory throughout the period, it is possible that the *Passio*—when recited aloud—fulfilled much a similar function.[316] Furthermore, the orality of a given text is a fluid, as opposed to binary, category. Monika Schausten summarises this relationship in her article *Orality, Literacy, and/or Ekphrasis?*: "Thus medieval writing is not regarded as a form of communication based on completely different principles from oral modes of communicating, but rather as a new medium that preserves the more traditional form of direct, body-centred communication in writing and yet at the same time transforms distinctive characteristics of oral cultures intro written texts."[317] With this in mind, the reliance upon scriptural pericope that is the foundational hallmark of the entire genre of mock-passion and the degree to which it has been supposed that this would necessitate a purely clerical audience, can be turned on its head if we view the presence of the pericopes as textual allusions to cultural touchstones that a lay audience would, to a not insignificant extent, be familiar with. Much as ubiquitous objects such as the Book of Hours employed Latin in a more personalised context to be used by well-to-do lay nobility, the pericopes in mock-passions take a significant degree of literacy and education to create and weave into the broader narratives in which they are a part, but the scriptural passages they directly allude to (be they from the Gospel, Book of Judges, etc.) would have been well-known to a fairly broad swath of the medieval elite. The demand for, and attraction of, such an object can be found in the aforementioned ubiquity of the Book of Hours, which

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[316] M. B. Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts*, (London: Hambledon Press) 1991, p. 275–276.

[317] Monika Schausten, 'Orality, Literary, and/or Ekphrasis? Narrative Techniques of Visualization and the Poetics of Late Medieval Romance: Johann von Wurzburg's *Wilhelm von Osterreich*', *Orality and Literacy in the Middle Ages: Essays on a Conjunction and its Consequences in Honour of D.H. Green*, ed. Mark Chinca, Christopher Young (Turnhout: Brepolis) 2005, p. 183.

was the most popular book bar none in the Late Medieval period.[318] Furthermore, though the Book of Hours was fundamentally constructed around the Psalms, by the late fourteenth century they were, as Kathleen Kennedy refers to them, "an anthology that is usually considered to have contained a calendar, four Gospel lessons, the Office of the Hours of the Virgin, the Hours of the Cross and the Hours of the Holy Spirit, the seven penitential Psalms, the Litany of the Saints, and the Office of the Dead".[319] These were often further personalised via the addition of local and regional variations.[320] They were, above all else, Latin texts that many laity would have known by rote. In this way, the weighty education behind the composition of the *Passio* must not be a strike for or against a specific audience, as useful as it can be in identifying a potential author. The staggeringly low survival rate of these mock-passions can be attributed to their transgressive nature which, regardless of how it was received at the time, would have attracted a great deal of ire in subsequent periods.[321]

1.3 Inventing the Invective: A New Examination of the *Passio*

The text of the *Passio* has largely escaped the gaze of historians. As the previous section revealed, early scholars such as Edward Maunde Thompson were dismissive of the text to the point of omission, with the only substantial analysis of text occurring during De Smet's cursory edition in 1977. The first is its aforementioned low international profile. The second is a

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[318] Kathleen E. Kennedy, "Reintroducing the English Books of Hours, or 'English Primer'", *Speculum*, 89 (2014), 693–723, p. 693.
[319] Kennedy, "Reintroducing the English Books of Hours", p. 694
[320] Kennedy, "Reintroducing the English Books of Hours", p. 694.
[321] Alongside the aforementioned omission of the Flemish *Passio* from early twentieth-century editions, the Marquis of Bute, when commenting on the *Passio Scotorum*, refers to its anonymous author as "a person of singular brutality and cruelty of disposition, the lowest possible taste, and a turn for pleasantry of a very degraded and degrading kind"; Marquis of Bute, "Notice", p. 186.

historical lack of engagement by literary critics of medieval texts.[322] Both of these factors have resulted in a text that has been critically underserved by Anglophonic scholarship. The intent in this chapter is to not only situate the *Passio* within a broader framework of the construction of cultural memory and civic identity in Flanders in the wake of the Battle of the Golden Spurs; it also aims to provide an updated study of the text that helps bridge the gap in the literature and reveal how the *Passio* manifests the righteous, vengeful glory expressed by the Flemish and their disdain for the French in the immediate aftermath of the battle. For the purpose of this analysis, the *Passio* will be divided into eight sections, each concerned with a specific narrative beat in the mock passion's story.[323] For the purpose of this chapter, any lines given will be in reference to Given-Wilson's translation, and any quotes derived therefrom will be accompanied by their Latin equivalents. Given-Wilson's edition is being used here as it is the most recent translation of the text, published in 1997, whereas the last edition published before that was by De Smet in 1977.

1.3.1 King Philip's Court

The first section, corresponding with lines 1-22, is prefaced by what is now the title ascribed to this text: "Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos".[324] It is unclear if this title was part of the original text, or a production on the part of Usk during his copying. This section serves to introduce the character of King Philip IV and frame his intervention in Flanders. The Christ-like connotations of kingship are warped, placing Philip in the role of Christ with a

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[322] Lee Patterson, 'On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic History, and Medieval Studies', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), pp. 87–108, p. 87.
[323] Appendix, 1.1
[324] "The Passion of the French according to the Flemings"; Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 220.

roomful of conniving advisors as opposed to dutiful disciples.[325] Philip is portrayed as a fraught and dithering ruler; insecure and leaning on his advisors for counsel, he gathers his court to reassure him that he is, in fact, the count of Flanders:

> Philippus rex Francorum, conuocatis discipulis suis, secreto ait illis, 'Quem dicunt homines esse comitem Flandrie?' Ac illi dixerunt, 'Alii Carolum, alii Lodewycum, aut unum ex prophanis.' Dixit iterum eis rex, 'Vos autem quem me esse dicitis?' Vnus ex eis, nomine Petrus Flot, consilio accepto a Carolo, dixit, 'Domine, tu es rex Flandrie.
>
> [Philip, king of the French, called his disciples unto him and said secretly to them, 'Whom do men say is the count of Flanders?' And they said, 'Some say Charles, some Louis, and others, one of the profaners.' The king said unto them again, 'But whom say ye that I am?' One of them, Pierre Flote by name, after taking counsel with Charles, said, 'Lord, thou art the king of Flanders.'][326]

Additional fun is made at the expense of Philip for his confusion between 'count' and 'king', and his deference to his advisors is indicative of the struggle his reign faced in the form of powerful vassals often eclipsing royal power (Fawtier employs the phrase, "a weakling in the hands of unscrupulous advisors").[327] Much as Philip serves as both king and Christ in the *Passio*'s

[325] Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 42
[326] Appendix, 1.1, lines 2-6; See Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 220
[327] Robert Fawtier, *The Capetian Kings of France: Monarchy and Nation 987-1328*, trans. by Lionel Butler and R. J. Adam (Hong Kong: The MacMillan Press, 1978), pp. 35–36.

narrative, the author is skewering what Elizabeth A. R. Brown refers to as Philip's "two bodies": his public and personal selves.[328] The "Charles" and "Louis" being referred to are Philip's sons, his firstborn Louis X (1289-1316) and third-eldest son Charles IV (1294-1328), both of whom would go on to themselves become king. This exchange also serves to introduce Pierre Flote (d. 11 July 1302). Flote was one of Philip IV's chief legalists, serving as a Chancellor of France and Keeper of the Seals.[329] He played a significant role in the annexation of Flanders during the Franco-Flemish War, and was present at both the Bruges Matins and the Battle of the Golden Spurs—his death at the latter being emblematic of the degree to which the French defeat was as much an administrative blow to Philip as it was a military one. Furthermore, Flote's conference with Charles before confirming that Philip is indeed the rightful king of Flanders does much to portray the enabling dynamic between an enfeebled monarch and his controlling circle.[330] This opening section also features an explicit proclamation by Philip of the intentions of the French project in Flanders:

> Si ergo a regno meo diuisi fuerint, domos eorum demolliar, gladium meum uibrado, et potestas mea regia subiugabit eos, aut in mari, terram de eis

[328] Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "Persona et Gesta: The Image and Deeds of the Thirteenth-Century Capetians, 3. The Case of Philip the Fair", *Viator*, 19 (1988), pp. 219–246, p. 221; For Philip IV's relationship with his advisors, see: Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "Philip the Fair and his Ministers: Guillaume de Nogaret and Enguerran de Marigny", in *The Capetian Century, 1214–1314*, ed. By William Chester Jordan, Jenna Rebecca Phillips (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), pp. 185–218; Élisabeth Lalou, "Robert Fawtier's Philip the Fair", in *The Capetian Century, 1214-1314*, ed. By William Chester Jordan, Jenna Rebecca Phillips (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), pp. 261–280

[329] See: Tilmann Schmidt, "La condemnation de Pierre Flote par le pape Boniface VIII", *MEFRM: Mélanges de l'École française de Rome : Moyen Âge*, 118.1 (2006), pp. 1–13; Sophia Menache, "A Propaganda Campaign in the Reign of Philip the Fair, 1302–1303", *French History*, 4.4 (1990), pp. 427–454; Franklin Pegues, *The Lawyers of the Last Capetians* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962)

[330] This was of course almost certainly not the case, but was played up by both French critics and foreign opponents of the king; Fawtier, *The Capetian Kings of France*, p. 79.

mundando, ipsos fugere compellet. Congregaboque eos, quemadmodum gallina congregat pullos sub alis, et fiet unum ouile et unus pastor.

[If therefore they shall be divided from my kingdom, I will lay their houses waste, and I shall brandish my sword; and either they shall be made subject unto my royal power, or I shall cleanse the earth of them and drive them into the sea. And I shall gather them unto me, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.][331]

This is where the *Passio* reveals itself as uniquely useful source for gauging an insight into the Flemish position immediately post-1302. The most striking part of the passage is the blatant pericope at play (Luke 13:34, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as the bird doth her brood under her wings, and thou wouldest not?").[332] It very clearly positions Philip as the aggressor, and frames his aggression as an extension of paternalistic hubris.

1.3.2 The Flemish Rebuke

In lines 22-33, the text shifts from the French royal camp to the relay of Philip's threats to the Flemings and accounts for their brave reaction. While the Flemings in question are not yet identified at this stage in the narrative, they respond in a singular, unified voice that appears to respond to Philip's aggression as a cohesive entity. The *Passio* establishes a certain

[331] Appendix 1.1, lines 17-20; See Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 220.
[332] Edgar, Swift, and Angela M. Kinney, *The Vulgate Bible: Douay-rheims Translation* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010).

back and forth between Philip and the Flemings, with the subsequent section (lines 23-35) directly addressing each of the king's points in turn. In response to Philip's invocation of Luke 13:34, they reply:

> Ciuitates et oppida gloriose constructuximus. Rex uester non pastor sed potius lupus dicendus est, quia uult oues deuorari et lupo subici. Et cum boues non sumus, timemus subiugari; et quia pulli non sumus, timemus sub alis congregari, et potius gladio perire. Cum potius pastorem deceat paci parcere quam gladio uibrare, nec credimus demollicionem domus, ymmo demonis, fieri, ymmo potius tigurrium sibi in deserto fieri.
>
> [We have built splendid cities and towns. Your king does not deserve the name of shepherd, but rather is he a wolf, for he wishes the sheep to be devoured and delivered unto the wolf. And since we are not oxen, we fear to be yoked; and since we are not chicks, we fear to be gathered under wings, but would rather die by the sword. And since it better befits a shepherd to keep the peace than to brandish the sword, we do not believe that any house will be destroyed, but rather the devil; or rather, that he will make unto himself a hovel in the wilderness.][333]

Here, the text establishes the significant civic pride felt by the Flemings for the glorious cities the built. The pride in the cities they have built ("ciuitates et oppida gloriose constructuximus")

[333] Appendix 1.1, lines 25-33; See Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 220.

and their desire to protect them. The fact that the Flemish cause is deeply rooted within their cities is further contrasted by the author's earlier invocation of Isaiah 1:8 in Philip's speech to the messengers ("And the daughter of Sion shall be left as a covert in a vineyard, and as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, and as a city that is laid waste").[334] A similar emphasis is also present in the *Annales Gandenses*, when the friar describes the parades and ceremonies marking King Philip's 1301 processions through Flanders in considerable detail. He praises the respectful appearance of the men of Ghent:

> Venit enim primo Duacum, deinde Insulam, postea Gandavum. Gandenses autem honorifice sibi obviam processerunt, omnes novis vestimentis induti, majores duobus modis, quia dissidebant inter se, et communitas suo modo.
>
> [He came first to Douai, next to Lille, afterwards to Ghent. The men of Ghent went forth in procession to meet him and pay their respects, all clad in new garments, the patricians in two fashions, because they disagreed amongst themselves, the commonality after their own fashion.][335]

The implication here is one of covetousness on the part of Philip; the Flemings had displayed their wealth to him during the royal processions of 1301, and his forceful annexation of the territory began—in the eyes of the *Passio*—conspicuously soon after. This juxtaposition of Philip's desire to assert his political control over the Flemish, and their tacit rebuttal, is mirrored in the animal-centric discourse of the section. The Flemish fear of "being yoked" is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 25:4 ("You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain"), and their

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[334] Isaiah 1:8
[335] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 12.

reiteration that they are not oxen (nor chicks) echoes the sentiment of Saint Paul in Corinthians 1:9-10:

> For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out he grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the ploughman should plough in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing the crop.[336]

This dynamic, of Philip predicating his diplomatic overtures to Flanders on a basis of confused animal husbandry, is framed by the *Passio* as a point of misunderstanding at the King's expense. His intentions are presented as not only malicious, but also misguided in their facileness—off being incapable of understanding his own motivations on anything more than an allegorical level.[337]

1.3.3 A Crusade Against Flanders

Lines 36-49 frame the outset of the conflict after the Flemings send the messengers back to Philip, who is "exceedingly sorry" ("indignatus ergo rex propter iusiurandum") to hear their response.[338] The king then calls for the Count of Artois "for his oath's sake" as well as his "fellow disciples who were present", commanding them to gather support against the Flemings and join him for another attack. The *Passio* channels this polemic via its portrayal of Philip as being overzealous in his religious conviction:

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[336] Corinthians, 1:9-10
[337] Michael J. Gilmour, *Eden's Other Residents: The Bible and Animals* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), p. 31
[338] Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 220.

> Euntes in mundum uniuersum, docete omnes gentes contumaciam Flemyngorum in nominee meo. Qui dederit eis mala, hic saluus erit. Qui uero non dederit, condempnabitur. Signa autem eos qui dederint hec sequentur: in nominee meo demonia suscipient; Deum despicient, et si mortiferum quid susceperint, hoc eis nocebit. Et cum fueritis euntes in Flandriam, occidite omnes Flemyngos a bymatri et infra.
>
> ['Go ye into all the world, and preach to every creature in my name of the disobedience of the Flemings; he that shall do them harm shall be saved; but he that shall not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that shall do this: in my name shall they receive devils; they shall despise God; and if they take up any deadly thing, it shall hurt them. And when ye go into Flanders, kill all the Flemings of half-blood or more.'][339]

For Fawtier, Philip "saw a religious quality in his kingly office" and regarded the uprising in Flanders as a product of heresy if not by the Devil himself.[340] In the above passage, Philip is contextualising the Flemish resistance to French annexation in not only a moral framework, but an inherently religious one as well. The totality with which the French king speaks of the Flemings extends beyond simple punishment, invoking salvation for those who assist in his military endeavour and citing damnation for any who stand against him. This inciting speech in the *Passio* reads as much as a call to holy crusade as it does a general call to arms is then given

[339] Appendix 1.1, lines 38-45'; See Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 222.
[340] Fawtier, *The Capetian Kings of France*, p. 37.

a more comical, if not slightly darker, tone with this added context. This insinuation also questions the capability and authority of Philip as, by the early fourteenth century, the consistent political and military failure of the European projects in Outremer had established a very negative connotation around these grand, divinely sanctioned military campaigns.[341]

This employment of crusading rhetoric situates Flanders as the Holy Land after which Philip covets.[342] His bombastic, apocalyptic mandate—calling upon and administering salvation to those who go and spill Flemish blood—echoes the framing of early crusading by Pope Gregory VII (p. 1073-85), a de-escalation of rhetoric which Matthew Gabriele describes as "A staid military expedition (that) became a cosmic battle between good and evil, which then became, well, nothing."[343] Fire and fury and, as the *Passio* jabs, very little of substance. Whether or not the *Passio* is directly alluding to the specific political precedents of the crusades and their architects is uncertain, but it is invoking and disparaging the grandiose rhetoric associated with them in order to make light of Philip's perceived hubris and self-aggrandisement. This shift in the popular view of crusading is present in vernacular poetry as well, with Jaye Puckett attributing the "pinpoint moment" as occurring within the second decade of the thirteenth century.[344] This also reveals a degree of political understanding on the part of the *Passio*'s author. Philip's interests in Flanders and Aquitaine, alongside his infamous

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[341] Daniel H. Weiss, 'Biblical History and Medieval Historiography: Rationalizing Strategies in Crusader Art', *MLN*, Vol. 108 (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 710–737, p. 710.
[342] Andrew A. Latham, 'Theorizing the Crusades: Identity, Institutions, and Religious War in Medieval Latin Christendom', *International Studies Quarterly*, 55 (Wiley, 2011), pp. 223–243, p. 229.
[343] Matthew Gabriele, *An Empire of Memory: The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 145.
[344] "The tone of the songs surrounding the later crusades (fifth through eighth) is considerably darker than that of the songs written at the time of the earlier crusades (third and fourth): optimism is replaced by pessimism, confidence by doubt, cajolement by threats."; Jaye Puckett, '"Reconmenciez novele estoire": The Troubadours and the Rhetoric of the Later Crusades', *MLN*, 116 (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 844–889, p. 845.

clashes with Boniface VIII (c. 1230-1303) and his aggressive assertion of French royal prerogative, are all being comically skewered in this passage.[345] The transformative nature of this commentary is inherently subversive. The *Passio* is taking what is otherwise perceived to be an existential threat (as evidenced by the allusion to Herod's atrocities in Matthew 2:16) and portraying the source of that threat—in this instance the personage of Philip IV—as a fragile, uncertain ruler who is in control of neither his kingdom nor his emotions.

1.3.4 Peter Coninck and the Death of Robert of Artois

From lines 50-73, the narrative of the *Passio* shifts to focus on Peter Coninck (d. 1332/1333).[346] Given the pivotal role of populist agitator he played throughout the Franco-Flemish War (and the monumental nature of his perceived historical footprint in Flanders), conspicuously little is known of Coninck. He was dean of the weaver's guild in Bruges.[347] The anonymous friar who wrote the *Annales* refers to him as "Petrus Rex Brugas", literally "Peter, King of Bruges".[348] Though this is undoubtedly a play at his name ("koning" meaning "king" in Flemish), he held very real power in Bruges, to the extent that he was able to incite the commonality to repeatedly tear down French fortifications, undertake acts of civil disobedience, and was an active military leader throughout the 1302 campaign.[349] His

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[345] For an overview of the conflict between Philip IV and Boniface VIII, see; Charles T. Wood, *Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII: State vs. Papacy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967).
[346] Also known by his Flemish name Pieter de Coninck, the Latinized "Petro Cannyng" in Usk's *Chronicon*, and "Petrus Rex Brugas" in the *Annales Gandenses*, he will henceforth be referred to as Peter Coninck for continuity's sake. See; Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 222, *Annales Gandenses*, p. 25.
[347] Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 222; This is in reference to the statue of Jan Breydel and Peter Coninck that was erected in Bruges in 1887, during the wave of neo-medievalism that swept through country after the publication of Hendrik Conscience's 'The Lion of Flanders' in 1838.
[348] *Annales*, p. 25.
[349] *Annales*, p. 17, 21.

contribution to the rebellion saw him lead a force of fifteen hundred foot soldiers from Bruges in a successful attack on the town of Ardenburg in early 1302, and he was present in the Bruges line during the Battle of the Golden Spurs.[350] Although Guy of Namur and William of Julich would be remembered as the members of nobility most associated with the county's struggle against French intervention during the later stages of the Franco-Flemish War, Coninck was the face of local resistance to perceived foreign influence, and his signal role in the *Passio* is indicative of his meteoric rise to the status of folk hero. The combination of his surname and political activity most likely makes him one of the "profaners" referred to in the sixth line of the text—the joke being that the French mistake the dean of the weavers for a pretender king. Coninck's central role in the *Passio* is also indicative of its origination in Bruges (combined with St Mary's of Bruges being where Usk originally discovered it).[351] The *Passio* imagines Coninck conversing with the Count of Artois, Robert II (September 1250–July 11 1302), when the latter is entering Flanders at the behest of Philip.[352] The two engage in a dialogue of verbal sparring (referencing at least seven instances of scripture alone) that continues for half a dozen lines before culminating in Coninck physically confronting the count:[353]

> Dici ei Petrus, 'Scriptus est enim, "Non occides, quia qui gladio percutit, gladio peribit".' Et ipse Petrus, extracto gladio, abscidit auriculam eius dextram. Tunc dixit comes, 'Vsquequo non parcis michi ut gluciam saliuam meam?' Petrus

[350] *Annales*, p. 22.
[351] Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 220.
[352] There is no evidence that there were any diplomatic meetings between the French and Flemish after the Bruges Matins, let alone one between Coninck, a burgher, and Count Robert II of Artois. This will be thoroughly explored in the second chapter of this thesis; pp. 149–155.
[353] Appendix, Table 2.

iterum percussit, et dixit, ‘Sic respondes pontifici?” Et procidit comes in terram et orauit, dicens, ‘Pater, si possible est, transiat a me calix iste. Non tamen sicut ego uolo, sed sicut tu uis, Petre.’ Et terre motus factus est magnus ab hac hora tercia usque ad horam nonam.

[Peter said unto him, ‘Truly it is written, “Thou shalt not kill; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword”. ‘ Then this same Peter drew his sword and smote off his right ear. Then the count said, ‘Wilt thou not spare me at least until I may swallow down my spittle?’ Peter smote again, saying, ‘Answerest thou the high priest so?’ And the count fell to the ground and prayed, saying, ‘Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done, Peter.’ And it was the third hour, and the earth did quake until the ninth hour.][354]

This dynamic section initially positions Peter as the “denying” apostle, while blasphemously casting Robert as Christ—but when Peter cuts off the ear of Robert, this gesture reverses the Passion narrative, as Robert then becomes one of the Roman soldiers at the betrayal.[355] This is immediately followed by Artois calling out for his horse, Bayard, before “giving up the ghost” and dying.[356] Firstly, this is an allusion to the two Gospel passages in Matthew 27:46 and Mark

[354] Appendix 101, lines 59–67; See Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 222.
[355] For an overview of the Denial of Peter, see: Arthur Maynard, ‘The Role of Peter in the Fourth Gospel’, *New Testament Studies*, 30.4 (2009), pp. 531–548; Maurits Sabbe, ‘The Denial of Peter in the Gospel of John’, *Louvain Studies*, 20.2 (1995), pp. 219–240; Robert Herron, *Mark’s Account of Peter’s Denial of Jesus: A History of Its Interpretation* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991).
[356] Appendix 1.1, line 71.

15:34 in which Christ calls out to God during the apex of the Crucifixion.[357] Secondly, the name of Artois' horse, "Bayard", references the mythical mount used by the protagonists in the chanson de geste *Les Quatre Fils Aymon*.[358] Though the chanson dates from the early twelfth century, by the fourteenth century the name had become so widely used that Chaucer refers to various horses in *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Canterbury Tales* (in both the Reeve's Tale and the Canon's Yeoman's Tale) as "Bayard".[359] By the time Chaucer was writing at the end of the fourteenth century, the name had taken on both a more general meaning, referring to any bay-coloured horse, and a specific connotation as an especially stubborn beast ("Ye been as boold as is Bayard the blinde, That blondreth forth, and peril casteth noon.").[360] By explicitly invoking the name of the famous steed, the *Passio* is simultaneously reinforcing the French aspect of Artois' character, and conflating him with the mythological heroes of his homeland.[361] The *Passio*'s author takes no prisoners in their dismantling of their French foes, striking at historical and mythological personages alike. For the text's author, it is not simply enough to kill the French. Their heroes must be skewered as well.

1.3.5 The Cowardice of Pierre Flote

[357] Matthew 27:46, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? That is, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"; Mark 15:34, "And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying: Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani? Which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?".

[358] Auguste Longnon, *Le Quatre Fils Aymon* (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1879), p. 8.

[359] Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde: A New Translation*, ed. B. A. Windeatt (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 100; Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Jill Man (London: Penguin Books, 2005), p. 201, 661.

[360] Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, p. 661, 1078.

[361] Though *Les Quatre Fils Aymon* would later be appropriated by Brabantine writers and incorporated into the vernacular tradition in both Flanders and the Low Countries, this process would not begin to emerge until later in the medieval period (and find even greater impact in the nineteenth century), see; Veerle Uyttersprot, Een paard en een stad: De Dendermondse toe-eigening van De historie van de vier Heemskinderen, *Queeste*, 27 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), pp. 97–127.

The *Passio*'s treatment of Pierre Flote is similar to that of Artois, if not somewhat truncated. He and Coninck meet each other on the field, where the later recognises the French councillor due to his single eye.[362] Unlike Artois, however, who is undone by the intellectual and martial superiority of Coninck and lambasted for losing his horse, Flote is given a coward's death:

> Ex quibus dixit unus, 'Vere et tu ex illis es/' At ille incepit detestari et iurare quia non nouisset hominem; et continuo nullus Gallicus contauit. Et angarriauerunt eum Flemyngi ut sequeretur comitem Arthesie; at ille, ablato capite, secutus est eum.
>
> [One of them said to him, 'Surely thou art one of them.' But he began to curse and to swear that he had not known this man; and straightaway no Frenchman crowed. And the Flemings compelled him to go out with the count of Artois; and so, his head having been removed, he followed him.][363]

Once again the *Passio* leans into the comedy of the moment rather than girding itself with any pretence of accuracy—a goal it was never concerned with in the first place. Rather, Flote's death serves as representative of the folly of the French project, and an assertion of the *Passio*'s central thesis of Flemish martial and moral supremacy. This is illustrated in the

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[362] There is little other evidence that Flote was in fact one-eyed, as Given-Wilson assumes with Usk as his sole source (Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 222). As well as the obvious allusion to Matthew 18:9, the metaphorical and allegorical implications of "one eyedness" could point in a number of directions, from more obscure sources such as Matthew 6:22-23 ("But if thy eye be evil thy whole body shall be darksome. If then the light that is in thee, be darkness: the darkness itself how great shall it be!"), to Augustine ("Our whole business in this life is to restore to health the eye of the heart whereby God may be seen."); See Margaret Miles, Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine's *De trinitate* and *Confessions*, *The Journal of Religion*, 63 (1983) 125–142.

[363] Appendix 1.1, lines 81–85; See Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 222.

narrative aside the text prefaces Flote's death with: "It is better for thee to enter into battle with the French with one eye, rather than having two eyes and being slain by the Flemings".[364] In this way, the entirety of the Franco-Flemish conflict is represented within the competing personas of Peter Coninck, Robert of Artois, and Pierre Flote. Coninck embodies the positive ideals of moral certitude (weeping after having slain Artois), intellectual rigour (openly citing quippy scriptural passages while engaging with Artois), and martial supremacy (leading 100,000 men and soundly defeating the French).[365] On the contrary, Artois is presented as the personification of pride and hubris—soundly beaten only to be abandoned by his horse and subsequently slain. The character of Flote in the *Passio* represents the abject failure of both Philip IV's political vision and the material execution thereof. His character arch bookends the narrative, being present in the beginning to advise Philip and slain at the end while trying to pass himself off as Flemish. Flote's act of proceeding after Artois while headless could be a measured jab at Saint Denis, who is one of the most notable cephalophores and the patron saint of the Capetians. The monastery of Saint-Denis played a particularly generative role in manufacturing and perpetuating Capetian identity, and an allusion to Saint Denis frames the Flemish triumph as not only one born out of two competing powers—namely the Flemish rebels and French military—but out of two competing historical frameworks.[366] The *Passio* presents an argument that the defeat of the French, embodied in the shame and

[364] "Melius est cum uno coulo intrare prelium Francorum, quam duos oculos habere et mori a Flemygnys." Appendix 1.1, lines 79–81; See Usk, *Chronicon*, p. 222.
[365] Appendix 1.1, lines 64, 72.
[366] Fawtier, *The Capetian Kings of France*, p. 3.

embarrassment of Artois and Flote, is not only a refutation of the geopolitical goals of Philip IV, but the entire project of France and the Capetian worldview.

1.3.6 The Marking of the Dead and the Tribes of the French

Lines 101-105 consist of a listing of French casualties, and is an example as to the elevated rhetorical framework the *Passio* is operating in. This occurs after the Flemish have marked the foreheads of the slain French ("lest their neighbours and their cousins come and steal them away, and say unto the people, they are risen from the dead"), in reference to Revelation 9:4: "And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree: but only the men who have not the sign of God on their foreheads.".[367] The structure is lifted whole cloth from Numbers: 1-44, replacing the listings of the Tribes of Israel with the defeated contingents of the French cohort. The author then goes on to list the number and geographical origin of each Frenchmen "sealed" in this manner:

> Et erat numerus: centum quattuordecim milia signati ex tribu Francorum, quadraginta septem milia signati ex tribu Picardorum, uiginti quattuor milia signati ex tribu Normannorum, sedecim milia signati ex tribu Britanorum, tredecim milia signati ex tribu Pictauorum, sedecim milia signati ex tribu Andagauorum.
>
> [And the number was: of the tribe of the French were sealed an hundred and fourteen thousand; of the tribe of the Picards were sealed forty-seven thousand; of the tribe of the Normans were

[367] Appendix 1.1, line 97–98.

> sealed twenty-four thousand; of the tribe of the Bretons were
> sealed sixteen thousand; of the tribe of the Poitevins were sealed
> thirteen thousand; of the tribe of the Angevins were sealed sixteen
> thousand.][368]

Emphasis is being placed solely on the French in this list (much as it has been throughout the *Passio*), but it is telling that no mention is made of the pro-French Flemish nobles who rode with Artois that day, nor of the significant foreign mercenary component that accompanied the French on their punitive campaign.[369]

As this chapter has demonstrated, the *Passio* stands apart from the early corpus of extant sources that account for what happened at the Battle of the Golden Spurs. This distinction is due not only to a historiographical categorisation that has in its efforts to disentangle "French" and "Flemish" accounts of the battle found the *Passio* conducive to neither, but to the very nature of the mock-passion as the product of an entirely different literary genre altogether. This is not to say that there are no similarities between it and the histories that surround it. Van Velthem's *Spiegel Historiael* is deeply tinged by his intimate literary familiarity with Arthuriana, and Guiart's rhymed chronicle is as conducive to personal enjoyment as either the *Spiegel* or *Passio*. However, the *Passio* is an encapsulation of memory in a way later historical accounts of the conflict simply are not. There are several complex facets of this text; the dizzying wordplay, the elevation of dramatic stakes, but the author of the *Passio* reveals their interest and prerogative once it is taken into account what is *not* present

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[368] Appendix 1.1, lines 100–106.
[369] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 188.

within this narrative—that which is conspicuously missing. This is, of course, the entirety of the Battle of the Golden Spurs. No commentary is given on the battle itself, aside from the throw-away mention of the "hundred thousand men" accompanying Coninck, and the ensuing listing of the dead afterwards.[370] The *Passio* is explicitly—only—interested in the personal exchanges between Coninck and Artois (and soon after, Pierre Flote), the later of whom vanquishes his foes by the sword, yes, but also through incisive and condemning rhetoric. This is perhaps demonstrative of a certain degree of self-insert on the part of the text's writer. It is also another—and one of the most concrete—points of evidence in favour of the text being produced in and for a religious community, as it eschews bombastic scenes of battle (such as those found in the *Spiegel Historiael* and even, to a much smaller degree, in the *Annales*) in favour of what can only be described as "scriptural sparring". To that end, a thorough understanding of the biblical sources from which the *Passio*'s humour draws is a prerequisite to understanding the text on anything but the most basic of levels. The *Passio* reframes the abstract complexities of the war into a narrative of interpersonal conflict, breaking down political agendas and reframing them in a Biblical structure that would have been easily understood by contemporary audiences. Whereas the *Spiegel Historiael* invokes Arthuriana, and the *Annales* a concrete chronological mould, the *Passio* is a manifestation of cultural memory that resides in the heightened rhetoric of Biblical pericope. It elevates and caricatures contemporary actors, both sympathetic and antagonistic, in an account of the conflict that stands as both invective and memorial.

[370] Appendix 1.1, line 50.

2.0 Object: The Courtrai Chest

> *Imo et imagines sanctorum in ecclesiis, ac si homines fuissent vivi, decapitaverunt alia eis etiam membra amputantes.*
>
> "They even beheaded the images of the saints in the churches, as though they were alive, or chopped off their limbs."
>
> - Anonymous, *The Annals of Ghent* (1308)[371]

Text is not the only vehicle for the commemoration of the Battle of the Golden Spurs. The Courtrai Chest displays an elaborate visual chronicle of the events surrounding the battle, imagined from the perspective of the Flemish. The pictorial cycle, executed in low-relief carving onto an oak panel that serves as a frontispiece measuring 100 cm by 71 cm, both reflects and attempts to justify the violence inflicted by the Flemings upon the French army. This central message presents the Flemish rebellion as both necessary and effective, invoking themes of political unity, communal strength, and military excellence in order to cement a memory of the conflict that is both mournful and triumphant. Moreover, any study of Courtrai chest itself is emblematic of the fractured academic consensus surrounding the history of the Franco-Flemish across linguistic and national lines. The very name of the object is a highly volatile political invocation as to whether or not one sees the chest as a product of the country in which its visual programme originated, or tethered to the paroxysms of its uncertain resurfacing in the early twentieth century. This double epithet is almost entirely—and counterintuitively—split between both sides of the Channel, with English academics and institutions referring to it as the Courtrai Chest, and Belgian and French experts reinforcing a singular aspect of its provenance

[371] Anonymous, *Annales Gandenses*, trans. Hilda Johnstone (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1951), p. 28.

with “the Oxford Chest''. While the earliest uses of the term “Oxford Chest” were necessary in so much as the full extent of its visual programme and place of origin had not been fully mapped out, this chapter will demonstrate that latter, incessant references to its perceived “Englishness” were emblematic of a concerted project of dismissal and suspicion. Throughout this thesis, the term “Courtrai Chest” will be employed, as this research is fundamentally concerned with the conditions that gave rise to its creation, and as such reducing its name to current *terminus* of its provenance would be counter-productive. In fifty years' time it may very well reside back in Belgium; “Courtrai Chest” will be evergreen, “Oxford Chest” less so.

This chapter will examine the Courtrai Chest along two principal axes: as a product of the conflict during which it was made and as the focus of ongoing scholarly hesitation surrounding debates about its nationalistic identity. Beginning with a comprehensive overview of the chest's provenance since its discovery in 1905, it will present a careful analysis of its iconographic programme, which is divided into three panels with six individual scenes, drawing from the corpus of documentary sources presented in the first section of this thesis. The design and function of the chest serve to commemorate the cataclysmic events leading up to 11 July 1302, but the history of its transport to England requires cautious investigation. For this reason, the questions of who carved the frontispiece, what purpose it served, and how (and when) it crossed the Channel will also be addressed. By placing the chest in a cultural and documentary context, this chapter will uphold the claim that it almost certainly originated in Flanders circa 1302–1305. It will also explore the likelihood that the frontispiece was produced by a participant, or at the very least a contemporary, of the historical events its visual programme depicts, and was soon after transported to England during the political upheaval that befell

Flanders during the first half of the fourteenth century. The question of its reconfiguration into use as a corn bin circa 1600 will also be explored, along with an analysis of antiquarian trade networks in and around Oxfordshire.

This chapter will demonstrate how the frontispiece of the Courtrai Chest exists as the earliest known depiction of the both the narrative events of the Franco-Flemish War and the social conditions that gave rise to a concerted programme of memorialisation in the wake of the triumphant Flemish victory on the fields in front of Courtrai. It will re-centre Courtrai as a key aspect of the frontispiece's identity via a new iconographic reading. I will suggest that the chest was made and used in a guild-specific context, and that the political nature of this context is what precipitated its movement from Flanders to England later in the fourteenth century. By viewing the frontispiece as not just a commemoration of the victory of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, but as a memorial to those communities most traumatised and involved in the conflict, this chapter will seek to broaden and enrich our understanding of both the object and the history depicted upon its oaken panels.

2.1 The Rediscovery: From a farmer's corn bin to the Warden's lodgings

In July 1905, Warden Archibald Spooner (22 July 1844 – 19 August 1930) of New College, Oxford, visited the property of the one of the university's tenants in Stanton St. John—that of the Harris family. According to his biographer William Hayter, Spooner was amazed to find in a particularly "ruinous"-looking barn a peculiar chest being "used as a corn bin".[372] There is little evidence to suggest that Spooner identified the chest as anything other than an ostensibly

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[372] William Hayter, *Spooner: A Biography* (London: W.H. Allen / Virgin Books, 1977), p. 123.

valuable oddity, as he was not especially well travelled outside of England, nor studied in any specific aspect of medieval visual or art history more broadly.[373] The considerable majority of his life was spent at New College, where he was a scholar in 1862, a fellow in 1867, a deacon in 1872, and a priest in 1875.[374] He is most well-known for his time spent as Warden of New College from 1903 to 1924; made famous via his pastoral tendencies and distinct mannerisms. During the entirety of his academic career Spooner only published two significant pieces of work: philosophical retrospectives concerning Aristotle and the eighteenth-century theologian Bishop Joseph Butler.[375] His legacy, and popularity at the time, was largely concerned with his reputation as a gifted and eccentric lecturer and coiner of jumbled aphorism.[376]

There is no evidence to suggest, then, that Spooner could have immediately understood the significance of this carved frontispiece bearing a pictorial cycle of mounted knights and masses of infantry when he first saw it. However, the object was found on the property of a tenant who was by every account in severe financial arrears. The circumstances surrounding Spooner's rediscovery remain vague, but the acquisition is described in one of his biographies, which suggests that Spooner perceived that it was an expensive antiquity. William Hayter (1

[373] Hayter, *Spooner: A Biography*, p. 168.
[374] "Obituary: Dr WA Spooner", *The Guardian*, September 1, 1930.
[375] Walter Hatch, William Spooner, *The Moral Philosophy of Aristotle* (London: John Murray, 1879); William Spooner, *Bishop Butler* (London: Methuen & Co., 1901).
[376] He has also been posthumously subjected to several very unfortunate studies surrounding his verbal tick–some even going so far as to attempt to link it to his albinism, see; Barrie Jay, 'What Was The Matter With Dr. Spooner?', *British Medical Journal* 295 (1987), pp. 942–943.

August 1906 – 28 March 1998), Spooner's former student and later biographer, wrote the only known account of this "most important" find.[377]

> The Progress notes do not refer to the most important event of his visit. In one of the ruinous barns the Warden observed an oak chest, in use as a corn-bin, the front of which was elaborately carved. He bought it from William Harris, the farmer, for £50 (or at least wrote off £50 worth of Harris's rent arrears to the College).[378]

Hayter's mention of fifty pounds being meted out by Spooner is, the first and only instance of this transaction; odd given how large a sum it was even then (adjusted for inflation, £50 in 1905 is equivalent to £6,468 in 2021).[379] It is worth unpacking this reference to the payment of debt in greater detail via an investigation of the College's finances. First of all, there is no known evidence that Spooner actually paid Harris for it, or remitted any amount of money on behalf of the college. It is perhaps noteworthy that on 17 June 1903, the Harris family's rent was reduced from £42 to £30 a year, and the New College committee fellowship agreed to, "remit his arrears of rent in excess of £30". Despite this reduction in rent, the Harris family continued to accrue a debt that was substantial enough for New College to consider filing suit in 1904; one year before Spooner made his memorable Progress.[380] Spooner had become Warden in 1903, and had already completed two progresses through Stanton St. John by the time he had found the chest. The New College minutes of 1905-1909 make no mention of remitting £50, or paying

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[377] Hayter was a celebrated diplomat and later became Warden of New College himself in 1958. He retired to Stanton St. John in 1976, where he wrote his biography of Spooner the following year. See: William Hayter, *A Double Life: The Memoirs of Sir William Hayter* (London: Hamilton, 1974).
[378] Hayter, *Spooner: A Biography*, p. 123.
[379] Bank of England, *Inflation Calculator*, (January 2022) <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator> [Accessed February 13, 2022], Hayter, *Spooner: A Biography*, p. 123.
[380] Warden's Accounts, New College Archive #9642 (SGM 1899-1908), p. 282.

such an amount out, even though they are clearly interested in the property in so much as the payments due by its tenants.[381] There is the possibility that Spooner paid for the chest out of pocket, but his later assertion—passed on via Hayter—that the Harris family was remitted arrears then becomes challenged. However, due to the dearth of documentary evidence that this was an institutional acquisition in exchange for reduced arrears, the purchase of the chest should be seen as an individual act on the part of Spooner, and not him acting in his capacity of Warden.

2.2 A Contentious Historiography

After his acquisition, Spooner kept the chest in his College office, where it started to attract its fair share of controversy. Once the chest was in the possession of the college it was promptly cleaned, but would not undergo any specific analysis until Charles Oman (12 January 1860 – 23 June 1946), a leading military historian, saw it in passing and recognized its potential significance.[382] Oman was accompanied by Henri Pirenne at the time, and refers to the event thusly: "This unique relic I was lucky enough to identify in New College , some fifteen years ago, and to have the chance of showing it to Professor Pirenne, who agreed in the identification."[383] It is possible this interest was due in part to the iconography of the chest: its display of detailed livery and insignia, as well as very specific articles of armour and weapons made it possible for contemporary art historians to ascertain a number of details concerning its narrative and likely point of origin. Charles Oman dated the chest in a paper in 1909 as being Flemish in origin and

[381] Warden's Accounts, p. 282.
[382] Hall, *Spooner: A Biography*, p. 104.
[383] Charles Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages, Vol. 2* (London: Methuen & Co., 1924), p. 114.

depicting the Battle of the Golden Spurs.[384] The first plate and discussion of the chest was published in 1912 in *The Burlington Magazine* by Aymer Vallance (1892 – 1955), as a passing inclusion in his serialised "Early Furniture" column.[385] He describes the frontispiece as "vigorous rather than refined; but the massing of the crowds of figures in four tiers depicting all manner of siege operations and field engagements, shows a masterly ingenuity, less characteristic of English than of foreign work of the that period".[386] He found the heraldry particularly evocative, and had shown the frontispiece to the antiquary William St John Hope (1854 – 1919), who asserted that they were more "suggestive in a general way, representative way rather than specific and literal".[387] Although Vallance does not directly compare the Courtrai Chest to the "tilting chest" type (as others have done and which will be explored in considerable depth later in this chapter), he does follow his segment of the Courtrai Chest with an overview of the Harty Chest—which will also feature in this chapter.

In a letter to the editor of the Burlington in 1912, Charles Ffoulkes (1868 – 1947) responded to Vallance's observations, praising the chest as a visual index of the iconography of medieval warfare :

> The other details, the ailettes, the circular buckler of the same type as that used up to the middle of the sixteenth century, the archer's pairs in the lower corner, the falchions, the trebuchet on the walls of the city, and the stirrup crossbow, all

[384] Hall, *Spooner: A Biography*, p. 104.
[385] Aymer Vallance, *'Early Furniture I'*, The Burlington Magazine , 21, (1912), 153–161.
[386] Vallance, "Early Furniture", p. 159.
[387] Vallance, "Early Furniture", p. 159.

> combine to make this chest a most valuable illustration of the military equipment of the beginning of the fourteenth century.[388]

He made many of these observations by way of a passage of Guillaume Guiart's *Chronique métrique*.[389] Two years later in 1914, Ffoulkes would publish a much lengthier article in the journal Archaeologia, where he would use the frontispiece to re-introduce the publication's British readership to the Battle of the Golden Spurs.[390] It is here that he would suggest that the carver of the frontispiece was likely a guildsman from Ypres, due to the fact that only the Yprois militia are singled out with their own heraldry (as opposed to the other Brugeois guilds, who have only their banners).[391] This article as features an introduction and brief analysis of the Leugemeete wall paintings, from which Ffoulkes astutely draws several visual comparisons—namely in reference to his further disambiguation of the *goedendag*.[392]

It would not be until the 1950's, in the period surrounding the six hundred and fiftieth anniversary commemorations of the battle, when the chest was placed at the centre of an increasingly tense scholarly debate. J.F. Verbruggen's ground-breaking monograph on the *Guldensporenslag* published in 1952 (in Flemish) featured an entire chapter on the chest, in which he grafted text to image, using the pictorial scenes to point to the military composition of

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[388] Charles Ffoulkes, *'Carved Chest at New College, Oxford '*, The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs, 21.112, (1912), pp. 240–241.

[389] The passage Ffoulkes cites is, "A granz bastons pesanz ferrez, a un lonc fer agu devant, vont ceuz de France recevant. Tiex bastons qu'il portent en guerre on nom godendac en la terre. Goden-dac, c'est bon jour à dire, qui en francois le veust descrire."; Guiart, *Branche des royaux lignages*, p. 210.

[390] Charles Ffoulkes, "A Carved Flemish Chest at New College, Oxford", *Society of Antiquaries, Archaeologia*, 65 (1914), pp. 113–128.

[391] Ffoulkes, "A Carved Flemish Chest", p. 125.

[392] Ffoulkes, "A Carved Flemish Chest", p. 121.

the Flemish forces, and the material conditions of the battle as a whole.[393] In that same year, Antoon Viaene (1900 – 1968), the editor of the Biekorf journal, submitted that the frontispiece had been carved sometime after the mid nineteenth-century in Bruges (which he claimed was known to have produced such works of forgery). Viaene's evidence was based on deposits of red lead in the interstices of the carving, as well as some apparent inconsistent depictions within the decorative programme itself, namely the clothing of the figure of the monk, whom he claimed was uncharacteristically portrayed in a manner consistent in a with fourteenth-century art (though he does not elaborate as to why).[394] To quote a 1979 article in The Spectator, "The matter rested there until the 1960s when the College thought of exhibiting the chest. If it was to be exhibited it would have to be insured. Underwriters needed to establish its value, which in turn meant resolving the question of its origin."[395] This marked a new era in the controversy surrounding the chest.

In 1977 the chest was subjected to a battery of dendrochronological dating. J.M. Fletcher of the Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art (RLAHA) at Oxford was able to, in 1978, date the upper plank of the frontispiece to having been felled between 970–1243 CE, and the lower plank as between 983–1216 CE.[396] Though this sufficed in quieting most critics of the chest's authenticity, there was still a strong vein of suspicion among Belgian academics due to the legacy of Viaene's challenges.[397] The fact that the dendrochronological

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[393] J. F. Verbruggen, *De Slag der Guldensporen; bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Vlaanderens vrijheidsoorlog, 1297–1306* (Antwerp: Standaar–Boekhandel, 1952); Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, pp. 195–210.
[394] Geoffrey Wheatcroft, "Chest problem", *The Spectator*, 16 June 1979, p. 28.
[395] Wheatcroft, "Chest Problem", p. 28.
[396] Hall, *Spooner: A Biography*, p. 106.
[397] Even after the dendrochronological dating in 1977, Dr R.H. Marijnissen at the Royal Institute for National Art History in Brussels, using almost purely art historical methods, denounced the chest as a late nineteenth-century forgery. This will be further explored in the section on the debate surrounding the chest's authenticity; p. 159.

dating supports the theory, originally put forward by Oman, that the chest was created soon after the battle. The dendrochronological conclusions were later used by J.F. Verbruggen, A. Van de Walle, and R. Heughebart to theorize that the chest was carved immediately after the battle as a diplomatic gift to one of Edward I's councillors.[398] This theory, which rests solely on the place of the chest's discovery circa 1905, will be addressed in full during a latter subsection concerning the its provenance.[399] Fletcher's findings were only reinforced when the chest was subjected to further radiocarbon dating by the RLAHA in 1985. Scientist and RLAHA member Edward Thomas Hall summarised the magnitude of this development in his 1987 review of the chest:

> Until recently conventional radiocarbon dating was not suitable for the dating of organic museum artefacts due to the unacceptable amount of sample required (about 10 g). With the development and the recent routine use of the new accelerator-based mass spectrometer (AMS) method (Hall 1980), a sample one thousand times less (10 mg) is sufficient. A whole new area of radiocarbon dating now becomes possible, and the New College chest has now been dated, with insignificant damage to it, by this method.[400]

This meant that the new testing methods were both more exact and significantly less invasive. Not only did the findings confirm a timetable of early fourteenth-century carving, but that New

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[398] A Van De Walle, R Heughebaert, 'The Flemish chest of Courtrai, a multiscientifical study conercing a unique medieval diplomatic coffer, material culture, diplomatic coffer', *Medieval Europe Basel*, 10–15 September (3rd International Conference of Medieval and Later Archeology, (2002), pp. 400–405, p. 405.
[399] See pp. 145–151.
[400] Hall, "The Courtrai chest from New College, Oxford, re-examined", p. 106.

College was invested in submitting the chest to such cutting-edge and previously cost-prohibitive tests speaks to a new institutional interest in resolving the international controversy surrounding it. It also helped that the research centre conducting this cutting-edge work was itself an arm of Oxford. Both the dendrological test and radiocarbon dating of the frontispiece reveal that it was felled from Baltic white oak as late as the thirteenth century.[401] This chapter will provide an art historical and technical analysis of the Courtrai chest, synthesising the studies involving the object over the past century. Central to the discussion will be a new elucidation of its complex iconographic programme with a view towards how it reflects back Flemish victory.

2.3 The Narrative Cycle

The order of scenes, divided according their narrative content and spatial location, is as follows: Scene I begins at the upper left-hand corner of the chest, continuing from left to right and ending at the lock. This depicts the arrival of Guy of Namur and William of Jülich. Scene II consist of everything on the top row to the right of the lock reserve. This depicts atrocities committed by the French during the lead up to the Battle of the Golden Spurs. Scene III includes the entire horizontal register below the first two, starting with the priest blessing the militia and ending with the kneeling man being beheaded. Scene IV continues in the lower left-hand corner, depicting a castle as a setting. The right, Scene V represents the Flemish phalanx and

[401] For an overview of Baltic trade before the emergence of the Hanseatic League in the mid fourteenth century, see: *Maritime Societies of the Viking and Medieval World*, ed. James H. Barrett, Sarah Jane Gibbon (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2015); Peter Stabel, “Bruges and the German Hanse: Brokering European Commerce”, *The Sea in European History*, ed. Luc Francois, Ann Katherine Isaacs (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2001), pp. 35–56; J. A. Van Houtte, “The Rise and Decline of the Market of Bruges”, *The Economic History Review*, 19. 1 (1966), pp. 29–47.

the ensuing French charge. Scene VI is the slice underneath the phalanx, consisting of the looting of the desiccated bodies. As a whole, the narrative cycle begins with the triumphant arrival of the leaders of the Flemish rebellion, and ends with the debasement of their enemies.

It is important to reflect on the designer's source material for the chest's visual narrative. To do so, both the primary records and historiography outlines in the previous case study concerning the Battle of the Golden Spurs will be carefully considered not as direct influences used by the artist but rather as disparate views of different versions of the events. Verbruggen's interpretation of the visual narrative relied on his assumption that the earlier source material was more "reliable".[402] This can be seen to an extreme degree in the *Passio*, whose author is more concerned with parody and Biblical pericopes than with conveying a historical narrative.[403] Much as recent historians have observed the Courtrai Chest as a political instrument, those histories written closest to the conflict are more acts of explanation and confirmation than any cogent attempt at confirming an overarching narrative.[404] Verbruggen submits that geography, national pride, social attitudes, sympathy and antipathy, and visceral reactions to opposing accounts render no sole account of the battle wholly dependable.[405]

This highlights another aspect of the sources that frame this period: it was a messy and disorganised affair, geographically, chronologically, and politically. Indeed, the iconography of the chest confirms this. The Flemish militia is united not by a singular aesthetic theme but by their shared combat with the French.[406] Contingents from Ypres wear their own distinct

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402 Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 32.
403 Peersman, "Constructing Identity", p. 93.
404 Van De Walle and Heughebart, "The Flemish chest of Courtrai", p. 400.
405 Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 32.
406 Ffoulkes, "A Carved Flemish Chest", p. 241.

insignia; the militia carry a plethora of guild banners.[407] More subtly, the lack of political unity is evident by the lack of a preeminent Flemish leader. Guy of Namur and William of Jülich are given equal billing at the beginning of the narrative in the upper left scene, while Peter Coninck—who rocketed to popularity after the battle in works like the *Passio* and the *Annales*—is situated among the militia line with both noblemen in scene IV.[408]

2.3.1 Scene I: The Arrival of the Rebellion

Starting in the upper left corner of the frontispiece, the first scene depicts a party of armed and mounted men riding from left to right in the direction of the city located opposite the lock that divides scenes one and two. The opening of narrative with these ten figures hastening towards a beleaguered city cuts to the core of the Flemish ideological programme: the French are existential threats, and the rebellion seeks to preserve that which their enemies' threaten. The wind-swept barding of the horses and prominently displayed weapons invokes an atmosphere of urgency and desperation, and of a willingness and preparedness to fight.

A lone figure stands at the head of the cortege holding a *goedendag*, while two prominent equestrian figures carry shield. Charles Ffoulkes first identified the personages of Guy of Namur and William of Jülich as leading the entourage of armoured knights, their coats of arms clearly identifiable on their ailettes and shields.[409] Verbruggen also identifies a third nobleman to the left of Guy and William, Hendrik van Lontzen, the Marshal of Bruges, by the scalloped cross shield.[410] The scene itself is ahistorical. William and Guy joined the rebellion at

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[407] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 196.
[408] Peter de Conynck is the only named Flemish leader in the *Passio*; see chapter two.
[409] Ffoulkes, "A Carved Flemish Chest", p. 114.
[410] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 199.

different dates, so the image of them riding together to save an embattled Bruges is a fiction.[411] Verbruggen explains this as "most probable that the artist intentionally reproduced these two events in one depiction, as this was common practice in the work of that period".[412] Ffoulkes was unable to place any of the heraldic devices, instead assuming the entire mounted party were French knights, dismissing them as "tool-play" of "a simple craftsman, [who] would only know well the arms and badges of guilds kindred to his own".[413] Verbruggen highlights a detail that could suggest the artist's ignorance or wilful anachronism.[414] Lodewijk van Velthem writes that William of Jülich was said to have donned the armour of his grandfather Guy of Dampierre (who was at that time a prisoner of Philip IV) as evidence that the carver of the chest made an error.[415] If this is true, he would not appear wearing the lion rampant with lily and five annulents which are displayed on his armour on the frontispiece, but rather simply the lion rampant of the Count of Flanders.[416] However, the artist's inclusion of the lion rampant with lily makes William of Jülich much easier to recognise. It also served to commemorate his family's legacy. The designer wants the viewer to easily identify William and Guy, situate them in the context of their nobility (hence the entourage of mounted knights), and be aware of their relationship with both each other and the Flemish people.

Returning to the *goedendag*-wielding footman, he is ostensibly one of bust a faceless number of militiamen. In fact, the presence of this figure becomes a repeated motif that

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[411] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 201.
[412] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 201.
[413] Ffoulkes, "A Carved Flemish Chest", p. 118.
[414] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 214, p. 199; Lodewijk, *Spiegel Historiael*, p. 276, vv. 1176–205.
[415] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 214.
[416] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 199; Verbruggen's first footnote here merely reads "The *Istore et croniques de Flandres* confirms this".

appears in similarly prominent positions in the decorative programme. The proportions of the figure are exaggerated, making him appear much larger than the mounted knights he is escorting. This serves to ensure the individual is both marked as distinct from among the otherwise visually busy surroundings, and acts as a transitional barrier—demarcating a liminal space which is then punctuated by the lock reserve on the right-hand side of the scene. In the context of the visual programme of the frontispiece, the identity of the militiaman is immaterial. It is his presence at the forefront of the travelling knights that lends legitimacy to the Flemish cause, projecting a unified front across multiple swathes of otherwise politically distinct groups; guildsmen and knights united in shared cause.

2.3.2 Scene II: The Key And The Town

Situated to the right side of the lock reserve in the upper register, this second scene is divided into three distinct but seemingly simultaneous sections. Firstly, a gaggle of townsmen wearing the robes of aldermen and with their hair neatly groomed gather outside an opened door of a fortified wall with crenelations. One man kneels, while the other two stand to face towards the lock. The kneeling man offers an oversized key towards the approaching band of noblemen in the previous scene, gesturing with pointed fingers and open mouths. The visual interplay between the imagined key and the directly adjacent lock suggests the artist's intentional interplay between function of the chest and the history it depicts.[417] In this sense, the townsmen are simultaneously appealing to the noblemen and bidding the viewer to unlock the chest itself. This feature not only indicates the complexity of the iconographical design; it

[417] Appendix, G.

also seems to confirm that the chest, in its original construction, was in fact a chest—something all historians who have engaged with it have implicitly assumed. The three townsmen seem to rush with urgency out of the opened gate of their city. This gate, with its carefully chiselled ashlar, bulky crenelations, and two distinct decorative turrets above, is the first of four extant buildings within the narrative—as the sides of the original board were trimmed it is impossible to tell if there were more present in the margins, though there is a certain symmetry between the castle in the lower left corner, the fort in the middle, and the gate in the upper right corner that naturally draw the eye to the recessed shrine that narrowly avoided the re-boarder's saw.

Beyond the gate, the viewer is presented with one of the chest's more complex compositions. Three soldiers, depicted in profile armed with swords, stand above a collapsing, nearly horizontal figure of an unarmed man wearing a rob. The soldier to the right stands just beyond the pictorial plane, while the soldier in the centre raises a sword in his right hand and carries a round shield in his left. But it's the soldier to the left, who is nearest to the city gate, who commits what look like an act of horrific vengeance: He grabs his victim's hair in his right hand while slicing a sword across his neck with his left hand. The possible significance behind this act of decapitation undertaken by a left-handed soldier will be addressed in due course. To the right of this murder is yet another microarchitectural frame.[418] A shorter, narrower tower with three crenelations and a pointed roof above. It contains an alcove which houses a small figure placed upon an elevated platform. Hovering to the right of the figure is the arm and leg

[418] Appendix, H.

of a figure who did not survive the saw of whomever trimmed the frontispiece during one of the chest's many transformations.

Since Oman first analysed the iconography of the chest, the three sections that comprise Scene II are assumed be a representation of the Bruges Matins—a nocturnal massacre on 18 May 1302 in which the denizens of Bruges rose against a French garrison lead by Jacques de Châtillon (d. 11 July, 1302), who had been appointed the governor of the County of Flanders by King Philip IV in 1300.[419] Ffoulkes added nuance to this interpretation by suggestion it might also represent the fall of the castle of Malle and the decapitation of its governor.[420] Verbruggen echoes both of this potential attributions.[421] The iconography of the kneeling man is similar to other extant representations of martyrdom at the time. An excellent example of this is a late thirteenth-century funerary carving in the parish church of Saint-Barthélémy in Chénérailles, France (Appendix 2a). The carving tells the story of Saint Bartholomew, though the beheading is a specific reference to the martyrdom of St. Cyr. The kneeling figure of the saint is presented several steps beneath that of his executioner, his hands clasped together in an act of prayer. Similarly to that of the chest, Cyr is portrayed in the garb and hairstyle of the period. This similarity sheds doubt as to the garb of the man on the chest, who's attire has been surmised as that of a "sleeping knight" in efforts to contextualise it as occurring during the Bruges Matins.[422] A cleaner iconographical reading would infer that the choice of portraying a kneeling figure in a robe, while creating evocative religious undertones, allows the carver of the chest two

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[419] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 19; Oman, *A History of the Art of War In The Middle Ages*, p. 114; Ffoulkes, "A Carved Flemish Chest", p. 118.
[420] Ffoulkes, "A Carved Flemish Chest", p. 118.
[421] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 199.
[422] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 197.

opportunities. The first is that the robe is a simple yet visually appealing aesthetic choice. The folds allow the artist to convey a sense of movement within the carving, while also being simple enough so as to not require an overdue amount of effort on the part of the carver nor distract from other elements in the immediate context of the visual elements around it. The second opportunity is one of projection on behalf of the viewer. Referring specifically to the robed man on the Courtrai Chest, the ambiguity of his garb allows the viewer to substitute his circumstances for their own. This becomes incredibly important when you substitute the violence of the Bruges Matins for the political violence subjected upon Flemish urban centres by the French immediately *after* the Matins; this recontextualization will be further elaborated upon in the later section entitled as such. The key difference between the two scenes is the presence of emotive action in Scene II of the Courtrai Chest. The soldier is actively pulling the kneeling man out of his prayerful position by his hair, his sword frozen at the point of decapitation.

2.3.3 Scene III: Gathering Lines & Skirmishes

Moving on to one of the busiest scenes on the frontispiece, the carver used the entire breadth of the second highest register (or what remains of it) to display an event as it unfolds. Proceeding again from left to right and divided at the very centre (just beneath the lock), the left half of the group is comprised of a cluster of soldiers facing towards the open city gate, where one soldier leans down and peers through. On the left of the second register, a phalanx of Flemish militia appear with no fewer than five banners denoting different contingents of individual artisan guilds—from left to right, they represent fullers, weavers, shippers, wine

measurers, and wine carriers or loaders.[423] The hooded figure to the left is most likely a monk or priest administering a blessing to the assembled guilds before battle. Though the *Annales* makes no specific mention of a blessing occurring before the battle at Courtrai, there are other cases where mass was held for the militia (such as before the Battle of Mons-en-Pévèle).[424] To the right of another crenelated tower, serving as a useful framing device, is a violent clash between a mounted knight (the French) and *goedendag*-wielding soldiers (the Flemish), while another unarmed man is being beheaded on the far right. The identity of the man is unknown. It has been suggested that he and the charging knight are the same individual, Geoffrey of Brabant (d. 1302), though this is unlikely as the heraldry on the knight's caparison would be incorrect.[425] Verbruggen suggests that it could be the sheriff of Torhout, and that the second register could be a representation of the siege of Wijnendaal castle that occurred after the Bruges Matins—though he admits that this interpretation is still an imperfect fit.[426] It is possible that this is a depiction of the days of skirmishing that preceded the battle. The *Annales Gandenses* describes several days of individual combats and assaults between the two armies.[427] If this were the case, then the repetition of the execution motif further serves to heighten the tension and stakes at play between the two forces. The similarity between the execution in this scene, situated as it is directly beneath the sacking of Courtrai above, would imply an emphasis being placed on the physical violence occurring during these events. The repetition of this motif, a kneeling figure praying while being executed by a left-handed soldier,

[423] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 203.
[424] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 65.
[425] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 201.
[426] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 201.
[427] *Annals Gandenses*, p. 29.

reinforces the political and moral stakes of the narrative. From left to right, the Flemish militia is fighting across the register to reach the kneeling man. Another similarity with the beheading occurring in the second scene is the lack of any straightforward identification of the figures surrounding the violent act.

Whereas the rest of the chest places important and specific emphasis on where the Flemish militia is and what they are doing, the identity of the trio surrounding the kneeling man is ambiguous—no *goedendags* nor heraldry to be found. In contrast, the soldiers bringing down the armoured knight are prominently featured using the *goedendag*. Spatially, the significance the designer gives to the crossbow in this scene, a weapon used by both the Flemish and French, though more notably by the later during the Battle of the Golden Spurs, seems to create a break in the action—separating the identifiably Flemish soldiers from the morally ambiguous scene occurring beyond them. In this regard, the *goedendag* is fulfilling two distinct iconographic functions; serving as both a cultural identifier of the Flemish militia as an abstract collective, and a utilitarian device which the designer of the chest uses to distinguish between friend and foe. This utility is especially important as the visual programme makes no special distinction between the garb of the two groups, as evidenced by the depictions of the French garrison within the castle on the bottom left register, who are visually identical to the Flemish militia in their helmets and mail.

2.3.4 Scene IV: The Courtrai Castle & The Ypres Militia

Spanning the third and fourth registers, the left side of this scene is dominated by the towers of the monumental castle. A group of Yprois militiamen, their uniforms carefully marked

with carved crosses, can be seen fighting off a French sally from Courtrai's keep.[428] On the left side of the structure, consisting of a gate flanked by two towers, a hooded figure can be seen being raised—or lowered—by the fortification's French defenders (as identified by the fleur-de-lis flag flying above the battlements).The *Annales Gandenses* frames the defeat of the castle's emergent defenders as especially indicative of the Fleming's martial abilities, forcing the French to affect an "ignominious" defeat at the hands of the "manly" Flemish.[429] There is also a trace remainder of another structure to the left of the castle, it too having barely survived the axe of whoever refit the chest into its current form. There was a notable béguinage, the Begijnhof Sint-Elisabeth, next to the castle which burned down during the fighting. The unnamed author of the *Annales* writes, "When battle was joined, those in the castle, mindful of their friends, threw down fire from the castle, as they had done often before and set alight many houses in Courtrai, and consumed one beautiful house by fire, to terrify the Flemings".[430] The presence of the robed figure being hoisted by the castle's garrison could be another visual pun at the expense of the French; a reference to the community of women living in the fortification's shadow.[431] The sculptor of the chest was meticulous in their rendering of the keep, from the trebuchet and oil on the ramparts to the French flag waving from the battlements. This could be a reference to the report of the garrison attempting to frantically signal the arriving French

[428] The presence of the Yprois were used by Ffoulkes to theorize that the chest could have been made by someone from there but Verbruggen argues that the necessity to identify members of the Yprois militia could be due to the fact that the carver was from Bruges; Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs,* p. 197.
[429] "Ipsi etiam et equites et pedites de castro, ut Flandrenses a tergo invaderent , egressi, ab Yprensibus eis viriliter et probe resistentibus in castrum reverti turpiter sunt coacti"; *Annals Gandenses*, p. 30.
[430] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 30.
[431] For a history of medieval beguinages, see C. Neel: 'The Origins of the Beguines', *Signs* 14 (1989), pp. 321–341; P. Guignet: 'État béguinal, demi-clôture et vie mêlée des filles dévotes de la Réforme Catholique dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux à l'époque moderne', *Armand Colin: Histoire, économie & société* 3 (2005), pp. 373–385.

army and guide them through the marshy terrain, as first manifested in the *Spiegel Historiael*.[432] The narrative in question is relating the repression of the French sortie during the battle by the Yprois militiamen.[433] The amount of detail paid to the castle in question is quite considerable. A French flag, which Verbruggen identifies as the "simplified standard of the Lord of Lens" is clearly visible above the battlements, accompanied by two trebuchets and, directly below them, a barrel of oil hangs above the castle's gate.[434] A window on the left tower shows a helmeted soldier peering out, while a figure—potentially a woman—is being lowered to the ground.[435] The presence of a béguinage in Courtrai—founded in 1238 and in the shadow of the town's castle—might explain the particular garb of the woman in the question (head garb and robes), as well point to the designer of the chest using the circumstances as a jab at the honour of the French defenders; raising beguines to and from their castle.[436] The 'curious defender' has been repeated earlier in the program, featured in the fort from the third scene. The castle's two towers form the base of the architectural program that rises diagonally through the chest, culminating in the saint's shrine in the upper right corner. Out of the gate rides a French knight, behind which stands another defender. Four Flemish soldiers stand to the left of the gate, wielding an assortment of weaponry which includes a *goedendag*, two falchions, a shield, and a large tower shield of the kind used to protect crossbowmen. An arrow can be seen embedded in the shield.

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[432] L. Van Velthem: *Voortzetting van de Spiegel Historiael (1248-1316)*, ed. H. vander Linden, W. de Vreese, P. de Keyser, A. van Loey, 3 vol, Brussels, 1906–1938, L. IV. C. 21.
[433] Van Velthem, *Spiegel Historiael*, p. 198.
[434] Van Velthem, *Spiegel Historiael*, p, 206; Ffoulkes, p. 240.
[435] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 206.
[436] Jess Bontemps , *Le Béguinage de Courtra*i (2019) <http://histoire-a-sac-a-dos.com/le-beguinage-de-courtrai/> [accessed 30 January 2019].

2.3.5 Scene V: The Flemish Phalanx

Though the shortest of the scenes, the battle array carved here is a rare depiction of the Flemish phalanx at Courtrai and has proven especially exciting to military historians.[437] In the foreground, three men brace themselves with a spear against the charge of an oncoming knight. The barding on the knight's horse echoes the frantic movement of the mounted knights in Scene I, and a fluttering pendant can be seen streaming from the horseman's tilting lance. In the background, a line of six guildsmen stand, each resting a *goedendag* on their shoulder. Above the heads of the militia the guild banners are once again prominently displayed.[438] The personal emblems of Guy of Namur, William of Jülich, and Peter de Coninck can be clearly seen.[439] There is also a banner that can be interpreted as belonging to either Ghent or Bruges (depending on if it is seen as lion or a franc).[440] The most prominently displayed guild banner is that of the carpenter's guild, to which Verbruggen and Ffoulkes suggest the carver of the chest would have belonged.[441]

2.3.6 Scene VI: The Aftermath

The final scene, this section of the chest depicts the bloody aftermath of the battle. A row of corpses can be clearly seen—gashed with deep marks across their stomachs and limbs. Disembowelled bodies are clearly and prominently displayed. Several figures are depicted going

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[437] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 203.

[438] These being the Guild of Carpenters, Guild of Smiths, the Guild of Masons, and the Guild of Tilers; Ffoulkes, *A Carved Flemish Chest*, p. 126; Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 206.

[439] Ffoulkes, *A Carved Flemish Chest*, p. 126.

[440] Ffoulkes specifically refers to it as "the ensign of the crossbowmen of Ghent", though Verbruggen suggests it could be either that of Ghent or Bruges; Ffoulkes, *A Carved Flemish Chest*, p. 126; Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 206.

[441] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 203.

through the bodies, one with a knife in his (left) hand, though their headwear and dress are dissimilar to that of previously depicted Flemish and French figures. A man can be seen pulling a gambeson off of a corpse. The *Annales Gandenses* specifically make mention of an order given jointly by all the leaders of the Flemish militia to refrain from looting during the battle, under pain of death: "anyone who stole any valuable during the battle or kept as prisoner a noble, however great, should be straightaway put to death by his own comrades."[442] While the chronicler makes mention of this order specifically as a means to explain why no French nobles were taken prisoner during the battle, the juxtaposition between the battlefield discipline instilled in the Flemish—evidenced by the fact that no prisoners were indeed taken—and the fighting depicted between looters on the chest is something to be aware of. The knife-wielding figures in question are, it bears repeating, not garbed in the previously dominant garb of the standard militia and their French counterparts; mail and helmet. This detail is critical to corroborate the narrative of the chest's depiction of events with that of other contemporary historical sources. The fact that the men are garbed in hoods and tunics can be literally interpreted as meaning one of two things. The first—and most literal—possibility is that the events in the subsection (i.e. the looting) are occurring significantly after the battle has ended, the passage of time having allowed for the combatants to retire, change out of their armour, and return to the field to loot. The second literal interpretation is that separate actors—having never been garbed as militia and thus remaining as such—immediately set upon the battlefield to begin despoiling the corpses of the French. This second reading would account for the violent nature of the looting at hand, as the two men are very much fighting over the spoils in

[442] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 31.

question. The most likely explanation is that the designer is using the hoods to symbolically depict the change from martial actors to civilian ones.[443] That is to say, whether or not the militia completely changed out of their armour is beside the point. The key meaning the designer is attempting to convey is that the looting is occurring *after* the fighting.

Now that the visual programme of the frontispiece has been addressed across all of its scenes, certain broader patterns can be identified and explored. At the forefront of this is the symmetry at play within the wider image. Starting from the upper left, the first manifestation of said symmetry is the *goedendag*-wielding militiaman standing in front of the entourage of noblemen. It would be altogether too dismissive to regard the fact that the designer of the chest chose to put him in front of such integral figures as Guy and William as mere happenstance. Elsewhere across the chest, such as the phalanx of militiamen, the composition of the entourage, the row of militia banners, and the order in which figures are standing during the actual depiction of the battle implies a certain hierarchy. This is most notable seen in the way Guy and William are portrayed in Scene V—standing at the very forefront of the Flemish line, each pointing towards the French with their right hand in a clear indication of leadership. The image of the *goedendag*-wielding militiaman is similarly repeated one panel down, in Scene III. Divided from the rest of the militia by the solitary fort in the middle of the row, he is nevertheless situated exactly as the first, with the exception that he is now participating in the dismounting of a (ostensibly *Leliaert*) Flemish knight. This can be interpreted in one of two ways, then: either the individual is a stand-in for the every-man, a gesture that aptly matches

[443] As present in the contrast between the robed aldermen and the armored soldiers in Scene II.

both the overall spirit of the chest and the cultural zeitgeist that struck Flanders in the wake of the French defeat, or it is referencing a certain individual. Verbruggen has hinted at the presence of a specific individual in the design, but did so out of a necessity to address the left-handedness of the figure striking down the clothed man in Scene II.

The left-handed figures pose their own inherent problems. Verbruggen must be given credit as the first scholar to address their existence as such, but even then he did so in passing and without any concrete conclusions.[444] He also does not mention the other four left-handed figures located elsewhere on the chest. There are a total of six depictions of left-handedness within the iconography. These are: the smiling soldier beheading the robed man in Scene I, the floating left hand touching the saint in Scene I (its handedness indicated by the fold of the thumb and the angle of the phantom foot beneath it), the charging knight in Scene III, the crossbowman in Scene II, and the soldier beheading the kneeling man in Scene III. Each representation exists in a context of immediate violence; the swing of a sword, the charging of a horse, the firing of a crossbow. A first assessment would suggest certain moral implications in the handedness between individual characters. A direct foil to the program of left-handed violence is to be found in Scene II: directly behind the left-handed soldier and the kneeling robed man is another soldier, his right hand raising a sword in the direction of the first soldier, and clutching a targe in his left hand. It is difficult to come to a definitive explanation as to the predominance of the motif in keeping with broader scholarly work on the subject, as the field of handedness is itself incredibly young and especially lacking in primary sources.[445]

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[444] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 199.
[445] I. C. McManus, 'The history and geography of human handedness.', in Language Lateralisation and Psychosis, ed. by I. Sommer & R.S. Khan(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 37–58.

Nevertheless, the oversaturation of the image with left-handed individuals explicitly meting out violence with their left hands cannot be waved away.

One critical—and critically overlooked—aspect of the chest's iconography is the way in which it conveys the narrative of the story in question. Due to the fact that the chest was quickly and emphatically labelled as a simple depiction of a proscribed series of historical events (see both Ffoulkes and Oman), no one has questioned why the designer of the chest made the decisions they did. This line of inquiry is especially necessary when attempting to understand the object's contribution to the creation and projection of social memory. The disjointed, cartoon-strip style mode of narrative conveyance that seems to have little regard for matters of syntactical cohesion or chronological fidelity (as vast swathes of time are lost between panels), is not the by-product of poor design or hasty construction but rather an aesthetic choice. This paratactic narrative, which Fentress and Wickham describe as "(the) images are only strung together like beads on a string"[446] is similar to other types of popular medieval art; frescos, stained-glass windows, and liturgical sermons were all concerned with presenting a succession of striking visual images.[447] In this context, if we treat the general design and layout of the chest with as much respect and critical investment as its contingent parts, meaning can be gleaned from analysing the frontispiece through the lens of its contemporary viewer. This can manifest itself in a singularly important question: what elements, both narrative and aesthetic, are being emphasised? As has been previously indicated via the analysis of single scenes, violence is obviously an element that is given chief

[446] James Fentress, Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), p. 55.
[447] Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 50.

urgency by the chest's designer. The paratactical nature of the narrative allows the designer to 'pause' on certain especially violent moments; the beheadings in Scene II and III, the martial conflict in Scenes III, IV, V. Of the entire chest, only one scene, Scene I, is devoid of any immediate conflict. Even then, the arrival of Guy and William is itself *heralding* the conflict that is to come—a narrative detail that would be certainly known to any Flemish viewer of the chest. Indeed, so many iconographical details of the chest are predicated upon historical and cultural context that hinges upon a 'Flemish' reading of the chest's that the idea that the object would have been made for a non-Flemish viewer is rendered suspect. If, as it has been theorized, the chest was a diplomatic gift, one would expect that the narrative would be both more forthright and stripped of the detail that, as Verbruggen himself points to in order to identify the Warden of Bruges and thus reframe the context of the chest's creation, would be of concern only to a viewer who bears a very specific social memory of the events in particular. The heraldry, the topography, the micro-architectural specificities, the presence of a locally important saint; all of these things speak more to the collective memory of those actively involved in the events at hand their immediate cultural impact, rather than some detached English nobleman who happened to have the ear of the king.

2.4 Reemphasizing Courtrai

There is a singular reinterpretation of the chest's artistic programme that dramatically redefines the parameters of the entire narrative of the frontispiece, accounting for supposed historical error and artistic oddity alike. It has, since Oman's initial identification, been taken as an utter truism that Scene II depicts the Bruges Matins. This assumption has been based on the

depiction of the soldier slaying the robed man in conjunction with the fact that the scene occurs in the lead up to the Battle of Courtrai itself.[448] However, a closer reading of the sources and artistic programme casts serious doubt as to exactly what the designer of the chest was trying to accomplish within the confines of the upper right corner. Beginning with the arrival of Guy and William, they are not arriving at the "centre of the rebellion" as Verbruggen puts it, but rather at the centre of the story the designer of the chest is attempting to tell: Courtrai. [449] Therefore, it is not only excusable that the designer depicts the two men arriving together, but historically truthful as Courtrai was where the disparate elements of the Flemish rebels gathered together in the lead-up to the eponymous battle.[450] This could also potentially address the issue Verbruggen has with the depiction of William's armour, since the retinue is arriving at Courtrai with intentions of imminently engaging the French it makes sense that he is wearing his personal armour instead of his father's—the need for propagandistic pretence gone. No source takes the time to point out what armour William was wearing before and during the battle, whereas one would assume the opposite to be the case if he had indeed been parading around in his father's colours. This fits with the designer's chief intentions concerning the noblemen within the iconographic program: identifying them, and identifying them as emblematic of the Flemish militia itself. The impetus on identification can be seen in their repeated heraldic designations, and their relationship to the militia is created via their relation to the soldiers around them. Even in Scene I, the two noblemen are immediately presented with a goedendag-wielding militiaman. This relationship is reaffirmed in Scene IV, where both

[448] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 196.
[449] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 201.
[450] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 193.

men are depicted as physically leading (note the articulation of Guy's pointed finger) the gathered guilds against the French.[451] Verbruggen echoes this in his association of the helmets worn by the noblemen—open faced and bowled on top—with those worn by the militiamen.[452] Furthermore, the manner in which the entourage is received by the party of townsmen, one kneeling with key outstretched, is a narrative element that echoes the voluntary surrender of Courtrai and Oudenarde to the gathering Flemish rebels.[453] The fact that the man being beheaded within the town so closely resembles those outside, who Verbruggen identifies as members of the Bruges town council, is not indicative of the scene depicting the Matins but rather further proof against such an interpretation.[454] When viewed in context with the rest of the frontispiece, labelling the robed man as "French" is dubious as the designer of the chest, in later scenes, makes clear the distinction between those individuals deemed worthy of the viewer's sympathy and those who are not. In Scene III the knight being set upon by the goedendag-wielding soldiers has just broken his lance upon one of their comrades. In Scene IV, the designer of the chest has even gone so far as to depict a standard bearing fleur-de-lis above the castle—a clear willingness to label the enemy when he sees them. Throughout the chest, violence—when undertaken by the Flemings—is always presented with a certain moral justification. The exceptions to this rule, namely the left-handed soldiers dispatching unarmoured victims, emphasize the moral soundness of the Flemish actions by the presence of other, explicitly immoral behaviours.

[451] Appendix, Fig. 1d
[452] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 201.
[453] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 26.
[454] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 199.

The most important element of Scene II to address, as it is the element upon which the designer has placed the most emphasis and which sets the tone for the entire frontispiece, is one of violence. The image of the robed man being struck down was immediately associated with the nocturnal assault on the French garrison of Bruges with good reason—the French sources are quick portray to the Matins as an ostensibly bloody act of treachery.[455] However, the Flemish sources tell a decidedly different story. It is unsurprising that they portray the Matins in a much better light, but the violence meted out by the French upon the civilian population is depicted with an understandably strong emphasis, where it is otherwise lacking from the French sources. To quote the anonymous author of the *Annales Gandenses*:

> As the French entered Flemish-speaking Flanders, to show their ferocity and terrorise the Flemings they spared neither women nor children nor the sick, but slew all they could find. They even beheaded the images of saints in the churches, as though they were alive, or chopped off their limbs. However, such doings did not terrorise the Flemings, but stimulated and provoked them to still greater indignation and rage and violent fighting.[456]

The violence being meted out by the left-handed soldier can therefore be interpreted as representing the larger violence being inflicted upon Flemish urban centres by the French army. The evidence pointing to the left-handed soldier being not Flemish but French is both varied and extant across the frontispiece. Firstly and most immediately is the aforementioned soldier directly behind him, raising his sword towards the back of the smiling man’s head. Though

[455] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 26.
[456] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 28.

situated to the right of the left-handed soldier, the shield bearer wields his sword in his right hand—a feature that only emphasizes the strangeness of the other left-handed figures. The shield itself exists outside of the iconographical programme of the chest. The shibboleth "shield and friend" was an apocryphal by-product of the Bruges Matins that came to represent the larger ideological schisms between the two Flemish factions (*Clauwaerts* and *Leliaert*), and the French themselves.[457] Much as Verbruggen was willing to dismiss the supposed mistake of Guy and William's joint arrival as an artistic liberty composed of joining together two separate historical events, the presence of the shield within a vignette of urban violence queues the viewer into a broader political narrative without explicitly limiting itself to a single event, such as the Matins. It is in such a way that the designer can clearly designate friend and foe, much as the chaotic realities of urban combat necessitate similar mechanisms of identification. If the designer of the chest was indeed from Bruges, then he very well may have born personal witness to the Matins. As such, a scene of French violence in urban Courtrai is elevated to an even grander narrative scale; the designer's personal experiences in both towns creating a programme that can be mapped onto the individual experiences of the viewer. For someone from Bruges, Scene II could quite justifiably be taken to represent the Bruges Matins, as the larger abstraction of the Matins fits into the grander narrative of the war. To someone from Courtrai—or Oudenarde or some similar town that suffered French brutality—Scene II presents both the cause and effect of the war for those Flemings living within striking distance of the

[457] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 192.

border. The violence inflicted upon the towns by the French necessitated the Flemish rebellion and the ensuing battle at Courtrai.

An important micro-architectural feature of Scene II is the tower, looming over the violence and housing an image of a saint. Far from being some unnamed gatehouse in Bruges, the aforementioned relocation of the narrative from Bruges to Courtrai allows us to posit as to what exact monumental structure is being featured in the chest's iconography. Given the garb of the saint—mitre and pallium—and the context of the scene, it is likely that the building is the Church of Saint Martin, one of the two eminent churches in medieval Courtrai (along with Notre Dame de Courtrai). Destroyed by fire after the battle of Westrozebeke on November 7, 1382, the lost Gothic building had replaced an earlier Romanesque structure around the turn of the century.[458] The presence of St Martin in particular makes sense as he was the patron saint of wool-weavers and tailors; guilds of which are prominently displayed across the chest. Alternately, St Martin was the patron saint of France—only to be usurped by St Denis and his prodigious patronage by the Capetians—and his presence in a scene condemning French violence could be seen as an effort to rehabilitate him in a Flemish context; though the broad reach and incredible popularity of his cult lent his image a certain ubiquity that doesn't inherently necessitate such a tacit effort of reclamation by the Flemish.

By identifying Scene II as Courtrai we also significantly shorten the timeframe of the narrative. The Bruges Matins occurred on the 18th of May, 1302. The entire Flemish army was

[458]Ann De Gunsch, "De Leeuw, Sofie & Metdepenninghen, Catheline, Parish Church of St. Martin" (2016) <https://inventaris.onroerenderfgoed.be/erfgoedobjecten/59787> [accessed 3 January 2019].

fully assembled at Courtrai by the 26th of June.[459] This means that, from Scene I to Scene II, the chronology is shortened by nearly a month. This makes sense, as the events of said month are—at best—difficult to ascribe to the conflict present in Scene III. Verbruggen, Ffoulkes, and Oman all had different interpretations of the scene that invariably concluded with airs of uncertainty. Verbruggen obviously struggles with this chronology, walking back his earlier assertion that Guy and William's joint arrival is a mistake and writing, "The historical events portrayed in this depiction are more difficult to determine. We are already at the beginning of June 1302 since we have had the Bruges Matins and the arrival of Willem van Jülich and Guy de Namur."[460] However, if the town in Scene II is indeed Courtrai, then the need to ascribe the depiction to any one of the dozen of armed conflicts that occurred after the Matins and before the battle—mostly acts of William as he shored up support and exacted revenge upon opponents of his grandfather—is severely mitigated. The author of the *Annales* explicitly makes mention of clashes between the two armies in the days leading up to the battle, writing: "These, with Guy and William, drew up the Flemish army and put heart into it. For three or four days there were individual assaults and combats between the two armies."[461] That is exactly what is being depicted in Scene III. The Flemish line is being drawn up. A priest is administering to the men—putting heart in them, for lack of a better term. Small-scale combat is occurring, under the watchful eye of a soldier who bears striking visual resemblance to the later depiction of the French soldier look out of the castle in Scene IV. All the while, the specter of French violence looms in the background; another left-handed soldier beheading an unarmed,

[459] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 218.
[460] Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 201.
[461] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 29.

prayerful man. Once again, reemphasizing Courtrai as the center of both the frontispiece's iconographic program and narrative solves more problems than it creates. The initial impulse to map the breadth of the Flemish campaign onto the events depicted on the chest is understandable, but naïve in so much as it invites a certain teleological reading of events that is divorced from both the events as they would have been understood by their contemporaries and the historically limited conception of events held by the object's designer at the time of its creation. Rather than using the chest to attempt to validate our current historical understanding of the Franco-Flemish conflict, a more effective use of the object's value is to allow it to speak for itself; instead of cramming its artistic programme into a box comprised of modern understandings of the events we think it depicts.

2.5 The Hands That Carved the Chest

I have already mentioned in passing both Verbruggen's and Ffoulkes' theories regarding the creator of the chest, but will now delve into the matter more deeply. This question is, perhaps more than any other assumption one can make about the chest, absolutely integral to understanding the object in its historical context. Depending on how one chooses to address and answer said question, the entire trajectory of its purpose, provenance, and narrative are drastically altered. Beginning with the two major theories of origination, Ffoulkes' theory of an Yprois *scrinwerker*, though hardly robust as it relies solely on the presence of Yprois uniforms, was not satisfactorily addressed by Verbruggen. Verbruggen, both in his own theory of origination and in his contributions to the later "diplomatic gift" theory of van de Walle and Heughebaert fixates on the idea that the chest was carved *statim post* the Battle of the Golden

Spurs. The chronology and archival sources, however, cast some doubt as to if sending the chest in 1302 to Stanton St. John would have been physically possible or politically viable. In "The Flemish chest of Courtrai, a multiscientifical study conercing a unique medieval diplomatic coffer, material culture, diplomatic coffer" van de Walle and Heughebaert frame their argument as revolving around the personages of Edward I and one of his advisers, Sir John of Stanton St. John.[462] Their reasoning is straightforward: the chest was found in Stanton St. John, John of Stanton St. John was privy to the king's ear, Edward I had wintered in Flanders in 1297 and was ultimately appealed to by the Flemish in their later diplomacy with the French. They also lean heavily on how popular Edward I was among the Flemings, writing, "The personality of Edward I was interesting to the Flemish for he was willing to listen to the opinions of others, in contrast to Philip IV, effectively King of Flanders. Edward I reigned in the main with cooperation between town and community. Edward I granted the Parliament and the cities with a kind of democratic participation in the power, with citizens as representatives."[463] Though their process of starting with the chest's earliest (and only) known location and working backwards is certainly a viable method of ascertaining its provenance, there are several inconsistencies with the assumptions they make along the way.

The relationship between Edward I and the Flemish towns was much more fraught than Van de Walle and Heughebaert insinuate. In 1298, while wintering in Ghent, the English army fought with the local Flemings in a skirmish that lasted two days. The *Annales Gandenses*, relating this account some ten years after the fact, is quite damning in its indictment of the

[462] Van De Walle and Heughebaert, "The Flemish chest of Courtrai", p. 1.
[463] Van De Walle and Heughebaert, "The Flemish chest of Courtrai", p. 2.

actions of the English soldiers, even going so far as to roll them into a larger polemic against the whole of England. The idea that such sentiment would have lessened for a time between 1298 and 1308 is doubtful.

> The fight lasted two days. The English, utterly ungrateful for the loyalty, benevolence and cordiality of the Flemings, especially the men of Ghent, who had most courteously allowed them to dwell there in complete safety throughout the winter, dragged their tails as usual. Wishing to plunder the town and to slaughter any who resisted, they set fire to it in four places, at the four corners, as it were, in order that the men of Ghent, engaged in putting out the fire, might be less careful to guard their property.[464]

The idea that the English were "dragging their tail as usual" infers a pre-existing Flemish view that the English were already timid, if not outright cowardly. This can be explained by Edward I's lack of commitment to engaging Philip IV in western Flanders in the aid of Guy of Dampierre, seen as tantamount to betrayal by the anti-French Flemings. Instead of confronting the French, as he had promised, Edward sat in Ghent until eventually signing the Truce of Sint-Baafs-Vijve on 9 October, 1297.[465] The looting undertaken by the static English force in the following year merely added insult to injury. Van de Walle and Heughebaert point that Guy of Namur, as well as his brother John, were knighted by Edward before the English departed, though the context of the English's king's departure somewhat questions any lasting ties such an encounter would have created. The *Annales* lists the casualties of the English looting as being, "About seventy of

[464] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 7.
[465] Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, p. 190.

the king's foot soldiers [were] killed. Of the townspeople of Ghent, as many as twelve were burnt by the English (among them some women and children) and about twenty-five men fell in battle in that town."[466] So while it may have very well been true that the Flemish admired certain aspects of Edward I's Parliaments and the idea of "democratic participation in power" (which is itself a very poorly defined term) they had, certainly by 1302 and before, very negative associations and at least one disastrous conflict with the English king.

The case for a *terminus post quem* of late 1302, as van de Walle and Heughebaert (and by extension, Verbruggen) are committed to making if the chest was commissioned as a political gift following the battle, is significantly different than one of only several years later. This is mostly a matter of chronological fidelity. The political will behind the impetus to send such a gift quickly thins out, as William of Jülich died on 18 August, 1304 and Guy was taken captive after the Battle of Zierikzee on 10 August, 1304. Between the Battle of the Golden Spurs on 11 July, 1302 and the final French victory at the battle of Mons-en-Pévèle on 18 August, 1304 there were no further singularly significant Flemish victories. After the battle, Flemish morale had been thoroughly crushed—as had any intentions of reviving the rebellion.[467] By the time the truce of Athis-sur-Orge was signed in 1305, effectively putting the rebellion to bed and inflicting severe financial indemnities upon the Flemish, no one involved in the Battle of the Golden Spurs would have had reason or means to make such a diplomatic overture to Edward I; especially those who might have been present in Ghent when Edward wintered there. Assuming it took several weeks to design, carve, and construct the chest, this leaves a window

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[466] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 7.

[467] Kelly DeVries, *Infantry Warfare in the Early Fourteenth Century: Discipline, Tactics and Technology*, 2 edn (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), p. 33.

of September, 1302 to June, 1305. John of St. John operated out of Lageham, Surrey (giving him the formal appellate of Baron St. John of Lageham) until 1305 when the manor house in St. John was completed.[468] He was buried there upon his death in 1316, and invested heavily in the property in the interim, but was not active out of it before 1305. Similarly, if the aim was to get the chest in front of the eyes of Edward I, the royal itinerary makes no mention of any visit to Stanton St. John prior to or during this period.[469]

Van de Walle and Heughebaert's theory, somewhat problematic as it is, is appealing because it depends on a certain timeline of events when the rest of the chest's lifespan is entirely uncertain. After the truce of 1305 the number of possibilities surrounding the chest's provenance increases dramatically. This opens up the likelihood that the chest was carved not by someone who was physically present at the battle, but by someone within living memory of it. Though the case has been made that it could have been constructed in the early fourteenth century then carved at a later date,[470] I believe that the evidence put forward so far—mainly the dendrochronological dating and historical fidelity—points to an origin within twenty years of the battle. Similarly, the fact that the chest finally came to rest in Stanton St. John does not require it to have been made for this purpose. Rather, it is entirely possible that it found its way into England by alternative means at a later date, and was eventually purchased or sent to Stanton St. John because of said family's ties with Edward I's wars abroad in general, and Baron

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[468] Nigel Gilmour, 'The Medieval Manor at Stanton St John: a 700th Anniversary?', Oxoniensia, LXIX, (2005), pp. 51–92, p. 64.
[469] Henry Gough, *Itinerary of King Edward the First Throughout His Reign, A.D. 1272–1307, Exhibiting his movements from time to time, so far as they are recorded, Vol. II. 1286-1307.* (Paisley and London: Alexander Gardner, 1900).
[470] R. Didier, 'Sculptures, style et faux', in Festchrift fur Peter Bloch, ed. by H. Krohm and C. Theuerkauff (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1990).

St. John's brief stay in Flanders specifically. Extant stained glass from the church of St. John the Baptist in Stanton St. John, under whose chancy the nobleman is thought to be buried, indicates that both John and his son wished to be commemorated within a militaristic context.[471] The chest itself is not necessarily a historical oddity. There are several Flemish chests in southern England—with at least four extant in Kent alone—all dating from the mid to late fourteenth century. This raises a question of typology. As Christopher Pickvance points out in his article "Medieval Tracery-Carved Clamp-Fronted Chests: The 'Kentish Gothic' Chests of Rainham, Faversham and Canterbury in Comparative Perspective":

> Here we enter the domain of 'folk' terminology, where popular names may have little connection with true origins, and a single term like Flanders chest may be applied to several types of chest at different periods. In particular it may refer to the place of export rather than the place of manufacture. Scholars have failed to identify 'Flanders chests' with certainty because they are invariably not further described. The three most likely referents of this term are a) the fourteenth century tracery-carved clamp-fronted chests of interest to us, b) the clamp-fronted 'tilting' chests, such as the Boughton Monchelsea chest, dendro dated to the mid fifteenth century, and c) the domed iron-bound chests of pine and poplar often found in churches in eastern and south-eastern coastal counties. [472]

[471] John Henry Parker, A Guide to the Architectural Antiquities in the Neighbourhood of Oxford (Cambridge: The Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture, 1845), p. 230.
[472] Christopher Pickvance, "Medieval Tracery-Carved Clamp-Fronted Chests: The 'Kentish Gothic' Chests of Rainham, Faversham and Canterbury in Comparative Perspective", *Regional Furniture*, 21, (2007), pp. 67–93, p. 77.

Given everything that has been taken into consideration regarding the skills, factual knowledge, and material composition of the Courtrai chest thus far, it is most likely that the chest was constructed in Flanders and imported soon after in a domestic—not diplomatic—context. Not only would this answer circumvent the problems inherent in a diplomatic origin—ones of commission, transportation, and reception—but it is supported conclusively by evidence that must be otherwise stretched to support other competing theories. By the middle of the fourteenth century there were several vibrant immigrant Flemish communities in England, the largest and earliest being the one in London that was born out of Edward III's charter in 1326 that sought to supplement the struggling English textile industry with skilled foreign labour.[473] The work of immigrant woodcarvers in England would explain why the "Flemish" style chests in England are so distinct both from contemporary English chests and other such chests on the continent. Pickvance notes: "No chests exactly resembling the German chests in tracery carving are to be found in England, and no chests exactly resembling the English and Kentish chests are to be found in Germany. It is as though they are closely related but distinct sets."[474] This is unfortunately entirely in keeping with the exceptional nature of the chest. It defies typology, due not only on its uncommon iconographical characteristics but also to the fact that we are missing most of the components that would make a chest a chest.

2.6 Composition and Authenticity

[473] Jonathan Good, 'The Alien Clothworkers of London, 1337-1381', in *The Ties That Bind: Essays in Medieval British History in Honor of Barbara Hanawalt*, ed. by Linda E. Mitchell, Katherine L. French, Douglas L. Biggs (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), p. 10

[474] Pickvance, "Medieval Tracery-Carved Clamp-Fronted Chests", p. 77.

Since the discovery of the chest in 1905, much of the academic interest surrounding it has been more concerned with its authenticity than its intrinsic historical value. It was not until the turn of the twenty-first century that historians felt comfortable enough to address the chest as both something of immense material and cultural value, with a raft of scholarly papers published between 2001 and 2002 by Ian Tyers and Brian Gilmour, and van de Walle and Heughebaert, respectively. Similarly, Verbruggen's seminal book on the Battle of the Golden Spurs (first published in 1952) was republished in English in 2002. This section will seek to conclusively affirm the chest's authenticity, responding most directly to the allegations of forgery put forward by Marijnissen and Didier, and in so doing address the multiple phases of construction the chest has undergone throughout its lifetime. The two are of course contingent upon each other; a thorough understanding of the significant alterations made to the object over the years not only confirm its status as an at least partially medieval specimen, but sheds light on its perilously oblique provenance and opens up fresh avenues of inquiry.

The material components can be categorised as follows. The oldest extant piece of the original medieval chest is the frontispiece, consisting of three separate boards joined together. It is also the most well-documented section, having been dendrochronologically dated by Fletcher in both 1969 and 1978, and subjected to further radiocarbon dating by AMS in Oxford in 1985.[475] Martin Bridge was able to produce similar findings when running the original result through OxCal in 2021.[476] The findings of both suggest a construction date circa 1300, with a window on either side of some fifty years, as has previously been discussed. On the rear interior of the

[475] Hall, *Spooner: A Biography*, p. 106.
[476] I am incredibly indebted to Dr Bridge's kindness and eagerness to assist with my reappraisal of the chest; Appendix, Fig. T.

frontispiece are six sections of iron strapwork; a later repair that reconnects the split lower section with the upper.[477] This repair also crossed over the incised line of the interior structure. The breadth of the reconstruction, as well as the substantial seventeenth-century additions, reinforces the utility of referring to the frontispiece in specificity, rather than the Courtrai Chest as a whole. When we discuss the authenticity and materiality of the Courtrai Chest, we are instead referring only to those components known to be original: namely the frontispiece.

The interior structure is one of the more vexing material facets of the chest. The carved trench that runs across both the front and back walls, roughly a third of the way from the bottom, is marked by three wedge-shaped deviations on the posterior side and at least two on the anterior (the iron straps and later wood reinforcement cover much of the structure on the rear of the frontispiece).[478] It has been thought that the presence of this interior structure is indicative of a series of secret compartments, and is an integral part of the theory that the chest was part of a diplomatic gift.[479] However, the mechanical niceties of this function pose their own inherent problems.[480] The presence of this secret compartment creates its own typological issues as well; there are simply no other examples of similar early fourteenth-century chests with matching hidden compartments. That is to say, the complexity of the interior structure, if it is a hidden compartment, is ahead of its time by almost a century. That is not to say that hidden compartments were entirely absent during the fourteenth century: there

[477] Appendix, Fig. 3a
[478] Appendix, Fig. 3b
[479] Van De Walle and Heughebaert, “The Flemish chest of Courtrai”, p. 17.
[480] Upon visiting the reconstruction of the chest currently housed in the 1302 Museum in Kortrijk, M. Dumolin—who built the chest according to Van de Walle and Heughebaert’s specifications—was very helpful in allowing me to climb inside and view their work; though neither of us could successfully open the “secret compartment”, and indeed the very mechanism they had to facilitate this was a small hole on the front of the frontispiece; a feature wholly absent from the original.

is evidence of Flemings attempting to smuggle goods into England, as evidenced by the transgressions of John Kempe and Francis van Yabek in 1362, as noted in the Close Rolls.[481]

The most obvious function of the interior structure, in lieu of a “secret compartment”, is one of support. The inclusion of three planks running perpendicular between the two bottom boards would have significantly increased the stability and load-bearing capability of the chest in its original form. This functionality would have allowed heavier—or more—objects to be stored within the chest, and ensured that its structural integrity was maintained either during travel or over time. The question therefore becomes one of chronological inclusion: at what point was this interior structure constructed? Van de Walle and Heughebaert are clearly assuming it was a feature of the original chest, as an early construction and the inclusion of a “secret compartment” are two key pieces of their “diplomatic gift” theory. There is, however, nothing in the materiality of the chest that necessitates this early function. Furthermore, the relationship between the substantial damage that has been done to the chest’s frontispiece and its later repairs raises some very serious questions as to when and in what order these features came about. Operating in chronological order and based solely off of clearly visible elements, we can ascertain the following with an utmost degree of certainty: the frontispiece and backpiece both have the interior structural groove cut into them, at roughly the same height, and it has been cut off in line with the trimming of the frontispiece, which suggests that the backpiece was similarly trimmed. The frontispiece has sustained substantially more wear than the backpiece, with damage in the form of deep gouges and holes clearly visible across the

[481] 'Close Rolls, Edward III: October 1362', in Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward III: Volume 11, 1360-1364, ed. H C Maxwell Lyte (London, 1909), pp. 355–361. British History Online http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-close-rolls/edw3/vol11/pp355-361 [accessed 29 July 2019].

anterior side. On the posterior, attempts to support the comprised portion of the frontispiece take the form of metal strapwork, iron fixings, and a wooden board nailed roughly over the largest hole (visible from the front in Scene VI). Both the front and back boards are composed of radially split wood, common to medieval construction.[482] In light of these observations, several possibilities present themselves. If the backpiece is part of the original chest, then we can infer one of two things: either the interior structure was present in the original construction, or was added at some later date. The evidence for the former is supported by the fact that both the structural base grooves on the frontispiece and backpiece appear to have been shorn short, indicating that they were present at the time the two boards were trimmed to accommodate the chest's present state. The co-origin of the front and back pieces is also suggested by the aforementioned matching of the wood grain.[483] Given all of these things, it becomes apparent that the inclusion of the iron strapwork and wood panel speak to the state of the original chest at the time of its reconstruction circa 1600.[484] The trimming of the front and backpiece could be a matter of pure utility; the owners had an old chest and instead of getting rid of it merely upcycled it into a smaller, more compact yet sturdier container (befitting a corn bin). This is nuanced, however, by the intense damage done to the frontispiece, and the inclusion of the metal strapwork. At the time of reconstruction, the frontispiece was damaged sufficiently enough to warrant the costly and work-intensive addition of the metalwork both across the bottom interior structure and the iron ties and nails that hold the other sections of

[482] Brian Gilmour and Ian Tyers, "Courtrai Chest: Relic or Recent. Reassessment and Further Work: an Interim Report," ed. by Guy De Boe and Frans Verhaeghe, Art and Symbolism in Medieval Europe - Papers of the 'Medieval Europe Brugge 1997' Conference, 5, p. 20.
[483] Gilmour and Tyers, "Courtrai Chest: Relic or Recent", p. 20.
[484] Gilmour and Tyers, "Courtrai Chest: Relic or Recent", p. 20.

the board in place. That is to say, someone went through the time and effort of including and reinforcing the frontispiece, specifically. This speaks to a personal attachment between the owner and the iconography—as there clearly wasn't a dearth of wood boards to be had, as evidenced by the addition of the top, sides, and bottom. The reconstruction, then, is turned into an act of preservation. The state of the extant portions of the original chest speak to a considerably hard life, and it is very likely that the frontispiece was trimmed in an effort to preserve what would have been an old and collapsing chest even at the time of reconstruction. If the damage across the lower section of the frontispiece is any indication, it is likely that the rest of the chest was in considerable disrepair as well—the backpiece being largely spared because of its spatial relationship with the rest of the chest (if it were not displayed in the round, it would have been shielded by the other constituent parts of the chest and whatever surface it was placed up against).

One thing we cannot be certain of is how much time passed between the dislocation of the original chest and its reincorporation into its current form.

In 1978 R.H. Marijnissen published an article entitled "De 'Chest of Courtrai' een vervalsing van het pasticcio-type", in which he took the chest's authenticity to task. His examinations took place while the chest was at the Brussels Science Institute, after having been displayed in Belgium for a time. General opinion of the chest was quite high in Flanders, as the City of Courtrai was attempting to raise the £1 million purchasing price proposed by Sotheby's.[485] Given this context, Marijnissen's lengthy and rigorous examination comes as no

[485] Gilmour and Tyers, "Courtrai Chest: Relic or Recent", p. 20.

surprise. His conclusion, that the chest was an amalgamation of 'found' material and hence a complete forgery, is somewhat suspect. Fletcher had published his dendrochronological dating of the chest only two years earlier, and while Marijnissen makes no use of such scientific methods himself, he does not even mention the findings nor attempt to reconcile their claims of authenticity with his own suspicions. Rather, he attaches the findings as an addendum at the end, ostensibly to allow his readers to decide for themselves. His evidence falls mainly in the realm of visual analysis, predicated upon the supposed historical anachronisms of details such as the cowl of the monk and the looting of the dead French.[486] As Gilmour and Tyers neatly surmise: "Marijnissen objected to the overall rather crude style of the carvings, as well as to certain specific details such as the style of the monks habit on the left panel, and the whole scene on the lower left, showing the stripping of the dead French knights which he said was not to be expected in the fourteenth century, but which he suggested was modelled much more recently on a scene from the well-known 11th century embroidery, the Bayeux tapestry."[487] Such iconographical nit-picking would be a tenuous means of completely dismissing the frontispiece, but when stacked up against Fletcher's dating it is rendered almost suspect. Similarly curious are the objections he makes to the presence of red lead minium across the frontispiece; even though such pigment tracery was a common medieval staple (giving, as Gilmour and Tyers point out, the word "miniature" its name).[488] Furthermore, Marijnissen draws parallels between the Leugemeete Frescoes iconography and that of chest, using claims of forgery directed at the former to further condemn the later. It is especially telling that his

[486] Marijnissen, "De Chest of Courtrai", p. 11.
[487] Gilmour and Tyers, "Courtrai Chest: Relic or Recent", p. 20.
[488] Gilmour and Tyers, "Courtrai Chest: Relic or Recent", p. 20.

report includes both photos of Bethune's calques of the frescoes, and an artist's rendering of said calques, but pulls his iconographical analysis seemingly solely from the latter. As this thesis's chapter on the frescoes clearly illustrates, both the accusations of inauthenticity of the wall paintings and the way said accusations are invoked to discredit the chest are problematic and were widely disputed at the time. The stain of doubt that was cast upon the Frescoes—similarly by a lone historian in Brussels—seeped across the Oxford Chest as well.

In *Sculptures, style et faux* published in 1990, Robert Didier doubles down on Marijnissen's claims in an article that begins as a survey of certain faked wooden sculpture (of decidedly non-Flemish origin) and ends with the conclusion that the chest is a later fabrication of dubious medieval origin.[489] Didier categorizes the material dating of the chest as a "problem of methodology", writing: "Du point de vue méthodologique, ils ne suffisent pas a prover l'authenticité, alors que cell-ci est battue en brêche dans le contraire."[490] The two objects he discusses in the lead up to the chest, both fourteenth-century figural sculptures, are related to the chest only in so much as Didier uses them to broach the subject of successful fakery, and in so doing implicate the authenticity of the chest. He then goes on for several more pages, surveying extant fourteenth-century French wood sculpture before returning to the chest by asserting that the role of the art historian is to rise above the embattled methodologies of other disciplines, especially when they seek to claim authenticity.[491] To his credit, he does point out that dating the chest as being built directly after 11 July 1302 is problematic due to the age the wood would have been during carving, throwing an extra five years as the earliest carving

[489] Didier, "Sculptures, style et faux", p. 349.
[490] Didier, "Sculptures, style et faux", p. 349.
[491] Didier, "Sculptures, style et faux", p. 356.

post-datum. However, he then doubles down, claiming that though the wood may be of early fourteenth-century origin, the iconography is suspect. He draws on two perceived problems: the iconographical depiction of the monk providing benediction, and the supposed 'heraldic problem' that both Marijnissen and Verbruggen mentioned as well. The latter problem is the easiest to address, and has already been done so; there is no heraldic problem. The designer of the chest did not make a mistake, and any perceived heraldic errors—whether in William of Julich's arms and armor or the presence of the Marshall of Bruges—is symptomatic of a dogmatic need to assert a singular, much later and arguably modern, conception of the historical narrative upon the chest's iconography. The issue of the monk is a bit more difficult to address, as we are dealing not only with what is being depicted on the chest, but what exactly we expect to see in this instance. Didier's argument is that the soldiers are not prostrating themselves before the monk, "like all the sources indicate".[492] The problem here is that not every source makes mention of this "prostration": neither the *Annales Gandenses* nor the *Spiegel Historiael* specifically mention such an event taking place prior to the battle. As such, its presence is not necessary, and its absence is not indicative of a faulty narrative. Didier refers to the overall iconographical program as ambiguous in its heterogeneity and stylistically confused as a result, but this is unsurprising when he has until now been concerned only with later French woodcarvings.[493] The iconography is indeed abstract in places, but no more so than other contemporary sources of similar subject matter. Similar depictions of arms, armour, horses, and the composition of mounted figures can be seen in contemporary illuminated

[492] Didier, "Sculptures, style et faux", p. 359.
[493] Didier, "Sculptures, style et faux", p. 359.

manuscripts such as a copy of the *Spiegel Historiael* currently at the Hague.[494] Likewise, even more similar parallels can be found in the iconography of early fourteenth-century Arthurian Cycles, such as *MS. Ashmole 828*. Not only is the motif of the 'mounted entourage' reoccurring, but the depiction of the denizen of an abode looking outward is featured quite prominently throughout.[495] Though abstract, there are clear contemporary precedents for the iconography of the Oxford Chest.

2.7 Provenance

Were this chapter on any other object, a more traditional structure would dictate that the discussion of its provenance be placed much earlier on. However, as nearly every aspect of the chest has proven to be intrinsically and inextricably problematic to some degree—from its iconography to its materiality—clarity would necessitate that a considerable amount of exposition be undertaken before addressing something as ostensibly simple as where it's been and when. As such, now that the exact nature of its artistic programme has been analysed, along with a survey of its materiality, discovery, and potential impetus behind its commission, this section will seek to synthesize all of the above into a faithful timeline of events.

The concrete consensus of the dendrochronological and radiocarbon dating must be given pride of place. This is because, in lieu of any extant documentary evidence, the scientific data is the closest one can get to any degree of exactitude concerning its creation. Returning once again to Fletcher's dating and Tyers' re-analysis, the wood would have been used

[494] Appendix, K.
[495] Appendix, L.

sometime after 1275 (allowing for sapwood and seasoning), with radiocarbon dating corroborating this with a dating window of 1280 to 1420.[496] It is very likely, then, that the original chest was constructed pre-1302 (as it is unlikely the wood would have been aged for nearly thirty years beforehand), with the carvings being undertaken upon an already existing chest. This could also account for later structural instability of the frontispiece (as evidenced by the need for extensive repair). Simply put, the depth and breadth of the carving severely weakened the chest's integrity—resulting in the need for reconstruction some three hundred years later.

The commissioning of the chest is then reframed by the added context that the carvings were placed upon a pre-existing piece; this lessens the likelihood that it was made as a bespoke diplomatic gift. Combined with the fact that it cannot have arrived in Stanton St John before 1305 (in keeping with the "diplomatic theory" and the fact that the manor house there was not used by Sir John until that year). On the far side of that *terminus post quem*, it was reported by the Harris's that the chest had been in their family as far back as they could remember.[497] The Oxfordshire Wills Index first records a Harris in Stanton St. John in 1593.[498] This date gives us two points of reference. Firstly, it suggests that the chest was reconstructed in its current form by the Harris's themselves, as its more modern components all suggest an early sixteenth-century refitting.[499] Secondly, it introduces the possibility that the Harris's themselves brought

[496] Martin Bridge, Daniel Miles, *'A Review of the Information Gained from Dendrochronologically Dated Chests in England'*, *Regional Furniture*, XXV, (2011), pp. 25–54, p. 34
[497] Hayter, *Spooner: A Biography* , p. 123.
[498] Oxfordshire Wills Index, 188.248
[499] Hall, "The Courtrai chest from New College, Oxford, re-examined", p. 105.

it with them—though this is admittedly unlikely and holds even less water than Van de Walle and Heughebaert's gift theory.

In summary, we have four dates of interest: 1275 (earliest construction date), 1302 (earliest carving date), 1593 (earliest Harris in Stanton St. John), and of course 1905 (its discovery by Spooner). All of these dates corroborate the narrative of a late thirteenth-century chest being repurposed as a commemorative object, eventually finding its way from Flanders to England, and being up-cycled by the Harris family as early as the 1590s.

2.8 Trajan's Column & The Courtrai Chest: A Comparative Analysis

The history of low relief carving is both long and pan-cultural, with the artform having roots that can be traced through ancient Egypt, Greece, Assyria, and beyond.[500] One of the most famous examples of public low relief carving from antiquity is that of Trajan's Column. Erected at the height of Emperor Trajan's (r. 98 to 117 AD) reign in 113 AD, the visual programme of the monument celebrates the victorious culmination of the Dacian Wars (101-106 AD) and was at least partially funded by its spoils.[501] As one of the best preserved monuments of ancient Rome it has, to quote Penelope J.E. Davies, "rarely suffered from scholarly neglect".[502] To that end, aesthetic comparisons can be made between the carvings on both the column and the Courtrai Chest. Past scholarship has, both passingly and—in the case

[500] Vaughn E. Crawford, Prudence O. Harper, Holly Pittman, *Assyrian Reliefs and Ivories in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Palace Reliefs of Assurnasirpal II and Ivory Carvings from Nimrud*, ed. by John P. O'Neill, Rosanne Wasserman (New York: The Metropolitan Museum, 1980).
[501] Roger B. Ulrich, *Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument* (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].
[502] Penelope J. E. Davies, 'The Politics of Perpetuation: Trajan's Column and the Art of Commemoration', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 101.1, (1997), pp. 41–65, p. 41.

of Marijnissen—dismissively compared the chest to similarly well-known examples of “cartoon strip” orientation (in Marijnissen’s case, the Bayeux Tapestry) and Roman low relief carving.[503] The comparisons are understandable, but none are as apt as Trajan’s Column. Both objects are concerned with conveying a political narrative that aims at reinforcing a particular status quo—the column seeks to glorify the successes of the Dacian Wars while the chest seeks justify the Flemish cause in the Franco-Flemish War. Both visual programmes are concerned with legitimising and perpetuating conflict.[504] In addition to similarities in genre and intent, the two objects share a number of thematic elements. Warfare is obviously the most overt; both narratives contain scenes of siege (Dacian attacks on Roman forts and the French sortie from Courtrai’s castle), pitched battles being led by the respective protagonists of each programme (Trajan leading the Roman legions, Guy and William leading the Flemish phalanx), as well as the repeated use of standard bearers and marching lines of soldiers. However, these dual visual programmes also contain assorted civilians, both under duress and engaging with the main subjects in each respective story. This section will compare and contrast the narrative and iconographic programmes of Trajan’s Column and the Courtrai Chest, using the robust and methodologically sound scholarly framework surrounding one of the most famous public monumental works in Western Europe to shed light on a smaller and more personal carving which nevertheless finds itself inextricably drawn to the orbit of Rome. Furthermore, this section will also consider how a victory column in Trajan’s Forum could cast a shadow which

[503] Marijnissen insists one of the fallen soldiers on the chest is “nothing more than a slightly mirrored image” of one of the fallen knights on the tapestry (Marijnissen, p. 11); De Potter and Dumolin briefly reference the line of soldiers above the Porta Romana in Milan (De Potter and Dumolin, p. 34).
[504] Tonio Hölscher, 'Images of War in Greece and Rome: Between Military Practice, Public Memory, and Cultural Symbolism', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 93, (2003), pp. 1–17, p. 3.

stretched across the Apennines and beyond the Alps, from the second century to the fourteenth.

Measuring 44.07 meters high, the column's base is adorned with sculpted weapons while the shaft is wrapped in a spiralling decorative frieze.[505] This constitutes over 200 meters of uninterrupted visual narrative. This narrative was at the forefront of early scholarship on the column, as its visual programme was used as a substitute for the dearth of textual accounts of the Dacian Wars.[506] Questions of logistics and visibility were also prominent fixtures of early art historical assessments of the column, with Henry Stuart Jones—then-director of the British School in Rome—writing in 1910 that "whatever the merits of Roman art, it must be conceded that it had the defect of overloading the field of decoration with ornament".[507] Such topical criticisms have been left firmly in the past, and the general study of Roman sculpture has since evolved to analyse its subjects with much more artistic and thematic consideration.[508] In particular, the concept of collective memory and its implicit function in articulating awareness and unity has become a central pillar of our recent scholarly understanding of the column.[509] The emphasis on a collective imperative is evidenced in the over 2,500 figurative carvings present in the carving which wraps twenty three times up the sides of the column.[510] In similar

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[505] Davies, "The Politics of Perpetuation", p. 42.
[506] Elizabeth Wolfram Thill, 'Civilization Under Construction: Depictions of Architecture on the Column of Trajan', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 114.1, (2010), pp. 27–43, p. 27.
[507] H. Stuart Jones, 'The Historical Interpretation of the Reliefs of Trajan's Column', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 5.7, (1910), pp. 435–459, p. 436.
[508] Thill, "Civilization Under Construction", p. 27.
[509] The function of memory in Roman society is well-explored in the collected work of MEMORIA ROMANA: Memory in Rome and Rome in Memory, and most usefully to the remits of this thesis in T. P. Wiseman's chapter "Popular Memory"; Rome in Memory, *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome. Supplementary Volumes*, 10, (2014), pp. iii, v-xi, xiii, 1-13, 15-41, 43-81, 83, 85-101, 103-115, 117-135, 137-163, 165-193, p. 43.
[510] I am much indebted to the excellent (and excellently maintained) Trajan's Column website administered by Professor Roger B. Ulrich of Dartmouth College. The site is a fantastic repository of both visual and historical

fashion to the Courtrai Chest, the way in which we view Trajan's Column is indelibly linked to early twentieth-century attempts at systemisation. In the case of the column it was Conrad Cichorius who, circa 1896, divided the column's narrative on a scene-by-scene basis alongside the publication of 113 plates.[511] While this division, like any *post facto* attempt at compartmentalising a visual narrative, is far from perfect, it nevertheless remains a straightforward and—for the purposes of this section—superlatively practical foundation from a which an art historical analysis can be undertaken.[512] Specifically, scenes will be referenced using the system by which the images have been catalogued by Roger B. Ulrich, which itself is a further refinement from the system put forward by Filippo Coarelli et al circa 2000.[513]

2.8.1 A Tale of Two Wars

The column contains two narratives relating to the First and Second Dacian Wars, respectively. These are intercut with fifty seven depictions of Trajan himself, either in profile or three-quarter view (with a single frontal view in Scene XX). The First Dacian War can be further segmented into eight sections, each comprising of a series of vignettes. These scenes are, using Coarelli and Ulrich's designations, as follows: I-V are largely concerned with the Danube River, containing a personification of said river alongside a series of towns and Roman garrisons. This is the first instance of such architectural iconography, which is a central theme throughout the

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material. See; Roger B. Ulrich, *Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology, and iconography of the monument* (2018) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 17 May 2021].

511 Cichorius, C, *Die Reliefs der Traianssäule, Text volumes II and III. Plate volumes: vol I (Die Reliefs des ersten dakischen Krieges) and vol. II (Die Reliefs des zweiten dakischen Krieges)*, (1896-1900).

512 For a more thorough breakdown of the Cichorius plates see: F. Lepper, S. Frere, *Trajan 's Column : A New Edition of the Cichorius Plates*, rev. 2015 (Gloucester, UK and Wolfeboro, NH: Fonthill Media, 1988).

513 F. Coarelli, B. Brizzi, C. Conti, R. Meneghini, P. Zanker, *The Column of Trajan*, trans. by Cynthia Rockwell (Rome: German Archaeological Institute, 2000).

unfolding story and is constantly and overtly contrasted with the less-developed architectural furnishings of the Dacians.[514] The narrative of the campaign is formally present in depictions of the Romans crossing the river in Scene V.[515] Scenes VI-XXI contain many of the central themes present in Trajan's first campaign, starting with the war council, the mobilisation of the cavalry, the omen of the fallen man (in which a man's fall off a wall is taken by Trajan to signal the impending fall of the Dacian people), and the construction of a series of forts, camps, and bridges.[516] Scenes XXII-XXV prominently feature rows of marching Roman legionaries as they progress through Dacia while building a road, traversing a forest, and accompanying Trajan while he surveys a captured Dacian settlement.[517] Scenes XXVI-XXX depict further Roman ingress throughout Dacia, including the fording of another river, the reception of a Dacian embassy by Trajan, and further Roman attacks on settlements (including the destruction of buildings and the slaughter of livestock).[518] Of particular note is scene XXX, wherein Trajan pardons a Dacian woman while other women and children look on.[519] This ceremonial act of mercy provides a useful foil to the conspicuous lack of mercy portrayed on the Courtrai Chest, and is perhaps indicative of the reverse nature of the two narratives on display: one of the conquered, and one of the conqueror. Continuing through the events of the First Dacian War, scenes XXXI-XXXVIII depict prolonged stages of battle, consisting of Dacian and Samaritan counterattacks against Trajan's forces. This aggression is met by Trajan leading his forces in a

[514] Thill, "Civilization Under Construction", p. 114.
[515] Appendix, Fig. SS
[516] Appendix, Fig. TT
[517] Appendix, Fig. UU
[518] Appendix, Fig. VV
[519] Appendix, Fig. WW

naval landing, resulting in a Roman counterattack and the defeat of the Sarmatians.[520] Scenes XXXIX-XLV feature Trajan receiving another Dacian envoy, groups of civilians observing Roman soldiers building fortifications, the "Battle of Bandages" whereby injured Roman soldiers are being treated during a battle, and finally captured Roman soldiers being tortured by Dacian women.[521] Scenes XLVI-LXXIII are largely composed of further Roman empire-building, with a focus on the development of roads, the crossing of rivers, deforestation, the Roman incursion into the mountains, and an assault against a Dacian fortress. These scenes also feature Roman soldiers looting and burning Dacian homes.[522] It is one of the more overt examples of the way the visual programme contrasts the respective identities of the Romans and Dacians, both in their attire, weapons, and fashion, but also more insidiously in competing "ethnic physiognomies".[523] Though this term is problematic at best, its inclusion in the study of the column as recently as 2003 strikes at the darker side of the column's visual prerogative: promoting a hierarchical status quo that gives Trajan the authority and moral imperative to extend the perceived cultural and military might of Rome over its neighbours. These "imperial responsibilities" of warfare, conquest, and infrastructure, are as intrinsic to the column as the white marble itself, and the fortunes of the victorious cohorts it celebrates are only made possible by the misery and destruction of those who were deemed "less than": less than Roman, less than civilised, and ultimately less than human.[524] Finally, scenes LXXIV-LXXVIII feature the final narrative beats of the conflict: the subjugation of the Dacian people, Trajan

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[520] Appendix, Fig. YY

[521] Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].

[522] Appendix, Fig. ZZ

[523] Hölscher, "Images of War in Greece and Tome", p. 3.

[524] I. A. Richmond, 'Trajan's Army on Trajan's Column', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 13, (1935), 1-40 (p. 3).

addressing his men, and a “winged Victoria” figure who commemorates the Roman victory.[525] The events of the First Dacian War end roughly halfway up the side of the column.

The preliminary events of the Second Dacian War are depicted in much the same way as the first; Trajan leading Roman soldiers over a body of water—in this instance, a nocturnal departure from an Adriatic harbour.[526] Scenes LXXIX-XCI are similarly preoccupied with the mass movement of Roman forces in the build up to the battle, featuring their arrival in Dalmatia and ensuing scenes of civil procession whereby Trajan meets with locals and leads a sacrifice before departing the town at the head of a group of mounted riders. Scenes XCII-XCVII are mostly concerned with the build-up and initial conflict with the Dacians. Similar to the themes of empire-building present in the first narrative, these scenes centre forest-clearing, Dacian attacks on an established Roman fort, and a the Dacians breaking under an assault being led by Trajan on horseback.[527] These events are further expanded upon, following Trajan's counterattack with an illustration of what Roger B. Ulrich describes as “the relentless and overwhelming power of the Roman military”.[528] These appear in three scenes, XCVII-C, which feature an imperial sacrifice, a great bridge over the river Danube, and finally Trajan receiving men from foreign delegations.[529] Scenes CI-CX repeat the motif of Trajan's conquest in the form of water-crossing, with the Roman army crossing the aforementioned bridge of the Danube, after which he meets with his troops and participates in another sacrifice. This is followed by a

[525] Roger B. Ulrich, *Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument* (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].
[526] Appendix, Fig. AAA
[527] Appendix, Fig. BBB
[528] Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].
[529] Appendix, Fig. CCC

council of war, and a sequence featuring Roman soldiers interacting with further fortifications.[530] Scenes CXI-CXXXVI largely serve to preface the culmination of the Second Dacian War, depicting the Roman siege on Sarmizegethusa and the resulting assault and looting that took place in the wake of Trajan's victory.[531] The rest of the pillars narrative, scenes CXXVII-CLV, pertains to the fate of the Dacians in the wake of the Roman triumph, and is largely comprised of routing soldiers committing acts of suicide, Dacian nobility making appeals to Trajan, several last stands of the Dacian army, and the relentless road and camp building by the Roman legionaries.

2.8.2 The Chest & The Column

The dozen images referenced in the preceding breakdown are present not only for their central importance in the column's narrative, but because they each share respective similarities with the Courtrai Chest. Of these, the iconographical similarities are the most immediately apparent. More specifically, the iconological signifiers used to denote unity—both civic and militaristic—feature prominently on both the column and the chest in the form of gathered lines of soldiers (be they legionaries or militiamen). Nor are these simply static lines of featureless automatons. Scene III of the Courtrai Chest and Scenes IV/V of Trajan's Column depict fluid rows of soldiers, their arms and armour rendered in specific and exacting detail, assembled under banners which even further denote their identity and allegiance.[532] Both scenes feature elements of supernatural importance, in the form the presence of the

[530] Appendix, Fig. DDD
[531] Appendix, Fig. EEE
[532] Appendix, Fig. FFF

personification of the Danube and the blessing of the hooded monk, respectively. Both groups of soldiers show an implicit awareness of themselves, with the most prominent man in each line candidly looking to the man behind him. Not only are the gazes of the soldiers fluid on a horizontal axis, but they engage with the verticality of the environments in which they find themselves. This is evidenced by the tilting heads of the two rear-most Flemish militiamen and the careful eyes of the legionaries crossing the river. The two vertically-inclined militiamen even play within the space of the visual programme itself, their gazes extending past the implied border above their heads to land on the figures of Guy and William in the scene above. This pre-empting of the physical, dimensional space in which the figures find themselves in is even further pushed by the foremost Roman standard-bearer, his chin turned and eyes cast out upon the forum in which his likeness stands. These flashes of self-awareness position the gathered men in both scenes as more than static pieces of a larger whole. They transcend the singularly dimensional confines of their carving and, by articulately observing and interacting with separate elements of the visual programme in which they find themselves, become iconographical stand-ins for the viewers themselves. These visual cues bridge the gap between the “ephemeral victories” being depicted and the material contexts in which the objects find themselves.[533] As such, the entirety of Trajan’s Forum was drawn into the visual program of the frieze; the victory column acting as a mirror of the bustling city around it, echoing the easily recognisable features of the Roman cityscape visible in the form of elaborate civil architecture up and down its length.[534] Such structures are present in the background of Scenes IV/V,

[533] Elizabeth Wolfram Thill, 'Setting War in Stone: Architectural Depictions on the Column of Marcus Aurelius', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 122.2, (2018), 277-308 (p. 277).
[534] Thill, “Setting War in Stone”, p. 114.

serving the narrative function of establishing where the Roman army is departing from—in this case the imperial homeland of arches and ashlar. This is contrasted later on by their arrival in Dacia, and their dismantling (and looting and burning) of Dacian wood structures.[535] The idyllic, imperial portrayal of Roman architecture also creates a boundary which, much like the geographical boundary of the Danube, the Roman army can cross, and beyond which the aforementioned "imperial responsibilities" can be undertaken in a morally acceptable manner. The Courtrai Chest uses microarchitecture in a similar way, creating boundaries which contextualise and amplify the acts occurring within. Unlike the gate in Scene IV of Trajan's Column, through which the imperial legions march as portent of their impending triumphant return, the gate in Scene II of the Courtrai Chest is cast ajar, its crenelations barely separating the gaggle of aldermen from the violence occurring within the city. These two contrasting thematic elements, order and chaos, are reversed in either narrative. On the column, Trajan—and by extension Rome—is seeking to impose their own perceived order upon a disordered world. On the chest, the order of the civil and political status quo is upended by unsanctioned and improper violence. The column stands as testament to a world set right. The chest exists as testimony of a world undone.

It is here that an easy criticism could be levied at any attempt to compare the column and the chest in a significant and meaningful way: where is the connective tissue? When one has a hammer, everything looks like a nail. When one is cross-examining the narrative of a war memorial carved in low relief, everything looks like a highly symbolic memorial of shared

[535] Thill, "Civilisation under Construction", p. 38.

trauma. There are, however, historical and artistic precedents that sway the discussion of the two objects from the realm of speculative conjecture onto more stable scholarly ground. The medieval ties between Flanders and Rome are well recorded—the former's economic growth attracting cohorts of Italian bankers and the latter being a hub of international diplomacy, bureaucracy, and trade.[536] An example of a visitor travelling to Rome and departing with a cultural blueprint in mind—can be found in the personage of Bernward of Hildesheim (c. 960—20 November 1022). The erstwhile churchman, founder of St. Michael's and active bureaucrat who moved throughout western Europe during his lengthy career, is most remembered as the patron of two monumental works in Hildesheim Cathedral. The eponymous Bernward Doors, two massive bronze doors which feature a highly typologised rendering of the Fall, are thought to be inspired by similar Old and New Testament depictions such as those on the wooden doors of the Santa Sabina in Rome.[537] Of particular interest to this section is Berward's second opus: the Bernward Column, a massive bronze triumph featuring a helical frieze depicting Christ's life in 24 scenes.[538] It is in these two objects that we see, circa 1000, artistic and architectural ideas being lifted from Rome and recontextualised within wider Western Europe. This goes far beyond the ubiquitous rise of the 'Romanesque'; these are concrete examples of specific individuals personally engaging with specific visual programmes. It stands to reason that, as social and economic ties continued to develop over the next three hundred years, these same

[536] The degree to which Italian cities played host to foreign visitors is well evidenced, and most recently explored by Miri Rubin who draws from a wealth of archival material in towns such as Bologna and San Gimignano. See: Miri Rubin, *Cities of Strangers: Making Lives in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 35-37.
[537] Adam S. Cohen, Anne Derbes, 'Bernward and Eve at Hildesheim', *Gesta*, 40.1, (2001), pp. 19-38, p. 19.
[538] Appendix, Fig. 14, for an overview of the column see: Peter Barnet, Michael Brandt, Gerhard Lutz , *Medieval Treasures from Hildesheim* (New Haven, Connecticut : Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 15-17.

aesthetic and narrative signifiers could be contextualised in yet another context; manifesting not in patristic ornamentation but as a politically invective war memorial.

In her article "The Politics of Perpetuation: Trajan's Column and the Art of Commemoration", Penelope Davies convincingly argues the column served a dual function as both a viewing station and tool by which the viewer would physically act out ancient funeral rites by following the helical friezes that spiral up its length.[539] In this case, the visual programme of the column—which requires the viewer to circumambulate around its base in order to follow the unfolding narrative upwards—facilitates the physical enactment of procession.[540] The Courtrai Chest also incites its viewer to action, with several visual motifs (namely the placement of the key-holding alderman directly below the lock reserve) prompting the unlocking and opening of the object. Furthermore, the Leugemeete Chapel must also be mentioned in this context, as the rows of marching militia upon its topmost tier of decoration—all processing in the direction of the altar—echo actions of the views within the chapel below, especially during instances where many people would be funnelling through the small building all at once, such as during mass or specific holy days which featured procession. This phenomenon, that the designer of these visual programmes took into account the specific spatial and social contexts surrounding these objects and decorative schemes, can be used to further understand the relationship between object, art, and audience. On a psychological level, recent scholarship demonstrates that humans have strong positive associations with forward movement, and are, inversely, inclined to approach things which they find positive or

[539] Penelope J. E. Davies, 'The Politics of Perpetuation: Trajan's Column and the Art of Commemoration', *American Journal of Archaeology* , 101.1, (1997), pp. 41–65, p. 41.
[540] Davies, "The Politics of Perpetuation", p. 47.

appealing.[541] While this “motivational direction hypothesis” (MDH) is not entirely perfect—there is some debate around avoidance behaviours and how likely people are to step *away* from things they perceive to be negative or distasteful—it is useful in understanding the relative spatial relationship between a specific visual programme and its viewer, and why certain programmes would seek to illicit certain biomechanical responses from their intended audience.[542] Davies’ charge, that the uncomfortable neck-tilting and circuitous ambulatory necessitated by the column’s visual programme is a feature and not—as has been long been expounded—a “disappointing” fault, is important both in so much as it corrects a presumptive oversight that had long been established within the discourse surrounding the monument, but also that it gives the ergonomic relationship between the column and its viewer pride of place within her art historical analysis. The medium in which this discursive relationship is achieved must also be interrogated. Both the low relief carvings of Trajan’s Column and the Courtrai Chest, as well as the flat wall paintings of the Leugemeete Chapel, allow their designer to specifically place their intended audience. This is in contrast to more high relief sculpture, or monumental architecture features that are devoid of specific ornamentation, which, by virtue of the fidelity of their three dimensional existence, are always accommodating the viewers gaze regardless of the latter’s position. In short, what could be perceived as the “limiting” or “flat” nature of low relief and painted decoration allowed their designers to more intuitively control the movement of their viewer.

[541] Bradley, M. M., Codispoti, M., Cuthbert, B. N., & Lang, P. J., “Emotion and motivation I: Defensive and appetitive reactions in picture processing”. *Emotion*, 1.3 (2001), pp. 276–298.
[542] Eric Yiou, Manon Gendre, Thomas Deroche, Serge Le Bozen, 'Influence of Emotion on the Biomechanical Organization of Backward and Forward Step Initiation', *Motor Control*, 18 (2014), pp. 368–382, p. 369.

Similarly to how MDH might suggest why certain pieces of artwork would want to physically draw their audience closer, this phenomenon—of objects and artwork eliciting physical action in the viewer—and its affective qualities can aide in the creation of additional levels of meaning, especially in regards to memory and memorialisation. This "embodied cognition", whereby enactment, gestures, and even exercise are shown to aid and influence human memory and perception, creates a strong cognitive link between the visual programme being observed and the physical actions associated with it.[543] This suggests that the column, chest, and chapel are more than static artistic edifices. Rather, they engaged both the minds *and the bodies* of their viewer. Madan and Singhal describe the potency of this combinations thusly: "Ideas that are communicated in parallel with actions (e.g., gestures) should be remembered better than those that are communicated in the absences of movement."[544] The case of the Courtrai Chest is even more exceptional, as the object is fully interactable by the viewer (with this relationship being highlighted by the aforementioned visual motifs). A 2003 study suggests that the ability to interact with an object even further focuses the viewer's spatial attention, meaning that the chest's iconography and utility work in concert to evoke a very specific, meaningful action from any who approached: to kneel down and open it.[545] It should be noted that this series of elicited physical actions would serve to ultimately place the

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[543] For an overview of embodied cognition, see: Christopher R. Madan, Anthony Singhal, 'Using Actions to Enhance Memory: effects of enactment, gestures, and exercise on human memory', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 3, (2012), p. 507, in <https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2012.00507> [accessed 2 July 2021]; Michael L. Anderson, 'Embodied Cognition: A field guide', *Artificial Intelligence*, 149.1, (2003), pp. 91–130, in <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0004370203000547> [accessed 2 July 2021]; M. Wilson, 'Six views of embodied cognition', *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 9, (2002), pp. 625–636, in <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03196322> [accessed 2 July 2021].

[544] Madan and Singhal, "Using Actions to Enhance Memory", p. 507.

[545] Handy, T., Grafton, S., Shroff, N. et al, 'Graspable objects grab attention when the potential for action is recognized', *Nature Neuroscience*, 6, (2003), pp. 421–427, in <https://doi.org/10.1038/nn1031> [accessed 2 July 2021].

owner/user of the chest in a kneeling position with their hands clasped before them while they unlocked the chest—a position intimately reminiscent of prayer and contemplation. Anyone kneeling before the chest would, with their chin downturned, have their gaze cast upon the visual programme.

2.9 Stylistic and Iconographic Analysis

The brunt of the speculation and accusations of fakery levied at the chest have been borne, somewhat understandably, by the utter dearth of clear-cut stylistic comparisons.[546] That is to say, the bulk of the stylistic comparisons have been to objects wholly removed both temporally and stylistically from the object itself. The chest has been compared to the Franks Casket, Bayeux Tapestry, Morgan Bible, and surviving Italian portal carvings from antiquity; the sheer breadth encompassed by all of these comparisons is staggering, yet has been justified as each are examples of the ostensibly "cartoon strip" aesthetic of the chest's frontispiece.[547] Van de Walle and Heughebaert must be credited with undertaking one of the more extensive examinations of the chest's artistic style (which is fitting, as they have produced the most comprehensive scholarly studies of the chest itself).[548] In their 2006 publication, they draw from three key sources for their comparisons: a late fourteenth-century luxury coffer, a series of tilting chests (mostly English), a fourteenth-century carved ivory frontispiece of Bruges origin, and later fourteenth-century illumination.[549] Even then, their comparisons never venture

[546] Didier, "Sculptures, style et faux", pp. 347–50.
[547] Gilmour and Tyers, "Courtrai Chest: Relic or Recent", p. 20; Fred Roe, *A History of Oak Furniture* (London: Connoisseur , 1920), p. 25.
[548] A. L. J. Van de Walle, Roland Heughebaert, 'Vlaamse ambachtslui tijdens de Middeleeuwen en de Kist van de Gulden Sporen 1302', Tijdschrift Voor Industriële Cultuur, 24.96, (2006), pp. 4–25.
[549] Van de Walle and Heughebaert, "Vlaamse ambachtslui tijdens de Middeleeuwen", pp. 9, 21, 23, 25.

outside of the realm of iconography. This section will seek to establish a comprehensive stylistic and iconographical invective that places the frontispiece in the context of late medieval Flemish art. This endeavour is complicated for two reasons. The main challenge is the lack of extant like-objects. This is due to both the uniqueness of the chest's artistic programme and the dearth of fourteenth-century Flemish bas-relief woodcarving—due in large parts to the widespread iconoclastic riots of the sixteenth century.[550] Kim Woods, while researching the breadth of extant Netherlandish sculpture, drives home the point that entire geographic regions were stripped of the bulk of their carvings, noting that: "Iconoclasm hit Ghent hard in 1566 and 1578, and this loss means that the work of important local craftsmen like sculptor Willem Hughe can no longer be identified. Almost no documented or attributable work survives from Ghent. The almost entire absence of any reliable framework for dating and attributing Ghent sculpture means attributing any surviving work to the city is immensely problematic."[551] Secondly, the historiographical track is similarly muddied as much of the attention in the past two centuries has been given to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This is especially true for the evolution of regional art circa the fourteenth-century.[552]

2.10.1 A Tale of Two Chests

Before branching off into a broader analysis of like iconographical and stylistic examples in other mediums, a more holistic comparison can be found in the parish church of Harty, on

[550] Kim Woods, *Imported Images: Netherlandish Late Gothic Sculpture In England c.1400–c.1550* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007), p. 13.
[551] Woods, *Imported Images*, p. 13.
[552] Rudy van Elslande, De Laatgotische Beeldhouwkunst te Gent (2008) <https://sites.google.com/site/vlaamseprimitieventegent/3-beeldhouwkunst> [accessed 4 August 2019].

the Isle of Sheppey in Kent. The eponymously named Harty Chest is critically understudied outside of its inclusion in several twentieth-century historical furniture catalogues, with only a topical material and iconographical assessment being undertaken by Scott Robertson in 1876.[553] In a similar vein, Van de Walle and Heughebaert mention the chest only in passing and exclusively as part of a larger corpus of tilting coffers; referring to a poor black and white scan that contains barely a paragraph of context or comparison.[554] However, there are multiple iconographical and stylistic similarities between the Harty Chest and the Oxford Chest that shed light on the shared artistic heritage of the two objects.

One of the more unfortunate similarities between the Harty Chest and the Oxford Chest is the lack of information surrounding its early provenance. Apocryphally, the chest is said to have washed up upon the isle from the nearby Swale sometime in the late medieval period.[555] This theory is predicated upon the relatively poor condition of the chest (with worm-rot and water damage clearly evident across the object), in conjunction with a theorized continental origin.[556] The chest has been established as part of the Kentish contingent of fourteenth and fifteenth-century 'Flemish' chests.[557] The measurements of the chest are: 133 cm x 74 cm (including blocks) x 68 cm deep.[558] The lid is a later replacement made of pine, and its hinges are of similarly non-medieval origin. On the underside of the lid is an ink inscription reading,

[553] Scott Robertson, "On an ancient carved Chest in Harty Church", *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 10, (1876), pp. 77–81.
[554] Van de Walle and Heughebaert, "Vlaamse ambachtslui tijdens de Middeleeuwen", p. 18.
[555] This was relayed to the author via Sue Hopper, then Church Warden of Harty Church.
[556] Scott Robertson identifies the chest as originating from Germany or the Low Countries (including Flanders) due to the distinct saddle and leg armour which match found artifacts from abroad, and are unheard of in England during the time; Robertson, "On an ancient carved Chest" p. 78.
[557] Chris Pickvance, "Kentish Gothic' or imported? Understanding a group of early 15th century tracery-carved medieval chests in Kent and Norfolk", *Archaeologia Cantiana* (2017), pp. 105–12, p. 138.
[558] Measurements taken by myself and Chris Pickvance.

"Mary Hall May 16 1864", which suggests a tentative posterior date for the later additions. Moving on to the original components, the body of the chest is made of straight close-grained Baltic oak—similar to the Oxford Chest. It is also sawn in the same manner of the Oxford Chest, with the presence of medullary rays indicating either a cleft or quarter sawn cut. There's been no comprehensive dendrochronological dating of the frontispiece, though Scott Robertson suggested an earlier dating of mid-fourteenth century due to the fact that the saddles are reminiscent of contemporary English jousting saddles as depicted in St. Alban's Chronicle.[559] All of this indicates a carving date of 1340-1380.

The iconography of the chest is standard fare for the genre of tilting chest; two knights are depicted mid-joist, with their esquires pictured both in-frame and on the stiles.[560] One has just broken his lance. The joust itself is interesting, as the pronged lance-tips, in conjunction with the leg protection and unique saddles, indicates that the event is a peaceful one, with the aim focused on unseating one's opponent.[561] The visual programme, aside from relaying a narrative of a peaceful joust, is also concerned with the juxtaposition between urban and agrarian spaces. Both of the figural carvings in the stiles are framed by urban canopies. This is in contrast to the nature-centric centre image, which prominently features trees, fronds, and grass. The abundance of foliage can be found on other fourteenth-century tilting coffers, such as the coffret currently housed at the V&A.[562] Substantially smaller than both the Oxford and Harty chests, the coffret is of a simple box construction.[563]

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[559] Robertson, "On an ancient carved Chest", p. 78.
[560] Appendix, Fig. 4a
[561] Appendix, Fig. 4a
[562] Victoria & Albert Museum 738-1895.
[563] Appendix Fig. 5a

The first and most striking similarities between the two chests are ones of style. The depiction of the mounted jousters matches the way mounted figures are depicted across the chest. Most notably, the charging French knight in Scene VI has his horse configured in the same manner as the right-most knight on the Harty Chest—the front two legs are splayed outward and the hind legs are bent, pushing the horse's body relatively close to the ground. The depiction of the great helms are also similar; two straight lines ending in a vaguely conical bulge. The knight on the left, meanwhile, is holding his shield in the exact manner as Guy and William in Scene I of the Oxford Chest. Returning to the horses, the mounted esquire in the background, behind the right knight, has his horse hunched forward, mane and ears tucked inside its bridle. Though considerably more detailed (as the Harty Chest generally is, given the magnitude of the increase in scale), the forward slope of the equine's neck, in conjunction with its bridle, is very reminiscent of the curving heads and necks of the horses on the Oxford Chest. The general composition of the chest is also reminiscent of the Oxford Chest—the framing of the central board between two decorated stiles (as the original Oxford Chest's frontispiece would have undoubtedly been) and the lock given prominent space within the iconographical landscape of the carving. The most significant stylistic divergence is the forced perspective present in the upper left-hand corner. The tiled roof and frame are slanted, at odds with the more typical microarchitectural canopy underneath, and in so doing create a sense of implied depth. This nuance is not present within the Oxford Chest, and can be seen as an indication of the Harty's slightly later carving date. It also bears resemblance to the complex microarchitecture of the York Minster Chest.[564] Dated to the late fourteenth century, the York

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[564] Appendix, Fig. 6a

Minster serves as a neat chronological foil for both the Oxford and Harty chests.[565] As a group, these chests give some insight into a very specific type of coffer that was being imported from Flanders during (and potentially just before) the fourteenth century. Their general composition is more or less uniform, from the type of oak used to the way the boards were cut.[566] Even the placement of the lock reserve is fairly uniform; both in its physical location on the frontispiece and the way the designer was uninhibited by its rectangular intrusion into the carved scenes surrounding it. In this specific comparison, the direct incorporation of the lock into the carving's narrative by the Oxford Chest's carver is shown in brilliant contrast to other, more codified iconographical standards. It is not unwarranted, then, to infer that characteristics shared by the Harty and York Minster chests could also have been present in the original iteration of the Oxford Chest. The most exciting possibility is that of the carved styles, long since lost on the Oxford Chest due to the shearing of its front and backpiece. It is very likely that the Oxford Chest's stiles would have been carved, and comparisons to these two (more or less) intact chests suggests that the carvings would have been of figures directly involved within the centre-piece's narrative (such as the esquires that flank the joust they are assisting in within the Harty Chest). To that end, it is not unlikely that the images of Guy of Namur and Willem of Julich—so prominently featured across the surviving portions of the frontispiece—would have been featured in similarly prominent positions along the styles. Another possibility is that the repeated motif of the *goedendag*-wielding militiaman would have been repeated writ-large on

[565] William Edward Tate, *The Parish Chest: A Study of the Records of Parochial Administration in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 39.

[566] Comparisons of joinery are rendered impossible as the dismantling and sawing of the original Courtrai Chest leaves us with little solid evidence to work off of. That is not to say that it would have looked dissimilar in assortment to its sister chests, as the boarded composition of the front and backpieces suggest that it would have conformed to the standard "boarded chest" type.

the end pieces; though we can never say whether it would have been one or the other, or any at all, with certainty due to the unfortunate editorial tastes of time and entropy. That is to say, all three chests are operating on a similar aesthetic axis, across the breadth and width of the fourteenth-century.

2.10.2 Netherlandish Bas Relief Carving

A distant cousin of chest carving, the prominence of retable manufacturing within the Low Countries during the later fourteenth century can be seen as a useful foil for the materiality of carved frontispieces. This is because they both share similar methods and materials. That being said, due to the aforementioned iconoclasm experienced throughout Flanders in the sixteenth century, there are no surviving Flemish examples from before the end of the fourteenth century.[567] The genre is well survived in England, especially in later centuries, though these examples are less useful. This is because, in this section, the onus will be on exploring the potential conditions and qualifications that existed within relief carving in Flanders circa 1300. To do so will require starting at the end of the century and working backwards, due to the aforementioned lack of exempla.

In 1390, Jacob de Baerze of Dendermonde was commissioned to create two new carved altarpieces for the Chartreuse of Champmol in Dijon, modelled on existing altarpieces in the ducal chapel in Dendermonde castle and in the Abbey of Bijloke in Ghent.[568] Kim Woods uses the prominence of the work being commissioned to suggest that it "give[s] an impression of de

[567] Woods, *Imported Images*, p. 13.
[568] Woods, *Imported Images*, pp. 12–1.3

Baerze's style of carving c.1390. Perhaps they offer an impression of the sort of carving style prevalent in the Dendermonde and Ghent area around this date, but that is harder to prove. Most of all, however, they suggest that in 1390 the carved wooden altarpiece with tracery, movable shutters and narrative scenes was already a Netherlandish specialism, and that the place to acquire them was Flanders."[569] De Baerze's work, while being the earliest extant example available, is nonetheless typical of later retable carving. Of some 350 surviving altarpieces, most are made of Baltic oak (note the similarity with that of the Oxford Chest), and only in the fifteenth century deviate from this proscription towards the use of walnut instead.[570] Earlier carved works (fourteenth and fifteenth century) were also carved out of a single block of wood, as opposed to later retables which are composed of several figural groupings, and carved on separate relief planes and pegged together to form a constituent whole.[571] Stylistically, the retables are much too far removed from chest carving to be of any serious use. However, the iconography and materiality of the de Baerze altarpieces bears some relation to that of the Oxford Chest.

Of the two altarpieces produced by de Baerze in the 1390s, The Altar of Saints and Martyrs is the most visually striking and bears certain visual motifs within its iconography that are also present within the Oxford Chest.[572] The scene which immediately stands out is that of the Execution of John the Baptist.[573] When compared to Scene II of the Oxford Chest, several

[569] Woods, *Imported Images*, p. 13.
[570] Lynn F. Jacobs, *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces, 1380-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 1.
[571] Jacobs, *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces*, p. 1.
[572] Appendix, Fig. 7a
[573] Appendix, Fig 7b

things become immediately apparent.[574] The first is the considerable difference in style. Compared to the static, high relief of the altarpiece, the figures upon the chest's frontispiece appear to be full of movement and physical potential. The composition is also distinct enough. However, the iconographical niceties of the two narrative sequences speak to a potentially shared origin. When viewed in succession, the image upon the chest appears to be the natural conclusion of the moment within the altarpiece; from raised sword, to sword cut. The macroscopic features of the scene, namely the presence and position of the microarchitecture, executioner, and depiction of the saint/victim, are all visually similar despite a potential century of artistic movement between the two. This relationship in visual motif can be interpreted as the development of a certain iconographical tract within Flanders throughout the fourteenth century, with the carving of the Oxford Chest representing a prototypical representation—carved in low relief—of visual themes that would survive throughout the century, to eventually manifest themselves within the workshops that eventually created altarpieces and other, more extant, examples of Netherlandish sculpture. This link is present in the very nature of the altarpiece itself, with Lynn F. Jacobs writing that: "One of the most basic aspects of taste manifested within Netherlandish carved altarpieces is a pronounced preference for narrative expression. These retables primarily depict stories, that is, scenes conceived in historical terms, derived largely from the Gospels, Acts, and well-known Apocryphal writings, such as the *Golden Legend*."[575] Given the Oxford Chest's emphasis on narrative expression, story, and historically contextualized scenes, it is entirely possible that it represents the type of common and

[574] Appendix, Fig. 1c
[575] Jacobs, *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces*, p. 35.

commonly produced work that would stoke the Flemish appetite for later, more complex renderings of narratively-complex artwork. Whether or not it was carved by a *scrinwerker* specifically is beside the point, as sculptors of both wood and stone were aggregated within the same guild.[576]

2.10 Memory, Commemoration, and Memorialization

In his 1920 book, *A History of Oak Furniture*, Fred Roe describes the iconography of the Oxford Chest's frontispiece as "a sort of processionary movement into longitudinal compartments".[577] He does this in order to contextualize the chest with the few pieces of similar aesthetic composition—namely the Franks casket—but in so doing neatly summarizes one of the core iconological and philosophical underpinnings of the object: procession and remembrance. To quote Fentress and Wickham, "A memory can be social only if it is capable of being transmitted, and, to be transmitted, a memory must first be articulated. Social memory, then, is articulate memory. Articulation does not always imply articulation in speech."[578] It is by these two metrics, the creation and articulation of social memory, that this section will explore the symbolic and cultural value of the chest's iconography while taking into consideration the previously explored concepts of artistic intent, potential commission, and the intrinsic cultural *mis en place*.

In terms of an identifiable, cohesive vision behind the chest's myriad narrative details, the iconographical programme is concerned with three chief things: identification,

[576] Wood, *Imported Images*, p. 22.
[577] Roe, *A History of Oak Furniture*, p. 25.
[578] Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 52.

characterization, and unification. Whether it is through the use of extensive heraldic devises, processional motifs, or visual puns, the designer of the chest clearly set out to impart the viewer with a sense of who was present at these historical events, what they were doing, and who they were doing it with.

As has been discussed during the iconographic breakdown in this chapter, Scene II of the Courtrai chest contains a multiplicity of violence. This includes the direct physical violence of the smiling soldier beheading the kneeling alderman, the martial violence of the adjacent soldier with his shield and sword raised to strike, and the abstraction of the generalised violence inflicted upon Flemish communities by French forces. That being said, a return to the passage in the *Annales Gandenses* when the anonymous Friar elaborates on (and morally condemns) the actions of the French during their punitive occupation of Flanders reveals yet another strata of impious violence: the sacrilegious desecration of shrines and statues. The Friar writes:

> About the beginning of July, Robert moved from Lille, set out for Courtrai, and pitched his camp near that town, at a distance of about four or five furlongs. As the French entered Flemish-speaking Flanders, to show their ferocity and terrorise the Flemings they spared neither women nor children nor the sick, but slew all they could find. They even beheaded the images of saints in the churches, as though they were alive, or chopped off their limbs. However, such

> doings did not terrorise the Flemings, but stimulated and provoked them to still greater indignation and rage and violent fighting.[579]

The juxtaposition of the heinous atrocities committed against the civilian population with the highly specific acts of iconoclasm directed at the Fleming's holy places is a damning indictment of French activity during the war and, in the same vein, a justification for the ensuing actions of the Flemish rebels. The wording of the account is similarly weighty and purposeful: "imo et imagines sanctorum in ecclesiis, ac si homines fuissent vivi, decapitaverunt, alia eis etiam membra amputantes".[580] The emphasis here is being placed on *actions* and *things*; the images of saints are passive, defenceless victims of excessive French violence in just the same manner as the Flemings who worship them. The rhetorical sleight of hand being performed by the writer of the *Annales* is revealed in the passage's ending, when the passivity of the saints and their followers is turned from a weakness in the face of French aggression into an emboldening call to action for the Flemish resistance. All of this is in the immediate context of the ensuing Battle of the Golden Spurs. Nowhere else in the *Annales* is French violence elaborated upon or condemned in terms approaching anything near as strong and emphatic as here. Furthermore, there is no reason given for the wrathfulness of the French, though an easy connection exists in the events of the Bruges Matins some two months' prior (though any mention of Flemish transgression is left conspicuously absent in the *Annales*).

[579] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 28.
[580] *Annales Gandenses*, p. 28.

The actions of the French reflect contemporary corporal punishments, specifically for treason or transgression taken against the king.[581] The methodical acts of dismemberment described by the *Annales*, and depicted on the Courtrai Chest, are explicitly framed as punishment; that is to say, Count Robert II of Artois' incursion into Flemish-speaking Flanders is fulfilling a punitive function previously absent in the conflict.[582] The specific methods being displayed in the imagery of the Courtrai Chest are reflective of actual punishments used against Flemish rebels, the earliest extant record of which dates to 1328. In this instance Guillaume De Deken, the mayor of the councillors in Bruges and one of the leaders of the Peasant's Revolt has been taken to Paris and subjected to the king's punishment:

> Item, que de touz les dommages qui ont esté fais au conte de Flandres, au conte de Nemur et aus nobles du païs de Flandres, et des murtres qui on esté fais en Flandres, espéciaument de ceus qui furent prins et murtri en l'église d'Ardenbourch, il a esté cause, promoteur, faiseur et exécuteur…Pour lequel fait, ledit Guillaume Le Doyem de Bruges ont coupé les deus poins à Paris et mis toute le jour ou pillory, et après lendemain fut penduz et trainex au gibet de Paris.[583]

The parallels between this judicial verdict and the actions of the French some twenty five years prior are stark: the king's justice is being administered to a foreign rebel for crimes against the

[581] S. H. Cuttler, *The Law of Treason and Treason Trials in Later Medieval France* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 117.
[582] Which is not to discount previous civilian casualties undertaken by either side.
[583] *Archives Nationales*, Paris, 10 4, fol. 131 v.

crown in a highly specific and visible way.[584] Even more striking is the similarity between Guillaume De Deken and the alderman being mutilated on the Courtrai Chest; both were town officials party to rebellions against the French crown. Double amputations such as those carried out in 1328 and mentioned in the *Annales Gandenses* appear to be quite rare, and dismemberment was usually reserved for the worst offenders even before the advent of drawing and quartering as a *du jour* method of execution in the early modern period.[585] Furthermore, capital punishment on this scale was relatively rare to begin with. S. H. Cuttler writes, “The last Capetian kings of France did not on the whole prosecute rebellion and treason with severity […] whatever Philippe IV’s true intentions were, one cannot say that his treatment of either the bishop or the count was brutal. Indeed, the only known executions for treason during Philippe IV’s reign were those in 1305 of the eight consuls and some other inhabitants of the Carcassonne, and of about forty people from Limoux, all of whom were implicated in a conspiracy to renounce the sovereignty of France in order to escape the rigours of the Inquisition.”[586] Philip IV is on record as reserving these punishments nigh exclusively for threats against his sovereignty. In this context, the rhetorical specificity of *Annales* is meant as form of hyperbole. That is not to say that acts of egregious violence were not carried out against the Flemish population, far from it; the language and imagery being invoked by the Flemish sources is intentionally seeking to elicit a specific response from their audience—one of righteous indignation.

[584] Henri Stein , 'Les conséquences de la bataille de Cassel pour la ville de Bruges et la mort de Guillaume De Deken, son ancien bourgmestre (1328)', *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'Histoire*, 9, (1899), pp. 647–664.
[585] Cuttler, *The Law of Treason and Treason Trials*, p. 145.
[586] Cuttler, *The Law of Treason and Treason Trials*, p. 142.

The profane degradation of the statues of saints is by no means a singular feature of the Franco-Flemish War, rather the opposite: the medieval period is seen to be bookended by great acts of iconoclasm, namely Byzantian, Henrician, and Reformist; the Courtrai Chest is a unique extant depiction of late medieval iconoclasm.[587] However, iconoclasm was hardly relegated to these grand historical moments, and quotidian acts of politically-motivated defacement were quite commonplace throughout the medieval period.[588] While the acts depicted on the Courtrai Chest and described in the *Annales* are not theologically motivated, certain comparisons can be made larger historical phenomena which have in turn drawn a greater degree of inquiry. Of the Reformation, Dario Gamboni writes, "In order to prove their powerlessness, images were not immediately destroyed: first they were profaned and degraded—often in ways that mimicked judicial processes of the day or the martyrdom of the saints they represented—and summoned to react."[589]While the punitive, judicial nature of the French violence being carried out has already been discussed, the symbolic pacification of these foreign, "Flemish" statues at the hands of the French seems to be motivated by a desire to assert their dominance over the annexed county. That is to say, the violence being depicted here is both premeditated and purposeful.

[587] For a history of comparative iconoclasm, see: Catherine Brown Tkacz, 'Iconoclasm, East and West', *New Blackfriars*, 85.999, (2004), pp. 542–550, Jaś Elsner, 'Iconoclasm as Discourse: From Antiquity to Byzantium', *The Art Bulletin*, 94.3, (2012), pp. 368–394, and for an overview of the term "iconoclasm" itself; Jan N. Bremmer, 'Iconoclast, Iconoclastic, and Iconoclasm: Notes Towards a Genealogy', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 88.1, (2008), pp. 1–17.

[588] Marcus Meer, 'Reversed, defaced, replaced: late medieval London and the heraldic communication of discontent and protest', *Journal of Medieval History*, 45.5, (2019), pp. 618–645.

[589] Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism Since the French Revolution* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), p. 5.

The designer of the Courtrai Chest has taken these two themes, violence against the Flemish populace and violence against their saints, and juxtaposed them in a manner that speaks to a tacit acknowledgement of blasphemy and sacrilege. By placing the kneeling alderman directly adjacent to the image of the enshrined saint, the chest urges the viewer to conflate the immediate violence being perpetrated by the sword-wielding soldier with the implied violence against the statue itself—foreshadowed by the ominously hovering hand. While depicting an image of a saint being defaced would itself be blasphemous, the chest uses the visceral *mis en place* of the scene to allow the viewer to draw the connection themselves, thus making them complicit in conceptualising the act being only alluded to on the frontispiece. Furthermore, the saint is acting has a witness to the alderman's death; distant enough to be unable to intervene, yet close enough to be similarly threatened. To this end, the image of the saint—more than any other figure on the chest front—acts as a placeholder for the viewer. It observes the acts being committed by the French, yet does so in a way that is neither passive nor absent. It is threatened by the existential, violent threat being presented by the French, but it is not defenceless. That is to say, it does not lack defenders. By placing this scene on the end of the uppermost tier of carving directly opposite the opening vignette of the approaching noble entourage, the message is clear: The people of Flanders and their saints and imperilled, and Guy of Namur and William of Julich are there explicitly to defend them. It is even possible to insinuate that, given the attention to detail present throughout the visual programme of the frontispiece, the play between the descending hand and the approaching Flemish rebels introduces an element of urgency and an awareness of time into the narrative. The threat facing Flanders is presented as neither distant nor static; it is present, unfolding, and

demanding of action. Much how the violence being inflicted against the Flemish aldermen on the chest acts to give the political figures of Guy and William the *casus belli* required to legitimise their imminent military action against Philip IV, the implied violence being directed towards the enshrined saint. The connection between the saints and "just war" was established by Saint Augustine (354-430) in the fifth century and was carried throughout the medieval period as a metric to establish when war could, or should, be celebrated as an intrinsic good. In Book XXII of *Contra Faustum*, he writes:

> When war is undertaken in obedience to God, who would rebuke, or humble, or crush the pride of man, it must be allowed to be a righteous war; for even the wars which arise from human passion cannot harm the eternal well-being of God, nor even hurt His saints; for in the trial of their patience, and the chastening of their spirit, and in bearing fatherly correction, they are rather benefited than injured.[590]

This prerequisite of divine sanction is hardly unique, as there has never been a battle fought in any time period where neither participant thought God, the gods, or any variant thereof, was not explicitly on their side. The Courtrai Chest presents the Franco-Flemish War as a primarily spiritual, existential endeavour as it relates to the Flemish participation in the conflict. There is no vain, human interest on the part of the Flemings—they are merely victims of a bellicose aggressor who is persecuting both them and their saints, and by extension God. The ensuing Battle of the Golden Spurs is then rendered a punitive comeuppance; punishment for the

[590] Augustine, *Reply to Faustus the Manichaean XXII*, 74, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, (1886), p. 301.

transgressions being depicted in the second scene. In *The Elements of St. Augustine's Just War Theory*, John Langan describes the difference between Augustinian concepts of defensive and punitive as such: "Actions to protect such things may be permitted by human laws, but are to be punished by divine providence…This denial of legitimate self-defence for the protection of goods which can be lost is the underlying reason for Augustine's adoption of a punitive model of war in preference to a defensive model."[591]

[591] John Langan, "The Elements of St. Augustine's Just War Theory", *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 12.1, (1984), pp. 19–38, pp. 26–27.

3.0 Image: The Leugemeete Chapel

In 1315, Lodewijk van Velthem observed that there were so many corpses piling up due to famine and sickness that the Brabantine graveyards hadn't any room left to bury their dead.[592] It was about this time that a group of townspeople banded together to construct a small almshouse on the western outskirts of the city of Ghent. Its west-facing gable could be seen from the street; its extensive brickwork supporting several large windows on both the north and south walls through which could be glimpsed an interior covered by a wooden barrel vault.[593] Its outward appearance, hardly remarkable during the time of its original construction and certainly undervalued during its destruction via committee in 1911, concealed a complex inner world.[594] Passing through the small doorway located on the north wall, the busy thoroughfare of the Brugspoort would have given way to a quiet space filled with light and colour. Three large blind arches on the southern drew the eye eastward, in tandem with rows of marching guildsmen along the upper tiers of the chapel's walls. The colourful, powerful lines of butchers, fishmongers, and assorted religious confraternities were joined by a lower register of biblical pedigree: three Magi kneeling westward, their heads bowed and arms overflowing with gifts. In the opposite direction of the guilds parading above their heads, the Magi gestured across the first arch, its architectural void punctuated on the first side by a hovering angel swinging a censer and on the far side by an image of the Virgin and Child enthroned in an

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[592] Velthem, *Spiegel Historiael*, p. 220.

[593] Carina Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting in the Southern Netherlands* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepolis, 2011), p. 47.

[594] Jeannine Baldewijns, Lieve Watteeuw , 'Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete met vourstelling van de stedelijk milities (1861-2004)', *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent*, LX, (2006), pp. 337–367, p. 337.

ornately decorated microarchitectural frame. Turning eastward to face the altar, the chapel's largest stained glass window—its specific visual programme unknown—dominated the far wall. The infusion of light and colour was flanked to the left by a monumental painting of the chapel's titular saints, John the Evangelist and Paul, and to the right by a towering Tree of Jesse under which knelt the personages of the Count of Flanders and his wife and son. Turning northward, the viewer was greeted first with a sixteen-panel *Vita Sancti Johannis* immediately catty-corner from the patron portrait. The north wall itself would have been wholly incorporated into the chapel's decorative scheme via another line of parading guildsmen spread between three smaller windows, each sandwiching a round oculus. These monumental wall paintings—both those depicting the individual confraternities and those that give context to the epistemological world the guilds found themselves in—give insight into how the guilds saw themselves; the specific narratives they wove around their own congregations and attempted to project upon others. It is a snapshot of a vital stage in the evolution of Flemish guild art: a tradition that can be seen in its infancy upon the Oxford Chest at the outset of the fourteenth century and in full flourish upon the walls of the Leugemeete. This chapter will revisit how the wall paintings were rediscovered and documented, address the controversy of their authenticity, untangle the complex visual programme into which they were inserted, and finally explore the idea of "guild spaces" as areas that reflected the civic ideals of both the guilds and other members of Flemish urban life.

Discovered under whitewash during renovations in Ghent in 1845, the Leugemeete wall paintings have been the subject of much excitement, controversy, and speculation, with interest in the images outlasting the original paintings themselves. Destroyed in 1911 due to

the general decay of the building and the need to facilitate the expansion of Ghent's industrial sector, only copies of the fragmentary original schema survive.[595] These nineteenth-century visual records stand as testament to a complex visual programme that imagines a triumphant parade, combining elements of standard theological iconography with elaborate figural representations of prominent Ghentois guilds. These murals are an example of collective urban memory once preserved in a sacred context.

Félix De Vigne (1806-1862), a prominent antiquarian, artist, and public intellectual in Belgium, was alerted to the presence of the murals in 1846 and immediately set about creating a series of watercolour sketches, which he published in his *Recherches historiques sur les costumes civils et militaires* in 1847.[596] His publication was an immediate success, elevating De Vigne from a well-known historical illustrator to a major name in Belgian popular culture; his illustrations were even recreated for a 1848 production of the opera *Jacques van Artevelde*.[597] The site of the frescoes was the eponymous Leugemeete Chapel, situated along the Brugspoort in Ghent. Originally dedicated to Saints John (the Evangelist) and Paul, the chapel acquired a new colloquial name in the sixteenth century due to the presence of a large clock installed on the façade that was frequently wrong—hence the name "Leugemeete", or "liar" in Flemish.[598] The earliest extant foundational charter dates to 1316 and shows that the chapel was founded as a woman's charity dedicated to St John the Evangelist, with St Paul added as a titular saint by

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[595] Of the two comprehensive visual sources (Bethune and De Vigne) to be referenced in this section, the entirety of the wax calques are currently housed in the STAM in Ghent. I would like to thank Wout De Vuyst and the museum's Research & Collection Dept. for allowing me off-hour access to both the calques and their collection catalogue.
[596] Hermann Van Duyse, *Les Dernieres Cartouches d'un Archiviste; Le Goedendag. Les fresques de la Leugemeete* (Ghent: A. De Brabandere, 1897), p.6.
[597] Werner Waterschoot, 'Felix De Vigne als boekillustrator'*, In Monte Artium*, 7, (2014), pp. 115–134, p. 125.
[598] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 340.

1334.[599] A permanent chaplain was installed that same year, who fell under the patronage of the nearby pastor of Ekkergem.[600] Further support, in the form of an allowance from the surrounding urban centre, began in 1346.[601] De Vigne's watercolours eventually attracted the attention of Baron Jean Baptiste Bethune (1821-1894), also an antiquarian. In 1860, Bethune assembled a team of experts consisting of Adrien Hubert Bressers, Eugene Boulanger, and Henri-Charles de Tracy to begin a series of calque tracings, which the finished the next year.[602] This was in tandem with an architectural assessment of the chapel that was undertaken by the architect August Van Assche (1826-1907), on behalf of Bethune.[603] It is important to note that while these recreations were based on the architectural sketches of Van Assche, they were in fact assembled by H. Koechlin—a misattribution on the part of Fryklund.[604] This was during a period of neogothic interest in Belgium, and especially in centres such as Ghent where a concerted effort was being made to locate, identify, and catalogue extant medieval art—most notably wall paintings.[605] In the mid to late nineteenth century, the production of calques followed a method whereby tracing paper was placed over a surface to record its form, using a combination of linseed oil, poppy oil, walnut oil, shellac, varnish, and Venetian turpentine; the

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[599] J.-B.C.F. Béthune de Villers, Alfons van Werveke*, Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent, bijgenaamd de Leugemeete*, 2 edn (Gent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1902), p.IX.
[600] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 341.
[601] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 345.
[602] Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, p. VI.
[603] Vanden Gheyn *, Les fresques de la Leugemeete: Rapport sur leur authenticité par le Chanoine Vanden Gheyn, Secrétaire de la Societé d'histoire et d'archéologie de Gand; extrait des bulletins* (Ghent: La Societé d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Gand, 1899), p. 19.
[604] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 358.
[605] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 337; This includes the 1855 calques produced from the murals in the Groot Vleeshuis, as well as finds in the chapel of the Bijloke hospital, and Sint-Leonards chapel. For a historiographical overview of the rise of neo-Gothic interest in Belgium circa 1840, see: Ellen Van Impe, 'The Rise of Architectural History in Belgium, 1830-1914', *Architectural History*, 51, (2008), pp. 161–183.

calques produced by Bethune's team were done so on cardboard, resulting in the rapid deterioration of an already fragile end-product.[606] Both De Vigne and Bethune used calques to produce faithful reproductions of art that could otherwise not be moved.[607] That is not to say that these calques are perfect facsimiles of the original. In the instance of the Bethune calques, the team took considerable measures to indicate exactly where certain features had been lost; in so doing, they ostensibly did not adopt any artistic license in recreating lost features. For this reason, a comparison of Bethune's calques to De Vigne's watercolours reveals any issues of artistic invention.

3.1 Written Evidence of the Leugemeete's Function

Though oft referenced as essential evidence in dating both the chapel and its monumental paintings, the extant primary sources pertaining to the building in its fourteenth-century iteration are both perilously few and shallowly explored by the historiography at large. In total, there are four sources of note: a 1316 foundational charter by the aldermen of the city of Ghent, a 1324 provision granting permission to perform divine services in the hospital, a 1333 confirmation of the foundation, and a 1334 ordinance allowing for the foundation of a row of chapels.[608] Comprehensive inventories and lists of charitable donations can be found as early as the mid-fifteenth century, but the bulk of the fourteenth-century sources are concerned with the establishment and evolution of the chapel. This section will analyse each of

[606] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", pp. 337–38; Baldewijns and Watteeuw repeatedly stress the fragile and decomposing nature of the six calques produced by Bethune's team, and single out the time-sensitive nature of the visual material as the major impetus for their 2006 reassessment.
[607] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 338.
[608] These were transcribed by van Werveke as part of his review of the chapel circa 1902; J.-B.C.F. Béthune de Villers, Alfons van Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent, bijgenaamd de Leugemeete* (Gent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1902).

the extant primary sources and seek to ground them in a wider understanding of Ghent at the time, demonstrating that the Leugemeete was a flexible, inconstant space that rapidly changed in order to accommodate the needs of the communities around it.

The foundational charter of 1316 is perhaps the mostly singularly important document with which we can glean the chapel's initial purpose and function. At its core, the short declaration is a ratification by the city's aldermen of work that had already begun by the burgesses' of Waelbrugghe in founding a house.[609] Van Werveke notes that the presence of the dual epithets "godshuis" and "hospital" suggested a twofold purpose: providing housing to old women and giving night quarters to poor strangers.[610] The document itself asserts:

> "[that it] be made understood and known to all those who see or hear this proclamation[…]that we[…]in the prayers of many good people[…]that we would shower and feed them in the name of Our Lord, and in the spirit of the blessings of Saint John the Evangelist, [to that end] we have begun to set up a house in the Waelbrugghe, within the city limits of Ghent."[611]

The timing of this charter, perhaps even more so than its contents, reveals the impetus behind the construction of a new almshouse on the city's outskirts. The Great Famine of 1315-1317 utterly defined the period—the amount of flooding which precipitated it in Flanders alone

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[609] Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, p. IX.
[610] Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, p. X.
[611] "Wij scepenen van der stede van Ghend, maken cont ende kenlic allen den ghenen die dese jeghewordeghe lettren sullen sien ofte horen lesen, dat wij, bi den neresten versouke ende beden van vele goeden lieden onsen porteren, bi voersienecheden wel gemouvert in Onsen Here, die in de heere ende in de werdechede vanden groeten sente Jane ewangheliste, een huus hebben begonnen stichten an de Waelbrugghe, binnen den scependoeme van Ghend"; Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, p.1

being so severe as to prevent a punitive French invasion in 1315.[612] In Antwerp that year, the price of wheat rose three hundred and thirty percent in the span of seven months.[613] The fact that the burgesses of Waelbrugghe, an area only recently incorporated into the city, were sorely lacking in the infrastructure required to tend to the most basic needs of their citizens is given a sense of immediacy and urgency in the context of the ongoing calamity; this is evidenced in the charter itself, as the document is merely authorising the establishment of a charity who's construction is already underway.[614] Neighbourhood associations founding hospitals is not without precedent, especially in other densely populated areas of medieval Europe (such as northern Italy), where independent hospitals provided housing for staff and administrators alongside patients, the poor, and itinerant pilgrims.[615]

Proceeding in the chronology of the chapel's development, the next document is a charter permitting the provisional admission of divine services within the hospital circa September 1324 (as it is self-dated as being addressed the Sunday before the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary).[616] The document itself survives only as a seventeenth-century copy on paper, bound in a collection simply entitled *Copies of Old Charters, 1152 to 1296*.[617] This is a

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[612] Henry S. Lucas, "The Great European Famine of 1315, 1316, and 1317", *Speculum*, 5.4, (1930), pp. 343–377, p. 351.
[613] Lucas, "The Great European Famine", p. 354.
[614] David Nicholas suggests that the *banmijl* surrounding Ghent, including the villages of St. Bavon's and St. Pieter's, were nearly entirely annexed by the turn of the fourteenth-century, after which they were soon folded behind extensions of the city's walls; David M. Nicholas, "Town and Countryside: Social and Economic Tensions in Fourteenth-Century Flanders", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* , 10.4, (1968), pp. 458–485, p. 460.
[615] Sally Mayall Brasher, *Hospitals and Charity: Religious Culture and Civic Life in Medieval Northern Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), p. 60.
[616] "dominica ante nativitatem beate Mariae."; Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, p. 4.
[617] Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, pp. 4–6; Stadsarchief van Gent, Register LL, fol. 285 v.

testament to the thorough research of Béthune and Werveke. The copy opens with the note: "The extract of the register, [written] on very ancient parchment, which is kept in Eckerghem at the parish [of] Saint Martin."[618] The provisional charter is unique among the extant sources, as it is the only one to be recorded in Latin.[619] Within the document, the building is referred to as "hospitalis S.[ancti] Joannis evangeslistae iuxta Waelbruggherecognoverunt".[620] The additional appellate of Saint Paul has not been added yet; this will be revisited later, as it aids in establishing a *terminus post quem* for the two patron images of Paul and John within the chapel's visual programme (of which we can rule out any time before 1324). This also offers a correction to Baldewijns and Watteeuw, who erroneously assert that the charity was originally founded under both of its titular saints.[621] The provision is exceedingly useful in tracking the evolution of the space and its requisite functions. It notes: "And with this also promised [to] the said provisor after that the funeral procession [of] dead [guild] brothers of the said hospital which up to this point has been done in the church of the Brethren of Ghent ".[622] This passage provides a concrete link between the visual motifs of guild procession present upon the chapel's walls and its liturgical usage. Not only does it corroborate the presence of the guilds as explicit benefactors of its religious services, but it lays out the nature of their participation: funerary procession. The term "exequias confratum", while literally translating into "funerals of

[618] "Extractum ex registro perantiquo, in pergameno conscripto, quod servatur in archiviisecclesiae parochialis S.[anc]ti Martini de Eckerghem"; Béthune and Werveke p. 4; Stadsarchief van Gent, Register LL, fol. 285 v.
[619] It is presumed that original was written Latin and copied as such, rather than a seventeenth-century compositor translating a Middle Dutch document into Latin.
[620] Stadsarchief van Gent, Register LL, fol. 285 v.
[621] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 339.
[622] "Et cum hoc etiam promiserunt dicti provisoresdictis curatis quod exequias confratum dicti hospitalis decedentium, quas hactenusfieri faciebant in ecclesia fratrum Predicatorum Gandensium", Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, p.5.

deceased brothers", is perhaps too vague to ascribe the presence of particularised guild activity by itself, but it is supported by both the nature of the iconography within the chapel and the immediate political situation in Flanders circa 1324.[623] The first wave of widespread unrest swept through the county in 1323, and by 1324 the militias would have already engaged in scattered engagements with the rural rebels. In his framing of the period directly before the Peasant Revolt, William H. TeBrake writes: "…in the absence of a meaningful response from the central government the cities of Ghent and Bruges sent out their militias and apparently were able to contain the disorders, at least temporarily."[624] This suggests that the provision to administer divine services within the chapel—namely funerals—directly correlates to the activity and mortality of the militia featured upon its walls. Furthermore, the use of the chapel by the guilds to bury their dead would not only explain their vested interest in the site, but also provide the small building with the funds required to commission such a magisterial suite of monumental wall paintings via the bequeathment of goods and monies in the wills of deceased guild members.[625] This cycle, of the guilds requiring a special place to commemorate their dead

[623] The specific language employed when directly addressing guilds are: "collegium", "ministerium", "universitas", and "officium". That being said, many primary Latin sources from the period don't mention the guilds at all, referring instead to either general commonalities ("communitate") or simply men ("viri"), as is the case in the *Annals Gandenses*. For guild terminology, see: Sheilagh Ogilvie, *The European Guilds: An Economic Analysis* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2019), p. 9.
[624] William H. TeBrake, *A Plague of Insurrection; Popular Politics and Peasant Revolt in Flanders, 1323-1328*, ed. by Edward Peters (Philadephia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1993), p. 52
[625] The cycle of wills and funerary arrangements has been well-studied in the Baltic guilds, in both the medieval and early modern periods. See: Håkon Haugland , '"To Help the Deceased Guild Brother to His Grave": Guilds, Death and Funeral Arrangements in Late Medieval and Early Modern Norway, ca. 1300–1900', *Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies*, 18, (2015), pp. 152–183.

and then transforming said place to reflect their specific spiritual and aesthetic tastes, is compounded by the spiritual capital of being able to directly memorialise their predecessors.[626]

The third document (written in 1333) is a reconfirmation of the chapel's founding. The need to ostensibly reaffirm the building's civic functions by the aldermen of Ghent would suggest that it had drastically changed since its inception circa 1316. The most obvious evidence for these changes is the appearance of a new name; it is here that it is first referred to as the "chapel of saint John and saint Paul the apostle".[627] The charter invokes the blessing of "here van sente Janne ewanghelisth" early on, potentially signalling the presence of a hierarchy between the two saints within the document. The document begins by naming six governors (or confessors) of the property: Boudin van Lederne, Philips van Calkine, Hughe de Plonghere, Lieviin Baraet, Willem van Osterzele and Gillis de Scheene. These were likely also financial benefactors of the property; Willem van Osterzele appears in the registers of Froissart's *Chroniques* and is listed as one of the wealthiest burghers in the city circa 1327 (paying 30 lib. in tax within the parish of Nostre-Dame).[628] In the preface to his edition of the charters, Van Werveke suggests that this could indicate a lack of success on the part of chapel, its stewards having to seek a new ratification from the city aldermen so soon after its founding.[629] Conversely, this could be interpreted as more indicative of the changing status of the institution rather than a tacit failure at any one of its stated aims. Given how hastily the almshouse and

[626] Gervase Rosser ascribes this to "the Catholic belief that the activities of the fraternity benefitted the souls of the members' ancestors in purgatory"; Gervase Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity in the Middle Ages: Guilds in England 1250-1550* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 203.
[627] Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, p. 2.
[628] Jean Froissart, *Oeuvres de Froissart, Chroniques*, ed. by Kervyn de Lettenhove (Bruxelles: Matthieu Closson et Companie, 1967), p. 120.
[629] Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, p. IX.

hospital were created circa 1316 (fast enough to prompt its builders to seek authorisation after its construction—and potentially its use—had already begun), and how it had quickly changed from a public-facing charity to internally administering to the liturgical needs of its patrons circa 1324, the necessity to ratify its status and legal standing under the purview of an articulated board of benefactors seems indicative of its tenacious flexibility.

Any doubt as to the perceived "success" of the Leugemeete towards the middle of the fourteenth century is challenged by the relative swiftness with which the premises adapted and changed to the needs of its community. The site was ostensibly such a prominent local institution that in 1334 it was given a permanent chaplain (Jacop van der Hasselt) alongside the foundation of a row of chapels.[630] These are not the developments of a charitable institution in decline. This resiliency is compounded by the fact that the almshouse does not appear in the city's accounts until 1346, meaning that it was most likely funded completely by its community and respective patrons from 1316-1346, at which point it was awarded a financial allowance.[631] These four documents reveal the impetus for the ad hoc founding of the Leugemeete as a place of communal charity, painting a picture of a building whose functions were entirely focused on the immediate needs of the people of Waelbrugghe. Its creation stemmed not from the planning of the city's aldermen, nor immediately from any of the pre-existing charitable institutions that already existed in the city circa 1316.[632] It was the manifestation of the initiative taken by a small community to address their collective wish to better the material

[630] Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, p. 7.
[631] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 340; Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, p. 135.
[632] Such as the aforementioned guild almshouses.

circumstance of their less fortunate; in the context of overwhelming societal distress and famine. Eight years later, the needs of the denizens of Waelbrugghe changed and so too did the almshouse; transforming from a space of charity into a venue in which the guilds and their families could memorialise the dead. The addition of a permanent chaplain in 1334, followed by the establishment of a direct allowance from the city council circa 1346, cemented the almshouse as a permanent and important institution for the duration of the fourteenth century. Moreover, these documents both cement certain descriptive terms ("almshouse", "hospital") while demonstrating that the quotidian utility of the premises was much more far-reaching and complex than any single term could adequately encapsulate.

3.2 The Guilds in Ghent circa 1330

Before unpacking the iconography of the Leugemeete it is essential to situate the chapel—both its physical form and the civic function it fulfilled—in the context of the period that birthed it. Ghent was, from the outset of the fourteenth century, the second largest city in mainland Europe north of the Mediterranean—its population of 64,000 outmatched only by Paris on the continent and across the channel by London.[633] When an eighteen year old Louis II assumed the mantle of count in 1322, the densely populated urban landscape of Ghent was the economic and administrative hub of western Flanders.[634] It had its bureaucratic apparatus replaced wholesale in the wake of the 1305 concessions to France, with a *poorter*-dominated regime installed in 1312 that gave eminent power to the count's captains while, as David Nicholas describes it, "limiting the participation of the weavers without excluding them

[633] TeBrake, *A Plague of Insurrection*, p. 19.
[634] TeBrake, *A Plague of Insurrection*, p. 45.

totally”.[635] When Louis II came to power, the city was vigorously invoking privileges granted to it by his father—namely the right to enforce a moratorium on the production of cloth within five miles of its walls with an exception for those communities who had a charter conceding the right.[636] These three factors: a pro-comital regime, a check on the perennially rebellious weavers, and the enjoyment of privileges that greatly increased their capacity to enforce an economic mandate, meant that the city of Ghent was uniquely situated as a bastion of support for Louis II from the outset. Their loyalty would soon be tested as the Peasant Revolt of 1323-1328 would both shake the count’s grasp on Flanders and reframe the way the county viewed their relationship to the count. The scale and seriousness of the revolt is seen in the breadth and width of the response it generated, with William H. TeBrake writing in his book *A Plague of Insurrection: Popular Politics and Peasant Revolt in Flanders, 1323-1328*: “The triumphant force at Cassel in 1328 was an international one, designed to restore the authority of the count of Flanders over his rebellious subjects. Though personally commanded by the king of France, it was generously supplemented by personnel, materiel, and money from kingdoms and principalities throughout north-western Europe, including, among others, Artois, Brittany, Burgundy, Hainaut, Lorraine, and Navarre.”[637] TeBrake frames the revolt as being indicative of the fundamental state of Flemish politics, which at the time consisted not only of traditional privileged elites and their respective factions (as was broadly the case in the Franco-Flemish War), but also included the participation of so called “ordinary people”—even swathes of the

[635] David Nicholas, *The Metamorphosis of a Medieval City; Ghent in the Age of the Arteveldes, 1302-1390* (United States of America: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), p. 2.
[636] Nicholas, *The Metamorphosis of a Medieval City*, p. 2.
[637] TeBrake, *A Plague of Insurrection*, p.2.

peasantry.[638] The nature of the count's response to the revolt, leaning heavily on outside help to physically repress the insurrection as quickly as possible, stands in stark contrast to the lasting relationships formed between himself and those communities that stood by him. The lack of general support enjoyed by Louis II places even more emphasis on his ability to establish and enforce his authority, and his presence in the visual programme of the Leugemeete signals an effort to create stronger, lasting bonds with specific groups that had proven loyal in the past. This propagandistic element of the Leugemeete's decoration will be explored more fully in a later section, but the juxtaposition of the comital family and the parading militia was a cognisant choice made by the wall paintings' designer that reflects the political landscape of the time. It is in this way that the Leugemeete is as much a mechanism for the consolidation of the count's power as it is a celebration of the guilds and religious motifs on display upon its walls. To that end, this section will explore the socio-political underpinnings of the Ghentois guilds circa 1322-1348 in order to more fully contextualise the spaces they patronised.

An appreciation of the magnitude of the Peasant Revolt is necessary to understand the impetus for the iconographical programme present on the walls of the Leugemeete. The Ghent militia played a significant role in the defence of both the city and the civic sphere's allegiance to Louis II; they put down an abortive revolt by the weavers in 1325 and fought with the count afield on several occasions.[639] All of this was exacerbated by the geographical closeness of the revolt—the city's neighbours of Bruges and Kortrijk being staunch centres of opposition. It should come as no surprise then that the Leugemeete is concerned with two things above all

[638] TeBrake, *A Plague of Insurrection*, p.45.
[639] Nicholas, *The Metamorphosis of a Medieval City*, p. 2.

else: depicting the glory and splendour of the city's militia and creating lasting connotations between said militia and the personage of Louis II. As I will demonstrate via iconographical analysis, the visual programme of the chapel served a very specific function in the civic sphere of Ghent in the second quarter of the fourteenth century; namely creating a complex narrative of timeless solidarity between the count of Flanders and those men and women who worked to secure Ghent in his name. Its function as first a women's charity and then a general hospital, with Marian imagery and militaristic embellishment, is directly tied to the martial engagements of the city's militia that would have impacted the lives of hundreds of women—their husbands and sons serving in the campaign of restoration undertaken by Louis II.[640]

The Peasant Revolt, and its resulting casualties, necessitated the creation of a charity shaped in the image of the men who fought on behalf of the city—a principal group of which being the Confraternity of St Sebastien. Of such organizations, Émile Mâle writes: "Men were never less isolated. Divided into small groups, the faithful formed numberless confraternities. It was always a saint that who brought them together, for at that time, the saints were the bond uniting men."[641] This common thread can be seen throughout the chapel. The confraternities of Saint Sebastian and Saint George are singled out among the militia on the upper walls, while two monumental depictions of the building's titular saints, Saint Paul and Saint John the Evangelist, adorned the far wall. Mâle separates confraternities into three distinct subtypes: religious, militaristic, and guild.[642] However, these distinctions are rendered oversimplistic from

[640] Béthune and Werweke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, p. IX.
[641] Émile Mâle, *Religious Art in France; The Late Middle Ages*, ed. by Harry Bober, trans. by Marthiel Mathews, 5th edn (Meriden, Connecticut: Meriden-Stinehour Press, 1986), p. 159.
[642] Mâle, *Religious Art in France*, p. 159.

the outset given the very existence of the Leugemeete as a religious building patronised by a militaristic confraternity and featuring several prominent craft guilds. This public-facing space—with its emphasis on charity—provided the confraternities and craft guilds with a means by which they could address a specific societal need while simultaneously propagating and engaging with a powerful narrative of civic unity and self-determination. The reorganisation of the chapel in 1334 came at a time when Ghent was acquiring a keen awareness of the need for social charity directed at its less fortunate inhabitants.[643] To that end, guild almshouses that catered specifically to their own members had long-standing precedent amongst the weavers and fullers that was eventually extended to include the shippers, the brewers, the fishmongers, the blue dyers, and the bakers.[644] It is interesting to note that of the extant evidence of guild alms-houses in Ghent, at least three are featured on the Leugemeete's walls; namely the brewers, fishmongers, and bakers. From this we can draw two conclusions. Firstly, that the Leugemeete fulfilled a function which was more specific than the general charity one would expect to be offered within the individual guilds, and in a context that centred the collective act of civic defence. Secondly, it could suggest the original presence of a series of craft guilds which did not have the good fortune to have their likenesses survive to be traced by Bethune and his team circa 1861. Within the individual guilds there existed a corps d'esprit which Gervase Rosser refers to as "the community of the guild".[645] He defines this relationship as: "[consisting] neither in their social nor in their territorial definition, but in their members' shared sense of a

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[643] David Nicholas juxtaposes the lack of widespread civic engagement pre-1302 (with the exception of the rise of the mendicant orders in the twelfth century) with the numerous institutions—orphanages, hospitals, and almshouses—that rose to prominence in the fourteenth century; Nicholas, *The Metamorphosis of a Medieval City*, p. 32.
[644] Nicholas, *The Metamorphosis of a Medieval City*, p. 43.
[645] Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity in the Middle Ages*, p. 193.

collective responsibility."[646] What the Leugemeete chapel represents, then, is the community of the *guilds*; a multiplicity of confraternities and craft guilds engaged in the two shared experiences which were commonplace throughout the period but uniquely capable of bringing individual communities together: warfare and procession. Every guild had its yearly holy processions (usually situated around their respective saints), and none were spared the ravages of war, but the Leugemeete is an exercise in using the former to commemorate the latter.[647] Guild processions were unique in their capacity to unite different communities together under the twin banners of polity and piety. Using regulations issued by the Leuven City Council in 1433 concerning the annual Our Blessed Lady procession, Jelle Haemers describes one occasion as such:

> From that day forth, all craftsmen in town were to take part in the procession in a strictly regimented sequence, with the *smedenkeerse* leading the way. That meant that the smiths' guild would head the procession, led by the guild's *kaars* or candle-bearer. A diverse array of craftsmen followed after, representing guilds in the following sequence: metalworkers, kettle-makers, masons, carpenters, butchers, fishermen, tanners, shoemakers, skippers, millers, bakers, brewers, furriers, shrine-workers, dyers, weavers and fullers. The regulatory framework punished any craftsman who failed to join the procession behind his own guild's candle-bearer without a valid reason, subject to a penalty of one litre of Rhine

[646] Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity in the Middle Ages*, p. 193.

[647] Outside of Corpus Christi processions, Ghent had comparatively few church processions. See: David Nicholas, 'In the Pit of the Burgundian Theatre State: Urban Traditions and Princely Ambitions in Ghent, 1360–1420', in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Barbara A. Hanawalt, Kathryn L. Reyerson(USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 272–73.

wine. The wine would be served to the leading figures in the guild, and particularly the *gezworenen* (sworn officials).[648]

In his article, Haemers uses the city ordinance to situate the numerous purposes guilds served in medieval society. The incredibly specific ordering of the procession mirrors that of the idealised parade in the Leugemeete, the main difference being that instead of candle-bearers, the craft guilds and confraternities are led by standard bearers.[649] Similarly, the strict hierarchy of the guilds is also on display; each group's standard bearer wears a unique visored helmet, and some are even looking back to the men behind them as though ordering them onward.[650] The standards themselves not only held highly symbolic and religious value, but were also highly politicised objects as well. Haemers' work on the *wapeninghe*, a ritual ceremony in which armed craftsmen would parade through the streets with banners in order to frighten the aldermen and display the military power of the craft guilds, demonstrates that the martial identity of the guilds was also used to defend their status within the very cities they sought to protect.[651] The determination of the guilds to remain independent political bodies in their own right is also indicative of the degree to which urban authorities sought to extend their control over corporate leadership and organisation; by this period the politics of the guilds were

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[648] Jelle Haemers, "Artisans and Craft Guilds in the Medieval City", ed. V. Lamber, P. Stabel*, Golden times: Wealth and Status in the Middle Ages in the Southern Low Countries*, Tielt, Lannoo, 2016, pp. 209–239, p. 209.

[649] These standards could themselves be regarded as sacred objects, known in Italy as "gonfalone", and in Germany as "fenlin" or "fänlin", see: Jean Henri Chandler, 'A brief examination of warfare by medieval urban militias in Central and Northern Europe ', *Acta Periodica Duellatorum*, 1, (2013), pp. 106–150, p. 113.

[650] STAM 09555.1-6

[651] Jelle Haemers, 'Ad petitionem burgensium. Petitions and peaceful resistance of craftsmen in Flanders and Mechelen (13th–16th centuries)', in *Los grupos populares en la ciudad medieval Europea*, ed. by Jelle Haemers, Jesus Telechea Solorzano, Béatrice Arizaga Bolumboru(Logrono: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2014), pp. 371–394, p. 381.

inseparable from the political apparatuses of the towns and cities in which they operated.[652] This friction between the guilds and their parent cities is an omnipresent feature of the late medieval period, and is one of the reasons why addressing craft guilds as some idealised whole is an exercise in fruitless abstraction.[653] To this end, the particularities of the visual and architectural features of the Leugemeete should be read as a product of the community that utilised it rather than a definitive and formative manifestation of the totality of said community. The specific craft guilds and confraternities depicted on its walls were much too complex, their shared responsibilities much too intertwined and changing, to be encapsulated—or even faithfully relayed—in a single set of paintings, no matter how detailed and evocative. However, when combined with other primary sources and viewed in the proper historical context, these artistic representations are a vital thread in the tapestry of evidence in which we can see glimpses of the guilds and their communities.

3.3 Iconography

Taken together, De Vigne's early watercolours, the surviving calques produced by Bethune's team, and later published reproductions of both constitute the known visual corpus of evidence for the wall painting design.[654] As careful tracings of the original forms, the calques are the most accurate surviving records. The Ghent STAM Museum holds the collection of

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[652] Arie Van Steensel, 'Guilds and Politics in Medieval Urban Europe: Towards a Comparative Institutional Analysis', in *Craftsmen and Guilds in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, ed. by Eva Jullien, Michel Pauly(Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016), p. 38

[653] Rosser warns such generalised discussions of 'communities' are open to being criticised as "idealised, romanticised, and falsified by historical experience"; that is to say, Rosser argues that it is the shared burden of responsibility that unites these communities, not the physical spaces they find themselves in; Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity in the Middle Ages*, p. 192.

[654] In 1935, Henri Koechlin painted a composite of Bethune's calques at 1/15 scale (currently held in the Stadsarchief), Appendix, QQ.

Bethune's extant calques (two of which are on permanent display). This section will explore the extant guild iconography of the chapel in order to pinpoint the presence and function of its iconographical programme. To that end, it will also take into consideration elements that have until now been viewed as separate to the "secular" nature of the guild iconography; namely the image of the *Christ in Resurrection*, the comital "Family Portrait" of Louis II and his wife and son, the monumental depiction of the chapel's titular saints, and finally the *Tree of Jesse* that shared equal billing with John and Paul on the east wall.

3.3.1 Guild Iconography

Beginning with the vestiges of the figures from the top left corner of the south wall (to the right of the altar), this space marks the head of the procession depicted along the uppermost length of the wall. [655] It begins with the figure of a mounted man sitting atop a horse, the latter angled to face the viewer while the former is turned to address the proceeding men.[656] He holds a crossbow above his head, creating a silhouette that is noticeably larger than any other element of the mural, save for the banners being held aloft by the captains of the militia.[657] Much of the horse—including its head, face, and neck—has been lost.[658] The man is facing a group of militia, armed with bows, swords, pikes, and *goedendags*. They are notable as being the sole group of extant figures wearing neither armour nor helmets, but cloth head coverings and bows. The goedendag is prominently displayed in the foreground of the group;

[655] Gent Bijlokecollectie, Inv. nr. 9555.6-6; Appendix, W.
[656] Similarly to the orientation of one of the horses being ridden by the Magi in the 'Holkham Bible Picture Book' (c. 1327-1335); London, British Library, Additional MS 47682, f. 13v; Appendix, RR.
[657] Their station indicated by their visored helmets and positions slightly to the fore of each assembly.
[658] And is indeed altogether absent from De Vigne's watercolour; this is addressed at length later in this section.

two figures have slung their bows over their shoulders and are wielding the iconic Flemish weapon with both hands. Many faces in the group are disjointed, most likely a product of the tracing. A pair of eyes hover in empty space above the second figure in the group. A small, triangular head—bodiless—similarly floats above a soldier who has been turned completely around.[659] The gaggle of bowmen are undoubtedly the most visually chaotic of the depicted groups. Edges of headwear are missing, fading into the yellowed tracing paper. Not every soldier is facing the mounted man, in a clear break from the lines depicted upon the Oxford Chest which generally tend to be more forward-facing.[660] Behind the group, twelve pikes and *goedendags* protrude. Next is a man, scaled slightly larger than those around him, holding aloft a standard emblazoned with a cross. He wears a coat of ail and a visored helmet, as do the men behind him. A second standard, bearing the same design, is discernible in the background, as are two trumpets. These figures are identified as members of the Brotherhood of St George, due to the presence of the St George's cross on their standard.[661] Fryklund rightly asserts that the representation of military subjects within a sacred context is not unprecedented, and points to the ubiquity of battle scenes and files of armed and mounted knights as evidence.[662] However, the case for the inclusion of the "secular" militia iconography can be pushed even further. By analysing the major extant visual features and the complex iconographical programme they formed constituent parts of, it becomes apparent that the inclusion of

[659] This is the only instance where a rank and file member of the militia is depicted as facing in the reverse direction of the prevailing procession.
[660] With the exception of the monk administering a blessing to the praying soldier in the third section of the frontispiece.
[661] Baldewijns and Watteeuw note that the oldest document in which the guild is mentioned is a city bill from 1314-1315; Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 346.
[662] Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting*, p. 57.

militaristic confraternities such as the Brotherhood of St George is a definitive feature—not an outlier—of the Leugemeete's iconographical programme.[663] After the captain march a contingent of trumpeters, followed by a large group of crossbowmen.[664] They prominently display their crossbows, and all have coats of mail, hauberks, rondels, and swords at their hips. The unorganized ordering of their weapons forces a certain depth of field, and hints at a degree of realism within the visual programme. These are not idealised abstractions of perfect warriors, but depictions of mortal men bound together by civic and religious ceremony. Men who hold their weapons askew, who march in imprecise ranks; yet who collectively represent a whole which is more impressive than the sum of its parts. In her book *Archery and Crossbow Guilds in Medieval Flanders, 1300-1500* Laura Crombie makes full use the iconography of the crossbowmen, writing: "The crossbowmen are in the front, as they should be, given that civic regulations stated that 'no one will stand before the banners of Ghent and Saint George' or of the count on military expeditions".[665] This is especially telling, as it contextualizes the wall paintings as depicting a triumphant militaristic march, with a high degree of fidelity as to how the guild would have actually organized and acted on campaign.

The second half of the calque repeats the motif of a visored soldier bearing aloft a standard, this one emblazoned with five crosses and two shields. Despite the group's heraldry

[663] A later section will analyse the liturgical functions of the chapel, but it must be said that given the evidence of funerals being performed in the space as early as 1324 it stands to reason that the Brotherhood of St. George, a vital component of the urban militia during the outset of the Peasants Revolt, be featured—and featured so prominently; Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, pp. 4–6.
[664] Appendix, W.
[665] Laura Crombie, *Archery and Crossbow Guilds in Medieval Flanders, 1300-1500* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), p. 39.

having survived fully intact, the identity of the group is uncertain.[666] The next calque (09555.4-6) completes the rank and file of shielded soldiers, though most of their faces have been lost.[667] There is again a break in the line which is preceded by a visored soldier carrying a standard. The details of the much lower half of the calque, as well as the standard, have not been recorded, though De Vigne places them as the Butcher's guild due to the marked chevrons on their tabards.[668] This could potentially explain the presence of the two large, single-bladed axes prominently displayed amongst the rows of spears and goedendags. This group also marks the beginning of the contingent of craft guilds participating in the procession, and fifteenth-century accounts from Leuven place the Butchers' guild as marching ahead of its peers, behind only the metalworkers, kettle-makers, masons, and carpenters—none of which feature in the extant visual programme of the Leugemeete.[669] The presence of a falchion, the first of two depicted in the visual programme (the second being in the rear ranks of the Fishmongers' guild), makes this anonymous group the most diversely-armed contingent of the entire militia. This could potentially indicate the presence of more wealthy burghers in its midst—its members having both the ability and authority to wield more personalised armaments.[670]

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[666] De Vigne thought it was a representation of the Brotherhood of St. Sebastian, but as Baldewijns and Watteeuw astutely point out, they would have been almost certainly accompanied by their trademark crossbows (as a shooting guild), and more importantly would have been marked by a different set of heraldry altogether; Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 246.
[667] Appendix, Y.
[668] Félix De Vigne, *Recherches Historiques sur Les Costumes Civils et Militaires des Gildes et des Corporations de Métiers, leurs Drapeaux, leurs Armes, leurs Brasons, etc.* (Rue des Peignes: Gyselynck, 1847), Plate 21.
[669] Haemers, "Artisans and Craft Guilds in the Medieval City", p. 113.
[670] Noah Smith, "The Arms & Armour of the Guilds in the Leugemeete Chapel: A Case of Individual Taste?", *Martial Culture in Medieval Town*, 31/12/2020, https://martcult.hypotheses.org/1169.

Continuing to the right (09555.5-6), the preceding line is completed, with the addition of another axe as well as a prominently featured falchion.[671] The motif again repeats itself, with the established pattern of standard bearer, trumpeter, and staggered ranks of militia—with several falchions present among the usual background of pikes and *goedendags*. De Vigne identifies them as the Fishmongers' guild, or *Poissonniers*, and noted their superlative condition, writing: "Le Drapeau des Poissoniers est parfaitment conserve. Il est rouge au poisson blanc. Les Poissonniers, armés come les autres, ont leur cotte d'armes ornée de bandes rouges et blanches, placées obliquement. Un éclairon marche à leur tete".[672] His description of a "white fish over red background" is one of the few descriptions of polychromy, and is incredibly useful given how faded the calques produced by Bethune's team have become over the last one hundred and sixty years.

The next section (09555.2-6), and the last of the extant guild iconography on the south wall, shows a comparatively smaller group of militia, marching under a banner of crossed paddles.[673] Only a single shield survives within the image. These can be identified as either the Bakers' guild or the Brewers' guild: the former due to the association and display of the baking paddles on their coat of arms not only in Ghent but throughout the Low Countries was put forward by De Vigne and accepted by Fryklund, the latter interpreted by Werveke, Baldewijns, and Watteeuw.[674] The *calque* ends with another standard bearer beginning the next—now

[671] Appendix, Z.
[672] De Vigne, *Recherches Historiques,* p. 33.
[673] Appendix, AA.
[674] De Vigne, *Recherches Historiques,* Plate 8; Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 347; Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting*, p. 57.

lost—section. This is most likely the Brewer's Guild.[675] The last section is the sole piece of guild iconography extant on the north wall (09555.1-6), and as such is facing to the right (as the militia is marching in the direction of the altar).[676] De Vigne places them as the Textile Cutter's Guild, due to the large shears on the standard.[677] The singular large shear can be easily differentiated from the shears of the *Sceppere* Guild.[678] The image is that of the gathered-militia motif, preceded by a trio of trumpeters and a helmeted standard bearer. Some soldiers appear to be wielding what are either spears with pennants or stylized halberds.

Several common motifs emerge in these murals. The presence of standard bearers, trumpeters, and militia clearly separates the present guilds into easily discernible group. This is notable, as the only other extant iconography of any similarity in this period is ostensibly the Oxford Chest.[679] Even then, the representation on the chest is nowhere as ordered or detailed as those on the murals. This should be contextualized by the fact that the depiction on the chest is severely limited by both physical space and an emphasis on a more complex overarching narrative, whereas the Leugemeete paintings put the guilds centre stage. Similarly, each guild is depicted as carrying a varied and personalized set of weapons. The Brotherhood of St George is the most obvious, with the emphasis clearly placed on their crossbows and aforementioned position at the head of the column. The following group is presented as solely using *goedendags* and pikes, but the other craft guilds further down the line incorporate more varied weaponry. The Butchers' have several axes, a falchion, and a halberd, with the

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[675] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 347.
[676] Appendix, BB.
[677] De Vigne, *Recherches Historiques*, Plate 13.
[678] De Vigne, *Recherches Historiques*, Plate 9.
[679] As it pertains to the Flemish guilds, or depictions of guilds in general.

Fishmongers' having two falchions present. This reflects the varied nature of the militia's weaponry, though it is unlikely to be truly representative. Given the nature of the militia's tactics—a strong pike line with a second row of *goedendags* and smaller weapons to dismount and finish their enemies—the prominence of the pike is accurate.[680] This also raises the question of personalization within the figural representations of the militia. It is impossible to identify specific individuals, so we are left with at best an abstraction of the way that the guilds saw themselves, or at the very least as to how they wanted to be seen. That each guild bears its own uniform and banner—features also present on the chest—speaks to the fact that one of the primary functions of the visual programme is to depict specific guilds as distinct parts of a unified whole.

There have been several interpretations given as to what specific historic event, or historical personages—the militia paintings could be evoking. Carina Fryklund assembles these in her book *Late Gothic Wall Paintings in the Southern Netherlands*, and addresses two core possibilities: that the paintings are a representation of the yearly procession of the Ghent militia at Lent, or that they could have been commissioned to commemorate a specific successful military campaign.[681] The former is the most innocuous hypothesis; the later a complicated assembly of historical what-ifs. Van Werveke was a proponent of the idea that the images refer to a specific event; in his mind an oath being fulfilled at the end of a particular undertaking, though pinning down a *specific* event seems to come down to how one decides on

[680] Verbruggen describes the array of the Flemish militias in 1302 as comprised of "a sturdy goedendag, a long pike, a hooked spear, a sword and a small shield or even a falchion with a very wide blade sharp pointed end." All of these weapons are present among the militia depicted in the Leugemeete; Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, p. 226.
[681] Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting*, p. 57.

identifying the lead figure atop the horse in 09555.6-6.[682] If he is Boudewijn Wenemaer, then the gathered assembly depicts the White Caproans, a “very feared militia employed by the city council, who all too often went beyond their powers” that was particularly active between 1334 and 1347.[683] If, as Fryklund hints at, it is Willem Wenemaer, captain of the Ghent militia and a heroic casualty of the battle of Rekelingsbrugge (21 July 1325), then the entire gathered ensemble would seem to revolve around the participation in the subjugation of Peasant’s Revolt on the behest of Louis II.[684] Wenemaer’s presence at the head of the procession is supported by the previously discussed 1324 provisions allowing the performance of funerary services at chapel which, along with his prior activity in supporting the almshouse of *St Lauren’s*, paints the picture of the leader of the militia creating space for his men to be supported and remembered as the Peasants Revolt continued to ramp up.[685] This period of activity would be cut short by his death on 21 July, 1325. At any point during this time, and even more so after his death, the murals could have been commissioned either by or (given his death in 1325) on the behalf of Wenemaer.

All of these dating attempts view the militia iconography independently of the rest of the chapel’s visual programme and function as an almshouse. As has already been established in the historical context, the singular defining social phenomenon between 1316 and 1334 would have been the Peasant’s Revolt. Likewise, the emphasis the chapel’s visual programme

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[682] A. van Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint Jan en Sint Pauwel te Gent, bijgenaamd de Leugemeete; De Kapel en haar muurschilderingen van c. 1346* (Ghent: , 1909), p. 151.
[683] Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint Jan en Sint Pauwel te Gent,* pp. 139-141; Baldewijns and Watteeuw, “Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete”, p. 345.
[684] Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting*, p. 57.
[685] See: Augustijn D'Huygelaere, *Willem Wenemaer of De Gentsche held, offer zijner vaderlandsliefde; historisch tafereel, 1325* (Gent: Vanderhaeghen-Hulin, 1828-1850).

places on the relationship between the count and the militia, as well as religious elements that will be subsequently addressed (the Jesse Tree directly above the comital family, the constant emphasis on micro-architecture, the juxtaposition between the Christ in Resurrection and the orientation of the militiamen in regards to the altar) conforms to expectations of the later theory.

It must be pointed out that the presence of the mounted individual is the single greatest divergence between the watercolours of De Vigne and the calques produced by Bethune and his team. Both De Vigne's original sketch and the published plate, preserved in the archives of Ghent University, have several major iconographical departures from the visual programme as captured by Bethune.[686] The horse is entirely absent in De Vigne's version; the unique hat a simple helmet. The soldier with the raise crossbow is much lower to the next closest man, their gaze more or less on level with one another. The comparison also highlights the degree of chaos and uncertainty in Bethune's calque; a large void in the middle of the throng of soldiers filled with floating heads and wayward faces. The weapons of the rank and file change as well, from an assortment of crossbows in De Vigne's sketch, which match that held aloft by the foremost marcher, to a forest of bows. A direct comparison between the two versions shows that the silhouettes of helmets and crossbow arms are directly transformed into cloth head caps and curved bows—the only constant being three heads and the forest of spears and goedendags in the background. There are three possible explanations as to the disparity between the composition of the two images. Firstly, De Vigne could have amended his version

[686] Appendix, JJ and KK, as compared to Bethune's calque (Appendix, W).

to fit the composition of the plates he would eventually go on to publish. This would account for the drastic reimagining of the foremost soldier. However, this is challenged by the fact that throughout the rest of his watercolours De Vigne happily changes the scale and orientation of his images to accommodate all manner of visual elements that do not fit neatly in the immediate frame of his paintings; from large standards to the occasional trumpet.[687] In his plates, he even goes so far as to pick out individual figures and faces that he finds particularly interesting, interrogating them on an entirely different scale.[688] The calques produced by Bethune, which are inarguably the more exact of the two sources being discussed (its "exactitude" as it relates to this visual divergence will be discussed imminently), demonstrate that—in the 1860 version at least—both the mounted soldier and the standard are on the same plane, meaning both would have fit within De Vigne's frame. Another small point here would be that for De Vigne to so drastically amend such a visually interesting facet of the first series of guild iconography from his publication that was entirely concerned with historical costumes would be somewhat self-defeating. If anything, inventing a chapeau-ed, mounted figure at the head of the procession would have been grossly to his benefit.

This leads to the second possible explanation for the difference between the two sets of images: artistic invention. Nearly two decades separate the competing visual records of De Vigne and Bethune. During this time, the building was still privately owned and being as storage for the adjacent brewery.[689] It is possible that alterations were made to the wall paintings, unbeknownst to De Vigne or otherwise; the impetus for these changes could be manifold, from

[687] Appendix, LL.
[688] Appendix, LL.
[689] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 341.

simple acts of restoration to a more concerted effort at increasing their perceived cultural value in the tenuous period between their initial emergence and the eventual careful study requisitioned by the Ghent Archaeological Society. The only evidence to suggest that anyone "touched them up" to any degree exists solely in the discussed differences between the visual records of the Leugemeete circa 1846 and 1860, but it does bear some small degree of consideration. The ongoing debate as to their authenticity was chiefly concerned with zero-sum conceptions of fakery; not degrees of subtle reimaging and diligent upkeep. To that end, some small degree of intervention between 1846 and 1860 is to almost be expected given the dilapidated state of the brewery store room in which they were discovered. The final consideration explaining the changes between De Vigne's watercolours and the calques produced by Bethune's team is one of further discovery post-1846. The degree to which De Vigne stripped the whitewash from the first raft of the wall paintings is uncertain, and it is possible that Bethune's team uncovered the horse and cloth hats beneath layers of paint that had not yet been removed. This would not, however, account for the drastic compositional change between the two pieces (where the figure of the mounted man is concerned).

Whether or not the individual atop the horse depicts either Willem Wenemaer or Boudewijn Wenemaer is ancillary to the fact that the mere presence of the guild iconography in concert with the rest of the chapel's visual programme, in accordance with the known dates of the building's use and function in this period, strongly indicates that the artistic imperative is one of affirmation and commemoration in the wake of military participation on behalf of the count. This is further reinforced by the introduction of funeral services on the premises circa

1324, which as has previously been mentioned coincide perfectly with the earliest participation of the militia in combating the nascent Peasant Revolt.[690]

3.3.2 Christ in Resurrection

Originally located on the northern wall of the chapel, on the second tier of decoration to the left of said wall's door, a large painting of the *Resurrection* dominated the space between two of the building's large windows.[691] This position would have framed the painting in light: due to its placement on the north wall, the light would have been the most consistent throughout the day. The iconography is typical of the medieval west; Christ is seen emerging from a sepulchre, holding a crucifix-topped staff in his left hand and blessing the viewer with his right.[692] Below him, three soldiers are arranged in different states of sleep, with the one on the right gazing upward. To the left of Christ, an angel hovers. While a significant portion of the image has been traced to calque, there is a void to the left of Christ and below the angel. This snapshot of the Resurrection, occurring in a highly symbolic yet brief moment after the stone has been removed from the tomb, is typical of thirteenth and early fourteenth-century Resurrections in France and the Low Countries in nearly all respects; the main divergence being that the sepulchre is in an interior space rather than outside.[693] This reorientation allowed the artist to introduce a complex micro-architectural framework that serves to both contain the scene of the Resurrection while incorporating the painting into the architectural schema of the

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[690] Béthune and Werveke, *Het godshuis van Sint-Jan & Sint-Pauwel te Gent*, pp. 4–6.
[691] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 359; Appendix, CC.
[692] Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting*, p. 49.
[693] Emile Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. by Dora Nussey, 2nd edn (New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 194.

chapel itself.[694] The tiled canopy is reminiscent of the exterior façade of the building, while its turrets would have been equally similar to those flanking the Leugemeete in its medieval incarnation. They are also similar, stylistically, to the bombastic micro-architectural baldachin's that frame Saint John and Saint Paul.[695]

The inclusion of the Resurrection within the iconographical programme of the Leugemeete has a knock-on effect of contextualizing other elements that, when viewed as a consummate whole, create a complex epistemological narrative. Namely, the "Marian" Tree of Jesse on the east wall and the monumental paintings of the chapel's titular saints, John and Paul, all bear heavy symbolic import when viewed in relation to each other. To quote David R. Cartlidge and J. Keith Elliott in their book *Art & The Christian Apocrypha*: "John the Evangelist is very closely associated with the Virgin Mary. In this case, there is a canonical impetus to the stories in which John cares for the Virgin after the crucifixion of her son (John 19:25-7—under the hypothesis that the 'beloved disciple' is John the Evangelist). In the iconic and rhetorical versions of the Virgin's life after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, she stays with John."[696] It is by this metric that these three extant features—the Resurrection, Marian Tree, and eponymous emphasis on John the Evangelist—stand as a convincing indication as to the function of the chapel at the time of the paintings' commission; a charity and hospital specifically catering to widows and, by extension, widows of men who died in defence of the city. What scant documentary evidence exists from the early fourteenth century indicates that the chapel was

[694] Compared to exterior Resurrections, such as that found on the polyptych of the Madonna and Child in the Ducal Palalc, Urbino: Appendix, DD.
[695] Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting*, p. 48.
[696] David R. Cartlidge, J. Keith Elliott, *Art And The Christian Apocrypha* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 207.

ostensibly a charity for women circa 1316, as has been pointed out by Baldewijns and Watteeuw, but only is so far as to suggest the circumstances of its inception.[697] The extant iconographical programme from the 1330s/40s strongly indicates that it not only maintained this function throughout the first half of the century, but was emboldened in said efforts by the patronage of the guilds—with a very specific civic and militaristic embellishment.

3.3.3 The Family Portrait

Located on the east wall, directly underneath the Tree of Jesse, was an image of Count Louis I of Flanders, his son Louis II, and his wife, Margaret I, Countess of Burgundy. All three figures are kneeling, their hands clasped in prayer. There is a void in the calque between Margaret and her husband and son in the shape of a large square with an angular protrusion at the base; this could possibly be an altar. All three individuals are covered in their respective heraldry. The armour of Louis I and his son is covered in the rampant lion of Flanders, on a gold background. Margaret's dress is dotted with heraldic embellishments, split between the lion of Flanders and her own cross-hatched crest. Stylistically, the armour of Louis and his son bear similarities to the chain coifs and articulated elbows of the militia above. Louis II was born in 1330, and Louis died at Crécy in 1346. Fryklund dates them to c. 1338/46 on the basis of their stylistic similarity to the 'portraits' of the Counts in the Gravenkapel.[698] However, inculcate in the significant adaptations underwent, especially in the period of 1614-1616 (during which time a beamed wooden ceiling was installed and the southern arcades were bricked up), there exists records of a painter—Lukas Floquet—being paid for illuminating the 'counts of Flanders' and

[697] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 340.
[698] Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting,* p. 49.

for other paintwork.[699] While the specifics of this work are not mentioned, it does speak to a history of further artistic intervention throughout the chapel's life—not to mention numerous whitewashing efforts.[700] Fryklund's analysis seems somewhat disjointed as she also infers that the extant wall paintings appear to be cotemporaneous with each other, while astutely offering dates of the more "Parisian" *Resurrection* and *Adoration* scenes.[701] While much detail has been lost in the tracing, the difference in facial features between Louis I and II, namely how small Louis II's head is and how soft his features are, indicate that the artist could have originally been indicating the youth of the later and the seniority of the former. The sixteen-year window during which this family portrait could have been reflective of the actual lives of its subjects is further muddled by questions of aspiration. The symbolic representation of the count and his son garbed for war and draped in the heraldry of Flanders indicates a level of heightened intent; the two men are readying for war, surrounded by the civic militia which will (ostensibly) accompany them into battle. This image then, being an idealized version of the comital family—like the above lines of guildsmen are an idealized version of civic defense—is likely more concerned with depicting Louis II not as a young boy, but as a powerful young man in the image of his equally capable father. It is therefore impossible to ascribe this a reliable date within that sixteen-year window, as one would justifiably argue that the Louis II being depicted is as much the aspirational embodiment of a young count-apparent as he is an actual teenager. Whether six or sixteen, this artistic rendering is concerned chiefly with representing the boy's role within his family and, by extension, Flemish politics at large. This projection is best articulated by

[699] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 341.
[700] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 341.
[701] Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting*, p. 49.

Maurice Halbwachs, who notably first came to define the concept of collective memory. He assigns familial memory a unique position both in its essential construction and the utility of its role as a signifier both within the family-group and to outsiders, writing: "Similarly, in the most traditional societies of today, each family has its proper mentality, its memories which it alone commemorates, and its secrets that are revealed only to its members. But these memories, as in the religious traditions of the family of antiquity, consist not only of a series of individual images of the past. They are at the same time models, examples, and elements of teaching. They express the general attitude of the group; they not only reproduce its history but also define its nature and its qualities and weaknesses."[702] In this case, the general attitude of the comital family is one of noble patronage and familial closeness. Its nature, piety and fealty. Its qualities, unity and steadfastness. The image of the kneeling family serves to pull the viewer into that quiet, private moment of piety that, by the very nature of its monumental rendering, is itself rendered performative.

3.3.4 Eponymous Saints

Located on the east wall of the chapel, the monumental wall painting of the Leugemeete's titular saints, John the Evangelist and Paul, sat opposite the Tree of Jesse.[703] Similarly to the Tree, the painting occupies the majority of the wall's space and constitutes one of the largest paintings in the chapel.[704]Though only a fragment of the Bethune calque remains, a copy was produced by A. Bressers that currently resides in the Stadsarchief in Ghent and

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[702] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Cooper (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 59.
[703] Appendix, EE.
[704] Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting,* p. 47.

captures the full breadth of the baldachin as hinted at by Van Assche's architectural renderings.[705] The most striking feature of the mural is the massive microarchitectural canopy that dominates the space. It takes the share of two dual baldachins, each framing a respective saint (Saint John on the left, holding a chalice and blessing the viewer, Saint Paul on the right, bearing a sheathed sword resting against his neck in his left hand and a closed book in the right). Each baldachin consists of three architectural tiers. The bottom is a large bay that houses the saints—garbed in long flowing robes, the exaggerated folds of which seem to echo those of the cloth drapery featured in the *Resurrection*. This space features three pillars, each topped with gothic fleurettes. The arrangement of the vertical posturing of the saints in conjunction with the slender vertically of the pillars hints at a certain visual pun; that is, that the saints are the pillars of the building in which they're situated.

The second tier consists of two elaborate gothic canopies framed against a backdrop of ashlar brickwork and intercut with a series of slender gothic windows. The triangular canopies each contain a trio of trefoils on the interior space, as well as gothic tracery along the bottom which then turns into a series of nine gothic trefoils on each side. An element of perspective is introduced on this tier, as the central column of the painting—consisting of the base pillar and the rectangular windowed-space that continues all the way up the length of the microarchitecture—protrudes in front of the bottom-most fleurette on either side. This creates the illusion that the gothic canopies are inset into the building itself, and is featured on both the Béthune calque and the Bressers watercolor. The technique is also present in the *Resurrection*

[705] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", p. 350; See the Bressers watercolour, Appendix, FF.

wall painting (where the two columns overlap the edges of the gothic arch). The two paintings also share—apart from the previously mentioned drapery—similarities in their gothic decoration: most notably the gothic fleurets, the pronounced gothic arch, and the trefoil-and-globe decoration that tops the aforementioned arch. Similarly to the *John and Paul* mural, the microarchitecture of the *Resurrection* is likewise split into three distinct sections.

The third tier consists of four sets of flying buttresses, each connecting a central tower to two smaller exterior turrets. The two central towers are themselves topped by pairs of additional turrets, each featuring a gilded pennant. In the middle of each tower sits a bird—the arched necks of the pair turned inward to regard themselves and the interior of the building. The saints are similarly faced inwards; both "into" the building, but also as a matter symmetry. They are depicted as standing atop the gothic baldachins of the second tier, yet are accommodated by gothic trefoils in the background of the third tier. Each are flanked in turn by another set of inset trefoils. Seemingly innocuous at first glance, these birds are in fact depictions of *caladrius*—mythical birds that were said to cure illness and plague with a glance.[706] The pair bear heavy iconographical similarity to depictions of the bird in contemporary art, such as the Harley Manuscript.[707] The presence of these specific birds inset on this microarchitectural façade is particularly telling; they are looking inward, suggesting that they are channelling their restorative powers into the interior of the building. They are also situated directly above the patron saints of the chapel, creating a strong iconological link between the two. Finally, given the fact that the Leugemeete was itself a hospital and

[706] Jacques Schnier, 'The Symbolic Bird in Medieval and Renaissance Art', *American Imago; a Psychoanalytic Journal for the Arts and Sciences*, 9.2, (1952), pp. 89–117, p. 93.
[707] Appendix, GG.

almshouse, the symbolic connotation of these divine birds on the exterior of the gothic baldachin insinuates that the building in which John and Paul and standing is itself the Leugemeete—or at the very least a visual metaphor for what the Leugemeete was in the mind of the artist. This is further evidenced by the visual pun of the saints being presented as the "foundation" of the building, as well as the architectural similarities between the tripartite representation of the microarchitectural façade and the tripartite construction and interior decoration of the Leugemeete's physical space.

3.3.5 The Three Figures

Referred to solely in descriptions of the chapel as "three figures" and, somewhat disjointedly, simultaneously as a "Adoration of the Magi (?)", this mural does technically consist of three kneeling figures, but contains only two men.[708] In this space three fairly intact kneeling figures are face westward. All are robed; the first in the procession (furthest to the right) in what appears to be some fine, lined material. All three wear crowns, their heads encircled by halos. The first figure, his bright red beard one of the more dramatic traces of polychromy present on the calques, gestures upward with both his hands, his finger cupped as though cradling an offering which is no longer extant. The second figure, bearded in a much less dramatic fashion, clasps his hands together in prayer, his gaze cast forward. The third figure is a woman, her head covered in a cascading wimple, upon which a crown is set. In her right hand she holds an ornately decorated chalice, atop which can be seen an assortment of small, crumb-like offerings. Her left hand is stretched outward, in the direction of the blind archway.

[708] Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting*, p. 49.

The placement of these three figures upon the south wall of the Leugemeete is more instructive as to their identity than what a cursory glance at their amazing expressive faces might first suggest. From east to west, they followed first by two more kneeling figures, they're likenesses nearly entirely lost, and then finally by an image of the *Virgin and Child Enthroned*.[709] This orientation reflects that of the very popular medieval visual motif of the Adoration of the Magi: three kneeling kings turned to face an image of the Virgin, enthroned in a microarchitectural nice and cradling a seated Christ child upon her lap. One contemporary parallel is from a series of extant fourteenth-century wall paintings in Edstaston, in Shropshire, which similarly features the front-most magi holding a large chalice.[710] We are then presented with a problem in the form of a question. If the Leugemeete's *Three Figures* are actually a depiction of the *Adoration of the Magi*, how does one account for the presence of the wimpled-woman with the cradled chalice and outstretched hand?

3.4 Authenticity

Soon after their rediscovery, suspicion arose about the authenticity of these wall paintings. J. Van Malderghem challenged the date in a publication entitled "La verité sur le Goedendag" in 1895.[711] He based his scepticism on the presence of the infamous *goedendag*, which, in a criticism that echoes similarly early criticism of the Oxford Chest, stems from a lack of scholarly consensus as to what exactly a *goedendag* looked like. Malderghem wrote that he was unconvinced that the depictions of the iron-tipped club were truly representative of

[709] Appendix, II.
[710] Anne Marshall, *Medieval Wall Painting in the English Parish Church* (2018) <https://reeddesign.co.uk/paintedchurch/edstaston-magi.htm> [accessed 8 March 2021]
[711] Jean Van Malderghem, *La vérité sur le "Goedendag"* (Brussels: Alfred Vromant, 1895).

goedendags as they appeared too “mundane” and were therefore historically inaccurate.[712] This was part his broader project to establish a typology of “standard” communal weaponry. The specialized nature of the goedendag fell outside his definition “communal weaponry”, automatically putting him at odds with those who accepted the presence of the weapon as standard-issue among the militias. In response to the attack on the frescos’ authenticity, the Ghent History and Archeological Society convened and published a general assembly report in 1899 which testified to the veracity of De Vigne’s findings.[713][714] The Society took issue with Malderghem’s typology, writing: “Pourquoi M. Van Malderghem, qui précise sa nouvelle invention par la création de l'heureux néologisme décalibré, est-il s discret sur ce qu'il faut entendre par le calibre normal de l'arme populaire des communiers, étudicée par lui si minitieuseent? Pourquoi nous céler les autorités qui lui permettent de trouver tant de choses, dans un mot évidemment n d'une erreur de copiste, sur laquelle est venue se greffer l'interprétation fautive d'un commentateur? ”[715] While the Society merely sought to achieve a consensus among local historians of the painting’s authenticity, H. Van Duyse, president of the Society, pre-empted this report by publishing a pamphlet in 1897 entitled *Les fresques de la Leugemeete sont-elles un faux?*, in which he aggregated contemporary analysis of individual aspects of the frescos and used the surfeit of scholarly consensus to address Van Malderghem’s

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[712] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, “Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete”, p. 334.
[713] Vanden Gheyn, 'Les fresques de la Leugemeete, Rapport sur leur authenticité par le Chanoire Vanden Gheyn, Secrétaire de la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Gand; extrait des bulletins, 6eme année', *La Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Gand; extrait des bulletins* (1899).
[714] This annual report also outlines how much the Society was spending on work at the Leugemeete; in 1899 they listed 24.0 francs for “Travaux à l’ancienne chapelle dite de la Leugemeete”; Vanden Gheyn, “Les fresques de la Leugemeete”, p. 79.
[715] Van Gheyn, “Les fresques de la Leugemeete”, p. 104.

skepticism.[716] He specifically focused on archaeological and iconographical evidence to support his argument that the individual details of the art were too authentic to seriously entertain any sustained doubt as to its verisimilitude. The first consisted of a concise breakdown of the chapel's history (the previously mentioned foundational charter, installation of a priest in 1334, etc.); this chronology was further supported by Werveke and is one of the pillars of Baldewijns and Watteeuw's 2006. In addition to what has already been summarized regarding the founding of the chapel in the form it would have taken during the painting of the frescoes (as a charity, under one saint originally, later falling under the jurisdiction of Ekkergem), Van Duyse catalogues the many restorations and changes made to the building's interior, using archival and archaeological references to surmise that it had been whitewashed several times. The specific dates he gives (referring to the research done prior by Van Werweke) are: preliminary whitewashing in 1537-38, then again in 1614, 1637-40, 1659, 1702, 1703-10, 1727, 1736-39.[717] He then combines this data with original iconographical analysis published by De Vigne in 1847—which was endorsed by the Ghent History and Archeological Society prior to the publishing of Van Duyse's article—in order to demonstrate that not only do the paintings bear the aesthetic qualities of fourteenth-century wall paintings but they could not possibly been painted any time between the late fourteenth century and the late eighteenth, due the presence of the whitewashing. He also argued that the paintings were so well done, their fame so immediate, that any forger capable of making them would have come forward (one suspects to capitalize on the monetary implications, though Van Duyse does not specify). Similarly, no

[716] H. Van Duyse, *Les fresques de la Leugemeete sont-elles un faux?* (Ghent: la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Gand, 1897).
[717] Van Duyse, *Les fresques de la Leugemeete sont-elles un faux?,* p. 4.

single forger or huckster could have undertaken the project alone: he paints were well over four meters off the ground, so much so that they would have required a team of painters and considerable scaffolding—as well as time—to realize.[718] Finally, he ends by saying that the state of the frescoes upon their discovery; their dilapidation, degradation, and general presence of considerable lost space, further suggested that they were not a work of forgery. A prominent example of this being the significant areas where Bethune and company were unable to recover any detail whatsoever.

In 1898, and in testament to how seriously Ghentois historians and archaeologists were taking the claims of fakery, J. de Raadt published a pamphlet in Brussels entitled *Les fresques de la Leugemeete (Révélations d'un archéologue gantois) et Le Catalogue de la Porte de Hal* whereby he expanded the analysis of the paintings to also include the other extant iconography within the chapel.[719] He noted that the Tree of Jesse was stylistically similar to other examples of medieval iconography, though he does not go into considerable detail, and identified parts of the stories from the Apostle John the Evangelist.[720] Both are critical in establishing the authenticity of the paintings, with the latter further reinforced by the archival evidence surrounding the chapel's founding. He also took steps to synthesize the presence of the guilds within a religious space—one of Van Maldeghem's key skepticisms. De Raadt did this by establishing that the images of the guilds were not imposed upon a pre-existing iconographical programme, but rather that the scheme of the entire interior was created with the militia in

[718] Van Duyse, *Les fresques de la Leugemeete sont-elles un faux?*, p. 16.
[719] J.-TH De Raadt, *Les fresques de la Leugemeete (Révélations d'un archéologue gantois) et Le Catalogue de la Porte de Hal*, ed. by Constant Baune (Brussels: , 1898).
[720] De Raadt, *Les fresques de la Leugemeete,* pp .505–506.

mind. The militia all march in the direction of the altar, above which was painted Christ in Resurrection with “séjour” and cross in hand.[721] Van Maldeghem’s reductive view that one can clearly distinguish between “secular” guild imagery and a “religious” space is rendered suspect as not only does he fail to specify exactly what is meant by “secular art”, but the presence of the guild imagery in a chapel which they patronized speaks to a level of comfortably with blending these two atheistic iconographical details. De Raadt’s observations that the decorative programme of the chapel was designed with the guilds in mind—evidenced by the explicit depiction of the guilds themselves—lays plain the notion that matters of civic pride and communal identity were compatible within an ideological landscape that also features what we would consider to be more ubiquitous medieval imagery (the Tree of Jesse, Christ in Resurrection, etc.).

Even though Van Maldeghem’s arguments were immediately and vigorously opposed by the aforementioned local and national experts, and convingly rebuked by the likes of Van Werweke, Van Duyse, and De Raadt, doubt remained in the form of R.H. Marijnissen and R. Didier’s respective criticism of the Oxford Chest’s authenticity. R. Didier inferred that the wall paintings were eighteenth-century forgeries predicated upon Van Maldeghem’s arguments of the iconography of the *goedendag* (which also features heavily upon the chest’s frontispiece).[722] As has already been demonstrated, the iconography of the wall paintings are decidedly fourteenth-century in both style and content, thereby making any comparisons to the Oxford Chest complementary in nature, rather than dismissive. Ian Tyers and Brian Gilmour

[721] De Raadt, *Les fresques de la Leugemeete*, p. 506.
[722] R. Didier, ‘Sculptures, style et faux’, in *Festchrift fur Peter Bloch*, ed. by H. Krohm and C. Theuerkauff (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1990).

make good use of this in their 1997 paper entitled, "Courtrai Chest: Relic or Recent?" Reassessment and Further Work: An Interim Report".[723] They draw art historical comparisons between certain sections of armour displayed in both the frontispiece and the wall paintings (namely the shoulder ailettes), and draw a chronological line between the early fourteenth style depicted upon the chest and the later development within the frescoes.[724] While this reinforces two narratives, that the chest is a product of the turn of the fourteenth century and the paintings' anterior dating of 1336 as proposed by Van Werweke, it does not rule out a later carving for the chest or an earlier creation of the frescoes. While the armour on the chest does predate the development of more stylized ailettes by several decades, it is entirely possible that this was either a cognizant choice on the part of the designer or simply a coincidence. There was no metric of standardization to ensure that modes of fashion and armour were phased out with any kind of consistency, and while it might be a stretch to assume that the chest—if carved significantly after the events which it depicts—is intentionally evoking an earlier mode of dress, it can be assumed with some surety that both forms of dress overlapped considerably, and would thus share a similarly broad chronological and iconographical overlap.

3.5 The Leugemeete as Guild Space: For Charity and Memory

Before unpacking the particular social and civic aspects of the Leugemeete, it is important to establish a useful methodological framework for such an inquiry. It must be stated that the physical (i.e. visual, architectural) components of medieval aesthetics under review in

[723] Brian Gilmour and Ian Tyers, 'Courtrai Chest: Relic or Recent: Reassessment and Further Work: An Interim Report', in Papers of the "Medieval Europe Brugge 1997" Conference. Vol 5: *Art and Symbolism in Medieval Europe. Bruges*, 1997, pp. 17–26.
[724] Gilmour and Tyers, "Courtrai Chest: Relic or Recent ", p. 19.

this chapter are merely the products of a process of production, and that the individuals and communities producing said visual and spatial programmes are the real subjects being studied.[725] Henri Lefebvre, who laid much of the philosophical groundwork for articulating the relationship between spaces and the people who shape them, describes the process of "production" as:

> From the start of an activity so oriented towards an objective, spatial elements—the body, limbs, eyes—are mobilized, including both *materials* (stone, wood, bone, leather, etc.) and *matériel* (tools, arms, language, instructions and agendas). Relations based on an order to be followed—that is to say, on simultaneity and synchronicity—are thus set up, by means of intellectual activity, between the component elements of the action undertaken on the physical plane. All productive activity is defined less by invariable or constant factors than by the incessant to-and-fro between temporality (succession, concatenation) and spatiality (simultaneity, synchronicity).[726]

This specific definition of production is useful as it places an emphasis on the process of "production" as being one of both physical and temporal consequence. When we interrogate the visual programme of the Leugemeete, or remark on the particularised implications of its physical layout or position in the larger layout of the city, we are observing the end product. It is possible, then, to consider all the respective elements present in its production, and in so

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[725] "Aesthetics" in this instance referring to artistic techniques and visual motifs. See: Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, *History of Aesthetics, Vol 2, Medieval Aesthetics*, trans. by R. M. Montgomery (The Hague, Paris: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1970), p. 76.

[726] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), p. 71.

doing gain insight into the goals, aspirations, and identity of the community which produced it. The fluid process that produced the physical qualities of the Leugemeete was as inconstant, impermanent, and volatile as the process that created the city around it.[727] This section will explore the relationship between the Leugemeete and the militia who endorsed it circa 1324, with the aim of defining and developing an idea of 'guild space' that synthesises notions of identity, patronage, and communal obligation in fourteenth-century Flanders. This will entail examining how the chapel's visual programme reflected the aims and desires of the confraternities who commissioned it.

3.5.1 The Leugemeete as Hospital

Charity was a cornerstone of public life in the late medieval period, and the social framework constructed around acts of giving, caretaking, and stewardship is party to a robust historiography.[728] As previously discussed, the Leugemeete originally functioned as an almshouse and hospital dedicated to Saint John and was operating as early as 1316. The later patronage of guilds in 1324 and then ostensibly again in 1334 both revitalized and reimagined the space, paying for new administration and commissioning the wall paintings (which so prominently display the aforementioned craft guilds).[729] Aside from the practical transformation associated with an influx of capital, there is, intrinsic to this 'co-option' of space,

[727] Albrecht Classen, 'Urban Spaces in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age: Historical, Mental, Cultural, and Socio-Economic Investigations', in *Urban Spaces in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. by Albrecht Classen(Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), p. 13

[728] See: James William Brodman, *Charity & Religion in Medieval Europe* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009); Ben R. McRee, 'Charity and Gild Solidarity in Late Medieval England', *Journal of British Studies*, 32.3, (1993), pp. 195–225; Mark R. Cohen, 'Poverty and Charity in past Times', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 35.3, (2005), pp. 347–360.

[729] Vanden Gheyn, *Les fresques de la Leugemeete sont-elles un faux?,* p. 19.

an intersection of gender and communal obligation.[730] There is no evidence to suggest that the implicit function of the building changed after its rehabilitation by the guilds, which means that the militia was explicitly supporting the quotidian functioning of the almshouse and its hospital. This implication is compounded by how visible the links were between the confraternities, craft guilds, and the chapel, and can serve as an explanation as to why the former would commission a series of expensive, high-status wall paintings to adorn the inside of the space. In short, the militia's patronage of the charity was as much about doing public good as it was being *seen* doing public good.[731] Sally Mayall Brasher, who has written extensively on the founding and maintenance of hospitals and charity in late medieval Italy, provides a useful fifteenth-century example of a hospital being founded in a ostentatiously public manner, including a procession through the city of Milan and the donor and his wife personally laying the foundation stone for the new hospital.[732] While the context of its founding is of a later date and geographical context, the actions of Duke Francesco Sforza (1401-1446) demonstrate the lengths to which some parties would go to in order to publicly associate themselves with charity in general, and hospitals in particular. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that the militia had an excellent

[730] Though Werveke's reading of the 1316 charter places heavy emphasis on the impetus to provide charity specifically for women, the evolution of the Leugemeete's liturgical functions circa 1324 suggests that it had quickly expanded past any gender-specific charity, and it could be argued that the patronisation of the militia represents a masculine co-option of a space that had up until that point been heavily gendered female. This is in line with a late medieval focus on gendered charities which specifically focused on women within a broader system that provided demonstrably more charity to men; James Brodman, 'Unequal in Charity? Women and Hospitals in Medieval Catalonia', *Medieval Encounters* , 12.1, (2006), pp. 26–36.

[731] The existence of guild-sponsored charity predates their ascendant political and economic rise in the fourteenth century, to quote Hadewijch Masure: "This was mostly horizontal mutual aid (an insurance against temporary poverty; the giver could once be receiver and vice versa), rather than vertical charity (gifts from the rich to the poor)."; Hadewijch Masure, 'Poor boxes, guild ethic and urban community building in Brabant, c. 1250-1600', in Cities and Solidarities: Urban Communities in Pre-Modern Europe, ed. by J. Colson, A. van Steensel (London: Taylor & Francis, 2017), p. 117

[732] Brasher, *Hospitals and Charity*, p. 136.

idea of the kind of institution they were associating themselves with. In her book *Medieval Healthcare and the Rise of Charitable Institutions: The History of the Municipal Hospital*, Tiffany A. Ziegler uses the Hospital of Saint John in Brussels as a case study on the advent of the hospital movement in high medieval Europe.[733] She describes the institution as, "the only hospital in Brussels up until the *Ancien Regime* to serve as more than just an almshouse, while Saint John hospital and Saint Pierre leprosarium were the only institutions fully open to the public."[734] In her doctoral dissertation, she even acknowledges how the hospital's name was as fluid as the services it provided, with some records referring to both Saint John the Baptist *and* John the Evangelist.[735] She similarly notes that the development of the hospital was influenced by "the political development of the duchy of Brabant, the religious structure of the diocese of Cambrai, and the social developments of the lay religious movement".[736] Situated as they were in their respective cities of Ghent and Brussels, both the Leugemeete and Saint John's are useful foils of one another, and suggest a utilitarian space which was as malleable as the appellate of their given saint. The diverse umbrella of charity that extended outward from both hospitals suggests that these semi-autonomous institutions were possessed of a degree of flexibility and utility unique to the shifting (and oft confused) identity of their patron saint. It could indicate that hospitals/almshouses dedicated to Saint John were better situated to adapt to the changing needs of their immediate communities, due to the local nature of their upkeep

[733] Tiffany A. Ziegler, *Medieval Healthcare and the Rise of Charitable Institutions: The History of the Municipal Hospital* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
[734] Ziegler, *Medieval Healthcare and the Rise of Charitable Institutions*, p. 87.
[735] Tiffany A. Ziegler, '"I was sick and you visited me": The Hospital of Saint John in Brussels and Its Patrons' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2010 https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/62766422.pdf [accessed 20 March 2021] p. 196.
[736] Ziegler, *Medieval Healthcare and the Rise of Charitable Institutions*, p. 87.

and administration (a guardianship composed of local secular burgesses, the presence of a local priest administering liturgical services, etc.). This is not to say that the brand of medieval charity offered by either institution would have been standardised or indiscriminate, as concepts of "deserving" and "undeserving" poor were already being articulated as early as the twelfth century.[737] Rather, the localised activities of the militia within the Leugemeete circa 1324, a date cotemporaneous with the stylistic dating of the guild iconography, suggests that the militia were using the blank canvas of the hospital to paint an image of themselves in a charitable light.[738]

3.5.2 The Leugemeete as Edifice

In the introduction his book *Medieval Identity Machines*, Jeffrey J. Cohen makes the case for his 'machinist' reading of identity production in the medieval period by attaching it to a wider, critical apparatus of feminist, queer, postcolonial, and disability studies; arguing that a systematic, composite analysis is as conducive to understanding the individual parts of a phenomenon as much as its consummate whole.[739] He writes: "What if corporeality and subjectivity—themselves inseparable—potentially included both the social structure (kinship, nation, religion, race) and the phenomenal world (objects, gadgets, prostheses, animate and inanimate bodies of many kinds) across which humanity is spread?".[740] In this way, the idea of "guild space" lies at the intersection of social structure and the 'phenomenal world', as

[737] Adam J. Davis, 'The Social and Religious Meanings of Charity in Medieval Europe', History Compass, 12.10, (2014), pp. 935–950, p. 938.
[738] Fryklund, *Late Gothic Wall Painting*, p. 53.
[739] Jeffrey J. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. XII.
[740] Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, p. XII.

manifested by the physical artefacts produced by the guilds, their respective confraternities, and civic associations such as the Ghent militia. Guild spaces were not static, finite areas sandwiched between the four walls and a door. Rather, the production of guild space was an exercise in active identity formation, articulation, and projection on the part of the guilds themselves. This is in contrast to a long historiography of the guilds which views them in purely economic terms.[741] This is not to say that such frameworks are unhelpful. The Leugemeete, both in its capacity as a charitable institution and as a social mechanism utilised by the guilds, can be seen as a prime generator of "social capital".[742] However, even the terminology here is one merely borrowed from a critical apparatus that can only define guilds in relation to the wider economic world they inhabited. The men who wanted to see themselves reflected in the holy space they patronised, monetarily, yes, but also spiritually and socially, had no demonstrable urge to maximise their effective output of *corps d'esprit* (if such a thing is even measurable). While the term "social capital" is effective at describing the outputs of these complex social networks in a purely utilitarian sense, it perpetuates a view of guilds that is at once too materialist and also too entangled in the baggage of economic analysis.

Returning to Lefebvre's definition of production, it can be understood that the act of the militia reconfiguring the physical space of the Leugemeete was, in terms of cultivating an image of public charity, as beneficial to the group as the acquisition of a new space in and of itself.

[741] Even Sheilagh Ogilvie, who has written what is arguably the most comprehensive economic analysis of European craft guilds and pulled the discipline forward by leaps and bounds, situates her analysis of the sociological phenomena underpinning guild life within a purely positivistic framework (which admittedly fits well within her economic analysis); Ogilvie, *The European Guilds*, p. 18.
[742] Defining social capital, Ogilvie writes: "These non-economic activities and relationships helped guilds to motivate and inspire their members, as well as to persuade outsiders that guilds deserved their privileged position.", Ogilvie, *The European Guilds*, p. 18.

This would explain, in part, the utility of having certain craft guilds and confraternities publicly associate themselves with the militia, and why the visual programme of the Leugemeete is centred around the identities (signified by standards, uniforms, and armaments) of its respective participants. The militia is depicted not as a uniform and uniformly presented whole, but as being composed of a multiplicity of smaller groups—each with their own unique character and attributes. One of the definitions Lefebvre gives for space is “the locus of communication by means of signs”.[743] In this instance, the message the guild paintings on the Leugemeete is sending is one of benevolent charity, of triumphant celebration, and of careful commemoration. To use a term employed by Katherine M. Boivin while describing the impetus behind the commissioning of an altarpiece in Rothenberg circa 1502, the intense localisation of these themes can be read as a “nucleus of civic identity”.[744] That is to say that the very presence of the militia-sponsored wall paintings within the Leugemeete is as important as the intricacies of the iconography itself. The hospital’s stewards could have chosen any number of symbolic (or even purely decorative, for the cash-strapped) motifs to feature on such a significant section of their chapel, yet they chose to invoke the militia and its respective confraternities and craft guilds.

Identity can be constructed not only by the outward processes that have been reviewed thus far but also by the manipulation of history and memory.[745] In this specific instance, the

[743] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 135.
[744] Katherine M. Boivin, *Riemenschneider in Rothenburg: Sacred Space and Civic Identity in the Late Medieval City* (USA: Penn State Press, 2021), p. 2.
[745] William J. V. Neill unpacks a stark example this in a modern examination of the reconciliation of identities between East and West Germany, but the argument he presents, that the formation of identity is both a “top-down” and “bottom-up” process is a useful truism: William J. V. Neill, *Urban Planning and Cultural Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 74.

wall paintings of the Leugemeete are the visual articulation of a collective identity being codified in pigment in a highly symbolic context. It should be stated that there is a dearth of sources concerning communality, especially in the context of medieval guilds, and any conversation surrounding identity is rendered somewhat generalised. Andrzej Pleszczyński lists the manifestations of communality amongst medieval guilds, and its relation to their collective identity, writing, "Another feature of all these groups was their religious nature connected with the duty of providing economic assistance to all members; another equally important feature of these communities was their self-defence character, which included the duty (of all) to fight in militias."[746] These three pillars of the collective identity of the guilds (religiosity, economic charity, and collective defence) are all present within the Leugemeete. Pleszczyński describes this "guild" collective identity as being composed of "rituals, myths, and symbols".[747] The space of the Leugemeete lends itself to each, both in its visual decoration and the liturgical and ritualistic practices it would have enabled.[748] It is in this way that the Leugemeete was a space where identity could simultaneously be both created and articulated.

The relationship between guild and chapel was a complex arrangement of confluent power structures and social dynamics.[749] As the Courtrai chest clearly demonstrates, there existed in the fourteenth century a specific cultural desire to be associated with certain guilds—and for said guilds to associate themselves with certain historical events and institutions. The

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[746] Andrzej Pleszczyński, 'The Identity of Self-Governing Groups (Guilds and Communes) in the Middle Ages and Their Collective Identity', in *Imagined Communities: Constructing Collective Identities in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Andrzej Pleszczyński, Joanna Sobiesiak, Michał Tomaszek, Przemysław Tyszka(The Netherlands: Brill, 2018), p. 206
[747] Pleszczyński, "The Identity of Self-Governing Groups", p. 214.
[748] As evidenced by its explicit incorporation of divine services circa 1324.
[749] It was not even unheard of for guilds to be formed with the express function of rebuilding and maintaining derelict chapels, such as in Ripon circa 1370; Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity*, p. 51; Stephen Werronen, 'Ripon Minster in its social Context, c. 1350-1530' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2013), p. 69–70.

material conduits of these associations were hardly limited to public processions and name associations, and the material wealth (as in the sheer amount of material objects to be found therein) of chapels allowed for greater expression of individual and communal status. For example, Pope Innocent III's 1199 directive that 'in each parish church a chest was to be placed to receive the indulgence-worthy donations of faithful' speaks both to the 'world of things' that could be found within a chapel's walls, and necessitates both the presence of chests and presents the opportunity for their ornate decorations.[750] This world of things extends, patently, to the decoration of the building itself. In *Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Age*, Emile Mâle describes the relationship between eager confraternal patrons and the manifestations of their specific forms of patronage in the context of decorated altars:

> Towns in the Midi were once enriched by the trade confraternities with many painted or sculptured altarpieces. In 1471, the wool merchants of Marseille had Pierre Villate paint the story of St. Catherine of Siena, their patron saint. In 1520, the carpenters of Marseille commissioned Peson to paint an altarpiece of the most charming naivete: it shows Joseph building boats in his shop, as if Nazareth had been a seaport like Marseille. At the same time, the shoemakers of Toulon had Guiramand, an artist famous in Provence, carve the history of Sts. Crispin and Crispinian. In archives we find records of many works of the same kind.[751]

This phenomenon, of confraternities projecting their own self-image onto the spaces which they were monetarily—and spiritually—invested in, is writ large on the walls of the

[750] Christopher Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (UK: Macmillan Education, 1998), p. 36.
[751] Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France*, p. 163.

Leugemeete. Their spiritual interests are evident in their triumphant militaristic procession; the foundations for which are envisioned in the form of the *Resurrection* and the prayerful offerings of both the chapel's saints and the benevolent Magi. They are marching towards the altar as an idealized form of the civic defenders they imagine themselves being. Their political interests reinforce their spiritual narrative, with Louis II and his family offering prayers directly behind the altar, to the chapel's patron saints and by extension the depicted confraternities above. It is in this way that the narrative blends together the secular and the religious, the spiritual and the political. The confraternities are acting as a politically conscious body in their efforts to curry favour via association with Louis II in the form of these monumental images, but they are doing so through an ontological framework that utterly necessitates the inclusion of the religious iconography that previous art historians have found so ill-fitting in the presence of the profanely "secular" guild iconography. Finally, the pastoral interests of the Leugemeete conform to both the confraternity's political and spiritual aspirations; using its functionality as an almshouse to extend the graces of the confraternities to the civic community it sought to defend. This feedback loop of meaning is perfectly self-contained within the visual programme of the Leugemeete; a self-sustaining narrative that exhorts the confraternity's political, spiritual, and civic aspirations and perceived prestige.

On the intersection of personal and collective memory, Maurice Halbwachs writes: "One cannot in fact think about the events of one's past without discoursing upon them. But to discourse upon something means to connect within a single system of ideas our opinions as well as those of our circle. It means to perceive in what happens to us a particular application of facts concerning which social thought reminds us at every moment of the meaning and impact

these facts have for it."[752] What the visual programme on the Leugemeete's walls is, then, is that discourse given physical form. The entire space of the chapel was a vehicle to commemorate the militia's triumphant dead, and remind them of the social contracts which made their sacrifice not only necessary, but celebratory. I have undertaken a small amount of digital reconstruction of the space using August Van Assche's architectural plates (as reproduced by Baldewijns and Watteeuw) and floorplans from the *Atlas Goetghebuer*.[753] These images should be seen more as visual aids than concrete attributions of space or relative distance, but nevertheless provide striking insight into the physicality of the Leugemeete's interior.[754] The foremost utility of these reconstructions comes from the ability to imagine the space as a whole; the respective decorative and architectural elements working in concert to influence and guide the viewer through its doors and down its length. The immediate sensation is one of fluid movement; the nature of the space naturally moves the visitor through its street-facing doors and towards the altar. To that end, any individual or collective procession would have found themselves flanked by the rows of parading militia on either side. This turned the chapel from a static place into a tool that could be used by the guilds on an *ad hoc* basis; triumphant processions on holy days and funeral processions for the dead.[755] It is also directly in line with contemporary guild statutes, which placed an emphasis on conducting feasts, processions, worship services, burials and prayer services, and to "promote a sense of solidarity

[752] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 53.
[753] Baldewijns and Watteeuw, "Calques van de muurschilderingen uit de Leugemeete", pp. 358–359; Appendix, MM.
[754] Appendix, NN, OO, PP.
[755] Given that the space was potentially being used for funeral services as early as 1324, it stands to reason that other functions would begin occurring soon after; the liturgical functions of the Leugemeete were by no means mutually exclusive.

among their members".[756] In this way, the physical layout of the chapel was as intrinsic to its interior iconographical programme as the paintings on its walls.[757]

[756] Ben R. McRee, 'Charity and Gild Solidarity in Late Medieval England', *Journal of British Studies*, 32.3, (1993), pp. 195-225, p. 196.
[757] The interplay between architecture and iconography is a vital component of many medieval holy spaces, with the most well-known form being the layout of cathedrals in a symbolic representation of the True Cross. See: Richard Krautheimer, 'Introduction to an "Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture"', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5, (1942), pp. 1–33.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to analyse and contextualise three core components of Flemish memory and civic pride that were produced in the wake of the Battle of the Golden Spurs (11 July 1302). These components are emblematic of the lived experiences and historical narratives that emerged from the Franco-Flemish War (1297 – 1305). After putting forth a foundational definition of social memory and introducing the requisite historical context, an interdisciplinary analysis of each component was undertaken. While an overview and exploration of the extant historical primary accounts was done in an effort to contextualise the cultural and historiographical traditions to which these artefacts leant themselves, the emphasis was placed on the contribution that each case study could make to the received corpus of historical knowledge. This triptych of inquiry took the form of three central case studies, each engaging with a different facet of remembrance.

The first case study consisted of a reintroduction of the *Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos*, which was prefaced by a breakdown of the core historiographical traditions that arose both in the period immediately after the Franco-Flemish War and later during Belgium's nascent and intensely nationalist systematic identity-building in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It was during this section that the evolution of the Battle of the Golden Spurs and its many retellings was synthesised into three distinct phases. The first phase was identified as a period of source aggregation and confirmation. The second phase was identified as being concerned with discovering a "true" account of the battle, leaning on either French or Flemish sources. The third phase was identified as a return to source analysis; being more

inclusive, yet critical, of the primary source material—still in an effort to discern a truthful account of the battle, but not at the expense of the perceived utility of the individual accounts themselves. It acknowledged the existence of two separate accounts of the battle, and instead of pitting them against each other in search of some kind of resolution, instead analysed them based on their own merits and contexts.

Having placed the forthcoming analysis of the *Passio* in that third section, an introduction of the personage of Adam Usk was undertaken in an effort to analyse the conditions in which the early fourteenth-century mock-passion was rediscovered circa 1406 and the motivations that could have moved Usk to copy it into his *Chronicon*. While both his itinerant scholarship and proud Welsh identity could have endeared him to the searing invective contained within the *Passio*, it is ultimately the document's genre—a mock passion—that positions it as such a unique and consequential cultural artefact. The known corpus of extant mock passions was summarily introduced, after which the relationship between the *Passio*'s form and contents was analysed during a close reading of specific sections. These were shown to be indicative of the function the *Passio* serves, as an encapsulation of indignant rage and fresh victimisation. The *Passio* reframes the abstract complexities of the war into a narrative of interpersonal conflict, systematically assaulting the identities and memories of its perceived aggressors.

The second case study was a reassessment of the Courtrai Chest. This consisted of establishing a definitive account of its discovery in Stanton St. John circa 1905, as well as a novel investigation into the financial transaction (or ostensible lack thereof) that occurred between Warden Archibald Spooner and the chest's penultimate stewards, the Harris family.

This was followed by a thorough unpacking of the international controversy that has surrounded the chest since widespread news of its rediscovery reach Belgium in the early twentieth, and in the context of the several attempts New College made to sell it. The extensive suite of radiocarbon and dendrochronological dating subjected to the chest in the 1970s and beyond was introduced as an initial counter to the claims of the forgery and misattribution, but also to argue against a theory of diplomatic transmission circa 1302. A historical investigation into the personage of John of Stanton St. John, and the ensuing state of the Flemish rebellion during the period of 1302-1305, was also used to push back against the claims of a "diplomatic mission". Similarly, a material analysis of the chest, its construction, and subsequent reconstructions, was framed in both a utilitarian and typological context in order to refute the idea of a "hidden compartment" facilitating the delivery of a "diplomatic gift" while the Franco-Flemish War was still ongoing. One of the most significant contributions of this thesis occurred during a careful analysis of the frontispiece's visual programme. During this work, a new identification of the second scene of the Courtrai Chest was put forward—reorienting the narrative and its iconography from a general representation of the Bruges Matins to a specific condemnation of French violence inflicted upon the Flemish urban population.

The third case study was an extensive assessment of the no longer extant Leugemeete Chapel in Ghent. This consisted of an analysis of the antiquarian calques and water colours that preserved its visual program—thus enabling further analysis of the original medieval work—as well as a heretofore incomplete investigation into the material conditions that gave rise to the creation of the chapel, as well as its earliest use. Most importantly, archival primary sources were used to date the presence of the guilds in the space much earlier than their original 1340

estimation. A novel digital reconstruction of the chapel's space was undertaken, which was then used to reference and explore the ways by which the Ghentois confraternities could have used the space in conjunction with their known holy processions and political activities. The iconography was directly compared to that on the Courtrai Chest, tracing an evolution in the way the guilds projected themselves, and chose to be remembered. The Leugemeete's function as a hospital was discussed in the context of urban charity and the city of Ghent in the thirteenth and fourteenth century.

While this thesis sought to reintroduce and recontextualize these three subjects in a dialogue with one another, the future work that this interdisciplinary framework enables is significant. A vertical continuation of this material would see even more emphasis placed on the materiality of the primary sources surrounding the Battle of the Golden Spurs (work that was impossible due to the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic). A horizontal development would entail moving this methodology away from the Battle of the Golden Spurs and into the realm of guild and urban studies more broadly. The establishment a syncretic dialogue between object, text, and image would be productive in any instance where there exists an example of each. The projection of this methodology into the later developments of the Hanseatic League, or earlier instances of the creation and use of guild spaces, would be fertile ground for novel contributions to the field of both art history and social memory. Furthermore, the analysis and comparison of similar Flemish-type chests in southern England, and a more thorough analysis of similar Flemish objects, would serve to build a corpus that can both be compared to the Courtrai Chest, and facilitate future interventions based on the introduction of additional texts and images.

This thesis located the memory of the Franco-Flemish War, created by individuals and the communities in which they lived, across three distinct mediums. Much as the Passio could not have been created outside of the invective genre conventions in which it was written, and the Courtrai Chest's frontispiece was a vital part of the original object, and the Leugemeete murals were inextricably linked to the space in which they were painted, this triptych of inquiry is larger than the sum of its parts. These three case studies, though each seeking to understand its subject through the lens of memory and community, project a powerful image of a generation of people reflecting on the events of the world as they unfolded around them.

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Appendix

A. *'Passio' breakdown.*

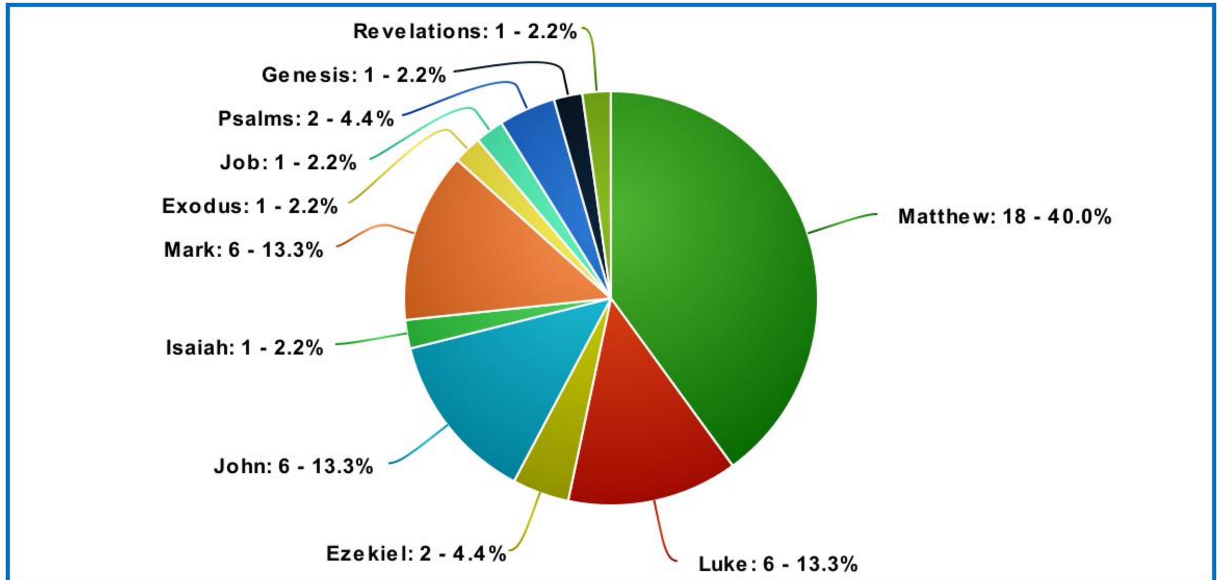
Line	Structure
1-22	King Philip deliberates on what he wishes to do in Flanders, then gives his orders.
23-35	The Flemings respond to the king's orders.
36-49	The king declares war on the Flemish.
50-73	Peter Coninck confronts Count Artois.
74-85	Peter Coninck confronts Pierre Flote.
86-100	The French are slain and their corpses are marked.
101-105	The number of French dead are given.
106-110	Epilogue and the king's retreat.

B. *'Passio' pericope breakdown.*

Line	Pericope
3	Matthew 15:32
13	Matthew 16:13-19
16	Luke 11:17
18	Ezekiel 35:4
22	Luke 13:34 and John 10:16
33	John 10:12 and Isaiah 1:8
35	Luke 2:20
37	Mark 6:26
44	Mark 16:15-18
45	Matthew 2:16
49	Matthew 25:15
56	Matthew 26:34-5
58	Matthew 16:18 and Luke 19:44
61	Exodus 20:13 and Matthew 26:51-2
63	Job 7:19
64	John 18:22
66	Mark 14:35 and Luke 22:42
71	Mark 15:25-37
72	Mark 14:72
73	Matthew 27:54
75	John 21:20
76	Matthew 1:22
78	Matthew 18:9
79	Matthew 26:58, 1:22
81	Matthew 18:9
83	Mark 14:70-72
85	Matthew 27:32
87	Psalms 37:6 and Matthew 1:22
90	Matthew 26:41, 45
91	Genesis 40:19 and John 19:36
93	Ezekiel 39:4 and Psalms 77:2
95	Matthew 26:5
97	Revelations 7:3
98	Luke 1:58
100	Matthew 27:64
106	Revelations 7:4-8
107	John 20:30
108	Matthew 25:19
110	Matthew 2:12

C. *Pericopes in the 'Passio' by source, frequency, and percentage.*

Biblical Pericopes in the Passio
Noah Smith, 2021



meta-chart.com

D. Passio Francorum secundum Flemingo Transcription; Adam Usk, The Chronicle of Adam Usk: 1377-1421, trans. by Chris Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 219-223. Line numbers inserted by author.

The Passion of the French according to the Flemings: at that time Philip, king of the French, called his disciples unto him and said secretly to them, 'Whom do men say is the count of Flanders?' And they said, 'Some say Charles, some Louis, and others, one of the profaners.' The king said unto them again, 'But whom say ye that I am?' One of them, Pierre Flote by name, after taking counsel with Charles, said, 'Lord, thou art the king of Flanders.' And the king said unto him, 'Blessed art thou, Peter, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my brother which is hapless; and I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my counsel; and I will give unto thee the keys of my kingdom of Flanders, and whatsoever thou shalt bind shall be held in contempt by God above.' Then, summoning his messengers, the king said unto them, 'When ye go into Flanders, say unto the Flemish, "every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falleth." If therefore they shall be divided from my kingdom, I will lay their houses waste, and I shall brandish my sword; and either they shall be made subject unto my royal power, or I shall cleanse the earth of them and drive them into the sea. And I shall gather them unto me, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.' When they came into Flanders, therefore, these messengers told the Flemings that which the king had told them to say. Whereupon the Flemings, replying to each point in turn, said, 'We have built splendid cities and towns. Your king does not deserve the name of shepherd, but rather is he a wolf, for he wishes the sheep to be devoured and delivered unto the wolf. And since we are not oxen, we fear to be yoked; and since we are not chicks, we fear to be gathered under wings, but would rather die by the sword. And since it better befits a shepherd to keep the peace than to brandish the sword, we do not believe that any house will be destroyed, but rather the devil; or rather, that he will make unto himself a hovel in the wilderness.' Having received this reply, therefore, the messengers departed to tell the king all that they had heard and seen, as it had been told unto them. Whereupon the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, for his oath's sake, he summoned the count of Artois and those of his fellow-disciples who were present, and said unto them, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach to every creature in my name of the disobedience of the Flemings; he that shall do them harm shall be saved; but he that shall not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that shall do this: in my name shall they receive devils; they shall despise God; and if they take up any deadly thing, it shall hurt them. And when ye go into Flanders, kill all the Flemings of half-blood or more.' So the count departed to do as the king had told him. Some of the French gave five talents, others two, and others one—each one to the other according to his ability. And so, gathering the entire host together, the count straightaways took his journey to Flanders. And when Peter Coninck was told of this he hurried to meet him, a hundred thousand men in his company. Peter turned to him and said, 'Who are thou' The count replied, saying, 'I am he. Who art thou that asks?' Peter Coninck replied, 'I am.' The count said unto him, 'Amen, amen, verily I say unto thee that before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.' Peter said unto him, 'Though thou shouldst die with me, yet will I not deny thee.' The count said again, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will draw my sword, and I shall not leave in thee one limb below thy head, for thou knowest not the time of thy visitation.' Peter said unto him, 'Truly it is written, "Thou shalt not kill; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword". ' Then this same Peter drew his sword and smote off his right ear. Then the count said, 'Wilt thou not spare me at least until I may swallow down my spittle?' Peter smote again, saying, 'Answerest thou the high priest so?' And the count fell to the ground and prayed, saying, 'Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done, Peter.' And it was the third hour, and the earth did quake until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour the count cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Bayard, bayard, where art thou? Why hast thou forsaken me?'—that is, 'My horse, my horse, why have you forsaken me?' And having said this, he gave up the ghost. And Peter called to mind that the count had said, 'I am he,' and he went out and wept. And one of the Flemings said, 'Truly this man was worthless in the sight of God.' And when Peter Coninck turned around and saw Pierre Flote, he knew him to be the disciple whom God had spurned, for he was a one-eyed man, whereby that which is written in the scriptures might be fulfilled, namely, 'And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee.' But this man followed afar off, to see the end, thereby fulfilling what is said in the gospel, 'It is better for thee to enter into battle with the French with one eye, rather than having two eyes and being slain by the Flemings.' One of them said to him, 'Surely thou art one of them.' But he began to curse and to swear that he had not known this man; and straightaway no Frenchman crowed. And the Flemings compelled him to go out with the count of Artois; and so, his head having been removed, he followed him. The corpses of the French rotted, whereby what the prophet said was fulfilled, namely, 'Their wounds do stink, and are corrupt.' The Flemings came to see the corpses of the dead, and they said, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' The dogs and the birds of the sky ate their flesh from off them, whereby the scriptures were fulfilled: 'They gave the corpses of thy Frenchmen unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.' One of the Flemings said, 'Let us bury the corpses of the French, lest there be an uproar among the people.' Peter Coninck said, 'Bury them not in the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed them as Frenchmen in their foreheads, lest their neighbours and their cousins come and steal them away, and say unto the people, they are risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first.' And the number was: of the tribe of the French were sealed an hundred and fourteen thousand; of the tribe of the Picards were sealed forty-seven thousand; of the tribe of the Normans were sealed twenty-four thousand; of the tribe of the Bretons were sealed sixteen thousand; of the tribe of the Poitevins were sealed thirteen thousand; of the tribe of the Angevins were sealed sixteen thousand. And many other things were done which are not written in this book. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them; and, having been warned that he should not return, for the Flemings were prepared to fight, he departed into his own country another way.

E. Passio Francorum secundum Flemingos scans; Photographs by Chris Given-Wilson circa 1996. Usk MS B fol. 2r

(E Con't) Usk MS B fol. 2v

B. fo. 2v.

F. The Courtrai Chest, Ashmolean Museum, 2017 (photograph by author).

G. *Courtrai Chest, detail of Scene II.*

H. *Courtrai Chest, detail of Scene II.*

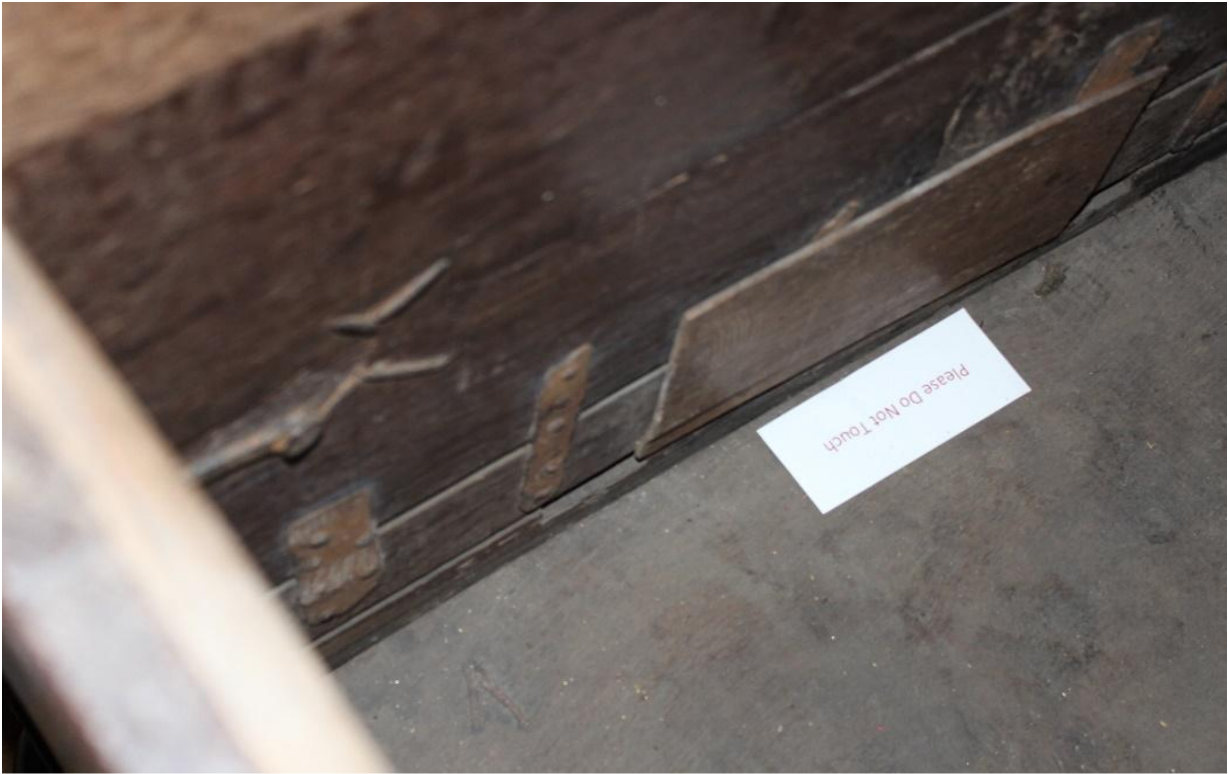
I. *Courtrai Chest, detail of Scene IV.*

J. *Tombeau de Saint- Barthélémy de la Place à Chénérailles, late thirteenth century.*

K. *The Hague KB KA 20 'Battle of the Catalaunian plains between Atilla, Aetius, Meroveus and Theodoric I' fol. 146v, miniature.*

L. *MS Ashmole. 828.*

M. *Interior view of the frontispiece of the Courtrai Chest (photograph by author).*



N. *Interior view of the back panel in the Courtrai Chest (photograph by author).*

O. *The Harty Chest, Isle of Sheppey (photograph by author).*

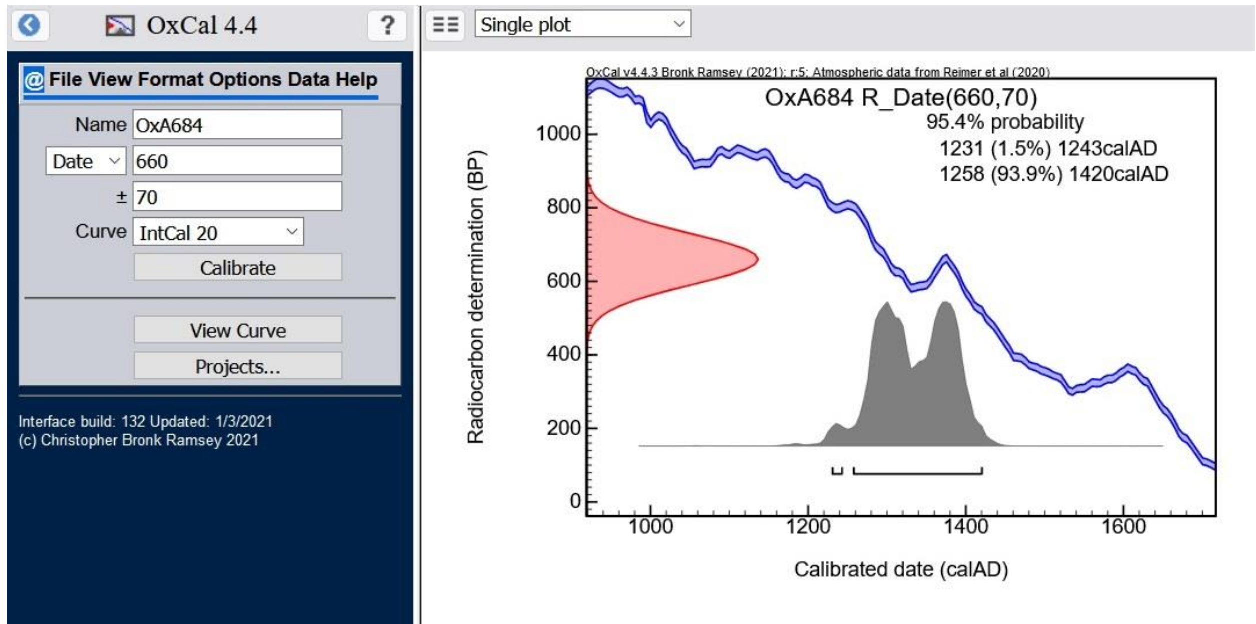
P. *V&A 738-1895*

Q. *York Minster Tilting Chest.*

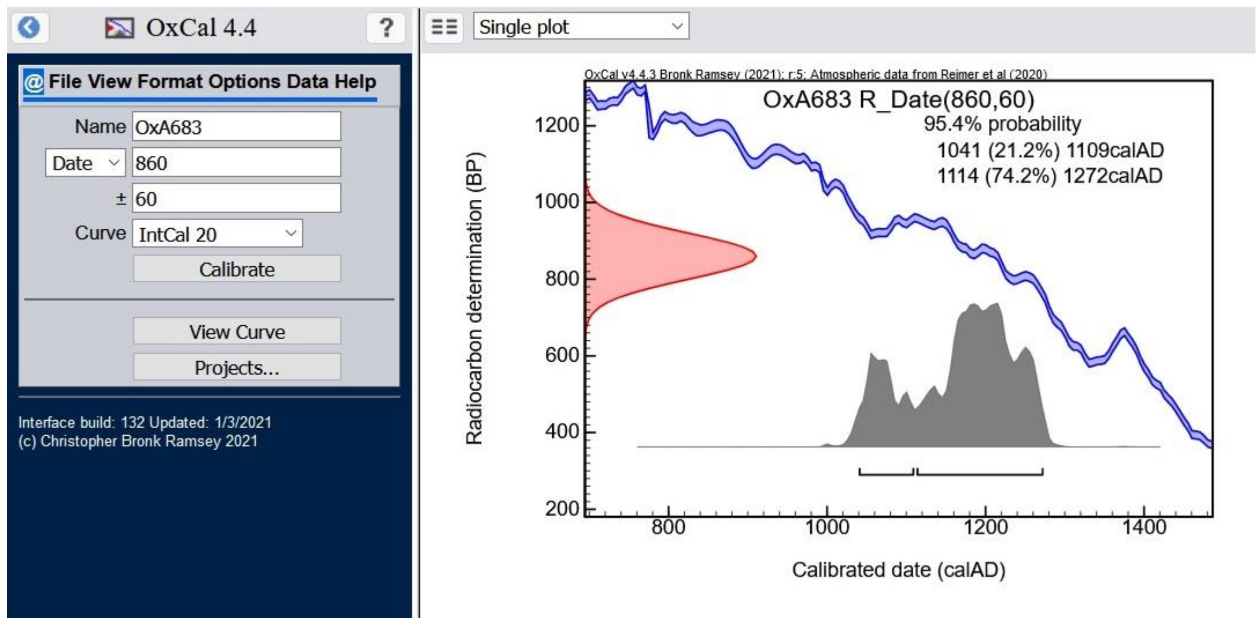
R. *Altarpiece of the Saints and the Martyrs, Jacob de Baerze c. 1392.*

S. *The Execution of John the Baptist, detail.*

T. *OxCal Bronk/Ramsay, courtesy of Martin Bridge 2021.*



U. *OxCal Bronk/Ramsay, courtesy of Martin Bridge 2021.*



V. *Table: Narrative similarities between the Courtrai Chest and extant 14th c. sources.*

Narrative similarities between the Oxford Chest and extant early 14th c. sources (Noah Smith 2019):

Source	Year	Perspective	BotGS	Saintly Violence	Ditches/Marsh	Guy & William	Pieter Coninck	Explicit Urban Violence	Castle Flag	Post-battle Looting/Corpses	Beguines/Monastery	Castle Battlements	Bodily Violence	Total
OC	n/a	Flemish	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	11
PF	1302	Flemish	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes	4
CA	1304	French	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	6
BRL	1307	French	yes	no	no	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	no	yes	4
AG	1308	Flemish	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes	8
CM	1315	French	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes	no	no	no	4
SH	1316	Flemish	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	8
CC	1323	Flemish	yes	no	no	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	no	4

W. *STAM 09555.6-6*

X. STAM 09555.3-6

Y. *STAM 09555.4-6*

Z. *STAM 09555.5-6*

AA. *STAM 09555.2-6*

BB. *STAM 09555.1-6*

CC. *Ghent, former Almshouse of Sts John and Paul, resurrection, tracing by J. Béthune et al. after a mural in the chapel. Photo: Bijlokemuseum, Ghent.*

DD. From the predella of a polyptych of the Madonna and Child, The Ducal Palace, Urbino.

EE. STAM, Sint-Jan en Sint-Paulus, patroonheiligen van de Leugemeete (muurschildering Leugemeete).

FF. Ghent, former Almshouse of Sts John and Paul, Sts John the Evangelist and Paul, copy by A. Bressers after a mural in the chapel. Photo Ghent Stadsarchief, L 61/5, photographed by the author.

GG. *British Library, Harley MS 4751, Folio 40r.*

HH.STAM, 'Twee koningen en de koningin van Shaba (muurschildering Leugemeete)'.

II. STAM, 'Twee geknielde figuren (muurschildering Leugemeete).

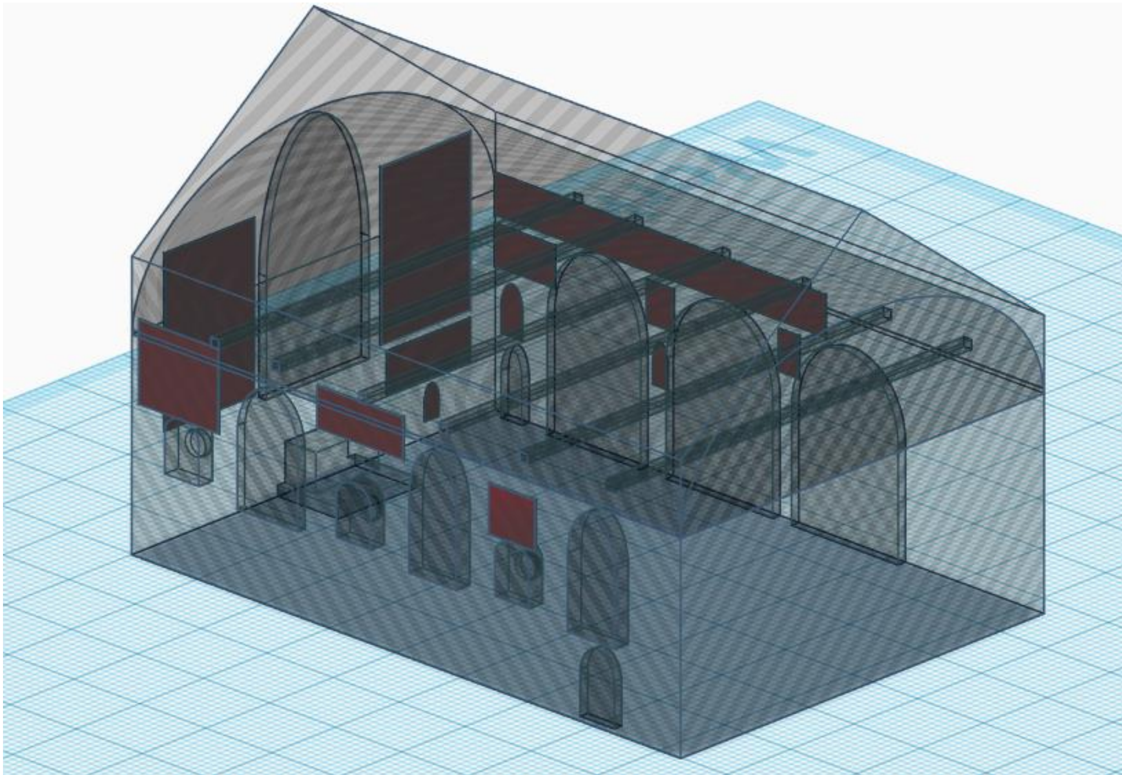
JJ. Archive Ugent, BIB.G.014074.

KK. Ghent Stadsarchief, L61/6 (photograph by author).

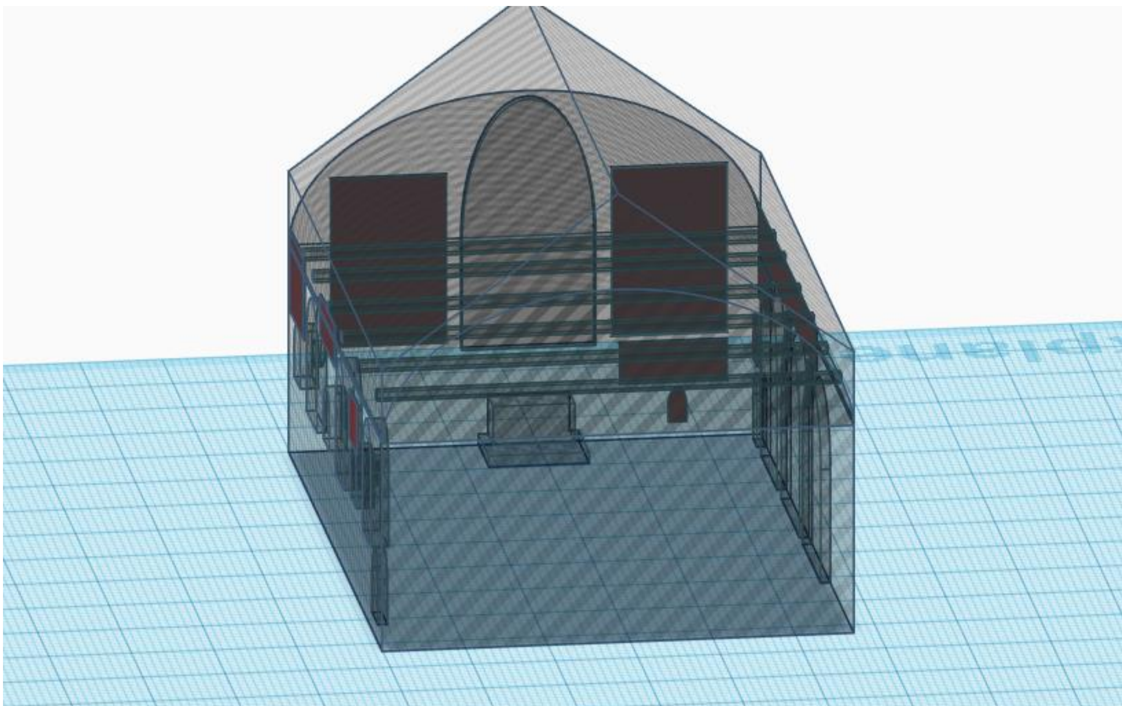
LL. Ghent Stadsarchief, L61/8 (photograph by author).

MM. Ghent Stadsarchief, Atlas Goetghebuer 1. 61/1b (photographed by author).

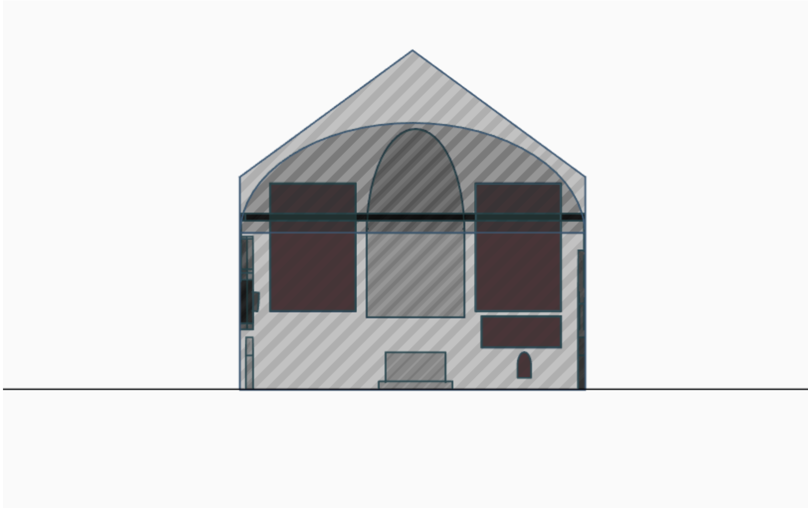
NN. Noah Smith, Reconstruction of the Leugemeete circa 1340 (Tinkercad), 1.



OO. Noah Smith, Reconstruction of the Leugemeete circa 1340 (Tinkercad), 2.



PP. Noah Smith, Reconstruction of the Leugemeete circa 1340 (Tinkercad), 3.



QQ. Peintures murals militairs de la Chapelle de la Leugemeete a Gand, by Henri Koechlin circa 1935, Ghent Stadsarchief L61/13, photographed by the author.

RR. Image from the Holkham Bible Picture Book (c. 1327-1335). London, British Library, Additional MS 47682, f. 13v.

SS. Trajan’s Column, Scenes IV/V: Roman legionaries crossing the River Danube. Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].

TT. Trajan's Column, Scene IX/X: detail "The Omen of the Fallen Man". Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].

UU. Trajan's Column, Scene XXIV: Roman legionaries fight Dacian soldiers in a forest while Jupiter accompanies them. Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].

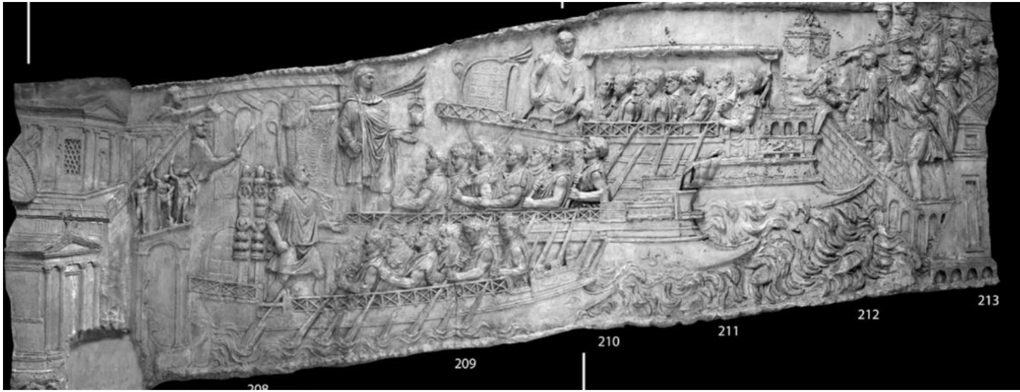
VV. Trajan’s Column, Scene XXVIII: Trajan receives a Dacian envoy while Roman legionaries construct fortifications. Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].

WW. Trajan’s Column, Scene XXIV/XXX: Trajan pardons a woman and her child, while other women with children look on. Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].

XX. Trajan’s Column, Scene XXXI-XXXII: Dacian horsemen are driven into the river, while on the far side of the banks a Roman fort is under attack. Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].

YY. Trajan's Column, Scene LIX: A Roman soldier sets fire a Dacian home. Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].

ZZ. Trajan’s Column, Scenes LVIII-LI: Trajan leading the departing Roman host. Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].



AAA. Trajan’s Column, Scene LVIII: Detail of a Dacian soldier leading and gesturing toward the walls of the Roman fort. Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].

BBB. Trajan’s Column, Scene C: Detail of Trajan meeting with foreign emissaries, behind which can be seen Roman buildings including an amphitheatre. Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].

CCC. Trajan's Column, Scene CIV: Roman soldiers on the march, following the standards of their legion. Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].

DDD. Trajan's Column, Scene CXXIV: Detail of the Roman sacking of a Dacian town. Roger B. Ulrich, Trajan's Column in Rome: The history, archaeology and iconography of the monument (2021) <http://www.trajans-column.org/> [accessed 6 April 2021].

EEE. Comparison of Scene III of the Courtrai Chest and Scenes IV/V on Trajan's Column.

FFF. Hildesheim: St. Michael: Int.: Bernward Column: Scenes from the Life of Christ (at https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.13921863)