

YALE UNIVERSITY
BEINECKE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY
MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE MANUSCRIPTS

MS 990

Northern France, s. XIV/XV

Cuvelier, *Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin*

ff. 1ra-124vb Seigneurs, or faites paix pour Dieu le roy divin, / Que nostre sire Dieux, qui de l'yauwe fist vin / Le jour que aux noces fu de saint Archedeclin, / Vous vueille tous garder et donner bonne fin ... Sy pres ne savoit mie nos Français vraiment, / Mes nos Français les voient a leur commendement. / Thiebaut du Pont, quant vit les Englois l'errevant //

Cuvelier (s. XIV²), *Bertrand du Guesclin*, poem composed about 1380-1385. J.-C. Faucon, ed. (Toulouse, 1990). The version deviates from the basic text printed by Faucon, especially towards the end, where it stops after verse 58 of the variant version printed in v. 2, p. 438. Our manuscript was unknown to the editor.

Parchment, ff. 124, 365 x 270 mm. Many defective corners and lower margins have been repaired before the writing by means of pieces of parchment carefully pasted onto the leaves. Closely trimmed at the upper and outer margins. The left edge of f. 1r is damaged by paste.

I-V⁸ (ff. 1-40), VI⁸ (-5, loss of text; ff. 41-47), VII-XV⁸ (ff. 48-119), XVI⁶ (-6, loss of text; ff. 120-124). Horizontal catchwords underlined, right of the center. There is a curious set of signatures of the type "al all aIII aIII" in quires X-XV (ff. 72-119) in the inversed order, from "f" to "a".

Ruled in lead for two columns of writing starting above top line. There are mostly 46 or 47 lines per column, but 40-45 lines are also found, especially in quire VI (ff. 41-47) and the preceding and following pages. There are two bounding lines at left and one at right for each column, based on a set of 8 prickings in the lower margin. Next to the writing starting above top line, the ruling is special because of the horizontal lines often extending over the entire width of the page. The opening letters of all verses are set apart at a distance from the rest of the text.

Copied, probably by one hand, in small *Gothica Cursiva Libraria* (Bastarda). The ascenders on the top line are often lengthened and given fancy shapes.

2-line flourished initials in gold (or brown ink?) (some in silver on ff. 25v-30r) with brown or red penwork (no strict alternance is observed); the penwork sometimes features a human face; guide-letters. At the opening of the text 7-line historiated initial *S*, showing Bertrand du Guesclin straddling the letter, which itself ends in the head of a serpent; over his armour he wears a coat of arms with his arms: a two-headed eagle sable. With his right hand he holds a lance by which he pierces the serpent's mouth. Left-margin foliate bar border consisting of a blue and gold bar from

which golden and red vine leaves issue, also extending into part of the upper margin. Over the full width of the lower margin and in the intercolumnar space a coloured pen-and-ink drawing, showing an army of soldiers in armour, partly standing behind a stone wall and preparing to storm a castle at right rising in the outer margin; they bear the du Guesclin arms.

S. XVIII^{ex} parchment binding over cardboard, both covers gold-tooled with a border of palmettes and a fleur-de-lys in the four corners. Gold-tooled spine with six raised bands, the compartments decorated with small fleur-de-lys stamps, and a gold-tooled red morocco title-label with inscription "MANUSCRIT".

The former rear pastedown (f. 125) is a large fragment of a document in French on parchment, now badly damaged by the paste and difficult to read, in which the countess of Artois and the city and castle of Arras are repeatedly mentioned. The countess must be identified with Margaret of Male, countess of Artois, Flanders, Nevers, Rethel and Franche-Comté, and the document consequently dates from between her accession in 1384 and her death in 1405. It is written in *Gothica Cursiva Libraria/Currens* (Bastarda). On the blank verso of this document (now f. 125r), pen-and-ink drawings of various coats of arms and several signatures and inscriptions in French, Flemish and Latin by s. XV-XVI hands: "A tort a droit et sans mesure, / Qu'il l'a il a bien va si dure [?]" ; "Item mijn vader heeft ghecocht j[]"; "Je me recomende humblement a vous en plorant tendrement que vous ayés de moy souveranche m'amour la plus bielle de Franche"; "Honour a dames"; "Franciscus de Meynis" (Meyvis?). In the upper margin of f. 1r, a faded signature and, in a s. XVI² hand: "A moi Tabourot". This is the French lawyer and poet Etienne Tabourot (1547-1590); in the intercolumnar space, he has written his device: "A tous accords". On the basis of the binding the manuscript probably later belonged to a member of the French royal family. Collection of Richard Heber (1773-1833); his sale, Evans, Febr. 1836, lot 819. Collection of Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872; MS 8193 in his collection; label on spine). Purchased from H.P. Kraus, New York, on the Edwin J. Beinecke Fund.