

**Filmstrip Notes**

**CHRONICLES OF  
HAINAULT**

HOLKHAM MS. 658

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## CHRONICLES OF HAINAULT

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### INTRODUCTION

The Chroniques de Hainault were originally composed in Latin under the name *Annales Hannoniae*. The author was a Franciscan friar called Jacques de Guise who died in 1399 at Valenciennes where a monument was erected in his memory. There is a study of the author, his work and his sources by Dr. Roger Wilmaus in Pertz, *Archiv der Gesellschaft Ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, ix (1847), pp. 292-382. The *Annales* have been edited by the Marquis Fortia d'Urban (1826-1833) in 15 volumes and by Sackur in *Monumenta Germaniae Historiae*, SS. xxx, i, 77.

These chronicles run from the beginning of the world to 1390. The Holkham Library contains two illustrated volumes. These contain books 1-7 and only come up to the fourth century A.D. (the Emperors Valentinian, Gratian and Valens). The library also contains two volumes without illustrations. Each of these pairs of volumes contains, bound in two volumes, what used to be contained in a single volume, when the book was produced in 1490. The library never contained the third and last volume of the work. Though the two volumes which contain the original second volume contain no illustrations, they used to contain illustrations at the beginning of each of the "books" into which it is divided. These have been removed and others have been substituted with blank parchment where the pictures should be. Offsets on the opposite pages prove that these pictures were once present. Each of the pictures covers three-quarters of a page, in contrast to those in a manuscript of the same work at Boulogne where little miniatures are scattered throughout the text.

The first book tells of the birth and origin of Bavo. Bavo foretold the destruction of Troy and Jupiter bade him retire thence to the country of Treves. After warning Priam of the impending ruin Bavo and his Trojans emigrated. The chief priest, Brunehildis, established seven chief roads all converging on the city of Belgis. In allusion to these he adopted, according to the legend here told, seven chevrons for arms. Of particular interest to lovers of Shakespeare are chapters 60-63 wherein Jacques de Guise repeats from the *Historia Britonum* the tale of King Lear and of his daughter Cordelia's marriage to Aganippus, King of the Belgians (for the Franks were not yet in Gaul). The second book deals with Ursus, a hunter made the first king in the city of Belgis by the people. He was evil and destroyed Belgis and proposed to transfer his capital to Treves. In chapter 51 of this book we hear how the son of Tarquin, who had lost the throne of Rome, wished to settle at Belgis. Some seven centuries,

or according to others, 394 years after the foundation of Belgis, immediately after the death of Cyrus, King of Persia, the third book tells how the city of Belgis became a republic and began to elect annual dukes. The Belgians were divided into three tribes and among the most important of their cities was Belgis. Its territory was what was later called Hainault and it included Mons and Tournai. The fourth book opens with a discussion of the three parts into which Gaul was divided. Of the Belgians, the Celts and the Poitevins each had its own religion, language and manners. The Belgians were the bravest of the three. Bereft of all comfort, and divided from the others in diet and customs, they were very harsh and savage, strong and brave. They had no relations with foreigners, and bought no merchandise from fear of becoming soft. Their continual wars with the Saxons beyond the Rhine made them even more cruel and more ready to support hardships. This book is concerned with Julius Caesar and concludes with his death. The fifth book says that after Caesar had destroyed Belgium many Belgian refugees hid for years in the coastal marshes, in woods and in caves. Famine and wild beasts devastated the land. Domestic animals reverted to savagery and the land lay uncultivated. At last Augustus agreed to let the Belgians return if they accepted disarmament and consented to pay taxes and adopt Roman customs. Some accepted these conditions and began to rebuild Belgis. The book tells the story of Christ and ends with the imprisonment of St. Peter. The sixth book begins by explaining the purpose of the first council at Jerusalem. Christianity reached Hainault and the surrounding lands and the author says he is determined not to lose sight of the task he has undertaken, by the grace of God. This book mentions the work of SS. Eucher, Nazaire and others, but is much concerned with St. Paul, Nero, Seneca and Pliny. It includes the death of Hadrian, and reaches the reign of Commodus. The seventh book continues the story of imperial times up to the death of Valentinian and the reign of Valens. Its first chapter is the last subject to be illustrated by the surviving pictures in the Holkham MS. Jacques de Guise says that Hugh of Toul is the sole authority for a revolt which occurred against Commodus. The Germans and the Gauls united against him. He summoned the senators and told them how often the Gauls had offended, he complained that the Germans had slain his envoys and he spoke about the expulsion and massacre of his tax collectors. The senators felt that the massacre of their leading citizens had offended the Gauls and partially excused their action. Their alliance with the Germans was particularly distressing and they advised the Emperor to send ten legions against the Germans. After subjugating the Germans the Emperor was content to impose half the previous tribute on the Gauls.

The general appearance of the Holkham MS. is much like that of another copy of the French translation of the Chroniques, Bodleian MS. Douce 205. Both often have 35 lines to the page and the miniatures are by the same artist. His name is unknown but he is called the Master of Antoine Rollin, because the Douce MS. was made for Antoine Rollin, son of the Chancellor Nicholas Rollin, Grand Bailli de Hainault and his wife Marie d'Ailly. He also illustrated

the Livre des Echecs Amoureux, MS. fr. 9197 in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. All three were exhibited together in the Royal Academy Exhibition of Flemish Art in 1953-4.

Confusion is sometimes caused by the fact that the Holkham Chroniques, MS. 658, is wrongly described as 659 (which is actually the Chronicle of the Counts of Flanders illustrated by the Master of Margaret of Burgundy) by Potthast.

The Holkham MS. contains nine pictures, the presentation of the book to the Duke of Burgundy, an author portrait, and a picture for each of the first seven books. Six of these are included in the slide set.

#### THE TRANSLATOR

The translator of this manuscript has been wrongly called Simon Nockart, owing to the misinterpretation of an inscription. Simon Nockart was, until 1449, clerk of the Grand Bailliage de Hainault as has been shown by E. Mathieu in "Un artiste picard à l'étranger" (in *Memoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie*, série iii, vol. x, Amiens, 1889, 333-356), it was Nockart who introduced the Duke of Burgundy's attention to the actual translator, Jean Wauquelin. The first commission given to Wauquelin was for translating the text from Latin of the *Annales Hannoniae* (of Hainault). No doubt Nockart knew the artist as well as the translator; for Dr. Pächt had identified the hand of the Master of Antoine Rollin, who happened to be the son of the Chancellor, Nicholas Rollin, Grand Bailli of Hainault.

Wauquelin long failed to receive the credit of making this translation. The Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library attributes to Jean Lessabé the translation in MS. Douce 205; Liebermann, who did not have time to read the Holkham catalogue (*Neues Archiv*, 10, 1885, pp. 596, 599) ascribed the translation to Nockart and Horwood (Ninth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, pt. ii, 1884, p. 363) proposed the names of J. Setro, George Chastellain and Vos de Lausanne. Lessabé was first described as the translator by Luc Wadding in 1650, an error which Arnold suggests may be due to the fact that a man of that name wrote a topographical account of Hainault for which he used the *Annales Hannoniae* of Jacques de Guise, but as Lessabé died at Tournai in 1557 he could not have been responsible for work done about a century before. Nockart's name comes forward because the *Chronique* is inscribed as made "por fray Diego de Guisa traduzida por Simon Nockart clerigo" in 1446 for Philip, Duke of Burgundy. The ascription to J. Setro is based on the occurrence of his name at the end of the manuscript - he may have been the scribe.

In the *Memoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie*, Ser. 3, (1889) Ernest Matthieu's Jean Wauquelin, traducteur, historien et littérateur has shown that Jean Wauquelin left the service of

the governor of Picardy, Jean de Bourgogne, to establish himself at Mons shortly before 1440, in which year he received payment for a book. His actual handwriting is known for all the corrections in a manuscript of the Chronicles of the Counts of Hainault in the Mons municipal library "ont esté faites de par le main de Jehan Wauquelin translateur de tous les trois volumes". Wauquelin had composed a Romance of Alexander for Jean de Bourgogne, and later he produced a more splendid copy for the Duke of Burgundy. For this, as for the Holkham manuscript, he showed a picture of the Burgundian court with the book being presented to the Duke as a frontispiece. This theme recurs in the *Grandes Chroniques* at Leningrad. Perhaps the best examples are in his *Chronicles of Hainault* in the *Bibliothèque Royale* at Brussels and in the *Girart de Roussillon* in the *Nationalbibliothek* at Vienna. Girart was particularly calculated to flatter the Duke as he was the first Duke of Burgundy and "conquered the King of France twenty times". The translation of the *Chronicles of Hainault* was evidently popular as nineteen manuscripts are known with French translations including three at Paris and others at Boulogne, Mons, Oxford, Vienna, Brussels (four), Cambrai and Valenciennes. Wauquelin's French translation was printed by Galliot du Pré in 1531-2 under the title of *Illustrations de la Gaule belgique, Antiquitez du pay de Haynau et de la grand cite de Belges*.

Jean Delaissé has made a study of the workshop of Jean Wauquelin and published the result in *La Miniature Flamande, Le Mecenat de Philippe le Bon, Exposition organisée à l'occasion du 400 anniversaire de la fondation de la Bibliothèque Royale de Philippe II le 12 Avril 1559*, 1959, p. 47. As early as 1879 de Brassart had drawn attention to the fact that Wauquelin had begun to receive an annual "pension" from Philip the Good out of the revenues of Hainault in 1447 (de Brassart, "Jean Wauquelin, traducteur de Jacques de Guise, 1446-1452" in *Souvenirs de la Flandre Wallonne*, xix (1879), p. 145 and ff.). Delaissé applied to the study of Wauquelin and other "publishers" of Flemish fifteenth-century manuscripts an archaeological technique comparing the physical appearance of their actual productions and proceeding from the known, signed, dated and localised to the unknown. Wauquelin first appears in 1445 when he made a translation of *Chroniques de Hainault* for the famous bibliophile Charles de Croy, later Prince of Chimay (British Museum MS. Lansdowne 214). He made a second translation, our present text, in 1446 for Philip the Good at the instigation of Nockart. In 1447 he recast *Girart de Roussillon*, in 1448 he adapted a *Life of St. Helen* and in 1451 he translated the *De Regimine Principum* of Aegidius Romanus. He was a publisher rather than a scribe or mere translator, employing a clerk, Jacotin Du Bois and porters. After his death in 1452 his widow continued the business and produced a third volume of the *Chronicles of Hainault* and a fourth volume of *Froissart*. Surviving accounts describe his business as that of "escripture, enluminure, dorure, reliure et armoyure". His other productions include a *Boethius*, a *Christine de Pisan*, a *Chroniques de France abrégées* and the *Histoire d'Alexandre*, of which a splendid copy

was prepared for Philip le Bon in 1448, produced in the earliest example of his great bâtard bourguignonne writing from a text made in 1440 for John de Bourgogne.

#### LITERARY STYLE

The style of the French is described by Ivor Arnold as that of the fifteenth century at its worst. Words and phrases are continually repeated for no good reason in attempt at style. This affectation is the translator's and does not occur in the Latin original. It is absent in the more concise version contained in the British Museum MS., MS. Lansdowne 214, a manuscript which belonged to the family of Croy and which contains, in addition to a translation of the Chronicle by someone other than Wauquelin, a translation by him of Geoffrey of Monmouth. To illustrate this inflated style, Arnold prints a passage which explains a picture on folio 25 not reproduced in this series:

Ou temps que Laomedon roy de Troye fu occis et mis a mort par Hercules et Jason, c'est assavoir ens es temps de Abessan et especialment es tamps de Zabulon, etc., etc. . . . en l'an apres la creation du monde deux mil sept cens quatre vings et troix, de la nativité d'Abraham le premier patriace viii. cens et vingt et. iiii. regnoit en Frige le roy Bavo qui estolt filz de la sereur legitisme de la femme dudit roy Laomedon, mere du roy Priant. Et ainsi estoient lesdis Bavo et Priant cousins germains comme issus et procreez de deux sereurs. Lesquelz deux rois comme ilz eussent oy la tres piteuse mort du roy Laomedon, avec ce la tres piteuse destruction et desolacion de la cité de Troyes et la prinse de Esiona, sereur du dit Roy Priant menée em Gresse comme en servitude, furent tres angousseux et troublez en coeur.

The various copies of the Chroniques were made by careful scribes and contain few variants. The Holkham text is related to that of Paris, Bibl. Ste. Geneviève 809-811. It is called "B" by Arnold who believed it to be nearer to the original than other MSS., though the authority of the Mons MS., corrected by Wauquelin himself, must in fact be higher.

#### FIRST OWNER

The Holkham Chronicle of the Counts of Hainault contains the arms of Berlaimont, Barry of six, vair and gules. These are impaled with the arms of Ligne, Quarterly, 1 and 4, Or a bend gules, 2 and 3, Argent 3 lions rampant gules. The Berlaimont arms are distinguished by a coronet and supporters. One of the early Berlaimonts was the famous Gilles de Chin, a twelfth-century co-hero of medieval romance with Gillion de Trapegnies. The surname is variously spelt Barlaymont, Barlaimont, Berlaymont and

Berlaimont. These arms are those of the most important and ancient of three families with this name. Gilles, Seigneur de Berlaimont, Hierge, Peruwelz and Beauraing married Marie de Ligne, Lady of Lens, Seigneur Beloell. Of their children, Lancelot was killed in 1484 and Marie died childless. F. V. Goethals, Dictionnaire généalogique et Heraldique de Royaume de Belgique, Brussels, 1849, vol. 1, says that Gilles had a daughter who left everything to Charles de Berlaimont, Seigneur de Floyon, whom she adopted. The coronet is significant because Charles was the first count in the family. Such arms were sometimes inserted in manuscripts a considerable time after their production. The Berlaimonts were an important family and inter-married with most of the Burgundian and Flemish noble families like Croy and Lalaing.

#### Slide 1

This handsome frontispiece shows Jacques de Guise presenting his translation of the Chronicle of the Counts of Flanders to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, in 1446. A similar picture occurs in Bibliotheque Royale MS. 9243 in Brussels. Miss J. G. Tarbet is producing a Study of the Life of Antony, Great Bastard of Burgundy, in the course of which she has become familiar with the features of the Duke and of his courtiers as a result of comparing numbers of miniatures in manuscripts produced under his patronage and showing his court around him at similar presentation scenes. She remarks that generally Philip is not plump, as here, but has sharp features and pointed shoes. He generally wears a hat, but not of the type shown here. As here he wears the order of the Golden Fleece. His motto is generally shown on the walls or on a banner. This is a fine view of the palace interior. Note the material on the back of the throne and the miniature on the wall behind the Duke. Opposite it there is suspended an early example of a lantern clock. There is one like this in another fine manuscript, "Les Grandes Chroniques". Each side of the throne one can see through doorways into rooms beyond. The presentation copy of the book is a large volume ornamented with five great bosses. Two pet dogs are playing on the floor. Two of the courtiers have hawks on their wrists.

A border of gold is ornamented with naturalistic representations of flowers and birds. Some of them cast shadows on the gold in order to give an illusion of reality as if they were placed on top of, and projecting above, the surface of the picture. This is a late fifteenth-century characteristic of some Flemish illuminated manuscripts and was copied from the later work of the Master of Mary of Burgundy. Among the objects shown there is a butterfly and two insects like house-flies. There is also an ape combing his head at a hand mirror. The coat of arms of Berlaimont is shown three times - once with a coronet and supporters and once, in a lozenge, quartered with the arms of Ligne.

## Slide 2

After a small portrait of the author Jacques de Guise, on folio 2v., not included in this slide set, the second large picture introduces Book 1, on folio 25. This shows the alliance between King Priam of Troy and King Bavo of Phrygia. Hercules and Jason had killed King Laomedon of Troy and in the background it can be seen being rebuilt. According to the legend Bavo foresaw the destruction of Troy and emigrated to Hainault. Just as the Romans claimed to be descended from the Trojan prince Aeneas so the British claimed to be the realm of another Trojan, Brutus. Here we have an instance of the fascination which Troy had for medieval chroniclers. London claimed to be New Troy and the name of the Trinovantes was given an ingenious but impossible derivation from Troy Novant to link the ancient Britons with Troy.

The arms of Berlaimont recur on the foot of this page. There are birds, flowers and strawberries in the margins. Notice the distant landscape through which a river winds and the costumes of the courtiers grouped each side of the page. All the hats are flat, as in the previous picture. Only the royal personages wear long robes. A crane and a ladder can be seen in the building operations. On the opposite side of the river from Troy there is an army.

## Slide 3

The frontispiece of the second book shows Ursus made first King of the Belgians. There is no historical connection between this legendary event and the actual Belgian monarchy. This was supposed to have taken place "apres la destruction de la noble cite de Troyes environ cccc et v ans ou seloncq une aultre oppinion cccc et l ans cest assavoir ou tamps de Ozia Roy de Iherusalem et de Judee". He was called Ursus, which means "Bear", because he was hairy. The artist should have drawn him two cubits taller than the others.

As before, the arms of Berlaimont are in the lower margin. Flowers, birds, strawberries, flies and a butterfly inhabit the margin, casting shadows on the gold ground as if they were in front of the plane of the parchment. Notice the back of the throne, somewhat like that in Slide 1. There is a little ape in the foreground. At the back of the room there is a doorway with two arches through which the eye can travel. The left side of the picture shows the outside of the palace, and its entrance with three steps. There is a tall belfry and a street receding into the distance. This is the last picture in volume I of the Holkham copy of the Chronicle of the Counts of Hainault. It occurs on folio 90.

## Slide 4

This shows the first annual election of a duke by the Belgians, a legendary event assigned to the time when Cambyses was King of Persia. It is described in the rubric as "Comment la cite de

Belges cest adire les Belgiens instituerent chascun an duc pour le gouvernement dicelle cite et du realme". In the foreground stand six nobles in magnificent robes deliberating. There is a small hound at the heels of the one on the right. On the left rises a tall slender tree. In the middle distance is a compact Flemish city with walls and towers. On the right a miller is approaching a post mill and behind it there is a row of five other windmills. There is a distant landscape with hills rising from the plain and it contains other distant towns. Clouds are represented by horizontal streaks. The lower margin contains the arms of Berlaimont. Flowers, flies, a butterfly and a strawberry cast their shadows again on the gold background. This picture introduces book 3 and occurs on folio 161. It was reproduced by Dorez as plate 60 in his book on illuminated manuscripts at Holkham and was reproduced in the Illustrated London News to illustrate the exhibition of Flemish art at Burlington House.

#### Slide 5

Book 6 begins with an account of the first Council at Jerusalem, here shown. St. Paul and St. Barnabas are shown in the foreground disputing against the contention of certain converted but mistaken Pharisees who maintained that the faith was insufficient for salvation unless the Mosaic law were also observed. The case was heard before St. Peter and St. James, wearing his mitre as Bishop of Jerusalem. St. Peter remarked that he had himself baptized Cornelius and preached to the Gentiles. St. James, as Bishop of Jerusalem where the question had been raised, pronounced by pontifical authority the definitive sentence. The text says that St. Peter had not yet become pope and did not go to Rome until later the same year. It may be, therefore, that St. James, not St. Peter, is the central figure. The identity of the cardinal is not clear. Note the distant landscape seen through the window behind the hanging. The margin contains acanthus scrolls, daisies, peas, a strawberry, a cabbage white moth, a bird and daffodils on a gold ground in the style typical of the Master of Antoine Rollin. Notice the arms of Berlaimont and of Berlaimont quartered with Ligne.

#### Slide 6

Book 7. Commodus tells the Roman Senate how the French and Germans rose against the tax collectors. In the streets outside spies report the Roman preparations. Note the cloak and dagger, the arms of Berlaimont in the margin, and, quartered with Ligne, in the initial and the thistle, strawberry (in flower and fruit), bird, snail, butterfly, cornflower and daisy. A hound is at the Emperor's feet in the Senate. Note gabled building over the gate, it is typically Flemish in style. In the distance are tents and beyond that the fires lit during the troubles.