

Chivalry and Politics in Fifteenth-Century Orders of Knighthood

Sanne van Splunter

3237222

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Supervisor: Dr. A.J. van den Hoven van Genderen

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Introduction

Lay orders of knighthood were a common phenomenon in late medieval Europe. The first orders started to appear in the 1320's and 1330's, with the oldest known order, that of St George in Hungary, being established in 1325.¹ In the two centuries that followed, two periods can be discerned, 1330-1381 and 1430-1469, in which most orders were founded.² Most royal courts of Latin Europe had founded an order of knighthood during this period,³ and many French and German dukes followed example.⁴ In his extensive and authoritative study on these orders, D'A.J.D. Boulton writes that these princes were not solely lead by a desire to follow a fashion, but 'most of the founders created their order in response to a very particular political situation, often quite pressing, and tailored the statutes of the order to suit their perceived needs in that situation.'⁵

The political importance of these orders, however, has often been dismissed or undervalued by historians.⁶ This is due to the influential works of Johan Huizinga, whose views on these orders have generally been accepted by scholars up to the 1980s.⁷ In his chapter on orders of knighthood in *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen*, he writes that political utility was antithetical to the religious and chivalric elements of these orders. It was in the earlier, religious orders the political utility came to the fore, which pushed the chivalric and religious elements to the background;

'De eerste ridderorden, de drie grote van het Heilige land en de drie Spaanse, waren als een zuiverste belichaming van middeleeuwse geest ontsproten uit de verbinding van het monniks- en het ridderideaal. (...) Zij waren gegroeid tot grote staatkundige en economische instellingen, ontzaglijke vermogenscomplexen en financiële machten. Hun politieke nuttigheid had zowel hun geestelijk karakter als het ridderspel-element op de achtergrond gedrongen.'⁸

1 Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (reprint; New Haven 2005) 179, D'Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, *Knight of the Crown, The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe 1325-1520*, (reprint; Woodbridge 2000) xi (from here on referred to as 'KotC')

2 KotC, 453

3 Ibidem, 452; the only exceptions were Navarre and Portugal

4 For a discussion of orders founded by French princes see: KotC, 'French Princely Orders Founded Before 1430', 271-278 and 'Appendix II. Additional Monarchical Ordes founded by French Princes before 1430', 547-550. For a discussion of German orders, see: Holger Kruse et al., *Ritterorden und Adelsgesellschaften im Spätmittelalterlichen Deutschland*. (Frankfurt am Main 1991)

5 KotC, 453

6 Malcolm Vale, *War & Chivalry, Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages* (London 1981) 34

7 His most notable writing on these orders is the chapter 'Ridderorden en ridderlijke geloften' in *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen* (1919; reprint 1989) 78-88

8 Huizinga, *Herfsttij*, 78-79; the English text as translated in the first English translation by Fritz Hopman (1924): 'The first great orders, those of the Temple, of Saint John, and of the Teutonic Knights, born of the mutual penetration of monastic and feudal ideas, early assumed the character of great political and economic institutions. Their aim was no longer in the first place the practice of chivalry; that element, as well as their spiritual aspirations, had been more or less effaced by their political and financial importance.' p. 74; I have not been able to consult a

The lay orders which emerged in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, however, he typifies as having the 'chivalric play element' as a principal element:

‘Doch in de veertiende en vijftiende eeuw was het ridderwezen enkel meer hogere levensvorm, en daarmee was in de jongere ridderorden het element van edel spel, dat in hun kern besloten lag, weer op de voorgrond gekomen. Niet dat zij enkel spel waren geworden. Als ideaal zijn zij nog altijd vervuld van hoog ethisch en politiek streven. Maar het is waan en droom, ijdele plannenmakerij.’⁹

Huizinga thus typifies the political importance of an order as contrary to the chivalric elements in it. The politically important religious orders had little ‘chivalrous play elements’, whereas the lay orders of the fourteenth and fifteenth century were saturated with these ‘play elements’, and thus their intended high political goals were nothing but idle dreams. This characterization of the ceremony and decor of the lay orders as contradictory to any political purpose, resulting in a loss in meaning, has often been levelled against lay orders of knighthood.¹⁰ It was not until the resurgence of interest in chivalry as a field of study that the role of lay orders of knighthood in late medieval society was re-evaluated. Most notably, this was done by Malcolm Vale in a chapter of his book *War and Chivalry*.¹¹ He argues that due to their exclusive nature, which limited membership only to the aristocratic elite, the orders provided ‘a means whereby the real props [i.e. the aristocratic elite] of any fifteenth-century régime might be secured and strengthened.’¹² He argues that, because the aristocratic elite and their support were fundamental for the rule of a prince, the orders provided a new way in which to strengthen the ties of loyalty of that elite to the prince and his dynasty. There was a need for such a new way of reinforcing loyalty, he writes, as ‘the ties of vassalage were largely a thing of the past. Loyalty had become negotiable, and the increasingly materialistic nature of the relationship between lord and man – cemented largely by money payments in the form of pensions and annuities – may have lain behind the attempt to invoke the ties of chivalry.’¹³

more recent translation by Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (1994) and it should be noted that the 1924 English translation is incomplete and misses large portions of the text as it was written in Dutch.

9 Huizinga, *Herfsttij*, 79; English as translated in the first English translation by Fritz Hopman (1924): ‘It was in the orders of more recent origin that the primitive conception of a club, of a game, of an aristocratic federation, reappeared. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the real importance of chivalrous orders, which were founded in great numbers, was very slight, but the aspiration professed in founding them were always those of the very highest ethical and political idealism.’ p. 74-75; note that in this translation, Huizinga's assertion that this political idealism is ‘a phantasm and a dream, idle planning’, is left out.

10 Keen, *Chivalry*, 199

11 Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 33-62

12 Ibidem, 35

13 Ibidem, 35

Vale proposes a different relationship between the ceremony and chivalric ideas of these orders and their political goals. Instead of an antithetical relationship, he argues that ‘an order of chivalry could act as a means whereby chivalrous ideas were transposed into political reality.’¹⁴ Thus, by invoking chivalric ideas in these orders, the prince gained a new way of retaining the loyalty of their noblemen in times when old means were proving to be less effective.

A slightly different interpretation is given by Maurice Keen. He also argues that chivalric elements were used as a way to further a political goal, such as reinforcing diplomatic alliances and consolidating political loyalty, and writes that the ceremony, glamour and the idealistic goals of the orders were meant as a way to add lustre, since ‘solid political and social objectives would be better served if their service could be given a more illustrious slant’.¹⁵ He thus positions the chivalric elements not as a tool to activate loyalty, but as a veneer that would appeal to the target audience.

For this thesis, I wish to examine that relationship and interaction between politics and idealistic notions more closely. Several studies have been done on the political functioning and the role of chivalric ideals in these orders, however most of them have been cursory examinations of various orders.¹⁶ The most in-depth study has been done by Hugh Collins, which is a case study of the Order of the Garter.¹⁷ For this thesis, I will examine two other orders: the Order of the Golden Fleece and the Order of the Crescent.¹⁸

The Order of the Golden Fleece, founded by Philip the Good in 1430 is, together with the Garter, the most well known and well studied order. The Order of the Crescent, founded by René of Anjou in 1448, is not as well known and very little studied. Because the Order of the Crescent was active from 1448 to 1480, I have chosen to limit my study of the Golden Fleece to the Burgundian period – that is to say, from 1430 to 1477 – as that offers a convenient point to stop at roughly the same time the Crescent ceased to exist.

There are a few reasons for choosing these two orders. First of all, it is a matter of accessibility and availability of sources. Unlike some other orders, both have a full version of their statutes as well as partial or complete lists of their members and accounts of their meetings. Furthermore, these sources are accessible either through critical editions (the Golden Fleece) or through the digitalization of the manuscripts (the Crescent).

14 Ibidem, 62

15 Keen, *Chivalry*, 190

16 Most notably by Vale, *War & Chivalry*, 33-62; the monumental KotC also touches upon these themes.

17 Hugh E.L. Collins, *The Order of the Garter 1348-1461. Chivalry and politics in late medieval England*. (Oxford 2000)

18 For the course Nobilities in Transition, given by Prof. dr. J.F.J. Duindam and Dr. A. Janse in 2012 (Leiden), I have written a paper on the politics of the Order of the Golden Fleece: 'Corrections and Accusations, The Order of the Golden Fleece as a Political Instrument'. This research inspired the topic of this thesis.

Secondly, both René of Anjou and the Burgundian dukes were part of two younger branches of the royal Valois family which had build their territories on the appanages granted to their ancestors by King Jean the Good as well as large additions of territories through marriage and inheritance. It would be interesting to see how the representatives of these two Valois families organised and used their respective orders.

My research question therefore is: what is the relationship between politics and the idealistic notions of chivalry and how do these two elements interact with one another within the Orders of the Golden Fleece and the Crescent?

In order to answer this question, this thesis is divided into three parts. First, a more general exploration of orders of knighthood has to be made. Therefore, subquestions for part one will be: what is an order of knighthood and what organizational and inspirational models were used in creating these associations. The second part contains a short introduction to the Golden Fleece and the Crescent as well as the political context of their creation and their functioning. This will include a description of the sources.

Part three is subdivided into three thematic sections. Throughout these thematic explorations, the political and idealistic elements of the orders will be the leading principles. Section one deals with questions of membership; what are the requirements for membership, who are elected and what is the election process? This allows one to gain an image on the factors which were considered important for gaining access to the order as well as the amount of influence the founders and the members of the orders had over this process. Section two discusses the reasons for leaving the order or for expulsion from the order. This will give an insight into whether these decisions were politically or idealistically motivated or both. The third and final section deals with the ways in which these orders sought to encourage or discourage particular kinds of behaviour. In this section, I will look at the obligations of the members as well as the encouragement and discouragement of behaviours through honouring and criticising the members.

What is an order?

Different terminology has been used to refer to orders of knighthood. Usually, the terms used by scholars have two elements. First, adjectives such as 'lay', 'temporal' or 'secular' are used to distinguish between these orders and the religious orders like the Templars and the Teutonic knights. Secondly, the qualifications 'of knighthood' or 'of chivalry' are added to reflect the medieval French term *ordre de chevalerie*. For my thesis, I will follow Boulton's use of the term lay orders of knighthood.¹⁹ He argues that using the term 'chivalry' for these orders is confusing as in most scholarship chivalry commonly refers to the ethos of the nobility. Contemporary medieval uses of the term *ordre de chevalerie*, however, are understood to refer to the knighthood as a class. Therefore, 'order of knighthood' would be a more precise translation into modern English. Furthermore, Boulton prefers the term 'lay' over alternatives as it refers to the lay status of the members of these orders and is therefore more precise than the alternatives.²⁰

The wording thus used would describe a group consisting of lay knights. However, the group of orders of knighthood so defined is very broad and extremely heterogeneous. The order of the Golden Fleece is one of the most prestigious and well known orders of knighthood and in modern scholarship commonly understood as a political tool to further the ambitions of the dukes of Burgundy. It had very little in common with the order of the Golden Apple, which was founded in 1394 in Auvergne and which functioned like a group of brothers-in-arms,²¹ and these two orders also had very little in common with the Swabian order of the Falcon and the Fish, which had organizing tournaments as its primary activity.²² Thus, it still does not specify the activities and goals of such a group, nor the organizational form.

In addition to a very heterogeneous group of associations that called themselves 'orders', there are groups which use other terms to refer to themselves, such as 'company' or 'society', but which are in other ways similar to groups which are named 'orders'. Examples are the company of the Star of the French king and the fraternal society of knighthood of St. George in Hungary, both of which are comparable in organization and activities to 'orders' founded by other kings.²³ Furthermore, some groups which carry the title order are almost indistinguishable from other forms of nobiliary organization like retinues and brotherhood-in-arms. Due to this ambiguity in the use of the term it is

19 KotC, xi, n. 2

20 Ibidem, xi

21 Keen, *Chivalry*, 189, KotC, xvii.; a study on this order: A. Bossuet, 'Un ordre de chevalerie Auvergnat: l'Ordre de la Pomme d'Or', *Bulletin historique et scientifique de l'Auvergne* (1944), 83-98

22 Keen, *Chivalry*, 187

23 See KotC, 27-45; 167-210; The Company of the Star existed from 1364 to 1380, the Fraternal society of knighthood of St George existed from 1325 to 1395.

therefore not workable to solely considering groups with the title 'order'.

The difficulty to distinguish what is and is not an order was also a concern for Olivier de la Marche, who wrote in 1502 in his *Epistre pour tenir et celebrer la noble feste du Thoisson d' Or* an explanation of what he considers orders and why.²⁴ He first singles out insignia given out without a restriction on the number of bearers, and which did not have any statutes or regular chapter meetings. These he calls *devises* and are therefore not orders. An order, he explains, has statutes and chapter meetings, as well as a limit on the number of members. An association that does have statutes and meetings, but has an unlimited number of members, he calls a confraternity.

De la Marche's concern with the distinctions between these different groups is explained by Maurice Keen as a desire to reserve the title order to prestigious ones like the Garter and the Golden Fleece, while at the same time also making a distinction between badges of retinue given without any further organization around it, and the insignia indicating an organization with rules and regular meetings.²⁵

De la Marche's distinctions, however, were not made by the founders of these associations. Moreover, De la Marche only concerns himself with groups founded and maintained by princes, but the phenomenon of knightly societies was not restricted to those founded by princes, nor was the title 'order'. For an academic approach it is therefore necessary to try and make a different classification that will encompass all groups. Furthermore, even when defining what is and is not an order, scholars have made further subdivisions within the group of what they define as an 'order'. The reason for this is that the group of lay orders of knighthood is so diverse that it is impossible to be studied as a single phenomenon, and one has to make a kind of classification that allows for meaningful generalizations that apply to all orders in one group.²⁶

A first attempt at classification was made by Richard Barber in his 1970 publication of *The Knight and Chivalry*.²⁷ He divided them into three groups: princely orders of 'high intent', orders which sole purpose was 'chivalric whim on their founders' part' and 'practical associations'.²⁸ In the first group he places princely orders which De la Marche would have described as the only group of true orders: those which were founded by princes and had a high degree of organization.²⁹ In the second, he describes orders called into life for a specific chivalric goal, like the order of the White Lady on a

24 Published in: Olivier de la Marche, *Mémoires*, vol 4, ed. H Beaune, J. Arbaumont (Paris 1888) 158-189

25 Keen, *Chivalry*, 182

26 KotC, xiv

27 Richard W. Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*. (Reprint: Woolbridge 1995) 339-350

28 Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 339-350

29 Ibidem, 339-349

Green Shield, founded by the famous French knight Boucicaut to defend disinherited and unprotected ladies, as well as orders which De la Marche describes as *devises*.³⁰ The third group he reserves for orders which were very close in terms of organization and activities to alliances and brothers-in-arms.³¹ It is, however, not sufficiently comprehensive to be used when studying these orders more closely.³²

For this reason, D'A.J.D. Boulton has made new attempts at classifying these orders of knighthood. He has made two models of classification, both of which are described in his in depth study of these orders in *The Knights of the Crown*.³³ His first version used the quantifiers of 'constitutional form, principal purpose and intended longevity' to categorize these associations into six groups, four categories of orders, two categories of 'pseudo-orders', which he considers clearly distinct classes.³⁴

First a distinction is made between pseudo-orders and 'true' orders, following the principles of Olivier de la Marche. The first group does not have statutes or a corporate organization, the second group has both. 'True' orders are subsequently divided into four groups; monarchical, confraternal, fraternal and votive orders. Pseudo-orders fall into two groups; cliental and honorific.

The first group of 'true' orders were attached to a princely court, often of an effectively sovereign prince, and had as primary goal to loyal service of its members to the prince.³⁵ These orders are called monarchical due to their monarchical constitution, which put the prince as the head of the order. This is one of the distinctions between this group and the second group of 'true' orders, called the 'confraternal orders'.

The confraternal orders get their name from their organization, which was based on the lay confraternities. Boulton divides confraternal orders into two sub-groups. The first group, 'princely confraternal orders', closely resembles the monarchical orders in purpose and organisation, except that their sovereign is not the head of the order.³⁶ Instead, the order has an oligarchical organization, and the head of the order was elected. The second group of confraternal orders Boulton calls 'baronial confraternal orders' due to their members coming from the baronial class. These orders were not associated with a princely court or dynasty. In order to understand the nature of these baronial confraternal orders, Boulton suggests to view them as 'an aristocratic version of the

30 Ibidem, 349

31 Ibidem, 350

32 KotC, xv

33 The second version is only published in the reprint of his book; *The Knights of the Crown* (Woolbridge 2000)

34 KotC, xv

35 Ibidem, xv-xvi

36 Ibidem, xvi

professional guilds'.³⁷

The third group of 'true' orders, the fraternal orders, were orders which were closely related to the concept of brothers-in-arms and temporary alliances. The only distinction between these orders and many other types of temporary alliances was the use of the word 'order'.³⁸

The last group of the 'true' orders Boulton defines as groups of which the members 'undertook a collective vow to perform certain specific chivalrous deeds, under specific conditions and within a specific period of time, after the completion of which the society is simply dissolved'.³⁹ These orders closely resembled the individual vows of knights to perform heroic deeds called enterprises of arms and were primarily intended to enhance the reputation of those who undertook the vows.

The two groups of pseudo-orders are defined as follows. The cliental pseudo-orders had a membership consisting of men bound by an oath of clientship to the founder. These orders were indistinguishable from retinues, except for their title 'order'.⁴⁰ Honorific pseudo-orders put no demands on its members, but membership was usually bestowed during a festive occasion, such as a coronation or a completion of a pilgrimage.⁴¹

This classification rests heavily on the organizational form of the orders. This means that orders which might have had a similar purpose end up in different categories, such as the princely confraternal orders and the monarchical orders. Furthermore, while the princely and baronial confraternal orders used the lay confraternity as an organizational model, their purposes were very different. While the princely variant resembled the monarchical orders, with being associated with a princely court and their focus on loyal service, the baronial orders were mostly concerned with organizing festivities in their region and promoting chivalrous conduct.⁴²

Since the first publication of *The Knights of the Crown*, Boulton has proposed a different method of differentiating between different groups of orders (see appendix 1).⁴³ Instead of creating rigid groups, he uses dichotomies of important characteristics. This creates a multidimensional model that allows for the many mixed forms of organization to become apparent without creating rigid groups. Thus, in addition to a differentiation made between groups with and without statutes, there are differentiations between confraternal and non-confraternal groups, both of which are also divided into groups with a monarchical constitution and those with an oligarchical one. This allows

37 Ibidem, xvi

38 Ibidem, xvii

39 Ibidem, xvii

40 Ibidem, xviii

41 Ibidem, xix

42 Ibidem, xvi

43 First presented in a colloquium in 1999 at the Fondation Singer-Polignac in Paris, but an extended version was published in the reprint of KotC (2000), Appendix I, 541-544

the similarities between the ‘princely confraternal orders’ and the ‘monarchical orders’ - some of which have a confraternal organization – to become more apparent. Furthermore, in the second version, Boulton reserves the term 'order' to what he terms as 'political curial societies', societies that were attached to a court of a prince with an explicit political component. The reason he gives for this is that these groups were the only ones ‘that even approached the religious orders of knighthood in the extent of their endowment and organization and the high level of their goals’.⁴⁴ It is this last group with which this thesis is concerned. I will follow Boulton's proposed terminology and use the word 'order' to refer to this specific group of 'political curial societies'.

The usage of Boulton's second model is the most useful for the discussion and the orders at hand. When taking into consideration the two orders that are the focus of this thesis, the limitations of Barber's models and Boulton's first classification system become apparent. In Barber's classification, it remains vague what the 'princely orders of high intent' exactly entailed and which orders do and do not belong in this category. In Boulton's first model, the Orders of the Golden Fleece and of the Crescent fall into two different categories. While the order of the Golden Fleece is counted among the monarchical orders, the order of the Crescent is a princely confraternal one.

However, making a distinction between the Golden Fleece and the order of the Crescent based on whether or not the founder was the formal head of the order is not a very useful one. As will be discussed in more detail below,⁴⁵ the different aspects of the orders, such as the election process, will show that the amount of influence these founders had was not as clear cut as the categories 'monarchical' and 'confraternal' imply. Both the Burgundians and René of Anjou tried to find a balance between controlling the proceedings of their orders and creating the image of an association in which all members were equal.

The second taxonomy of Boulton is by far the most useful, as it provides more axes of comparison, and allows for the nuances between organizational forms to become more apparent.

44 KotC, 545

45 See the discussion under the heading ‘the election process’

Inspirational and organizational models

As discussed above, the classification models discussed above rest heavily on the organizational form of the orders. The lay confraternities are the main model for the organization of the orders with which this thesis is concerned. However, these orders have an amalgamation of sources of inspiration, all of which left their imprint on the shape of these orders. Therefore, before discussing the lay confraternities, it is useful to look at two other sources of inspiration.

Fictional orders of knighthood

One inspiration were the fictional portrayals of the orders of knighthood in popular romances, and in particular the Arthurian romances. The first mention of a fictional order of knighthood is by Geoffrey of Monmouth and concerns the society of the Round Table:⁴⁶

‘Arthur then began to increase his personal entourage by inviting very distinguished men from far-distant kingdoms to join in. In this way he developed such a code of courtliness in his household that he inspired peoples living far away to imitate him. The result was that even the man of noblest birth, once he was aroused to rivalry, thought nothing at all of himself unless he wore his arms and dressed in the same way as Arthur's knights.’⁴⁷

This society of the Round Table was developed further by other authors; it was incorporated by Wace in his *Roman de Brut*, Robert de Boron in his *Merlin* and the anonymous author of the *Perceforest*.⁴⁸ Robert de Boron, writing in the first half of the thirteenth century, further elaborated on the shape of such a society. The Round Table had fixed number of members. The number is fifty-one in the *Merlin*, though some later romances give the numbers 150 or 250.⁴⁹ Merlin choose the fifty initial members of the order, with one seat – the 'siege perilous' – remaining empty only to be occupied by a knight of outstanding worthiness. Furthermore, the members, once having shared a meal together, were to treat each other with affection. Wace, in *Roman de Brut*, writes that the members of the Round Table treated and regarded each other as equals.⁵⁰

A second fictional order is present in the *Perceforest*, called the order of the *Franc Palais*. The *Perceforest* romance was written by an anonymous author in a French Hainault dialect between 1314 and 1325, a timing which Boulton notes is only shortly before the foundation of the first lay

46 KotC, 22

47 Geoffrey of Monmouth. *History of the Kings of Britain*. Trans. L. Thorpe (1966), p. 222

48 KotC, 22-23

49 Ibidem, 23

50 Ibidem, 22; *Roman de Brut* : ‘Arthur made the Round Table / Of which the Britons speak many fables / There sat the vassals / All chivalrously, and all equal’ (as quoted by KotC, 22)

orders of knighthood.⁵¹ This society of the *Franc Palais*, like the society of the Round Table in the *Merlin*, has a fixed number of members (300), and its members were to be treated as equals. Additionally, only those knights who were worthy were to be admitted as members.⁵²

Though the writers never specify how exactly these fictional orders supposedly functioned, they did provide an inspiration for the orders founded in the fourteenth and fifteenth century. Several elements were used, such as the idea of exclusivity which stipulated that men had to be of outstanding chivalrous behaviour to be accepted into this order. Furthermore, many orders took the idea that the meeting of the order took place in one fixed room where the seating arrangements were indicated by the armorial bearings of the members was also used.⁵³ Sometimes, these fictional orders formed quite a literal inspiration, as is the case with the order of the Garter. Edward III of England explicitly modelled his society on that of the Round Table and intended it to be a refounding of the famous society of his mythological predecessor.⁵⁴ Though not much of Edward's initial plans for the order is known, what is known suggests that he drew his inspiration from several literary depictions of orders: that of the Round Table and the *Franc Palais*. The protagonist of the *Franc Palais* was an ancestor of King Arthur, and was thus also part of the English chivalric tradition and the ancestry which Edward hoped to emulate.⁵⁵ Edward's order to have the same prestige and standing as Arthur's Round Table, and it was to be a perpetual organization attached to the royal court. Furthermore, it was to have the same number of members as the *Franc Palais* (300).

However, despite their appeal to the imagination, the fictional orders did not provide any basis for forming a real life organization, as there are no detailed descriptions of their rules or structure.⁵⁶

Religious orders of knighthood

Another possible source of inspiration to draw from were religious orders of knighthood like the Templars.⁵⁷ These religious orders originated in the first half of the 12th century and quickly became major military powers. They were committed to the Holy War and formed the elite in the crusading armies of the 12th and 13th centuries. Their discipline and loyalty to their commanders was in stark contrast with the undisciplined and often recalcitrant vassals participating in the military skirmishes

51 KotC, 23

52 Ibidem, 23

53 D'Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, 'The Middle French Statutes of the Monarchical Order of the Ship (Naples 1381): A Critical Edition, with Introduction and Notes.' *Mediaeval Studies* 47 (1985) 184

54 Collins, *The Order of the Garter*, 6-33; Richard Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England: The Battle of Crécy and the Company of the Garter* (London 2013) 149-178

55 Richard Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 173-4

56 KotC, 24

57 For a recent study on the Templars see Helen Nicholson, *The Knights Templar, a new History*, (Stroud 2001)

of the princes.⁵⁸ Thus the usefulness of these disciplined groups inspired several Iberian kings to found religious orders of knighthood to serve in their war against the Infidel on the Iberian Peninsula. Examples of these are the Order of St. James, founded by King Fernando II of Leon in 1170 and the Order of St. George of Alfama, created by King Pere II of Aragon in 1201.⁵⁹ These Iberian orders had a major influence, though they remained religious orders separated from the courts and secular ambitions of the kings who founded them. However, Boulton remarks, it was only a matter of time before sovereign princes would want to create orders of knights that served them and their successors directly.⁶⁰

These religious orders, however, did not provide a useful model for a lay order of knighthood. There are several reasons for this. First of all, the religious orders answered to their Grand Master, who was elected by the professed brethren of the order from their own ranks. This meant some degree of autonomy from royal or princely power.⁶¹ Moreover, the religious orders were subject judicially to ecclesiastical authority, not to the secular one.⁶² A construction like this meant the order would have to follow the commands from someone else other than the prince and thus would be contrary to the envisioned goal: that of undivided loyalty to the prince.

The second reason is due to the men who a prince hoped to attract to the order: the most powerful and wealthy members of the nobility. Due to their military resources and political influence, these were the most useful members of society whom a prince could hope to bind more closely to his own political ambitions through an order of knighthood. However, the vows of a religious order would not have appealed to this group of society.⁶³ As the religious orders were modelled on monastic orders, the members of these orders had sworn oaths of poverty and chastity and had to live a communal monastic life.⁶⁴ The brethren lived lives under the Cistercian rule supplemented with stipulations and adaptations for their military lifestyle. These rules governed every aspect of the brethren's lives.⁶⁵ Secular princes who wanted an elite, disciplined order of knights in their own service would have to create a lay organization which would not place such strict conditions on the members, but instead allowed the members to continue to live their lives as much as possible in order to appeal to powerful and wealthy noblemen.⁶⁶ For these reasons,

58 KotC, 21

59 Ibidem, 17-18; see also: Enrique Rodríguez-Picavea Matilla, 'The Military Orders and Hospitaller Activity on the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages', *Mediterranean studies* 18 (2009) 24-43

60 Ibidem, 21

61 Ibidem, 21

62 Keen, *Chivalry*, 180

63 KotC, 21

64 There are some exceptions, though the vast majority had rules based on the Cistercian order and the set of rules written by Bernard of Clairvaux in 1128 specifically for a society of knights in Jerusalem. See: KotC, 16-18

65 KotC, 16-18

66 Ibidem, 21

religious orders were not a feasible model for lay orders of knighthood.

Furthermore, the superficial similarities between lay and religious orders as bands of knights that formed a loyal military power fall away when one looks at the spirit in which these orders were created. Religious orders were created in the service and aiding of the Holy War, they aggregated against the secular ideal of knighthood. They were the embodiment of Bernard of Clairvaux's 'new knighthood', with its emphasis on poverty and warfare only fought against the enemies of Christ.⁶⁷ Lay orders of knighthood, however, fully embraced what Bernard of Clairvaux aggregated against in his 'in Praise of the New Knighthood': worldly rewards and glory were at their core, and they specifically sought to consolidate secular loyalties.⁶⁸

It can therefore be concluded that although the religious orders served as examples of military discipline, the organizations themselves did not provide useful models for the lay orders of knighthood due to their different goals and a way of organization that did not appeal to that part of society from which the princes hoped to draw their order's membership.

Confraternal societies

The orders were all organized as confraternal societies.⁶⁹ Lay confraternities were a widespread phenomenon from the thirteenth century onwards.⁷⁰ This organizational form allowed the confraternities to adapt it to their own needs and the common interests of the group. Not only orders of knighthood, but also charitable organizations and guilds were commonly organized as confraternities. This type of organisation could thus be found in many different parts of society.⁷¹ Though the intentions and goals of these confraternal societies differed greatly, there are several common characteristics between them and the orders of knighthood.

First there is the regulation of the organization through a constitution or statutes. These rules stipulated the goals for that society, the admission process, the rights and duties of the members, and the activities and administrative side of the society.⁷² The recruitment of new members was regulated and restricted to certain members of society; restrictions could include moral, religious and social limitations as well as restrictions on class and profession. Only if an aspirant member met all these requirements there would be a vote for his election. Second is the patronage of an

67 KotC, 16

68 Keen, *Chivalry*, 199

69 Boulton, 'The Middle French Statutes of the Monarchical Order of the Ship', 185; KotC, 24-26; Keen, *Chivalry*, 181-182

70 KotC, 24; Keen, *Chivalry*, 181; See for a general study on the confraternities in France: Catherine Vincent, *Les Confréries Médiévales dans le Royaume de France, XIIIe-XVe Siècle*. (Paris 1994)

71 Vincent, *Les Confréries Médiévales dans le Royaume de France, XIIIe-XVe Siècle*, 72

72 KotC, 25

appropriate saint.⁷³ This could mean the confraternity would maintain a chapel dedicated to their patron, and would meet annually on the feast day of that saint for a collective mass. For orders of knighthood, the patron saint was usually one associated with chivalry, such as Michael, George and Maurice, or the Blessed Virgin Mary.⁷⁴ The third characteristic is that during this annual meeting, the affairs of the confraternity were discussed.⁷⁵ It was an opportunity to elect new members, to settle disputes between existing members, and to reward or punish the behaviour of existing members in the past year. Lastly, the religious duties and benefits for the members of a confraternity were mirrored in the orders. Often, there were masses, prayers and permanent memorials in the confraternity's chapel for deceased members. Furthermore, members were often obliged to perform additional masses or prayers throughout the year.⁷⁶

All of these characteristics are found in the statutes of the orders of knighthood. However confraternities were egalitarian in nature and the founder of an order would need to adapt this form of organization in order for it to serve its purpose of promoting loyalty to him. Thus, although confraternities provided a useful model of organization in other respects, princes needed to adapt parts of the organization so it could serve the promotion of loyalty and service to the crown.⁷⁷

73 Ibidem, 25

74 Boulton, 'The Middle French Statutes of the Monarchical Order of the Ship', 183; 185

75 KotC, 25, Keen, 181-182

76 Vincent, *Les Confréries Médiévales*, 110-120

77 Boulton, 'The Middle French Statutes of the Monarchical Order of the Ship', 185-6

The Burgundian dukes – Philip the Good (r. 1419-1467) and Charles the Bold (r. 1467-1477)

The Burgundian dynasty started with Philip the Bold, the youngest son of the Valois king John the Good. For his loyal service and deeds on the battlefield of Poitiers in 1356, his father gave him the duchy of Burgundy. Through dynastic politics, the Burgundians managed to carve out a large swath of land on the borders of France and the Roman Empire. Especially under Philip the Good, the third Valois Duke of Burgundy, they extended their control over new lands.⁷⁸ Upon his father's death, he became Duke of Burgundy, Count of Flanders and Count of Artois, in addition to being Count of Charolais, a title given to the heir apparent of the sitting Duke of Burgundy.⁷⁹ During his reign, he acquired the county of Namur (1421),⁸⁰ the duchy of Brabant and Limburg (1429/30),⁸¹ the counties of Hainaut, Holland and Zeeland (1433),⁸² and the duchy of Luxembourg (1444).⁸³ Furthermore, in 1456, he expanded the dynasty's influence in two Episcopal lands bordering his own territories by electing his bastard son David of Burgundy as bishops of Utrecht and his nephew Louis of Bourbon as bishop of Liège.⁸⁴ During his own reign, Charles the Bold tried to expand his territories further in the Alsace, Lorraine, Guelders and Frisia, though not with the same success as his father, as none of these territories ever came under permanent Burgundian control.⁸⁵

The Burgundian lands had a big disadvantage compared to England and France: although ruled by the same lord, they were not a single jurisdictional unit.⁸⁶ The Burgundian lands were what Boulton calls a 'domain' as opposed to a 'dominion'. A dominion, as defined by Boulton, is a 'discrete jurisdictional territory of a territorial lord of any sort, marked with a distinctive name and title' and he defines a domain as a 'set of multiple independent dominions, not formally united in a larger dominion, but ruled simultaneously by the same lord'.⁸⁷

The policy of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold with regards to this issue was to unify the

78 See: Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 29-53

79 Françoise de Gruben, *les Chapitres de la Toison d'Or à la époque Bourguignonne (1430-1477)* (Leuven 1997) 7

80 De Gruben, *Les Chapitres*, 7, Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 29-30

81 He was named heir in 1429, and in 1430 the Duke of Brabant, Philip of Saint-Pol, died. Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 51-52, Gruben, *les Chapitres*, 7

82 Vaughan notes that 'no single date can be attached to Philip's acquisition of Hainaut, Holland and Zeeland, for the process was a gradual one', *Philip the Good*, 49-50. However, the formal and complete surrender of the lands into the hands of the duke was in 1433. See: Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 32- 50. Antheun Janse. *Een Pion voor een Dame, Jacoba van Beieren (1401-1436)*, (Amsterdam 2009) 281-287, 312-316.

83 Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 274-280

84 Ibidem, 230-232

85 Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 84-122

86 D'Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, 'The Order of the Golden Fleece and the creation of Burgundian National Identity' in: D'A.J.D. Boulton, J.R. Veenstra (ed.), *The ideology of Burgundy: The Promotion of National Consciousness, 1364-1565* (Leiden 2006) 25-26

87 Boulton, 'The Order of the Golden Fleece and the creation of Burgundian National Identity', 21, n.1

lands through adopting several instruments that were being employed by kings in order to further unity; the formation of 'national' mythology, adoption of saint Andrew, the traditional patron saint of the duchy of Burgundy, as patron saint to the dynasty's lands, a badge in the form the saint Andrew's cross for soldiers, and a badge of the *fusil* (flint-and-steel) for the ducal household, establishment of a monarchical order.⁸⁸ The political goals of the Order of the Golden Fleece is therefore usually described in terms of a unifying element.⁸⁹ A second ambition of both dukes was to become kings in their own right.⁹⁰ This ambition, however, was pursued in vain.

Although they were carving out their own territories, the Burgundian dukes played a considerable role in French politics. Their relationship with the French kings was often strained or outright hostile. For the first part of his reign, Philip the Good was in alliance with the English against the Dauphin and later King Charles VII. With the treaty of Arras in 1435, Philip the Good severed his ties to the English cause. In return, he was promised several territories as well as a release from the fealty and homage due to the French king. However, the French had no intention of honouring the agreement, as they solely used it as a means to detach the Duke of Burgundy from the English.⁹¹ The French foreign policy under Charles VII remained marked with hostility towards the Burgundians.⁹²

When Charles the Bold became Duke of Burgundy in 1467, the relationship with the King of France was not much better. His personal relationship with the King of France, Louis XI, was strained.⁹³ This hostility marked much of Charles' politics as he build alliances with opponents of the French king such as the English and the Duke of Brittany, as well as Naples and Aragon.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Charles the Bold attempted to sever his ties to the kingdom of France more permanently with the treaty of Peronne in 1468. Part of this was to enforce that the treaty of Arras, however the underlying theme in the treaty of Peronne was the diminishing of royal influence and power in Burgundian lands.⁹⁵ In his biography of Charles the Bold, Vaughan notes that the treaty showed 'Charles's most profound aspiration of all [was] the severance of all connections between France and Burgundy which in any sense reflected or maintained the subordinacy of the duke to the king.'⁹⁶

88 Boulton, 'The Order of the Golden Fleece and the creation of Burgundian National Identity', 27

89 De Gruben, *les Chapitres*, 11

90 Boulton, 'The Order of the Golden Fleece and the creation of Burgundian National Identity', 26

91 Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 113

92 Ibidem, 115

93 Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 42

94 Ibidem, 42-45, 60-1

95 Ibidem, 55-58

96 Ibidem, 57

René of Anjou (1409-1480)

René of Anjou was a member of another cadet branch of the Valois family. King John the Good (1319-1364) gave his three younger sons their own appanage. That is to say, they were given duchies which were to return to the crown if there was no male heir. As discussed above, the youngest, Philip, was given Burgundy. The second son Louis I of Anjou got the Duchy of Anjou.⁹⁷ The Angevin dynasty gained more lands through marriage and by inheriting. In 1380, Louis I of Anjou was named the heir of Jeanne I, the (titular) Queen of Sicily. He thereby gained the counties of Provence, Forcalquier and Piémont, as well as claims to the thrones of Jerusalem and Naples.⁹⁸ Moreover, Louis III of Anjou, René's brother, was named as the heir to Queen Joanna II of Naples, which strengthened their claims to the throne of Naples.⁹⁹ In addition to this, the Angevin house touted claims to the thrones of Hungary and Aragon.¹⁰⁰

The Angevin lands were thus a patchwork of dominions scattered over Latin Europe. However, while the Angevins had an impressive list of claims, they effectively only controlled their French territories and despite their attempts, were unable to gain full control over Naples and Aragon.¹⁰¹ They were thus kings in title only.

When René was born in 1409 as the second son, he did not stand to inherit these lands and claims. Through his marriage to Isabelle of Lorraine (1420) and his adoption by the Duke of Bar as his heir (1418), René was destined to be the lord over the neighbouring Franco-German duchies of Bar and Lorraine.¹⁰² The first part of his life was spent in these regions, as he was educated at the court of his father-in-law.¹⁰³ However, with the death of his brother in 1434, he inherited all the lands and all the claims of the Angevin dynasty.¹⁰⁴ His life was marked with succession wars. His succession to Lorraine and Bar was contested, which marked the years after he succeeded his father-in-law and landed him in Burgundian captivity from 1431 to 1437.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, his Italian interests marked much of his politics. His claim to the throne of Naples landed him in wars with the Aragonese between 1435 and 1442, and again between 1458 and 1464. In the wars of 1435 to 1442,

97 Alain Girardot. 'René d'Anjou: une vie', in: Jean-Michel Matz, Élisabeth Verry (ed.), *le Roi René dans tous ses États*. (Paris 2009) 17; the third son, John, was named Duke of Berry.

98 Girardot, 'René d'Anjou: une vie', 17

99 Alan Ryder, 'The Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples.' in: Christopher Allmand (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History* 7 (Cambridge 2008) p. 574-576

100 Girardot. 'René d'Anjou: une vie', 17-20

101 There have not been any serious attempts to make good on their claims to the thrones of Hungary and Jerusalem.

102 Girardot. 'René d'Anjou: une vie', 20-24

103 Ibidem, 26-27

104 Ibidem, 30-1; Ryder, 'The Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples', 574-577

105 Girardot. 'René d'Anjou: une vie.' 27-28; Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 63-4; The Burgundians were the allies of his opponent, Antoine of Lorraine, the lord of Joinville.

he fought against Alfonso of Aragon. Though he ruled Naples briefly in the period between 1438 and 1442, he lost it to his rival Alfonso of Aragon.¹⁰⁶ After Alfonso's death in 1458, René and his son, John of Calabria, launched a second invasion and tried to claim to throne to the disadvantage of Ferrante, Alfonso's illegitimate son. However, Ferrante was able to ward off the Angevin campaign with the backing of the pope and established his rule over Naples from 1464 onwards.¹⁰⁷ René's meddling in the conflicts on the peninsula were not restricted to Naples. In the years 1450-1454, he participated in the hostilities between Milan and Venice.¹⁰⁸

While he had several male heirs, he outlived them all. Thus, when he died in 1480, his appanage of Anjou, as well as his claims to the various crowns were transferred to the King of France. The Duchies of Bar and Lorraine went to his grandchild through his daughter, René II.

The patchwork of territories René did control were, much like the territories of the Burgundians, extremely diverse linguistically, politically and culturally.¹⁰⁹ They were not a legal unity, but a domain comprised of different dominions. Similarly, both René and the Burgundians had regal ambitions. The difference being that René of Anjou sought to take control of at least one of the kingdoms he was titular king to, while the Burgundians enjoined the prestige and power of *de facto* kings but had no title to match it.¹¹⁰

The big difference between the Angevin and the Burgundian dynasties was their relationship to the King of France. While the Burgundians sought to gain independence, and more often than not had antagonistic relations with the king, René was a loyal supporter.¹¹¹ Furthermore, the King of France was a useful ally whose own interests often overlapped with those of René of Anjou.¹¹² In the schemes of the French kings against the Burgundians, René and his lands bordering the Burgundian territories often played a role. For instance, in the succession wars in Lorraine, Charles VII came to the aid of the Angevins.¹¹³ Furthermore, they shared René's interest in expanding their

106 Amedeo Feniello. 'Naples dans l'aventure italienne.' in: Jean-Michel Matz, Élisabeth Verry (ed.), *le Roi René dans tous ses États*. (Paris 2009) 120-123

107 Ryder, 'The Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples.' 580

108 Michael Mallett, 'The Northern Italian States.' in: Christopher Allmand (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History 7* (Cambridge 2008) 565-566

109 For the politics of René in his various dominions see: Rivière, Christophe. 'René 1er d'Anjou, duc de Lorraine (1431-1453): un prince moderne dans une principauté féodale?' in: Jean-Michel Matz and Noël Yves Tonnerre (ed.), *René d'Anjou (1409-1480) Pouvoirs et Gouvernement* (Rennes 2011) 31-46; Matz, Jean-Michel. 'Le duc en son apanage.' *le Roi René dans tous ses États*. 53-74; Pécout, Thierry and Roux, Claude. 'La Provence au temps du roi René.' *le Roi René dans tous ses États*. 75-98; Feniello, Amedeo. 'Naples dans l'aventure italienne.' *le Roi René dans tous ses États*. 99-123

110 Michael T. Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' *Journal of Medieval History*. vol. 19 (1993), 49

111 Ibidem, 149

112 Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 113-115

113 Ibidem, 62-4

influence on the Italian peninsula.¹¹⁴ The Order of the Crescent can therefore not be conceived as a tool to gain independence for René, as the Golden Fleece was for the dukes of Burgundy.¹¹⁵

René of Anjou and the Burgundian dukes were not only pitted against one another in their relationship to the King of France. As the Burgundian sought to gain influence and control in the territories between Burgundy and their northern dominions, they clashed with the Angevin dynasty over René's lands in Lorraine and Bar on multiple occasions.¹¹⁶ As mentioned above, René spend several years in Burgundian captivity as the Burgundians sided with his rival in the Lorrainian succession wars. Moreover, a few decades later, in his the attempts to unity his northern and southern territories, Charles the Bold tried to exert and expand his influences in the region and took brief control over Lorraine in 1475.

114 Ryder, 'The Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples', 565-566

115 Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 58

116 Girardot. 'René d'Anjou: une vie.' 24-31, 41-43

The Order of the Golden Fleece¹¹⁷

The Order of the Golden Fleece was proclaimed on 10 January 1430 in Bruges and it still functions as an order today.¹¹⁸ The focus of this thesis will be on the Burgundian period, that is to say: From the order's foundation in 1430 by Philip the Good until the death of Charles the Bold in 1477.

The patron saint was Saint Andrew, who was also the patron saint of the duchy of Burgundy. Chapter meetings were initially set to be held yearly on the feast of Saint Andrew, which was 30 November.¹¹⁹ There were, however, some problems with this frequency and this time of year.¹²⁰ Meeting at the end of November was difficult and from 1451 onwards, the chapters were held at the beginning of May. As annual meetings were not always possible either due to the preoccupations of everyone, the duke included. For this reason, the chapter meetings after 1433 were not annually. In the period of 1430 to 1477, thirteen chapters were held, eleven under Philip the Good and two under Charles the Bold.

The number of members was initially restricted to twenty-four, but that number was increased to thirty in 1433.¹²¹ The reasons for this increase will be discussed in more detail in the section on the election process.

In the light of Burgundian politics there are several important things to note. As mentioned before, Philip the Good and Charles the Bold held vast and very different territories and made attempts to solidify a stronger unity between these dominions. At times, they also held the higher ambition of trying to become king in their own right. The Order of the Golden Fleece reflects these ambitions both in the fact that a duke would found an order this elaborate as well as in the statutes' emphasis on loyalty.

The direct endowment of the order with statutes as well as the scale of the properties it was endowed with, immediately gave the order and its founder enormous prestige. According to Boulton, the nature and extend of the statutes and properties made it the second highest order, right after the Garter, in terms of splendour.¹²² Furthermore, it is unique that Philip the Good was able to

117 There is a wealth of scholarship on this particular order. For this thesis, my main sources on the general history of the order are Françoise De Gruben, *Les Chapitres de la Toison d'Or à l'Époque Bourguignonne (1430-1477)* (Leuven, 1997) and Pierre Cockshaw, and Christiane Van den Bergen-Pantens (ed.), *l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or. De Philippe le Bon à Philippe le Beau (1430-1505): Idéal ou Reflet d'une Société?* (Brussels 1996)

118 That is to say: there are two orders of the Golden Fleece functioning today, maintained by two different offshoots of the Habsburg family: the Spanish royal house and the Austrian Archduke of Habsburg.

119 Ibidem, 82

120 Ibidem, 82-3

121 De Gruben, *Les Chapitres*, 20-21

122 Boulton, 'The Order of the Golden Fleece and the creation of Burgundian National Identity', 28

execute his ambitious plans from the very start. Boulton writes: ‘In fact, only kings had hitherto proclaimed fully-realized orders of this type, and only the kings of England – in 1430 the leading power in Latin Europe – had been able to establish and maintain the order they had proclaimed in anything like its original or intended form.’¹²³ The sheer ambition in the creation of the Order of the Golden Fleece shows that the order served as a symbol for the regality of the Burgundian dukes.¹²⁴

On the point of the politics of unification and solidifying noble loyalty, Boulton argues that the order played a key role in these politics of unification. It provided a symbol of unity with the most important members of the nobility wearing the order’s insignia, such as the collar.¹²⁵ Moreover, he argues that the order filled a gap in the structure of the Burgundian 'state', and thereby being a concrete tool in the unification of the Burgundian states as he compares the social role the order to the English House of lords.¹²⁶ However, the concrete role the order played in such unification schemes is hard to measure and other scholars have argued that the Burgundian court played a far more important role in the unification of the Burgundian elites.¹²⁷

Although the order was initially tied to the ducal territories of Burgundy, the order did not pass to the French crown together with the Burgundian lands upon the death of Charles the Bold. Instead, Mary of Burgundy gained the order and in 1478 the order elected her husband Maximilian as member and chief.¹²⁸ Thus, the order continued to function under the Habsburg dynasty.¹²⁹

123 Ibidem, 28-29

124 Boulton, 'The Order of the Golden Fleece and the creation of Burgundian National Identity', 30

125 Ibidem, 32

126 Ibidem, 30

127 Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 172

128 De Gruben, *Les Chapitres*, 396

129 Ibidem, 396

Sources for the Order of the Golden Fleece

There are two texts of interest to study the functioning of the Order of the Golden Fleece. One is the statutes, the other are the accounts of the chapter meetings. In addition to these sources, I will use the prosopography of the members of the order, which is edited by Raphaël de Smedt.¹³⁰

The statutes

In her critical edition, Sonja Dünnebeil ordered the statutes were into 103 different articles. These articles describe the proceedings during a meeting, several offices in the order, the election procedure and all the rules which the members had to abide by at all times.

The statutes could be amended. The members would have to discuss and cast their votes on the changes during a meeting, after which the articles could be changed.¹³¹ There were, however, a few articles that only the duke could alter.¹³² These were the articles 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-17, 66 and 77-83 and they dealt with the reasons for expulsion for the order, the procedure of voting for new members, the oaths that were taken upon being accepted as a member, and the rules stipulating the loyalty to the duke and his causes. Having control over these aspects in the statutes ensured that the duke couldn't be overruled by majority vote on key points which ensured the duke's control in the order: the control of who became a member and what members had to stand for during their membership.

Only minor changes were made to the statutes in the years between 1431 and 1473. In 1433, the number of members was raised from twenty-four to thirty and in 1440, an article was added to ensure exclusivity: members could not be part of another order, with the sole exception of monarchs and princes who were the heads of their own orders.¹³³

In 1446, the last amendment to the statutes was made. The duke ordered a committee, made up of a small group of the members, to look at the statutes, to reorganize and rewrite if necessary. The end result was a reshuffle of the articles, and only one small change to the election system. Instead of casted their votes anew for every vacant seat, the first vacant seat would go to the nominee with the most votes, the second vacant seat would go to the runner up of the tally, and so

130 Raphaël de Smedt (ed.), *Notices Bio-bibliographiques. Les Chevaliers de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or au XV^e Siècle* (Frankfurt am Main 2000)

131 Sonja Dünnebeil (ed.), *Die Protokollbücher des Ordens vom Goldenen Vlies* 1, 2, 3. (Stuttgart 2009) 189; From here on out the three volumes containing the sources on the Golden Fleece will be referred to as PB I, PB II and PB III respectively. If it concerns the statutes rather than the accounts of the chapter meetings, it will be specified.

132 PB I, *statutes*, 189

133 *Ibidem*, 197

on.¹³⁴

While the last amendment was a practical change, the first two ensured the duke could elect the men he wanted into the order. The 1440 amendment allowed the duke to elect the first monarch to his order, Alfonso of Aragon (elected in the following chapter of 1445). Without the clause that princes and sovereigns could have their own order besides being a member of the Golden Fleece, he would not be able to elect what would be the first of the royal members of the Golden Fleece. Furthermore, the rise of members in 1433 allowed the duke to get more men elected during that meeting. It could thus be argued that the changes made were tweaks to the already existing system to make the order function like the political tool the duke had intended.

Because each member got a copy of the statutes upon being accepted into the order, there are quite a few manuscripts. A critical edition has been made by Sonja Dünnebeil and I will use this edition for my thesis.¹³⁵

The accounts of the chapter meetings

The accounts of the chapter meetings during the reign of the Burgundian dukes are divided into three registers.¹³⁶ The first register deals with the eleven meetings held under Philip the Good. The second and third respectively deal with the meetings in 1468 and 1473 under Charles the Bold. A critical edition of these registers has been published by Sonja Dünnebeil. For this thesis I will therefore make use of that edition.

The accounts record the major events taking place during each meeting. It thus provides detail for the ceremonial proceedings, religious activities such as prayer for dead members, the banquets, and the ‘corrections’. Furthermore, it provides an account for the members which are present at the meetings, the newly elected members, the changes made in the statutes, as well as discussions and negotiations of disputes in which the members were involved. The chapter accounts thus provide an account of what happened during the meetings as well as a complete membership list.

There is a significant difference in the nature of the accounts of the meetings during Philip the Good's reign and those during Charles the Bold's reign. The two meetings taken place under the latter are recorded in far greater detail. While the accounts under Philip solely mention that a ceremony had taken place, the accounts of the 1468 and 1473 meetings record more often than not

134 Ibidem, 193-195

135 PB I, *Statutes*, 189-231

136 The manuscripts are kept in Vienna, Archiv des Ordens vom Goldenen Vliesse, Burgundisch-spanisches Archiv: Protokolle der Ordenskapitel 1431-1473.

the order in which members had performed a certain ceremony, as well as recorded their speeches. Therefore, the accusations and praise as well as the response given during the 'corrections' were recorded. Another example is the requiem mass of the dead, for which the speeches as well as the order of passing on the candle were recorded. This level of detail is absent in the descriptions of the meetings between 1431 and 1461.

There is thus considerable difference between the accounts. It is therefore difficult to compare the order's function under these two dukes, as the missing detail in the accounts under Philip could give an impression of a much more peaceful order. The accounts under Charles the Bold show a lot of discussions, disagreements and conflict mediation, in which the duke himself was involved himself. One must keep in mind that the absence of elaboration of the discussions going on during Philip's reign does not mean the same level of discussions and conflicts weren't happening between 1431 and 1461.

The Order of the Crescent¹³⁷

The order of the Crescent was founded in 1448 and functioned until the death of its founder in 1480. The number of members was limited to the number fifty, which was rather high compared to the limits set by the Golden Fleece. However, this number is similar to that of several German orders.¹³⁸ Furthermore, the choice for fifty could be linked the wanting to reflect the Round Table as closely as possible, as fifty was the first fixed number mentioned with regards to the Round Table.¹³⁹

The members were to hold the chapter meetings annually on 22 September, the feast day of the patron of the order, St. Maurice. Saint Maurice of the Theban legion was one of the three military saints which were regarded as the heavenly patrons of knighthood.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, Saint Maurice was the patron saint of the cathedral of Angers, which was the capital of the Duchy of Anjou. Thus the choice of this saint simultaneously symbolized the connection to the dynasty and duchy of Anjou, as well as emphasizing the chivalrous status of the order with his status of exemplar of Christian chivalry.¹⁴¹

One remarkable feature of the Order of the Crescent was the function of the senator. The ownership of the order was attached to the duchy of Anjou, which meant that whomever was the Duke of Anjou had the right to continue the order. For most orders, this person was the head of the order. However, René of Anjou refused to be the head of the order and instead the order was to choose the head of the order, called the senator, from one of its members. Senators only held their position for one year and new senators would be elected during the chapter meetings. In his function, the senator was to preside over the chapter meetings, accept new members, and punish behaviour of the members to his own discretion.¹⁴²

Upon René's death in 1480, the patronage of the order passed to the King of France. However, the king already had his own order, that of st. Michael (founded 1469), and subsequent successors to the French throne seemed to have no interest in keeping the Crescent as a full order. Instead, the order survived as a pseudo-order or *devise* up to 1515. After the death of Louis XII, the order seemed to have dissolved completely.¹⁴³

137 Compared to the Order of the Golden Fleece, very little written about the Order of the Crescent. The only works that deal exclusively with this order, as far as I know, are Michael T Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant', *Journal of Medieval History* 19 (1993) 125-161 and Clément Beaudinet, *L'Ordre du Croissant* (2001) [thesis; Université de Nancy]. However, I have not been able to consult the latter.

138 KotC, 614

139 Ibidem, 23

140 Ibidem, 12; the other two saints were St. Michael the Archangel and st. George of Lydda.

141 Ibidem, 613, Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 53-4

142 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 140-2

143 Ibidem, 621-22

Sources for the Order of the Crescent

The sources on the Order of the Crescent are not published in a critical edition, like those of the Order of the Golden Fleece. However, the manuscripts containing the statutes, membership lists and accounts of meetings are accessible through the digital collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale: Gallica. Whenever possible, I have tried to verify my reading of the sources with the readings of Boulton and Reynolds.¹⁴⁴

The statutes

The statutes of the Order of the Crescent have been preserved in at least two versions. The oldest manuscript holding the statutes of the Order of the Crescent can be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris as MS 25204.¹⁴⁵ This fifteenth century manuscript does not only hold the statutes of the order, but also the armorials of members of the order.

The date of production of this manuscript is put at 1462 based on the absence of two armorials in the manuscript. Louis de Beauvau, who was a member since 1448, died that year, and André de Haraucourt joined the order that year.¹⁴⁶ With the absence of both their armorials, it is likely that the manuscript was produced in that year.¹⁴⁷ Two seventeenth century copies of this version of the statutes exist: the *Le vray théâtre d'honneur et de chevalerie* by Vulson de la Colombière¹⁴⁸ and the manuscript Clairambault 1309.¹⁴⁹ However, they are incomplete copies. Both resemble the MS 25204, but miss the last three articles and the epilogue.

A second version of the statutes can be found in *Les Oeuvres complètes du bon roi René*, published by Comte de Quatrebarbes in 1845.¹⁵⁰ This version was copied from the 1644 publication by Claude Ménard, who in turn copied the statutes from manuscripts of the churches of Saint Marthe in Tarascon and the Cathedral church of Angers dedicated to Saint Maurice.¹⁵¹ The version of Ménard and the MS 25204, though in large part containing similar content, do show some

144 KotC, 611-622; Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 125-161

145 Paris, BN, MS. fr. 25204 can be viewed online on the website of Gallica:
<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8470042b>

146 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 130

147 Christian de Mérindol. *Le roi René et la seconde maison d'Anjou : emblématique art histoire*, 382

148 M. Vulson de la Colombière, *Le vray théâtre d'honneur et de chevalerie* 1 (Paris, 1648) 107-22

149 Paris, BN, MS. Clairambault 1309

150 Comte de Quatrebarbes (ed.), *Oeuvres complètes du Roi René : avec une biographie et des notices*, 1 (Paris, 1845) 51-79

151 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 129; Reynolds notes that the churches Ménard probably meant were the church of St. Marthe in Tarascon and the cathedral church of Angers, which was dedicated to st. Maurice.

differences as MS 25204 has more text.¹⁵² An extra sentence or word is added, but in some instances, an entire article is added. As MS 25204 appears to be a refinement of the Ménard version, Reynolds suggests that the version as copied in Ménard is a copy of an older version of the statutes that predates 1462.¹⁵³ Reynolds also provides a table which categorizes the articles of the statutes by content, based on the copy of Ménard.¹⁵⁴ This overview of the articles as well as the numeration of them will be used to refer to specific articles in this thesis.

The accounts of the chapter meetings

The accounts of the chapters are fragmentary and incomplete. There are extracts from the registry kept by the greffier, Jean de Charnières, from the years 1450-1452, which are preserved in the manuscript Clairambault 1241.¹⁵⁵ In these years, three chapters and seven councils took place. Chapters were the annual meetings of the order, for which the ceremony and proceedings were captured in the statutes. Councils took place every few months. The extracts of these councils show that these meetings were used to discuss practical and organizational matters related to the order. The extracts of the chapters and councils of the Order of the Crescent are not only incomplete with regards to the years covered, they also only account the decisions that were made. This is in contrast to the accounts of the chapters of the Order of the Golden Fleece, which are structured around the day-to-day events of the chapters and recount all the ceremony and proceedings taking place.

Membership and Senator lists

As with the accounts of the chapters, the membership and senator lists are incomplete as well. A total of fifty-five members can be counted from the list in manuscript Clairambault 1241¹⁵⁶ and the armorial in MS 25204.¹⁵⁷ Of twenty-six of these knights the election dates are known, which all lie between 1448 and 1454.¹⁵⁸ In these same manuscripts, seven senators can be found for the years 1448 to 1454.¹⁵⁹ The most complete list of these members, gathered from the two manuscripts mentioned above, can be found in Perrier's essay, with a short prosopography of the members, senators and officers of the order.¹⁶⁰ However, the twenty-one Neapolitan knights who temporarily

152 Ibidem, 130; Reynolds puts it at about 500 words more.

153 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 131

154 Ibidem, 135, included as Appendix 2 of this thesis

155 Paris, BN, MS. Clairambault 1241, 905-920

156 Ibidem, 925-949

157 Paris, BN, MS. fr. 25204, f. 41r-56v

158 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 151

159 Their election as senator is marked in MS. Clairambault 1241

160 Emile Perrier. *Chevaliers du Croissant: Essai Historique et Héraldique*. (Vannes 1906) 17-18, 24-63 (members), 13 (senators), 13-17, 64-66 (officers)

joined the order during the invasion of Naples by John of Calabria in the years 1459 to 1461 are missing in this list.¹⁶¹

While the senator list is especially incomplete, the known members would probably account for a considerable portion of all the members of the order.¹⁶²

The incompleteness of the sources on the Order of the Crescent make it difficult to make wholesale comparisons to the Order of the Golden Fleece. Furthermore, the sources seem to be more complete with regard to the first decade of the Crescent's existence. The extracts of the chapters and councils date from the early 1450's, the known senators are from the first seven years of the order's existence, and twenty-six of the fifty-five members are known to be elected between 1448 and 1454.¹⁶³ Because of this incompleteness, it must not be presumed that the sources which are available give a representation of the entire period in which the order was active, as the mass of the sources are from the first decade of its existence.

One possible explanation for this bias of the sources towards the 1450's is that the administration of the order's affairs was not as well kept after the 1450's and that they therefore do not exist. Another explanation could be that during the compilation of the manuscript Clairambault 1241, which accounts for a list of most of the known members and all the senators as well as the only extracts from the chapter meetings, the writer relied on incomplete source material or simply did not copy everything he found. A closer study of this manuscript is in order to come to a more definite conclusion. The manuscript contains a large quantity of copied material on various French orders of knighthood. It seems to consist of many different parts, which might have different origins, as the manuscript is written in many different hands and some pages have old page numbers written on them.

161 See Paris, BN, MS. Clairambault 1241, 948 for a list of these knights

162 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 154

163 Ibidem, 151

The Orders in Action

With each topic to be discussed I will discuss the idealistic aspects of the orders first, before turning to an evaluation of the political dimension. As mentioned above, scholars have proposed various ways to explain the presence of idealistic, chivalric elements in organizations which they typified as primarily political in nature. These elements, according to Keen, were meant as a tool to make the orders more appealing and therefore more effective in enticing the noble elite.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, Vale emphasized that by appealing to a common idealistic notion of chivalry, the orders could serve as a way to influence and control the behaviour of the noble elite.¹⁶⁵

All order presented themselves as an exclusive association. A limit was set for the amount of members and during their membership, men were expected to conform to certain rules and requirements. If one did not meet the requirements, one could not be considered for membership. If one did to did not comply with certain rules, one could be expelled from the order. During one's membership one did not only have to abide by the most fundamental rules that warranted expulsion, but the order sought to impose obligations on its members as well. Furthermore, some orders employed systems of criticism and honouring to further reward or discourage behaviour.

164 Keen, *Chivalry*, 190

165 Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 62

Membership

Before discussing the reasons for expulsion as well as the ways in which the orders sought to reward and discourage particular kinds of behaviour, it is important to look at who was thought to be worthy of membership, who was elected and how the election procedures took place.

Requirements of membership

Most orders had two basic requirements for men who wanted to join the order. The first noble or knightly status. The second was moral worthiness.

The restrictions based on noble and knightly status seem to have been present in almost all orders, though the precise requirements could vary.¹⁶⁶ Most orders restricted membership to those who had receive the accolade of knighthood, while a few, such as the Order of the Band (Castile-Leon, 1330-1474) and the Order of the Stole and Jar (Aragon, 1403-1516), extended their membership to squires as well. The Order of the Golden Fleece was in this respect no exception, and required its members to be knights.¹⁶⁷ The concepts of knighthood and nobility overlapped and were heavily intertwined in late medieval thinking. While not every nobleman was a knight, being dubbed a knight would mean one entered the nobility if one was not part of that before.

There are very few orders which specify that prospective members are able to comply to both requirements. Among those orders which do have these two requirements are the Order of the Band and the Order of the Garter. The Crescent did not follow this particular custom, but like many German orders, only specified that a member had to be of noble lineage.¹⁶⁸ More specifically, the Crescent's statutes stipulate that one had to be of noble blood through four family lines.¹⁶⁹ This meant that one did not necessarily had to be a knight. These stipulations as to what degree one had to be of noble lineage were absent in earlier orders outside of the Empire, but became a more widespread practice from the fifteenth century onwards.¹⁷⁰

The second qualification, that of moral worthiness, was not as universal as restrictions based on lineage or knighthood.¹⁷¹ Nonetheless, there were quite a few orders which did specify that one had to have some personal qualities for joining the order. These included the Garter, the Collar (Savoy, 1364-present), the Ship (Sicily, 1381-1386) and Saint Michael (France, 1469-1790) as well as the Crescent and the Golden Fleece. All except the Order of the Ship did so in the most general

166 KotC, 458

167 De Gruben, *Les Chapitres*, 21, KotC, 614

168 KotC, 614

169 Ibidem, 614

170 Ibidem, 458-9

171 Ibidem, 459

terms; they only stipulated that a man had to be ‘without reproach’. The Order of the Ship was an exception in that it specified in great detail the qualities one ought to have or not to have in order to be considered. This ranged from being of good reputation and a true Catholic, to not being a user of foul language nor have specific professions such as being a lawyer, a merchant or a judge.¹⁷² Quite likely, the other orders kept their qualification of being ‘without reproach’ purposely vague for the simple reason that they did not wish to restrict their options in elections.¹⁷³ This allowed them to interpret the requirement as they saw fit.

This duality of worthiness through lineage and worthiness through behaviour echoed the ideas about nobility of that time. Lineage and virtue and how they determine nobility were at the centre of much late medieval debate.¹⁷⁴ For on the one hand it was maintained that one was noble by virtue of birth and lineage and on the other hand, that one was ennobled through their virtuous conduct. This raised the question what the relationship between virtue and lineage was.¹⁷⁵ Keen argues that, although the ideas of nobility through behaviour and through lineage might seem to be a contradiction of one another, those concerned with this debate tried to unite the two concepts. The reasoning was that the virtue and reputation of the noble ancestors would serve as an example and an encouragement to the generations who were alive.¹⁷⁶ The idea put forward was thus not so much an opposition of two ideas, but the intertwinement of them. One had to strive for virtuous living exactly because of one's lineage, in order to live up to and continue the reputation of that lineage.¹⁷⁷ Keen concludes: ‘The medieval view of lineage and nobility is thus one which focuses not simply on birth as the determinant of caste so much as on family traditions of honour and privileged position founded in past achievement, and offering an example to future generations.’¹⁷⁸

Although this would have to be investigated further by studying other orders in more detail to reach a more definite conclusion, there seems to be a parallel between ideas of nobility and the requirements for access to membership of a lay order of knighthood. By using the qualifications of both lineage and personal virtue, orders seem to carry out that same message that one's nobility, and by extension their worthiness of membership of the order, relied on this tandem of nobility through blood and nobility through behaviour. Having noble ancestry alone was not enough. One had to be worthy through one's own conduct as well. Moreover, this emphasis on behaviour was not just

172 Ibidem, 300; Boulton, 'The Middle French Statutes of the Monarchical Order of the Ship'

173 KotC, 459

174 Keen, *Chivalry*, 143-161; Keen, 'Some Late Medieval Ideas about Nobility.' in: Maurice Keen, *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages*. (London 1996) 187-207

175 Keen, *Chivalry*, 159

176 Ibidem, 160

177 Ibidem, 160-1

178 Ibidem, 160

applied to the entrance requirements, but to the obligations during one's membership as well. As will be discussed later on in this thesis, members had to continue to live 'without reproach' and orders used several tools to encourage and reward some types of behaviour, while discouraging or punishing other kinds.

The election process

As mentioned above, the requirements for membership were set out in purposefully vague terms, so it would not limit the options of the head of an orders. This created room to elect those men who were deemed politically valuable to the head of the order. A second condition that allowed the order to function as a political tool was that the head of the order had to have some control over who was elected as a member. It is therefore important to explore what the election process looked like and how much influence the head of the order had.

A few orders, those of the Band (Castile-Leon, 1330-1474), the Knot (Sicily, 1352-1362), the Sword (Cyprus, 1347-1489) and the Sole and Jar (Aragon, 1403-1516), had an authoritative approach. Only the head of the order had a say in who became a member.¹⁷⁹ The majority of orders, however, had a form of democratic or oligarchical system to elect new members. The exact procedures between the orders differed.¹⁸⁰ Even with an election process in which all members could participate, most orders had provisions to ensure the control by the head of the order over this process.¹⁸¹

The order of the Garter, for example, had a democratic election process, but the king remained in firm control over the elections. After the death of one of the companions, an assembly of at least six of the remaining companions was called and all had to nominate nine people - three knight-bachelors, three bannerets and three barons - for the vacant seat. The votes were tallied and presented to the king, who then had the final say. He could either declare that the one who received the most votes was elected, or he could use his powers as head of the order to choose someone else whom he deemed a more suitable addition.¹⁸² The tallies of the votes of some of these elections are kept in the Black Book, the main source on the workings of the Order of the Garter, and these show that the king quite often chose another companion than the one who received the most votes.¹⁸³

The Order of the Golden Fleece and the Order of the Crescent had a different systems.

The Order of the Crescent is very vague about the election process in its statutes. There are only two articles, article 19 and article 50, which deal with this process.¹⁸⁴ Article 19 states the following:

‘Quant aucun prince haut baron ou autres gens que on cogneust clairement que ce fust le bien honneur et augmentation de l'Ordre vouloit entrer en dict Ordre, le nombre non accomply, en

179 Ibidem, 46-95; 460

180 Ibidem, 460-1

181 Ibidem, 461

182 Ibidem, 125, 128-129

183 Ibidem, 130

184 Numbering as done by Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 135

celuy cas le senateur accompagné de dix autres Chevaliers et Escuyers d'iceluy Ordre au moins le pourrons recevoir ayant toutesfois regard et advis que ceux qu'ils recepuroient fussent tels qu'ilz n'eussent charges ou repressention au prochain chapitre des autres Chevaliers et Escuyers dudict Ordre pour lors absens de les avoir receuz.'¹⁸⁵

Thus, if there were vacant seats, the senator and a delegation of at least 10 knights were to meet any high noblemen who wished to be a member.¹⁸⁶ The ceremony surrounding the delegation was further stipulated in article 50. It prescribes the clothing worn by the delegation.¹⁸⁷

Though the election of this member had to be confirmed in the next meeting of the order, the phrasing of the article seems to indicate that this delegation was to receive *anyone* who wished to become a member of the Order as long as the limit of fifty members had not been reached yet.

The process of self selection has some precedents. This was a common practice for religious orders such as the Templars.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, there is one other known lay order which has a somewhat similar process: the Fraternal Society of Saint George.¹⁸⁹ This order was founded by the King of Hungary in 1325 and lasted up to at least 1395. If anyone thought they had the right qualities to become a member, they simply had to make this known to the head of the order. First the king first had to approve the candidacy, after which the members of the order voted.¹⁹⁰ Thus, the King of Hungary still had some control over the elections, as he could reject candidates who he deemed unfit before the voting of the members.

This raises the question about the exact role and influence René of Anjou had. Reynolds writes that 'it seems highly unlikely that the *Croissant* relied upon volunteers for members' and 'there must have been an unwritten process whereby potential members were prompted to present themselves for consideration.'¹⁹¹ There is evidence that it was René who selected the members himself. A letter with the seal of the order dated 23 September 1462 informs André de Haraucourt that René approves of his membership of the *Croissant*.¹⁹² Furthermore, the invasion of Naples after Alfonso's death in 1458 was accompanied by the election of twenty-one new members of the order, all of which were allies to the Angevin cause of that time.¹⁹³ It was not René, but his son John of

185 *les oeuvres complètes du Roi René*, vol. 1, 58

186 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 137-138

187 *Ibidem*, 137-138

188 *KotC*, 34

189 *Ibidem*, 27-45

190 *Ibidem*, 34

191 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 138

192 Paris, BN. Pièces originales, t. 1478, d. 33489, 20; Described in J. Roman, *Inventaire des sceaux de la collection des pièces originales du cabinet des titres à la Bibliothèque Nationale*, vol 1 (Paris, 1909), no. 2578, as well as Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 146

193 For a full list of these nobles, see Paris, BN, MS Clairambault 1241, 948

Calabria who was able to secure their election into the order, which suggests that not solely René, but also his heir had considerable influence on the workings of the order.¹⁹⁴

The sheer number of new members during the Neapolitan invasion shows that special provisions for the acceptance of such a large number had to be made.¹⁹⁵ It seems inconceivable that the order had indeed twenty-one vacant seats at the time. What exactly those provisions would have been, however, is unclear as nothing is mentioned in the known sources. However, it does show that the Angevin dynasty had considerable control over the election process.

This control was not absolute. As article 50 of the statutes stipulates, new members had to be accepted by the order when they presented themselves during the chapter meeting. Arguments against their election could thus, it seems, still be raised. There is one known case in which this happened. During a council in September 1450, the members opposed the election of the lord of Montjean.¹⁹⁶ Questions about his conduct were raised and his election was postponed while the claim would be investigated further. As his name does not appear in the membership lists, it seems likely that he had been rejected altogether.¹⁹⁷

Thus, while the statutes themselves are vague and do not formalize the role which the duke plays in the election process, indirect evidence shows that René and his son John used the vagueness and the lacunas in the statutes to their own advantage.

The Crescent had another election: that of the senator. The function of senator, and the position of René within the order are rather remarkable. There are a few German order which also had this construction of a senator, such as the Company of St George's and St William's Shield, founded and maintained by Duke Friderich IV of Austria and landgrave of Alsace respectively.¹⁹⁸ However, these German orders maintained the founder and his heirs as the heads of their own order, with their senator being framed as submissive to the head of the order.¹⁹⁹ This was not the case in the Order of the Crescent. In the last article of the statutes, René's role is explained:

‘And to the end that this present Order should endure and be maintained both duly and forever but perpetually to the service of God almighty, to the exaltation of the true Catholic Faith, our mother Holy Church being the basis of prosperity and felicity of the common weal, the King of Jerusalem and Sicily, Duke of Anjou, of Bar, and of Lorraine, Count of Provence, of Forcalquier and of Piedmont, brother and inventor of the Order, not wishing

194 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 157-8

195 Ibidem, 158

196 Paris, BN, MS. Clairambault 1241, 907-8; this case will be discussed in more detail below.

197 Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 62

198 KotC, 6587-589

199 KotC, 617; 641

to name or call himself chief of it, nor to attribute to himself the glory and praise, but to give this to the blessed and glorious archmartyr, My Lord St Maurice, chief and patron of the said Order (...) has wished to be as the least of the said Order without in any way having or demanding there any other preeminence, and to call himself only *maintainer* or *undertaker* under the protection of the said saint.²⁰⁰

Thus, René wished his position to be that of a regular member. This formal organization makes it seem as if René did not have any control over his own order. By refusing to be the head of the order, the order is presented as an group consisting of equals. However, the influence of René on the elections of new members is evidence that suggests that the senator was merely an administrative head, with René in control behind the scenes.²⁰¹ Furthermore, this control over the elections was likely also the case with the elections of the senators. The exact procedures for the yearly elections were not formalized at all. Therefore, there is no way of knowing how exactly these election procedures took place and what role René had in it. However, the list of known senators suggests that René's influence in the elections must have been considerable, as all the known senators were loyal supporters and servants of the Angevin dynasty. Furthermore, René and his son and heir John of Calabria served as senators in 1449 and 1453 respectively.²⁰²

The question remains why René chose this particular system. In the explanation as written above, the argument is that by not taking up the permanent position as head of the order, René ensures that all the glory will go to Saint Maurice, the patron saint. There might indeed be a heartfelt desire to honour this saint. However, there are some other explanations that can be put forward. Reynolds suggests that René used this construction as a way to appease his noblemen by not positioning himself as in full control.²⁰³ This argument revolves around the idea that the noblemen René wished to include in his order would not be interested in joining if they thought René controlled everything in the order. By symbolically positioning himself on equal footing, and granting the position of senator to different members each year, he would give the members more (symbolic) power over the proceedings of the order. One can wonder, however, how well such a strategy would work, considering that these noblemen would find out how order functioned once they were accepted as members.

Another explanation can be found by looking at the lay confraternities. As discussed above, lay orders of knighthood used the organisational model of these confraternities. Having a rotation

200 As translated by KotC, 616

201 Ibidem, 141-142

202 Ibidem, 56

203 Ibidem, 142

system for the leading functions within a confraternity was common practice. Just like in the Order of the Crescent, these confraternities elected new people for these positions from the membership body during their annual chapter meeting.²⁰⁴ A mere copying of this organisational model can therefore serve as another possible explanation for why René made this choice.

The vagueness of the Crescent's statutes is in stark contrast with the statutes of the Order of the Golden Fleece. The election process of the Burgundian order was stipulated in great detail in the statutes.²⁰⁵ When a seat fell vacant, members had to nominate one aspirant-members during the chapter. The names of the nominees were made known before the voting started, to ensure that anyone unsuitable could be eliminated. The votes were tallied, and the man with the most votes would be elected. Prior to 1446, if there was more than one seat vacant, votes had to be cast again, and after 1446, the runner-up in the first tally would get the second seat.²⁰⁶

The duke's vote would count twice, and in the case of a tie, he would decide which aspirant member would be elected. However, he could not overrule a majority vote. That meant that, at least in theory, the duke would not have a lot to say over the election process. However, much like René using the lacunas in the statutes to his own advantage, and thereby exerting informal control over the election process, the dukes of Burgundy tried to influence the elections behind the scenes. Charles the Bold successfully lobbied for the election of Philip of Savoy in 1468, even though others were elected and there was no vacant seat. He convinced one of the newly elected members, the Count of Saint-Pol, to give up his seat with the promise that he would get elected once another seat would become available.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, he opposed the election of Henry of Neufchâtel in 1473.²⁰⁸ Neufchâtel had paid homage to the Duke of Lorraine and based on that fact, Charles the Bold successfully argued that Henry of Neufchâtel was more of a Lorrainer than a Burgundian and therefore should not be elected into the order.²⁰⁹

Quiet negotiations did not work in all instances. The raise of the number of knights from twenty-four to thirty in 1433 probably has to do with the election of Charles the Bold, at the time a baby of merely three weeks old.²¹⁰ Two seats had fallen vacant, and therefore had to be filled during that years' chapter meeting.²¹¹ With the raise of the limit to thirty, eight new members were elected.

204 Vincent, *Les Confréries Médiévales*, 24-5

205 The articles referring to the election process are §41 to §50., PB I, *Statutes*, 111-2

206 As written above, this was a minor adaption to the statutes made in 1446 when a commission reviewed the statutes.

207 De Gruben, *Les Chapitres*, 350-352

208 The Duke of Lorraine at the time was Nicolas, the grandson of René of Anjou.

209 Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 103-104

210 De Gruben, *Les Chapitres*, 176

211 *Ibidem*, 176

One can determine who was elected first as the list of new members as written down in the accounts was done in the order in which they are elected.²¹² This shows that Charles was elected as the sixth new member. As all the nominees had to be known before the votes were cast, Charles' nomination was likely outvoted for the two original vacant seats. The sources do not give a clear answer to the question of at what point during the chapter meeting the number of members was raised from twenty-four to thirty and whether or not this was done during the election process. However, Charles' sixth place in the election of eight new members indicates the difficulty of getting him elected, leaving Philip with no choice but to raise the number of members in order to get his son elected that year.²¹³

Changing the statutes was done in one other instance in order to allow the election of a new member. In 1440, an amendment was added to the article stipulating that none could be member of the Golden Fleece and simultaneously be a member of another order.²¹⁴ The amendment contained an exception for those who had their own orders. They could thus be the head of their own order as well as a member of the Golden Fleece. This change in the statutes ensured that Charles of Orléans, who had his own Order of the Porcupine, could become a member in that same year.²¹⁵

Thus, the strict stipulations of the election process did not mean the Burgundian dukes had no control at all. They were still able to influence the election process through informal means. However, the detail in which the statutes formalized the election process at times also worked against them. In those cases, they did not qualm to change the statutes in order to get what they wanted.

To conclude one could say that the statutes of the Croissant completely leave out a formalized role for René as the head of the order, and instead leave the impression that he was on equal footing with other members. This creates an impression that René himself had little to no control over the election process. However, the evidence outside of the statutes suggests that he and his heir exercised considerable control over the election process by using the lacunas and vagueness of the formalized election process. A reason for René not wanting to formalize his influence in the election process could be found in the way in which his position within the order was formalized in the statutes: he wished to be considered a regular member.

The Order of the Golden Fleece, on the other hand, has a strictly formalized election process in which the influence of the duke was, although greater than normal members, still restricted. The

212 PB I, 43-44

213 De Gruben, *Les Chapitres*, 176

214 PB I, *statutes*, 197

215 KotC, 378

Golden Fleece was in that respect no exception. The Orders of the Ermine (Sicily, 1465-1494) and Saint Michael (France, 1469-1790) had similar restrictions on the influence of the head of the order. Boulton writes that ‘it would appear that the founders of [these] orders placed this formal restriction upon their right to name members to the order primarily in order to give the companions the feeling that they were not just clients of their prince-president, but equal members of a self-governing *collegium* over which he merely presided.’²¹⁶

This formal restriction on the influence of the head of the order did not mean the influence of the head of the order was limited in practice. Boulton argues that it is likely that the wishes of the head of the order would have been made known before the conclave started, which in all likelihood ensured that those favoured by the head were elected, and those opposed would be rejected.²¹⁷ The evidence of the Order of the Golden Fleece does seem to support this theory. While there are some examples of men who were not immediately elected despite the duke's wishes, there are no examples of men elected contrary to the duke's wishes. This might suggest that the objections the duke raised after the initial nomination round would automatically mean the men in question was not elected. The only pitfall that remained with the elections set up as a democratic process was the unwanted outcome of an aspirant member which the duke wanted to be elected not receiving enough votes.

216 Ibidem, 461

217 Ibidem, 461

The members

The membership lists of any order can roughly be divided into two groups: 'subjects' of the sovereign – that is to say: men whose most important lands lay in the dominions of the head of the order – and 'foreigners'; men whose principal lands were held of lords other than the head of the order.²¹⁸ For the first category, the order functioned as a way to bind the men more closely in loyal service to their king. For some men in the second category the order served as a way to bind them more closely to the prince, while for others, it was a diplomatic tool to confirm allegiance.

The order as a tool to solidify loyalty

The founding members for both the Order of the Crescent and the Order of the Golden Fleece were all important vassals, officers or councillors of the founder, and were representative of the founder's own dominions. For the Order of the Crescent, the founding members were key figures in Anjou, Provence and Lorraine. Exiled noblemen from Naples, who also held offices under René in his other dominions, were elected as well.²¹⁹ Of the fifty-five known members, at least forty were vassals of René. Of those forty members, half were from Anjou. The other half was equally divided over Lorraine and Provence. This division shows that, although all dominions were represented, there was a strong emphasis on the dominion with which the Order was associated: Anjou.

The Order of the Golden Fleece had a similar distribution of membership to men from all the different dominions.²²⁰ However, Boulton notes that, despite the formal attachment of the Order to the Duchy of Burgundy, 'only eight of the first companions were from either of the two Burgundies, and before the loss of those dominions in 1477 only six more Burgundians were elected to the Order.'²²¹ The vast majority of members hailed from the various dominions in the Low Countries.²²² Thus, much like the Order of the Crescent, while all dominions are represented, there is an uneven distribution of the members. That the Order of the Golden Fleece, unlike the Order of the Crescent did not have a large representation of members from the dominion the order was associated with (that is to say: Burgundy), is likely due to the importance of the dominions in the Low Countries.

That both orders were meant to be representative of all the dominions falling under the head of the order is not just seen in the lists of the founding members, but also seen in the election of new members. After the acquisition of the Counties of Holland and Zeeland, the Order of the Golden Fleece noblemen from those regions were elected as well. In the chapter of 1445, three of the six

218 Division taken from KotC, 379

219 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 151

220 KotC, 379, De Gruben, *Les Chapitres*, 21

221 KotC, 379

222 Idem, 379

new members were important figures in those regions; Frank van Borselen,²²³ Reinoud van Brederode²²⁴ and Henri van Borselen.²²⁵ By electing men from these important families, the order could serve as a tool to bind the nobility in these dominions more closely to the Burgundian dukes, as well as encourage the integration of these dominions into the larger Burgundian domain.

A more extreme version of including the nobility of the territories one wished to get under one's control can be found in the Order of the Crescent. Upon the invasion of Naples in 1459, the Order of the Crescent made room for a whopping twenty-one noblemen from that region.²²⁶ This unusually large number of new members shows that membership to the order was to serve a specific goal: that of the recruitment and reward of loyal supporters.²²⁷ This group of Neapolitan members comprised of the leading families in the kingdom of Naples. Some of them had been supporters of the Angevin cause in the previous invasion of 1435-1442. For others, their loyalty was less one-dimensional. Roberto Sanseverino was one of the most powerful recruits of the Order of the Crescent. According to chronicler Odorico Raynaldus in his *Annales Ecclesiastici*, Sanseverino later claimed that he was forced to join the order by the Angevins after his capture at the Battle of Sarno.²²⁸ As this source was written after the events, it is possible that this is not an accurate representation of Sanseverino's motives for joining the order, but instead an excuse and explanation that allowed him to regain the favour of Ferrante of Aragon, the other claimant to the throne, once he switched back to the Aragonese side.

That the membership of the order was considered to be a powerful political tool can be gleaned from this event for several reasons. First of all, the sheer number of new members means the order must have made special arrangements for it to be able to incorporate so many new members. It was thus a conscious attempt on the side of the Angevins to recruit these men into their order. Secondly, by becoming a member and swearing the oath of the order, these Neapolitans 'recognised René as their sovereign lord and, thus, pledged not to carry arms against him.'²²⁹ It was thus way of formalizing their loyalty to René and his claims in Naples.

This posed a problem to those Neapolitan nobles once the tide began to turn. From 1461 onwards, the Angevins had setbacks in their campaign and in 1462 underwent a crushing defeat at the Battle of Troia. Many Neapolitan nobles, such as Roberto Sanseverino, abandoned John of

223 Paul de Win, 'Frank II van Borselen', *Notices*, 99-102

224 Michiel van Gent. 'Renaud II de Brederode', *Notices* 102-104

225 Michiel van Gent. 'Henri II de Borselen', *Notices* 104-106

226 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 157-8

227 Ibidem, 157

228 Ibidem, 158; source: O. Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, vol. 19 (Cologne, 1694), 70

229 Ibidem, 158

Calabria and made their peace with Ferrante.²³⁰ However, upon becoming members of the Order of the Crescent, they had recognized René as their rightful sovereign and their actions of abandonment could therefore be interpreted as treason. In order to solve that issue, pope Pius II, stepped in and issued a bull which absolved the nobles from their oaths and dissolved the order. This bull was, it seems, dated to 9 January 1461.²³¹ The fact that a papal bull had to be issued in order to release the Neapolitan noblemen from their oaths and their membership to the order shows that the oaths taken as well as the membership of the order itself were regarded as politically important.

The exact contents of the bull have not been studied and René's reaction to the papal bull is unknown. However, the records of the Crescent show that the order was still active after 1461, and it can therefore be assumed that the bull had a minimal effect on the functioning of the order outside of Naples. Furthermore, with the death of Pius II in 1464, René was once again on good terms with the papal see, as his relations with the successor, Paul II, were good.²³²

A second point which shows the acknowledgement of the Order of the Crescent's political importance is the establishment of the Order of the Ermine.²³³ King Ferrante established this order only a year after his victory over John of Calabria in 1465.²³⁴ The date of its foundation as well as the nature of the obligations of the members indicate that the principal reason for the foundation of the order was to secure the loyalty of the nobility and solidify his rule over the kingdom.²³⁵ There are three reasons why this is indeed the case. Firstly, such a short time after many important figures had supported René of Anjou, Ferrante would need ways to retain the loyalty of those very same men. Secondly, the statutes reveal an emphasis on loyalty to the king and the head of the order.²³⁶ Thirdly, the statutes do not specify that aspirant-members ought to be 'without reproach', something which many other orders do include. Instead, the statutes specify that upon becoming a member, the men had to go to confession and purge themselves in the case that they had committed any action worthy of reproach. Boulton argues that this might be due to the fact that Ferrante wanted to include some noblemen in his order who had previously rebelled against him and had taken the Angevin side.²³⁷ These men could not be elected as members if one of the requirements was to be without

230 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 158-9

231 There is, however, some controversy about the exact date of this bull. As the bull hasn't been published, and the date has not been verified with the original document, all there is, is the mention of it by Odorico Raynaldus. See Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 158, n. 167

232 Ibidem, 159

233 KotC, 397-426

234 Ibidem, 397-426

235 Ibidem, 404

236 Ibidem, 411

237 Ibidem, 412

reproach, as their fighting against Ferrante was explained as rebellion against their natural lord – truly an act worthy of reproach! If one compares the membership lists of the Ermine and the Crescent, there is indeed some overlap between the known members of the Ermine and the twenty-one Neapolitan noblemen who had been admitted to the order of the Crescent.²³⁸ The most notable ones are Roberto Sanseverino and Troiano Caracciolo, the Duke of Melfi.²³⁹

The role played by the Order of the Crescent and the Order of the Ermine in the wars over the kingdom of Naples and the care undertaken to ensure that all the sovereign's dominions were represented show that orders of knighthood were regarded as tools to solidify and consolidate loyalty of the noble elite of their dominions.

The order as a tool for diplomacy

The second category of members of the order, the 'foreigners', were present in both the Order of the Crescent as well as the Order of the Golden Fleece. However, the numbers as well as the status of these foreign noblemen were of a different calibre.

Compared to the Order of the Golden Fleece, the Order of the Crescent does not have a large number of foreign nobles. Only three of the fifty-five known members can be considered foreign.²⁴⁰ Two of these are Italian: Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan and Jacopo Antonio Marcello, the Venetian general. The third one is Johan, the Count of Nassau and Saarbrücken, who was a direct neighbour of René in Lorraine and Bar.²⁴¹ All three would have had political value in terms of alliance to René. While his exact role in the order as well as his relationship to René of Anjou will have to be researched further, it seems likely that Johan of Nassau could prove a valuable ally in what Vaughan terms the 'Franco-German no-man's land' that constituted the neighbouring area of Lorraine and Bar,²⁴² especially with the encroachment and the meddling of the Burgundians in the area.

The election of Francesco Sforza and Jacopo Antonio Marcello stand in a larger context of the election of Italian nobles. There were four other Italian noblemen in the order. Giovanni and his son Gasper Cossa had fled Naples after René's defeat in 1442 and served him in his French dominions.²⁴³ Jacopo Pazzi and Gabriel Valori, both from Florentine families, had acquired lands in René's French dominions due to their services to the Angevins in Italy.²⁴⁴ This strong Italian

238 KotC, 415

239 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 159

240 Ibidem, 152, Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 59

241 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 152-3

242 Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 293

243 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 153, Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 59

244 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 154

presence compared to the lack of foreign princes from other regions betrays René's political interests on the peninsula.

For the Order of the Golden Fleece, the category of 'foreign' could be divided into two subcategories: noblemen who did not have their lands in the domain of the head of the order, but who did spend a lot of time in the service of the Burgundians, and foreign princes whose alliance were important to the dukes of Burgundy. Examples of the first category include Antoine de Vergy, the Count of Dammartin,²⁴⁵ and Pierre I of Luxembourg, Count of Saint Pol,²⁴⁶ who had their lands in either France or the Empire.²⁴⁷ The election of these men served a similar purpose as the election of men from the duke's own dominions: to strengthen their loyalty and their cliental ties to the Burgundian house.

Members falling into the category of 'foreign princes' were not represented upon the foundation of the Golden Fleece. Between the years 1431 and 1445, there was a slow growth in the number of foreign noblemen, princes and kings have been elected as members. One explanation why the order started with no foreign princes, but as the years progressed elected more and more of them, as put forward by Boulton, is that it was important to first firmly establish the order as the political tool the Burgundians needed; the 'development [of electing foreign princes] tended to reduce the value of the order as a unifier of the dominial nobilities'.²⁴⁸ However, as noted above, the extend of which the order truly functioned as a concrete unifier of the Burgundian nobility is very hard, if not impossible to measure. Furthermore, there might be another explanation as to why there were no foreign princes elected into the order in the first decade: it might not have been seen as prestigious for these princes to be part of this order when it was first founded. The first king to accept membership, Alfonso of Aragon, had a list of demands before he was willing to accept his election. One of these demands was that he did not want to wear the collar of the Golden Fleece daily, as was stipulated by the order's statutes.²⁴⁹ Alfonso was keen to distance himself from rules that would suggest his subordination to the duke. Furthermore, great care was taken on the Burgundian side to ensure the king was represented as was becoming for his rank. It was arranged that King Alfonso, for as long as he was alive, was to have two knights to accompany him in the order of the Golden Fleece.²⁵⁰ To this end, two loyal courtiers of Alfonso were elected in the

245 Marie-Thérèse Caron. 'Antoine de Vergy', *Notices*, 11-13

246 Paul de Win. 'Pierre Ier de Luxembourg', *Notices*, 22-24

247 KotC, 379

248 Boulton, 'The Order of the Golden Fleece and the creation of Burgundian National Identity', 31

249 Paul van Peteghem. 'Alphonse V, le Grand ou le Magnanime, roi d'Aragon, de Sicile et de Sardaigne (1416-1458) et Alphonse I, comme roi de Naples (1442-1458)', *Notices*, 97

250 *Ibidem*, 97

following chapter in 1451: Iñigo de Guevara²⁵¹ and Pedro de Cardona.²⁵² Alfonso's demands, and the Burgundian accommodation of his royal status showed a preoccupation with a concern that his royal status was not harmed by being a member of an order of what was, after all, 'merely a duke'.

One reason for wanting princely members was that these foreign princes gave the order more prestige and it helped to further establish the international standing of the dukes of Burgundy.²⁵³ A second reason for electing foreign princes was that orders were used as a diplomatic tool to strengthen the political friendship between two parties. The Order of the Golden Fleece has some examples which show how that diplomacy worked. When the houses of Orléans and Burgundy reconciled after their continued wars,²⁵⁴ their reconciliation was further emphasized by the membership of each other's orders. Charles of Orléans was elected in the Golden Fleece in 1440,²⁵⁵ and in exchange, Philip the Good took Orléans' *devise*, the Order of the Porcupine.²⁵⁶ The membership of each other's order and *devise* were thus a confirmation and a strengthening of the reconciliation between the houses of Orléans and Burgundy. The same exchange of membership took place between Charles the Bold and King Edward IV of England after the Anglo-Burgundian rapprochement and Charles' marriage to Margeret of York in 1468.²⁵⁷ Charles became a knight of the Order of the Garter in 1469 and Edward was elected into the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1468.²⁵⁸

A second example of a foreign prince being elected gives another insight into the workings of the order as a diplomatic tool. As discussed above, Alfonso of Aragon, King of Aragon and Naples,²⁵⁹ was elected into the order of the Golden Fleece in 1445. The dukes of Burgundy had similar concerns as the King of Aragon and Naples with regards to the power of France. Furthermore, Alfonso shared Philip's interest in a crusade and upon his election, an alliance against the infidel was formed.²⁶⁰ Membership of the order could serve as a confirmation of the allegiance

251 Peter van Peteghem. 'Iñigo de Guevara, comte d'Ariano di Puglia, Apice et Potenze, gran sénéchal', *Notices*, 112-113

252 Peter van Peteghem. 'Pedro de Cardona, comte de Golisano ou Collesano, maître justicier de Sicile', *Notices*, 114-115

253 Boulton, 'The Order of the Golden Fleece and the creation of Burgundian National Identity', 31

254 The war of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs (1407-1435), which started with the murder of Louis of Orléans by the men of the Duke of Burgundy.

255 See: Philippe Contamine. 'Charles, duc d'Orléans', *Notices*. 86-87

256 Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 40-41

257 Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 60-61

258 Ibidem, 60

259 See: Paul van Peteghem. 'Alphonse V, le Grand ou le Magnanime, roi d'Aragon, de Sicile et de Sardaigne (1416-1458) et Alphonse I, comme roi de Naples (1442-1458)', *Notices*, 95-99

260 Ibidem, 97; For an examination of the idea of a crusade and the role of the Order of the Golden Fleece, see: Caron, Marie-Thérèse, Clauzel, Denis, eds. *Le banquet du Faisan. 1454: l'occident face au défi de l'Empire ottoman* (1997)

between the two princes, as it did with Charles of Orléans and King Edward IV.

Upon receiving the delegation send by Philip, Alfonso accepted his election, but had a list of conditions.²⁶¹ One of those conditions was that Philip was to never have an alliance with the house of Anjou. For if he ever did, Alfonso would quit the order and declare war upon Burgundy. That this membership was thus taken as a political allegiance becomes clear from that demand alone. The duke agreed to this. As with Charles of Orléans, Philip also accepted membership of the order of Alfonso: the Order of the Jar.²⁶²

The amiable relations between Burgundy and Naples continued, as Alfonso's son, Ferrante, King of Naples, was elected in 1473.²⁶³ This election was a direct consequence of the treaty of Saint-Omer in 1471 between Burgundy, Naples and Aragon which ensured a defensive alliance between the three regions against France. While there were some very notably objections against Ferrante's membership – the violent death of the condottieri Jacopo Piccinino was a moral objection, while his membership to the Order of the Garter went explicitly against one of the statutes – he was elected anyway.²⁶⁴ That the rules of the order could be bend in order to accommodate foreign princes shows that these members were regarded differently than the others. Furthermore, Boulton states that the princely members were not expected to participate actively in the order's affairs. There was thus a different set of expectations for foreign princes.²⁶⁵

In his study on the Order of the Garter, Collins shows that membership of the order as offered to foreign princes, was often done in combination with an alliance.²⁶⁶ This seems to be true for the way in which membership of the Golden Fleece was deployed as well. All the memberships discussed above are part of an alliance or reconciliation. Furthermore, the alliance with the English was further emphasized by Charles' marriage to Margeret of York.

Furthermore, Collins shows that for those who accepted membership in such terms, their membership to the Garter was the most important sign of such an alliance.²⁶⁷ It is unclear whether a similar conclusion can be drawn for the Order of the Golden Fleece. However, considering the number of foreign kings and princes elected into the order for diplomatic purposes, it would be an interesting topic to investigate in further research.

The election of foreign nobles thus served to strengthen of loyalty of foreign nobles in service of the

261 Ibidem, 97

262 KotC, 332

263 Alfonso de Ceballos-Escalera y Gila. 'Ferdinand I (Ferrante) d'Aragon, Roi de Naples, auparavant duc de Calabre (1442-1458)', *Notices*, 168-170

264 Ibidem, 170

265 Boulton, 'The Order of the Golden Fleece and the creation of Burgundian National Identity' 30-1

266 Collins, *The Order of the Garter*, 155-186

267 Ibidem, 155-186

head of the order, much like it was intended to do for nobles from the sovereigns own domains. Furthermore, the election of foreign princes into the Order of the Golden Fleece was done as a diplomatic way of creating and maintaining alliances. It confirmed the reconciliation between old enemies, and further strengthened the relationship between allies. There seems to have been different standards with regards to their participation and their suitability for elections. In order to ensure the election of Charles of Orléans in 1440, the statutes were amended so Philip and Charles could exchange membership of each other orders without being in contradiction to the rule that members of the Golden Fleece were not allowed to be part of any other order. Furthermore, the objections that king Ferrante was already a member of the Order of the Garter upon his election, and his reproachable involvement in the death of Jacopo Piccinino, while discussed during the election process, were eventually ignored. In the case of foreign princes, the political advantage of their election therefore seems to have overruled any requirements made in the statutes.

Unacceptable behaviour and expulsion

As emerged from the discussion of the membership requirements and the election process, the framework allowed for a considerable influence of the head of the orders, as well as enough room to elect those men who were politically valuable.

Upon their election, members were to swear an oath, had to familiarize themselves with the statutes of an order and had to comply with the rules set out in them. I will discuss the oaths in more detail below. One characteristic of the Orders of the Crescent and the Golden Fleece was that membership was for life. There were only a few exceptions in which one could leave the order of one's own accord or when one was expelled.

Leaving of one's own accord was usually only done on the grounds that one's membership was incompatible with one's own political loyalties.²⁶⁸ There are a few examples from the Order of the Garter in which men resigned due to their conflicting loyalties. In each instance, this was due to them being subjects of or allies to the King of France and their membership of an order tied to the crown of England would compromise their political loyalties.²⁶⁹ This shows that their obligations to their sovereign took precedence over the ties that the order invoked.

The Order of the Golden Fleece

Most orders had stipulated reasons for why a member would be expelled.²⁷⁰ The Order of the Golden Fleece had three reasons for expulsion: heresy, treason and cowardice on the battlefield.²⁷¹ For these offenses, the case would be judged by the peers of the accused. The reason these cases were not tried in any other court was that members of the Golden Fleece were exempt from the jurisdiction of all secular courts except the order.²⁷² This was not unique to the Golden Fleece. The Orders of Saint George (Hungary), Saint Michael (France), and from 1518 onwards, the Order of the Collar (Savoy) had given the same privilege to their members.²⁷³ This clause made the Order of the Golden Fleece extremely attractive to the powerful noblemen, as there was no other comparable institution in the Burgundian territories.²⁷⁴

The procedure for these judgments was as follows. Upon being accused of one of three offenses, a member would have to appear before the order in order to explain and defend himself.

268 Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 34
269 Ibidem, 34
270 KotC, 492
271 PB I, *statutes*, 202-204
272 KotC, 383
273 Ibidem, 471
274 Ibidem, 383

After the accused had had time to argue his case, the duke and the members would pass their judgment. The final decision about the fate of an accused member had to be supported by at least the majority of members.²⁷⁵

During the reign of the two Burgundian dukes, eight members of the order had to defend themselves against charges of heresy (1), treason (4) or cowardice (3).²⁷⁶ In three cases, two in 1431 and one in 1468, members were excluded from the order. The other accusations warranting expulsions were made in 1456, 1473 and three others in 1468. In 1456, Reinoud of Brederode had to answer for his disobedience against a direct order of the duke, his lord – a treasonous act. In 1468, Antoine de Croÿ, Jean de Croÿ and Jean de Lannoy had to answer to charges of machinations against the duke. Thus, once again: treason. And in 1473, Louis de Châteauguyon successfully defended himself against charges of cowardice.²⁷⁷ The cases of 1456 and 1468 will be discussed in more detail in the section on the obligations of the members. Below I will discuss the cases leading to the exclusion of three members in more detail as these three cases give a good picture of how ideals and politics interacted. Furthermore, they show the limitations of the power of the duke.

The two cases in 1431 concerned Louis of Chalon, prince of Orange, and Jean de Neufchâtel.²⁷⁸ They were intended to be two of the founding members of the order. An invitation to the order was already extended to them and Jean de Neufchâtel had already received his collar. However, during the first chapter of the order both men were forbidden to wear the collar, Neufchâtel had to return his, and their invitations were revoked. They were expelled before they could officially become members by swearing the oath. The reason behind these measures is that both were accused of cowardice on the battlefield after they had fled the battle of Anthon in 1430.²⁷⁹ As their invitation was sent before the battle took place, the order had to revoke the invitations and their membership once they had learned of the events of Anthon.

The fact that both had been intended as founding members of the order shows that their exclusion could hardly be politically motivated. To the contrary: their exclusion would mean that the Duke of Burgundy had to miss two assets he had intended to include in his newly founded order.

Jean de Neufchâtel was part of a family loyal to the Burgundian dynasty, and his personal

275 PB I, *statutes*, 204

276 KotC, 377

277 PB II, 102; PB III, 70-75; for a study of the case of Louis de Châteauguyon, see: Armstrong, C.A.J. 'La Toison d'Or et la Loi des Armes.' *England, France and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century*, (1983) 375-383

278 Raphaël de Smedt (ed.), 'Jean de Neufchâtel' *Notices*, 53-54; As Louis de Chalon had not received his collar before the expulsion, he was never considered an official member, his biography is not incorporated in this bio-bibliography

279 PB I, 30-33; see also C.A.J. Armstrong, 'La Toison d'Or et la Loi des Armes', in: C.A.J. Armstrong, *England, France and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century* (London 1983), 375-383

service to the Burgundians went back to the time of John the Fearless. Furthermore, he had served as a councillor of Philip.²⁸⁰ In his correspondence with the order, Jean seemed to have been especially stricken by his exclusion. After the explanation he had received in the chapter of 1431, he appealed by sending another letter explaining his case in 1432.²⁸¹ His second appeal was denied as well, but the connection to the Neufchâtel proved important to the Burgundians. Jean de Neufchâtel died that very same year, and in 1433, his brother and heir Thibault was elected.²⁸²

Louis of Chalon had a more ambiguous relationship with the Burgundians. He had lands in the border regions of the duke's territory, predominantly in France. While Louis of Chalon had served as a captain under Philip in the Low Countries, the loyalty of the family of Chalon was not that straight forward.²⁸³ The wider family of Chalon divided their loyalties between the Duke of Burgundy and the crown of France and worked these relationships to their own profit. It is therefore likely that the offering of the collar of the Golden Fleece was an attempt to bind Louis of Chalon more closely to the Burgundian dynasty. After his exclusion, the effect was to the contrary. Chalon officially defected to the King of France in 1432. And thus, Philip had lost an ally.

Although the loss of an ally and the exclusion of a loyal servant would have been inconvenient for Philip, he likely could do little else. The order had been newly established and if he had accepted these men as members, it would have undermined the reputation of exclusivity and moral standing of the order. In this light, the exclusion of two politically valuable assets send the message that the reasons for expulsion were to be taken seriously.

The third case worthy of further discussion took place in 1468. This was the first year in which Charles the Bold was the head of the order, after he became the new Duke of Burgundy in 1467. During this chapter meeting, he accused four men of crimes warranting expulsion: Jean de Bourgogne, Antoine de Croÿ, Jean de Croÿ and Jean de Lannoy. He had had political and personal run-ins with all of these men before he had inherited the ducal title and when he became duke, he sought to settle the score. He only managed to expel one of the four: his second cousin, Jean de Bourgogne.²⁸⁴ They had been long time personal enemies.²⁸⁵ They had fought over territories, such as the town of Peronne, and after Charles succeeded his father, Jean de Bourgogne tried to instigate

280 Raphaël de Smedt (ed.), 'Jean de Neufchâtel' *Notices*, p. 55-56; Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 173

281 PB I, 39

282 PB I, 44; Raphaël de Smedt (ed.), 'Thiébaut VIII, seigneur de Neufchâtel et de Châtel-sur-Moselle' *Notices*, 81-85

283 Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 66

284 Raphaël de Smedt (ed.), 'Jean de Bourgogne, comte d'Étampes', *Notices*, 125-129,

285 Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 233

a rebellion in Liege.²⁸⁶ When Jean de Bourgogne was summoned to attend the chapter meeting of 1468 in order to face the accusations against him, he refused. Instead he send two letters, one to the members of the order, the other to the duke, declaring his resignation of the order.²⁸⁷ In these letters, he argued that his loyalties to the King of France prevented him from further participation in the order. He continued with expressing his displeasure at the treatment he received at the hands of the duke and argued that this treatment is contrary to the statutes:

‘Quant a ce, mon treshonnoré seigneur et cousin, je suy tresdesplaisant de ce que j'apparçoy que de plus en plus vous vous indignez contre moy et ne le cuide avoir desservi envers votre maison ne faire ne le voudroie.’²⁸⁸

As for this, my honoured lord and cousin, I am very displeased that I have noticed more and more your indignation against me and I do not think I have wished to do or did do anything against your house.

The first reason for wanting to leave the order was, according the statutes of the Golden Fleece, acceptable.²⁸⁹ Like the Order of the Garter, the Golden Fleece accepted that loyalties to one’s sovereign took precedence over loyalties to the order. However, his second reason, that he had received unfair treatment at the hands of the duke was more personal and reflective of the history these two men had. One could argue that this is more a case of voluntarily resignation. Jean de Bourgogne had no desire to defend himself in front of the order, and with his relationship with Charles being as bad as it was, he might not have seen any benefit in staying a member.

The matter could have been put to rest after that. However, at the end of the chapter meeting, the issue resurfaces.²⁹⁰ The portrait and weapons of Jean de Bourgogne, hanging in the chapel of Dijon were to be replaced and a text would be shown in its place with a list of accusations against Jean de Bourgogne. The gravest accusation was that of heresy; a crime for which one was to be expelled from the order. This accusation of heresy served as grounds for the expulsion of Jean de Bourgogne – after he had already handed in his resignation. These were very shady accusations which dated back to an affair in 1462, when a servant of Jean de Bourgogne confessed to having practiced sorcery on the command of Jean in order to damage Charles the Bold.²⁹¹ Jean de Bourgogne also had not received the opportunity to defend himself against these charges as the statutes stipulate.

286 Ibidem, 4, 256

287 PB II, 41-44

288 PB II, 42

289 PB I, *statutes*, article 16, 203-204

290 De Gruben, *Les Chapitres*, 334

291 Ibidem, 334

However, this ‘expulsion’ was politically motivated. A public resignation from the order in the very first chapter of the new duke, especially in the light of his ongoing frictions with other members of the order, would not have reflected well on the order's stability nor the duke's authority. A public accusation of heresy preserved an image of unity to the outside world.²⁹² Furthermore, it diverted the question of blame from Charles himself.

These three cases show that the relationship between idealistic elements and political interests was not always as straightforward as political value trumping idealistic veneer. Maintaining the image of the order played an important role in all decisions. In 1431, the exclusion of two intended founding members was inevitable in order to maintain the order's prestige, while trumped up charges of heresy were used to detract the public eye from political disunity within the order.

Order of the Crescent

Compared to the extensive details in which these cases of the Order of the Golden Fleece were recorded, the existing evidence for expulsion cases in other orders is meagre. The statutes of Order of the Crescent list five reasons for expulsion: heresy, treason, flight from the battlefield, defeat in a duel, and giving aid and comfort to the enemy of their natural lord.²⁹³ The first three are similar to those of the Golden Fleece, while the latter two seem to have been René's own additions. The exact proceedings with regards to these accusations are not stipulated in the statutes. It is therefore unclear whether the members were to discuss and judge their fellow members similarly to the Golden Fleece. However, the phrasing of the first two reasons for expulsion show a concern with finding the truth:

Le premier est que ils fussent convaincus et attains de heresie et fussent trouves non pas fermement croians en la creance de noustre foy catholicque.

Le second est que ils fussent concaincus et attains veritablement de cas de traison prouvee alencontre deulx suffisanment.²⁹⁴

The first is that they have been convicted of heresy and have been found to not truly believe in the creation of our Catholic faith.

The second is that they have been convicted of a true case of treason, which has been sufficiently proven.

292 Sonja Dünnebeil, PB II, *Einleitung*, 21
293 KotC, 614
294 Paris, BN, MS. fr. 25204, fol. 5v

The phrasing ‘convaincus et attains’ is absent in the other three reasons for expulsion. The phrasing suggests a concern that the accusations had to be sufficiently proven in both of these cases. This concern can be explained by the gravity of these accusations, which was of a different and graver order than the other three reasons for expulsion. Furthermore, the phrasing shows that these accusations would have to be tried in judicial courts. This was different from the Order of the Golden Fleece, as the Duke of Burgundy had given the members of his order the special privilege to only be judged by their peers and not by any other court.

Due to the lacunas in the sources, it is difficult to establish whether these accusations were ever raised against a member. The case of the Neapolitan nobles who left the Order of the Crescent in the years 1461-1462 should have had quite an effect on the order, and it would be interesting to know how the order dealt with their quitting as well as the papal bull that was issued. However, one would have to do more archival research to establish whether there are any sources to provide an answer to those questions.

Some light can be shed on the proceedings of expulsion by the rejection of an aspirant member to the order. During the council meeting in Saumur in 1450, the lord of Montjean had been proposed as a new addition to the order. It is not clear from the sources who this is. Most likely, this is Jean of Montjean (or alternatively Montejean), who had a castle and a barony in the Duchy of Anjou until at least 1451.²⁹⁵ His land was situated not far from Anger.²⁹⁶ Based on the location of Montjean’s lands it is not unlikely that René wanted this man to be a member of his order. However, during that same council meeting in Saumur, Louis of Beauvau, the Seneschal of Anjou, raises his objections:

‘Par ledit seigneur de Beauvau a esté rapporté ce que il avoir trouvé avec le seigneur de Montjean touchant le different de son election pour ce qu'on dit que il fut avec monseigneur le dauphin contre le roy’,²⁹⁷

By the aforementioned lord of Beauvau it has been reported that he has found objections regarding the election of the lord of Montjean. For it is said that he went with mylord the dauphin against the king.

295 Pierre Louis Joseph Bétencourt and François Morand, *Noms féodaux : ou, Noms de ceux qui ont tenu fiefs en France dans les provinces d'Anjou, Aunis, Auvergne, Beaujolois, Berry, Bourbonnois, Forez, Lyonnais, Maine, Saintonge, Marche, Nivernois, Touraine, partie de l'Angoumois et du Poitou, depuis le XIIIe siècle jusque vers le milieu du XVIIIe* Tome I (Paris 1867) 669

296 Montjean is called Montjean-sur-Loire nowadays.

297 Paris, BN, MS Clairambault 1241, 907-908

The objections raised by Louis of Beauvau are that the lord of Montjean was involved in the dauphin's intrigues against his father. Since 1446, the dauphin Louis had intrigued against his father.²⁹⁸ Another major figure in these frictions was Jean II, the Duke of Alençon. The lord of Montjean had been to visit the dauphin together with the Duke of Alençon.²⁹⁹ He had thereby taken actions against his natural lord, the King of France. As noted above, going against one's own natural lord was against the statutes of the order. However, these accusations had to be investigated further, and it was decided that Guy de Laval, the lord of Loué, would seek out King Charles VII to find out if the actions of the lord of Montjean were indeed reproachable. As mentioned before, the name of the lord of Montjean does not appear in the membership lists and it can therefore be presumed that he was excluded from membership based on his actions against the King of France.³⁰⁰ This episode illustrates that, after receiving an accusation, the order would set out to verify that information before making any final decisions. However, unlike the Golden Fleece, which specifically allowed members to defend their own case, they set out to ask the aggrieved party in the conflict: the King of France. This case, together with stipulations in the statutes that accusations of heresy and treason had to be proven by an outside authority, suggests that the order itself would not hold a court in which accusations had to be proven or disproven, but instead would rely on outside information to prove or disprove a charge.

The reasons for expulsion given by both orders were not unusual. Many orders listed similar reasons like treason or flight from the battlefield as grounds for expulsion.³⁰¹ These were considered grave crimes. The classification of these types of behaviour as wholly unacceptable for members show some of the motives at play.

First, there is the consideration of the reputation of the order itself. If one has to uphold that their order has a certain moral standard, a bottom line has to be drawn of what is not acceptable. In this light, not committing crimes like treason could be regarded as the absolute minimum requirements of good behaviour. Losing a duel can be added to this list, as this most likely referred to judicial duels. These duels were fought over legal claims and whoever lost was considered the guilty party.³⁰² It is no surprise that the order wished to exclude anyone who lost a duel. The implications of being guilty of a crime as well as the loss of honour would not reflect well on the reputation of the order.

298 Jean Favier, *Louis IX* (Paris 2012) 109-130

299 Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 62

300 Ibidem, 62

301 KotC, 469

302 Esther Cohen, *The Crossroads of Justice: Law and Culture in Late Medieval France* (Leiden 1993) 56

Secondly, there are the goals the head of the order hoped to achieve with his order. If one takes the notion that the goal of a founder of an order is to solidify loyal service, it stands to reason they would include some basic rules that enforced that loyalty. Treason, aiding the enemy of one's natural lord and flight from the battlefield would be included under such an explanation, as these are the very opposite of loyalty. Furthermore, the threat of severe punishment of flight from the battlefield might also have served as a reinforcement of military discipline.³⁰³ Moreover, the ties to this concept and treason are implied in the statutes of both the Order of the Crescent and the Order of the Golden Fleece, as these particularly state that flight from the battlefield was grounds for expulsion *if banners had been deployed*.³⁰⁴ Banners had the symbolic meaning that they represented the honour and authority of the lord. Fleeing while those banners were deployed could be explained as being the same as fleeing when one ought to defend that lord. Therefore, by extension, this act was a form of *lèse-majesté*.³⁰⁵

303 KotC, 469

304 Paris, BN, MS. fr. 25204, fol. 5v-6r; PB I, *statutes*, 203

305 C.A.J. Armstrong, 'La Toison d'Or et la Loi des Armes', 381

Obligations of the members

In between these bare requirements of acceptability and the bottom line of unacceptable behaviour, there is a range of ways in which an order sought to discourage or encourage certain types of behaviour. In the statutes, orders sought to impose various kinds of obligations upon their members.

The obligations imposed on members could be subdivided into five categories: cliental, fraternal, chivalric or moral, corporate and spiritual.³⁰⁶ The categories of fraternal, spiritual and corporate obligations can be found in confraternities in general, whereas the cliental and chivalric duties were specific to the lay orders of knighthood.³⁰⁷ Cliental obligations were those duties which members had towards the head of the order and their natural lord, while fraternal obligations were those owed to their fellow members. The chivalric or moral duties included those of military nature as well as those imposed on personal good conduct.³⁰⁸

Corporate duties were owed to the order and included the participation in the order's activities, obey its statutes and promote the order's interests. The general porté of these obligations was to ensure the functioning of the order and the participation of its members. Prohibiting members to join other orders was also part of the corporate duties of some orders, like the Golden Fleece; 'Such obligations (...) were clearly intended to strengthen the hold of the order (and therefore the prince-president) upon the ordinary companions.'³⁰⁹

Obligations of a spiritual nature were most commonly a specific kind of regular spiritual exercise, for instance, attending mass regularly, or to recite prayers, as well as general vows to defend the church. Boulton writes that 'it is difficult to tell in most cases whether these obligations were included primarily because they were felt to be appropriate in a society organized on the confraternal model and dedicated to a saint, or because a knight, to be considered truly chivalrous, had to behave in keeping with at least the minimum standards of piety currently expected of laymen.'³¹⁰ With regards to these spiritual obligations, it is interesting to note that the Order of the Crescent had, compared to many other orders, far more spiritual obligations.³¹¹

Cliental, fraternal and chivalric or moral obligations will be discussed in more detail below. There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, cliental and chivalric duties were unique to the lay orders of knighthood. It is therefore interesting to go in more detail of what these entail and what the roots of these obligations are. Secondly, cliental and fraternal obligations give one further insight into the

306 KotC, 466

307 Ibidem, 466-469

308 Ibidem, 466-471

309 Ibidem, 468

310 Ibidem, 468

311 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 139

interpersonal obligations and interactions. Lastly, chivalric obligations can tell one more of the idealistic aspects which the founders of these orders hoped to promote.

Cliental obligations

The cliental obligations revolved around the duties and loyalty owed by the members to the head of the order, as well as the obligations the head of the order owed to the members. The extend of those duties varied remarkably from order to order.³¹² The differences are also noticeable between the Orders of the Golden Fleece and the Crescent.

Cliental obligations in the Order of the Golden Fleece

The Golden Fleece expected members to give counsel to the duke, not bear arms against him, and to join him if he decided to go on a crusade.³¹³ In return, the duke had several obligations towards the members as well. He was to treat everyone justly and he was to ask the members of the order for council in military matters.³¹⁴ These obligations reinforced the cliental ties between the duke and the members of his order and resembled a type of life-long contract of retinue.³¹⁵ This type of cliental obligations can be found in several other orders, such as the Garter, the Band and the Knot.³¹⁶ That there is indeed a link between the contracts of retinue and the cliental obligations imposed by the orders is shown in the statutes of the Order of the Ship. The language used, as well as the types of duties stipulated are strikingly similar to a retinue contract.³¹⁷

That the mutual duties between members and head of the order were taken seriously in the Golden Fleece can be deduced from two episodes. When Jean de Bourgogne left the order in 1468, one of his reasons for leaving specifically is that Charles the Bold had failed in his duty to love and treat him like a brother. Furthermore, he emphasizes that he himself has kept his part of the deal. He lists his services to the house of Burgundy and mentions his loyal service to the late duke Philip.³¹⁸ He thereby accuses the duke of not upholding his own obligations as head of the order. Thus, in addition to his conflict of loyalty between the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy, he cites a breach of contract by the Duke of Burgundy as the reason for quitting the order.

The second case of interest are the sessions of mutual criticism (which will be discussed in more detail below). During two of these sessions, Charles the Bold was specifically called out on

312 KotC, 466

313 De Gruben, *Les Chapitres*, 40

314 PB I, *Statutes*, article 6

315 KotC, 492

316 See: KotC, 81,165, 230

317 Boulton, 'The Middle French Statutes of the Monarchical Order of the Ship' , 214, 235-241

318 PB II, 42-44

his failing to adhere to his duties as head of the order. Both in 1468 and 1473, one of the points of criticism towards Charles is his failure to consult the members of the order on his military affairs.³¹⁹

Cliental obligations and conflict mediation in the Order of the Golden Fleece

As previously mentioned, the Order of the Golden Fleece had conferred the right to be judged by their peers onto its members. This was not only reserved for the three offenses warranting expulsion, but this was also extended to the mediation of conflicts between members. The procedure described previously was also used in mediation conflicts and members were bound by the verdict.³²⁰ However, this left room for members to use these stipulations in their conflicts with the duke, which would allow them protection and judgment by the order and effectively infringed on the duke's right to preside over such matters.

This powerful tool for conflict mediation and protection from the order in conflicts with the duke was declared by Charles the Bold in 1468. During the chapter meeting of that year, he tried to expel Jean de Lannoy and Antoine and Jean de Croÿ.³²¹ The issues between these men and Charles the Bold date back to the period before he succeeded his father. The Croÿs and Lannoys were powerful families at the Burgundian court, particularly gaining their power under Philip the Good.³²² Since 1457, Charles the Bold had had several clashes with his father and in these disputes, the family Croÿ had taken the side of Philip the Good.³²³ When Charles succeeded his father in 1467, they ensured him of their loyalty in an attempt to put their differences behind them.³²⁴ However, this had not put the matter to rest for Charles. In the chapter meeting of the Golden Fleece in 1468, they were accused of conspiring with the King of France and making Charles look bad in the eyes of his father.

In response to these accusations, they declared that they would let the members of the order judge them. After all, the statutes stipulated that conflicts and accusations had to be debated with all the members. This was much to the chagrin of Charles the Bold, who probably fearing the order would rule in the favour of the Croÿs and Lannoys. That was not an unlikely outcome due to their power. He declared that from hence forth, the statutes would be interpreted in a different manner and argued that the role of the members in the judgment of accusations was reserved for matters

319 PB II, 120; PB III, 98

320 PB I, *statutes*, 200

321 Raphaël de Smedt (ed.), 'Antoine de Croy' *Notices*, 34-38; Raphaël de Smedt (ed.), 'Jean de Croy' *Notices*, 48-50; Raphaël de Smedt (ed.), 'Jean seigneur de Lannoy, de Lys, de Wattignies et d'Yser' *Notices*, 115-117

322 Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 336-338

323 Ibidem, 336-339

324 Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 247

concerning knightly honour.³²⁵ While the conflict between Charles and these three men did not end there, Antoine and Jean de Croÿ and Jean de Lannoy could do little else but leave the chapter meeting due to Charles' refusal to let the order perform the function of mediator in their conflict.³²⁶

Charles' interpretation of the statutes was accepted by the order and subsequent members, such as the counts of Egmond and Horn in 1568, were unable to call upon the order for mediation and protection if they had a conflict with the head of the order.³²⁷

Cliental obligations in the Order of the Crescent

The cliental obligations for the Order of the Crescent were formulated quite differently. Instead of pledging loyalty to René, the members had to swear that they would serve their own natural lord loyally.³²⁸ This might be a by-product of René's refusal to be the formal head of the order. While it would not make much difference for the vast majority of members, as they were all vassals of René, this did leave room for those few foreign noblemen to take up arms against René in the service of their own lord. This was exactly what happened with Jacopo Antonio Marcello, the Venetian general, in 1453. In the constant wars between the Italian states, Venice had taken up arms together with the Aragonese against Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan and another member of the Order of the Crescent.³²⁹ Sforza had made an alliance with Florence and René of Anjou and thus, in June 1453, Marcello was on the eve of a campaign against the head of his order, as well as one of its members.³³⁰

While the statutes of the Crescent leave room for such a situation, Marcello himself was troubled by this dilemma.³³¹ In an attempt to smoothen any ruffled feathers, and perhaps influence the actions of René, he send a manuscript of a Latin *Life of St Maurice* as a present to the order.³³² It is unclear what the effect of the gift was on the actions of René, as the alliance between Milan, Florence and René of Anjou fell apart shortly after this, and the hostilities ceasing altogether in 1454.³³³ Marcello remained a member of the order and there is no indication that his relationship with René suffered from this episode. In 1457 and 1459, he send two other manuscripts to René.

325 PB II, 72-74

326 Sonja Dünnebeil, PB II, *Einleitung*, 18; Jean de Lannoy and Jean de Croÿ were forgiven a year later, while Antoine de Croÿ had to wait until 1473, when other members of the order persuaded Charles to forgive him: Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 250

327 KotC, 383

328 Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 58

329 Mallett, 'The Northern Italian States,' 558

330 Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 60

331 Ibidem, 61

332 See for a full account and description of the manuscript: M. Meiss, *Andrea Mategna as Illuminator: an episode in Renaissance art, humanism and diplomacy* (New York / Hamburg 1957); Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 60-61

333 Vale, *War and Chivalry*, 61, Mallett, 'The Northern Italian States', 558

Vale speculates that the manuscript sent in 1457 might have been given to express Marcello's gratitude for René's involvement in his release from captivity in 1454.³³⁴

Fraternal obligations

Fraternal duties were implemented to promote friendship and cooperation between members. While they resembled general confraternal obligations of brotherhood in some degree,³³⁵ they also incorporated the ideas of brotherhood-in-arms. The overlap and resemblance between lay orders of knighthood, in the broadest sense of the term, and the concept of brotherhood-in-arms is explored in great detail by Maurice Keen.³³⁶

Fraternal obligations and brothers-in-arms

Brotherhood-in-arms was a relationship between two or more men-at-arms which rested on mutual loyalty and aid. Usually, this relationship was primarily related to warfare, but could be applied to other aspects of life. Through brotherhood-in-arms, the brothers agreed to divide their profits of war equally, as well as contribute to paying the ransom if the other fell prisoner. This relationship was thus a very practical way of sharing the risks and the gains of warfare.³³⁷ The oaths the brothers-in-arms swore are especially interesting with regards to lay orders of knighthood. These included vows of loyalty, to give each other counsel and to love one another as brothers. The only exception for their loyalty was if it conflicted with the loyalties to their natural lord and their family. This relationship could be for life or only for a short amount of time, for example only for the extent of one campaign.³³⁸

Brotherhood-in-arms was not merely a military and financial partnership, but a very strong and intimate bond; 'a brother-in-arms really was more than a sworn companion; in idea at least, he was one of one's blood and kin.'³³⁹ This reciprocal relationship and the idea of kinship or brotherhood between two men-at-arms is also present in the statutes of many orders of knighthood.³⁴⁰ Both the Order of the Golden Fleece and the Order of the Crescent had an oath upon becoming a member to love fellow members like brothers.³⁴¹ Furthermore, the specific obligations

334 Vale *War and Chivalry*, 61

335 See for a discussion of fraternal love and obligations in confraternal orders: Vincent, *Les Confréries Médiévales*, 67-84

336 Keen, 'Brotherhood-in-Arms.' *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages*. (1996) 43-62; See also Barber, *the knight and chivalry*, 245-247

337 Keen, 'Brotherhood-in-Arms', 53; Barber, *the knight and chivalry*, 246

338 Keen, 'Brotherhood-in-Arms', 50

339 Ibidem, 47

340 Ibidem, 58-59

341 PB I, *Statutes*, article 4; Reynolds, René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 138

of members to one another reflect some of the obligations brothers-in-arms had to one another.³⁴² The members of the Order of the Crescent had the duty to aid and counsel fellow members as well as provide payment for ransom or support the wife and children if needed.³⁴³ It is well possible that Jacopo Antonio Marcello, in his predicament in 1453, not so much worried about his cliental obligations to the order and René, but was mindful of the fraternal obligations he had to all members of the order. Thus, while he was following the duties imposed on him through his cliental obligations, he might have worried about the consequences that would have due to his fraternal obligation to love and aid his fellow members.

Similarly, the Golden Fleece asked its members to aid one another in various facets of political and military life. This included military aid, as well as a more general vow to help members against those who had done them harm. Furthermore, they had the duty to inform one another if they knew of any betrayal against their fellow members.³⁴⁴

Fraternal obligations and conflict mediation in the Order of the Golden Fleece

The stipulation that members were to aid one another in their conflicts with outsiders proved to be the opportunity Reinoud van Brederode needed to set the order's rules to his own hand. Reinoud van Brederode had a longstanding conflict with David of Burgundy, the bishop of Utrecht. This dates back to 1455, when the Episcopal see of Utrecht had fallen vacant. While Philip the Good nominated his own bastard son David and secured papal approval, the Brederodes ensured a unanimous election of his brother Gijsbrecht by the chapter of the Cathedral.³⁴⁵ Things came to a head during the chapter meeting of the order in 1456 and Reinoud was accused of not obeying the Holy See, which effectively put him at risk for expulsion from the order:

‘n'en povoit pretendre juste ignorance, et que il, par devoir de l'ordre de chevalerie et estat de noblece et aussi par l'astriction des ordonnances et status dudit ordre, estoit tenu de garder et defendre a son povoir l'estat de l'eglise et obeir au Saint Siege apostolique, (...) il avoit fait et faisoit le contraire.’³⁴⁶

[he] cannot pretend ignorance, and that he, by the power of the order of chivalry and the noble estate and also by the constraints of the ordinances and the statutes of said order,

342 KotC, 381

343 *Les Oeuvres Complètes du Roi René*, vol I, 52-56 Articles 4, 5, 16,17,18

344 PB I, *Statutes*, articles 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; KotC, 381

345 CA.J. Armstrong, 'Did the Burgundian Government had a Policy for the Nobility?' *England, France and Burgundy* (London 1983) 219-220; A.J. van den Hoven van Genderen, 'Op het Toppunt van de Macht', in: R.E. de Bruin, et al. *Een Paradijs vol Weelde*, (Utrecht 2000) 178-179

346 PB I, 118

was held to guard and defend within his power the estate of the church and to obey to the Holy See, (...) he has done and does the opposite.

In response, Reinoud feigned ignorance of the statutes and demanded to consult them in his native tongue, Dutch. C.A.J. Armstrong suggests that Brederode's insistence on the use of Dutch, not only in consulting the statutes, but also in his defence, was a symbolic challenge to the Burgundian interests in Holland.³⁴⁷ In order to defuse the situation, the other members of the order advised Reinoud to obey the duke and the wish of the pope. By doing so and additionally making a public renouncement of his brother's claim, he was able to stay in the order and evade further actions by the duke for his disobedience. However, this did little for his effective support of his brother. They continued to openly oppose David of Burgundy.³⁴⁸

His conflicts with David of Burgundy made their way into the Order of the Golden Fleece again in the chapter meeting of 1473. This time, Reinoud brought his issues to the order himself as he requested the help of the order with his conflict with the bishop of Utrecht.³⁴⁹ In his request he was careful not to implicate the duke, and invoked the order's statutes which stated that all members had to come to the aid of another member if he had any conflict with a third party.³⁵⁰ In response, the duke asked the members to discuss the matter without him being present.³⁵¹ He thereby gave away his immediate control over the mediation in this conflict. A possible reason for the duke personally removing himself from the order's involvement could be that he did not wish to end up in a position in which he had to choose between his half-brother and a powerful vassal.

In the duke's absence, the order prepared to intervene on Reinoud's behalf. A letter was sent to the bishop explaining the allegations Reinoud had levelled against him. In the letter, the phrase 'par la deliberacion desdis chevaliers freres et compaignons dudit ordre' makes it clear that it was not the duke who sent it, but the members of the order.³⁵² This second involvement of the order in Reinoud's conflicts with the bishop of Utrecht thus seemed to work out to Reinoud's advantage. However, Reinoud did not enjoy the benefits of his successful enlisting of the order's help for long. He died a few months after the chapter meeting after drinking some bad wine. His allies claimed he was poisoned at the instigation of David of Burgundy.³⁵³

The events of 1473 show that, despite Charles' reinterpretation of the statutes, which

347 Armstrong, C.A.J. 'The Language Question in the Low Countries: the Use of French and Dutch by the Dukes of Burgundy and their Administration.' *England, France and Burgundy* (London 1983) 206-207
348 Michel van Gent, 'Renaud II de Brederode', *Notices*, 103
349 PB III, 67
350 PB I, *Statutes*, articles 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
351 PB III, 146-147
352 PB III, 152-153
353 Michel van Gent, 'Renaud II de Brederode', *Notices*, 103

prevented the order to pass judgment in conflicts between members, he was unable to prevent the order from intervening on a member's behalf if the adversary was not part of the order himself.

Chivalric or moral obligations

This category of obligations is, Boulton observes, often very meagre. The statutes of the Golden Fleece merely note that members had to live virtuously³⁵⁴. For many orders, the duties for good conduct which were explicitly mentioned, such as refraining from drunkenness and visiting brothels, were designed to maintain 'a minimally acceptable level of conduct.'³⁵⁵

There are a few notable exceptions to this general rule, one of which is the Order of the Crescent.³⁵⁶ Upon entering the order, new members had to swear seven oaths about their personal conduct. They were to have a clear conscience towards God, to help widows and orphans, to have compassion for the poor people and to be amiable to everyone, never to speak ill of women, to think before one talks to prevent telling lies, to avoid all dishonest company and debate and to never carry ill-will towards anyone, unless it is for a matter of honour.³⁵⁷

The themes of compassion, mercy and honour evoked by these oaths reflect chivalric ideals represented in the romances of that time.³⁵⁸ It is unclear whether these oaths were enforced, as the sources do not give any insight into this. The ideas of knightly virtue as presented in medieval romances were generally not explicitly incorporated in the lay orders of knighthood. That they occur in the statutes of the Crescent, is likely more a reflection on the personal character and preoccupations of René, as a patron of chivalry and the author of several works concerning the topic,³⁵⁹ than that of lay orders in general.

354 PB I, *Statutes*, article 56, 216

355 KotC, 640

356 Ibidem, 640; Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 138-9

357 MS. fr. 25204, fol. 6v-7v

358 Ibidem, 139; KotC, 640

359 For René's literary works see: Nelly Labère. 'L'oeuvre littéraire de René d'Anjou.' *Le Roi René dans tous ses États*. 203-226

Honouring systems and criticism

While the obligations of members deal with the explicitly mentioned duties of the members, there was one other way in which the orders tried to influence the behaviour of the members. Some orders used an honour and criticism system to encourage or discourage particular types of behaviour.

Subjection to criticism

A unique feature of the Orders of the Golden Fleece and the Crescent were the sessions of mutual criticism.³⁶⁰ These sessions were a standard event in all chapter meetings. The statutes of both orders included a justification for these sessions, from which the intended goals can be deduced. The statutes of the Golden Fleece state:

‘Item, et afin que ce present ordre et amiable compaignie soit maintenue en bons termes et que les suppostz, chevalliers et freres d'icellui ordre travaillent a vivre vertueusement, en bonnes meurs et accroissement de honneur et bonne renommee, qui viengne en bon exemple a tous autres chevalliers et nobles, par quoy le devoir de l'ordre de chevalerie et noblesse soit mileux congneu et plus prins a cuer, sera oudit chappitre entre autres choses touchié en general par le chancellier de l'ordre ce que luy semblera estre bon, valoir et prouffiter a la correction des vices et melioracion et amendement de vie et vertus pour lesdiz de l'ordre.’³⁶¹

Item, to the end that this order and amiable company is to be kept on good terms, the knights and brothers of this order work to live virtuously, in good morals and to work to the increase honour and good reputation, by which it would serve as a good example to all other knights and nobles, through which the works of the order of knighthood and nobility will be better known [has a better reputation] and is more taken to heart. It is for this reason, amongst other reasons touched upon by the chancellor, that it would seem good, valuable and profitable to correct the vices and improve and change of the lives and virtues of those of the order.

It was thus specifically with an eye on increasing the good behaviour and virtues of the members of

360 KotC, 619

361 PB I, *Statutes*, 216

the order that this subjection to criticism was introduced as a formal part of the proceedings of the chapter meetings. The statutes of the Crescent read similarly, though it adds an additional reason for the sessions of criticism:

‘Item, et pour ce que les chevaliers et escuiers dudit ordre sont demouvans et residans, les unge es pais daniou de barrois et de lorraine, les aultres en prouvence et aultres contrees et regions distantes et loingtaines les unes des aultres, pouquoy comme impossible chose seroit au senateur chief dudit ordre de savoir et congnoistre les vices et vertus diceulx chevaliers et escuiers sans en avoir informacion[.] daultres que de soy mesmes, est ordonne et appointe ad ce que lesdis chevaliers et escuiers se estudient de vivre vertueusement et user leur vie en bonnes meurs accroissement de honneur et bonne renomme alexemple de tous aultres nobles hommes.’³⁶²

Item, because the knights and squires of this order live in different regions, the one in the country of Anjou, Bar and Lorraine, the others in Provence and other countries and regions which are far and distant from each other, it is impossible for the senator, chief of this order, to know all the vices and virtues of these knights and squires without having information. Furthermore, with regards to themselves, it is ordered that these knights and squires try to live virtuously and use their lives and good morals for the increasing of honour and good reputations and as being an example for all other noble men.

The statutes of both orders mention the wish to improve the virtues and good behaviour of their members. The members of the order were then to serve as examples to the noble class at large. The similarities in wording as well as reasoning are striking. This is probably due to the fact that René of Anjou used the Order of the Golden Fleece as one of the inspirations on which his own order was modelled.³⁶³ It seems he was familiar enough with the statutes of the Golden Fleece to incorporate not only a similar form of activity that is not found in any other order, but also to include a similar reason for doing so.

The additional reason mentioned in the statutes of the Crescent might have been added as a way to cloak the explicit goal of wanting to police the behaviour of its members. The duties of the senator included to know the affairs pertaining to the order and to discipline its members.³⁶⁴ It

362 Paris, BN, MS fr. 25204, fol. 24v

363 KotC, 619

364 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 139

seems to argue that, if the senator was to perform his duties, one would need some way to be informed about the behaviour of the members.

The proceedings for the subjection to criticism were the same in both orders.³⁶⁵ All members were discussed, the chief included. When it was their turn, a member would have to leave the room, while his fellow members would then discuss his behaviour. The Golden Fleece regulated the order in which the members were criticized (from the newest member to the most senior one), while the Crescent did not. The second part of the procedure differed slightly between the two orders. For the Golden Fleece, when members were done discussion someone's behaviour, the member in question was asked to return and hear the verdict.³⁶⁶ He then had the right to respond, and to defend his behaviour if it was found lacking. The denouncements of bad behaviour as well as the responses of the members were an affair all members of the order were privy to. This is reflected in the accounts of the chapter meetings of 1468 and 1473 as well: all the verdicts on the behaviour of the members were recorded, together with the responses given.

This is in contrast to the Order of the Crescent.³⁶⁷ After the members had had the opportunity to criticize their fellow member, and if the behaviour was found lacking, the senator would speak to the member in question privately, or in the company of two or three other members. It was up to the discretion of the senator to exact punishment and the discussions of these sessions had to be kept secret. It is likely for this reason that there are no accounts of how these sessions of criticism played out in the Order of the Crescent.

Not everybody seems to have taken well to these sessions of criticism, however. In 1436, during these sessions, a discussion arose about the order in which these sessions ought to proceed as well as the right of those who passed judgment on another member to do so: 'il sembloit que on devoit demander de la vie et renommee du chevalier yssu a la discrecion de cellui qui du demander auroit la charge, sans autre ordre tenir.'³⁶⁸ This discussion meant that the criticisms did not take place that year, nor in the chapter meetings following. It was not until 1451 that the criticisms were resumed.³⁶⁹

Reading through the accounts of the meetings in 1468 and 1473, the types of behaviour that were criticized varied from promiscuous behaviour, like that of Antoine Bastard of Burgundy, to

365 PB I, *statutes*, 216-7; Paris, BN, MS fr. 25204, fol. 24v-25v

366 PB I, *statutes*, 216-7

367 Paris, BN, MS fr. 25204, fol. 24v-25v

368 PB I, 77

369 PB I, 87, 95

accusations of cowardice levelled against Louis de Châteauguion in 1473.³⁷⁰

The Duke of Burgundy was not exempt from criticism either, and Charles the Bold received a long list of grievances in 1468. These accusations included his breach with the statutes of the order in not consulting the members on his military affairs, as well as demands that he needed to follow through on the promises he made and concerns that he worked too hard and was too angry in his demeanour to his subjects.³⁷¹ The duke promised to do better. However, in 1473, he received the same list of criticism.³⁷² Thus, while the critiques are remarkable in their length as well as directness, it did not seem to have the desired effect of the duke changing his behaviour.

The sessions of criticism were used for a wide variety of behaviour that needed 'correcting'. However, the majority of cases criticized military or political actions. This suggests that the primary concern was not so much the more abstract or loftier chivalric virtues as we know them from medieval romances, but instead a preoccupation with regulating and enforcing contemporary views on the proper codes of conduct in political and military life.³⁷³

Honouring systems

While the form in which the members were subjected to criticism was unique to these two orders, the questioning of behaviour was a far more common occurrence. Indeed, it goes back on a common practice in confraternities to have a regular discussion of the behaviour of the brothers.³⁷⁴ Different ways to criticize members' behaviour, as formulated in the statutes of other orders, were part of a larger system of honouring and punishing behaviour. While the sessions of mutual criticism focussed on the negative, the Crescent and the Golden Fleece also had a way to encourage to positive: the book of noble and worthy deeds.

At least eight Orders - the Orders of the Star (France, 1352-1364), the Knot (Sicily, 1352-1363), the Golden Fleece, the Crescent, the Pelican (Electoral Palatinate, 1444-1449), Saint Michael (France, 1469-1790), the Ship (Sicily, 1381-1386) and from 1518 onwards, the Order of the Collar (Savoy, 1364-present) - mention having such books, though unfortunately none of them have survived.³⁷⁵ Furthermore, while both the Order of the Golden Fleece and the Order of the Crescent had such a book, or at the very least had plans to compile one, very little else is known about the

370 PB II, 102; PB III, 70-75; for a study of the case of Louis de Châteauguion, see: Armstrong, C.A.J. 'La Toison d'Or et la Loi des Armes.' *England, France and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century*, (1983) 375-383

371 PB II, 120

372 PB III, 98

373 For an examination of the unwritten laws of war in late medieval Europe, see: Maurice Keen, *The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages* (1993)

374 KotC, 468

375 KotC, 471, 601, 615; For the Order of the Pelican, see Holger Kruse, et al., *Ritterorden und Adelsgesellschaften im Spätmittelalterlichen Deutschland*, 347-351

contents. For the Order of the Crescent, the *King of Arms* was responsible for collecting the material for the book, which was to be written by the Order's scribe.³⁷⁶ The name of the book was the *livres des chroniques de l'ordre pour perpetuel memoire*.³⁷⁷ For the Order of the Golden Fleece, the division of the tasks was the same. The scribe was responsible for keeping and writing the book, while the material would be collected by the *King of Arms*.³⁷⁸ Kings of Arms were the heralds who were held in the highest regard.³⁷⁹ As heralds were regarded as the 'judges of martial honour',³⁸⁰ it is not surprising that the task of collecting the noble deeds of the orders was given to them.

The intent of these books, as the name of the book for the Crescent suggests, was to commit into writing the deeds worthy of remembering in an attempt to commit those deeds to eternal remembrance. This harks back to the chivalric notions that high and worthy deeds established a good reputation and that it was desirable to maintain that reputation perpetually.

Two other orders provide some more detail on the nature and function of these books. The book of the Company of the Knot, founded by Louis of Taranto in 1352, was called the *Livre des avenemens aus chevaliers de la Compaignie du Saint Esperit au Droit Desir* and was to be kept in the chapel of the order.³⁸¹ Instead of giving the task of collecting the stories for this book to a herald as was the case with the Orders of the Crescent and the Golden Fleece, the companions of the Knot had to hand in a written report of their own deeds before the assembly. After that, the reports were read to the Prince and his council, who then decided which stories were worthy of being included in the book.³⁸²

The manuscript does not survive, but it is mentioned by the writer Boccaccio and chronicler Matteo Villani, who had both read it. Neither of them was much impressed by its contents. Boccaccio wrote in a letter to Francesco Nelli: 'He wrote in French of the deeds of knights of the Holy Spirit, in the style in which certain others in the past wrote of the Round Table. What a laughable and entirely false matters were set down, he himself knows.'³⁸³

Villani has a much harsher judgment on the contents: 'He [Louis of Taranto] praised and vaunted himself so much for the magnificent deeds he did in time of war and in time of peace that he plunged his listeners into astonishment and into boredom. Pleasing himself with his own praise,

376 KotC, 618; BN, MS fr. 25204, fol. 15v - 16v

377 Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant.' 138

378 KotC, 392-3

379 On heralds, see Keen, *Chivalry* 134-142; Werner Paravicini, *Die Ritterlich-Höfische Kultur des Mittelalters* (München 1994) 77-85

380 Keen, *Chivalry*, 139

381 KotC, 235; the full name of the company of the Knot was the Company of the Holy Spirit of Right Desire, hence the name of the book.

382 KotC, 235-236

383 See: Francesco Corazzini, ed. *Le lettere edite e inedite di Messer Giovanni Boccaccio* (Florence, 1877) 161. Text as translated by KotC, 236

he had made of his tales some writings in a pompous style'.³⁸⁴

From Boccaccio's letter, it becomes clear that this book sought to imitate the fictional Arthurian stories and the idea presented in those stories that the Knights of the Round Table were to tell the tales of their adventures at court so these might be written down in a book.³⁸⁵ As neither Boccaccio nor Villani was much impressed with the veracity of the accounts, however, it seems that it failed in prolonging the good reputation of the men mentioned in the book.

The book of the Company of the Star was, according to the accounts of the chronicler le Bel, of a different nature. In his *Chronicle*, he wrote:

‘each of the companions was to recount all the adventures, the shameful as well as the glorious, which had come to him in the time since he had been in the noble court. And the king was to establish two or three clerks who were to listen to all these adventures and put them in a book, so that they might be reported there every year before the companions, by which one could know the most valorous (*preux*) and honour those who best deserved it.’³⁸⁶

Thus, instead of the book only recounting the greatest deeds, it recounted all the deeds of the members, both the honourable and the shameful ones. The accounts in the book of the Star served as a basis on which to judge who were the most worthy of honour during each chapter. During each assembly, nine members, of which there were to be three princes, three bannerets and three knights, were honoured for their deeds and were seated at a table called the *Table d'Onneur*.³⁸⁷ These men were called the *preux*. This numbers of nine and break-up into three different categories as well as the referral to these nine knights as *preux* indicate that this was a direct mimicking of the literary Nine Worthies.³⁸⁸ The literary Nine Worthies are commonly identified as Joshua, David and Judas Macabeus from the Bible, Hector, Alexander and Julius Ceasar from ancient times and Arthur, Charlemagne and Godfrey of Bouillon from Christian times.³⁸⁹ The stories about these heroes and the framing of them as the Nine Worthies held a powerful message for the medieval chivalrous nobility: ‘The Nine Worthies symbolised the significance of a story that was emphatically unconcluded, reminding men at once of the example of the past and that the history of chivalry was

384 See: Matteo Villani. *Chronica*, 1. X, chap 83, Text as translated by KotC, 236

385 Keen, *Chivalry*, 191-2

386 *Chronique de Jean le Bel*, ed. J. Viard, E. Déprez (Paris, 1904), 204-206; text as translated by KotC, 180

387 Keen, *Chivalry*, 192

388 KotC, 200; Keen, *Chivalry*, 192

389 Paravicini, *Die Ritterlich-Höfische Kultur des Mittelalters*, 18

still a-making.³⁹⁰ All over Europe, men were hailed as the Tenth Worthy in order to emphasize the importance and worthiness of their deeds.³⁹¹ Equating members of an order with those legendary figures thus proved a powerful tool of rewarding a particular type of behaviour.

From the *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois* it becomes clear that John the Good specifically wished to reward the deeds performed on the battlefield, and thereby explicitly excluded knightly exploits in tournaments and jousts.³⁹² This shows that these elections and honours bestowed on these members were far from empty ceremony, but were meant to serve a purpose. In his war against the English, John the Good had far better use for knights who were willing to fight for him on the battlefield than those honing their skills in a tournament.³⁹³ The organization and encouragement of military obedience and service to the crown was not solely restricted to the election of the Nine Worthies, but arguably it was the reason why the order was founded in the first place. After the disastrous defeat at Crécy, John the Good, then Dauphin, blamed the nobility for their abominable performance. His low esteem for their military prowess continued in the first years of his reign and it is therefore not unthinkable that one of the reasons for founding his order were tied into this disappointment.³⁹⁴

This particular usage of the mythology of the Nine Worthies is not unique to the Order of the Star. In the election process of the Order of the Garter, there is also a subcategorisation of bachelor knights, bannerets and barons. As a seat fell vacant, all existing members had to nominate three names in each category. There are two possible reasons for this exact division. Firstly, the exact number and subdivision was probably chosen as a reflection of the Nine Worthies.³⁹⁵ Thus, like the Company of the Star, the Garter used the same mythological lore to frame their members as exemplary men. Instead of applying this to only a few members of his order, the usage of the Nine Worthies during the election process suggests that all members of his order were worthy of comparison to these nine legendary figures. Secondly, this equal division between three categories was probably made as Edward III wished to have knights of all ranks represented in his order.³⁹⁶ The subcategorizing into three groups thus served at once a symbolic function as well as a practical one.

While the Company of the Knot's book was different in nature than that of the Company of the Star, it was similarly part of a larger honour system. This system in the Company of the Knot

390 Ibidem, 123

391 Some examples of this are Bertrand Du Guesclin in France and Robert the Bruce in Scotland. See Keen, *Chivalry* 123

392 KotC, 200

393 Ibidem, 201

394 Ibidem, 172

395 Ibidem, 129

396 Ibidem, 128-129; Collins, *The Order of the Garter*, 34-85

was even more elaborated and included things like a crown of laurel and a devise and a habit of honour in addition to their own honour table, the *Table Desiree*.³⁹⁷ All served the specific purpose of rewarding loyalty.

The functioning of the books of noble deeds in rewarding and punishing behaviour, and their context in a larger system of honouring members of the Companies of the Knot and the Star suggest that the sessions of mutual criticism of the Crescent and the Golden Fleece were part of a larger system in which the founders sought to encourage loyalty and proper military and political conduct.

397 KotC, 239

Conclusion

This thesis sought to explore the interactions between politics and idealistic notions as they presented themselves in the Orders of the Golden Fleece and the Crescent. The circumstances of the founders of these orders were at the same time similar as well as contrary. The similarities are to be found in the patchworks of territories the founders of the orders owned. The orders filled the lack of a centralized institution that brought together the political and military elites of these territories. The conception of the order as such was far more crystallized and more ambitious by the Dukes of Burgundy. Some scholars have argued that they seemed to have conceived the Golden Fleece as an institution meant to fill the role similar to that of the Peers of France and England.³⁹⁸ This theory is supported by the dukes granting their order special judicial privileges. However, as soon as members tried to use those privileges in a way that would have a negative outcome for the duke, such as in the conflict between Charles the Bold and the Lannoy and Croÿ family, the duke sought to limit the order's power.

René of Anjou also conceived his order as a way to unify and solidify loyalty to his house, which can be seen in the role the order played in his invasion of Naples in 1458. The order was actively used as a recruitment device and a way to tie his supporters to his cause by formal means. Membership to an order was seen as a serious affair, and breaking with one's oaths of loyalty to that order and its chief were not done lightly.

Both the Dukes of Burgundy and René of Anjou tried to present their orders as a body of knights who were all of equal standing. This might have been done to give the members the feeling the order was not just to emphasize their cliental relationship with the head of the order, but instead what Boulton calls a 'self-governing collegium of knights'.³⁹⁹ Furthermore, the primary form of organisation on which these orders were modelled, the confraternities, had a similar oligarchical structure. René went to greater lengths than the Burgundians, by refusing to take up the position as formal head of the order and thereby removing all formal means by which they could assert their control over the order's affairs. However, evidence suggests that he was still in control behind the scenes. While the evidence on the order of the Crescent shows that the vagueness and the lacunas in the order's statutes allowed René greater informal influence, the Golden Fleece had the limits of the power of the duke formalized in the statutes. The dukes of Burgundy chose to make concessions by giving the members voting rights in the elections, as well as the privilege to be tried by a college of their peers. That members made use of that limited power to their own advantage can be seen in the

398 KotC, 383

399 KotC, 461

ways they tried to use the order as a way to resolve conflicts with the duke. In the instance of Reinoud van Brederode, the Order of the Golden Fleece seem to indeed function as a 'self-governing collegium of knights'.

The dukes used several elements to enforce the obligations and encourage loyal behaviour: they cast obligations in the language and form of known aristocratic and military relationships: that of the retinue and the brotherhood-in-arms. Furthermore, the mimicking of the Arthurian romances and other knightly mythology did not only increase the prestige of the order, it reflected on the members on whom those comparisons were bestowed as well. It was meant as an encouragement for loyal service to the head of the order, and in return, promised members a confirmation of their own good reputation and a way to build a lasting reputation of chivalrous men. In an age where reputation, during as well as after one's life, meant everything, this was a powerful encouragement.

When looking closely to the requirements asked of the members, the picture that emerges is one in which orders generally tried to keep the moral obligations, membership requirements and reasons for expulsion to the absolute lowest bar of acceptability. The Order of the Crescent might be seen as an exception in this case. However, the sources do not tell us in which ways these higher standards were enforced, or whether they were enforced at all. By casting these requirements in language familiar to discussions of idealistic notions, they were able to maintain an image of idealistic institutions. In the meantime, this allowed them minimal obstruction in their political goals.

Abbreviations

BN	Bibliothèque Nationale
KotC	D'Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, <i>Knights of the Crown</i>
PB I, II, III	Die Protokollbücher des Ordens vom Goldenen Vlies, vol I, II, III, (ed. Sonja Dünnebeil)
Notices	<i>Notices Bio-bibliographiques. Les Chevaliers de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or au XV^e Siècle</i> (ed. Raphaël de Smedt)

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APPENDIX 1

Table I. Taxonomies of Nobiliary Bodies, c. 1285–1520

- A. Classified by Constitutional Form (and Relationship to Knighthood)
- I. *Bodies without statutes or a corporate form, made up wholly or largely of lay nobles:*
NOBILIARY & SEMI-NOBILIARY GROUPS
 A. *Groups whose members are connected by being knighted in special circumstances:*
HONORIFIC GROUPS
 1. *Groups whose members are knighted in a special ceremony:* **Ceremonial pseudo-orders**
 (Kts. of the Bath of England, of St Mark of Venice)
 2. *Groups whose members are knighted at a place of pilgrimage:* **Peregrine pseudo-orders**
 (Kts. of the Holy Sepulchre, of St Catherine of Mount Sinai, of the Golden Spur)
 B. *Groups whose members are bound only by obligations of fraternity:* **FRATERNAL GROUPS**
 (Groups of two or more brothers-in-arms)
 C. *Groups whose members are bound only by cliental obligations to a patron:* **CLIENTAL GROUPS**
 1. *Groups whose members are bound to a lord by a cliental oath and pension:* **Pensioned retinues**
 2. *Groups whose members are bound by oath to a lord alone:* **Sworn retinues**
 a. *Groups not called 'order':* **Simple sworn retinues**
 b. *Groups called 'order':* **Sworn cliental pseudo-orders** (O. of Porcupine, Orléans)
 3. *Groups whose members are bound only by gratitude to a lord:* **Honorific retinues**
 a. *Groups not called 'order':* **Simple honorific retinues** (Collar of SS, Double Crown)
 b. *Groups called 'order':* **Honorific cliental pseudo-orders** (O. of the Broom-Pod, France, etc.)
- II. *Bodies with statutes and corporate form, dominated by but not restricted to nobles:*
SEMI-NOBILIARY SOCIETIES
 A. *Bodies whose members all live under a monastic rule:* **SEMI-NOBILIARY RELIGIOUS ORDERS**
 1. *Societies whose noble members are all knights:* **Knightly Religious Orders**
 2. *Societies whose noble members need not be knights:* **Semi-Nobil. Religious Orders**
 B. *Bodies divided between those who do and those who do not live under a monastic rule:*
SEMI-NOBILIARY SEMI-RELIGIOUS ORDERS OR SOCIETIES (O. Santiago, C. Ettl)
 1. *Societies whose noble members are all knights:* **Knightly Semi-Religious Orders**
 a. *Societies with an elective or appointed presidency:* **Non-monarchical**
 b. *Societies with an hereditary presidency:* **Monarchical** (Sp. orders after 1500)
 2. *Societies whose noble members need not be knights:* **Open Semi-Nobil. Semi-Rel. Orders**
- III. *Bodies of lay nobles with statutes and corporate form:* **LAY NOBILIARY SOCIETIES**
 B. *Non-religious societies lacking most of the distinctive characteristics of a confraternity:*
NON-CONFRATERNAL NOBILIARY SOCIETIES
 AA. *Societies with a democratic or oligarchical constitution:* **NON-MONARCHICAL NON-CONFRATERNAL (LAY NOBILIARY) SOCIETIES**
 1. *Societies whose members are bound by an oath to accomplish some set of feats of arms for a limited period of time:* **Votive societies or Enterprises**
 (Order of the White Lady with Green Shield, Boucicaut; of the Prisoner's Iron, Bourbon; etc.)
 2. *Societies whose members are bound only by oaths of mutual support:* **Fraternal societies**
 (Order of the Black Swan, Savoy; O. Golden Apple, Tiercelet; etc.)
 AB. *Societies with a monarchical constitution:* **MONARCHICAL NON-CONFRATERNAL LAY ORDERS**
 1. *Societies whose principal class is open to nobles without regard for knighthood:*
Monarchical non-confraternal nobiliary orders (Society of the Dragon, Hungary)

400 From: D'Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, *Knight of the Crown, The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe 1325-1520* (reprint; Woolbridge 2000), 542-3

2. Societies whose principal class is restricted to knights and squires or 'men at arms':
Monarchical non-confraternal knightly orders (Order of the Band, Castile)
- C. Societies having most of the distinctive characteristics of a confraternity:
CONFRATERNAL NOBILIARY SOCIETIES or NOBILIARY CONFRATERNITIES
- BA. Societies with a democratic or oligarchical constitution: **NON-MONARCHICAL NOBILIARY SOCIETIES or CONFRATERNITIES**
1. Societies not founded or patronized by a prince: **Normal nobiliary confraternities**
 - a. Confraternities founded for sport alone: **Sportive nobiliary confraternities**
 - b. Confraternities founded for political purposes: **Political nobiliary confraternities**
 2. Societies founded and patronized by a prince: **Princely nobiliary confraternities**
 - a. Confraternities founded for sport alone: **Sportive princely confraternities**
 - b. Confraternities founded for political purposes: **Political princely confraternities or orders** (O. St George, Hung.; O. St Catherine, Dauphiné; O. Crescent, Anjou)
- BB. Societies with a monarchical constitution: **MONARCHICAL NOBILIARY SOCIETIES or CONFRATERNITIES or CONFRATERNAL ORDERS**
1. Societies whose principal class is not restricted to men-at-arms: **Monarchical confraternal nobiliary orders** (O. of the Crown, Coucy; Soc. of the Eagle, Aust.; O. of St Hubert, Jülich)
 2. Societies whose princ. class is rest. to men-at-arms: **Monarchical confr. knightly orders**
 - a. Societies whose princ. class is open to squires: **Open monarchical confrat. knightly orders** (O. of the Stole & Jar, Aragon; S. of St Jerome, Saxony)
 - b. Societies whose princ. class is restricted to dubbed knights: **Closed monarchical confraternal knightly orders** (O. of the Garter, Collar, Golden Fleece, St Michael)

B. Classified by Relationship to Royal and Princely Courts¹

- I. Bodies of nobles not associated in any way with such a court: **NON-CURIAL NOBILIARY BODIES** (whether GROUPS or SOCIETIES)
- II. Associated in some way with such a court: **CURIAL NOBILIARY BODIES**
 - A. Bodies not endowed with statutes: **Curial cliental groups or Pseudo-orders**
 - B. Bodies endowed with statutes: **Curial societies**
 1. Societies not intended to be perpetual or to pursue general goals:
SIMPLE CURIAL SOCIETIES (In practice includes fraternal leagues)
 2. Societies intended to be perpetual and to pursue general goals: **CURIAL ORDERS**
 - a. Societies endowed with democratic constitutions and effectively external to the court of the patron: **Non-monarchical curial orders**
 - b. Societies with monarchical constitutions: **Monarchical curial orders**
 - i. Societies open to nobles generally: **Open nobiliary monarchical orders**
 - ii. Societies restricted to men-at-arms: **Knightly monarchical orders**
 - α. Societies open to squires: **Open monarchical orders of knighthood**
 - β. Societies restricted to knights: **Closed mon. orders of knighthood**

¹ **Definitions of Basic Terms:** a. **Body:** Any set of persons associated with one another in some way – b. **Group:** A body without any corporate statutes or structures – c. **Society:** A body endowed with statutes and a corporate structure – d. **Order:** A nobiliary society endowed with serious general goals, and intended both to exist in perpetuity, and to operate under the patronage or leadership of a sovereign prince – e. **Nobiliary:** Restricted to members of the nobility – f. **Open Nobiliary:** Open to nobles without regard for chivalric status (and often for sex or age) – g. **Knightly:** Restricted to noble men of knightly vocation (men-at-arms) – h. **Open knightly:** Open to squires as well as knights – j. **Closed knightly:** Restricted to dubbed knights – k. **Curial:** Attached to the court of a sovereign prince of any rank – l. **Monarchical:** Having a constitution providing for an hereditary monarchical presidency attached to the crown or dynasty of the founder.

Appendix 2 – Table of the statutes of the Order of the Crescent⁴⁰¹

Table 1

The Statutes of the Order of the *Croissant*

Prologue: Announces foundation of the order of the *Croissant* with no more than 50 members; emblem and motto (gold *croissant* with blue letters *Los en Croissant*); chief patron (Saint Maurice)

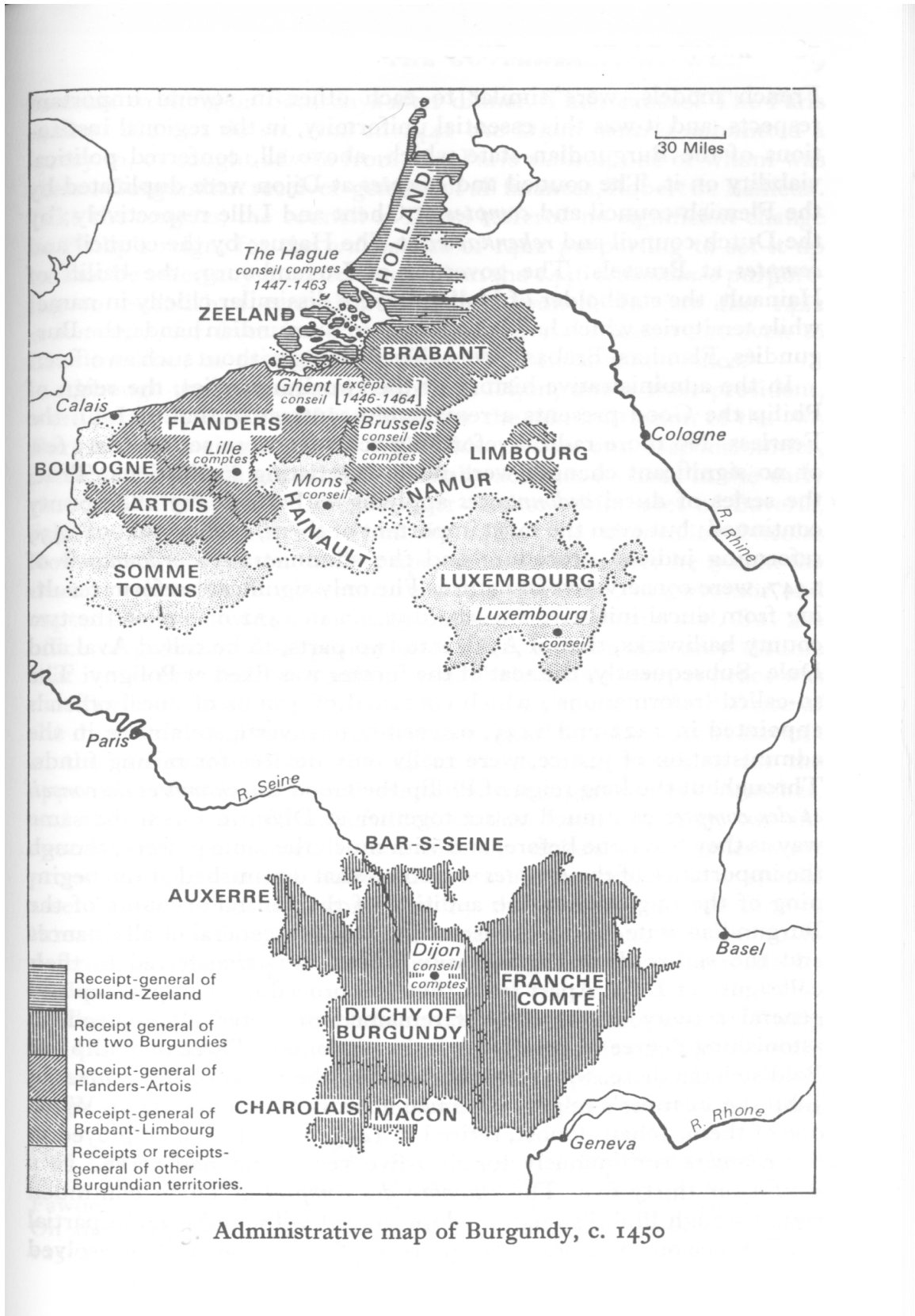
- I. Membership (1–20)
 - A. Conditions of membership (1)
 - B. Spiritual vows – masses, hours (2,3)
 - C. Obligations to fellow members (4,5,16,17,18)
 - D. Grounds and methods for expulsion and discipline (6,7,12,15)
 - E. Obligations to sovereign lord (8,9)
 - F. Obligations to assemble and wear the *croissant* at the appointed times (10,14,20)
 - G. Obligations to the senator (11)
 - H. Vows of personal good conduct; noble deeds to be recorded in a book for perpetual memory (13)
 - I. Membership procedure (19)
- II. Officers: their duties and vows (21–48)
 - A. Senator (21–7)
 - B. Chaplain/Confessor (28–31)
 - C. Chancellor (32–7)
 - D. Vice Chancellor (38)
 - E. Treasurer (39–42)
 - F. Greffier (43–5)
 - G. King of Arms (46–7)
 - H. *Croissant* (48)
- III. Costumes (49–54)
 - A. Feast of Saint Maurice – costumes to be worn by princes, knights, and esquires (49)
 - B. Reception of new member – costumes to be worn by the senator and knights who receive the potential member (50)
 - C. Costumes to be worn at the Feast by members who are in mourning for family members (51)
 - D. Costumes for the chancellor and vice chancellor (52)
 - E. Costume for the treasurer (53)
 - F. Costume for the greffier (54)
- IV. Feast of Saint Maurice and the general Chapter (55–69)
 - A. Procession – marching order, destinations, seating order (55–7)
 - B. Vespers, High Mass, Offerings during Mass (58–61)
 - C. The general Chapter – group decisions, elections (62–3)
 - C. The general Chapter – group decisions, elections (62–3)
 - D. High Mass of Requiem for departed brothers (64–5)
 - E. The wearing of the Order's badge – the *croissant* (66)
 - F. The Order's chapel – description (67)
 - G. Confessions of members in church (68)
 - H. Review of each member's honour/praise by the senator in a discreet manner (69)

Epilogue: The modesty and humility of René the founder; loyalty and obedience to the Duke of Anjou and all his legitimate successors; dated September 1451.

Source: Paris, BN, MS fr. 5605, f. 19r–42v

401 From: Michael T. Reynolds, 'René of Anjou, King of Sicily, and the Order of the Croissant', *Journal of Medieval History* 19 (1993) 135

Appendix 3 – Map of the land of the dukes of Burgundy, c. 1450⁴⁰²



Administrative map of Burgundy, c. 1450

402 From: Vaughan, Richard, *Philip the Good: the Apogee of Burgundy* (Reprint, New York 2002) 187

Appendix 4 – Map of the lands of René of Anjou⁴⁰³



403 From: Jean-Michel Matz and Elisabeth Verry (ed.), *Le roi René dans tous ses états*. (Paris 2012) 11