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Tournament Culture in the Low Countries and England

MARIO DAMEN

In 1279 John I, duke of Brabant, travelled to England to arrange a marriage for his son with Margaret, daughter of King Edward I.¹ According to the chronicler Jan van Heelu the duke deliberately sought out tournaments and chivalric games (*tornoy ende feeste*) and he was not disappointed. A tournament was arranged, probably at Windsor, with the royal couple as the most important spectators. But when the time came to divide the teams, it emerged that the duke's *conroi* was short of a few tourneyers. Then Queen Eleanor of Castile decided that six bannerets, 'the best of the entire country', probably with their retinues, should join the duke's team. However, according to Van Heelu, it was commonly known that one could not beat the duke of Brabant even without equal numbers. After the tournament 'young and old, both knights and heralds' spoke of the duke's performance and his chivalric deeds, all of which increased his honour and prestige and finally produced the marriage alliance to which he aspired.² The marriage was concluded in July 1290 and was preceded again by a big tournament, probably a Round Table, this time at Winchester and with the participation of Edward's prospective son-in-law, the future John II of Brabant, who by then had already been staying at Edward's court for five years.³ John I died at a tournament in Bar-le-Duc in 1294, organised on the occasion of the marriage of the duke of Bar with Eleanor, another daughter of Edward I. Numerous English knights

¹ This article was written within the framework of the research programme 'Burgundian Nobility, Princely Politics and Noble Families, 1425–1525', financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

² *Rijmchroniek van Jan van Heelu betreffende de Slag van Woeringen van het jaar 1288*, ed. J. F. Willems (Brussels, 1836), verses 896–950 (see also the digital edition at www.dbnl.org). See also W. van Anrooij, *Spiegel van ridderschap: Heraut Gelre en zijn ereredes* (Amsterdam, 1990), p. 16.

³ M. Biddle, *King Arthur's Round Table: An Archaeological Investigation* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 361–2, 372.

must have witnessed the fatal wounding of the duke's arm during a joust with a French knight.⁴

In England and the Low Countries towards the end of the thirteenth century, a common chivalric culture had emerged which permitted exchanges and mutual participation in tournaments on both sides of the Channel.⁵ On the fringes of the kingdom of France and the Holy Roman Empire in particular, the 'classic' *tournoi* came into being.⁶ It was a spectacular imitation battle between two teams of hundreds of tourneyers over several square kilometres in the countryside. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, however, the English tournament became a more formalised, ritualised and exclusively aristocratic event. A similar development took place in the Low Countries, but not at the same moment, and indeed, the earlier reciprocity of form between English and Low Countries' tournaments was replaced by divergence. In his book on medieval courts and culture, Malcolm Vale has already pointed at this tendency towards 'greater exclusiveness', especially in the Low Countries. Yet until the advent of the house of Burgundy, which between 1384 and 1430 acquired most of the principalities of the Low Countries, jousts and tournaments had offered the possibility for the noble and urban elites who did not form part of the ducal household, to intermingle with the ruler and his direct surroundings on an informal basis. After the Burgundian takeover, however, this situation changed and there was an 'increasing sense of separation between Burgundian court society and the urban society in which it lived'.⁷

Whilst the English case has been much discussed in the historiography, this essay aims to provide a counterpoint by exploring the case of the Low Countries. It will show that the aristocratisation of the tournament in the Low Countries became indeed increasingly evident, but not before the second half of the fifteenth century. Only then were elites, who did not form part of or were not connected to the princely household, excluded from tournaments. To demonstrate this I will focus on the classic tournament form, the *mêlée*. The *mêlée* was in fact the traditional *tournoi*, which was usually fought in the countryside, but in the later Middle Ages transferred to a confined urban setting: two equal-sized teams, normally composed according to geographical origin, battered each other with special tournament batons and swords.⁸

⁴ T. Hage, 'Tornoye die minde hi sere. Bij de dood van Jan I van Brabant (1294)', *Madoc* (1994), pp. 195–202 (at 196–8).

⁵ J. Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and its Context 1270–1350* (Woodbridge, 1982), pp. 22–3.

⁶ D. Crouch, *Tournament* (London, 2005), pp. 1–9, 119–31.

⁷ M. Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe, 1270–1380* (Oxford, 2001), p. 199.

⁸ See on the terminology, M. Vale, *War and Chivalry: Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages* (London, 1981), pp. 67–8.

One of the best known late medieval *mêlées* is the one organised in Bruges in 1393 by the Flemish nobleman Jan van der Aa, lord of Gruuthuse, who assembled fifty tourneyers against a team of equal strength of Jan, lord of Ghistelles. This tournament seems to have been the main source of inspiration for the famous illustrations in the René d'Anjou's *Livre de tournois*; a century later, the then lord of Gruuthuse would order a copy of this book, and present it to the king of France.⁹ In the tournament book of René d'Anjou as well as in that of Antoine de la Sale, both dating from the 1450s, the *mêlée* is considered to be the most prestigious tournament in terms of the honour that could be gained. The writers of these books were not only inspired by a nostalgic view of a chivalric past but also aimed to create an incentive for the nobility of their own day to perform 'deeds of arms', at tournaments and on the battlefield.¹⁰ Paradoxically, however, it was only in the second half of the fifteenth century that these books gained popularity: by this time, the massive *mêlée*-tournament had become obsolete whereas other more individual forms of combat began to overshadow the collective tournament.

In England the last *mêlée* was set up in 1342 in Dunstable; subsequently, Edward III turned the tournament into a court festivity.¹¹ This transformation came later in the Low Countries. Malcolm Vale wondered whether the Bruges *mêlée* of 1393 was the last *mêlée* ever organised, or the first one of a series intended to revive the genre.¹² This article will show that there were at least three other big *mêlée*-type tournaments organised in Brussels, one of the most important cities in the duchy of Brabant, during the first decades of the fifteenth century. The social exclusivity of late medieval tournaments was not so marked before circa 1450 in the Low Countries. These tournaments continued to offer possibilities for social and inter-regional exchange, in stark contrast to English tournaments, with which the tournaments organised on the other side of the Channel had less and less in common. The integration

⁹ The most recent article on this tournament is J. M. van den Eeckhout, 'Het tornooi van Brugge van dinsdag 11 maart 1393', *De Vlaamse stam*, 46 (2010), pp. 377–406. See also J.-B.-B. Praet, *Recherches sur Louis de Bruges, seigneur De La Gruthuyse* (Paris, 1831), pp. 265–84; Vale, *War and Chivalry*, p. 84; A. Brown, 'Urban Jousts in the Later Middle Ages: The White Bear of Bruges', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 78 (2000), pp. 315–30 (at 321).

¹⁰ Vale, *War and Chivalry*, pp. 66–7. See the edition of the tournament book of Antoine de la Sale in S. Lefèvre, *Antoine de la Sale: La fabrique de l'œuvre et de l'écrivain, suivi de l'édition critique du traité des anciens et des nouveaux tournois* (Geneva, 2006). For an English translation of the tournament book of René d'Anjou by Elizabeth Bennett, see <http://www.princeton.edu/~ezb/rene/renehome.html> (accessed 8 May 2011).

¹¹ Crouch, *Tournament*, p.130.

¹² M. Vale, 'Le tournoi dans la France du Nord, l'Angleterre et les Pays-Bas (1280–1440)', in *Actes du 115e congrès national des sociétés savantes (Avignon, 1990)* (Paris, 1991), pp. 263–71 (at 269).

of Brabant into the Burgundian personal union created tensions between the new rulers and the ruling elites in town and countryside, whereas at the same time opportunities (for jobs and land acquisition) arose as the duchy now formed part of a larger composite territorial state.¹³ At least at the beginning of Burgundian rule, the tournament was the occasion *par excellence* where tensions could be released and opportunities could be exploited.

The Organisers

In the Low Countries, tournaments had become typical urban events by the 1400s. They were not put on simply as amusement for or by the prince and his household, but rather they provided a meeting space for the noble and urban elites where business (such as political contacts or marriage arrangements) could be transacted.¹⁴ In Bruges and Lille jousts were organised annually by jousting societies, but were entirely financed by the civic authorities. During these spectacles (called, respectively, the White Bear and the Épinette), well-off patricians and merchants from the town would joust with their counterparts from other cities, with nobles, courtiers, and sometimes even with the count of Flanders himself or members of his household. In this way, inter-urban and urban-courtly contacts were stimulated.¹⁵

Although Brussels did not host a jousting society as was the case in Bruges or Lille, the town was an important tournament venue from an early stage.¹⁶ In the first decades of the fifteenth century, tournaments were organised regularly on the Grote Markt, or Grand-Place, the central market square.¹⁷ The Castilian nobleman Pero Tafur, who visited the court of Philip the Good in

¹³ R. van Uytven, 'Vorst, adel en steden. Een driehoeksverhouding in Brabant van de twaalfde tot de zestiende eeuw', *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis*, 59 (1976), pp. 93–122 (at 104–6).

¹⁴ A. Janse, 'Tourneyers and Spectators: The Shrovetide Tournament at The Hague, 1391', in *The Court as a Stage: England and the Low Countries in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. A. Janse and S. Gunn (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 39–52 (at 41); A. Brown and G. Small, *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries c. 1420–1530* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 23–5, 213–15; T. Zotz, 'Adel, Bürgertum und Turniere in deutschen Städten', in *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter: Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Formen- und Verhaltensgeschichte des Rittertums*, ed. J. Fleckenstein (Göttingen, 1985), pp. 450–99 (at 483–4, 499).

¹⁵ Brown, 'Urban Jousts', pp. 315–30; P. de Gryse, 'Toernooien en steekspelen ten tijde van Lodewijk van Gruuthuse', in *Lodewijk van Gruuthuse. Mecenas en Europees diplomaat ca. 1427–1492*, ed. M. Martens (Bruges, 1992), pp. 87–92 (at 90–2); Brown and Small, *Court*, p. 10.

¹⁶ Vale, *The Princely Court*, pp. 197–8.

¹⁷ A. Chevalier-de Gottal, *Les fêtes et les arts à la cour de Brabant à l'aube du XVe siècle* (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), pp. 105–11.

Brussels in 1438, was struck by the 'constant succession of tournaments and everything that makes for pleasure'.¹⁸ At least on three occasions – in 1409, 1428 and 1439 – a big *mêlée* was organised on the Brussels Grote Markt. Evidence shows that on all three occasions Philip the Good (1396–1467), duke of Brabant from 1430, was present. In 1409, as an adolescent, he had witnessed a tournament in Brussels on the occasion of the wedding of the duke of Brabant, his uncle Anthony of Burgundy (1384–1415).¹⁹ Antoine de la Sale saw this tournament, so his description of how a tournament should be performed was probably influenced by this chivalric event. He reveals that there were more than five hundred helms present on both sides (*de deux lez*). Even if this figure may be exaggerated, it must have been a massive event.²⁰ In 1428 there was again a *mêlée* on the Grote Markt. At this tournament, Philip of Saint-Pol (1404–30), the then duke of Brabant, and his cousin Philip the Good, then count of Flanders, made combat with 140 to 160 *heumes* (helms, tourneyers) each.²¹ There is a detailed account of this tournament by the chronicler Enguerrand de Monstrelet. He mentions that the event was organised by Jacob van Abcoude, lord of Gaasbeek (d. 1459, see Figure 5), one of Brabant's most influential *baanrotsen* (bannerets).²² The *baanrotsen* played a prominent political and military role in the duchy of Brabant. They derived their prestige from their seigneuries (called *terra* or *land*) held in fief, with high jurisdiction, from the duke of Brabant.²³ Jacob did not only own Gaasbeek, an important seignury south-west of Brussels, but also key possessions

¹⁸ Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures 1435–1439*, ed. M. Letts (London, 1926), p. 195.

¹⁹ *La chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet en 2 livres avec pièces justificatives, 1400–1444*, ed. L. Douët-d'Arcq, 5 vols (Paris, 1857–62), II, pp. 32–3; Chevalier-Gottal, *Les fêtes*, p. 118.

²⁰ De la Sale states that one of the tournaments that he has witnessed was 'à Bruxelles du temps du duc Anthoine de Brabant, il y a cinquante ans ou plus'. As he wrote his book in 1459–60 it must have been the 1409 tournament described by Monstrelet: Lefèvre, *Antoine de la Sale*, pp. 35, 261–2, 311. The figure of 'plus de Vc heumes de deux lez' is found in one manuscript, whereas in another manuscript it reads 'IIIc'.

²¹ *Chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet*, ed. Douët-d'Arcq, IV, pp. 306–8.

²² But Monstrelet states that 'duquel tournoiment estoit le chef, le filz du damoiseil de Gazebeque', that is that the son of the squire of Gaasbeek was the tournament's chief. He is most probably referring to Jacob van Aboude, lord of Gaasbeek, who was in fact an *escuier-banneret* because he was never dubbed a knight. His father Zweder van Abcoude had already died in 1400.

²³ A. Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement du duché de Brabant au bas Moyen Âge (1355–1430)* (Brussels, 1975), pp. 438–41; M. Damen, 'Heren met banieren. De baanrotsen van Brabant in de vijftiende eeuw', in *Bourgondië voorbij. De Nederlanden 1250–1650*, ed. M. Damen and L. H. J. Sicking (Hilversum, 2010), pp. 139–58.



Figure 5. Jacob van Abcoude painted by A. Buchelius after a stained glass window (now disappeared) in the cathedral of Utrecht. Jacob is wearing a tunic with his coat of arms and is holding his banner with the coats of arms of his four seigneuries: Gaasbeek, Abcoude, Strijen and Putten. (A. van Buchel, *Monumenta passim in templis ac monasteriis Trajectinae urbis atque agri inventa*, fol. 7v. Utrecht, Het Utrechts archief (Bibliotheek), ms. XXVII L 1)

in the neighbouring principalities of Guelders, Holland and the prince-bishopric of Utrecht.²⁴

According to the manuals of René d'Anjou and Antoine de la Sale, the *mêlée*-style tournament could only be initiated by princes, bannerets or even by *puissans chevaliers ou esuiers*.²⁵ In reality, the duke, let alone a banneret, would simply not have been able to organise such an event on his own. The cooperation of the town was essential. Although there are no surviving accounts of the Brussels town government from these years, other sources indicate that the town regularly sponsored tournaments.²⁶ The practical organisation of

²⁴ A. C. de Groot, 'Zweder en Jacob van Gaasbeek in Zuid-Holland', *Zuid-Hollandse Studien*, 9 (1959), pp. 39–99 (at 64–5); Uyttebrouck, *Gouvernement*, pp. 653–4.

²⁵ R. Barber and J. R. V. Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1989), p. 180. Although René d'Anjou speaks of 'quelque prince, ou du moins hault baron, ou banneret' as possible initiators, De la Sale thinks that 'ceulx qui entreprenoyent a faire cest behourt, estoient seigneurs ou puissans chevaliers ou escuiers': Lefèvre, *Antoine de la Sale*, p. 307.

²⁶ L. Galesloot, 'Notes extraits des anciennes comptes de la ville de Bruxelles', *Compte rendu des séances de la Commission royale d'histoire*, 3e série, 9 (1867), pp. 475–500 (at

the tournament – tasks such as the construction of the lists and a tribune, covering the soil of the Grote Markt with sand, renting space in houses from which to watch the tournament – was undoubtedly carried out by the town government. At least this was normally the case in Ghent, Bruges and Lille.²⁷

So in the later medieval Low Countries, princes did organise tournaments but they were not the only important players. Nobles and patricians, sometimes united in tourneying societies, played an active role in staging chivalric events. Moreover, the cooperation of urban governments was indispensable. In England, by contrast, the majority of the jousts and tournaments were already in the fourteenth century exclusively dependent on royal patronage.²⁸ This was probably the result of the tournament ordinances issued by Richard I in 1194 and Edward I in 1292. According to Keen and Barker, the ordinances enabled the king not only to train his knights in a regulated way, but also to control the heavily armed tourneyers and thus maintain the peace, to protect the royal forests by assigning only a few tournament sites and, last but not least, to receive the fees that participating tourneyers were obliged to pay.²⁹

In the Low Countries the most obvious places to organise a tournament in the later Middle Ages were the market squares of the cities, not only in the aforementioned cities of Brussels, Bruges and Lille, but also in Ghent, Louvain, Antwerp, Mons, Valenciennes and in a number of smaller cities as well.³⁰ For the English, however, there were only three important tournament locations: in London at Smithfield; along the frontier with France, especially in the marches of Calais; and along the frontier with Scotland. The proximity of hostile armies was a stimulus for the organisation of tournaments as they were still important for training combat techniques, particularly during times of peace.³¹ Smithfield, on the other hand, was not a straightforwardly urban site like the market squares of the Low Countries. It was a place of recreation for town-dwellers, and, in many ways, more like a border area. At the same time, however, it was referred to as the 'king's field'. This ambiguous status of the site made it in theory an ideal place for social interaction. Nevertheless,

482) mentions expenses made by the town during tournaments 'op die merct' (on the Grote Markt) in 1416 and 1417 in the presence of the duke of Brabant.

²⁷ Brown, 'Urban Jousts', pp. 317–19; E. Van den Neste, *Tournois, joutes, pas d'armes dans les villes de Flandre à la fin du Moyen Age (1300–1486)* (Paris, 1996), pp. 71–5; D. Nicholas, 'In the Pit of the Burgundian Theatre State: Urban Traditions and Princely Ambitions in Ghent, 1360–1420', in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. B. A. Hanawalt and K. L. Reyerson (Minneapolis, MN, 1994), pp. 271–95 (at 275–7).

²⁸ Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*, p. 37.

²⁹ M. H. Keen (with J. Barker), 'The Medieval English Kings and the Tournament', in idem, *Nobles, Knights, and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages* (London, 1996), pp. 83–100 (at 85–7).

³⁰ Van den Neste, *Tournois*, pp. 67–8.

³¹ Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*, pp. 36, 40.

most tournaments were organised solely by the king in contrast to most other London festivities, such as entries and processions, which were arranged in collaboration with the town administration. The lists even reserved a part of the public space of Smithfield for tourneyers and closed it off for normal citizens. Even on the stands, common Londoners, who had to pay to see the tournament, were separated from royal guests.³² Tournaments at Smithfield had become, by the late Middle Ages, almost exclusively 'royal, household, events and, insofar as the Londoners played a part in them it was as honoured guests, spectators and, no doubt, also as suppliers.'³³

The Burgundian Court Meets Brabant

A similar contrast is revealed through an analysis of the participants. In England the tourneyers formed, as Juliet Barker says, a 'close knit society' consisting of nobles who were 'members or cadet branches of the comital and great baronial families of England or men of their households and retinues'. Even they were more and more dependent on royal or magnate patronage as the costs of tourneying harnesses, armour and horses grew.³⁴

What can we say about the participants of the *mêlée* tournaments in Brussels? Apart from the three prize winners, one for each day of the tournament, Enguerrand de Monstrelet does not reveal the names of the participants of the tournament of 1428. In this sense we are better informed on a third *mêlée*, organised in Brussels in May 1439, which will be treated here in more detail. This tournament is mentioned in a variety of sources: ducal accounts, chronicles and above all in two occasional rolls, both copies from the sixteenth century, but trustworthy.³⁵ In these two manuscripts the coats of arms are depicted of 235 participants arranged in thirty-seven companies.³⁶ Nineteen

³² S. Lindenbaum, 'The Smithfield Tournament of 1390', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 20 (1990), pp. 1–20 (at 5–7).

³³ C. Barron, 'Chivalry, Pageantry and Merchant Culture in Medieval London', in *Heraldry, Pageantry, and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. P. Coss and M. H. Keen (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 219–42 (at 221).

³⁴ J. Barker, *The Tournament in England, 1100–1400* (Woodbridge, 1986), p. 134; Lindenbaum, 'The Smithfield Tournament', p. 11.

³⁵ In French, *armorial occasionel*. See M. Pastoureau, *Les armoiries* (Turnhout, 1976), p. 39. See also Crouch, *Tournament*, pp. 37–8.

³⁶ The first manuscript is Josse van Becberghe, *Echevins de Bruxelles et tournoys*, 1582. Archives de la ville, Brussels, Archives historiques [hereafter B.A.V., A.H.], 3357. The second is to be found in Rijksarchief, Ghent, Fonds Familie D'Udekem d'Acoz, 4498. I would like to thank Robert Stein (Leiden) and Frederik Buylaert (Ghent) for generously giving me the references of these occasional rolls. In another essay I treat the economic importance of the tournament for the town of Brussels in detail: M. Damen, 'The Town,

companies were conducted by bannerets and eighteen by pennon-holders. Among the tourneyers we find the duke himself as knight banneret and leader of a company, the *fine fleur* of his household and numerous nobles and patricians, mainly from the duchy of Brabant. The only comparable English document is the Dunstable tournament roll of 1309, analysed half a century ago by A. Tomkinson. These armorials offer the possibility of analysing the retinues of the leaders of the different companies and the positions of every retainer within the retinue.³⁷

For the *mêlée*, the companies had to be grouped together into two teams. In 1439 Philip the Good, then duke of Brabant, was almost certainly the leader of one team, whereas one of the Brabantine bannerets would have been the other *chef d'équipe*. This banneret may well have been Jacob van Abcoude, lord of Gaasbeek, the organiser of the 1428 tournament and of other chivalric events, and apart from the duke himself, the only one among them with ten helms in his company (Figure 5).³⁸ It is highly probable that we owe the existence of the (copies of the) armorial to the fact that these two teams were not composed at random, but rather by taking into account the strength and capability of all tourneyers. This is explicitly formulated by Monstrelet when describing the Brussels tournament of 1428. According to the chronicler the tourneyers 'furent partis l'un contre l'autre, et paraillement grand partie de leurs gens, par advis et déliberacion d'aucuns saiges de leurs consaulx et des officiers d'armes, adfin de eschever toutes rigueurs qui peussent advenir': that is to say, in order to avoid any atrocities, some wise councillors and heralds helped to compose two teams of equal strength.³⁹ To achieve this, probably a list of names of the participants was drawn up. Such a list must have been the main source of the armorial for the 1439 tournament.⁴⁰ But the herald must have used other 'sources' for his compilation. We know that the coats of arms of the tourneyers were fenestrated, probably at the inns where the tourneyers

the Duke, his Courtiers and their Tournament: A Spectacle in Brussels, 4–7 May 1439; in *Staging the Court of Burgundy*, ed. T.-H. Borchert (Turnhout, 2012). Furthermore, I intend to make an edition of both rolls in which I will compare the manuscripts more extensively. The tournament is mentioned (but not analysed) by Van den Neste, *Tournois*, p. 308, no. 322.

³⁷ A. Tomkinson, 'Retinues at the Tournament of Dunstable, 1309', *English Historical Review*, 74 (1959), pp. 70–89. See also Keene and Barker, 'The Medieval English Kings', p. 93.

³⁸ B.A.V., A.H., 3357, fols 38v–39r (Philip the Good's company) and fols 44v–45r (Jacob van Abcoude's company). In 1441 Jacob van Abcoude organised a tournament in Utrecht: A. Janse, *Ridderschap in Holland. Portret van een adellijke elite* (Hilversum, 2001), p. 342.

³⁹ *Chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet*, ed. Douët-d'Arcq, IV, p. 307.

⁴⁰ Tomkinson, 'Retinues', pp. 85–6 and Crouch, *Tournament*, pp. 73–4.

were staying.⁴¹ Moreover, one of the chroniclers states that there was a helm show on the eve of the tournament where all participants had to show their banners, pennons, helms and crests.⁴²

With respect to the origin of the tourneyers, Brabant is dominant, providing almost sixty per cent of the tourneyers. Of the neighbouring principalities, Holland and Zeeland are completely absent. The only Hainaut banneret, Simon de Lalaing, won the prize of the tournament, at least according to the chronicler Olivier van Dixmuide. Jacques de Lalaing, later nicknamed *le bon chevalier* for all his deeds of arms at tournaments and battlefields all over Europe, formed part of Simon's company at what must have been one of his first tournaments.⁴³ Van Dixmuide furthermore states that hardly any Flemish nobles were present.⁴⁴ Indeed, high-ranking Flemish household officers like Hue de Lannoy and Roland d'Utkerke were absent. Maybe they were too old for tourneying or simply busy with more important matters. But there may also be a more political explanation. De Lannoy and d'Utkerke belonged to the pro-English faction within Philip's council and did not share the views of the pro-French (councillor)-chamberlains, Antoine and Jean de Croÿ, the lords of Charny, Ternant and Crèvecoeur, who at that time played a leading role in the duke's policies, and also played a central part in the tournament (see below).⁴⁵

The prominence of the ducal milieu was striking. In his book on the princely court, Malcolm Vale states that the 'blending of service in war, tournament, and the household' marks 'a synthesis of chivalric and courtly activities and obligations.'⁴⁶ He was then evaluating the first half of the fourteenth century but a century later little seems to have changed according to analysis of the participants of the Brussels tournament and their links with Philip the Good's household. When comparing the 235 tourneyers with the household

⁴¹ B.A.V., A.H., 3357, fol. 168 where it is stated that one of the tourneyers had his coat of arms fenestrated ('doen vejnsteren').

⁴² *Chronique de Jean de Stavelot*, ed. A Borgnet (Brussels, 1861), p. 433.

⁴³ See on him *Les chevaliers de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or au XVe siècle. Notices bio-bibliographiques*, ed. R. de Smedt (Frankfurt am Main, 2000), no. 51. *Prosopographia Curiae Burgundicae* [hereafter P.C.B., see www.prosopographia-burgundica.org, accessed 8 May 2011], no. 1097; Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*, pp. 131–2; M. de Riquer, 'Les chevaleries de Jacques de Lalaing en Espagne', *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 135/2 (1991), pp. 351–65.

⁴⁴ Olivier van Dixmuide, *Merkwaardige gebeurtenissen, vooral in Vlaenderen en Brabant, en ook in de aangrenzende landstrecken, van 1377 tot 1443*, ed. J. Lambin (Ypres, 1835), p. 167.

⁴⁵ On the two political factions at the Burgundian court, see R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy* (London, 1970), pp. 100–1.

⁴⁶ Vale, *The Princely Court*, p. 189.

ordinance of 1438 and the (daily) lists of wages of May 1439,⁴⁷ it appears that forty-six participants, that is twenty per cent, can be linked to the ducal household. In Philip's own company no less than eight of the ten tourneyers were household officers. What is more, three of them had been members of the Golden Fleece since its foundation in 1430 and a fourth joined the chivalric order in 1433.⁴⁸ As members of both the household and the Order of the Golden Fleece, they were bound to the duke with a double oath of loyalty.

The involvement of the household was not limited to the company of the duke. Out of the thirty-seven companies present at the tournament, twenty-one of the company leaders boasted a connection with the duke's household. Their presence was even more manifest among the bannerets (seventeen out of nineteen) than among the pennon-holders (four out of eighteen). Most of these were (councillor-) chamberlains, high-ranking household officers, or even close relatives of the duke such as John, son of the duke of Cleves, and the counts of Étampes, Nevers and Saint Pol.⁴⁹ Some of them had been raised at the Burgundian court and appear as special guests in the paylists of the household.⁵⁰ Four bannerets (apart from Philip the Good himself) were members of the Golden Fleece.⁵¹ Since the leaders of the most prestigious companies of the tournament had a direct, sometimes even intimate, relationship with the duke, the household in many ways really dominated the tournament.

The officers of Brabantine origin formed a special category within the household of Philip the Good. In 1433 the duke created twenty-eight extra offices for nobles who had been born in, or had possessions in Brabant. It provided a way of embedding the leading Brabantine lineages firmly in the princely

⁴⁷ H. Kruse and W. Paravicini, *Die Hofordnungen der Herzöge von Burgund I: Herzog Philipp der Gute, 1407–1467* (Ostfildern, 2005), pp. 147–228. The paylists can be consulted on the website of the P.C.B.

⁴⁸ It concerns the four knights that are first mentioned in Philip's company: Pierre de Bauffremont, Colard III de Brimeu, Jacques de Crèvecoeur and Philippe de Ternant. On them, see *Les chevaliers*, ed. de Smedt, nos 16, 20, 21 and 29. P.C.B., nos 0181, 0297, 0321, 0437.

⁴⁹ *Les chevaliers*, ed. de Smedt, nos. 10, 47, 53. P.C.B., nos. 0384, 0533, 0664, 0697.

⁵⁰ P.C.B., écrow 11053 (paylist of 4 May 1439). The preparations for the wedding between Charles of Viana, grandson of the king of Navarra, and Agnes of Cleves were also going on in this month. See Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, p. 290; M. Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal, duchesse de Bourgogne: une femme au pouvoir au XVe siècle* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 1998), pp. 74–6. Agnes, princess of Navarra, is equally mentioned in the paylists and she must have witnessed the tournament. On the boat trip from Brussels to Bilbao later that year, Agnes was accompanied by, among others, her brother John and Hervé de Mériadec, member of the company of Philip the Good: W. Paravicini, 'Un tombeau en Flandre: Hervé de Mériadec', *Francia*, 33 (2007), pp. 85–146 (at 100).

⁵¹ It concerns Antoine and Jean II de Croÿ, Simon de Lalaing and Jean V de Crequy: De Smedt, *Les chevaliers*, nos 15, 22, 23 and 26; P.C.B., nos 0075, 0228, 0403, 0392.

environment.⁵² This had been preceded by the creation of a pro-Burgundian noble party in Brabant established already by Philip's grandfather Philip the Bold (1342–1404) through the grant of money fiefs (*fief rentes*). Eventually, in addition to the positive disposition of the Brabantine cities towards the Burgundian dynasty, this led to the voluntary integration of the duchy within the Burgundian personal union in 1430 when Philip of Saint Pol died without leaving a male successor.⁵³ The lords of Breda (Nassau), Bergen-op-Zoom, Gaasbeek, Rotselaar and Roost, who all led companies during the tournament, had already been mentioned in the household ordinance of 1433. Like their ancestors, they had played a prominent political role within the duchy of Brabant. Together with some ten other lords, they formed a special category within the knighthood of Brabant, the aforementioned *baanrotsen* or bannerets. The relative weight of Brabantine officeholders within the household (twenty-one per cent in 1438)⁵⁴ is more or less mirrored in the presence of Brabantine bannerets (five out of nineteen, or twenty-six per cent) at the tournament.

In the *mêlée*, unlike in the more individualised joust, collaboration within both company and the entire team was important. The tournament could in this way enhance the 'team building' within the household. Moreover, because the duke supplied most of his household officers with robes, armour and horses, or money to buy or hire such equipment, the bond between the lord and his men was strengthened. For these courtiers it did not matter whether they served their master on the battlefield or in tournaments. Both provided opportunities for 'deeds of arms' and the demonstration of prowess and loyalty to the duke.⁵⁵

This was a very present concern in the late 1430s when the duke was involved in several military confrontations, first against the insurgents of Bruges, and second against the English. In fact, the martial interaction of the Burgundian court with the urban communities of the Low Countries was not confined to the tournament on the market square. What is more, ducal-urban exchanges at the tournaments should not obscure outright urban hostility which was normally encountered by severe armed oppression by the duke and his armies. In May 1437, when combating the Bruges insurgents, Hervé de Mériadec, a member of Philip the Good's company, guarded the Bouverie-

⁵² W. Paravicini, 'Expansion et intégration. La noblesse des Pays-Bas à la cour de Philippe le Bon', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 95 (1980), pp. 298–314 (at 306–12).

⁵³ R. Stein, *Politiek en historiografie. Het ontstaansmilieu van Brabantse kronieken in de eerste helft van de vijftiende eeuw* (Leuven, 1994), pp. 176–204.

⁵⁴ Paravicini, 'Expansion', p. 313.

⁵⁵ Vale, *War and Chivalry*, pp. 67, 78–80; Vale, *The Princely Court*, p. 191.

gate of Bruges with Charles de Rochefort and Jean, bastard de Renty, also present at the tournament, under the command of Jean, bastard de Dampierre, another member of the duke's company.⁵⁶ In the same year De Mériadec was rewarded, together with Jean de Chaumergy, another company member, for fighting against the English.⁵⁷ This illustrates that combat techniques exercised during tournaments and the resulting team spirit still had a practical function in military confrontations.⁵⁸

The Tournament and the Urban Patricians

However, the exchanges fostered by tournaments in the Low Countries were more complex than this noble-focused model might suggest. After visiting the Low Countries in 1438 and marvelling at the Burgundian court and the tournaments in Brussels, Pero Tafur went to Schaffhausen in the Upper Rhine region. He noticed there that every man could joust (*justar*) and participate in any knightly game. However, the tournament (*torneo*) was restricted to those nobles (*fidalgos*) with a known coat of arms. According to the Spanish traveller this was a good rule because it would make clear who belonged to a knightly and noble lineage and who did not.⁵⁹ Tafur remarked a sharp social distinction between jousts and (*mêlée*-) tournaments. Participation in a *mêlée* was a way to show your noble status. This kind of distinction can be noticed in the tournament culture of the Low Countries in the first half of the fifteenth century as well. According to the rules of the tournament books, only nobles who could demonstrate that they had four noble ancestors could participate in the *mêlée*.⁶⁰ The chronicler Olivier van Dixmude doubts, however, that this rule was applied very strictly at the 1439 *tournoi*: 'one said that they [the tourneyers] had to have four noble ancestors but I think that many slipped through'.⁶¹ Even to contemporaries it was clear that these massive chivalric events were not as exclusive as they pretended to be.

This becomes clear when we shift the focus from the top categories among the tourneyers towards other socially more humble participants. Sixty-two tourneyers (more than twenty-six per cent), can be identified as members of

⁵⁶ *Chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet*, ed. Douët-d'Arcq, V, p. 285; J. Dumolyn, *De Brugse opstand van 1436–1438* (Kortrijk-Heule, 1997), p. 228; Paravicini, 'Hervé de Mériadec', p. 97.

⁵⁷ Paravicini, 'Hervé de Mériadec', pp. 108, 111–15, 136–7.

⁵⁸ Vale, *War and Chivalry*, pp. 70, 78–80.

⁵⁹ Tafur, *Travels and Adventures*, pp. 195, 208.

⁶⁰ Vale, *War and Chivalry*, p. 96.

⁶¹ Van Dixmude, *Merkwaerdige gebeurtenissen*, p. 167: 'ende also men seide, zo moesten zy alle eydel zyn van vier zyden, maer ic meene datter vele duere slopen.'

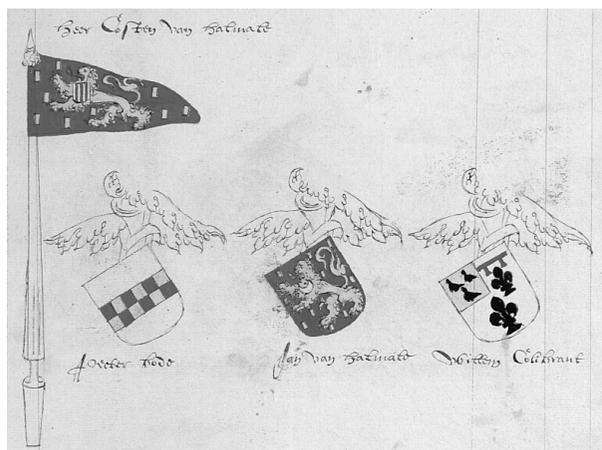


Figure 6. Detail of the occasional roll of the tournament (Brussels manuscript) displaying the company of Costen van Halmale. (Josse van Becberghe, *Echevins de Bruxelles et tournoys* (1582). Brussels, Archives de la ville, Archives historiques 3357, fol. 56r)

families who were active in the town administrations of Brussels, Antwerp, Louvain and Bois-le-Duc. I qualify them here as patricians, political office-holders who were part of the economic elite of the town which consisted of landowners, cloth manufacturers and wholesalers.⁶² The majority of the tourneying patricians, thirty-three, were from Brussels.⁶³ This gave the spectators a chance actively to support their fellow-citizens. Of course, we should not overestimate the bond between spectators and tourneyers. In a town like Brussels, with some thirty-five thousand inhabitants, social differences were big, and time and again tensions between the different social categories came to the fore. Although these patricians saw themselves as representatives of the town, at the same time, they rather preferred to be associated with higher-ranking nobles present at the tournament than with the Brussels populace. Still, it is a notable contrast with the tournaments at Smithfield, where the urban elite from London was not only excluded from participating in but even from organising the event.⁶⁴

⁶² See on the terms 'urban nobility' and 'patriciate': F. Buylaert, *Eeuwen van ambitie. De adel in laatmiddeleeuws Vlaanderen* (Brussels, 2010), pp. 259–66 and *ibid.*, 'La "noblesse urbaine" à Bruges (1363–1563). Naissance d'un nouveau groupe social?', in *Les nobles et la ville dans l'espace francophone (XIIe–XVIe siècles)*, ed. T. Dutour (Paris, 2010), pp. 245–73.

⁶³ See on the participation of the Brussels patricians, Damen, 'The Town'.

⁶⁴ Lindenbaum, 'The Smithfield Tournament', p. 12.

Fifteen of the eighteen pennon-holders can be categorised as patricians. A good example is Costen van Halmale, who was the leader of one of the smallest companies at the tournament of only three helms.⁶⁵ Van Halmale was the son of a knight and had been active as an alderman in the Antwerp town administration since 1426.⁶⁶ His company consisted of Peter Bode and Willem Colibrant, both from Antwerp patrician families, and of Costen's brother Jan van Halmale (Figure 6). Although his company was small, the alderman must have spent a fortune to stay for a week in Brussels, paying for the lodgings of himself and his company and buying or hiring horses, harnesses and arms. And the Brussels tournament was not a once-in-a-lifetime event for Costen. He left a kind of annuary in which he enumerates the tournaments, both *mêlées* and jousts, in which he participated in Antwerp, Louvain, Brussels, Malines, Bruges and Utrecht. For the Brussels tournament he mentions the same four precise companies from Antwerp which are listed in the occasional roll with a total of seventeen tourneyers.⁶⁷ This suggests that he was not only proud to show a chivalric attitude but also to represent his town with his fellow-patricians. At the same time the tournament served as a means of distinction in relationship to others.

Although I was not able to make a comprehensive prosopographical analysis of all tourneyers, it is evident that the majority of the Brabantine tourneyers were from families that were regularly summoned for the meetings of the Estates. In the convocation lists of these meetings they are mentioned in the second estate, that of the bannerets, knights and esquires.⁶⁸ In the duchy of Brabant the title of knight was not hereditary but personal, although members of knightly, and *de facto* noble families, were destined to be dubbed as knights. In Brabant, as in most other principalities of the Low Countries, the knightly title was not hereditary but could be obtained by the accolade which was granted by another knight (mostly the territorial prince) on the eve of a battle or a siege. However, there were other occasions for obtaining a knighthood, for example after coronation ceremonies or at the Holy Grave in Jerusalem.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ B.A.V., A.H. 3357, fol. 95r.

⁶⁶ See on the functions of Van Halmale and his fellow patricians in his team, F. Prims, *Geschiedenis van Antwerpen VI. Onder de hertogen van Bourgondië, hertogen van Brabant (1406–1477)* (Brussels, 1936), pp. 182–92.

⁶⁷ B.A.V., A.H. 3357, fols 190v–191r.

⁶⁸ See the names in the convocation lists of the estates of Brabant in the fifteenth century in M. Damen, 'Prelaten, edelen en steden. De samenstelling van de Staten van Brabant in de vijftiende eeuw', *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Commissie voor Geschiedenis* (forthcoming).

⁶⁹ A. Janse, 'Ridderslag en ridderlijkheid in laat-middeleeuws Holland', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 112 (1997), pp. 317–35 (at 324–8).

Jacob van Abcoude, lord of Gaasbeek belonged to the special category of the *écuyers banneret*, or esquires banneret, a recurrent type in Brabant until the advent of the Burgundian dynasty.⁷⁰ They derived their status from the importance of their seigneuries and not from their military title which supposed a hierarchical relationship between the giver (the prince) and the recipient. In his company only the first-listed, Jan Zwaef, was a knight in 1439. Van Abcoude's men had other qualities: seven of them were aldermen in Brussels, occupying this office before or after the tournament, and nearly all of them were descendants of the so-called Burgundian party among the Brussels patricians – aldermen who had received money fiefs from Duke Philip the Bold of Burgundy at the end of the fourteenth century and who actively supported the Burgundian takeover in Brabant.⁷¹ Van den Heetvelde, the leading family within this pro-Burgundian party, is represented by two tourneyers in Van Abcoude's team, Wouter and Willem. They had strong ties with this banneret as his fiefholders in the land of Gaasbeek. As a symbol of their origin and adherence, their coat of arms was charged with a lion rampant argent crowned or, the heraldic device of Gaasbeek.⁷² Their brother-in-law Gerrit van der Borch was on the team as well but there were other familial bonds. Jan Zwaef was married to the daughter of Simon van Ophem, a fiefholder of the lord of Gaasbeek, who tourneyed under his feudal lord together with his son Iwein.⁷³ So the bonding during the tournament did not only take place on the highest level, that of the duke and his household officers, but on a lower level as well. For bannerets such as Jacob van Abcoude the tournament was an ideal opportunity to enforce the bonds with and among his friends, clients and relatives who formed part of his company. The competitive element of the tournament was not the exclusive domain of

⁷⁰ Damen, 'Heren met banieren', pp. 152–6.

⁷¹ Stein, *Politiek*, pp. 221–6. The aldermen were Jan Zwaef, Jan 't Serclaes, Simon van Ophem, Willem and Wouter van den Heetvelde, Gerelijn and Jan Happart. On them and their coats of arms, R. Laurent and C. Roelandt, *Les échevins de Bruxelles (1154–1500). Leurs sceaux (1239–1500)* (Brussels, 2010), nos 197, 198, 210, 231, 452, 559, 698.

⁷² Their complete coat of arms was: Or, a bend gules charged with three hammers silver, the first charged with an inescutcheon sable, a lion rampant argent crowned or. The land of Gaasbeek was given in 1236 as an apanage to a younger son of the duke of Brabant.

⁷³ For the family relations of Van den Heetvelde and Ophem, see F. de Cacamp et al., 'Généalogie des familles inscrites au lignage Sweerts en 1376 d'après le Liber familiarum de Jean-Baptiste Houwaert', *Brabantica. Recueil de travaux de généalogie, d'héraldique et d'histoire familiale pour la province de Brabant*, 5 (1960), pp. 376–540 (at 459, 483, 507–9); F. de Cacamp and P. de Tienne, 'Généalogie des familles inscrites aux lignages de Bruxelles en 1376 d'après le Liber familiarum de Jean-Baptiste Houwaert', *Brabantica. Recueil de travaux de généalogie, d'héraldique et d'histoire familiale pour la province de Brabant*, 10 (1971), pp. 1069–214 (at 1159–61).

individuals, nobles or patricians, but extended to feudal followings and urban communities.

All this evidence likewise makes clear that the *mêlée* in 1439 was first and foremost a local event, open to the social and political elites of the duchy of Brabant. This corresponds to a general pattern in tournament culture in the Low Countries during the first half of the fifteenth century. In Bruges and Lille as well, the jousts were primarily local or regional events involving local patricians, participants from other Flemish cities and nobles from the direct surroundings.⁷⁴ Although there are of course exceptions, the bulk of the tourneyers originated from the town, the surrounding district or principality where the tournament was organised. The social and geographical range of the participants involved in these tournaments contrasts strongly with the English case. English tournaments increasingly served explicitly diplomatic functions (especially in border areas), and this brought a growing social exclusivity combined with a more overtly international setting.

In short, the *mêlée* of May 1439 can be characterised as a meeting between the Burgundian court and Brabant. Brussels was for a week the place to be in the Low Countries, and a point where the prince, his household and the local elites converged. Because of the presence of manifold noble and patrician tourneyers, their wives, friends and clients, this made the tournament an ideal occasion to arrange alliances and marriages. De Monstrelet gives a perfect illustration when describing the 'afterparties' of the 1428 event: 'A large number of dances and banquets was organized there. There were many dames and damsels, dressed up richly according to the fashion of their country. And concerning the masquerades (*mommeries*), both of men and women, there were lots of them.'⁷⁵ In this sense nothing had changed since the early days of tournament: the chivalric event was not only an opportunity to fight and show off one's armorial skills, but also to establish or confirm relationships and secure or improve one's social position.⁷⁶

Epilogue

In June 1467 a tournament was organised at Smithfield by Anthony Woodville, Lord Scales. On this occasion he challenged Anthony, count of La Roche and illegitimate son of Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy, better known as the Great Bastard of Burgundy.⁷⁷ It had taken Woodville two years to get the

⁷⁴ Brown, 'Urban Jousts', p. 322.

⁷⁵ *Chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet*, ed. Douët-d'Arcq, IV, p. 307.

⁷⁶ Crouch, *Tournament*, p. 67.

⁷⁷ On this *pas d'armes*, see S. Anglo, 'Anglo-Burgundian Feats of Arms: Smithfield, June 1467', *Guildhall Miscellany*, 2 (1965), pp. 271–83. On the Great Bastard, see *Les chevaliers*, ed. de Smedt, no. 54.

Burgundian nobleman to England. The tournament consisted of a joust with sharp spears, followed by a fight with swords. However, it took both parties a full day to discuss the way in which the combats on horseback and on foot ought to be fought. Apparently, tournament traditions on both sides of the Channel had been growing apart. In England, it was only the third important feat of arms in a period of twenty-five years, whereas in the Burgundian territories there is testimony of at least sixty-five jousts and tournaments in the same period, including no fewer than seven *pas d'armes*.⁷⁸ But there may have been another reason for the difficulties in agreeing the terms of play. The negotiations regarding a marriage treaty between Duke Charles the Bold (1433–1477) and Margaret of York, sister of Edward IV, were still going on at that time. It is possible that, as Sidney Anglo indicates, all the 'rules, regulations, precautions [were] taken to mitigate the dangers for all those taking part, lest there might ensue any heightening of political tension.'⁷⁹ The combats between the two noblemen took place during an entire week and were alternated with combats of their entourages and, of course, banquets and feasts. On 19 June, however, all the festivities were cancelled, when the news of the death of Duke Philip the Good, four days earlier in Bruges, reached the tournament venue.⁸⁰

Just as in 1278, the tournament played a function in the diplomatic relationships between England and the Low Countries. That said, it is clear that the 1467 tournament was a far more formalised and ritualised event than its predecessor of two centuries earlier. The chivalric encounter between the two Anthonys is characteristic of the tournament culture in the second half of the fifteenth century. The tournament developed into a more regulated contest, and became increasingly a purely courtly occasion. The traditional *mêlée* with two teams opposing each other became obsolete after 1440. It is possible that this kind of tournament had become too expensive for both organisers and participants. However, it was not just a pragmatic shift: in the second half of the fifteenth century individual prowess assumed greater prominence in the chivalric ethos, and became more highly valued in the eyes of the contemporaries than team work.⁸¹ For nobles, and especially for the higher echelons of the aristocracy, the *mêlée* tournament was simply too massive, and thus too anonymous, to provide them with an opportunity to distinguish themselves. They looked for other, maybe less dangerous, tournament forms in which they could shine and into which there was no admission for simple aldermen; every participant had to demonstrate that he was a man with four noble ancestors. Visibility, distinction and the demonstration of individual qualities were key

⁷⁸ Van den Neste, *Tournois*, pp. 308–28; Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*, p. 110.

⁷⁹ Anglo, 'Anglo-Burgundian Feats of Arms', pp. 275, 282.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 280–2.

⁸¹ Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*, pp. 110–12.

concepts in these chivalric encounters. It is therefore no surprise that the *pas d'armes* became the dominant tournament form in this period. Princes also withdrew from the city centres and erected tournament lists next to their residences, as exemplified by the lists constructed next to the ducal palace of the Coudenberg in Brussels.

The result was that, in the second half of the fifteenth century, the interaction between the prince and his household, the nobility and the urban governments in the Low Countries, at least on the tournament field, came to a standstill. In this sense, tournament culture in the Low Countries was heading towards the English model, in which the prince and his household played a predominant role in the convocation and organisation of tournaments and in which participants other than high-ranking nobles with connections at court were simply absent. On the other hand, this social exclusivity brought with it renewed exchange between tournament forms in England and the Low Countries; for instance, the Burgundian *pas d'armes*, introduced in 1467, turned out to be the dominant tournament form in England towards the end of the fifteenth century. It became a medium which could be used not only to foster military skills but also the political loyalty of English nobles.⁸²

In conclusion, whereas tournaments of the late thirteenth century were infused with cross-channel contact, whether in reciprocity of form or in the international composition of the participants involved, by the early fifteenth century, tournament forms in England and the Netherlands had significantly diverged. As has been thoroughly explored by recent historians, English tournaments became increasingly socially exclusive, whilst retaining an international dimension in the interests of diplomacy. However, this essay has demonstrated that this development was by no means typical of all late medieval tournaments. The case of the Low Countries demonstrates that the more socially inclusive style tournaments *did* continue into the fifteenth century, and provided an opportunity for the ducal household and noblemen to come into contact with patrician townspeople and even more diverse urban audiences.

⁸² S. Gunn, 'Tournaments and Early Tudor Chivalry', *History Today*, 41 (1991), pp. 15–25 (at 16–19).

