

Peek inside

Les Archives des Maîtres d'Armes de Paris

Henri Daressy

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## Ordinances of the Masters of Deeds of Arms of the City of Paris

(10 July 1633)

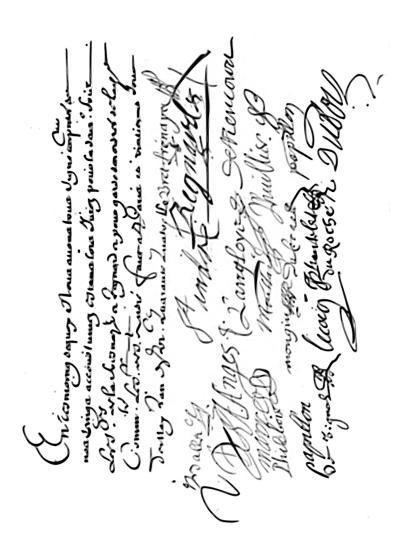
We, Masters of Deeds of Arms undersigned, see the abuses which happen daily in our Community concerning the reception of Masters who have been received against the injunctions of the Court and the former ordinances that we have on this subject. The principal cause of this disorder has only come from the too great a charity and accommodation by us all towards<sup>60</sup> those who have been presented to the Mastery, who have been preferred to the detriment and reputation of those who with pain and work have acquired this status, which must only be conferred on those judged, seeing its importance, by the *Jurés* and Elders as capable people and [as] those who know the misfortune which could occur.

We, desiring to continue the former discipline that we had here in the past, have been advised to make an agreement together that we promise and swear to observe, point by point, even if previously we made some deviations, in order to endeavour to maintain for us that which nevertheless we had contravened.

We have elected a perpetual Trustee to whom we give power and authority to enforce<sup>61</sup> this present agreement and ordinances. Submitting and obliging voluntarily to pay a fine of 12 *livre parisis* in the case that we fail in what we promise now, we give power to the said Trustee to constrain us by any means possible in the case we contravene it in any way and manner that may be.

<sup>60</sup> à l'endroit de

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup>de faire observer



Signatures from the 1633 Ordinances

#### A Fencing Competition at Toulouse

Under the reign of Louis XIII, the masters of arms of Toulouse, with the aim of inspiring emulation among their students, resolved to meet these latter in an annual conference and to determine the prize to two victors of this tourney.

A gilded silver<sup>174</sup> sword was the recompense for the first. The second received a silver sword. A little later, the chief magistrates<sup>175</sup> and the body of the city supported the expense of these prizes in the town of Toulouse, with which the weapons were engraved on the sword blades.

They agreed further, to those who merited them, free entry to the spectacle and the right to be presented with the sword at the town hall.

He should be of a noble or honourable family in order to take part in this competition which took place at same moment as that of the *Jeux Floraux*. <sup>176</sup>

M. de Montandier, lawyer and chief magistrate under Louis XIV, revived this custom which had begun to fall into disuse.

In 1754, the eldest master of arms of Toulouse was Plate, whose father, grandfather and great-grandfather had taught fencing.

The great-grandfather had even been one of the promoters of the establishment of the prize.

#### The Master of Arms by Bonnart

An engraving by Bonnart, <sup>177</sup> who lived under Louis XIV, shows a master of arms in the costume of the period. At the bottom of the engraving is the following quatrain:

Rather than one knowing how without shame The least touches to endure, This master, in stuffing himself, Finds his honour and his score.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>174</sup>vermeil

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>175</sup>les capitouls – the twelve chief magistrates of the city

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup>A poetry and minstrelsy festival and competition revived in Toulouse in 1324 and lasting until 1790. It was re-established in 1806 and continues to the present day <sup>177</sup>This images is not reproduced in the original book

# The Duel of a Seventeen-Year-Old Page (1540)

In the course of January 1540, King François I received at Chantilly Emperor Charles V. During this stay, a squire of the king's daughters named René de Sajault, aged around seventeen years, and a king's guard having met in the courtyard of the château and began joking. The joking became insults and soon a quarrel so acrimonious to the point that they challenged each other. They went to fight in the corner of a park a little distance from the château.

"They unsheathed their swords together from which they hurled several strikes one on the other so that the said supplicant (René de Sajault) was injured by the said deceased in two places in the face and the said deceased with a cutting strike to the hamstring in which he had some nerves cut."

The guard died about a month after "without lacking for good treatment, good regimen, government or otherwise."

King François I absolved René de Sajault in favour of his youth and accorded him a Letter of Remission given at Paris in the month of July 1540.

#### The Duel of Des Bordes against d'Ivoy-Genlis (1560)

In 1560, a nephew of the Marshall of Bourdillon, named Des Bordes, battled in a duel near the park of Saint-Germain-en-Laye with d'Ivoy-Genlis. Des Bordes had a hamstring cut but he didn't die of it. He was killed two years later in the battle of Dreux.

#### Letter of Challenge from Lord Castel-Bayart

(XVI century)

Monsieur, you are such a little thing that were it not for the insolence of your words I would never have remembered you.