



Metz, imperial city, armorial city. The patriciate as the 'sign director' of urban theatre.

Jean-Christophe Blanchard

► To cite this version:

Jean-Christophe Blanchard. Metz, imperial city, armorial city. The patriciate as the 'sign director' of urban theatre.. 2017. hal-02130888v2

HAL Id: hal-02130888

<https://hal.univ-lorraine.fr/hal-02130888v2>

Preprint submitted on 9 Jun 2020

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Metz, imperial city, armorial city.
The patriciate as the 'sign director' of urban theatre.

Well-known thanks to particularly active research since the second half of the 20th century, the city of Metz in the Middle Ages provides an ideal setting for an exploration of the 'heraldisation'¹ of its urban environment between the 13th and 15th centuries. Jean Schneider gave a precise and detailed presentation of socio-economic life in the city in the 13th and 14th centuries, as well as a careful description of the elite who presided over its destiny until 1552.² This has been completed by a number of works on the city walls, its urban monuments - whether ecclesiastical or secular - its stained glass windows, painted ceilings, etc., cross-referenced with ancient sources such as chronicles, in particular that of the merchant Philippe de Vigneulles,³ as well as armorials. These publications have served to reconstruct - partially, but nonetheless evocatively - the city's urban heraldic landscape. Thus seen, Metz is a theatre for an entire 'show', skilfully staged by the urban elite.⁴

After a brief presentation of the city, its ruling elite and their respective coats of arms, we will draw up a non-exhaustive inventory of the rare vestiges that have been partially preserved, as well as testimonies by contemporaries⁵ giving an account of Metz's heraldic past. In this context of the 'show', separations between collective and individual, public and private, profane and sacred, ephemeral and perennial are artificial, but offer a convenient dialectic, once again opposing exterior and interior, shown and hidden, known and unknown; a dialectic that should nonetheless be nuanced as far as possible. The question of heraldic images and their

¹ Here, 'heraldisation' is not the gradual transformation of a non-heraldic emblem into a coat of arms (see Arnold van Gennep, 'Notes sur l'héraldisation de la marque de propriété et les origines du blason', *Bulletins et Mémoires de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris*, V^e série, tome 6, 1905, p. 103-112, [online]. http://www.persee.fr/doc/bmsap_0037-8984_1905_num_6_1_9659 [accessed September 28, 2016].), it is the rise in number, in a given space which may be more or less vast, of the coats of arms of one or more individuals and/or morals (see Laurent Hablot, "L'héraldisation du sacré aux XIIe-XIIIe siècles, une mise en scène de la religion chevaleresque", Martin Aurell (dir.), *Actes du colloque Chevalerie et christianisme aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, Rennes, PUR, 2011, p. 211-233, [online]. http://www.academia.edu/3269618/L._HABLOT_L_h%C3%A9raldisation_du_sacr%C3%A9_aux_XIIe-XIIIe_si%C3%A8cles_une_mise_en_sc%C3%A8ne_de_la_religion_chevaleresque_Actes_du_colloque_Chevalerie_et_christianisme_aux_XIIe_et_XIIIe_si%C3%A8cles_dir._M._Aurell_Rennes_2011_p._211-233 [accessed September 28, 2016].

² Jean Schneider, *La ville de Metz aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles*. Nancy, imprimerie Thomas, 1950.

³ Lorédan Larchey, *Journal de Jehan Aubrion, bourgeois de Metz avec sa continuation par Pierre Aubrion 1465-1512*, Metz, F. Blanc, 1857 ; Heinrich Michelant (éd.), *Chronique de Metz de Jacomin Husson 1200-1525*, Metz, Rousseau-Pallez, 1870 ; Charles Bruneau (éd.), *La chronique de Philippe de Vigneulles*, 4 vol., Metz, 1927-1933. It is surprising that Philippe de Vigneulles accorded so little importance to heraldry since he was also, for nearly a year, during his Italian stay, in the service of one of the Duke of Calabre's king of arms: « ung jonne gentil homme natif de Lozenne [Lausanne], le quel estoit roy d'arme au duc de Callaibre », « c'on apelloit Andrieu, mais on l'apelloit Caillaibre ad cause de son office » (Heinrich Michelant (éd.), *Gedenkbuch des Metzger Bürgers Philippe von Vigneulles aus des Jahren 1471 bis 1522*, Stuttgart, 1852, p. 20 et 21), while we also know about his relationship with André de Rineck, who was a sponsor and owner of an armorial. (Jean-Christophe Blanchard, *L'armorial d'André de Rineck (Vienne, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 3336)*, Paris, Le Léopard d'or, 2008, p. 14-15) and that he had a gigantic heraldic "embroidery" made in 1507 (see infra).

⁴ In this 'show', events that demonstrate contemporaries' taste for the spectacular emerge occasionally; these are more specifically jousting and theatrical performances (see Pierre Pégeot, « Joutes messines » and Christine Reutenauer-Corti, « Le théâtre à Metz à l'époque de François le Gronnais (env. 1450-1525) », in Mireille Chazan, Nancy Freeman Regalado (éd.), *Lettres, musique et société en Lorraine médiévale. Autour du Tournoi de Chauvency (ms Oxford Bodl. Douce 308)*, Genève, Droz, 2011, p. 337-343 et 357-395). The sources used by these authors seem to be silent on the presence of coats of arms but testify to the importance of this concept of 'show' in Metz urban life and the interactions existing between the organizers-directors and the public.

⁵ These testimonies are limited to chronicles; urban accounting was not consulted for this study.

reception will therefore be partly addressed: who was able to see and understand the message conveyed by coats of arms and the manner in which they were displayed?⁶

1. The Metz Republic:

At the end of the Middle Ages, the city of Metz had become two different but embedded cultural and political spaces. Linguistically and culturally, the city belonged to the 'French' space, whereas politically it was a free imperial city which did not depend in any way on the kingdom of France, nor on the neighbouring duchies of Bar and Lorraine. During this period, it was one of the largest urban centres in Western Europe, with a population fluctuating between 15,000 and 25,000 inhabitants from 1430 to 1540.⁷ Despite a relative decline since the 13th and 14th centuries, Metz's economy was still dynamic and prosperous at the end of the Middle Ages.

1.1 Its ruling elite:

Metz, a free imperial city, was ruled independently by an urban oligarchy which, at the end of 12th and the beginning of 13th centuries, succeeded in removing the bishop from power.⁸ This patriciate was to be found in the 'paraiges', which were originally associations of notables linked by blood ties and living in the same neighbourhood; their objective was to defend their common interests and to control urban institutions. This structuring of the Metz patriciate had evolved over time, yet at the end of the period, aldermen and master alderman, the main magistrates of the city, were still recruited from within the six 'paraiges' (Porte-Moselle, Outre-Seille, Port-Saillis, Saint-Martin, Jurue and the 'Commun').⁹ The patriciate dominated the city and the surrounding flat countryside, known as Metz country, the equivalent of the Italian city-states' *contado*; the ruling elite stamped this urban and peri-urban space with its imprint, among other things through heraldry. The coat of arms of the Emperor on whom the city depended, those of the clergy, probably including those of the bishop (at least in the cathedral), those of the neighbouring princes, in particular the King of France and even the Duke of Lorraine, whose relations with Metz were fraught,¹⁰ were also known and represented, but it was mainly the coats of arms of the patriciate that monopolised Metz's public space.

From the end of the 13th century, well before the city itself did, the 'paraiges' acquired coats of arms which served as a template for their members when they themselves also adopted them.¹¹ Nevertheless, this was not systematized; we should not think that all of Metz's coats of arms were built on the same model. Although the majority of the different 'paraiges' families wore coats of arms derived from those of their respective 'paraige', not all the coats of arms of the Porte-Moselle patricians (*barry of eight or and azure*) were necessarily in fess, nor those of Jurue (*gules an eagle (without beak and unarmed) or*) emblazoned with an eagle, those of Saint-

⁶ This point was raised by Michel Pastoureau in the course of these days.

⁷ Laurent Litzenburger, *Une ville face au climat : Metz à la fin du Moyen Âge, 1400-1530*, Nancy, PUN-Editions Universitaires de Lorraine, 2015, p. 179, 263-269.

⁸ Jean Schneider, *La ville de Metz...*, p. 113.

⁹ On the paraiges: Jean Schneider, *La ville de Metz...*, p. 114-148.

¹⁰ In 1521, a stained-glass window in the choir of the cathedral bore the coat of arms of the Duke of Lorraine, the bishop's brother at the time, accompanied by the motto 'J'espere avoyr'; the stained-glass made "tumultuation et grand bruit" (see Martial Gantelet, « Entre France et Empire, Metz, une conscience municipale en crise à l'aube des Temps modernes 1500-1526 », in *Revue historique*, 2001/1 (n° 617), p. 5-45, here p. 30.

¹¹ On the coats of arms of the paraiges and the Metz patriciate: Jean-Christophe Blanchard, *L'armorial d'André de Rineck (Vienne, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 3336)*, Paris, Le Léopard d'or, 2008, p. 27-29.

Martin (*gules three bezants or*) with bezants (or roundels), those of Port-Sailly (*or a tower sable*) with tower(s) and those of Outre-Seille (*chevronny of eight azure and or*) with a chevron. Some families had original coats of arms before their entry into a 'paraige', and they kept them.

While it is true that owning a coat of arms of one of these types might indicate that a family had originally belonged to the corresponding paraige, this did not imply that its owner still belonged to it. The patricians could choose their maternal grandfather's paraige.¹² The creation of a sixth paraige in the 14th century, called the Common and bearing the coat of arms of the Heu family (*gules a bend silver with three escallops sable*), further disrupted the beautiful, theoretical order that one might have thought the norm. Families' coats of arms deemed worthy of joining the Metz oligarchy and welcomed into this new paraige could be modelled on those of the Heu, but could also be different. There was therefore no standardization of Metz heraldry. It was able to combine and enrich itself through the permeability between the six paraiges.¹³

1.2. Its coats of arms:

Placed under the remote and theoretical protection of the emperor,¹⁴ Metz definitively emancipated itself from the bishop's power in the last quarter of the 14th century. It was during this period of acquisition of freedoms that the city acquired coats of arms.¹⁵ It was a *party per pale argent and sable* which took up the colours (*argent/white* and *sable/black*) of the city's standard, the *baucent*, evoked for the first time in the *Dit de la guerre de Metz* (v. 1324-1326).¹⁶ The oldest mention of the coat of arms itself is an ornament dated 20 August 1394 relating to the minting of coins: the large deniers bear 'li corps saint Estenne en genoil, entre deux escussons dou bassant de nostre citeit'.¹⁷ Jean Schneider noted that the town's coat of arms was born at 'un moment important de l'histoire politique de la ville'; in this context, 'les armoiries

¹² Jean Schneider, *La ville de Metz...*, p. 127.

¹³ According to Jean-Claude Loutsch, in Metz, 'les armoiries sont réglées par une héraldique stricte' ('the coat of arms is governed by strict heraldry') (« Étude comparative sur la formation des armoiries bourgeoises dans les villes d'importance et de taille différentes au Moyen Âge : Metz, Bruxelles, Luxembourg and Arlon », in *Les armoiries non nobles en Europe : XIII^e-XVIII^e s.*, Acts of the 3rd international heraldry congress, Montmorency (19-23 September 1983), Paris, 1986, p. 63-82. Yet this statement is to be nuanced - see Jean-Christophe Blanchard, 'Un bilan des travaux concernant l'héraldique médiévale messine (XIX^e-XXI^e s.)', [online]. <https://hal.univ-lorraine.fr/halshs-01264617v1> [To be published in *Écrire aujourd'hui l'histoire de Metz médiévale*]. [accessed May 25, 2020].

¹⁴ Wenceslas of Luxembourg, King of the Romans, confirmed their privileges during his visit to the city in 1384 (Nicolas Van Werveke, 'Les relations entre Metz et Luxembourg sous le règne de Wenceslas, roi des Romains et duc de Luxembourg (1383-1449)', in *Annuaire de la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie lorraine*, 3rd year, 1891, p. 293-314, here p. 297). However, the emperor's political power over the city was almost nil, as he was obliged to resort to economic pressure when he tried to use it (Jean Schneider, *La ville de Metz...*, pp. 486-487).

¹⁵ Previously appointed by the bishop, the jurors of the Council of Thirteen were chosen directly by the six paraiges from 1393 onwards (Jean Schneider, *La ville de Metz...*, p. 155).

¹⁶ On the town's coat of arms: Jean Schneider, *Metz. His coat of arms through history*, Metz, 1951, here p. 24-26. The author asks about this coat of arms' model: did Metz follow the example of the Order of the Templars (whose banner also bears the name of *baucent*) or that of many Italian cities (p. 26)? It should be noted that, among the many Italian cities mentioned but not listed by Jean Schneider, there is one that is particularly remarkable: Siena, a town whose coats of arms, which appeared in the second half of the 13th century, are a *party per fess argent and sable*, called 'balzana' (Alessandro Savorelli, "Lo stemma di Siena e la sua storia", in *Il Palio di Siena e i suoi simboli*, Florence, La Mandragora, 1999, p. 129-138).

¹⁷ 'Saint Etienne kneeling between two escutcheons of the city's coat of arms'.

de la cité paraissaient comme le symbole de son indépendance politique.’¹⁸ In 1473, during Emperor Frederick III’s visit, the four thousand men armed by the city wore ‘II escuson blanc et noir pour leur enseigne’ and the sergeants of the Thirteen were ‘revestu de noire et de blanc.’¹⁹ The city of Metz’s coat of arms is represented in Conrad Grünenberg’s armorial (1483) with those of the three other Cities of the Empire.²⁰ In Hartmann Schedel’s *Liber Chronicarum* published by Anton Koberger in Nuremberg in 1493, the city of Metz is identified by its Latin name and by its coat of arms (f. CLXXXIV v^o).

2. Heraldry in the city:

2.1. Civilian public buildings:

Civilian public buildings are numerous in the city but evidence of the existence of a heraldic presence on these buildings is rare. We will therefore focus on buildings of high symbolic value to the urban community, such as the enclosure and the Palace of the Thirteen.

2.1.1. The enclosure:

The current state of conservation of the urban enclosure reveals only one testimony to the presence of the city’s coat of arms. This is the Desch caponier, located in the north of the German gateway and built in 1526-1527 on the initiative of Philippe Desch, then governor of that gateway. In his work on Metz’s enclosure, Jean Thiriot did not mention their presence.²¹ Nonetheless, the city’s coats of arms were sculpted twice, with the capital letters V and M (*Urbs Metis*). In addition, the sponsor did not use his coat of arms (*barry of ten ermine and gules*) but instead the jew’s-harp used as an emblem for his family; the latter appears on either side of an individual showing his behind to the city’s enemies.²² While Jean Thiriot omitted to mention the sculptures with the city’s coats of arm, he - undoubtedly arbitrarily - placed the *party per pale argent and sable* on one of the merlons surmounting the machicolations of the German gateway’s advance.²³ This proposed restitution is not absurd, but it is not based on any source. The city’s coats of arms could, as elsewhere, have been painted on different parts of the wall,

¹⁸ ‘An important moment in the political history of the city’; ‘the city’s coat of arms was seen as a symbol of its political independence’: Jean Schneider, *Metz. Son blason à travers l’histoire*, Metz, 1951, p. 26-28.

¹⁹ ‘Two escutcheons, white and black, for their sign’; ‘coated in black and white’; Jehan Aubrion, p. 57 et 59 ; Philippe de Vigneulles, III, p. 19 et 22. Mentions of pennons or banners with the coats of arm of the city are present on several occasions in the Seven of the War’s accounts: Metz, municipal Archives, EE 37, 1478-1479, f. 3 v^o, 1489-1490, f. 4 r^o, 1517-1518, f. 16 v^o, 1522-1523, f. 12 r^o (These references were communicated to me by Mylène Didiot, whose thesis work deals with the fortifications of the city of Metz, to whom I would like to express my gratitude.).

²⁰ Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, VIII. HA, II 21, f. XV v^o. These coats of arms were also known in France, as evidenced by Herald Berry’s coats of arms compiled in the mid-15th century. (Paris, French National Library, fr. 4985, f. 182).

²¹ Jean Thiriot, *Portes, tours et murailles de la cité de Metz. Une évocation de l’enceinte urbaine aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles*, Metz, Est-Imprimerie, 1970, p. 52.

²² Jean Thiriot, *Portes, tours et murailles...*, p. 85.

²³ In 1489, a pennant was placed on the door of the Rengmont Bridge but there is no mention of a coat of arms: Metz, Archives municipales, EE 29 (1) (1480-1489): *Comptes des Gouverneurs des Murs* (scroll) (References communicated by Mylène Didiot).

but instead they were painted on pennons placed on the main gates.²⁴ The city's coats of arms were therefore displayed in full view of inhabitants as well as visitors; they were a fundamental sign of the visual identity of the city, or even of its overall identity. Like the coat of arms, the enclosure was also a symbol of urban identity, its independence and its power. The tautological representation of one upon the other reinforced this idea, so essential for Metz society of the time.

2.1.2. The Palace of the Thirteen and the Tower of Mutte:

There is another symbol of urban power, and especially of its patrician representation: it is the Palace of the Thirteen which faced the cathedral. This structure, built at the beginning of the 14th century, is seen today only through a depiction of Chastillon engraved around 1614, which does not show any coat of arms on the visible facades.²⁵ Yet it turns out that the Messins, who had never had a belfry housing a municipal bell, decided at the end of the 14th century to build a bell tower on one of the unfinished cathedral's towers. Initially made of wood, the Tower of Mutte (named after the bell it houses) was rebuilt in stone at the end of the 15th century. From the outset, its top was decorated with a metal sheet with the city's coats of arms.²⁶ This sheet of metal was (and still is) placed at the highest point of the cathedral, itself a symbol of the power of the bishop, who had already been ousted. In Metz as elsewhere during the Ancien Régime, the secular world and the ecclesiastical world, the profane and the sacred, were intimately intertwined, in close connivance or in unspoken opposition, as is the case here, but this intertwining was clear and underscored by the use of heraldry. Finally, the Tower of Mutte, visible from the neighbouring flat country, appears to be the true symbol of the city's independence and power, and most importantly, of its domination over a vast territory and its ability to resist the neighbouring princes' assaults.

This presentation of some buildings that were emblematic of urban power is not exhaustive but seeks to raise awareness of the symbolic importance of these buildings, an importance reinforced in some cases by the presence of the city's coat of arms placed visibly in, but especially outside the city. This was a communication clearly targeted towards the outside of the city; the patriciate, in fact, was obviously aware of its power and it was therefore to its more or less distant neighbours that the message was addressed.

2.2. The paraiges' hold:

2.2.1. The patrician hotels:

Inside the city, patrician pre-eminence was manifested by the construction of sumptuous hotels, sometimes with towers, but it is often difficult, if not impossible, to know the identity of their sponsor(s) and/or owner(s); worse still, some of them have irretrievably disappeared. Our aim

²⁴ In 1489, a pennant was placed on the door of the Rengmont Bridge but there is no mention of a coat of arms: Metz, Archives municipales, EE 29 (1) (1480-1489): Comptes des Gouverneurs des Murs (scroll) (References communicated by Mylène Didiot).

²⁵ Jean Schneider, *La ville de Metz...*, p. 169; it should be noted that the city's coats of arms were indeed sculpted and painted on certain public buildings. Thus in 1517-1518, the door of the Fonderie des Célestins was rebuilt and masons sculpted an escutcheon on which Metz's coats of arms were painted (Metz, Archives municipales, EE 37, f. 38 v^o-39 r^o, references communicated by Mylène Didiot).

²⁶ Victor Jacob, *Recherches historiques sur la tour et la cloche de Mutte de la cathédrale de Metz*, Metz, Rousseau-Pallez, 1864, p. 1-8 et 98.

here is not to draw up an inventory of these buildings; to get an initial idea of their number it is sufficient to consult the Metz topography and the city's plan proposed by Lorédan Larchey at the end of his edition of the chronicle of Jehan Aubrion. There are 13 hotels attributed to authentically patrician families.²⁷ It should be noted that the oldest preserved patrician residence (late 12th-13th century), the hotel called Saint-Livier (located at 1, rue des Trinitaires), is not included on this list. This building, which with its tower seems typical of the patrician habitat, does not in its current state present any coat of arms visible from the outside.²⁸

The Hôtel des Heu, mentioned by Aubrion and still visible at n° 19-21 rue de la Fontaine, no longer shows the walker its coats of arms.²⁹ As far as we know, the only patrician hotel that had the coat of arms of its owners on the façade was the Hôtel de Chaverson. Unfortunately it was destroyed in the 19th century, but was known thanks to a description of one of its porches by the Baron d'Hannoncelles, who also reproduced the coats of arms: '... on y entre par une espèce de porche composé de deux arcades, sous la première desquelles sont sculptés deux écus accolés, l'un aux armes de Chaverson, l'autre aux armes de Gournay, brisées au canton senestre de celles d'Aboncourt, et sous la seconde, un seul écu aux dites armes de Chaverson.'³⁰ The combination of the arms of Chaverson (*barry of eight or and azure, a quarter gules an eagle (without beak and unarmed) argent*) and those of the Gronnais (*gules a bend sable with three towers argent, a quarter sinister gyronny of ten argent and gules*) enable us to date this portal to the end of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century, when Michel Chaverson married Gertrude le Gronnais.³¹

This late and isolated example nevertheless demonstrates the presence of patrician coats of arms which could easily be seen by contemporaries and whose purpose was to show the identity and proclaim the power of the premises' owners. Other vestiges prove the importance of heraldic decoration to the urban elite. For instance, the Hôtel de Heu's³² keystones (unfortunately destroyed) are worth mentioning, but the many painted ceilings preserved in Metz on which heraldry is very prominent are particularly noteworthy. Often located in what must have been the great hall of the patrician residences, these ceilings were part of both the private space, insofar as they were an integral part of the dwelling place of their sponsor and/or owner, and the public space since the great hall was also used as a venue for receptions and ceremonies. As such, it had to reflect the owner's great wealth. A map of various painted ceilings that have been preserved has been drawn up and shows the importance of this phenomenon in Metz, since some twenty such ceilings are located in the city.³³ Of the nine medieval ceilings of a heraldic nature, only four are unquestionably linked to the patriciate. Nonetheless, it is possible that, even in the absence of patrician coats of arms, these coats of

²⁷ Lorédan Larchey, op. cit. The hotels mentioned in the chronicle are located there; here, we only retain the hotels of patrician families, whose writing has been modernized: Baudoché, Boulay, Cœurdefer, Desch, le Gronnais (3), Heu, Louve, Raigecourt, Roucel (2) and Xavin.

²⁸ Gilbert Rose, « L'hôtel Saint-Livier », *Mémoires de l'Académie Nationale de Metz*, 1998, p. 7-16.

²⁹ Pierre-Marie Mercier, *Les Heu, une famille patricienne de Metz (XIV^e-XVI^e siècle)*, PhD thesis defended at Paul-Verlaine University, 2010-2011, p. 566-569. Armoured keystones were nonetheless visible inside the courtyard. (p. 567), [online]. http://docnum.univ-lorraine.fr/public/UPV-M/Theses/2011/Mercier.Pierre_Marie.LMZ1117.pdf [accessed May 25, 2020].

³⁰ '... It is entered via a sort of porch composed of two arcades, under the first of which are carved two adjoining shields, one with the arms of the Chaverson, the other with the arms of Gournay, differentiated by the sinister canton of Aboncourt, and under the second arcade, only one shield with the arms of Chaverson'; Gérard d'Hannoncelles, *Metz Ancien, Metz, Rousseau-Pallez*, 1856, 2 vol., t. 2, p. 52.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

³² See note 28.

³³ « Carte des plafonds peints de Metz (XIII^e-XVI^e) », Julien Trapp et Sébastien Wagner, *Atlas Historique de Metz*, Metz, éditions des Paraiges, 2013, p. 171.

arms of kings, princes and lords of high rank, all dating from the 14th century, were made at the behest of members of the patricians. The four indubitably patrician ceilings were located at n° 16-18 rue de la Chèvre, n° 12-14 rue du Change, 12 rue des Clercs and 11 rue de la Fontaine; only the beams from the latter address are preserved *in situ*, while the others are currently kept at the Musée de la Cour d'Or.³⁴ These ceilings present an idealized and synthetic vision of the Christian West: behind the coats of arms of the Pope, the Emperor and the King of France, they feature those of various princes and high barons; the role of the patrician coats of arms here was essentially to provide the identity of the person who commissioned the ceiling. The programs of these works were sometimes more complex, and more subtle too, as they were only seen by insiders allowed to enter these rooms, which remained closed to most of the city's inhabitants, less able to understand them. In any case, these ceilings testify to the 'heraldisation' of the patricians' living environment, their taste for heraldry and their elitist vision of a world of which they were an integral part.

2.2.2. Heraldry and *memoria*:

If the patricians distinguished themselves by their living spaces, they were also attentive to the layout of the places in which their *memoria* was to be perpetuated. This bid for eternity is manifested in pious foundations; these foundations, serious links between the living and the dead, and their accompanying achievements, were always built in strict compliance with the values of the patrician order. Indeed, its members were an elite aware of its rank and also of its nobility, a nobility clearly asserted in spite of disputes and criticisms from the feudal aristocracy of the Barroise and Lorraine principalities, or rather asserted and displayed because of the attacks from this same aristocracy.³⁵ The exhibition at Notre-Dame-la-Ronde of the deceased noble patricians' coats of arms³⁶ was undoubtedly in keeping with their desire to assert themselves. The shields with the noble families' coats of arms were in fact hung there like *totenschilden* in some German cities (see Katja Putzer's paper: "Heraldry in Nuremberg's Sacred Spaces"). This patrician practice, which once again marked the patriciate's ascendancy over the bishop, is attested to by the testimony of chronicles.³⁷ Thus, in 1472, the arms of

³⁴ Jean-Claude Loutsch, "Les plafonds armoriés de la ville de Metz," *Bulletin de la société des amis du musée national de la Légion d'honneur et des ordres de chevalerie*, no. 7 (1996), [online]. <https://www.amis-musee-legiondhonneur.fr/son-bulletin/num%C3%A9ro-7/plafonds-armories-ville-de-metz/> [accessed May 25, 2020]; Christian de Mérindol, *La Maison des Chevaliers de Pont-Saint-Esprit*, Nîmes, Conseil Général du Gard, 2000, 2 vols. t. II: Les décors peints. Corpus des décors peints et armoriés du Moyen Age en France, pp. 277-284, nos. 206, 207 and 208. Details of these ceilings were given to me by Nathalie Pascarel who is currently preparing a thesis at the University of Paris IV under the direction of Philippe Lorentz: *Recherches sur la décoration des intérieurs civils à Metz à la fin du Moyen Age. Les plafonds en bois peints des demeures de l'élite urbaine (XIII^e-XVI^e siècles)*, for which she is warmly thanked here. On the ceiling of 12-14 rue du Change: Nathalie Pascarel, *Un décor civil exceptionnel de la première moitié du XV^e siècle découvert à Metz en 1964 : le plafond peint de la maison n°12-14 rue du Change conservé au musée de La Cour d'Or*, Master's thesis in History of Art and Architecture, ed. by Philippe Lorentz, University of Strasbourg, 2011.

³⁵ On these aspects: Jean-Christophe Blanchard, *L'armorial d'André de Rineck...*, p. 27-29.

³⁶ The Notre-Dame-la-Ronde chapel, mentioned in the 8th century and then transformed into a collegiate church in the 12th century, had been integrated into the cathedral during the 13th century: Eugène Voltz, 'Notre-Dame-la-Ronde and the cathedral of Metz. Réflexions sur l'intégration de deux édifices' *Mémoires de l'Académie nationale de Metz*, 1994, p. 65-105, [online]. http://documents.irevues.inist.fr/bitstream/handle/2042/33690/ANM_1994_65.pdf?sequence=1 [accessed May 25, 2020].

³⁷ Jehan Aubrion, p. 76-77 ; Philippe de Vigneulles, III, p. 39 ; Jacomin Husson, p. 114.

Wautrin Clément, the *aman*,³⁸ were exhibited ‘comme la coustume est en Mets d’y mestre celles des gentilz hommes’ after his death on June 23, but they were taken away in the night six days later because ‘aulcuns en murmuroient, disant qu’elle n’y devoient point estre’. Perhaps not coincidentally, Wautrin Clément’s nobility was being questioned; it was therefore necessary to evacuate the coats of arms in order not to strengthen the hand of the feudal nobility, who could have used them as evidence against patrician claims to nobility, the key to its control over the city.

This collective desire to assert a social status through heraldic saturation was obviously also found on a smaller scale, that of the family and the individual, in the various ecclesiastical establishments which the patricians chose as burial places. In the Notre-Dame chapel of the church of Saint-Martin, the Heu’s coats of arms (*gules a bend silver with three escallops sable*) and that of the Baudoche (*chevronny of eight argent and gules, a chief azure two towers gold*) appearing on the remains of Jeannette de Heu’s tomb, wife of Jean I Baudoche († 1373), are a first testimony to the strong presence of patrician heraldry in the religious buildings to which their piety turned.³⁹ The stained-glass window portraying Jean Bataille in prayer, above his coat of arms (*barry of eight or and azure, a quarter or an eagle (without beak and unarmed) sable*) held by two lions (circa 1380-1390) is another; it is preserved in the chapel dedicated to the Virgin that Bataille had founded in the church of Saint-Ségolène (bay 9).⁴⁰ Finally, a third and last example should be sufficient to show the extent of the ‘heraldisation’ of places of worship by the urban elite: the chapel of Saint George and Saint Eloi in the church of Saint-Maximin, founded in 1365 by Poinsignon Dieuamy. In the 15th century, the chapel became a branch of the Le Gronnais’ property, and continued to be adorned with the coats of arms of its owners and their allies, its funeral monuments and stained-glass windows in particular. The armoured vault, known from an 18th century statement, completed the whole.⁴¹ Most of the complex’s keystones are from François le Gronnais’ eight districts (1450-1525) and those of his first wife Perrette Louve.⁴² Above the altar, the keystones of the chapel’s last span show François’ coats of arms (see above) facing the monogram IHS accompanied by the tetramorph; the eight keystones of the second and first bays bear coats of arms corresponding approximately to those of François and Perrette’s sixteen great-grandfathers.

The patricians’ funerals were also an opportunity for public demonstration and heraldic display. Claude Coeurdefer’s death on July 23, 1482, caught the attention of columnists, who provide us with a few details. It seems that his premature death, when he was to marry Mathieu le Gronnais’ daughter, left a lasting impression. Claude was to be buried in the Franciscan convent of the Observance. Although dressed in the friars’ habits as a sign of humility, the body of the deceased was transported in a procession ‘moult richement et triumpamment de luminaire et draps d’or mis sur luy. Et, alors, furent les armes dez Cueur de Fer attachée sur luy,

³⁸ *Amans* are the Messin equivalent of other medieval towns’ solicitors and notaries public. (Jean Schneider, *La ville de Metz...*, p. 160-168).

³⁹ Pierre-Marie Mercier, *Les Heu...*, p. 512-514 et 534.

⁴⁰ Michel Hérold and Françoise Gatouillat, *Les Vitraux de Lorraine et d’Alsace*, Paris, CNRS éditions, 1994, p. 107-109.

⁴¹ Pierre-Edouard Wagner, « La chapelle des Gournais en l’église paroissiale Saint-Maximin de Metz », *Mémoires de l’Académie Nationale de Metz*, 2004, p. 95-130, [online]. http://documents.irevues.inist.fr/bitstream/handle/2042/33928/ANM_2004_95.pdf?sequ.. [accessed May 25, 2020].

⁴² On this character: Jean Schneider, « Témoin d’une société en mutation : François le Gronnais, citain de Metz (1450-1525) », *Mémoires de l’Académie Nationale de Metz*, 1999, p. 185-205, [online]. http://documents.irevues.inist.fr/bitstream/handle/2042/33809/ANM_1999_185.pdf [accessed May 25, 2020].

et pendant aux cierges et aux torches.’⁴³ The procession then travelled through the streets of Metz to present the body before several of the city's churches: Saint-Sauveur, Saint-Jacques and Saint-Marcel, before arriving at the place of the Baude brothers. Claude was the last descendant of the lineage and the Coeurdefer coats of arms (*or an eagle (without beak and unarmed) sable with an escutcheon lozengy argent and sable*) was to be laid to rest with him. This final tribute to the last representative of a patrician family displayed his coats of arms throughout the city.⁴⁴

2.2.3. The impact on Metz's inhabitants:

This dramatization of patrician life, where costumes and props were carefully chosen and placed in signs, took place in a setting, whether permanent or ephemeral, which did not only concern the patriciate: other members of the urban community could also play a role. This was notably the case of the merchant and columnist Philippe de Vigneulles who, in 1507, had a gigantic patchwork made, ‘en manière de tapisserie,’⁴⁵ representing the Virgin accompanied by Saints Catherine and Barbe surmounted by the six paraiges' coats of arms, as well as those of the emperor, the pope and the king of France, all surrounded by the coats of arms of ‘tous les seigneurs de Mets.’ This huge ‘tapisserie’ was certainly designed in close collaboration with the patrician André de Rineck, and was exhibited in front of the cathedral on Saint Mark's Day (25 April) to promote the patrician elite, leaving its mark on the entire urban community.⁴⁶ It seems to me that this collaboration between a patrician and a bourgeois, although exceptional, shows the ability of these two environments to interact. I also deduce from the location of this impressive textile piece that its designers thought that their lower-ranking citizens would be able to understand its discourse and therefore recognize all or some of the coats of arms represented. Those of the Emperor and the King of France must have been familiar to everyone, just as we all recognize the French and German flags. Yet what about those of the popes, which in 1507 were those of Julius II, elected in 1503? Were they well known in Metz? It is a valid question, but it seems plausible that, four years after the Pope's accession to the throne of St. Peter, the coat of arms with the oak tree had been widely seen. The coats of arms of the paraiges and the patrician families, which were part of the daily life of the people of Metz, were undoubtedly well known, as was the *party per pale argent and sable* of Metz's coats of arms, which was absent from Philippe's ‘tapisserie’. This absence appears to me to reveal the true purpose of Philippe de Vigneulles and André de Rineck: the aim was indeed to glorify the patricians and not the city.

As an integral part of the patriciate's communication strategies, coats of arms were therefore regularly used in the city to proclaim its power both inside and outside the walls. It was necessary to establish the domination of paraige families over the rest of Metz's population and to legitimize this domination in the eyes of neighbouring princes, the dukes of Lorraine and

⁴³ ‘With many candles and gold sheets upon him. And then, Coeurdefer's coat of arms was attached to him, and hung with candles and torches.’

⁴⁴ Jehan Aubrion, p. 139; Philippe de Vigneulles, III, pp. 92-93. The burial of the last member of a lineage could also be less exuberant; Nemmery Rennillon died on 25 October 1490 and was buried at Saint-Simplice with only two torches and without a golden sheet but a simple camelin sheet; the lineage's coats of arms were, nonetheless, present (Jehan Aubrion, p. 267; Philippe de Vigneulles, III, p. 192; Jacomin Husson, p. 114).

⁴⁵ ‘In the manner of a tapestry.’

⁴⁶ Philippe de Vigneulles, IV, p. 47; Heinrich Michelant (ed.), *Gedenkbuch...*, pp. 154-156; Jean-Christophe Blanchard; ‘L'armorial d'André de Rineck: une propagande dévoyée’, in Jean-René Gaborit (Dir.), *Le Pouvoir de l'image*, 132e Congrès national des sociétés historiques et scientifiques (Arles, 2007), s. I.: Editions du CTHS, 2012, p. 225-233 (electronic edition).

Bar in particular, but also more distant royals such as the king of France and the emperor. Yet this patrician domination was not only urban, it was also rural since the Metz elites also owned the lands in the flat country surrounding the city. The territorial marking of this area via the network of patrician fortified houses deserves a study in its own right, but it is possible to get an inkling of it through Pierre-Edouard Wagner's study of the wayside crosses built on the initiative of Nicole Louve in the 1440s.⁴⁷

After describing and locating these various monuments, Wagner evokes the limits of the suburbs but does not comment on Nicole Louve's motivations. He nevertheless notes that the patrician's approach came in the context of the war which, in 1444-1445, pitted Metz against René d'Anjou and his ally, the King of France. The first of these crosses, near the city, was placed next to a bridge rebuilt in stone thanks to Nicole's generosity. Her evergetism was clearly evidenced by her coat of arms (*vair three pales gules, a chief or a wolf sable accosted two roundels gules*), whether fully or in part (a she-wolf is carved on the parapets). The other crosses, that of the "Haut chemin" (or "chemin de Sainte-Barbe"), that of the "chemin de Peltre" and that of the "chemin de Pouilly", were also marked with Nicole Louve's coats of arms. Another cross was attributed to her in the 18th century; however, the absence of her coat of arms on the drawing that has been preserved and the presence of those of the Heu next to two other unidentified coats of arms point to a link between her and this other patrician family, who had a monument known as the 'Belle-Croix' built on their land in Ennery.⁴⁸

'Heraldisation' thus extended beyond the urban area: the population of the surrounding flat country also witnessed the patriciate's coats of arms. They marked the limits of Metz's territory and thus also contributed to the delimitation of their living environment.

At the end of this tour inside and outside Metz's walls, it seems obvious that the heraldic remains of Metz have little in common with those of Italian cities, and in particular those of the great Tuscan city-states where the heraldic presence is obviously very important. However, as far as the heraldic presence in medieval towns is concerned, the example of Metz is particularly interesting because it represents an in-between. Indeed, Metz, a free imperial city, was more akin to the Italian city-states than the good cities of the kingdom of France whose language it shared. The armorial presence in Metz essentially owed itself to the will of the ruling elite to demonstrate its power over the city; this was something the city had in common with the Italian communes. Metz's vestiges, although modest, nevertheless reflect this patrician will to use heraldry in order to consolidate power over the most important city of the Lorraine region, coveted by the neighbouring dukes as well as by the King of France. In this context of tension, the city's coats of arms and those of its ruling elite seemed to clearly dominate; yet they were obliged to chime with those of the princes, whether neighbouring or more distant, which were visible during visits or embassies but also displayed by Metz's citizens themselves, for example on the painted ceilings or on Philippe de Vigneulles 'tapisserie'; they also had to contend with those of the bishop or blend in with those of the canons, who were numerous in the city and often themselves of patrician origin.

⁴⁷ Pierre-Edouard Wagner, « Les croix de sire Nicole Louve », *Mémoires de l'Académie Nationale de Metz*, 2000, p. 133-155, [online]. http://documents.irevues.inist.fr/bitstream/handle/2042/33827/ANM_2000_133.pdf?sequence=1 [accessed May 26, 2020].

⁴⁸ Pierre-Marie Mercier, *Les Heu...*, p. 518-520.

It is therefore a whole heraldic communication that one can imagine in Metz at the end of the Middle Ages; a communication at several levels in which coats of arms may have simply identified a patron or delimited a more or less important perimeter or, on the contrary, been developed as part of a much more complex plan to proclaim the seniority of a lineage or the patriciate's affinities with the aristocracy of the Christian West. The 'heraldisation' of the urban space contributed to the construction of the stage upon which urban theatre was played out, that is, the urban community's social life in interaction with its hosts. Simple or complex, the communication program that the patricians orchestrated always sought to assert its social superiority in order to establish its domination over the people and prevent challenges to its power. It goes without saying that in this 'propaganda' show, clearly understood although sometimes contested by the princes and the nobility visiting the city, and undoubtedly by the rest of Metz's population, the patriciate, even when only represented by these coats of arms, was always the leading actor.

Jean-Christophe Blanchard
CRUHL EA3945) – Université de Lorraine