



# TEFAF 2006

The European Fine Arts Fair

## 1. The Heraldry



The Baronage Press

## First Impressions

Communication is one of the great advantages of staging international events at Maastricht. Fast roads and uncrowded motorways pass close to the exhibition centre, the airport is only minutes away, and the nearest railway station is a three-minute walk. Visitors thus arrive with travel fatigue minimised, and even the trans-Atlantic buyers descending from their executive jets into their chauffeur-driven limousines seem to regard this as just another day at the office.

The welcome is, as one may expect in the Netherlands, floral to a degree probably unsurpassed at any other art fair. Once the heavy security is negotiated, the flowers stretch far ahead and almost distract attention from the little crowd to the left clustered around what is probably an interesting piece of decoration. It is, of course, fulfilling that role, but it is a Rembrandt, his portrait of Anna Wymer, lent by the Six Collection and on view to the public for the first time for at least a hundred years. How many exhibitions can offer an overture of that quality to establish the mood for the examination of the treasures inside?

A few steps and then the first oils burst into view in a dazzle of saturated colour. As commentators we are

rightly expected to leave our tastes and prejudices and preconceptions behind, but the impact of the first oils glowing in exceptionally effective lighting may be described only as sumptuous. A little later we realise it is not only the lighting – the carpets stifling the noise of the hundreds of feet, the stands restyled since last year and, above all and most of all, the ambiance, lift Maastricht's Art Fair to the top of the world league.

We are here, of course, for the heraldry, but before setting off for the illuminated manuscripts we must see another Rembrandt situated just off to the left of the entrance lane. This one is actually for sale, offered by Noortman Master Paintings of Maastricht for around £18million (more precisely €27million). It dates from 1633 and is the *Young Man with a Red Doublet* – one of those pictures at which the visitors are just standing and staring, temporarily bereft of speech.

There is one more Rembrandt to find, for this is the 400th anniversary of his birth – and homage is owed. *The Apostle James the Major*, a unique legacy from the artist's late period, is being shown by a New York firm, Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, in expectation of its sale for a figure in the region of £25million (€36 million).



Young Man with a Red Doublet (1633)

A young face, perhaps, but one already projecting a true character through thoughtful, expressive eyes.

*Noortman Master Paintings, Maastricht*



The Apostle James the Major (1661)

The ravaged, timeworn face hinting at intellectual and spiritual purity establishes this unique work as one of the world's greatest pictures (even when seen with the limitations imposed by this screen and digital format).

*Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, New York*

## Heraldry and History

The European Fine Arts Fair is not limited to pictures, for antiquities, books, maps, manuscripts, jewellery and antiques of all kinds are on show, many having heraldic detail worth examination. The first that caught this visitor's attention was a Book of Hours from 1460-70 with fifteen miniatures by the Master of the Vraie Cronique d'Escoce. The page displayed to the public featured *Azure on a bend Gules between two fleurs-de-lys three estoiles Or*. This early portrayal of colour on colour may have been a mistake, and perhaps the bend should have been fimbriated of a metal, or it may indeed have been accurate, the Saint Omer nobleman for whom the book was made in those heraldically comparatively unregulated days actually bearing arms offending the basic rule. Perhaps one of the Baronage readers may recognize the arms and will write to us to identify the owner. The price asked for the book, incidentally, is €148,000 – around £100,000.

The dealer offering this book, [Heribert Tenschert](#), brought several other Books of Hours to the exhibition, all perhaps equally desirable, and of especial interest is a 15th century "Chroniques" of Belgium, illustrated by the Master of Anton of Burgundy, of which one action-packed page is reproduced here.



[Bernard J. Shapero Rare Books](#) displays a beautiful deed recording a grant by Tsar Nicholas I (1825-1855) of arms to General Count Alexsei Petrovich Nitikin, a distinguished soldier who served his Emperor for more than 50 years.



The silk binding illustrated here, embroidered with raised silk threads, features the Russian double-headed eagle incorporating St George slaying his dragon, and on the eagle's wings six more shields. The 15 pages of vellum complement the large illustration of General Nikitin's arms with military pictures and 68 miniature shields. The Tsar signed and dated the deed 6th July 1851. The rarity today of items such as this, together with its condition, puts a very substantial premium on its value and a price of £65,000 is asked.

[Cohen & Cohen](#) have brought some armorial porcelain which would contribute splendidly to the collection of any enthusiast, but the eyecatcher here is a Quianlong period dinner service dating from around 1775 and consisting of 48 pieces. This is part of a 600-piece service made for the wedding of Robert Chambers and Frances Wilton, the 16-year-old daughter of the eminent sculptor Joseph Wilton, and bears the arms of both families emblazoned *baron et femme* (the painting of the arms being of indifferent quality, but the Chambers crest of a black bear passant, muzzled, collared and chained in gold, being of good size and notably well executed).

Whoever buys this service will have an interesting tale to relate to dinner guests. Frances Chambers was a famous beauty and in India, to which she accompanied her husband, who became Chief Justice of Bengal, she was celebrated as a great hostess. Their son, Thomas, was born there and when at the age of seven he had to depart to continue his education in England, Frances entrusted him to the care of a great friend, Mary Hosea, who was leaving for home. Tragically, the ship went aground on the coast of South Africa, about 800 miles from Cape Town, and although most of the crew and passengers reached the shore, thereafter the survivors' situation deteriorated. The natives were not hostile, but nor were they helpful, and after a week the sailors left in search of a settlement. Eight years later three white women were found, but not Thomas Chambers.



Heraldry enthusiasts can be disappointed sometimes with silverware, shown in major exhibitions, that fails to identify the arms or crests that may reveal so much about early owners. However, with this beautiful set of six goblets and two ewers shown by [Koopman Rare Art](#) there is no mystery. The engraved arms are those of the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Thomas FitzMaurice and his wife Mary, Countess of Orkney *suo jure*, whom he married on 21st December 1777. He was the second son of the 1st Earl of Shelburne and brother of the 1st Marquess of Lansdowne, and it is of interest that he stipulated in his will that all plate and pictures at his house, Llewenny Hall, were to be heirlooms. Mary was the third successive female heir to the Orkney Earldom. The O'Brien arms impaled by the FitzMaurice arms on these gilded goblets and ewers are those of her father, Murrough O'Brien, the 5th Earl of Inchiquin.

Arms of a different type appear in the collection of [Peter Finer](#), but while two enthusiastic visitors, husband and wife, are occupying the attendants' attention with the difficult decision of which two crossbows will be positioned on either side of the pavise on a wall in their American home, it is possible to examine closely a group of armorial belt badges. The arms on these, enamelled and probably 16th century, would doubtless have been worn on a swordbelt and, as with modern army badges, might have been traded among officers fighting in the same army to end as one family's.

A wide range of court swords, rapiers, basket-hilted Scottish swords and naval short-swords lines the walls, urging a tingling palm to try their weight, but we note it is the selection of exquisitely decorated crossbows that entrances most visitors.





Allegory of Peace and Justice by The Master of the Antwerp Bible Allegory is a stunning masterpiece that stops all visitors in their tracks, but the immediately intriguing element for us is the arms in the lower left corner of the picture. The [Axel Vervoordt](#) catalogue gives the identity of these as those of the Marquis of Antwerp.



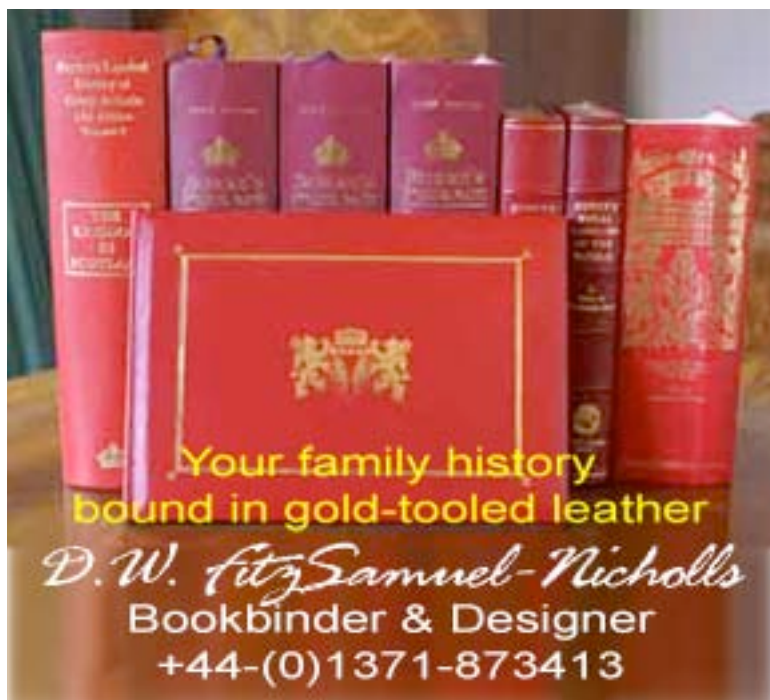
The picture is of its time, full of symbolism, and is based on Psalm 85, v.11, “Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.”

The usual meeting place for heraldry and art is the identification of arms in pictures as a confirmation of a sitter or an owner. There is a strong justification for this role in a picture by Jean-François Sablet – Vestal Virgin before a Burning Altar – on the stand of [Jack Kilgore & Co. Inc](#), a visitor from New York. The arms are mentioned in the documentation as “unknown”, but although not composed by modern standards, and thus reminiscent of bogus arms to some small extent, they appear to be genuine in their presentation, and in being semé-de-lis they may well be of French origin. Perhaps one of the Baronage readers will recognize them.



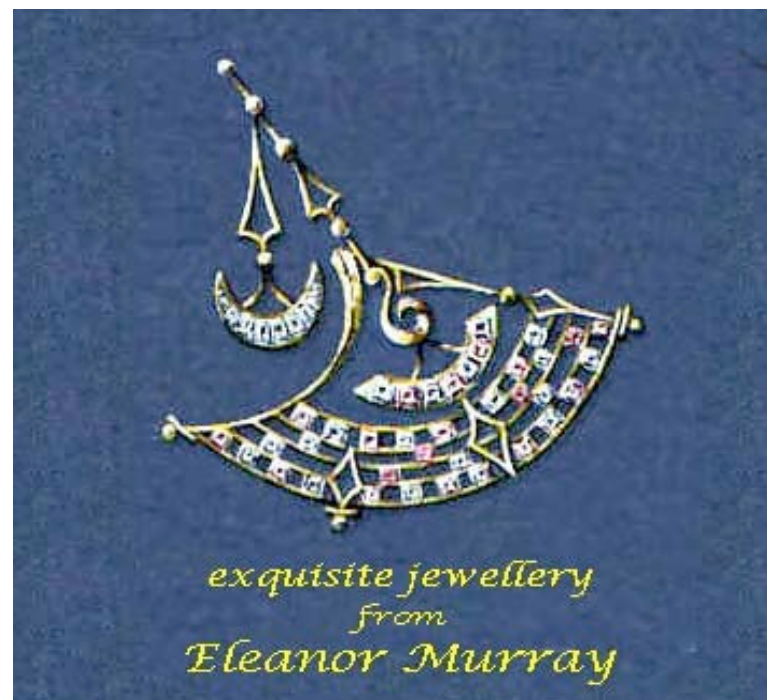
Among several portraits supported with the arms of the sitters is a group in [The Weiss Gallery](#), a London firm famous for its Tudor and Stuart pictures, but of most interest today to the visiting heraldry enthusiast is a 16th century Dutch work in which the artist emblazoned the sitter’s arms with a silver shield on a silver shield, the smaller shield having a thin black edge far too thin to be described as an heraldic charge. A herald would recognise this as an example of adumbration (or umbra), which is seen rarely – *Argent on an escutcheon adumbrated between three fighting cocks Gules a lion rampant Sable crowned Or* (the van der Hoef family).

More heraldry is in the second part of this report.



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The background picture on the front page was copied from the exemplary catalogue produced by The European Fine Arts Foundation for TEFAF 2006. It is *The Artist's Studio* painted by Johann Georg Platzer, the leading artist of the Austrian Rococo, and was exhibited by Bernheimer Fine Old Masters.

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