A Royal Crusade History: The Livre d’Eracles and Edward IV’s Exile in Burgundy

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The English King Edward IV (1442-83) had throughout his reign many political, familial, and cultural connections with the Flanders-based court of Burgundy, headed at the time by Duke Charles the Bold. In 1468, King Edward arranged for his sister Margaret of York to marry Duke Charles of Burgundy. The same year he was inducted into Charles’s powerful Burgundian chivalric Order of the Golden Fleece and reciprocally inducted Charles into the English Order of the Garter. In 1470, he was forced into exile for five months when the Earl of Warwick, Richard Neville, placed the former King Henry VI back on the throne. After first unsuccessfully trying to find shelter in Calais, Edward landed in Holland where he was hospitably taken in by Burgundian nobleman Louis de Gruuthuse (also known as Louis de Bruges) at his home in The Hague, and afterwards in Flanders at Louis’s home in Bruges. Between 1470 and 1471, Edward was witness to and inspired by the flourishing Flemish culture of art and fashion, including the manuscript illuminations that his host Louis was beginning voraciously to consume at the time. While Edward was in exile he was penniless, and thus unable to commission works of art. However, after his victorious return to the throne in 1471 he had the full resources of his realm at his command again, and over time

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built what became the early basis for the Royal library with his manuscript collection, of which many examples are extant in the British Library today.²

British Library, Royal MS. 15 E. I, known as the *Livre d’Eracles* (hereafter *Eracles*) is a beautiful example of Edward IV’s patronage of Flemish manuscript illumination. The manuscript was tailored to his interests and yet showed a resonance with similar manuscripts made for the Burgundian noblemen with whom he interacted. The text combines the fifteenth-century French translation of William of Tyre’s *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*, a chronicle of the crusades that William finished in 1184, and the anonymous continuation of the history up to 1231.³ This text came to be known as the *Eracles* because it begins with the story of the Emperor Heraclius who returned the True Cross to Jerusalem around 629. Including Edward IV’s copy, five copies of the *Eracles* owned by members of Order of the Golden Fleece in the fifteenth century are extant. Three of these share with Edward’s copy the same continuation to 1231. The patrons of these manuscripts, one of which was Louis de Gruuthuse, were all in the Burgundian orbit when Edward IV was in exile there. Hence it is possible that Edward’s interest in this text was piqued while he was at Louis’s household or by meeting other patrons of the text who were members of the Order of the Golden Fleece, like Jean V de Créquy.⁴

Edward IV’s *Eracles* was made c. 1475-80 in Bruges.⁵ Scholars have attributed ownership to Edward IV because the frontispiece bears the royal arms of England, surrounded with the blue and gold garter, with the motto of the Order of the Garter ‘Honi soit qui mal y pense’ (fig. 1). It is topped with a crown. On the right stands a flag with Edward’s arms as well as the

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⁴ The other fifteenth-century copies and their original owners are as follows: Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS. 9045, Burgundian Library; Amiens, Bibliothèque municipale, MS. 483 F, Jean V de Créquy; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. fr. 68, Louis de Gruuthuse; Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève, MS. 85, Wolfert VI van Borssele. Another non-Burgundian illustrated fifteenth-century manuscript of the text was commissioned by the Echevin of Rouen. This manuscript is Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. fr. 2629.

A Royal Crusade History: The *Livre d’Eracles* and Edward IV’s Exile in Burgundy

*Fig. 1.* London, British Library, Royal MS. 15 E. I, f. 16.
Yorkist badge of the *rose en soleil*. The manuscript was painted by an atelier of several artists, including the Master of the Flemish Boethius; an anonymous assistant who has been dubbed the Illuminator of Bibliothèque nationale MS. 82; another anonymous assistant to the Master of the Flemish Boethius; the Master of Edward IV; and either the Master of the Getty Froissart or his assistant.

The manuscript is illustrated with fifty-four miniatures and thus constitutes the most expanded illumination cycle of the fifteenth-century examples. In fact it contains the fifth largest cycle in the entire corpus of sixty-seven extant William of Tyre manuscripts, showing the resources Edward IV was able to provide to ensure its lavishness. Although many of the additional miniatures in the manuscript contain anonymous battle scenes, which add lushness but not narrative complexity, there are several miniatures in the manuscript which may speak to Edward IV’s particular interests. Here I will focus on two sets of illuminations: the first is a series related to relics of the Crucifixion that demonstrate a particular interest in the subject for either Edward himself or whoever planned the miniature cycle, and the second is a highlighting of English participation in the crusades which I argue was meant to flatter and engage the English king.

First, I shall address the Crucifixion relics group, which includes three miniatures dedicated to the True Cross and one displaying the Holy Lance. The True Cross cycle begins with the three-quarter page and sumptuous frontispiece miniature displaying the story of the Roman Emperor Heraclius (reigned 610–40), bringing the True Cross back to Jerusalem after his victory over Chosroes II in Persia in 628 (fig. 2). Although this moment in history is not officially a part of the crusades, as the first crusade did not begin until 1096, William of Tyre includes it as a pre-history of the Christian struggle with Islam from its start in the 620s. William limits his discussion of Heraclius only to a few facts: that he was victorious in Persia over Chosroes, that he returned the Cross to Jerusalem, that he ordained a new Patriarch of Jerusalem, and that he ordered all of the churches in the city to be cleaned and rebuilt because Chosroes had wrought much destruction upon them.

The miniature portraying Heraclius’s story, however, expands on William of Tyre’s narrative. The illumination was painted by an artist who is related in style to, or is perhaps the same as, the Master of the Getty Froissart. The illumination contains two scenes. In the background the emperor carries the Cross on horseback, before a city gate on top of which stands an angel holding a sword. In the foreground is the grey-bearded Heraclius, barefoot with the Cross over his shoulder. His followers await barefoot as well, the foremost with his hands in prayer. A member of Heraclius’s entourage seeks entry into the gated Holy City on the right.

Although it is mentioned in the *Éracles* text that Heraclius brings the Cross back to Jerusalem, the scene with the angel is unrelated, deriving from Jacobus de Voragine’s thirteenth-century...
A Royal Crusade History: The *Livre d’Eracles* and Edward IV’s Exile in Burgundy

*Fig. 2.* London, British Library, Royal MS. 15 E. I, f. 16. Heraclius returning the True Cross to Jerusalem.
Golden Legend, which perhaps used as a source a homily by Hrabanus Maurus, ninth-century archbishop of Mainz.11

In the Golden Legend, Heraclius brings the stolen Cross back to Jerusalem and wants to bring it into the city through the gate by the Mount of Olives, which is the gate through which Christ entered the city. Heraclius is on horseback and dressed in imperial garb. Upon his approach the gate to the city is miraculously bricked up and he is unable to pass. An angel appears and tells him that in order to gain access to the city, he must enter humbly, barefoot and in poverty like Christ. Heraclius heeds the angel and removes all of his imperial dress and shoes, dismounts and humbly carries the Cross to the gate and knocks on the door, where he is finally allowed access.12

Both parts of the Golden Legend story are included in the Eracles frontispiece, the angel’s admonition of Heraclius in the background and his humble entry into the city in the foreground. Thus the chronicle begins with a visual message not just of Christian victory but of humble Christian leadership. Perhaps there is a slight echo as well of Edward’s personally victorious return to his own country after his five-month exile, having taken his throne back from Henry VI and the Earl of Warwick.

Heraclius is featured in two other fifteenth-century Eracles manuscripts, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. fr. 68,13 in which he is shown statically enthroned, and Bibliothèque de Genève, MS. fr. 8514 showing him ordering the rebuilding the churches of Jerusalem in the top left corner of the miniature. One Eracles example includes the angel confronting Heraclius, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. fr. 9082, painted in Rome in 1295.15 This illumination portrays Heraclius on a white horse in the foreground, carrying the Cross over his shoulders with his army behind him and an imperial flag flying over their heads. The gate to the city of Jerusalem is closed before them and an angel stands atop the city gate; however, the miniature omits the humble entry that follows in the narrative.

This iconography was popular enough to be present not only in the Golden Legend and this Eracles, but in other contexts as well, many of which were devotional.16 In the contemporary Blackburn Hours an artist from the same atelier, the Master of Edward IV, painted one half of the scene, the emperor approaching the city gate in full imperial regalia and being denied by the angel.17 In the thirteenth-century Belleville Breviary Heraclius enters the gates of Jerusalem.

13 This miniature, found on f. 1, is viewable at the Bibliothèque nationale’s digital archive Mandragore: http://mandragore.bnf.fr/html/accueil.html. (accessed 30 April 2012).
14 This miniature, found on f. 2, is viewable at the Swiss library consortium digital archive E-Codices: http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/bge/fr0085. (accessed 30 April 2012).
15 This miniature is found on f. 25, and can be viewed at the Bibliothèque nationale’s digital archive Mandragore: http://mandragore.bnf.fr/html/accueil.html. (accessed 30 April 2012).
16 This analysis of the Heraclius and the True Cross cycles in wider contexts was delivered as a part of my paper ‘Visual Narrative in the Livre d’Eracles: Did a Formidable Gothic Tradition Shape Illuminations of Late-Medieval Examples?’ delivered at the Narrative in Gothic Art panel chaired by Dr Elizabeth Morrison at the College Art Association conference on 23 February 2012 in Los Angeles, CA.
17 Blackburn, Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, Hart MS. 20884, f. 34. The miniature is on the recto side of a diptych (ff. 33v-34) that opens the Hours of the Cross, and is paired with a miniature of the Crucifixion. Kren and McKendrick, Illuminating the Renaissance, pp. 342-3; a reproduction of the described miniature appears on p. 342.
A Royal Crusade History: The Livre d’Eracles and Edward IV’s Exile in Burgundy

barefoot, holding a small cross in his hands before him. The two scenes appear together in the Belles Heures of Jean, Duke de Berry, painted in Paris by the Limbourg Brothers c. 1405-08 and 1409. In the first scene, the emperor approaches the city in his imperial garb, but cannot gain access, with the angel having been omitted. In the next scene, he succeeds in his entry, barefoot and humbled and holding the Cross over his shoulder. This theme is also found in Italy. A fresco by Agnolo Gaddi of the Legend of the True Cross, from the Chancel Chapel at Santa Croce, in Florence, painted c. 1385, shows a strong iconographic connection to Edward IV’s fifteenth-century frontispiece. In the central background, the emperor holds the Cross on horseback. He finds the gate to the city closed, and the angel above admonishes him. In the bottom right corner, Heraclius approaches the gate again, barefoot, humbled, and carrying the Cross, and this time he is granted access. It is clear that the compositional arrangement of the scenes in both the Eracles and the fresco, with the admonition in the background and the entry in the foreground, bear a strong relationship to one another, though there is no evidence of a direct connection between them.

The use of the independent Golden Legend text to construct the more complex frontispiece for the Eracles could indicate that Edward IV’s artist, libraire, or patron was familiar with the Golden Legend, or that designs by his colleague the Master of Edward IV inspired him. However, the popularity of the scenes used even in devotional contexts demonstrates that the iconography was well known and the artist might have located the design in a model book or had even travelled enough to see a work of art such as the earlier examples. It is clear, in any case, that Heraclius’s story, however brief within the Eracles text, modelled strong but humble Christian leadership in a way that resonated with readers across both periods. In combination with the following scenes that also highlight the True Cross, however, it can also be viewed as a devotional meditation on the Cross in the context of the crusades.

In the next illumination, the miracle of the True Cross, painted by one of the assistants to the Master of the Flemish Boethius, the later crusaders have taken the Cross out onto the battlefield for assistance (fig. 3). During a battle with the Turks, the crusaders were trapped by Greek fire ignited by the Turkish army. Unable to escape, the crusaders asked archbishop Robert of Nazareth, who had carried the True Cross with him, to pray for them. This he did and the Lord,


The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters Collection, 54.1.1. Images of this manuscript are viewable at the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s digital archive: http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/70010729. (accessed 30 April 2012).

This miniature is on f. 146v.

This miniature is on f. 156.


Other scenes in the Eracles corpus that include Heraclius in some part include: Bibliothèque nationale de France, MSS. fr. 2628, f. 1; fr. 2824, f. 1; fr. 9082, f. 25; fr. 9083, f. 10; fr. 24209, f. 10v; fr. 22495, f. 9; Paris, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, mem. et doc. 230bis, f. 2; Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Reg. Lat. 737, f. 1. My ability to identify similar scenes in the Eracles corpus is indebted to Jaroslav Folda’s enormously useful 1968 dissertation (see n. 6 above), which catalogues every illustration in the corpus of William of Tyre manuscripts, allowing me to compare scenes chosen for illustration accurately.

The illumination is on f. 266.
Fig. 3. London, British Library, Royal MS. 15 E. 1, f. 266. Miracle of the True Cross.
seeing the army in peril, mercifully diverted the wind to send the flames back upon the Turks, miraculously saving the crusader army.  

The artist has effectively rendered the flames, which tilt dangerously to the left toward the grouped crusaders who crowd together; some of them have already perished on the ground. In the central background the bishop kneels and prays, holding a flag that bears a red cross on a white background with small red circles in each quarter. In the sky, the Lord, not very specifically rendered in a red mandorla filled with yellow light, sends down powerful golden rays toward the bishop and the Cross, indicating his miraculous intervention.

There may have been a problem in communication with the artist here, as the text explicitly states the True Cross was present, but here is only a flag bearing a cross. The rubric, placed just underneath the miniature, mentions the fire which has trapped the army, but does not mention the Cross. It reads: ‘Comment nos gens se mirent au retour. Et comment les turcs mirent le feu gregoys es ronches sur leur chemin.’  

The body of the text, however, found on the verso of the leaf bearing the miniature, explicitly mentions the Cross: ‘... ilz appellerent larcheuesque Robert de nazareth qui portoit la vraye croix deuant eulx’. It is possible that this artist was told the story to illustrate but misunderstood the cross element, and, not seeing it in the rubric, did not endeavour to read the passage all the way through to understand exactly what he should render. Only one other Eracles manuscript in the entire corpus includes this scene. The earlier Amiens, Bibliothèque municipale, MS. 483 F, painted by the Master of Créquy, demonstrates a very similar depiction of the flames trapping the crusader army, down to the diagonal composition of the flames, indicating a possible transmission of the iconography among the artists of the two manuscripts. However in the case of the Amiens manuscript, the True Cross is clearly and correctly included in the foreground. In Edward IV’s manuscript this miniature is separated physically from the frontispiece’s portrayal of the return of the Cross. The rarity of the miracle scene within the Eracles corpus demonstrates an intention to continue the Cross narrative specifically.

Furthermore, the True Cross cycle continues with a third example, picturing the Battle of the Horns of Hattin, which occurred on Saturday 4 July 1187 (fig. 4). In this battle Saladin, Sultan of Egypt and Syria, and his army routed the crusaders and captured both the Cross relic and Guy de Lusignan, King of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. The same artist who painted

27 Folio 266, my transcription. My translation: ‘How our men returned and how the Turks sent Greek fire to block their route.’
28 Folio 266v, my transcription. My translation: ‘They called the archbishop Robert of Nazareth, who carried the True Cross before them …’
29 It has been suggested to me that this flag represents St George’s cross, which was worn by crusading English kings historically. Although the idea is interesting, the artist’s marks in the quarter panels of the flag make it an inaccurate representation of a relatively simple design. In addition, this same artist, the assistant to the Master of the Flemish Boethius, uses a similar flag throughout his work in the manuscript (ff. 209, 273v 300, 335, 347 and 365). None of these examples shares the same idea of conflation between the actual Cross and St George’s cross. Furthermore, in most cases the dots in the quarter panels are also present. As the artist was painting in Bruges, it is perhaps possible that the artist misunderstood a St George’s cross and used his conception of it throughout his work to please the English king. However, I would argue that the chances are greater that it is in fact not representative of the English symbol and is only a design motif.
30 This miniature, painted c. 1440-45, is viewable at the French municipal library digital archive Enluminures: http://www.enluminures.culture.fr/documentation/enlumine/fr/rechguidee_00.htm. (accessed 30 April 2012). As far as I am aware, there are no other examples within the Eracles corpus of this miracle scene.
31 The miniature is on f. 433v.
Fig. 4. London, British Library, Royal MS. 15 E. I, f. 433v: The Battle of the Horns of Hattin. Detail of miniature only.
the miracle of the True Cross, the assistant to the Master of the Flemish Boethius, was also responsible for the Horns of Hattin scene. King Guy is on the left, crowned, wearing a golden suit of armour. Enemy soldiers bind his hands and his neck. On the right, one of Saladin’s soldiers irreverently uses the inverted Cross relic as a weapon, smashing the dead soldier below. In this instance the artist is able to clearly capture the vast losses felt simultaneously by the crusader army, which are spelled out clearly in the rubric: ‘D’une bataille que le roy guy de Iherusalem eut contre Salhadin ou ledict roy fut prins et presque tous les barons La vraye croix perdue …’. The Eracles history’s text underscores that King Guy took bad advice regarding the battle, bringing the downfall upon himself. The miniature captures the consequences of his bad leadership at the moment of his humiliation.

Three fifteenth-century manuscripts include scenes from this battle. The first is Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS. 9045, in which crusaders battle Saladin at the Horns of Hattin in a general mêlée. The second is the Paris manuscript in which Saladin decapitates Raynauld de Trac quite brutally while the king is carried away by two soldiers in the upper left corner. The last is the Amiens manuscript in which, again, the same scene is portrayed as in Edward’s manuscript, the loss of the Cross relic and King Guy de Lusignan. The Cross, inverted, is carried off by one of Saladin’s soldiers in the bottom left corner. There are no other known examples of the explicit visualization of the loss of the True Cross in any other Eracles manuscripts. Again, in this case, this second example of shared iconography between the two manuscripts indicates an artistic transmission between their creators.

These two last scenes in Edward’s manuscript, the miracle of the True Cross and the loss of the True Cross at the Battle of the Horns of Hattin, show a striking similarity to the same scenes within the Amiens manuscript. In the miracle of the True Cross illumination, the strong diagonal stripe of fire is mirrored across the two miniatures, though the organization of the other elements differs, with Archbishop Robert of Nazareth praying in the foreground with the crusaders surrounding him and the Cross in the Amiens manuscript, while in the London manuscript he seems to be more privately praying in the background. In the scenes of the Battle of the Horns of Hattin, the inverted Cross is being carried off in each of them, with the king being captured in the centre and the rest of the warring soldiers jammed together in the foreground. These two scenes are exclusive to these two manuscripts and demonstrate not only similar iconography but also the shared elevation and inversion of the story of the Cross in battle, with lessons of positive, faithful leadership leading to positive outcomes, and poor leadership leading to the opposite.

Jean V de Créquy, who lived from around 1397 to 1474, was the owner of the Amiens manuscript. He was one of Duke Philip the Good’s chamberlains and a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece since its foundation in 1430. When Edward IV was nominated to join the Order, Jean was among the delegation of Burgundian nobles charged with notifying the king of his election in 1468. After waiting a long period to receive a safe passage to England, Jean and the rest of the delegation arrived on 5 April 1469 to give Edward the statues of the Order to peruse before accepting its collar.
A Royal Crusade History: The Livre d’Eracles and Edward IV’s Exile in Burgundy

The Amiens manuscript was created much earlier than the London manuscript, around 1440-50, and in Northern France rather than in Bruges. Beyond the shared pairs of Cross miniatures in these manuscripts there is no concrete evidence that the Master of Créquy’s work in the Amiens manuscript was seen by the atelier that painted the London manuscript, or that perhaps Jean showed Edward his copy at some point in Flanders or in London. However, three manuscripts that Edward IV owned included the hands of artists who also worked for Jean V de Créquy. The first is a Valerius Maximus, Facta et dicta memorabilia (Royal MS. 17 F. IV), which demonstrates the hand of the Rambures Master.\textsuperscript{39} The second and third are a two-volume set of Bartholomaeus Anglicus’s De proprietatibus rerum (Livre des proprietez des choses, Royal MSS. 15 E. II–III) painted in part by the Bruges Master of 1482, who worked along with the same atelier that painted the London Eracles manuscript, with the Master of Edward IV, an assistant to the Master of the Flemish Boethius and a follower of the Master of the Getty Froissart. It is thus plausible that these artists had seen the Créquy Master’s designs for his True Cross miniatures and had somehow communicated them to the artists working for Edward. It is clear in any case that both manuscripts demonstrate an intentional focus on the Cross relic, with Edward IV’s manuscript further elaborating on its history with its frontispiece.

In the Royal manuscript the final miniature in the Crucifixion relics group expands from the Cross relic to the discovery of the Holy Lance that pierced Christ’s side during the Crucifixion (fig. 5).\textsuperscript{40} The illumination comes in the sixth book of the chronicle, and is positioned between the Heraclius and the miracle of the True Cross miniatures.\textsuperscript{41} This scene was not illustrated in any of the other fifteenth-century manuscripts.\textsuperscript{42} In this example, the artist – either the Master of the Flemish Boethius or his assistant, the Illuminator of Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. fr. 82 – has portrayed an outdoor scene where a monk, holding the Lance while a kneeling figure supports it, shows it to the kneeling crusader army, who fold their hands in prayer. The moment comes in a section of book VI, chapter xiv in which the people of Antioch were oppressed and beset by famine by Korbuga’s siege. At this low moment, a cleric called Peter Bartholomew had a dream vision of St Andrew, who told him the Holy Lance was buried inside the church of St Peter in Antioch. After its discovery, the barons and people of the city all gathered in the church to witness it. The earlier manuscripts in the corpus typically show either Peter Bartholomew’s dream vision or the display of the Lance in the church of St Peter. The Royal manuscript does not follow any of these earlier examples, instead providing a prayerful moment of contemplation and hope for the crusader army outdoors. Hence, the artists have portrayed a unique scene that again focuses on a holy relic of the Crucifixion, adding to the overall effect and importance of the relics group.

Out of the four miniatures in the Crucifixion relic group, the first three are hopeful and miraculous moments that either demonstrate God’s mercy on the weakened or threatened crusading army, like the Holy Lance or the miracle of the True Cross illuminations, or like the Heraclius scene show a humble Christian leader who puts the city of Jerusalem and its Cross relic back in the hands of the Christian inhabitants. The final example of the Battle of the Horns of Hattin inverts the positive leadership demonstrated by Heraclius in the downfall of Guy de Lusignan and the loss of the True Cross. This focus on Crucifixion relics in rare or unique scene choices indicates that the manuscript was expressly planned to feature

\textsuperscript{39} Miniatures from this manuscript are viewable on the British Library’s Online Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts: \url{http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=5691&CollID=16&NStart=170504} (accessed 30 April 2012).

\textsuperscript{40} The miniature is found on f. 98v.


\textsuperscript{42} Other Gothic manuscripts in the Eracles corpus that include the Holy Lance, though none this exact scene of discovery, include: Bibliothèque nationale de France, MSS. fr. 352, ff. 46 and 46v; fr. 22496-97, f. 61.
A Royal Crusade History: The *Livre d’Eracles* and Edward IV’s Exile in Burgundy

![Image](image-url)

*Fig. 5. London, British Library, Royal MS. 15 E. I, f. 98v. Discovery of the Holy Lance.*
the role of these relics in the crusade history for their royal patron, perhaps serving as models for Christian leadership. In the following section, I will discuss two miniatures that have been inserted particularly for Edward IV’s pleasure to reflect his identity as the English king. The final miniature in the manuscript portrays the English King Richard I landing in Palermo (fig. 6). The artist, the assistant to the Master of the Flemish Boethius, painted King Richard about to enter the city gates of Palermo behind members of his army. He wears a crown and golden armour. Two boats full of his army wait to disembark.

The text recounts that on his way to his crusade Richard landed in Palermo because he wanted to winter with the King of France, Philippe II Augustus. According to the continuation text, the two shared a great friendship. The artist in the London manuscript, however, did not include Philippe Augustus in the scene, who is typically included in earlier Eracles manuscripts. The only fifteenth-century manuscript to include the scene is the earlier Paris manuscript that belonged to Louis de Gruuthuse, Edward’s host while in exile. In Louis’s manuscript, Richard is crowned and wears armour that implies but does not replicate the English armorial blazon, half-blue and half-red with gold impressions of fleur-de-lys on the blue and illegible gold decoration on the red. He stands on a platform between two boats, and again the King of France is absent. It may be that owing to the typically contentious relationship in the fifteenth century among England, France and Burgundy both manuscripts chose to ignore the friendship of Richard I and Philippe Augustus, instead focusing solely on the English king. It also may be that as Louis de Gruuthuse was a personal friend of Edward, both patrons shared a stronger interest in the earlier English monarch.

Finally, the last example from this manuscript is a portrayal of the Siege of Damascus in 1148 (fig. 7). The text reads that there were three battalions involved in the siege led by their respective kings, Baldwin King of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, Louis King of France, and finally Conrad, the Holy Roman Emperor. The artist, who was the assistant of the Master of the Flemish Boethius who has been linked to Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. fr. 82, shows on the right the army of the Holy Roman Emperor carrying the double-headed imperial eagle on a golden heraldic flag. The emperor himself is crowned, wears gold armour and displays the imperial eagle on his back. In the bottom left the French battalion carries the flag of the fleur-de-lys emblazoned on a blue ground. The crowned French king to the far left wears golden armour and holds a shield also bearing the French insignia.

In the upper left corner, the final battalion is painted, which should be that led by the king of the Latin Kingdom, who should wear the armorial insignia of his realm, which is a golden cross on a white background with small gold crosses in each of the quarter panels. Instead, the artist has implied an English battalion, with the crowned English king in golden armour holding a red shield with a gold animal, and with a gold beast on a red background on the

43 At the Royal Manuscripts conference at the British Library, it was suggested to me that Edward IV may have been fashioning himself purposefully after models of Christian kingship at the time, because he was ruling while efforts to canonize the preceding King Henry VI were underway. My dissertation explains more fully ideas surrounding Edward IV’s royal self-presentation, expanding upon the current article. For more on Edward IV, see Drimmer, ‘The Visual Language of Vernacular Manuscript Illumination’, particularly Part II.
44 This miniature is found on f. 450v.
46 Other manuscripts in the Eracles corpus that include scenes of King Richard’s arrival are as follows: Bibliothèque nationale de France, MSS. fr. 2754, f. 198; fr. 2827, f. 234; Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, mem. et doc. 230bis, ff. 189v and 196v.
47 This miniature is found on folio 280v.
48 In the text he is referred to as ‘le Roy d’oultremer’.
Fig. 7. London, British Library, Royal MS. 15 E. I, f. 280v. Siege of Damascus.
A Royal Crusade History: The *Livre d’Eracles* and Edward IV’s Exile in Burgundy

heraldic flag overhead, evoking, but not replicating, the English blazon. The rubric does not include mention of the particular armies at all and reads: ‘De la scituation de la cite de damas et comment les crestiens assaillirent premiurement les jardins dicelle ville.’ 50 Thus, the artist has historically implied the English king in the place of the King of the Latin Kingdom. This scene is not pictured in any of the fifteenth-century *Eracles* manuscripts. 51 This same artist rendered multiple scenes of armies in the manuscript, but none contains specific armorials identifying the participants as in this scene. It is clear then that the scene’s miniature was altered to reflect the identity of its English owner.

Although Edward IV’s *Eracles* manuscript seems to be linked with the several others commissioned for members of the Order of the Golden Fleece, like Louis de Gruuthuse and Jean V de Créquy, with both of whom Edward spent time, Edward was not a markedly active member of the order himself. As Ann Payne and Lisa Jefferson have shown, Edward was admonished in 1478 and 1481 for not wearing the order’s collar and not sending a proxy to the order’s chapter meeting. 52 He is, however, pictured in a presentation scene of Jean de Wavrin’s *Anciennes et nouvelles chroniques d’Angleterre* (Royal MS. 15 E. IV, f. 14; fig. 8), wearing the collar of the order. But the manuscript was painted in Bruges by artists for whom the members of the order and their collars were a familiar sight and so the collar’s inclusion may have been less at the request of Edward and more due to the habits of the artists. 53

Although the subject of the text is the crusades, the English king also does not seem to have shared Duke Philip the Good’s enthusiasm to take on a new crusade. At the time, the Ottoman Turks led by Mehmed II were advancing quickly on western territories, having attempted to besiege Rhodes in 1480 and sent out a force to Otranto in Italy in the same year, but neither attempt was successful and did not encourage Edward’s rapid engagement with the idea. 54 Tyerman points out that Edward may have been preparing to send archers to Burgundy to aid Philip the Good’s preparations for a new crusade and did ‘authorise a crusade grant when Pius II actually announced the papal alliance with Burgundy and Venice.’ 55 However, no English crusade materialized, and it is unclear how sincere his commitment to the idea was. Edward’s interest in the crusades as a subject for illumination also does not seem to be vast, confined to the *Eracles* and a copy of the *Histoire de Godefroy de Bouillon* (Royal MS. 17. F. V; fig. 9). 56 However, the poet John Kay translated Guillaume de Caoursin’s account of the 1480 siege of Rhodes into English for Edward, and Caxton dedicated to Edward his English translation of the history of Godfrey de Bouillon, which he printed in 1481. 57

A Royal Crusade History: The *Livre d’Éracles* and Edward IV’s Exile in Burgundy

Fig. 8. London, British Library, Royal MS. 15 E. IV, f. 14. Jean de Wavrin presents his text to Edward IV.
Fig. 9. London, British Library, Royal Ms. 17 Fv, f. 3. Godefroy de Bouillon, king of Jerusalem, enthroned.
What is clear is that Edward IV’s Eracles manuscript, through its Crucifixion relics cycle, particularly in the Heraclius frontispiece, the capture of King Guy of Lusignan and the True Cross miniature, demonstrates a strong argument for humble and wise leadership, which if carried out well earns miraculous aid, like that received by Heraclius or the crusader army in the miracle of the True Cross. This interest in leadership extends to particularly English leadership with the inclusion of the Richard I miniature that omits the French king as well as the ahistorical indication of the English army battalion and king at the Siege of Damascus. Although his manuscript does select some similar scenes to those manuscripts belonging to his Burgundian knightly companions, particularly the Amiens manuscript that belonged to Jean V de Créquy with its two-miniature True Cross cycle, it is overall notably different in its selection and execution of scenes. The beauty and sophistication of many of the miniatures, as well as their sheer volume and size, definitely speak to the luxury and magnificence that the Flemish illuminators were able to produce for their English royal patron.