

Notes on Bibliotheque Nationale de France MS Lat. 11269

Three copies of Fiore di Liberi's *Flos Duellatorum* (c. 1410) are presently known: The Morgan Library version, M.0383, the Getty Museum manuscript, Ludwig XV 13, and the Pisani-Dossi version, now in private hands, which was published by Novati in 1902. A 58-leaf version made for Niccolò d'Este and catalogued as d'Este family library 110 is now lost, as is a copy mentioned in the Morgan and Getty prologues as having been made for Galeazzo di Mantua. This last, however, may be the identity of Bibliotheque National de France MS Lat. 11269. [Since disproven by Matt Galas]

That this copy of Fiore's work has been previously overlooked is not surprising: It was catalogued as *Florius de arte lutandi*, the title written in a perhaps 17<sup>th</sup> century hand on the guard-leaf, and, unlike the other known versions, its couplets are in Latin, not Firulian dialect. Furthermore, in a twist worthy of Dan Brown, the microfilm copy contained a completely different work, and it took considerable persuasion of the BN staff to induce them to bring out the actual manuscript.

Upon examination of the work itself, however, the content is instantly revealed to be Fiore, for there is clear repetition of techniques and teaching methods from the other versions, even if the elaborate costumes with angel-wing sleeves worn by the armored combatants are somewhat different from those of the other manuscripts. As with Fiore's other manuscripts, the figures demonstrating the master's techniques are illuminated with gilt crowns and garters; it is also notable because the figures are (inconsistently) colored with an ink wash. The quality of the illustrations is rather variable, however, and not up to the standard of the Pisani-Dossi. Judging by this and the details of the costumes, one is tempted to conclude that this may be the earliest of Fiore's manuscripts.

The history and provenance of the manuscript, covered in pasteboard and consisting of 44 parchment folios, is unclear. It was evidently re-bound in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the guard-page bear a watermark of Dutch arms and initials "IM," signifying the master paper-maker who worked at the Puy-moyen mill for Sieur Janssen and who was active c. 1635 (ref. Churchill, *Watermarks in Paper*). A sticker on inner cover depicts a device of two crossed scepters and a crown over a chain of office with a Teutonic cross under them and a banner "Cabinet de Livres de Pontchartrain." The recto side of the first folio contains "Florius de arte luctandi" written in a 17<sup>th</sup>-century hand, the number 312 crossed out, "ccc" and a buckle/thorn-type device, Star-of-David design with figure-8's top, left, and right, the note "Sppl[<sup>^</sup>]t l. 674" in a modern hand, and a BN stamp.

In size, the manuscript is 18.8 cm by 12.5cm, and evidently slightly reduced by rebinding. The folios are collected in 10-page gathers (or at least, there was a cord after the 5<sup>th</sup> page from front and back—the BN tends to frown upon bending the spines of its

manuscripts). For reasons of composition and page ordering, the manuscript forms one integral work and has not been rearranged any.

Each page (save 1v) contains two illustrations with matching Latin couplets. The pages are ruled in boxes to provide a framework for this. The ruled area is approximately 15½ centimeters wide and divided into four unequal boxes: The top between 2¾ and 3 centimeters tall and containing text, the one beneath that 7½ and 8 centimeters tall and containing the matching illustration, the second text area below that again measuring between 2¾ and 3 centimeters, and the area for the final illustration measuring between 7½ and 8 centimeters tall.

The contents are as follow:

1v: segno. This is in poor condition due to water damage, making one think the book circulated in this present order since its creation.  
2 r: Lances on horseback  
3 r: bottom: Sword on horseback begins  
4 r, bottom: Wrestling on horseback begins  
6 r: Defense against cavalry on foot begins  
6 v, bottom: Spear on foot begins  
8 r, bottom: The technique for defending with two sticks against a spear, finishing 8 v, top.  
8 v, bottom: Poleaxe  
10 r, bottom: Sword in one hand begins (including half-sword and *giocco stretta* techniques)  
18 v: Ends  
19 r: blank. This begins a quire.  
19 v: More sword, sword and dagger, sword vs. dagger, some in half-armor.  
21 r: Dagger masters  
21 v: Dagger defense begins  
22 v: End of the middle quire  
26 r: More sword in two hands, disarms, and grappling.  
31 r: More dagger disarms  
38 v: Wrestling wards, beginning the section on *presse*  
43 r: Dagger defense  
44 r: fin. The bottom panel bears this legend:

Florius hunc librus quondam peritissimus autor  
Edidit \* est igitur sibi plurima laudis honestas  
Contribuenda viro furlana gente perfecto

44 v: The following device and a BN stamp:

R  
L R  
I