Assembled out of its component parts, 174 individual woodcuts, the massive ensemble known as the *Arch of Honour* (B.138) stands almost four metres high and three metres across (fig. 1). Half a decade in production, from initial suggestions of subjects for its printed images (1512) to the final, closely supervised printing, the *Arch of Honour* occupied the workshops of both Albrecht Dürer, Nuremberg's finest artist, and Hieronymus Andreae, the city's finest woodblock carver. Details of the program, as well as its explanatory colophon, were devised by Johannes Stabius (d. 1522), court historian and general scholar-researcher for the patron of the entire project, Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519) (fig. 2).

The *Arch of Honour* was among the most ambitious of Maximilian's visual projects — and the only one to have been fully realized during his lifetime. The National Gallery of Victoria is indeed fortunate to have an example of this woodcut ensemble in its entirety, so it is fitting that it be an object of study in its own right within the larger Dürer holdings of the museum. This colossal work represents Dürer's major woodcut project of the teens and was the only massive product he and his workshop completed after he had issued his great book ensembles in 1511: the republished *Apocalypse*, the *Lute of the Virgin* and the *Large Passion* (see NGV Book no. 21), and the *Small Passion* (NGV Book no. 22).

Emperor Maximilian I was the son of the previous Holy Roman Emperor of the German Nation, Frederick III (1415–1493), and was officially crowned emperor in Trent in 1508 (despite his wish to follow the tradition of Charlemagne and to be crowned by the pope in Rome, this plan was blocked by hostilities with Venice, so he had to settle for the most Italian and southern of the safe areas of his own dominions). During the decade of his coronation, Maximilian began to consider the ways in which he could use both texts and images to celebrate his accomplishments as well as to leave a legacy for the future. In his autobiographical yet idealized prose romance of his reign, *Weisskunig* (which, like so many of his artistic projects, remained uncompleted at his death), he declared:

He who during his life provides no remembrance for himself has no remembrance after his death and the same person is forgotten with the tolling of the bell, and therefore the money that I spend on remembrance is not lost; but the money that is spared on my remembrance, that is a suppression of my future remembrance, and what I do not accomplish during my life for my memory will not be made up for after my death, neither by thee [the emperor's heir, the future Charles V?] nor others.²

The *Arch of Honour* project held special significance for the emperor. Taken together, its images and texts present a summation of all Maximilian's personal claims, particularly those whose legitimacy and lasting importance meant most: his ancestry, his territories, his extended kinship to other European rulers, his position in the history of Roman emperors (the *Arch* also celebrates those family ancestors who had held the imperial title before him), and his deeds and accomplishments. Side images on the *Arch* even attest to Maximilian's wide-ranging talents and interests, while a pseudo-hieroglyphic allegory at its summit proclaims his glory. Fortunately for the modern viewer, the accompanying Stabius text helps to explicate this complex program, which we shall now examine in sequence.
Fig. 1. Albrecht Dürer and workshop. The Triumphal Arch of Emperor Maximilian I (The Arch of Honour), c.1515-17, woodcut (B. 138).
Imperator Caesar Divus Maximilianus
Pius Felix Augustus

Fig. 2  Albrecht Dürer, Emperor Maximilian I, c.1518–19, woodcut (B.154).
Genealogy

At the very centre of the Arch stands the segment known as the Portal of Honour and Power, which presents Maximilian’s ancestors, as well as his children and grandchildren, all surrounded by the coats of arms of the territories claimed by his Habsburg family. Stabius spells this program out in his colophon, which shaped Düer’s imagery and appears at the base of the Arch. The axis of the entire Arch, then, is formed by a literal family tree. At its base, a trio of female personifications of Troy, Sicambria, and Francia serve to represent the putative prehistory of the Habsburg genealogy prior to Clovis (c.466–511), first Christian king of France. Even as the woodcuts were being produced, Maximilian was still uncertain about which ancient and mythic figures to claim for his ancestry, so he hedged on the specifics by means of these allegories.

The ultimate connections to Troy had already been drawn for the French royal house, so they simply were transferred wholesale to Maximilian’s version of French history. Indeed, such mythic ancestry had become a standard form of self-aggrandizement for most early modern royal houses, and Troy was a favourite wellspring of glory for rulers. For Maximilian and earlier Germanic rulers, Troy in particular had the advantage of providing an alternative ancestry to Rome. The myth of the Trojan hero Hector — who was sufficiently heroic and martial to suit Maximilian — was distinct from the Roman founding legends surrounding Aeneas, and was thus independent of any links with papal or imperial Rome. According to the codified version of the Trojan legends assembled by Jakob Mennel, Maximilian’s genealogical researcher, Hector’s son Francio, eponymous founder of the Frankish people, led the migration northwards out of fallen Troy at the same time as Aeneas voyaged westwards. In short, the world of Maximilian’s territories was claimed to as old as Rome — separate but equal.

Migrations of the Franks under Francio held another significance for Maximilian: they eventually settled at Pannonia (modern Hungary), later renamed Sicambria after Sicamber, a (grand)son of Francio. Having ancestral rulers in Hungary was especially opportune for Maximilian. At the time of the execution of the Arch of Honour, the emperor was pursuing a concerted ‘Ostpolitik’, a marriage diplomacy with the Jagellonian kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary that would climax in 1515 in a double wedding in Vienna between his grandson Ferdinand and Anna of Hungary, and his granddaughter Mary and Ladislaus (Louis) II of Hungary. The conquest of Gaul (modern France) by the ancestral Franks also implied a historical supremacy over France for Maximilian, through his family history.

The emperor’s claim of direct descent from the Merovingian dynasty in France begins with the Frankish king Clovis, who forms the specific, named starting point of Maximilian’s genealogy precisely because he was the first Christian king in the lineage. There is an apparent anomaly in this claim to descend from French royalty, because the contemporary kings of France were in fact the nemesis of Emperor Maximilian; however, the Valois dynasty had only tenuous connections to the previous Capetian dynasty and to the earlier Merovignians of Clovis. Hence it was in Maximilian’s interest to make his own powerful claims to kinship with the Merovignians, not least because of the culmination of that ancestry with Charlemagne (742–814), sainted emperor and ultimate prototype for Maximilian himself.

Yet Charlemagne appears on the Arch not on the genealogical tree of direct Habsburg descent but rather in the roster of Roman emperors on the left side portal (see below). Maximilian fastidiously claims to be descended from a younger son of Clovis, founder of the House of Burgundy, rather than from the eldest son, who became king of France. The emperor here reaffirms his own marital ties to a later House of Burgundy through his wedding of Mary of Burgundy in 1477 — even as that act seems to echo the earlier dynastic destiny of blood — and asserts his partisanship in the ongoing rivalry in his own day between the Burgundians and the ruling kings of France.

At the pinnacle of the family tree, by implication the culmination of its growth and development, sits Maximilian, enthroned, with the crown, orb, and sceptre of his imperial office. The specific individuals of the emperor’s immediate family, their identities itemized by Stabius, also appear at the climax of the Portal of Honour and Power. Because of the importance of primogeniture, the design of this section of the family tree places boys to one side, the heraldically favourable dexter side (the viewer’s left), and Stabius’s text speaks of descent ‘from person to person, i.e., from father to son’. Stabius also spells out the significance of Maximilian’s own marriage to the heiress of Burgundy as well as the marriage of his son,
Philip the Fair (1478–1504), to Joanna, heiress of the crown of Spain, in 1496 (the 1515 Vienna marriage is not yet shown on the family tree because of the minority of the celebrants).

It should be noted that the importance of dynastic weddings made them especially significant subjects on the portion of the Arch dedicated to the deeds and major events of Maximilian’s tenure as emperor. As a result, the only woodcuts from this area consistently ascribed to Dürer himself rather than to his large and active workshop are those showing the weddings of Maximilian, his son Philip (fig. 3), and his grandchildren (fig. 4), as well as a fourth scene showing the meeting with Henry VIII, king of England, after the ‘Battle of the Spurs’ (fig. 5).

**Heraldry**

Every bit as ambitious, even as far-fetched, as Maximilian’s genealogical claims are his territorial claims, which for the most part are based on the territories of the alleged ancestors represented on the central portal. Hence all of the figures of the Habsburg genealogy on the Arch of Honour appear with their appropriate coats of arms, while flanking the entire family tree on either side of the Portal of Honour and Power, running outwards and downwards from the centre in descending order of importance, are the massed coats of arms of territories claimed as Habsburg dominions.

In one of the panels on the right-hand tower of the Arch, delegated to another artist, Albrecht Altdorfer of Regensburg, Maximilian underscores the importance of these arms and the claims they represent. In this scene he is shown sitting in solemn state, wearing his imperial crown and holding orb and sceptre (as in the family tree). Before him kneels a court official reading a decree, marked with an imperial seal. The contents of the decree are revealed by a third figure, an imperial herald, who gestures towards a chart of nine heraldic arms, arranged three by three. The explanation of this scene is provided by the accompanying verses:

_Austria and Burgundy too he raised to kingdoms without ado._
_Both houses thus by his behest were soon combined on a single crest._
_For his foresight one day soon the heirs would thank him as a boon._

In effect, an imperial proclamation of Maximilian’s territories (as well as the desire to elevate both homelands of Austria and Burgundy to proper kingdoms rather than dukedoms) is being made through the medium of the Arch of Honour, rather than through the traditional interpretative voice of chivalry of a herald. As the verses make clear, such heraldic claims were used to elevate the Habsburg family further, for its everlasting use and honour.

In this respect, the Arch is hardly unique. Maximilian had already asserted his territorial claims through heraldic arms on the Wappenturm, or Tower of Arms (erected 1499; destroyed 1733), a building outside his palace at Innsbruck (fig. 6). A total of fifty-four territories appeared on the Wappenturm, each side showing nine rows of three arms each. On the left side of the tower (as documented in an engraving of 1750 by M. Herrgott) the arms chiefly recorded traditional Habsburg claims in and around Austria, while balancing claims of Burgundian lands ran down the right side. In similar fashion, the Arch of Honour roll-call of territorial arms is divided according to region, but it amplifies the roster with realms claimed as inheritance from the alliance of Philip the Fair with Joanna of Spain.
dynastic monument with heraldic claims is the Tomb of Frederick III, carved in red marble between 1468 and 1473 but only installed by Maximilian in St Stephen's, Vienna, in 1513. The tomb combines the effigy of the emperor with orb and sceptre, and shows him surrounded by the coats of arms of his territories. Arrayed around the figure are additional territorial shields, beginning with the double-headed eagle of the Holy Roman Empire.

The visualized political legacies of the Arch, typical of father as well as son, were at once personal and dynastic, involving the ongoing territorial claims of the entire Habsburg family — past (Frederick III), present (Maximilian), and future (Maximilian’s grandchildren, inasmuch as the Arch was completed well after the 1504 death of Philip the Fair, and thus promotes the legacy of the future Charles V and Ferdinand I). That the extent of the Habsburg dominions as represented on the Wappenwand of Frederick III (with its fictive territories around a core of fourteen dominions) had greatly expanded in real political terms by the time of the Arch of Honour attests to the success of Habsburg marital diplomacy under both rulers — beginning with Frederick’s marriage of Maximilian himself to Mary of Burgundy in 1477.

At the top left side of the Arch, each with its distinctive crown above, appear the ‘seven Christian kingdoms’ claimed by Maximilian as his dominions in official proclamations, plus a novel addition of an entirely new kingdom, based in Milan — that of ‘Lower Lombardy’. The arms of these kingdoms as they appear on the Portal of Honour and Power are recombined in Altdorfer’s woodcut of heraldry on the side tower.

A similar array of legitimate and fictive territories, some of them represented by horsemen with banners in a sequence of Altdorfer woodcuts and miniatures, appeared in the program for Maximilian’s proposed horizontal woodcut frieze of a Triumphal Procession, a celebration of the emperor that, though never completed, was intended to serve as a conceptual complement to the imposing stature of the Arch. In the program for the Procession, dictated by the emperor to his private secretary, Marx Treitschaunwein, in the year 1512, Maximilian spelled out his ‘fantasy kingdoms’ (though the woodcuts carrying their heraldry were limned in the painted miniatures for the Procession, they were never executed).
Louis XII; although his French rival was Maximilian's nemesis, the emperor nonetheless claims him as a fourth cousin (through Maximilian's own marriage to Mary of Burgundy, whose lineage included the brother of the king of France four generations earlier). Then follow Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, Maximilian's in-laws through the marriage of his son, Philip the Fair, to their daughter Joanna. Next, Vladislaw of Hungary and Henry VIII of England appear as fourth cousins of the emperor (suggesting that this part of the Arch was designed before Ladislaus II's marriage to Maximilian's granddaughter in 1515) and John of Portugal as a first cousin (Maximilian's mother, who married Frederick in 1452, was Eleonore of Portugal). Several other relations are listed along this illustrious row, with the following kingdoms represented by their sitting ruler-cousins: Poland, Scotland, Denmark, Naples, Hungary and Spain (the relations to Spain were further solidified through the marriage of Maximilian's daughter, Margaret, to Philibert of Savoy).

When one examines the marital diplomacy conducted by Maximilian on behalf of his grandchildren, the correlations with almost all of these princely houses redouble. As we have seen, he successfully married off two grandchildren at once in Vienna in 1515, solidifying the eastern alliance with Hungary and establishing the lasting ties of the eventual Austro-Hungarian Empire through the betrothals of Ferdinand (to Anna of Hungary) and Mary (to Ladislaus II of Hungary). That the delicate and shifting negotiations for many of the subsequent marriages, especially that of the emperor's grandson Charles (who was to succeed him as Charles V) to Isabella of Portugal, were not yet resolved at the time of the composition of the Arch is explicitly clear in the row of relations running down from the top of the Portal of Nobility. While the figure of Edward, prince of Portugal, appears atop the right side panel adjacent to the Portal of Nobility, a full five empty spaces then follow before the figures of two related electors, the archbishops of Mainz and Trier, and that of the Count Palatine, Ludwig, begin the next level of the princely hierarchy (next to Altdorfer's heraldry woodcut). In 1515 Maximilian was still negotiating with France (as well as several other countries) for the hand of Charles and several of his other grandchildren, and the possibility clearly still remained that other dynastic relatives might be added at the royal level of the Portal of Nobility.

Fig. 5  Albrecht Dürer, The Meeting of Maximilian and Henry VIII of England, woodcut (B.138) (3606.2/4).

Filiations

If the Portal of Honour and Power proclaims the core possessions of the Habsburg dynasty, as well as family and family territories, then the adjacent portals extend Maximilian's claims to a Europe-wide set of connections. A first set of claims stems from his massive genealogical researches, conducted by Jakob Mennel, as well as from the branching out of the family tree occasioned by Habsburg marriages. By virtue of marital kinship, either through his historical genealogy or in more recent years, Maximilian could style himself as the relative of most of the ruling houses of Europe, even though he could not directly claim to be a king himself (hence his persistent efforts to have Austria elevated to the status of a kingdom).

The right side portal, beside which Altdorfer's woodcut of heraldry was placed, is called by Stabius the Portal of Nobility. It presents a roster of Maximilian's royal cousins in a horizontal row that begins, significantly enough, with the reigning king of France,
figures moves outwards and downwards from the central tower. This sequence is of Roman emperors, starting with Julius Caesar, ‘the beginning of imperial majesty’. According to the colophon, this roster is not all-inclusive but rather represents, as Stabius writes, ‘those most deserving the honor’. The first omission from the principal (horizontal) row of founding emperors is the notorious Nero (who should be sixth) and his immediate successors.

After the division of the Roman Empire under Constantine into East and West, Maximilian switches his allegiance several times in the figures he chooses to list. He first sides, for example, with the Germanic conquerors of Roman troops: Odoacer (Odoacar), who deposed the last emperor of the Western Empire at Ravenna (476 AD), and Theodoric the Great (‘Dietrich von Bern, Nobleman of Hispania’), the Ostrogoth who established a new kingdom at Ravenna — and thus served Maximilian as a role model of a Germanic ruler who was also King of the Romans. Then Maximilian aligns himself with the Byzantine Emperors of the Eastern Empire, such as Justinian, who expelled the Ostrogoths from Ravenna. Finally with Charlemagne (‘Carolus the Great’) begins the line of Carolingians; they are followed by Otto the Great, founder of the Ottonians, and the eleventh-century Ottonian emperorsaint, Henry II, who was canonized with his wife Kunigunde. These latter figures were important in asserting Maximilian as heir to both imperial sanctity and independence from papal authority — since the presence of saintly forebears endowed the emperor with sacred blood, and thus with his own spiritual authority.

Later Salian and Hohenstaufen emperors are also represented abundantly but selectively, and their named attributes again assert qualities Maximilian admired and aspired to emulate in his own reign. Beginning with Conrad III (‘the Crusader’) and Frederick I (‘Barbarossa’; here styled ‘the Punisher’), the list continues with Henry VI (‘the Powerful’), who brought the medieval empire to its fullest territorial extent, and with Frederick II (‘the Warrior’). The roster then runs through the fourteenth century and the last effective pre-Habsburg emperors, ending with Charles IV and Sigismund (d.1437), whose portraits are situated just above the door opening. A mysterious non-emperor completes the portraits. He is designated as Ladislaus, ‘at the time the mightiest king of Christendom’. This presumably refers as a compliment to Vladislav II (1471–1516), first ruler of the Jagellonians.

In essence, these marital alliances were intended to consolidate and make permanent some of the territorial claims of the central tower as well as to cast eternal glory on the House of Habsburg. Hence the royalty on the Portal of Nobility appear as personifications of their regions, being clearly associated with their territorial coats of arms; after the figures of the two archbishops and the Count Palatine Ludwig, the row continues down the right side of the Arch in a descending hierarchy, to dukes, margraves and counts, just like the arrangement of arms on the central tower.

Opposite the noble relatives of Maximilian’s family tree, on the left portal of the Arch, dubbed the Portal of Praise by Stabius, an analogous descent of crowned
and king of both Hungary and Bohemia, with whom Maximilian negotiated the Vienna double wedding and the eventual Habsburg annexation of those territories.10

This survey of imperial predecessors reveals one essential gap: the prior Habsburg emperors. These august ancestors do appear, at full length rather than en buste, and they are given a special place of honour on the Arch — in niches atop the four columns that run across the face of the structure. They are depicted standing apart from both the Portal of Praise and the Portal of Nobility, not to mention the central Portal of Honour and Power, because they fully embody each of the qualities these structures promote: blood kinship and imperial office. On the outer columns appear Albrecht I and II, while Rudolf I, the first Habsburg emperor (1218–1291; elected 1273), and Frederick III, father of Maximilian, receive pride of place ment alongside the central opening. In his colophon, Stabius declares the importance of these ancestors ‘descended from the House of Austria and the line of Habsburg’. According to Stabius, they are represented on the outer columns (in addition to the family tree) because they ‘particularly added to the glory of the House of Austria’.

While the assemblage of noble relations serves to anchor the House of Habsburg to ruling families across Europe, the sequence of prior emperors serves to anchor the right of Maximilian and his heirs to a venerable, continuous history of their office over time. The verses at the top of the Portal of Praise make clear the honour attained by Maximilian in holding the glorious title of emperor but also assert that he has added lustre to that same title and defended it mightily:

The Emperors as from above ordained,
in many ways they well have reigned,
The Roman Reich has thereby grown,
with praise and Honour they have sown,
Also in Maximilian’s case,
He’s earned himself eternal praise,
So many were his glorious deeds
as of no other sovereign one reads;
great things he did and made
decisions with the Almighty’s aid
as he protected from all spite
his lofty office with great might.21

A further enhancement of the venerable princely relations of the Habsburg family occurs on the columns flanking the two side portals, beneath the imperial Albrechts. These are noble as well as saintly Habsburg ancestors: Bishop Arnulf of Metz (d. 641), a Frankish noble (ruler of the fantasy kingdom of ‘Austrasia’, which united the traditional Habsburg claims of Lorraine and Burgundy) and a founder of the Carolingian dynasty, and the venerated margrave Leopold of Babenberg (d. 1136), called by Stabius ‘the mild prince of Austria’, whose canonization as a ruler-saint had been a fervent Habsburg goal.

Side Interests

Literally at the margins of his central concerns — Habsburg descent, princely relatives, and imperial models — lay Maximilian’s own pastimes and personal interests. Consequently, the flanks of the Arch of Honour, comprised of two side towers illustrated with woodcuts by Albrecht Altdorfer, present a vertical sequence of scenes and verses that gather Maximilian’s ongoing activities and concerns — apart from the official deeds that comprised the ‘history’ of his reign (and that constitute the main decoration of the two side portals; see below). Stabius makes clear the relatively less important role of these activities and their images:

They serve to depict the Honourable, unforgettable, and useful activities of His Imperial Majesty from the days of his youth until the present: firstly, to seek the grace of God, then the desire to rule wisely ... Many are his accomplishments, yet others are still in His Imperial Majesty’s mind ... Now because these subjects cannot properly be considered to be triumphal, but do serve as good examples to others, they have not been placed on the Arch of Honor itself, but instead on each side of it.20

Nevertheless, the harmony of the entire Arch carries over to these flanking towers. On the tower to the side of the portal showing Maximilian’s family relations is Altdorfer’s woodcut representing the emperor’s interest in heraldry; just below is a woodcut commemorating the completion and installation of his father’s tomb in 1513.20 Both of these projects are appropriate to Habsburg dynastic splendour and underscore the family ambitions
to establish legitimate claims to new territories through both genealogy and marriage diplomacy. The subject matter of these woodcuts is consonant with their positioning on the Arch adjacent to images of the other ruling houses of Europe.

In similar fashion the images alongside the Portal of Praise reinforce Maximilian's commitment to imperial projects, specifically the protection of Christendom and the launching of a new crusade. In the upper image, Maximilian follows the lead of his father and reconsacrates a knightly Order of St George (titular saint of Frederick III's Wiener Neustadt church and the patron saint of the crusades). The woodcut shows an enthroned, crowned (hence explicitly imperial, as befits the Portal of Praise) Maximilian presenting a church to a quartet of knights, while a pair of flanking nuns hold red cross banners of St George. In the Altdorfer woodcut below, a standing, crowned Maximilian presents the crusader's banner of St George to an assembled group of kneeling princes, serving like the saint himself as the 'consolation' of all Christendom:

> With earnestness and diligence
> he came to Christendom's defense.
> For soon he planned a new Crusade
> and asked all princes for their aid.
> Pray God that very soon each nation
> obeys the call for Christendom's salvation.

These two scenes are appropriately placed adjacent to the roster of Roman emperors, conquerors and rulers of their entire world.

Below these scenes of specific events appear two images of Maximilian in the field of battle — the upper one noting his interest in and enormous contributions to artillery warfare,\(^5\) while the lower one celebrates his command of seven languages by showing him communicating in camp with a diverse group of troops.\(^6\) Appropriately, this image of Maximilian's polyglotism appears adjacent to the row of emperors that begins with a Goth, continues with the Byzantines, and concludes with the Frankish Charlemagne.

On the side tower adjacent to the Portal of Nobility, Maximilian's pastimes are more concerned with princely magnificence. Underneath the image of the completed tomb of his father, a further woodcut displays the (basically fictional) imperial treasury, claimed as the 'largest' and intended to be worthy of Europe's king of kings ("as no other prince ever was so renowned").\(^2\)

Above the image of heraldry on this same side tower Maximilian displays his renowned love of tournaments and of the masques that followed them.\(^2\) Although the tournament, like the hunt (the subject of another Altdorfer woodcut on the opposite tower),\(^1\) was a peace-time substitute for the exercise of martial skills, its elaborate ceremonial, including heraldic display, made it as much a pageant or a game, despite its real dangers.\(^2\) Maximilian featured numerous tournament jousters, in varied kinds of competition armour, near the head of his Triumphal Procession, and the significance of the sport as a noble enterprise was underscored by images as well as text in his historical narrative Historia Friderici et Maximiliani and, especially, in Weisskunig.

In the Altdorfer woodcut of the tournament with masquerade, the basic combats, also recorded by Dürer in his Freydal woodcut sequence,\(^2\) are recorded with their distinctive armours and weapons: jousting (Rennen and Gestech) with lances on horseback, and foot combat (Fusskampf or Gefecht) at the barrier with halberds. The accompanying verses also celebrate the 'princesliness' of these endeavours.

**Deeds of Valour and Major Events**

The main pictorial sequence of images on the Arch of Honour, a series of twenty-four panels on the two side portals, validates the situation of Maximilian as ruling emperor by presenting, as a kind of retrospective or running pictorial chronicle of his life and reign, his res gestae, or worthy deeds. Because of both his temperament and his contemporary political situation, most of these deeds turn out to be military events, just as battles dominate the accounts of Weisskunig, and much of his Triumphal Procession.\(^2\)

The overall tone of the deeds sequence on the Arch of Honour is set by the very first of the side-portal woodcuts, a summation of the valour and militarism of a youthful, almost allegorical, hero. Maximilian is depicted in armour, holding both sword and cannonball-orb while surrounded by lances, pikes and artillery from his military forces (as well as a hunting dog in proclamation of his general prowess), along with the verses:

> The Lord to him his grace has shown
> And ever more pious he has grown.
Adept to play a knightly part, for this he had the wish and heart. From early youth he practiced same; his greatest virtue it became.*

What these verses suggest is that the illustrated deeds of Maximilian to follow will confirm his fitness to rule as emperor and his illustrious accomplishments in that office — that his family heritage and imperial models will be well served by the heroism and leadership he displays over the course of his reign.

Significantly, the very next woodcut, one of the few images on the Arch that may be ascribed to Dürrer himself without workshop involvement, depicts Maximilian’s coming of age and the point at which many of his political fortunes were established: his marriage to Mary of Burgundy in 1477. The couple together hold the coat of arms of Burgundy as their shared territorial patrimony, the true prize of the alliance.

As a result of this fateful marriage, political conflicts over territories in the Burgundian Netherlands followed swiftly, and the first series of battle images of Maximilian depicts his early triumphs in securing the Low Countries, highlighted by the Battle of Guinegate (or Therouanne) in 1479. In each of the conflicts in the Netherlands, the armies of Maximilian are marked by banners bearing the arms of Burgundy, the X-shaped cross of St Andrew, often accompanied with the insignia of sparking flints. Each of the military divisions of the day are shown, respectively, in conflict within the layered landscape panoramas: cavalry, with mounted and armoured knights on horseback; artillery, with cannon and mortars; and infantry, with hosts of pikemen. It is hardly surprising that Dürrer’s workshop rather than the master himself was assigned most of these scenes of innumerable tiny figures amid stock battle settings.*

Sometimes specifics of a battle are shown, such as a siege (the fifth image shows that at Utrecht). Several surrender scenes depict delegations positioned outside city walls before the massed cavalry forces of Maximilian. Often the armies of the emperor are given the heraldically favourable left (dexter) side, like the forces of good in a traditional Last Judgement setting (an exception is the first battle image, showing Maximilian against the French at Hainaut). Another basic category of scene is one of alliance between Maximilian and his fellow monarchs, first Henry VII and later Henry VIII of England (the woodcut of the latter subject (fig. 5) is the only one besides marriages in this part of the Arch to be ascribed to Dürrer himself); these scenes show a further pair of opposed groups, here knightly equals led by their sovereign kings.

In general, each of the battle scenes begins from a set type of clashing forces, densely packed and organized into clusters of infantry and cavalry, identified through banners. Although some specifics like these armorial banners can define an event, and other activities, such as the artillery barrage upon a burning city in woodcut thirteen, lend variety, most of the battle scenes remain basically interchangeable formulas (particularly in terms of the landscapes employed by the Dürrer workshop).* Because of the sheer volume of images of battles produced over the same half-decade by artists as diverse as Altdorfer, Dürrer and the Augsburg artists Hans Burgkmair and Jörg Breu (and their workshops), Maximilian’s usual careful supervision of details could not keep pace, so the emperor had to content himself with minor modifications to drawings and proofs.

A notable non-battle scene of the Portal of Praise features Maximilian’s coronation (9 April 1486) as King of the Romans, that is, emperor-designate, at Aachen. He is shown enthroned, sword in hand, receiving from the bishop electors the distinctive arched imperial crown and ceremonial mantle, as the princely electors, in ermine-trimmed robes and caps, genuflect before him. This knowledgeable depiction of ceremonial regalia derives from Dürrer’s own recently completed ‘portraits’ of the emperors Charlemagne and Sigismund (now Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg), produced for his home town of Nuremberg in celebration of the possession of imperial ceremonial objects (conferred to the city by Sigismund in 1424).*

Like Weisskunig, with its succession of battle scenes and weddings, the Arch of Honour concentrates exclusively on affairs of the state. Dürrer’s own personal contributions, as noted, focus almost exclusively on the major dynastic marriage events: the weddings of Maximilian, then of Philip the Fair, and finally of the emperor’s grandchildren at Vienna in 1515. In each case, the nuptials unfold under an arch, redolent of the Arch of Honour itself. At the two later events Maximilian appears as a witness, standing crowned and holding his sceptre in front of his double eagle imperial coat of arms.
with the same ceremonial mitre crown. Each of the other male participants wears his own crown and stands with coat of arms at his feet. In the first two scenes Maximilian and Philip also proudly wear the chain and insignia of the princely Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece, whereas in the final scene the emperor appears in official, ceremonial robes.

Allegorical Ornaments

The Arch of Honour's theme of personal military victories, and dynastic accomplishments on behalf of the entire Holy Roman Empire (or Christendom), certainly depends upon the precedent of ancient triumphal arches in Rome, as the opening lines of the colophon by Stabius make clear: "The Arch of Honour of the Most Serene and Mighty Emperor and King Maximilian is constructed after the model of the ancient triumphal arches of the Roman Emperors in the city of Rome."3 While we have seen how the central tower of the genealogy and territorial arms, like that of the Wappenturm, is a departure from the flat-topped Roman arch, nonetheless the triple portal openings, articulated with columns, do conform to the basic model, as exemplified by the Arch of Septimius Severus or the Arch of Constantine at the outer edges of the Roman Forum.

Maximilian also emulates the Roman precedent by using such a structure purely for propaganda purposes through visual means. The dedicatory inscription of the Portal of Honour and Power, after elaborating Maximilian's lofty titles ('Elected Roman Emperor and Head of Christendom', among other offices), asserts the purpose of the overall structure of the Portal, 'ornamented with his several deeds', to be 'praise and eternal memorial of his rule, gentle magnanimity and victorious conquests'. Close inspection of the figure of Maximilian atop the genealogical tree at the privileged centre top position on the Arch reveals a cluster of classical winged Victories, their presence conflated with that of Christian angels in this lofty location (an association reinforced by the Dürer convention of ribbons of clouds, which surround the figures in the uppermost zone). Stabius is knowledgeable about the significance of these figures and the laurel wreaths they bear:

Above the Emperor will be seen the twenty-three Victories, who are winged ladies carrying laurel wreaths of Honour. The laurel tree has been dedicated to victory since ancient times. Its leaves are used to crown conquerors because they never wither but stay green forever. Likewise an Honourable victory or conquest should never fade or wither in the memory of succeeding generations.40

In essence, this Arch of Honour, like the floats celebrating military victories that were made for the Triumphal Procession, purports to serve as a permanent memorial, like the laurel, of Maximilian's triumphs.41

The symbolic glorification of Maximilian himself reaches its climax at the very top centre of the Arch. There, in a mysterium composed of various animals and other symbolic images, derived from the 'hieroglyphs' of Horus Apollo, a learned humanistic encomium of the emperor is constructed. Dürer's friend the humanist scholar Willibald Pirckheimer (1470–1530) had prepared for Maximilian a Latin translation, with Dürer illustrations, of the Greek Horapollo text on hieroglyphs (the Hieroglyphica),42 around the time of the completion of the Arch; this personalized application of what Stabius calls 'ancient Egyptian letters deriving from King Osiris'43 (also claimed as an ancient ancestor by Maximilian in one of his later genealogies) forms a fitting culmination to the claims of the ensemble. This is not to mention the symbolic meanings of the animals in the ornament!

Taken together, the elements of this tabernacle, inscribed within a cupola dome (which itself possibly alludes to the cosmos of earth or to the dome of heaven itself), suggest an occult revelation of Maximilian's ultimate essence and achievement. The emperor is presented as an enthroned world ruler, akin to the ruler of heaven. His ability to maintain order in the cosmos is suggested by the range of figures situated outside the classical frame that surrounds him: these nude females, satyrs, cupids and winged dragons, all of which are in some way restrained, suggest vice and chaos held in check by the emperor. As for the specifics of the composite hieroglyphic message, Stabius unpacks them word by word:

Maximilian ... a most pious, generous, mighty, powerful, and prudent sovereign; a
prince of unforgettable, eternal, and Honourable blood, born of a lineage blessed with all gifts nature can bestow, endowed with the knowledge of art and wise teachings, Roman emperor and Lord of a great portion of earth. He has by force of arms and superb victory, yet with the greatest modesty subdued the most powerful king [the king of France] ... and thereby has prudently guarded himself from further attack.46

In this panegyric, one after another the themes of the entire Arch of Honour are signalled: the emperor's genealogy, innate gifts and talents, learning, imperial rank, territorial authority, and accomplishments, including glorious military victories over the strongest of rivals (chiefly France, represented in this image by the cock).

Production Issues
In the uppermost zone of the Arch, next to the dedicatory inscription on the cupola, stand heralds, as well as a pair of trumpeters, who serve like the flames of the side portals to proclaim the honour, praise and nobility that are the overall message of the structure. Publicity for Maximilian thus precedes any memorial function of the Arch.

In the early modern era traditional feudal hierarchies, while still respected and invoked by Maximilian (for example in his ranked order of relatives on the Arch), were rapidly being replaced with the new bureaucratic machinery of the nation-state — something Maximilian sought to implement by means of his chancellery and other governmental agencies. However, the character of government under a royal dynasty still redounded primarily to the talents and accomplishments of the prince himself.47 In this context, Maximilian portrayed himself in his historical narratives, chiefly Historia Friderici et Maximiliani and Weisskunig, as a multi-talented individual who managed to excel even his own professional aides in their respective fields, whether hunting, warfare, learning and language, or engineering of armour and artillery.48 He reinforced his claims to legitimacy as emperor with this record of dynamic activity and ambitious achievement.

The ambition of the Arch of Honour remains firmly fixed on the person of the emperor and on his Habsburg family, including heirs and descendants, rather than on his imperial office in the abstract. This is a private, distinctly personal, assertion of grandeur and accomplishment, with previous emperors (including the leading non-Habsburg models, such as Charlemagne) confined to one side. Of course, there is no shortage of images intended to inspire awe around Maximilian and his dynasty: symbols of rule, hieroglyphs, plus the formidable arsenal of Habsburg ancestors who held imperial office.

 Appropriately, it was Maximilian himself who devised the plan for the production of his Arch of Honour. After his initial dictation of the germ of the idea to his private secretary, Marx Tretzsaunwein, in 1512, he delegated the project to the producing agents whose coats of arms appear in descending scale next to the date in the lower right corner. Johannes Stabius, who worked out the details of the program and the printed proofs of text and images:49 Jörg Kölderer (active 1497, d. 1540), court artist and initial designer of the layout, to whom the emperor delegated his visual ideas; and Albrecht Dürer, who, together with the artists of his workshop in Nuremberg, translated Kölderer's outline drawings into woodcut images. A letter of 14 October 1512 from Maximilian to his courtier Siegmund von Dietrichstein reveals that Stabius was already busy with the program for the Triumphal Procession,48 the dictated list of projects to be completed by the emperor, which accompanied the Procession program and was compiled in the same year, mentions both an Erenporten and a Triumphfswagen.50

Dürer probably met Maximilian at the February 1512 Diet at Nuremberg, but Kölderer's work on the designs may have begun as early as 1507: a memo of 30 March that year directs the court chamberlain, Martin Aichorn, to pay Kölderer for, among other things, "6 sketches for the Triumphal Chariot [the representation of Maximilian's own parade float (K.309) within the Triumphal Procession], five of them wrong".51 No drawing models by Kölderer for the Arch have survived; however, close correspondence in Procession compositions, between Altdorfer's painted miniatures and the Dürer school woodcut depicting a float of the Spanish wedding of Philip the Fair, suggests that these projects, and the Arch, began with a common model originating at the court itself.
The fact that later events, from 1513 and 1515, were added to the Arch also suggests an evolving rather than a rigidly fixed program, as do the spaces left for the inclusion of future weddings or achievements. The Arch was still in the process of production as late as 1517, despite its published date of 1515 in the lower corners.

In a letter to Stabius from Cologne (5 June 1517), Maximilian expresses concern about the delays in the progress of the project and brings to bear his usual micromanagement over details (akin to what one sees in his annotations on surviving drawings for Weisskunig). Then the emperor summons his retainer to him for closer corrections:

And so we have seen the aforementioned Arch of Honour and also received your text, and we have found that such an Arch is not rendered according to the exemplar that you have in your hands and that you were supposed to use as your direction, so that we are greatly displeased; not satisfied either about the work on this planned Arch.

So we want to show you then what we feel is lacking in it and how we propose to make it ready. 54

Doubtless the Arch images seen by Maximilian were the proofs of the woodcuts issued by Dürer and his workshop. Some of the problems referred to by the emperor were connected with details of the genealogy: Maximilian also wrote to Stabius from Antwerp (19 May 1517) to ask him to provide a copy of his genealogy text as well as to check at his end on the accuracy of the family tree woodcuts. 55 The letter cited here further reveals that there was a working model of the Arch (presumably akin to the line drawings that served the woodcut artists of Weisskunig), against which the woodcut proofs were checked as they came off the press.

The possibility remains that there once existed a (now-lost) luxury miniature redaction of the Arch, akin to the Triumphal Procession miniatures painted by Altdorfer and his workshop. Two letters sent by Maximilian to his daughter, Margaret of Austria, in the Netherlands, make this suggestion plausible. 56 The first letter (18 January 1516) speaks of a porte d’honneur en peinture, then in Margaret’s possession, which her father desires her to return, precisely in order to compare it with Stabius’s proofs for the details of the program. Of course, it must be remembered in this context that the outline drawing designs for Weisskunig are called ‘paintings’ (gemäl) in Maximilian’s annotations and that there is no specific mention in his letter to his daughter of a luxury edition on parchment.

What the documents do reveal about the genesis of the Arch and Procession projects is that Maximilian always maintained firm control over his programs — from dictated start to published finish.

The emperor’s ambitions included seeking publicity for his deeds and personal achievements amid a wide audience — the Arch is impressive in size and scope (and in its technical accomplishment as an intricate woodcut), yet its unique vision remains in its being a printed monument, able to be replicated and widely distributed.

Like the marble portraits of Roman emperors in the ancient world, or the coinage with his image that he also carefully supervised, the Arch of Honour could represent Maximilian and his majesty across the width of his far-flung Holy Roman Empire and even among his princely relatives throughout Europe. 57 Of course, the creation of a media ‘image’ in the realm of modern politics comes quickly to mind in our age of television and information technologies, and it should be remembered that the printing press was a recent invention — only half a century old — when Maximilian began to utilize it to reproduce the Arch. In so doing, he was using the very latest technology to disseminate both his image and his ideology.

The audience for the Arch consisted of the very nobles of the Empire who appear within the lower reaches of the rows of relatives on the Portal of Nobility (they are also among the rows of followers behind the chariot of Maximilian in the dictation and the miniatures of the Triumphal Procession). The program celebrates, and attempts to promote the further development of, a cohesive circle of bonds (not very binding in real life, especially when the call for taxes went out at imperial diets) between the emperor and these regional rulers of the Holy Roman Empire. Presumably these very princes would be among the most favoured recipients of Maximilian’s creations, which were replicated precisely for the purposes of such ritual giving.

Such a gift would confirm the favour and attention of Maximilian, while implicitly binding the recipient to a
client relationship (the Arch would have been distributed much in the way that modern banks distribute expensive books—often about shared cultural interests—to their favoured clients, or in a lesser way, that firms advertise themselves through illustrated calendars that may be put up by their business associates). The Arch of Honour would have compelled assent to this princely contract through its sheer size, ornamental splendour, bravura artistry, and triumphal theme—features that would have served to make Maximilian’s printed monument a powerful analogue of the actual reception of an emperor on a visit to a favoured locality. The ensemble simulates the giant scale of an actual stone arch, or of a temporary triumphal arch, in its dimensions, just as the length of the composite woodcut frieze of the Triumphant Procession seems to match the parade length of an actual triumph (it runs to some 54 metres, with only 147 out of the projected 200 woodcuts actually completed).

Although composed of individual paper components, the Arch of Honour (in contrast to legible individual woodcuts from the Procession) makes sense only when fully assembled, when its scale and grandeur can be viewed within a generous space—in effect, in a setting 'fit for a king'. There could be no question of this ensemble being distributed to a large public in the manner of the modern ‘mass media’, yet its capacity to be distributed to a privileged circle remains essential to its purpose—what the modern world calls ‘public relations’.

When Maximilian’s grandson Ferdinand set about in 1526 to distribute the published copies of Teuerdank (which, along with the Arch of Honour, was the only work by the emperor that was truly completed during his lifetime), he distributed them to the various regions of the empire, while also specifying that they be given to his lesser nobles and court officials. Out of six trunks of copies, five were to be distributed in Vienna ‘among our nobles and our retainers’ of the lands of the House of Austria; one was reserved for Ferdinand himself. According to a report to Ferdinand by Stabius, the total number of versions of the Arch amounted to some seven hundred copies before the condition of the blocks deteriorated, but the original, lifetime printing probably numbered closer to two hundred copies.

In similar fashion the Arch of Honour quite literally could represent Maximilian I in the geographical regions of his political influence. Its purpose was to celebrate him as he most fully wished to be remembered. While Dürr, following Kölderer, and Stabius, following Tretzauerlein, as well as the other individuals involved in the project (such as the artists of Dürr’s workshop and his block-cutter in Nuremberg, Hieronymus Andreae), all laboured carefully on the lavish details of this enterprise, the overall conception and the final effect remained firmly in the control of Maximilian himself. The result, when assembled, seems to create the old-fashioned ‘aura’ of handmade and unique splendour, while still being an example of technical replication through the mechanical process of printing both text and image. Coming into being in the wake of the luxury manuscript and its illuminations, the Arch of Honour attempted to convey the same princely magnificence and self-celebration of that older, traditional medium, while permitting the novelty of widespread diffusion. In the service of Maximilian the finest artists and writers of the day thus established an empire-wide ‘court without walls’, which continues to implicate all who view the Arch of Honour in the charisma of its public relations campaign.

Notes


2 Quoted by J.-D. Müller, Gedächtnis: Literatur und Holgesellschaft um Maximilian I., Munich, 1982, p. 80 [my translation]. For an extensive discussion of Maximilian’s ambitions to achieve lasting honour and glory through literature, see ibid., esp. pp. 130–58, 262–74. Weisskogel was posthumously published in Vienna in 1775.

3 A. M. Young, Troy and Her Legends, Pittsburgh, 1948. For a survey of such legends in Germany, see F. Borchart, German Antiquity in Renaissance Myth, Baltimore, 1971, esp. p. 191.

5 Translation by Strauss, p. 727.

6 ibid., p. 730. For the Altdorfer woodcut, see F. Winzinger, Albrecht Altdorfer Graphik: Holzschnitte, Kupferstiche, Radierung, Munich, 1953, p. 71, no. 72.

7 For Maximilian's efforts to establish an Austrian kingdom during the period of the Arch's execution, especially in the wake of the 1515 double wedding in Vienna, see H. Wiesflecker, Kaiser Maximilian I., vol. IV, Munich, 1971, pp. 192, 196, 302–3, nn. 56–64.


9 Lhotsky & Thomas, Prunkschwerter, pp. 159–60.

10 That Maximilian knew the orthodox form of the Roman triumphal arch is evident from his 1508 equestrian portrait by Hans Burgkmair of Augsburg (see L. Silver, 'Shining Armor: Maximilian I as Holy Roman Emperor', Museum Studies (Art Institute of Chicago), vol. 12, 1985, pp. 9–29, with bibliography).

11 Maximilian himself planned an enormous bronze tomb to emulate the precedents of his father, but the structure — originally intended to be located at Wiener Neustadt, but in fact erected in the Hofkirche in Innsbruck — was only partly completed. For the tomb and its decoration, see V. Oberhammer, Die Bronzestandbilder des Maximiliangrabmales in der Hofkirche zu Innsbruck, Innsbruck, 1935; E. Egg, Die Hofkirche in Innsbruck: Das Grabmal Kaiser Maximilians I. und die Silberne Kapelle, Innsbruck, 1974.


13 Coreth, Dynastische-politische Ideen, pp. 101–4, reveals that these armorial shields constitute the heraldry of Maximilian's proposed new kingdoms. According to Coreth (pp. 94–105), the six kingdoms on the Altdorfer project offered a balancing of territorial accounts, whereby Maximilian was manufacturing subdivided kingdoms out of Austrian Burgundy in order to balance the six inherited kingdoms acquired by way of the marriage of Philip the Fair and Joanna of Spain.


16 The 1501 marriage of Margaret to Philibert of Savoy may be read in part, along with the marriage of Philip the Fair and Joanna of Spain, as a strategy of Habsburg encirclement of France.

17 For the marital politics of Maximilian, see Wiesflecker, vol. V, pp. 466–80, with references.

18 It was upon the death of Ladislaus II at the Battle of Mohacs in 1526 that the emperor's grandson Ferdinand (1503–1564) would succeed to the crown of his brother-in-law (who had been adopted by Maximilian as his own son and heir) and would combine Hungary and Austria to forge an empire of both nations.

19 Translation by Strauss, p. 728.

20 Maximilian's enterprise of transcribing the German epics in his Ambras Heldenbuch was largely motivated by his perceived relationship to such heroic ruling models as Theodoric (see L. Silver, 'Die guten alten Istory': Emperor Maximilian I, 'Teuerdank', and the 'Heldenbuch Tradition', Jahrbuch des Zentralinstituts für Kunstgeschichte, vol. 29, 1986, pp. 71–106, with references). Moreover, the historical Theodoric married the sister of Clovis, not only tying him to Maximilian through the emperor's putative ancestry to Clovis but also providing an early example of the diplomacy of marital alliances.

21 Because the emperor who should have occupied this space — Maximilian's father, Frederick III — appears separately on a column above, the space could be used for much diplomacy, though the phrase accompanying the portrait possibly implies that Vladislav is the stronger ruler (or else he is just the 'mightiest king' and not to be compared to the emperor).

22 Translation by Strauss, p. 727.

23 ibid., p. 729.

24 Winzinger, Altdorfer Graphik, p. 71, no. 73.

25 ibid., p. 70, no. 66. St George is the figure paired with the equestrian portrait of Maximilian himself in a pair of 1508 woodcuts by Hans Burgkmair (see Silver, 'Shining Armor', passim).

26 Translation by Strauss, p. 730. For the woodcut, see Winzinger, Altdorfer Graphik, p. 70, no. 67.

27 Winzinger, Altdorfer Graphik, p. 70, no. 68. Maximilian embraced artillery, subject of a chapter in his Weiskunig, as the appropriate modern complement to his use of knightly cavalry and massed infantry. In Altdorfer's woodcut, the emperor stands alone within the protective walls of his portable fortress, the Wagenburg, whose carriages are visible in the background. He is surrounded by cannon and mortars of all calibres as well as their ammunition. The text underscores the military consequences of the use of such siege guns and other artillery. (The role of cannon in the actual battles of Maximilian can clearly be seen in the historical scenes on the Arch.) For the role of artillery in the general war materiel of Maximilian, see P. Krenn, 'Heerwesen, Waffe und Turm: unter Kaiser Maximilian I.', in Ausstellung Maximilian I. (exh. cat.), Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck, 1969, pp. 88–9, cat. nos 475–84.

28 Winzinger, Altdorfer Graphik, p. 70, no. 69.

29 ibid., p. 71, no. 74.

30 ibid., p. 70, no. 71.

31 ibid., p. 70, no. 70.

32 Wiesflecker, vol. V, pp. 391–3, discusses Maximilian and the tournament. The emperor held many tournaments at his own court and was renowned for his prowess as a participant. Krenn, pp. 89–91, nos 486–512, with bibliography, underscores the relation between tournament and warfare as well as the important contributions by Maximilian to the history of armour.
Maximilian’s proposed fully illustrated text of his tournament results and the distinctive subsequent masquerades, like so many of the projects mentioned here, was completed around 1515 as a preliminary text with miniature illuminations. Dürer was commissioned to produce woodcut illustrations for a printed edition, but he executed only five (Strauss, pp. 52–31, nos 182–6). For Freydaal, see Q. von Leflner (ed.), Freydaal: Des Kaisers Maximilian I. Turniere und Mummereien (1880–82), Vienna, 1959, esp. pp. 21–2, nos 66–91; F. Unterkircher, Maximilian I., Ein kaiserlicher Auftraggeber illustrierter Handschriften, Hamburg, 1983, pp. 37–41.


Translation by Strauss, p. 727.

Traditional attributions of authorship within the Dürer workshop vary between Wolf Traut (1480–1520) and the mysterious Hans Springinke, who usually seems to be a lesser Dürer figure. Re-examination of these artists in light of their other documented output, however sparse (Traut is better documented as a painter, but Springinke is scarcely documented at all), would repay effort after almost a century of uncritical repetition of the observations of Chmelarz (see note 1 above) and C. Dodgson, Catalogue of Early German and Flemish Woodcuts Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum (1903), vol. I, London, 1980, pp. 311–28.

For the purposes of this study, a generic designation, Dürer workshop, is used to indicate woodcuts produced within the studio by artists other than the master himself.

That such conventions continued in later battle depictions by Maximilian’s artists can be seen even in the ancient battles (with modern cavalry and infantry and their banners) painted after 1529 by Altdorfer (the celebrated Battle of Issus), Jörg Breu, Hans Burgkmair and others for Wilhelm IV of Bavaria (all now Alte Pinakothek, Munich).

For the imperial regalia, see Dürer’s 1513 rendition of Charlemagne in official dress (see T. Musper, Düriers Kaiserbildnisse, Cologne, 1969). In 1510 Dürer made several preparatory drawing studies for Charlemagne’s regalia (W.1504–7), and could have reused these for his Arch coronation woodcut.

Translation by Strauss, p. 726.

A general knowledge of ancient texts concerning triumphs, and to a lesser extent ancient triumphal monuments, can be gleaned by comparing Maximilian’s Arch with contemporary French royal creations, some of them generated on Italian soil (see R. Scheller, ‘Imperial Themes in Art and Literature of the Early French Renaissance’, Simiolus, vol. 12, 1982, pp. 5–69; R. Scheller, ‘Ensigns of Authority: French Royal Symbolism in the Age of Louis XII’, Simiolus, vol. 13, 1983, pp. 75–141; R. Scheller, ‘Galla cisaipina: Louis XII and Italy 1499–1508’, Simiolus, vol. 15, 1985, pp. 5–60). For the monuments within Italy, see especially the triumphs prepared for the Gonzaga of Mantua by Andrea Mantegna (see A. Martindale, The Triumphs of Caesar in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Hampton Court, London, 1979, esp. pp. 56–74). With the ongoing rivalry between Maximilian and the French kings, his desire to emulate their claims to imperial heritage with his own assertion of classicism cannot be overestimated.


Translation by Strauss, p. 726.

For the changes in governmental machinery instituted by Maximilian, see esp. Wiesfecker, vol. V, pp. 1–150, 220–305, with bibliography. For the general issues of this section, see Müller, p. 262ff.

For Maximilian’s own prodigious plans for writing and publication of his various forms of learning, see T. Gottlieb, Büchersammlung Kaiser Maximilians, Leipzig, 1900, p. 61; H. Rupprich, ‘Das literarische Werk Kaiser Maximilians I.’, in Ausstellung Maximilian I., pp. 49–59. The list includes, besides the personal and familiar historical narratives of triumphs, books on artillery, armour, stables, hunting, falconry, cooking, fishing, gardening, architecture, and even wine cellars!

The emperor’s projects were generally co-ordinated by the scholar Konrad Peuringer (1465–1547) of Augsburg.

Leifner, p. x.

Gottlieb, p. 61; Chmelarz, p. 304.

Quoted by Gottlieb, p. 67; Giehlow, ‘Urkundenexgese’, p. 94.

Quoted by Giehlow, ‘Urkundenexgese’, p. 101 [my translation].

Ibid. S. Laschitzker (ed.), ‘Teuerdank’, Jahrbuch, vol. 8, 1890, p. 11, discusses the ongoing controversies surrounding the constantly shifting genealogy and its reaches.


Müller, pp. 270–2, makes a similar point, citing Benjamin’s concept of aura (as being applicable, in the case of the Arch of Honour, even within the context of mechanical reproduction), as well as modern German analyses of the sociology of public political authority.

