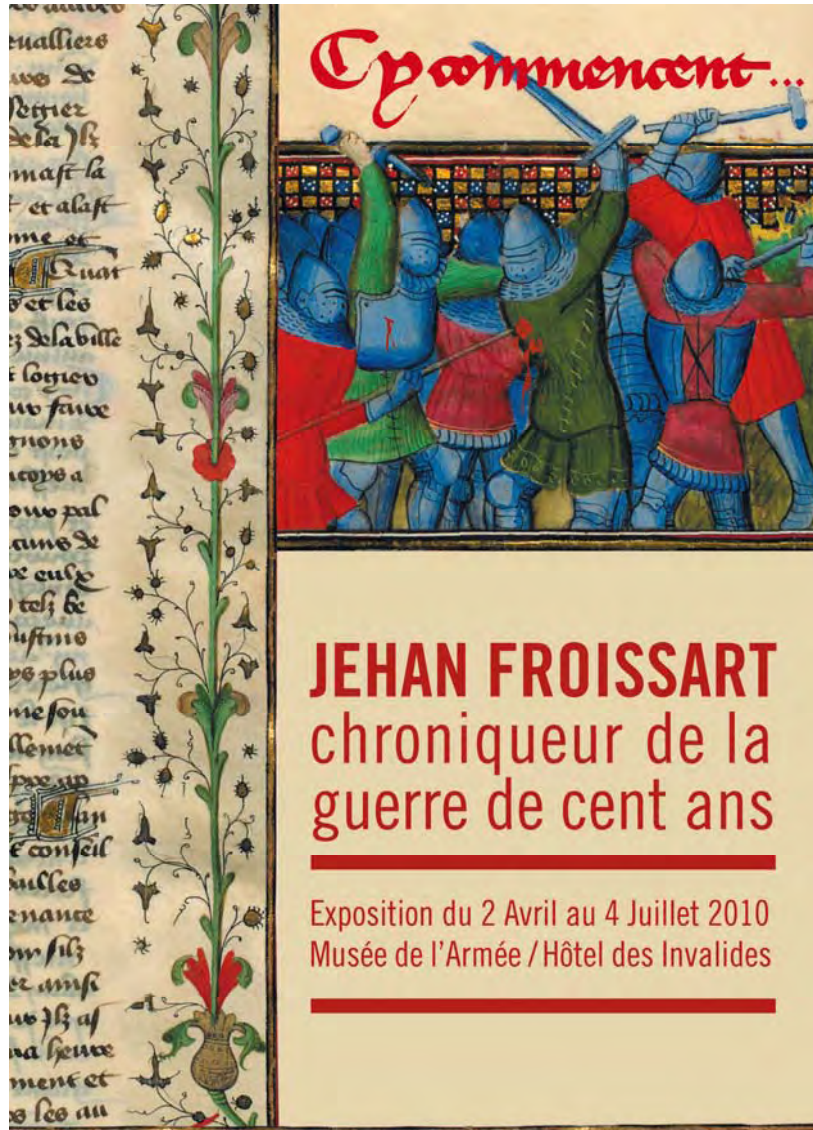




PRESS RELEASE



www.invalides.org

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JEHAN FROISSART, CHRONICLER OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

Exhibition opens 2 April until 4 July 2010

History told through magnificently illuminated manuscripts

In his celebrated *Chronicles*, Jehan Froissart (1337-1404), the historian and enthusiastic medieval traveller born in Valenciennes, bears witness to dramatic episodes from the Hundred Years' War between the kingdom of the *fleurs-de-lys* (France) and the realm of the *leopards* or lions (England). His *Chronicles*, a monument of medieval European historiography, met with very considerable success upon their appearance in manuscript form early in the 15th century. Their text, in lively and vivid style, stimulated the imaginations of the artists called on to illustrate them. Today they remain of particular interest to those wishing to study them as a source for information about the military operations of the period.

The exhibition mounted at the French National Museum of the Army (Musée de l'Armée) affords an unprecedented opportunity to discover these manuscripts which display so enticingly the art and talents of a number of medieval artists and their workshops. Four original manuscript books are presented. In addition, multimedia terminals and a programme of high-resolution digital photography undertaken by the **University of Sheffield** with photographic consultants Scriptura Ltd (United Kingdom) at partner libraries and using the Virtual Vellum and Kiosque viewing platforms, allow visitors to leaf their way through several virtual manuscripts whose originals are housed in some of our greatest research libraries, exploring their detail and appreciating the subtle beauty of their miniatures.



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Finally, arms and armour from the Museum's collections, contemporary with the period of military operations described by Froissart and featuring in the manuscript illuminations, allow visitors to appreciate the true size and appearance of combattants from the Hundred Years' War.

Exhibition Curators

Royal Armouries, Leeds, Karen Watts, Curator of Western Arms and Armour

University of Sheffield, Peter Ainsworth, Emeritus Professor, Department of French

Musée de l'Armée, Olivier Renaudeau, conservateur, Département Ancien, armes et armures

Practical Information

Musée de l'Armée
Hôtel national des Invalides
129 rue de Grenelle 75007 Paris
0810 11 33 99 www.invalides.org

Daily from 10h to 18h
Closed on the first Monday of each month

Access to the exhibition is included with the entrance ticket to the museum :
9 €- 7 €TR / Free to people under the age of 26 yrs

Historical heritage made accessible through new approaches to digital photography and interactive display

This event is the fruit of a lively collaboration between several scientific and heritage institutions on either side of the Channel. The exhibition is born of an original idea by Karen Watts, Curator of Western Arms and Armour at the **Royal Armouries in Leeds** (where it first ran in 2007-08) and Professor Peter Ainsworth, sometime Head of French at the **University of Sheffield**. It is part of the Virtual Vellum programme supported by that university and a number of world-leading research libraries. Complete manuscripts of Froissart's *Chronicles* have been digitised to allow more intensive study of their detail and contents. Nine original manuscripts have been digitally captured specially for this exhibition. They can be explored via interactive touchscreens located in the exhibition area.

At the heart of the exhibition, manuscripts, arms and armour tell the story of the Hundred Years' War...

Thanks to the generosity of our scientific partners the **National Library of France** and the **Municipal Library of Besançon**, the National Museum of the Army, through this exhibition, is able to unveil to the public two priceless twin manuscripts, each comprising two volumes, copied and illuminated between 1412 and 1414 by scribes and artists working under the overall supervision of Parisian bookseller Pierre de Liffol. They bear witness to the popularity of the *Chronicles* amongst clients from the cultivated elites of France and England, only a short time after the death of their author.

Set against a scenography inspired by the miniatures, showcases in the museum's Arsenal Gallery feature armour, weapons and a handgun contemporary with the great Anglo-French conflict brought to life by Froissart in the pages of his *Chronicles*.

The final area is devoted to manuscript book production at the beginning of the 15th century, via a display of the instruments, inks and pigments used by the scribes and painters, respectively to copy and illustrate the precious books exhibited in the Treasury as the climax to this exhibition.

An interactive exhibition

Thanks to the Virtual Vellum digitisation and visualisation programme and the Kiosque software specially designed for this exhibition, **multimedia terminals** (one of which is specially conceived for younger visitors) are provided as an integral part of the exhibition. At their leisure, visitors can leaf through digital copies of the four manuscript books housed in the Treasury, admiring their various features and, if so wished, comparing their miniatures side by side and in great detail.



Designed for a broad and diverse public, the exhibition is complemented by a programme of specially conceived **pedagogical events** : a Scribe's Workshop, and Heraldry and Emblems (performance item).

Siège d'Auberoche en Périgord par le comte de Lille (1345)
Maître de Giac, Besançon, 864, f°112
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