

French fencing guilds

of Paris, Lille, and Amiens in the 16th and 17th century

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BACKGROUND

These documents were provided to me by Roger Norling who got them from the French historical fencing website at <http://jfgilles.perso.sfr.fr>

TERMINOLOGY

For convenience and ease of comprehension for an English-speaking reader I have substituted some English words for specific terms.

The term '**Serment**' means sworn (via the Latin word *serere*, which means 'to join together', similar to the English legal phrase 'sworn-in'), and is used throughout these documents to refer to a group of people joined by an oath. Frequently the term 'sermon confrere' is used to refer to a sworn guild. I'm substituting the relatively familiar term **confraternity** though the more archaic term 'conjurament' is probably a closer match.

Confrérie ('brotherhood'), seems to usually refer to the larger organization, and is translated as **guild**. It could also mean sodality.

The French word **bourgeois** has a more specific political / social meaning today than it did when these documents were written, so I'm substituting the German term '**burgher**' which is better known in our community for the specific meaning of just an urban dweller or a citizen of a town.

Milice has been translated as **militia**.

Échevin has been translated as **alderman**. This is a rough translation, as it has a more specific meaning, closely related to the German *schöffe*, Czech *šepmistr*, Italian *scabino* etc. The term refers to someone who is an elected or appointed political and social leader, and who also usually acts as a magistrate. But while *schöffe* usually refers to an independent magistrate elected by the town or the guild (often also acting as town councilors) *échevin* can also refer to a seigniorial representative appointed by the King or Lord, more similar to the German *vogt*, the closest English translation for which is usually 'advocate'. This may be an important distinction between Amiens and the other towns in particular.

Couleuvrinier can refer to either a hand-gunner (earlier on this would mean hook gun or arquebus, later musket) or a cannon crewman, where it seems more likely to refer to **gunners** I've translated it as such, where it appears to refer to an actual cannon I use the term '**cannonier**'.

Connetable souverain is some kind of commander, I translated as **captain**, **sous connectable** as **lieutenant**.

Jurez appears to be a position of rank within the guild, I was not able to determine its actual meaning beyond 'sworn' – I have translated it as '**magistrate**'.

I have left the term **jeux d'armes** rather than translating it to 'fencing' or 'game of arms' because it may have a specific meaning which should be preserved. However, I suspect it's pretty close to the same meaning as *fechtschule*.

I was unable to determine precisely what the title Chef d'Oeuvre means in this context.

CURRENCY

1 Livre / Franc	= 20 Sols
1 Sol Turnois	= 12 Deniers
1 Denier	

Livre is roughly equivalent to a pound sterling, i.e. a pound of silver, though a 'pound' could vary widely from 10 to 18 ounces from year to year and place to place.

Gros probably refers to groschen, value is roughly 7 Denier

Denier is very roughly the same as a penny.

The name of a city after the type of currency ('Livres-Tournai' or 'deniers -Paris') means a coin minted from that town, i.e. a pound of silver from Paris might be 12 ounces vs. 14 at Tournai, while an ounce of silver from Tournai might be 10% more or less pure than one from Paris, which the reader during the period these were created would know to mean a specific value.

COMMENTARY

These documents provide a great deal of interesting information, the most salient points are summarized below briefly.

Document 1 is an introduction by a modern or Victorian writer. Documents 2-5 are direct translations of records from the 16th and 17th Centuries.

In terms of equipment, some people will be delighted to learn that the "French" fencing guilds put great importance on wearing the proper shoes, and gloves are required for fencing, but these same people may be dismayed to learn that padded coats are banned.

There is a detailed description of how a Provost can become a Master. From the description the Provost sounds like an apprentice (an apprenticeship contract is even mentioned). He must bring valuable gifts to the person that can "come closest to his heart" in a fencing match.

Rules on double-hits in these fights are mentioned, as are rules for losing or winning the special prize-play that a Provost fights to become a Master. If he can be hit with two clean cuts in this test he's kicked out of the fencing guild.

For context it's worth noting the different political situations of the three towns during the period these documents were written. They could be summarized as 'Franco-Belgian' but that wouldn't really be accurate in my opinion. Amiens was a free city, considered part of Flanders from the Medieval period through most of the 16th Century, until captured first by the Spanish, and then by the French in 1597, after which it lost its autonomy. Lille was also powerful, independent Flemish town and thrived under the rule of the Valois Dukes of Burgundy, but after their demise in 1477, came under the control of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and from 1556 was under the rule of the Spanish King Philip II. Paris, of course was ruled by the King of France.

So the traditions in Lille and Amiens in particular can be said to be related to fencing culture in Spain, Burgundy, Flanders, and the Holy Roman Empire as well as France, but probably more Flemish than anything else.

DOCUMENT 1

SAINT MICHELS WEAPONS GUILD

OR

LILLOIS FENCERS

BY

MR. SCRIVE BERTIN

Weapons confraternities are directly related to the medieval military system. However, they do not all go back to the same date. The fencing guild came in later after the three others: archers, crossbowmen, gunners.

In ancient documents either in Flanders or in France and in regards to the last three confraternities, we meet frequently the words, archer and crossbowman of plaisance in opposition to those of grand confraternity. Those more or less free association were subject to public authority and surveillance because it was a good way to hire new potential recruits where ever they were men getting together for entertainment or for weapon's fighting techniques and knowledge. “les joueurs du trait a poudre” is an expression found in the 1482 records.

In many communes, the confraternities acted as a mobile troupe under the alderman's power. The alderman was able to fulfill obligations to his suzerain or to the King himself.

During the long and bloody wars of the first Kings of the Valois dynasty against the English, acknowledgment of services rendered by the confraternities to the national cause were made public by some communes in which confraternities were organized.

In the prescription memoir were found written orders by the King Jean authorizing the formation of special units with the same salary as the King's troops along with many privileges. Cities tried to develop this institution in order to have a lighter military service and also to conserve the order within the walls of the cities or to be able to send units to the suzerain when needed.

Within a city, the military service was mandatory for the burgher. Neither age nor gender or profession was a discharge criteria.

However, with the right amount of money it was possible to be replaced and those units were able to provide door keepers guards or substitute for the burghers company. The communal militia had to march under the city's banner or flag.

We can be certain those are the direct causes of the confraternity's growth. It was at the time in everybody's interest. The burgomeister or high dignitary found it useful to always have a public force available and organized. The populations involved on a daily basis with police occupation could focus more on their profession and because the younger men's taste for weapon's lifestyle would lead to a less sedentary agenda, they would have to find substitutes such as minors, women, ecclesiastic, impotents, which was a real source of benefits for everyone.

Here are few samples from the alderman ban for our city.

JUNE 17TH 1479:

Each hostel manager has to guard in person its facility. Women, children and elderly may get paid and act a substitutes. Failure to do so will result in hiring archer and crossbowmen at the rate of 4 gros each per night and same per day.

OCTOBER 23RD 1513:

Obligation to guard in person, except for women, elderly, children and sick people. Substitutes can be hired, either archers, crossbowmen or gunners for a 3 gros paid out per shift.

Under the Duc de Bourgogne and well before the Princes, in Lilles existed next to the burgher militias the confraternity organized per district in great number always under the Alderman's thumb in order to act as an interior police or to defend the commune.

The confraternity of St Sebastian or archers, the Guild of Saint George or crossbowmen, and the Guild of Saint Barbara or coulevriniers called later cannoniers.

The 4th confraternity, which we are covering in this article was named: Guild of Saint Michel or weapon's shooter/ "*pulleur*" also called *Escrimeurs*.

It's only under Phillip II reign that this appellation officially appears. Before that time we have not found any mention in the Alderman's register under the procession's order except for the 3 other confraternity.

This eye blink on the guild was supposed to be the epilogue of our study.

The hospice's archives of our city contain numerous pieces and interesting material relative to the fencer's guild.

One of which, a little booklet with cooper staples seems to have been one of the confraternities functionary's agenda.

The writing is very sharp despite a few notes taken in a hurry. It describes a very developed sense of organization for the companies with a yearly expenses board.

Even letters from Phillip II King of Spain dated in 1588 stating the guild for fencers existed already and can be found in this book.

Those letters cover the reorganization of the institution going down before trouble times which was present during the 3 confraternity procession solicited in 1588. What was solicited for this confraternity in 1588 was the assimilation to the privileges of the three ancient companies.

The royal authorization was granted to two main fencing Masters Jacques Van Mulsen, Toussaint Ledieu and a third one Guillaume Durieu qualified as a banner carrier.

Leading the companies a captain and two lieutenants were appointed. Two [other] officers were also designated: Master fencer and banner captain.

The royale prescription limited to 30 the amount of individuals within the guild. The Alderman would elect the connetable souverain in order to reestablish the guild and to reinforce the city.

Privileges and freedoms were granted to the 3 ancients guilds new members.

The first article covered in the agenda as stated above was about the rules established by the aldermen on 20th February 1589. The other rules are in regards to the guild formula when a confrere is attending the oath of the greater guild as well as the captain's oath.

Since the agenda started under Spanish domination, and was still active after the city meeting to France in 1667 we can find two formulas in the confraternity. The oldest one to his Spanish Majesty and the recent one to his Christian Majesty. The new oath was added to the agenda after 1667.

Here are some of the pieces covered.

1. Articles that should be observed in the two handed sword Kingdom. One confrere exercise.
2. Practice being held to guarantee all Kingdoms will be every year during the 2nd fete, Tuesday of the feast of the Pentecost.
3. Other practice held because of ten prices. Two handed sword price: pleasure Kingdom procession during Saint Michel.
4. Practice for Lille procession every year on Sunday immediately after the feast of the Holy Sacrament.
5. An inventory of all titles or script from the guild. There is in the archive various pieces listed in this inventory the yearly gross income.

A note in the agenda explaining a few covering facts such as the facility which was used for fencing was also used for meetings in 1624.

6. The yearly detailed expenses for the guild without mentioning the yearly gross income. The accounting officer of the guild had to render his records track every year during the feast of Saint Michel.

The company did not remain limited to thirty men for long, two successive increment occurred within a short lapse of time. May 24th 1591, Phillippe II requested a twenty man recruitment in order to select and add ten men or colleagues. On the 5th of February 1596 a new permission to add another ten men was granted.

At the end of the 16th Century, the confraternity already had 50 members. In 1647 Phillippe IV King of Spain agreed to double the effectifs (effective strength in men). Since that era, we noticed that the St Michel Guild had one hundred associates.

The request presented to the King reveals the excessive fatigue from the colleagues during times of war because they were acting as day and night guards and this more often than the burghers companies even though their effectives strength was way superior to the guild by far. Two to three hundred individuals.

DOCUMENT 2

WEAPON'S FENCING MASTERS STATUTES

CITY OF AMIENS AUGUST 19TH 1530

To those who have seen this present letters, the Mayor, the Prevost, and the high dignitaries from the city of Amiens, good morning. Including on behalf of Pierre de Lemouelle, Nicholas Hamelot, Jehan de Buire, and Fremin D'Egrigny all Masters of short and long swords, quarterstaff (half pike?) and dagger including all other jeux d'armes, that we agreed to the entertainment games request in order to provide access to the population of this city.

After deliberation here are the rules and regulations concerning the games within the city of Amiens.

First of all:

1. No one can enter the jeux d'armes school (fencing school? fechtschule?) without the will to learn the games. Students must salute honestly and appropriately the Master and his entourage (companions and assistants). Failure to do so will result in fine 12 blancs, half to the Master and half to his entourage.
2. Those who want to learn fencing will have to be sworn on the cross and pay 12 blancs. Half to the Master and half to the entourage.
3. The students won't be able to play nor practice without gloves.
4. As soon as a student is sworn in, he won't be able to renounce to the games without paying an appropriate amount to the Master.
5. Each student has to pay his Master the amount previously agreed this within a period of six weeks starting at the ceremony. In return the Master has to teach the student enough to meet the games requirements.
6. When a student is ready to pass a grade, he will have to give a pair of gloves to his Master with a silver coin (6 blancs value) and also a pair of gloves to his godfather.
7. Upon grade completion a student has to pay 5 Solz in order to fight with anyone.
8. If the game is lost, neither the Master, Prevost nor student will have access to this money except for the Master in order to pay the city half and the other half to the Grand Master.

9. Neither the students nor the Master have the right to blaspheme in the name of God, the Virgin Mary, call the Devil, or use dishonest words under a 5 Solz penalty.
10. Anyone who pretends schooling without proper certification will have to pay a 40 Solz fine, half to the city and half to the Master.
11. Anyone who declares forfeit after being touched by a sword or other weapon will have to pay an 8 Deniers fine.
12. Anyone found with a knife or stick other than the one allowed for the game will be fined an 8 Denier penalty.
13. In this school, no one is allowed to lift up a sword with his foot, to step on it, to spit in his own hands while playing and to kick the equipment with his foot under a 2 blanc fine.
14. Anyone who hits too hard and cause a bleeding wound ('bleed his colleague') will have to pay a 2 Solz tournament fine.
15. Those who talk while playing and bleed themselves will have to pay a 2 Solz fine.
16. Those who call for a duel by throwing their gloves at someone will be fine 8 Deniers.
17. Those with inappropriate shoes and padded clothes will be fined 8 Deniers.
18. In the street no students will be allowed to play without gloves, robe with no belt, letting his sword fall on the ground under an 8 Deniers fine.
19. Students will be allowed 2 venues in the Master room.
20. Students will be allowed to participate to the games only if sworn in to this specific game.
21. No man, colleague nor student will be able to become a Master in Amiens without paying 8 Solz Parisis per game and rights such as 20 Solz Parisis to the master.
22. Masters without one and another agreement won't be able to elect a Master or Prevost in the city of Amiens under a 100 Solz Parisis. Half to the city, half to this specific game Master.
23. A foreign Master won't be able to create another Master in this city without the permission from the city's Masters.
24. Masters and companions hating each other won't be able to play against each other under a 20 Solz Parisis fine disbursed as mentioned above.
25. Masters will not be allowed fight in or out of the room the same day but rather one day

after the other under a 20 Solz fine disbursed as mentioned above.

26. Out of 3 venues, students will be able to win only one touch and won't be able to touch again while the Master is visiting them under a 12 Deniers fine to the Master.
27. Will be denied access to the room any other person trying to watch the game without exercising, profaning words to the Master on duty under a 40 Solz Parisis fine.
28. When a companion fights another one. If one reaches while debating himself, the one who reaches without debating will be considered favorite and will win the fight.
29. No one will be allowed to fight in room without being sworn in to this specific game.
30. The students won't be allowed to exchange the jeux d'armes signs or banners and will be allowed to pass it on only to the designated Masters or Prevost under a 20 Solz Parisis fine. Half to the city, Half to the Master. Students won't be allowed to play "jeux de pris" (prize play) in or outside of the room or in another room under an 8 Deniers fine. If a student is caught playing in another room than the one where he was taught, in order to come back he will have to pay an 8 Deniers tournois fine.
31. A foreign Master won't be able to host a room nor a house in this city more than 6 weeks under a 40 Solz Parisis. Half city, Half Masters.
32. A Master will be allowed only one Prevost which will be allowed to swear in students only in the Master presence.
33. Graduating students will have to be those sworn in by the Master and will also have to be proficient to defend their fight under a 20 Solz Parisis.

All the points and articles present in those letters are in common agreement with Masters and companions under our will.

We have celled to the causes of this city the present letters produced and expedited to the highest dignitaries of Amiens on August 19th 1530.

DOCUMENT 3

PRESCRIPTIONS AND STATUTES

FOR

FENCING AND SWORD MASTERS

OF

PARIS

FENCING RULE

JANUARY 15TH 1567

First of all, in order to conserve Art and Instruction for the fencers and sword fighters, two guards have been assigned. Nominated for two years, one will renew year after year and will be sworn in in front of the King's Procurer to determine mistakes and misconception throughout the fencing academy.

Whoever wants to become a Master in Paris will have to serve for two years as a Prevost or as a room keeper. During that time, he will have to organize a Prevost Prix Game (prize play) in order to obtain the freedom to seek and haunt other fighting facilities. This is designed to earn knowledge and merit.

This Prevost will be learning from another General Prevost or more than one if available.

Also, My sons will be General Prevost without exercising Prix Games of experience.

A Prevost who aspires to the Master position will be held as a chef oeuvre. The postulate will have two guards must come up with a Prix Game which will be reviewed by the two guards wearing a Me. Dud. Art which will serve as a conductor to the place.

The chef d'oeuvre will deliver his rapport and the guards will remain 24 hours after delivery in front of the King's Procurer and will be sworn in by the Procurer.

The guards will have the duty to inspect and report any defects or misconception in regards to the facility and equipment and this matter will be done in front of the Procurer.

In case they found the equipment to be defectives or illicit a fine of 20 Solz will be issued to the Prevost. Half to the King and Half to the guard.

In case of death, his widow will be allowed to conduct activities through a man of knowledge, under the guards surveillance and supervision. If she gets remarried, she will lose this privilege.

No one in this city will be allowed to conduct a room nor to show this Art anywhere unless proven as Chef d'Oeuvre with the experience listed above.

If someone conducts such activities, a 4 livres fine to the King and official confiscation of the weapons and equipment will be issued.

No one will be allowed to show nor to teach during the 4 yearly events, Notre Dame or St Michel under a 20 Sous Parisis penalty. Saint Michel is the official day of the sworn fighter guild.

Since an inexperienced individual could have negative consequences when it comes to fencing, only those with letters of experience will be receive, none otherwise.

Signed: *Jean Coefit, Langlois, J. Cossu, Mathieu de L'or.*

DOCUMENT 4

SWORD MASTERS PRESCRIPTION FACTS

FOR

THE CITY OF PARIS

JULY 10TH 1633

We, sword Masters, undersigned observing daily abuses in our community when it comes to Master's receptions, which have been received against court arrests including former prescriptions in regards to this subject. We have come to the conclusion that our tolerance, kindness, and generosity have been taken for granted and led to underestimating those who work hard by achieving a degree. The Jury will only consider those who capable to earn a degree considering the consequences as much as the Ancient because they are already aware on the inconveniences that could arise.

We have the desire to go back to the former discipline from the past in order to reach an agreement all together and we promise and swear to observe point per point even if we have made mistakes by maintaining a certain level.

We have elected a perpetual Syndic (trustee) who was granted power to enforce this prescription. By volunteer obligation we submit ourselves to pay a 12 livres fine in case we would fail to our promises. The Syndic has total power over us regardless of the situation.

First of all: We promise to observe a restraining order from the parliament court against those who want to be received with letters, including an experience against six Masters with four different weapons.

As of today, we will not oblige any Prevost native from France and of Catholic religion, Apostholoc (?) and Romaine (?) who happens not to be of good morale. He will be obliged to six years to reach perfection be capable and proficient at mastering his skills.

The Prevost won't be able to wear the sword until after a two year service to his Master and after asking the Syndic and the Master to have permission to wear it.

Those who apply for a Master degree be required the day before the reception and won't be able to choose the location in order to prevent previous disorders observed in the past.

Only Masters will be allowed and if those undersigned bring another person, a fine listed above will have to be paid the first time. The second time he will be evicted and won't have access to any of our upcoming assembly.

Prizes for receptions will be silver swords.

First prize value: 18 Livres Tournai

A golden ring of a 9 Livres Value.

A pair of deer skin gloves for 3rd prize 6 livres value.

A dozen of Esguilletes made of silk for the 4th prize at a 4 livres value.

Also, the rights for the present and absent will be saved in our community chest along with a memoire in regards to what is being saved except for our Syndic to whom 2 Ecus and a pair of valuable gloves will be issued as a receipt.

With the Oath, the one who is being received will sign our original prescription and will have to understand that it is our habit and costume to pay for our guild in order to maintain our community.

Will be forfeited the one who wants to be received for experience with the same time granted and will have to do it again until he reaches 2 franchises bottles to avoid an eventual abuse.

If someone is judged capable by the Syndic, Juries and elderly will present him in front of the King's Procurer in the Chatelet to have him under oath.

If he's beat the first 2 times, he will be send back to train himself with appropriated time and his expenses will be reimbursed.

We promise to attempt and be present to our assemblies as long as notified to be present under a one Ecu fine the first time if no valuable excuses due to unforeseen circumstances.

The Jury will be able to choose which Master will assist them in case of an absent without proper excuse and won't provide favors to none of the Masters.

In case a Prevost wants to fight a Master, the Master will have rights to decline or ignore given the inequality. Therefore the Master will have rights to complain to the Syndic which will cause the Prevost to present himself in front of the Syndic and swear to receive punishment by the Syndic.

Prevost won't be allowed to organize an assembly in our rooms upon eviction from the weapon's Master Guild.

If a Master starts trouble or disorder in our assembly, action will be blamed by Syndic and Jury as a threat to our society and no one will be allowed to assist the trouble maker under punishment according to our prescriptions. Also, will be evicted those who try to attack our Syndic and Jury.

With a common agreement we will elect a Syndic which will be responsible for a chest with a

key from our community. He will be covering two journals or memoires signed by himself and the Juries on charge at that specific time. One journal will be in the chest and the other in the Jury's hands which they will transmit to their successor along with the key and responsibilities.

The Jury won't be able to change anything in regards to our corporation without communicating to the Syndic whose voice will count for two and have power to stop those working against our prescriptions as stated in the brevet signed by all of us.

None of the undersigned will be able to renew anything from the past in regards to previous malfeasance in our community in order to improve to the best our society when it comes to Article 8's penalties.

We promise to observe and keep regulations and rules from the Bailly St. Germain des prez stating that no one will be able to teach in St. Germain without receiving our experience.

We will be present every year to the service and celebration at the Augustin convent the day of St. Michel our patron under a one Ecu fine if our absence is unjustified.

From now on the Master's son will be appointed to the discipline by fighting five or six Masters as well as those obligated and will have the sons and my favours in regards to rights in deniers only and no other expenses.

If our Syndic assisted by the Jury and four Masters of his choice, 2 older and 2 younger, is constrained for the support of our community to approve expenses either usual or unusual no one for whatever reason will be able to go against this will.

To conclude, we promise and swear to observe with honor this present agreement against anyone. We submit again to pay a 12 livres fine if we go against prescription and present agreement each Master has undersigned along with a signed copy from the Syndic and the Jury in order to avoid a lack of acknowledgment.

Done July 10th 1633 by *Syndic Langlois* wardrobe valet of the King's Chamber and Jury sieur du Rocher et de la Frenays. Undersigned: *Langlois, de la Fontaine, de Riencourt, Jacques Bourbon, St Andre, Jean Lecoq, Marres, Lavigne, Papillon, Bret de la Frenays, du Cornet, Vellet, Papillon, Langlois, Regnard, alexander, Lemaine, Mory, Beaulieu, de Riencourt, Lescueir, Vincent de st Ange, de Rocher, Marc de laq Roche, Anne Legoix.*

DOCUMENT 5

RULES AND STATUTES BY WEAPON'S MASTERS

FROM

THE CITY OF PARIS

FAUXBOURGS

TO MAINTAIN

PRIVILEGES GRANTED BY THE KING

MAY 12 TH 1644

First of all: In order to to keep an eye on our community well being and also to pursue its appropriated functions, an election by voice majority for two new Jurors by the masters will be held at the Chatelet of Paris in front of the King's Procurer. Those two Jurors will be appointed for two years.

A new election will held at the end of the two year term as described above.

This election will be based on the aptitude to conduct the city's matters not based on seniority or any rank what so ever.

2. The day of the Magistrate election will be also the day to elect a sworn in Master to guard the order and privilege to which a chest will be granted with all deniers, paper for the city along with three different keys. Two keys for the Magistrate and the third one to the guard. During those two years, the guard will held all assembly at his own place. At the end of this term another guard will take over with same obligations and responsibilities and will have report to the appointed Magistrate after being examined by the general assembly in a private and secretive place with a minimum of 12 Masters.
3. If a Master from the community has the desire to promote a Prevost to the Master's status,it will be his obligation to go with Prevost to the Magistrate and Guard place to certify that the Prevost is a native of the Kingdom of France, a good moral person, Catholic, Apostolic, and of Romaine religion with a certificate from the church where the Prevost was baptized. After verification by the Master and another sworn in person, the Prevost will be obliged according to the style and form of the community to go with the Guard in a place where he will receive 18 livres at the community charge and expense with the rights, gloves. He will not have right to wear a sword until 2 years after his admittance as a Master.
4. If a Prevost fails to serve his Master, he will be punished by the Magistrate and the guard

at the very first complain formulated by his own Master. The complain will be recorder the community book signed by the Master, Magistrate, and guard and at the second complain the Prevost at fault will be stripped of his rank, his contract will be canceled in front of the King's Procurer at the Chatelet. Other Masters won't be able to engage this Prevost under penalty and fine with an annulment of the apprenticeship contract.

5. A Master is allowed to oblige only one Prevost at a time and Prevost may not be obliged by more than one Master at once unless in case of death.

If a Prevost leaves his Master without his written notarized permission, he will be excluded from his Master degree. If the Prevost comes back to his Master and is forgiven, he will still have to spend 6 years to achieve his degree starting that day for the privileges of the community.

6. As soon as time expires, the Prevost will be pass in front of Magistrate and guard of order to present his baptized act as a verification of age. Upon double checking the Prevost age (25) and his aptitude and knowledge, the Master will present him in front of the general assembly. If accepted by the assembly, the Prevost will be directed towards 6 Masters (if one out six is absent, a substitute will be elected) to continue his training. 20 livres will be granted to the Prevost for his equipment expenses. Magistrate, guard, and two aldermen will be judging of the Prevost level in order to start officially his training.
7. Magistrate, guard, and Master conducting the Prevost to become a Master will be obliges to spend 3 to 4 days at the King's Procurer chateau (mansion). Only Magistrate and guard will be communicated the time, date and location to start the training also called experience. In order to prevent disorder, the postulate will find out those information the day before his experience.

Will be allowed to be present to this assembly only Masters, Sons of Masters and whoever will be included by the Procurer. A 20 Livres Parisi fine will be issue to whoever brings someone else along to this private assembly. 10 livres payable to the community and the other 10 livres to charitable organization. Also, if a Master fails to be present at the assembly, he will be fined 20 Livres Parisi the first if no excuses and the second time he will be asked not to participate to this specific assembly again. He will also be excluded of power to train a Prevost, join the Magistrate and Guard to enforce the execution of this article. A 100 Livres Parisi fine will be issued payable to the poor.

8. The day before the experience, the aspiring Prevost and his Master will visit all Masters of the community to ask them to be present at the designated place where the King's Procurer will be waiting for them. If an 18 or 20 year old Master's son is present and capable of fighting, the Prevost will be obliged to cross blade with a sword and offer them a 60 solz value pair of deer skin gloves each.

He will have to transmit the deniers to guard and Magistrate, which money was given to him for the occasion, the argent will then be redirected to the community chest along with half the rights due the Masters except for the Magistrate and Guard. Those rights will be given to the Masters, Magistrate, and Guard including the rights to the Procurer, with gloves as stated by this article, signed and approved.

9. The aspiring Prevost will provide two each 25 livres value swords as for a prize to those who will reach him the closest to the heart: either with a single sword, or with a sword and a dagger. The one who wins with the single sword won't be able to aspire winning with the sword and the dagger in order to share the honor. To maintain the order, the Guard will be obliged to bring the original statutes and privileges in front of the King's Procurer which will be begged by the Masters to hold hand and observe them. Then, the aspiring Prevost will be presented by his Master at the elderly assembly, passed on in the Magistrate hands and presented in front of the King's Procurer. They will elect with their consciousness which 2 Masters out of six will be the most appropriated for the experience and this without favoring one or the other to avoid confusion or manipulation.
10. The order will be given by the Procurer, Magistrate, or elderly to start the experience.

The aspiring Prevost will have to fight with 3 different weapons against six masters. The Espadon, single sword, and sword and dagger. He will be exempted from the use of a halberd and stick in front of the Master's assembly because the point is just to demonstrate his skills with swords. If he is beaten by two clean cuts by the first and second Master, he will be kicked out of the school, in presence of the Procurer, Magistrate, Guard, Elderly, and all assembly Masters will judge to render his reception's expenses along with the Magistrate quittance.

Double hits will be voided until two clean cuts are being observed.

11. After the experience, if the aspiring Prevost is judged capable by the community, he will be sworn in by the Procurer and the following he will have to thank the Magistrate, Guard, for their assistance.
12. If any Master's sons wants to be received, he will have to bring a baptized certificate stating he is at least 22 years of age, will do the experience listed above without any favors except for the deniers and Magistrate/Guard rights, gloves. He will have to pay to the city chest what the previous other son's Masters have paid and will also bring two swords at the same price the Masters have brought. He will also give rights to the Procurer, be sworn in if judged capable to master this art.
13. Masters' widows won't have rights nor privileges to teach this art if the Master dies and the Prevost present a that time will be obliged to go to Magistrate and Guard in order to assign a new Master till the end of training.

We omitted, if an aspiring Prevost cannot find a Master because all of them already have one, it is up to a Master to achieve his time as long as he wants him. It happened during la Jurande de la Frenay and Regnard in 1645 under Mr Bonneau King's Procurer who gave a sentence to a man called de l'Isle because he achieved his time with the first Master who wanted him even though he already had a Prevost. The Magistrate and Guard agreed the 24th of July 1645 in the name of the community that the sentence should be turned into a judicial law.

When a Master of this art has no choice but to give up or quit activities due to an accident or disease he has the right to appoint his Prevost, or his son, or a person capable to manage the facility and to teach this art. As for business matters, the Master can leave for absence and let his substitute taking over for a period of three month only. After that period of time, if he does not come back, Magistrate and Guard will have to close his facility to prevent any teaching or activities. A master who starts offices activities for the noble will have to close his facility as soon as he starts the new one. Meanwhile, he will also renounce to his previous activity unless if appointed otherwise by the king, the queen or children of France.

The Magistrate and Guard will precede all Masters to assemblies in regards to the community affairs and business. They will walk, and give their voices according to their seniority and also bring the Masters they judge appropriated to the visits under a fine for those who refuses.

In regards to the statutes and articles mentioned above, We, undersigned Masters, swear and promise to observe and apply them when needed. We beg The King's Procurer to maintain us in our position to avoid on any occasion being a burden to him.

As witnesses, we all have signed those letters with our regular signature: Being Magistrate of this art for the 2nd time. Sieurs de la Frenay, and Regnard. As for Guard for he order of the community sieur st Andre. Done in Paris May 12th 1644. Signed by: *le Bret Frenays, Regnard, S. Andre, Vincent, S Ange, Valet, Deriencourt, Langlois, du Roche, le Coq, Marres, Moussard, Philebois, Papillon, Mongin, du Cornet, Lhuyllier, Papillon, and Vignal.*

Statutes and regulations mentioned above have been transcribed and approved requiring the King's Procurer to record to the audience register of the civil chamber and police from le Chatelet de Paris, be me undersigned *Doyen des Greffiers* from the civil chamber in consequences of the sentence rendered by le lieutenant civil, the 5th of November, done the same year and day as mentioned above.