

Book review: Interrelated New Publications Illuminate Freydal.
Stefan Krause, *Freydal. Medieval Games. The Book of*
***Tournaments of Emperor Maximilian I* (Cologne: Taschen, 2019).**
Hardcover, 14.2 x 14.2 in., 12.20 lb, 448 pages, ISBN 978-3-8365-
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Conceived in the mind of Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519) around 1502 and executed between 1512 and 1515, *Freydal* is the largest and most sumptuous tournament book to survive from the late medieval period, and this expansive yet unfinished project exists in multiple iterations, spread across repositories and continents. Set within *Freydal*'s fictionalised narrative, the eponymous hero—a thinly-veiled version of Maximilian himself—gallops, fights, and dances through sixty-four tournaments and their attendant festivities. Each occasion comprises a variation of the *Rennen*, or mock joust of war using mainly pointed lances, the *Gesteck*, or mock joust of peace using coronel lances, and the foot combat. A courtly masquerade follows each trio of martial contests. Though the narrative's framework is based on high medieval chivalric romance literature, such as the works of Hartmann von Aue (1160–1210) or Ulrich von Liechtenstein (1200–1275), the names of the opponents that Freydal/Maximilian encounters in the lists are those of real members of the Habsburg-Burgundian court and its allies, as are the dancers who take part in the ceremonies that follow.¹

Maximilian intended *Freydal* to take its place among a series of literary works that celebrated his knightly persona and exploits through pseudo-fictional narratives. These *Ruhmeswerke* or *Gedächtniswerke* also included *Der Weißkunig* and *Theuerdank*. The former—which, like *Freydal*, remained unfinished during Maximilian's lifetime—presents a fictionalised version of Maximilian's biography. The latter, situated as a kind of sequel to *Freydal*, follows the prince's journey to wed Mary of Burgundy (1457–82) and his travails to secure Burgundian-Habsburg sovereignty in the Low Countries. Like each of these companion works, Maximilian wished for *Freydal* to circulate in woodcut prints, advertising fictionalised iterations of his chivalric deeds far beyond the imperial court. However, only five woodcuts were completed. Indeed, the fine manuscript copy crafted by up to around thirty-nine artists for the Emperor himself remained unfinished,

¹ Krause, 'Freydal – Das Turnierbuch Kaiser Maximilians I', p. 19. It is important to point out that works by these Minnesänger were well-known to Maximilian, in whose library they appeared in such sumptuous manuscripts as the *Ambraser Heldenbuch*, compiled from 1504 to 1517 (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod. Ser. n. 2663).

uncoupled from its narrative text, which is preserved in a draft now housed in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

The virtuosic and stylistically diverse book paintings that made up Maximilian's sumptuous personal copy of *Freydal* were bound together around 1600, in a collected volume (*Sammelband*) to which the compiler added a list of the names inscribed onto the otherwise atextual folios. During the eighteenth century, an index of these names was also inscribed onto the turn-of-the-seventeenth-century paper at the back of the codex.² Though it resided in Innsbruck from its creation through the eighteenth century, the *Sammelband*—or, to use Stefan Krause's preferred German term, *Konvolut*—has been preserved in Vienna since 1780.³ In 1880–82, Quirin von Leitner published a five-volume printed edition of *Freydal* that reproduced the 255 images and appended texts from Maximilian's personal volume in black-and-white heliogravures.⁴ For nearly 140 years following its publication, von Leitner's work remained the most complete resource for scholars wishing to study Maximilian's personal tournament book. Despite its exceptional artistic, historical, and literary importance, *Freydal* remained largely inaccessible to scholars, its shimmering images of tournaments and courtly masquerades reproduced only sporadically and in excerpted form in exhibition catalogues and scholarly publications.

In 2019, a long-awaited edition by Stefan Krause, Ronald S. Lauder Director of the Imperial Armoury of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, changed that, making the full visual splendour of *Freydal* available to global readers for the first time. This tri-lingual volume—with texts in German, French, and English—includes a short introduction by Krause, along with images of each of the manuscript's 255 illuminated miniatures accompanied by short explanations of the type of tournament and the participants that the image depicts. Despite its high price, the book's spectacular visual appeal combines with Krause's accessible annotations and introduction—which draws parallels between the tournament culture of late medieval and early modern Europe and the role of sport in contemporary society—to make this publication capable of engaging specialists and non-specialists alike.

Krause's widely-anticipated scholarly edition evokes the grandeur of its source. The book's images of the second joust in each tournament and foot combat that follows⁵ are reproduced at just over 4/5 the scale of the original illuminations, while images of the inaugural joust that precede them and the masquerades that follow them are enlarged and cropped to highlight the central details of the dynamic original compositions. The facsimile's consistent deployment of this pattern of enlargement or slight reduction of the

² Krause, 'Freydal – Das Turnierbuch Kaiser Maximilians I – Werkbeschreibungen', p. 183.

³ Krause, 'Freydal – Das Turnierbuch Kaiser Maximilians I – Werkbeschreibungen', pp. 36-39.

⁴ von Leitner, *'Freydal' Des Kaisers Maximilian I. Turniere Und Mummerien*.

⁵ Due to the loss of a folio prior to the binding, the pattern shifts midway through the volume.

original artworks' scale creates a rhythmic progression as the reader/viewer moves through the volume, echoing the rhythm of tournament events that organises the structure of the codex that it reproduces. The enlarged images, which run to the edges of their pages, offer unprecedented access to the pictorial and stylistic details of the illuminations that they reproduce. Though some readers may be frustrated by the loss of some details along the cropped edges of the images, careful attempts have been made to avoid omitting pictorial information, and the foliation numerals that punctuate each illumination's top left and bottom right corners remain clearly visible in the facsimile. Further, Krause's short annotations of each illustration provide straightforward yet invaluable information that exposes not only the many variations of tournament contests and courtly festivities that *Freydal* represents, but also offer insight into the defensive and theatrical technology embodied in the depicted armour and equipment, as well as the identities of the combatants and their relationships to Maximilian.

Through its introduction, lavish illustrations, and annotations, *Freydal. Medieval Games* serves as an ambassadorial publication whose sumptuousness will —no-doubt—seduce those who may have nascent interests in the world of the tournament during Maximilian's reign and provide new discoveries and insights for audiences who already know this work and its historical moment well. However, serious scholars will want to read Krause's edition alongside a special volume of the *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien*, also released in 2019 and edited by Dr. Krause. This volume, subtitled "Freydal: Zu einem unvollendeten Gedächtniswerk Kaiser Maximilians I.," contains nine essays devoted to *Freydal*, as well as detailed analytical descriptions of all surviving iterations of the project. These contributions are followed by five appendices offering information on the draft text of the knightly adventure now in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, a prosopographic list of the individuals named in *Freydal*, historical sources for understanding the development of the project, collation tables for the Vienna *Sammelband*, including its concordance with the preliminary version in Washington, and watermark analysis.

The articles that populate the *Jahrbuch* examine the creative processes, codicological structures, martial content, and luxury copy of *Freydal* in Vienna, a draft version preserved in Washington, D.C., and numerous other facets of the images and text. Krause's introductory essay not only summarises the history and context of *Freydal*, but significantly expands upon his simpler introduction to the facsimile by recounting details of the Vienna manuscript's provenance and historiography. At the end of the volume, his expansive *Werkbeschreibung* offers invaluable codicological information that will doubtlessly prove foundational for all future studies of *Freydal*.

Elsewhere in the *Jahrbuch*, Tobias Capwell expertly analyses eleven distinct variants of the joust that appear in *Freydal*, one of the most significant pictorial sources for the

proliferation of forms that transformed the *Gesteck* and *Rennen* during Maximilian's reign.⁶ Christoph Kaindel examines the tournament book's representation of the foot combat, connecting it to the visualisations of martial techniques developed within the fight book genre.⁷ Kaindel's comparative consideration of *Freydal's* relationship to fight books—such as *Gladiatoria*—known to have circulated within Maximilian's imperial circle makes connections between this *Gedächtniswerk* and the visual and material culture that surrounded its patron and inspired its artists. Similarly, Katja Schmitz-von Ledebur explores the depiction of fine textiles in the illuminated pages of the Vienna *Freydal*. Her focus on the clothing and cloths of honour that appear in the masquerade scenes draws important parallels between the material spectacles of the lists and those of the *Festsaal*. Her intermedial analysis also whets the reader's appetite for future examinations of the jousting scenes' flamboyant costumes and caparisons, which fall outside of her article's scope.⁸

Other articles within this special volume of the *Jahrbuch* shed light on the materiality of *Freydal*, its drafts, and sources. Erwin Pokorny reconsiders the painterly hands first identified in the Vienna *Freydal* by von Leitner, deploying closely observed stylistic and object-based analysis to shed new light on the workshops and groups of book painters who contributed to the illuminations.⁹ Stefan Matter analyses the draft text of *Freydal* in Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod. 2831, summarising how it connects to narrative and theatrical tropes and historical people and events, and considering the implications and extent of its fragmentary state.¹⁰ Andreas Zajic exams the annotations of the *Freydal* draft manuscript alongside other documents to tease out the characteristics of Maximilian's own hand.¹¹ Kimberly Schenk offers a technical analysis of the Washington draft copy of *Freydal*, exposing pentimenti that reveal aspects of the process that shaped the complex and collaborative project.¹² Katharina Uhlir describes the results of recent x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF)—known here by the German term *Röntgenfluoreszenzanalyse* (RFA)—tests that identify the pigments present in the Vienna *Freydal*.¹³

⁶ Capwell, “By the Action of His Majesty”: Jousting in *Freydal*’.

⁷ Kaindel, ‘Das Fußturnier Im *Freydal*’.

⁸ Schmitz-von Ledebur, “gulden Stuck Geclait Uff Welsch”: Zum Stellenwert von Textilien in Den Mummereien Des Wiener *Freydal*’.

⁹ Pokorny, ‘Die Maler Der Wiener *Freydal*-Miniaturen’.

¹⁰ Matter, ‘Der Textentwurf Zum *Freydal* Im Codex 2831* Der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek’.

¹¹ Zajic, ‘Rex Idiographus—Bausteine Zu Eine Analyse Der Autografen Maximilians I.’.

¹² Schenk, ‘Jousting and Jubilation: A Technical Investigation of the Washington *Freydal*’.

¹³ Uhlir, ‘Energiedispersive Röntgenfluoreszenzanalyse an Ausgewählten Blättern Des Wiener *Freydal*’.

Along with recent anthologies on the tournament published by Boydell & Brewer and Thomas Del Mar Ltd. in collaboration with the Kunsthistorisches Museum, current monographic studies are poised to illuminate new and exciting aspects of martial sport in medieval and Renaissance Europe.¹⁴ These include Justin Sturgeon’s forthcoming *Text and Image in René d’Anjou’s Livre de Tournois: Constructing Authority and Identity in Fifteenth-Century Court Culture*, which includes expansive art-historical, historical, and codicological analysis alongside the first complete scholarly edition to include all eight extant volumes of the *Livre de Tournois*.¹⁵ For its scholarly quality and utility for future research, Krause’s *Freydal: Medieval Games* takes its place at the forefront of this tide of new scholarship on the practice, material culture, and representation of knightly sport during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Published in 2019, *Freydal: Medieval Games* and the companion volume of the *Jahrbuch* contributed significantly to an international wave of scholarship and exhibitions marking the *Maximilianjahr*—the 500th anniversary of the emperor’s death in 1519. Major exhibitions in Augsburg, Innsbruck, and New York, as well as their catalogues, contributed significant new insights on Maximilian, his historical context, patronage, and legacy.¹⁶ While projects such as *The Last Knight: The Art, Armor, and Ambition of Maximilian I*, showcased *Freydal* within its larger artistic, chivalric, and socio-political contexts, Krause’s facsimile edition and the contributions that he and other authors published in the *Jahrbuch* provide multivalent inroads into this immensely important yet hitherto understudied commemorative project. Well worth the expense as well as the shelf space, this pair of volumes render the glittering and dynamic images, layered references, and complex materiality of *Freydal* accessible to global audiences for the first time.

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¹⁴ *The Medieval Tournament as Spectacle: Tournaments, Jousts, and Pas d’Armes, 1100–1600; Tournaments: A Thousand Years of Chivalry*.

¹⁵ Sturgeon, *Text and Image in René d’Anjou’s Livre de Tournois*.

¹⁶ See, for instance, *The Last Knight: The Art, Armor, and Ambition of Maximilian I*; *Maximilian I. ‘Zu Lob und ewiger Gedachtnus’*; *Maximilian I. (1459–1519): Kaiser. Ritter. Bürger zu Augsburg*.

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