**The Chronicle of Hainaut**

**A twelfth-century chronicle authored by Gilbert of Mons, a Flemish chronicler who served as a chaplain and notary to Count Baldwin of Hainault, this chronicle provides an account of the life and deeds of the family of Gilbert’s patron, Baldwin. As such, besides supplying extensive genealogical information about the families in the surrounding region, it also discusses the events of the count’s court. Here Gilbert records a duel between Gerard of St. Obert and Robert of Beaurain that arose, as many do, due to an insult. Pay particular attention to how and why the duel is resolved, and by what means Gerard seeks to affirm the time has passed.**

**Excerpted from The Chronicle of Hainault, ed. Laura Naplan (2005), 116-117.**

At that same time and year,when Gérard of Saint-Aubert, a noble man, the count of Hainaut’s man and first cousin, had a disagreement with certain knights, asserting that one of them was his serf, namely Achard of Verli, and then delivered him to the count of Hainaut’s court concerning this matter. With a day appointed for them in the lord count of Hainaut’s presence at Mons, with many virtuous and noble men and men of whatever status present, the most virtuous knights Robert of Beaurain (who had firstly had a wife from the count’s family, and had sons by her), a relative of Achard, was inflated with pride, and although no one persecuted him concerning servitude, he said publicly: ‘Lord count, it is told to me that lord Gérard of Saint-Aubert, without me hearing it, has said that I belong to him in servile status. If he has said so much, he lied like a worthless knave, and here is my pledge prepared against him for a duel concerning this.When Gérard heard of this man’s presumption and arrogance, although he had esteemed him up till then because of things other than his origin and had offered to show him mercy in this case always, he took his men’s counsel immediately, and responded: ‘Lord count, Robert of Beaurain, who is present, is my serf. Because he denies that and says that he is free, here is my pledge prepared, because he lies, and I am prepared to prove against him, as against a worthless knave, that he is my serf.’Robert responded to him that he was free, and that Gérard lied worthlessly. When he challenged him concerning this and pledges had been given into the lord count’s hand, because they agreed in their wish for a duel, a duel was set up for them.When guarantors had been given on either side, the day for the duel was established for them at Mons. The count wished to move on the correct path of justice and invited all nobles and wise men of his land to that day. The provocation of this duel was blamed on Robert by all who heard about it. Although he had been left in peace concerning this case, he had challenged a noble man to a duel. Although Robert was said to be more renowned and virtuous than that man, yet because he had had a broken right

arm, and thus, had not regained strength well, he ought to have more strength in the left arm. When the opportune day had arrived, they assembled at Mons for the duel. When the count was sitting in the square before the monastery of Blessed Waudru with many nobles and men of whatever status, and Bishop Roger of Cambrai and many abbots of this order, who devoted themselves to work for peace, Gérard of Saint-Aubert, armed, came about the first hour of the day, and coming into the lord count’s presence said that he was ready to prove what he had proposed against Robert of Beaurain. And so he stood, awaiting Robert, and while Robert (who was in the town of Mons) delayed – and thus, everyone present were amazed – the ninth hour sounded. Gérard of Saint-Aubert, seeing and hearing this, himself said, and through his spokesman Hugh of Croix, that he had waited for his adversary up to the hour and past it. And therefore he was released from the duel and had proven his grievance, and ought to prevail in this case, and he required justice concerning this. Therefore the count’s men were required to give a verdict most strictly, and considering the sun and instructed by clerks who were present, said that the ninth hour had passed. Finally they judged that Gérard was released from the duel and he had obtained by right what he claimed against Robert. It signified enough that Robert remained in his dwelling (I don’t know by what advice) both before and after the judgement was made. Robert came after the judgement was made, and armed in the lord count’s presence said that he was prepared to prove what he had proposed against Gérard. The lord count seized him according to his men’s advice and caused him to be disarmed and guarded as a prisoner. Gérard of Saint-Aubert requested from the count that Robert might be returned to him for sentencing immediately. The lord count returned him to Gérard by his men’s judgement. Gérard brought him with him in chains, as a serf sentenced by him. The judges of all these things, namely concerning the ninth hour and the duel (and thus, that Gérard was released and had proved what he claimed) and concerning Robert’s return into Gérard’s hand, were Eustace the elder of Le Roeulx, Nicholas of Barbençon, Walter of Lens, Eustace his son, Alard of Chimay, the count’s brother William, Otto of Trazignies, Baldwin Caron, Hoel of Quiévrain, William of Quiévrain (Robert’s uncle), Amand of Prouvy, Régnier of Trith,Walter of Wargnies, Baldwin of Walincourt, William of Haussy, Fulk of Semeries, Stephen of Denain, Gérard ‘the Sorcerer’, Simon of Aulnois, Rasso of Gavre, Gérard of Wattripont, Hugh of Oisy, Gérard of Hamaide, Goswin of Enghien, Nicholas of Péruwelz, Nicholas and Gilles of Mainvault, Roger of Condé, Hugh of Croix, Baldwin castellan of Mons, Ghislain castellan of Beaumont, Henry castellan of Binche, Gerald of Hon, John Cornutus,Hugh of Roeulx, Régnier advocate of Marchiennes, Thierry ofWallers, William of Gommegnies, William of Anzin, Hugh of Antoing, Stephen of Lambres, Nicholas of Le Roeulx archdeacon of Cambrai, Nicholas provost of Saint-Germain, Goswin provost of Soignies, Goswin of Thulin, Renard of Strépy, Walter of Blandain, Pol of Villers, Charles of Fresnes, Charles son of Louis of Fresnes, Nicholas of Caudry, Godfrey of Thuin, Walgan of Amfroitpret, Baldric of Roisin, Gilles of Bermerain, Stephen provost of Saint-Amand.