

For a Long Century of Burgundy

The Court, Female Power and Ideology

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On the evidence of the recent publications under discussion here, historians are beginning to break free from the constraints of the traditional chronological boundaries applied to Burgundian history, and are finding new and valuable ways of exploring political culture either side of the divide that was once thought to have been created by the events of 1477. But progress remains uneven: we know more about the court, the centre of political life, before 1477 than we do for the period that came after; with honourable exceptions, we know more about female political agency and power after 1477 than we do about the period before; and we know too little, still, about political ideologies, a burgeoning area of interest which has much to yield.

The field of Burgundian studies has witnessed a shift in emphasis over the past generation from overviews which were biographical and dynastic in emphasis, such as Richard Vaughan's volumes on the four Valois dukes, to studies of the Burgundian 'state' and the regions it ruled over, exemplified in the work of Walter Prevenier, Wim Blockmans and, more recently, Bertrand Schnerb.¹ Within this last strand, two sub-themes are especially prominent. A great deal of attention has been paid to the ducal court, partly due to the rich record survival which makes study of the topic so rewarding.² But this emphasis is justified in other ways too – by the fact that the court's political influence was felt over a greater area than that of any other single organ of government, or the seemingly widespread nature of the court's cultural influence across space and time.³ The second theme in studies of the Burgundian state concerns the towns and cities of the densely urbanised Low Countries. Economic developments have not been neglected, but it is above all the political history of municipalities which stands out, producing major studies of communities like Ghent, Lille or Leiden.⁴ Conflict between the court-dominated state and the powerful cities of the Burgundian lands have a special place in narratives of Burgundian state formation, but there is now a growing interest in more peaceable – although no less interesting – forms

of interaction between the courtly and civic sphere, facilitated by such things as membership of elite groups like shooting confraternities and rhetoricians' guilds, or participation in civic processions and religious confraternities which brought city and court together, sometimes in unexpected ways.⁵ Into this unfolding landscape of Burgundian historiography the eight new studies listed below have emerged. Together they reveal a marked willingness to extend the chronological scope of the Burgundian period into the sixteenth century, and in important respects they develop our understanding of the court, female power and ideology.

The century of Burgundy

Such was the preponderance of Burgundy in Johan Huizinga's vision of medieval culture that he considered entitling his 'Study of the forms of life, thought, and art', not the *Waning of the Middle Ages* as it would eventually become in English, but rather *The Century of Burgundy*.⁶ How is one to define the chronological parameters of such a 'century'? The relevance of the

- 1 Vaughan's four biographies were recently re-published by The Boydell Press (2002) with new introductions by M.G.A. Vale, B. Schnerb, G. Small and W. Paravicini. See also W. Prevenier and W. Blockmans, *The Burgundian Netherlands* (Cambridge 1986) and B. Schnerb, *L'état bourguignon* (Paris 1999) (although the latter has also recently written a biography: *Jean sans Peur: Le prince meurtrier* [Paris 2005]).
- 2 The work of Werner Paravicini is key here, much of it collected in his *Menschen am Hof der Herzöge von Burgund. Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Stuttgart 2002).
- 3 Although just how widespread this influence really was remains a matter for debate, and is the subject of the proceedings of a colloquium at the Deutsches historisches Institut in Paris on *La cour de Bourgogne et l'Europe: Le rayonnement et les limites d'un modèle culturel* (forthcoming).
- 4 On economic matters, for instance, the work of Peter Stabel is prominent, such as his *Dwarfs among Giants: The Flemish Urban Network in the Late Middle Ages* (Leuven 1997). Several recent themes in urban historiography are treated in Marc Boone, *À la recherche d'une modernité civique: La société urbaine des anciens Pays-Bas au bas Moyen Âge* (Brussels 2010).
- 5 Peter Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca [N.Y.] 1996); Élodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La ville des cérémonies: Essai sur la communication politique dans les anciens Pays-Bas bourguignons* (Turnhout 2004); Andrew Brown and Graeme Small, *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries, c. 1420-1530* (Manchester 2007); Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille. Rederijkerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400-1650)* (Amsterdam 2008). Two forthcoming studies should also be cited: Andrew Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion in Medieval Bruges* (Cambridge University Press); Laura Crombie, 'In War and in Peace: Archery and Crossbow Guilds in Flanders, 1300-1500' (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow).
- 6 E. Peters and W.P. Simons, 'The New Huizinga and the Old Middle Ages', *Speculum* 74 (1999) 587-620, at 605.

Burgundian legacy to so many nation states doubtless helps explain the enduring appeal of the subject, not to mention the continuing willingness of modern governments to contribute generously to the organisation of great exhibitions. But the teleology of national state formation can also have the effect of rigidifying the chronological boundaries attributed to the 'Century of Burgundy' in markedly different ways.

Marc Boone wryly observes in one contribution here that the 'limites chronologiques' of 1363 to 1477 (accession of Philip the Bold as Duke of Burgundy to the death of his grandson Charles the Bold at Nancy) 'trahissent une vision française' of the Burgundian century.⁷ To modern Belgian or Dutch historians, 1369 or 1384 have seemed more legitimate starting points than 1363. Philip the Bold's marriage to Margaret of Male and his subsequent accession as Count of Flanders did indeed inaugurate a long period of increasingly centralised rule.⁸ If one accepts the logic of 1369 or 1384 as a *terminus a quo*, then 1477 begins to lose credibility as a *terminus ad quem*. The duchy of Burgundy and other territories reverted to the French crown from that point on, but the process of 'state formation' which is commonly perceived to have begun under the Valois dukes continued to evolve in the Low Countries around the ruling Habsburg-Valois dynasty, the central and local organs of government, great noble families and powerful cities of the region. When, then, does the 'Century of Burgundy' end? In 1506, date of the death of Philip the Fair, 'dernier duc de Bourgogne'.⁹ The 'Burgundian' dominions were destined thereafter to form part of a wider universal empire which commanded the ruler's attention. The Low Countries were governed by delegation under a series of great noble *lieutenants-généraux* or *stadhouders* who are studied by Jean-Marie Cauchies in one of the publications listed below, 'avant que des femmes, prestigieuses et énergiques il est vrai, ne soient à leur tour mêlées aux affaires'¹⁰: first Margaret of Austria (†1530), then her niece, Mary of Hungary (†1558), both ruling in the name of Charles V. But the idea of Burgundy and many of the key forces that characterised the pre-1506 era did not disappear upon Philip the Fair's death, and many Dutch-language studies naturally opt for a later division in the history of the Burgundian Low

7 M. Boone, 'Introduction', in: Haemers, Van Hoorebeek and Wijsman, *Entre la ville, la noblesse et l'état*, 1-6, at 5.

8 Kerkhoff, *Maria van Hongarije en haar hof*, 17.

9 J.-M. Cauchies, *Philippe le Beau: Le dernier duc de Bourgogne* (Turnhout 2003), especially 246-250.

10 J.M. Cauchies, 'Les premières lieutenances générales dans les Pays-Bas (fin 15e - début 16e siècle)', in: Federinov and Docquier, *Marie de Hongrie*, 33-38, at 38.

11 H. Cools, *Mannen met macht. Edellieden en de moderne staat in de Bourgondisch-Habsburgse Nederlanden (1475-1530)* (Zutphen 2001) 143, agreeing with W. Prevenier and W. Blockmans, *De Bourgondiërs. De Nederlanden op weg naar eenheid, 1384-1530* (Amsterdam, Leuven 1997) 11.

Countries: 1530, date of Margaret of Austria's demise?¹¹ 1555, date of Charles V's abdication? Even the Dutch Revolt no longer seems quite as obvious a break as it once appeared. Peter Arnade has recently argued that 'the cultural forerunners of the Revolt [lie] in the Burgundian era of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries [...] [and] it is in the fifteenth century that tensions between the civic and princely spheres of the Habsburg Netherlands come fully into relief'.¹² The century of Burgundy grows ever longer.

Continuities in political culture

However one defines it, the notion of a 'Long Century of Burgundy' (longer, at least, than the dates commonly attributed in Francophone and Anglophone historiographies) has the undeniable merit of drawing out continuities of political culture which can be obscured when undue emphasis is placed upon dynastic caesurae. This central point emerges, for the early part of the 'Burgundian century', in Carole Chattaway's study of the Order of the Golden Tree during the reign of Philip the Bold (1363-1404). The order, she argues, was a widespread alliance of French nobles under Burgundian leadership against the policies of Louis Duke of Orléans during the internal conflicts which engulfed the kingdom under Charles VI (1380-1422). Whether Philip's aims really did include his family 'taking over the [French] Crown itself' (as Chattaway hypothesises) is impossible to say and actually quite difficult to believe, but the deep engagement of the first Valois Burgundian duke with French royal politics is amply demonstrated here. Chattaway's central point reminds us that Richard Vaughan's depiction of Philip the Bold – a prince intent on creating 'a separate, independent Burgundian state' – was a rather one-dimensional figure.¹³ Arguably, indeed, Philip the Bold continued where his Capetian predecessors as dukes of Burgundy had left off, at least in terms of his profound immersion in the political life of the kingdom of France. Raymond Cazelles showed long ago how the Capetian dukes of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries also sought to influence the actions of French kings, and by similar means: by marrying into the royal line, for instance, or by peopling the king's administration with 'men of the east'.¹⁴

- 12 P. Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca, London 2008) 8-9.
- 13 Chattaway, *The Order of the Golden Tree*, 107-108; R. Vaughan (with an introduction by M.G.A. Vale), *Philip the Bold: The Formation of the Burgundian State* (Woodbridge 2002).

- 14 R. Cazelles, *La société politique et la crise de la royauté sous Philippe de Valois* (Paris 1958). For a development of this point, see G. Small, *Late Medieval France* (Basingstoke 2009) *passim*.

Raymond Cazelles is absent from the bibliography of Edward de Maesschalck's new account of the history of the Burgundian dominions, *De Bourgondische vorsten 1315-1530*, and that is not the only omission which might raise an eyebrow. But De Maesschalck's purpose is not to produce a major scholarly revision of our understanding of the Burgundian phenomenon; rather, this is an attempt, for a wider public, 'om de meest geslaagde aspecten van diverse biografieën en synthesen tot één overzichtelijk geheel te combineren' (10). In this respect *De Bourgondische vorsten* is a definite success, its lively narrative built around the 'strong women' and 'dissolute machomen' of the Burgundian court, the whole accompanied by a large number of colour illustrations, many of them unfamiliar. In at least one respect too, De Maesschalck does draw attention to continuities in Burgundian political culture beyond the dates one commonly associates with the Valois dukes. This handsome book begins in 1315, not a date usually associated with the history of the Burgundian Netherlands, but rather the year in which Odo IV, penultimate Capetian duke of Burgundy, succeeded to his title.¹⁵ The reason given is simply the author's curiosity to know what preceded the reign of Philip the Bold, but the choice inevitably leads him to delineate continuities between the Capetian and Valois eras, such as the problems which confronted rulers governing lands either side of the Franco-imperial boundary (the duchy and the county of Burgundy in particular).

Some historians would even argue that continuities in Franco-Burgundian political culture extended far beyond the fourteenth century, and that the actions of the Valois dukes of Burgundy themselves can only be properly understood in the light of their deep attachment to a wider polity in the Kingdom of France. Huizinga, later followed by Paul Bonenfant and André Leguai, clearly thought of Philip the Good in this way.¹⁶ Few would accuse Charles the Bold of having a Francocentric outlook, but many of his servants remained strongly convinced of their obligations towards the French king as their ultimate lord. In the collection of essays devoted to Philip of Cleves under discussion here, we are rightly reminded by Jean-Marie Cauchies, Frederick Buylaert and Jan Dumolyn that such continuities remained real concerns for contemporaries. In the eyes of the great Burgundian nobles who were forced

15 I am aware of only one other work dealing with the Valois period which starts in 1315: Marie-Thérèse Caron, *La noblesse dans le duché de Bourgogne, 1315-1477* (Lille 1987). But the date is selected in this case purely because a particularly informative document in the field becomes available at that point (17).

16 See, for bibliography, R. Vaughan (with introduction by G. Small), *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy* (Woodbridge 2002) xix, xlvi, li.

by difficult circumstances to take stock of their position in the decades after 1477, 'la loyauté vis-à-vis du roi de France, suzerain du comté de Flandre, est indubitablement entrée en ligne de compte'.¹⁷ Conclusions such as these sit uncomfortably within the chronologies generated by the teleology of national state formation, this time of Belgium and the Netherlands, but they are no less significant for that.

Gradually, then, we have come to think of the 'Century of Burgundy' in broader terms than those once suggested by the subsequent development of the nation state. Lines of inquiry are pursued and methods and theoretical approaches are applied either side of any notional dividing line which might be deemed to exist in 1477. The raft of books under review here provides much evidence that the trend is strengthening, but we are also made aware of the uneven spread of the work, as well as some of the obstacles to be faced. These points can be pursued through a discussion of three themes which stand out in this latest crop.

The court

Analysis of the court has long been central to our understanding of Burgundian power for reasons adduced above. One strand in the historiography – going back at least as far as Huizinga – focuses on the material culture of the court, widening outwards from the contemplation of objects now housed in museums (in Huizinga's case, the work of Flemish primitives) to consider the societies and polities that made and used them. That tradition is alive and well today – if anything, indeed, it has been accentuated by the 'cultural turn' in historical research. The remarkable catalogue of the exhibition devoted to *Charles the Bold (1433-1477): Splendour of Burgundy* (Bern, Bruges, Vienna 2008-2010) is a model in this field. Alongside the fine plates and informative commentary, the catalogue brings together a number of valuable essays and shorter contextual pieces which, together, deepen our understanding of Burgundian court culture. In 'Palaces and tents filled with art: the court culture of Charles the Bold', for example, Birgit Franke and Barbara Welzel use their understanding of a wide-range of artistic media – tapestry, table decoration, ceremonial armour – to analyse in convincing detail how ducal 'choreographies of power' were orchestrated

17 F. Buylaert and J. Dumolyn, 'Conclusion.

L'importance sociale, politique et culturelle de la haute noblesse dans les Pays-Bas bourguignons et habsbourgeois (1475-1525): Un état de la question', in: Haemers, Van Hoorebeeck and Wijsman, *Entre la ville, la noblesse et l'état*, 279-294, at 288.



The town council reading out an ordinance, while the citizens look on and discuss among themselves.

Jacques de Guise, *Croniques de Hainaut* [Chronicles of Hainaut], 1448.

Royal Belgian Library, Brussels.

through multiple layers of display and meaning. The performative contexts within which these objects commonly functioned – tournaments, entry ceremonies, marriages – have been identified as core constituents of a Burgundian ‘Theatre State’, a term which Walter Prevenier and Wim Blockmans borrowed from the anthropologist Clifford Geertz. This, too, is a notion which has recently been transplanted from the historiography of the Valois court into that of its Habsburg successor, by Anne-Laure Van Bruaene.¹⁸ Historians are thus finding new ways to investigate the massive investment of the state’s growing revenues in luxury goods and symbolic communication across the ‘Long Burgundian century’.

But in other respects, the study of the court has not travelled quite so smoothly from the Valois context to a Habsburg one. A second strand in the historiography uses *ordonnances* and prosopographical methods to dissect the court as a dynamic political entity, and it would be fair to say that the Habsburg court in the Low Countries has not always benefitted from the same level of analysis as its Valois predecessor in this regard. Jacqueline Kerkhoff’s study of *Maria van Hongarije en haar hof* uses court *ordonnances* to shed new light on many aspects of court life during one of the most neglected reigns in the ‘Long Century of Burgundy’, with particular emphasis on court structure and function, court culture and itineration. Although there is also a chapter on the courtiers, what is missing, as the author readily admits, is a prosopographical approach to that subject. One can sympathise with the reasons why. The sources lie in far-flung repositories and pose far greater linguistic challenges than those associated with the Valois Burgundian court. Nonetheless, without a firmer knowledge of who served at court and, more especially, what their wider interests and attributes were, it is hard to concur with Kerkhoff’s view that the court in the early modern period was moving ever further from the business of government, conducted increasingly through discrete organs of state. Was the court really a ‘gesloten gemeenschap’ (110), a judgment echoing Sergio Bertelli’s description of Italian Renaissance courts as ‘closed worlds’?¹⁹ Without a prosopographical approach, it is hard to say in what sense this might be accurate. Courtiers took part in activities which had a direct bearing on political life far beyond the court, and if we knew who these courtiers were in greater detail, we might find such encounters highly significant. The art of hunting illustrates the point. As Christoph Niedermann notes in a separate contribution to this crop of work on Mary of Hungary, the hunt brought together ‘les

18 A.-L. Van Bruaene, ‘The Habsburg Theatre State: Court, City and the Performance of Identity in the Early Modern Low Countries’, in: R. Stein and J. Pollmann (eds.), *Networks, Regions and Nations: Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300-1650* (Leiden, Boston 2010) 131-149.

19 Sergio Bertelli, ‘The Courtly Universe’, in: S. Bertelli, F. Cardini and E. Garbero Zorzi (eds.), *Italian Renaissance Courts* (London 1986) 7-38, at 17.



The Death Bed of Maria of Burgundy (1482). The man at the foot of the bed (with ermine cape) probably represents Maximilian, looking his wife in the eyes for the last time.

Die excellente cronike van Vlaenderen [The Excellent Chronicle of Flanders], published by Willem Vorsterman in Antwerp, 1531.

National Library of the Netherlands, The Hague.

courtisans, mais aussi la petite noblesse et les membres du patriciat urbain [...] c'était un moyen efficace permettant au souverain et à sa régente d'entretenir des relations personnelles avec leur entourage, leurs hôtes, et la noblesse locale'.²⁰ Who met whom at the hunt was an important political matter. For the Habsburg court in the Low Countries, therefore, there is still a need for the type of research Jeroen Duindam called for recently: 'studies met een prosopografische ondergrond en analyses van de besluitvorming aan het hof'.²¹

Prosopography is, by contrast, used to remarkable effect in Jelle Haemers' new study of state power and urban revolts in the reign of Mary of Burgundy (1477-1482). At last the complex events of the years following Charles the Bold's demise are set out in an accessible, book-length study which an Anglophone audience can read with profit. Haemers charts the gradual but fragile establishment of Habsburg authority over the former Burgundian dominions in a three-cornered narrative which focuses on the state (the ruler, central organs of government), the great nobles of the Low Countries, and the cities (particularly the commercial metropole of Bruges, and to a lesser extent the great manufacturing centre of Ghent and the sleepier city of Ypres). Prosopographical techniques are used to identify and then explore the interests of key factions which operated at court and within the cities, around leading men like Louis of Bruges (Mary of Burgundy's 'first knight of honour') or William Moreel (a prominent member of the Bruges elite). The result is an impressively nuanced account of why it proved so difficult for Maximilian to establish his rights in the Burgundian dominions. At the centre of this narrative is the court, which emerges from Haemers's study, not as a closed world disconnected from government and politics, but rather as the beating heart of the polity.

Female power, female agency

The court could serve as a particularly effective forum for the development and exercise of female power. This last theme has itself become a significant feature of research into the 'Long Century of Burgundy', and arguably the study of female figures of the Burgundian house is the one remaining growth area in that strand of biographical and dynastic historiography which was typified by Richard Vaughan. Monique Sommé's work on Isabella of Portugal, third wife of Philip the Good, stands as a landmark in the field, but in recent years

20 C. Niedermann, 'Marie de Hongrie et la chasse', in: Federinov and Docquier, *Marie de Hongrie*, 115-123, at 123.

21 J. Duindam, 'Van cohabitatie naar coexistentie? Hofhouding en staatsbestuur in vroeg-modern Europa', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 115 (2002) 254-273, at 272.

it is the 'early modern' (rather than 'late medieval') period which has attracted most attention – a period when women of the ruling house in this region were, among many other things, regents with potentially wide powers.²² Perhaps the closest we come in this batch of studies to isolating and interpreting specifically female agency is in Laetitia Gorter-van Royen's contribution to the new collection of essays on *Marie de Hongrie: Politique et culture sous la Renaissance aux Pays-Bas*, concerning Margaret of Austria and Mary of Hungary as regents under Charles V. Here, regency *ordonnances* are examined in tandem with the details of the princesses' political roles in the Low Countries, which was substantial in both cases, perhaps even more so in Mary's than in Margaret's.²³ Our knowledge can only be enhanced by important new initiatives underway in the field, notably the edition of Mary of Hungary's early correspondence with her brother which is announced here by Jean-Paul Hoyois.²⁴ Elsewhere, however, it is hard to gauge what agency the women of the dynasty really had. We learn a great deal about the events of Mary of Burgundy's reign in Jelle Haemers's new book as we have seen, but Mary herself is *la grande absente*: 'after her marriage with Maximilian she no longer played a role in the decision-taking process'.²⁵ Or should we say, more accurately, that the decision-taking process did not leave records of any role she might have played? Perhaps Philip the Good really did believe that almost every noble family was ruled by the lady of the house, as he is reported to have said: but how would one prove that were true?²⁶

Identifying female agency remains problematic, a fact that is illustrated in other ways by essays which figure in the collaborative volume on *Livres et lectures de femmes en Europe entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance*. In the library of Jeanne d'Artois, which was a gift from Philip the Good to his chancellor Nicolas Rolin in 1426, Hanno Wijsman can say with some confidence that we have a clear example of a female collection of books. Jeanne was a widow

22 M. Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal, duchesse de Bourgogne: Une femme au pouvoir au XVe siècle* (Villeneuve d'Ascq 1998); M. Triest, *Macht, vrouwen en politiek, 1477-1558. Maria van Bourgondië, Margareta van Oostenrijk, Maria van Hongarije* (Leuven 2000); D. Eichberger (ed.), *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York. Margaret of Austria* (Leuven 2005); H. Schnitker, 'Margaret of York, Princess of England and Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503: Female Power, Influence and Authority in Later Fifteenth-Century North-Western Europe', 2 volumes (University of Edinburgh PhD 2007).

23 L. Gorter-van Royen, 'Les régentes de Charles-Quint aux Pays-Bas: Marguerite d'Autriche et Marie de Hongrie', in: Federinov and Docquier, *Marie de Hongrie*, 25-32, building on her *Maria van Hongarije, regentes der Nederlanden. Een politieke analyse op basis van haar regentschapsordonnanties en haar correspondentie met Karel V* (Hilversum 1995).

24 J.-P. Hoyois, 'La correspondance entre Marie de Hongrie et Charles Quint avant et au début de la régence: Une édition sur le métier', in: Federinov and Docquier, *Marie de Hongrie*, 52-60.

25 Haemers, *For the Common Good*, 38.

26 Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 130.

for almost all her days, and her brothers are far more likely than her to have inherited their father's manuscripts.²⁷ But in other contributions it becomes clear that a female library may in fact have been a couple's library, and instances of husbands and wives borrowing books from one another are numerous.²⁸ Margaret of Austria, for her part, appears to have read like a man. Anne-Marie Legaré notes that princess's marked preference for 'romans de chevalerie, compilations historiques, chroniques et généalogies de la maison de Bourgogne' – precisely the sort of reading material which, according to another of her contributors, 'on trouve habituellement dans les bibliothèques typiquement masculines'.²⁹ Margaret inherited books from male relatives and bought others from male servants, but she also commissioned major historiographical enterprises herself, such as the recension of the official chronicle written for her grandfather and great-grandfather, in which Habsburg rulers could read of an earlier Golden Age of Burgundian greatness.³⁰ Perhaps, then, Margaret's was simply a ruler's library, irrespective of her gender? Rulers read history, or at least they were supposed to, according to the extensive literature of advice that was aimed at them.

Ideology

Rulers' libraries are a core component in the third of our themes, ideology. Late medievalists in particular have come to regard the 'birth of ideologies' as something they can write about, and in the Burgundian Low Countries the work of Arjo Vanderjagt has been influential.³¹ In a period of increasingly intense communication between ruler and ruled, itself stimulated by taxation

27 H. Wijsman, 'Les livres de la "Demoiselle de Dreux": La bibliothèque d'une femme au seuil du XVe siècle', in: Legaré, *Livres et lectures de femmes en Europe entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance*, 67-75.

28 D. Jeannot, 'Les bibliothèques de princesses en France au temps de Charles VI: L'exemple de Marguerite de Bavière', in: Legaré, *Livres et lectures de femmes en Europe entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance*, 191-201, at 196; B. Schnerb, 'Les livres de Marguerite de Bécourt, dame de Santes', in: *ibid.*, 211-220, at 215-216.

29 Cf. A.-M. Legaré, 'Les bibliothèques de deux princesses: Marguerite d'York et Marguerite d'Autriche', in: *idem*, *Livres et lectures de femmes en Europe entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance*, 253-264, at

257, and Wijsman, 'Les livres de la "Demoiselle de Dreux"', *ibid.*, 74.

30 G. Small, *George Chastelain and the Shaping of Valois Burgundy: Political and Historical Culture at Court in the Fifteenth Century* (Woodbridge 1997) 209-211, 216.

31 Recent relevant work includes C. Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late Medieval France* (Berkeley, Oxford 1991); D.J.D. Boulton and J.R. Veenstra (eds.), *The Ideology of Burgundy: The Promotion of a National Consciousness, 1364-1565* (Leiden, Boston 2006). Arjo Vanderjagt's many contributions date back to his *Qui sa vertu anoblit: The Concepts of Noblesse and Chose Publicque in Burgundian Political Thought* (Groningen 1981).

and the growth of the state, ideology may be defined as a set of discourses and key words 'deployed to convince a society that the interests of a small group [were] really common interests'.³² We commonly look for sources and formative influences of ideologies in books: those owned by Flemish councillors of the dukes of Burgundy, for example, or in the works read by 'sage and prudent' advisors to English kings.³³ Sustained attempts to isolate strands in the ideology of the governing elite in the Low Countries now exist for the 'Long Burgundian century', including Lisa Maria van Hijum's thesis which takes the period from 1450 to 1550 as a single unit, or Bernhard Sterchi's study of aristocratic literature and political communication, which also extends into the sixteenth century.³⁴ But of course, despite these wide-ranging and stimulating studies, 'l'analyse idéologique des idées soutenues par ces élites [...] est loin d'avoir livré tous ces secrets'.³⁵ In this current crop of work, for instance, Céline van Hoorebeeck raises some important caveats concerning our attempts to locate the intellectual origins of ideologies. Discussing the libraries of three great Burgundian servants – Philip of Cleves, Thomas de Plaine and Philippe Wielant – she enumerates the dangers of 'reading off' ideological inclinations from lists of books which people owned. Book lists are imperfect, not necessarily made by the owner, or even during his or her lifetime. Books may be read differently depending on 'edition', authorial intention, reader's training and so forth – all of which is to assume, of course, that they were ever read in the first place, something which the late Pierre Cockshaw was fond of questioning, perhaps tongue-in-cheek.³⁶ Beyond the construction of ideologies lay their dissemination and reception, a wider and more complex subject area in which our current crop makes further valuable contributions. Foremost among these is Jelle Haemers's close discussion of

32 Haemers, *For the Common Good*, 263.

33 J. Dumolyn, 'L'idéologie d'état des conseillers des ducs de Bourgogne', in: V. Challet, J.-P. Genet and H.R. Oliva Herrier (eds.), *La sociedad política a fines del siglo XV en los reinos ibéricos y en Europa: ¿Élites, pueblo, súbditos?* (Valladolid 2007) 145-164; J.-P. Genet, 'Les conseillers du prince en Angleterre à la fin du Moyen Âge: Sages et prudents?', in: R. Stein (ed.), *Powerbrokers in the Late Middle Ages: The Burgundian Low Countries in a European Context* (Turnhout 2001) 117-151.

34 L.M. van Hijum, *Grenzen aan macht. Aspecten van politieke ideologie aan de hoven van Bourgondische en Bourgondisch-Habsburgse machthebbers tussen 1450 en 1555* (Enschede 1999); B. Sterchi, *Über den Umgang mit Lob und Tadel. Normative Adelsliteratur und politische Kommunikation im burgundischen Hofadel, 1430-1506* (Turnhout 2005).

35 Boone, 'Introduction', in: Haemers, Van Hoorebeeck and Wijsman, *Entre la ville, la noblesse et l'état*, 1-6, at 6.

36 C. Van Hoorebeeck, 'Les bibliothèques de Philippe de Clèves (1456-1528), Thomas de Plaine (ca. 1444-1507) et Philippe Wielant (1441-1520): Essai de mise en perspective', in: Haemers, Van Hoorebeeck and Wijsman, *Entre la ville, la noblesse et l'état*, 223-243.

how the ruling élite's notion of the 'Common Good' failed to convince a wider polity among the nobility and the towns of the Burgundian Netherlands in the tumultuous years of Mary of Burgundy's reign. This narrative has now been joined by a stimulating series of essays on the theme of the Common Good in a late medieval urban context, with much to say about the Burgundian Low Countries.³⁷

Conclusions

Historians are thus developing new approaches to Burgundian history in ways that scale down the importance of chronological boundaries resulting from the teleology of national state formation. Surprising though it may seem, the current crop of work suggests we need more studies which explore the history of the court, especially the Habsburg court – not just how it was organised internally, but also how it opened onto a wider polity and interacted with other forces there. Great nobles were a key part of that wider polity and yet they remain a surprisingly understudied group, so more initiatives like the collective volume devoted to Philip of Cleves would be valuable. We are beginning to understand far better the role of the women of the ruling dynasty in the 'Long Burgundian Century', but it would be good to see that work located within a wider framework of gender studies, thus far a neglected area in Burgundian historiography. Finally, there is the question of political thought, here articulated as 'ideology' – an emerging strand which has much more to yield, especially if it is extended beyond the court to encompass urban groups in power. ◀

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37 E. Lecuppre-Desjardin and A.-L. Van Bruaene (eds.), *De Bono Communi: The Discourse and Practice of the Common Good in the European City, 13th-16th Centuries* (Turnhout 2010).



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Recensies

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De bekende slogan 'Er gaat niets boven Groningen' maakt duidelijk dat de Groningers de perifere ligging van hun gewest niet als een nadeel beschouwen. Men zou dit als een rode draad in de Groningse geschiedenis kunnen beschouwen. Ver verwijderd van de centra van de macht konden de Groningers hun eigen rol spelen in de economische, politieke en culturele geschiedenis van de Nederlandse natiestaat. In de negentiende eeuw ontwikkelde de Groningse landbouw zich tot de meest geavanceerde van Europa. Hier ontstond een welvarende 'graanrepubliek', waarin een boerenstand zich zelfbewust als economische, politieke en culturele elite, eerst tegenover de adel, later tegenover de arbeidersbevolking plaatste. Op basis van de landbouw en het transport in de Veenkoloniën kwam een moderne industrie tot stand. De mix van snelle economische ontwikkeling en een perifere ligging stimuleerde de opkomst van oppositionele bewegingen in het nationale verband. Al vroeg in de negentiende eeuw wortelde hier een radicaal liberalisme, dat zich ook nationaal manifesteerde; later werden socialisme, anarchisme en communis-

me invloedrijker dan elders. De antiparlementaire houding van de Sociaal-Democratische Bond van Domela Nieuwenhuis, die in 1894 aanleiding zou worden voor de oprichting van de SDAP, vond een belangrijke basis op het Oost-Groningse platteland (het antiparlementarisme van de SDB werd in 1893 vastgelegd in een 'motie Hoogezand-Sappemeer'). Volgens de socioloog Hofstee waaierte een 'modern-dynamisch cultuurpatroon' vanuit Groningen uit over Nederland, wat zich onder meer uitte in vroege geboortebeperving. Aletta Jacobs kwam hier vandaan. In kerkelijk opzicht ontstonden hier zowel het modernisme van de Groninger richting in de hervormde kerk, als de orthodoxe afscheiding van 1834.

Men kan dit beschouwen als clichés, en deze provinciegeschiedenis brengt, zoals het betaamt, tal van nuances aan, maar de indruk blijft bestaan dat het geavanceerde Groningen in de negentiende eeuw vanuit een oppositionele houding meer invloed heeft gehad in het nationale bestel dan andere perifere streken. Of dit zo is geweest is uit de betreffende hoofdstukken niet na te gaan, want vergelijkingen met andere provincies treft men er niet in aan. Toch was de vraag naar de voorsprong van Groningen op zijn plaats geweest, te meer daar de integratie van de Groningse streken in het Nederlandse bestel wel een hoofdstuk van het boek is. Vanuit een andere uithoek, Limburg, is opvallend dat in deze negentiende-eeuwse oppositie- en vernieuwingsbewegingen in Groningen steeds binnen het nationale verband, dus niet regionalistisch opereerden. In Limburg was (en is) het anti-Hollandse element veel sterker, zij het deels in het kader van de nationale katholieke emancipatie en verzuiling.

De geschiedenis van Groningen wordt in deze delen beschreven vanuit het besef dat de 'eenwording van Nederland' een langdurig proces is geweest. Dat geldt ook voor de integratie van Groningen in het Nederlandse bestel. Het integratieproces werd gemarkeerd door politieke