

10254017



EDINBURGH
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

Shelf Mark

Theses Section 2

MILLAR

Ph.D. 1996



30150

016426642

*Olivier de la Marche and the
Court of Burgundy, c.1425-1502*

ALISTAIR MILLAR

PhD.

The University of Edinburgh

1996



ABSTRACT

The principal aim of the thesis is to give a detailed analysis of the career and literary output of the Burgundian courtier and chronicler, Olivier de la Marche, within the context of the political and cultural milieu of the Burgundian court in the second half of the fifteenth century. There is a full and comprehensive survey of the progression of la Marche's career under the last two Valois Dukes of Burgundy and their Habsburg successors, and this simultaneously attempts to shed some light on the world of the princely court in the late medieval period. Consideration of la Marche's major achievements as a diplomat, bureaucrat, counsellor, and military captain is given, as well as a detailed survey of his role as the stage-manager responsible for some of the magnificent *fêtes* which characterised the Burgundian court during this period. Consideration is also given to the ways in which la Marche's career was shaped by the changing political circumstances of his times, particularly in the years that followed the death of the last of the Valois dukes and the accession of the Habsburgs to their inheritance. There is also a detailed examination of la Marche's literary output. Attention is devoted to analysing the nature of his works, the manner in which they came to be written, the personal and professional experiences as well as the literary influences that acted upon him, and the objectives behind their composition. Some comment is made about the identity of both the perceived and actual audience of these works. The thesis also endeavours to demonstrate the ways in which some of this literature can be interpreted as both a response to and an attempt to shape the political and cultural milieu in which it was circulating, and how an understanding of it can enhance our knowledge of some of the wider historical developments of the later part of the fifteenth century.

I declare that this thesis is an original composition, and that I am its author.

Alistair Millar

ALISTAIR MILLAR

CONTENTS

Introduction	i
A Note on the Sources	xvii
Acknowledgements	xviii
Abbreviations	xix
Ch. 1. The Life of Olivier de la Marche : A Summary.	1
Ch. 2. The Courtier : Ceremony, Pageantry and Stage-Management.	53
Ch. 3. <i>Mémoires</i> .	102
Ch. 4. Poems and Treatises.	132
Ch. 5. The End of Valois Burgundy? Olivier de la Marche and the Habsburg Succession	173
Ch. 6. The First Book of <i>Mémoires</i> in its Political Context.	216
Ch. 7. The First Book of <i>Mémoires</i> in its Historiographical Context.	245
Conclusion	291
Appendix, Olivier de la Marche's Date of Birth	299
Bibliography	309

INTRODUCTION

The principal aim of this thesis is to give a detailed analysis of the career and literary output of the Burgundian courtier and chronicler Olivier de la Marche within the context of political and cultural change in the second half of the fifteenth century. Born in the Duchy of Burgundy in about 1425, la Marche had, by the time of his death in Brussels on 1 February 1502, enjoyed a long and distinguished career at the court of the Valois dukes of Burgundy and their Habsburg successors at a time when these powerful princes held sway over not only Burgundy, but a large section of north-east France as well as much of modern-day Belgium and Holland. An able and accomplished courtier, bureaucrat, diplomat and soldier, la Marche maintained a close professional relationship with the dukes, and was a leading figure in the creation of the elaborate and colourful pageantry for which the Burgundian court was renowned. In addition, he was the author of a considerable number of literary works, both verse and prose. The most famous and widely cited of these is *Mémoires*, which records the author's experiences at the Burgundian court between 1435 and 1488, and which has become a valuable source of information to generations of historians.¹ Besides *Mémoires*, some fifteen poems and eight prose treatises have been attributed to him with certainty.² Yet for over a century, there has been no comprehensive attempt to

¹ *Mémoires*, ed. H. Beaune & J. d'Arbaumont, 4 vols. (Société de l'histoire de France, Paris 1883-8).

² These works are very diverse in character and in length. Some of the poems are very short, notably *Huitain*, which consists of a mere eight lines, while others are much longer, such as *Le Chevalier délibéré*, which consists of 2704 lines. Similarly, the prose treatises vary from the three-page *Advis* addressed to Maximilian on how he should conduct himself towards his French neighbours, to *État de la maison du duc Charles*, which occupies 94 pages in the edition of Beaune & d'Arbaumont.

analyse either his career or his literary output in the second half of the fifteenth century. This thesis undertakes such an analysis.

Before the 1880s, very little was known about la Marche's career at all. The printed material that existed was for the most part editions of his work, and they included very little by way of analysis or annotation. The most frequently published work is *Mémoires*, complete editions of which survive in seven manuscript sources, all dating from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries,³ and to date in ten printed editions, the earliest of which appeared in 1562.⁴ None of these, however, contain any more than cursory sketches of la Marche's career at the Burgundian court, and they offer very little information that cannot be gleaned from a reading of the text. Such is the general pattern of virtually all the printed work which predates the 1880s. Indeed, the only piece that could be properly categorised as a biography is an unpublished work written in 1758 by 'l'Avocat Général de Frasne' which survives in a single manuscript source.⁵ It is a straightforward and reasonably informative account of la Marche's life, although its overall context - whether it was intended as an introduction to an edition of a text, or simply as a biography - is unclear. It is, furthermore, rather inaccessible. Nevertheless, modern scholars have little need to turn to this manuscript

³ These are B.N. ms. fr. 2868, which contains only the first book, ms. fr. 2869, and ms. fr. 23232; B.R. ms. 10999 and ms. II 10444: Bibliothèque du Musée Plantin, Antwerp, no. 141; and Bibliothèque de Lille, no. 329. On these see H. Stein, 'Étude sur Olivier de la Marche' in *Mémoires couronnés de l'Académie royale de Belgique*, 49 (1888), esp. pp.129-30, and H. Beaune in his introduction to *Mémoires*, I, pp.civ-cxii. In addition, fragments of the work survive in Bibliothèque de Valenciennes, no. 581, B.R. ms. 5760, and Bibliothèque Royale de la Haye, no. 1344, Stein, p.130, Beaune, pp.cix-cxi. A further fragment, apparently neglected by these scholars, survives in B.N. ms. fr. 9456, ff.400-11.

⁴ A list of all but one of the printed editions is given by Stein, pp.131-4, and Beaune, pp.cxiii-cxiv. The 1837 edition of J. Buchon, included by Beaune but neglected by Stein, also appears in Buchon's *Choix de chroniques et mémoires sur l'histoire de France* (Paris 1876), pp.295-599.

⁵ B.N. ms. fr. 9456, ff.412ff, 'Vie d'Olivier de la Marche prononcé par l'Avocat Général de Frasne à la séance du 21 février 1758'.

as a source of information thanks to the publication of much new biographical material in the 1880s and the decades that followed.

The 1880s saw the publication of two significant biographies, one by Henri Beaune as an introduction to his 1883 edition of *Mémoires*, and the other by Henri Stein in 1888.⁶ Both these works give detailed accounts of la Marche's career at the Burgundian court, and are generally reliable introductory surveys. Their main value to the modern scholar lies in the extensive amount of archival and documentary information that each has published. Nevertheless, the scope of the works is limited. Both are straightforward, step-by-step accounts of la Marche's career, with limited critical analysis of either this or, more significantly, his literature within the context of the political and cultural realities of his day. Furthermore, the information contained in them can now be supplemented in the light of recent historiography on the period in general.

In the decades that followed the publication of these biographies, scholars began to take much more interest in la Marche and his work, and to produce more illuminating surveys than had hitherto been the case. Overall, the scholars of the early twentieth century have dealt with la Marche in two principal ways, first as a source of factual information about the Valois dukes of Burgundy, and second as a guide to the pageantry, romance, and indeed the fantasy of late medieval chivalry. In doing so, these scholars have created a clear and resilient picture of la Marche and his work, and his significance for late medieval historiography.

⁶ See above, n.3. 34 years after his work was published, Stein produced a second biographical work, 'Nouveaux documents sur Olivier de la Marche et sa famille' in *Mémoires de l'Académie royale de Belgique. Lettres* (2), ix (1) (Brussels 1922).

The tone of twentieth-century scholarship was set in the exhaustive survey of medieval French literature given by Auguste Molinier at the beginning of the century, and by the equally thorough analysis of the literature of Valois Burgundy produced by Georges Doutrepoint. To Molinier, la Marche was a devoted servant of the house of Burgundy, for whom he saw himself as an apologist. His great passion was to celebrate the chivalrous lifestyle and the traditional values of the late medieval aristocracy, so much a hallmark of the Burgundian court. He therefore devoted much time to writing loving descriptions of the great festivities of the court, descriptions which were primarily designed to enhance the prestige of the Valois dukes among their peers.⁷ This theme was developed by Doutrepoint, to whom la Marche and Chastellain were ‘les deux *expositeurs* par excellence de la vie chevaleresque et mondaine de la cour’, and la Marche himself ‘l’illustrateur de la chevalerie’.⁸ Doutrepoint, who viewed la Marche as being less a precursor of Philippe de Commines and more a successor of Jean Froissart, stressed la Marche’s apparent fascination with all things chivalrous:

‘Festes et esbatemens emprinses’, tournois, réceptions mondaines, détails de mœurs et d’habillements, voilà ce dont il est soucieux d’escire. L’on a constaté, par exemple, que le récit du mariage de Charles le Téméraire lui prend ‘plus d’un tiers des chroniques de ce règne’.⁹

Doutrepoint also shared Molinier’s view that la Marche thought of himself as the apologist of the Valois dukes:

Il connaît l’art de louer et il le pratique à l’égard du ‘bon duc’ et de son fils. Il n’ignore pas leurs fautes, mais il les atténue en les résumant.¹⁰

⁷ A. Molinier, *Les sources de l’histoire de France. Le Moyen Age*, IV (Paris 1904), pp.200-2.

⁸ G. Doutrepoint, *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne* (Paris 1909), pp.443 & 445.

⁹ Ibid., p.447.

¹⁰ Ibid.

He ended by dismissing *Mémoires* as a poor guide to the period:

Il ne faudrait évidemment pas le considérer comme un guide très sûr pour l'histoire du temps: plus d'une fois il s'est trompé dans les questions de chronologie; en outre, il a manqué des informations nécessaires pour rapporter en toute exactitude certains événements de l'époque.¹¹

These are the principal themes to which scholars of la Marche and his literature were to cling over the following decades. A final dimension was added with the publication of Johan Huizinga's seminal *Waning of the Middle Ages*. To Huizinga, the rise and demise of Valois Burgundy was part and parcel of his overall contention that the fifteenth century was witness to the eclipse of the old established order following a brief Indian summer of its ideals. With specific regard to la Marche, Huizinga mocked the courtier's grave and sober analysis of correct dining procedure, a ceremony which he regarded as a mere charade, while elsewhere he questioned the quality of taste of the 'monstrous pageants' and the 'pretentious and ridiculous curiosities' on show at the Feast of the Pheasant in 1454, an event which la Marche was very much involved.¹²

The historians that followed Huizinga in the 1920s and 1930s appeared unable to break free of his, or in fact Molinier's and Doutrepoint's, fundamental assumptions. To Joseph Calmette, la Marche was a humble and uninspiring memorialist, who lacked the intellectual ability of his contemporary, Chastellain. His writing, although sincere, was simple and naive. A devoted servant of his masters in the best tradition of the chivalrous man, his work was dedicated to the celebration of the trappings of court

¹¹ Ibid., p.448.

¹² J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth 1955), pp.40-1 & 241-2.

life.¹³ These views were shared in a number of respects by Otto Cartellieri, who argued that la Marche, like Jean Lefèvre, seigneur de St. Rémy, was only really comfortable in the world of chivalry:

Olivier de la Marche devoted his whole life to the Burgundian house, which he did not forsake even after its fall. His memoirs and occasional writings ... are not the equal of Chastellain's chronicles. The point of view of the court official, punctiliously concerned with ceremonial, never fails to show itself. But as an eye-witness, he was able to narrate many important matters, and to preserve many personal details concerning the Dukes, whom he was able to observe at important moments.¹⁴

At its most extreme, early twentieth-century scholarship has depicted la Marche as a character lifted straight from the fantastic world of chivalrous romance. In the introduction to their English translation of *Mémoires*, Georgina Grace and Dorothy Margaret Stuart created the image of a charming idealist totally immersed in the ways of chivalry. A humble and naive servant, 'tranquil and serene', they envisaged him whiling away his later years in the writing of 'quaint, uninspired verses and manuals of chivalric lore' and 'delightful' poetry, against the idealised backdrop of the ducal court.¹⁵ The often harsh realities of court life are smoothed over, as the whimsical world of chivalrous fiction gently washes in.

The second half of the twentieth century has seen some further development in our understanding of la Marche and his literature, and attempts have been made to assess his work in ways which are altogether more sophisticated than either the blunt, subjective comparisons made to Chastellain and others by Calmette and Cartellieri, or the superficial, face-value interpretation offered by Grace and Stuart. In particular,

¹³ J. Calmette, *The Golden Age of Burgundy* (London 1962), pp.195 & 229-30.

¹⁴ O. Cartellieri, *The Court* (London 1929, reprinted 1972), pp.178-9.

¹⁵ Olivier de la Marche, *Memoirs*, ed & trans. G. Grace & D.M. Stuart (British Library typescript, 1930), I, pp.20 & 24. This is the only English translation of *Mémoires* in existence, and it has never been published.

M.S. Hardy has demonstrated that the genealogical myths contained in the first book of *Mémoires* are designed to give the Burgundian dukes a sense of legitimacy based on the heritage of their bloodline, and are part of a more general trend in some of the literature produced for the consumption of princes during this period.¹⁶ More recently, René Ménéage has placed the poem *Le Chevalier délibéré* within the wider context of literary development in the late medieval period.¹⁷ No fully comprehensive work has however emerged, and many of the fundamental assumptions outlined above remain unchallenged.

This leads us to consider the first of the two over-riding themes of this thesis. It is the aim of the thesis to demonstrate that although it must be accepted that la Marche was a man whose career and output were closely tied to the environment of the court, he was certainly much more than a naive sycophant unable to see beyond the conventions of chivalry. Instead, he should be seen as a determined, career-minded man, whose impressive rise through the hierarchy of the Burgundian court had more to do with ambition and the ability to perform the functions of courtier, bureaucrat, diplomat and soldier than the writing of manuals of chivalric lore. He was without question closely involved with the staging of spectacle and pageantry; these events were not, whoever, the decadent and hollow charades envisaged by Huizinga, but were important ceremonies with a very serious purpose in mind. Moreover, la Marche's participation in them was largely connected to their organisation, particularly in the case of the Feast of the Pheasant in 1454 and the marriage of Charles the Bold and

¹⁶ M.S. Hardy, *Olivier de la Marche and Chivalry and Monarchy in the Fifteenth Century* (University of London, MPhil thesis, 1970).

¹⁷ R. Ménéage, 'Le voyage délibéré du chevalier de la Marche' in *Sénéfiance*, 2 (1976), pp.211-19.

Margaret of York in 1468, and this would have required a range of skills including the ability to oversee the activities of a team of artists and craftsmen, to enlist the services of poets, musicians, and entertainers, to keep a careful account of expenses, and, as we shall see in some detail, to provide the inspiration for the *entremets* and other diversions that would be geared towards the overall iconography of the occasion. Such work is hardly the task of a quixotic simpleton.

We shall also see that la Marche's literary output was much more than a mere conglomeration of quaint poems and chivalrous musings. *Mémoires*, the best known of his works, will be discussed at some length below. Elsewhere, his work encompasses a wide range of styles and objectives. Some of the poetry in particular is admittedly very simple in concept, particularly the series of poems he produced in the last decade of his life of the consumption of various members of the ducal family, which are straightforward slices of moral instruction. But elsewhere, he produced literature that was far from the chivalrous nonsense attributed to him by some observers. *État de la maison du duc Charles* (1474) is, for example, a sober, practical manual designed to instruct a prince on the organisational requirements of an ideal household based on information acquired by the author from his position of *maître d'hôtel* in the household of Charles the Bold. Similarly, *Epistre pour tenir et célébrer la noble feste de la Thoisson d'Or* (1501) contains an account of the correct procedures to be observed at a chapter of the dukes' Order of the Golden Fleece, and was intended as a serious practical guide to these questions. In the treatise *Gaiges de Bataille* (1494), devoted to the issue of judicial duels, he showed a willingness to tackle some genuinely important ethical issues. Other works were altogether more personal in nature, particularly the allegorical poem *Le Chevalier délibéré* (1483),

without question his most emotionally-charged work, which should be understood as a response both to the traumatic events of the late 1470s and early 1480s, as well as to the author's growing acknowledgement of the fact that there were less years in front of him than there were behind.

It will thus be shown that la Marche was no slave to chivalric convention, but an ambitious man of creative and independent mind. Linked to this first major theme of the thesis is the need to question the view that la Marche, and the ideals and values which characterise his work, were ultimately the decaying remnants of a twilight medieval world. Certainly, he was in many respects a typical product of the northern nobility of the late Middle Ages, devout and pious, highly motivated by the concept of honour, and very favourably disposed towards the traditional values of courage, loyalty, and courtesy. His literature is full of praise for these values, and he frequently urged his readers to adopt them. Nevertheless, the thesis contends that his close association with these values does not imply that he should be dismissed as an anachronism, and that he can in some respects be seen to anticipate the ideals of the sixteenth century and the Renaissance. For example, his 'model courtier' persona, although derived from the tradition exemplified by Anthoine de la Sale's *Petit Jean de Saintré*, can equally be seen to anticipate the idealised courtier of Castiglione in the following century. Elsewhere, his moral outlook contains some pointers to the future. He was particularly fascinated by the concept that the events of the world were ultimately subject to the random forces of fortune, a belief almost certainly derived from his witnessing of the shocking and untimely death of Charles the Bold in 1477. This idea in some ways prefigures the concept which Machiavelli deployed a generation later. Finally, the elaborate *entremets* and *tableaux vivants* that he created

for the consumption of the court can hardly be seen as the symptoms of a dying culture, since this basic format would underpin court culture under the 'new monarchies' of Henry VII and Henry VIII of England, and Francis I and Henry II of France. Indeed, what was the Field of the Cloth of Gold if not an indulgent and purposeful foray into the ideals of chivalry that had so characterised the Burgundian court over half a century earlier?

This issue gives rise to the second overall theme of the thesis, which is rather more complicated than the first. The objective is to demonstrate the importance of la Marche's career, and more importantly his literary output and the attitudes he displays therein, within the context of the political and cultural upheaval to which the Burgundian Low Countries were witness in the second half of the fifteenth century. More specifically, it will be shown that much of la Marche's literary work was both shaped by and intended as a response to the uncertain realities that were created as a result of the sudden death of Charles the Bold and the accession of the Habsburgs to his inheritance in 1477. Although, as we have seen, he is usually portrayed as a man inextricably linked to the world of the Valois dukes of Burgundy, la Marche actually outlived the last of them by two and a half decades, during which time he would continue to be active as a courtier under Charles' successors, his daughter Mary of Burgundy, her husband Maximilian of Austria, and their son Philippe le Beau, to whom he held the position of personal tutor from 1485. Thus, of the 60 or so years that he spent as a courtier, 25 were spent outwith the service of the Valois dukes. More importantly, the vast majority of his literary work was produced in the period after 1477, and was therefore the product of the literary environment of the Habsburg court, not the Valois one. It was indeed from the Habsburg court that the majority of

intended recipients and actual readers of his work were drawn, and with the exception of two treatises and the very earliest sections of *Mémoires*, it is abundantly clear that the Valois dukes would not have been aware of the existence of his work at all.

The continuity of service that la Marche displayed to the successors of Charles the Bold forces the historian to make a re-assessment of the prevailing notions as to the nature of the impact that the Habsburg accession had on the political and cultural world of the old Valois territories. The prevailing view is that 1477 marks the ‘end of Valois Burgundy’, and the collapse of that last magnificent manifestation of a lost age of chivalry. And yet in Olivier de la Marche, we have an example of a man who continued to identify his career with the world of the court, and whose literary output was certainly present within its circles. Chapter 5 thus argues that by using la Marche as a representative figure, we must reject the notion that Burgundy simply collapsed in 1477. Rather, it will be shown that although a period of considerable upheaval, the two decades that followed 1477 are in fact primarily marked by an overall sense of continuity with the Valois past in political and cultural terms. This chapter also examines the motives of Olivier de la Marche in preferring to remain loyal to Charles’ successors instead of succumbing to the temptation of defection to the service of the French Crown, and asks to what extent he can be seen to typify the reactions of the Burgundian nobility as a whole. Analysis of the changing membership of the Order of the Golden Fleece as a microcosm of the Burgundian nobility between 1473 and 1481 suggests that the scale of the desertion to France that occurred in and after 1477 was far from comprehensive, that the Habsburg dukes continued to enjoy the support of the same noble families that had provided the bedrock of Valois power, and that Olivier de

la Marche, far from being exceptional in his decision to remain loyal to Mary of Burgundy, was part of a more general tendency.

The majority of the thesis is however devoted to an analysis of la Marche's literary output, much of which is subject to reinterpretation in the light of the observations outlined above. The most important work in this sense is *Mémoires*. As we have seen, *Mémoires* has been frequently dismissed as a piece of chivalrous nonsense, beset by errors of chronology and the omission of crucial information, and at best amounting to little more than unsophisticated propaganda aimed at the glorification of the Valois dukes. It is however the contention of this thesis that *Mémoires* in fact amounts to very much more than this.

In the first place, it is important that the work should be accurately dated. It has long been assumed that *Mémoires* is a relatively homogenous piece, which retains a unified sense of character and purpose throughout. This assumption is, however, an erroneous one. We shall see that the work was in fact written in a number of stages over the course of roughly three decades, that the standard edition to which we refer today is in reality a largely unrevised and disparate set of writings that have little sense of overall cohesion, and that only the earlier sections - roughly one third of the work at most - were written during the time of the Valois dukes. Both the so-called 'Introduction', or first book, as well as the section covering the period 1455-88, were written during the late 1480s and 1490s. This makes it difficult to accept the view that *Mémoires* should be seen as a piece of propaganda aimed at the glorification of the Valois dukes, since most of it was written long after the death of the last of them.

Given the fact that *Mémoires* is a disparate work, we cannot therefore look for a single motive for its compilation, nor for a solitary sense of purpose throughout. To

understand the work, we must examine the various sections separately and on their own merits. Chapter 3 looks at the earliest portions, those passages that were written during the lifetime of Charles the Bold, and attempts to explain exactly why la Marche began work on his most ambitious literary project when he did. It contends that his motive was less an attempt glorify his overlord, Charles the Bold, than a response to certain events that had profoundly affected his own life and outlook, as well as the position of the Valois court. More specifically, it is suggested that the writing of *Mémoires* represents, in its early stages, an attempt on its author's part to come to terms with the outcome of the duke's disastrous military expeditions in northern France in 1472, expeditions in which la Marche had an important personal stake, as well as with the emergence of the new, more bellicose character of ducal policy that had begun to develop with the accession of Charles as duke several years earlier.

However, with regard to those sections of *Mémoires* that were written in the 1480s and 1490s, an altogether different motive comes into play. The most significant part of the work in this context is the 'Introduction' or first book, which represents both a response to and an attempt to influence the series of events that had engulfed the Burgundian Low Countries in the aftermath of 1477 and the Habsburg accession. As we shall see, the 'Introduction' is very different in character to the rest of *Mémoires*, in that it consists of a quasi-mythical account of the history of Philippe le Beau's ancestors from earliest times down to his own day. It has as such been dismissed by scholars as an irrelevant piece of literature. Chapter 6 questions the validity of this view, and argues that the work is in fact of enormous value to historians in that it contains a wide array of clues as to the author's perception of and attitude towards the political and cultural circumstances in which it was written. It can in other

words provide us with an insider view, albeit a highly partisan one, of the events of the Habsburg succession, and one which actively seeks to influence the outcome of these events through an appeal to the work's recipient, Philippe le Beau. In short, 'Introduction' must be understood as a response to the political crisis that was triggered by the events of 1477. Many of the important themes regarding this crisis would furthermore be subject to development by the author in the later sections of *Mémoires* proper, written after the 'Introduction' had been completed.

On another level, the 'Introduction' should be seen as a piece of work which has a significant place in what might be termed the 'Burgundian historical tradition'. Chapter 7 examines the version of Burgundian history contained in its pages, from the earliest Burgundian kings down to the author's own day, and reveals how la Marche selectively borrowed and amended the notions about Burgundy's historical evolution that had been in circulation during the time of the Valois dukes in order to create a version that was palatable to an audience drawn from the world of the newly established Habsburg court in the Low Countries. In doing so, he offered an explanation as to how the political and constitutional status of late medieval Burgundy had been brought into being by the events of history, particularly with regard to its relationship with the kingdom of France.

The greater part of *Mémoires* was therefore intended for the consumption of the post-Valois court, and it was indeed from the world of the Habsburg court in the Low Countries that the majority of his readers appear to have come. Much of his work was certainly in circulation in this environment in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and a number of specific individuals who can be positively identified as readers of his work, or owners of manuscript copies, are named.

Similarly, it is apparent that the rest of la Marche's literary work was, for the most part, written for an audience that was drawn from the post-Valois court. As is noted above, these were not simply tales of chivalric lore, but encompassed a wide range of types. Many had a didactic purpose. The treatise *Gaiges de Bataille* was directly addressed to Philippe le Beau, and contains well-considered advice as to the prince's responsibilities should he be required to preside over a wager of battle, or judicial duel. The basis of this advice was in part the author's personal experience, derived from a lifetime of service to the court, but a substantial part of the information contained in this treatise was acquired through the consultation of a number of legal treatises and historical works. This gives rise to a more general point; far from being solely reliant upon personal recollection, much of la Marche's literary work is in fact the product of a relatively well-read mind, and we shall see that the consultation of literary sources provided an important dimension to his work, particularly with regard to the 'Introduction' or first book of *Mémoires*.

It is likely that in the writing of his didactic treatises, la Marche was casting himself as a wise and seasoned knight who could draw on the vast pool of experience that he had acquired from his years of service to the Valois dukes, and he can in this sense be seen to represent a bridge between the Valois and Habsburg periods, and a conduit through which the values he came to hold dear in his early years could be passed on. Exactly how far his advice was heeded by the young duke Philipe and his contemporaries at the turn of the century is difficult to measure with exactitude, but the survival of a relatively large number of manuscripts containing certain works suggests, as we shall see, sustained interest in his opinions in the period after his death. His influence can be measured in other ways also, and chapter 2 of the thesis

demonstrates that his treatise *État de la maison du duc Charles*, written in 1474, was destined to influence court culture in Edward IV's England, in the Low Countries of Philippe le Beau, at the imperial court of Maximilian of Austria, and indeed at the Spanish court of Charles V. La Marche's contribution to history was not confined to the needs of a relatively short-lived dynasty of dukes, but in many ways looked forward to the future. His work furthermore encompassed practical advice on institutional matters as well as homilies and history.

The general aim of this thesis is therefore to provide a comprehensive re-assessment of the life and more importantly the literature of Olivier de la Marche within the context of the political and cultural developments of the later fifteenth century, and to argue that his overall contribution to history is a great deal more sophisticated and far-reaching than has often been assumed. We shall see him as a man of many talents, whose place within the ranks of influential historical figures is assured.

A Note on the Sources

In the preparation of this thesis, extensive use has been made of literary and narrative source material, particularly the work of Olivier de la Marche. Virtually all of la Marche's work has been published, some of it on several occasions. The best edition of *Mémoires* is without question that of Beaune and d'Arbaumont, published by the Société de l'histoire de France, and it is from this version that all quotations are taken. This version has the added value of the inclusion of a number of la Marche's shorter treatises, including *État de la maison du duc Charles* and *Epistre pour tenir et célébrer la noble feste de la Thaison d'Or*. As for the poem *Le Chevalier délibéré*, I have used the edition of F. Lippmann published in London in 1898, which is itself a facsimile of the version printed at Scheidam in 1503.

Readers should be aware that in order to keep as close as possible to what contemporaries actually wrote, quotations from source material always appear in French and not in translation. Personal names are also, for the most part, given in French. In keeping with historiographical precedent, however, the names of the major historical figures discussed in the thesis are given in translated form. Thus, the names of the Valois dukes and their Habsburg successors always appear in English. The exception to this rule is Philippe le Beau, whose name always appears in the original French on the grounds that no entirely satisfactory translation of 'le Beau' exists.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the members of the History Department at the University of Edinburgh whose encouragement and direction have been invaluable in the preparation of this thesis. Particular thanks are given to my supervisors, Professor Kenneth Fowler, Professor Tony Goodman, and Dr. Richard Mackenney, to each of whom I owe an enormous debt of gratitude for their supervision, their constructive criticism and advice, and for their reading of and commenting on the various drafts of the thesis. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Graeme Small of Glasgow University for his advice and willingness to discuss issues of mutual historical interest.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.D.N.: Archives Départementales du Nord, Lille.

B.N.: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

B.R.: Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels.

CHAPTER 1. The Life of Olivier de la Marche: A Summary¹

Olivier de la Marche was born between 1425 and 1426² into a minor noble family whose origins lay in the principality of Bresse in the southern part of the County of Burgundy. Although no record of his birth has survived, his own testament records that he was baptised in a parish church in the town of Villegaudin near Châlon-sur-Saône in the Duchy of Burgundy, where, according to his will, a *Salve Regina* was to be instituted for the care of his soul.³ His remark that he was ‘natif de Bourgogne’⁴ is therefore probably a reference to the Duchy rather than the imperial County of Burgundy, and shows la Marche to have come from a territory which formed part of the kingdom of France in the mid- fifteenth century.⁵

His familial homeland was La-Marche-en-Bresse, a lordship which appears to have had no direct connection with that of the nearby lords of La-Marche-sur-Saône, rulers of a stretch of land near Auxerre on the border between the Duchy and County of Burgundy.⁶

¹ The two most important biographical works on Olivier de la Marche are H. Stein, ‘Étude sur Oliver de la Marche’, hereafter referred to as ‘Stein’, and H. Beaune’s introduction to *Mémoires*, ed. Beaune and d’Arbaumont, I, pp.i-clxvi, hereafter referred to as ‘Beaune’. Both published substantial numbers of documents relating to la Marche’s career. Also useful are H. Stein, ‘Nouveaux documents sur Olivier de la Marche et sa famille’, and his ‘La date de naissance d’Olivier de la Marche’ in *Mélanges offerts à Henri Pirenne*, II (Brussels 1926), pp.461-4; M.S. Hardy, *Olivier de la Marche and Chivalry and Monarchy in the Fifteenth Century* (University of London, M.Phil. thesis, 1970); Molinier, *Les sources de l’histoire de France: le Moyen Age*, IV, pp.200-2; Doutrepoint, *La Littérature française*, pp.445-8; *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: le Moyen Age*, ed. Bossuat et. al. (new ed., Paris n.d.), pp.1085-6; G. Grace and D.M. Stuart, *Memoirs of Olivier de la Marche*, I, pp.1-25, an introduction to their English translation of *Memoirs*, which appears to be little more than a summary of Stein; there are also two reviews of Stein and Beaune respectively by C. Lefebvre-Pontalis and J. Vasaen in *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes*, 50 (1889) pp. 111-4 and 587-91; and the hitherto undiscovered biography written in 1758 by ‘L’Avocat Général de Frasné’ in B.N. ms. fr. 9456, ff.412-426v.

² On the debate on la Marche’s date of birth and for my reasons for favouring 1425-6, see below Appendix 1.

³ *Mémoires*, I, pp.clx-clxi.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p.9.

⁵ The view of Henri Beaune, who denies that la Marche could have set foot in the County of Burgundy before 1434, p.xix.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.ii n.1.

During much of la Marche's early life, Bresse was ruled by Count Philip, the son of Louis, Duke of Savoy, and Anne de Lusignan.⁷ Philip was descended from the Valois dukes of Burgundy as the grandson of Mary of Burgundy, daughter of Philip the Bold. He succeeded to the title Duke of Savoy in 1496, only a year before his death. Much of his life was spent in the service of the Burgundian dukes, and in 1468 he was elected to the prestigious Order of the Golden Fleece.⁸ In 1470, he was the recipient of a dedicated treatise containing an account of Claude de Vauldrey's *pas d'armes* held at Ghent, written by Olivier de la Marche.⁹

The la Marche family was a well-established one by the mid-sixteenth century. The earliest surviving reference to the name appears to be that of a Renaud de la Marche, who was the witness to a treaty signed by Hugues III, Duke of Burgundy, and Guy, Count of Nevers, in 1174.¹⁰ There is however no concrete evidence to connect this man with the immediate ancestors of Olivier de la Marche, who, together with his children Bertrand, Guillaume and Regnaud, gave the church of St.-Martin-en-Bresse rights to the tithes of this parish in perpetuity.¹¹ It is however with Bertrand that we can begin to build a more substantial genealogical history of the family. A manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris gives a genealogical table of the family beginning in 1304,¹² and with the

⁷ S. Guichenon, *Histoire de Bresse et de Bagey* (Lyon 1650), I, part 1, pp.90-7.

⁸ H. Kervyn de Lettenhove, *La Toison d'Or* (Brussels 1907), p.93; and Philip's presence at the chapter held at Bois-le-Duc in 1481 is recorded by la Marche, *Mémoires*, IV, p.151.

⁹ 'Traictié d'un Tournoy tenu à Gand par Claude de Vauldrey seigneur de l'Aigle l'an 1469 [o.s.]' in B. Prost ed., *Traictés du duel judiciaire et relations de pas d'armes et tournois par Olivier de la Marche etc.* (Paris 1872) pp.55-95.

¹⁰ Stein, p.7; Beaune, p.1 n.3.

¹¹ Beaune, p.111 n.2.

¹² B.N., *Collection de Bourgogne*, vol.101, f.323.

corrections made to it by Beaune and Stein,¹³ we have an accurate picture of Olivier's immediate ancestors.

A striking attribute of these immediate ancestors is their distinguished history of service to the Burgundian ducal household, and this would be of enormous benefit to Olivier at the start of his career. Access to the ducal court in the fifteenth century was very much dependent on favour and contacts in high places, and Olivier being accepted as a page at the age of about thirteen should be viewed in the context of his family's history as good ducal servants.

Olivier's most distinguished ancestor in this sense was his paternal grandfather, Guillaume II de la Marche, who died in 1404.¹⁴ A prominent and loyal servant of Philip the Bold in the last two decades of the fourteenth century, Guillaume was *Bailli* and *maître des foires* at Chalon,¹⁵ giving him control of one of the five bailiwicks that constituted the Duchy of Burgundy at the time. He carried out numerous diplomatic functions from 1384 down to his death twenty years later, and was entrusted with various military duties, including involvement with the contingent of troops sent by Philip the Bold to aid the Count of Savoy in 1387.¹⁶ In 1391 he received a new title from Philip, *châtelain de la Colonne*, which placed him in charge of the administration of this castellany situated on the bank of the River Saône. He would appear to have been held in very high esteem by Philip the Bold, who gave him numerous rewards of land and money, including rights over the

¹³ Beaune, pp.cliv-clv; Stein, 'Nouveaux documents', facing p.14.

¹⁴ Beaune, pp.cliv-clv; Stein, 'Nouveaux documents', op. cit.

¹⁵ Stein, *Pièces Justificatives*, no.2, pp.150-1.

¹⁶ Beaune, p.vii.

territory of Villeargeot in Bresse in 1387.¹⁷ Letters patent issued by the Duke of Burgundy as late as 1437 refer to Guillaume as 'homme de grand honneur et estat'.¹⁸

As well as acquitting himself as a model ducal servant, Guillaume pursued a wise matrimonial policy. The identity of his first wife has disappeared from the records, but his second wife, Marie de Sercey, the sister of Jean de Sercey, was part of a prominent court-based family. It is perhaps no coincidence that on his acceptance by the court, Olivier was placed under the immediate supervision of Guillaume de Sercey, *premier écuyer d'écuyerie* and *Bailli de Châlon*.¹⁹ This man's sister was Fiore de Sercey, who had close links to the la Marche family in that she was the daughter of Marie de Sercey, and thus the step-daughter of Guillaume II de la Marche. Further, she was married to Guillaume's son, also Guillaume. With his third marriage, Guillaume II moved even closer to the ducal family itself, Marie d'Ayne was the illegitimate daughter of Louis de Mâle, Count of Flanders, the father of Philip the Bold's wife, Margaret of Flanders.²⁰

The activities of his grandfather therefore paved the way in many respects for Olivier's early career success. Furthermore, Guillaume's legacy in the fifteenth century included his foundation of a chapel in the parish church in Villegaudin in 1399,²¹ and this would appear to have become a kind of spiritual centre for the family.

Among Olivier's more distinguished ancestors must also be included his uncle, Anthoine de la Marche (c.1395-1438).²² Thanks to the years of loyal service his father,

¹⁷ Stein, 'Nouveaux documents', *Pièces Justificatives*, no.2, pp.23-4, and no.3, pp.25-6.

¹⁸ Beaune, p.vii n.6.

¹⁹ *Mémoires*, I, p.252; and see M.T. Caron, *La noblesse dans le Duché de Bourgogne 1315-1477* (Lille 1987), pp.149-51.

²⁰ See above n.18; and Beaune, p.viii n.1.

²¹ Stein, pp.8-9.

²² Stein, pp.9-10; 'Nouveaux documents', pp.4-7; Beaune, p.xiii n.1.

Guillaume II, had given to the dukes, Anthoine received the honour of being held at the baptismal font by Philip the Bold himself on 24 March 1396.²³ Following the death of Philip the Bold in 1404, Anthoine was retained by his successor John the Fearless, under whom he held the titles of *écuyer*, *chambellan* and *eschanson*,²⁴ and again by the next duke, Philip the Good, from 1419.²⁵ A prominent military figure, Anthoine first appears as a member of the ducal armies in 1414, under the command of Jean de Toulangeon.²⁶ From then on, he makes numerous appearances in a military capacity, such as the one at Beauvais in July 1417 as *chef de chambre* under Jean de Toulangeon. In 1419 he was among the Burgundian troops sent to raise the Dauphin's siege at Marseigny-les-Nonnains, and the following year he assisted the new duke, Philip the Good, at the siege of Mêlun. He was present among the troops of Jean de Toulangeon that were sent to assist the besieged town of Cravant the same year. He was probably best remembered, however, for his activities against the so-called 'Ecorcheurs', literally 'Skinners', a band of brigands who terrorised the area around Beaune and Dijon in the 1430s.²⁷ He died at Dijon on 23 December 1438, almost exactly at the time that his nephew made his entry to the court, and was buried at the church of Châteaurenaud, over which he had been lord for much of his life.²⁸

²³ B.N. *Collection de Bourgogne*, vol.23, f.84; Stein, p.9 n.10; Beaune, p.xiii n.1.

²⁴ Beaune, p.xiii n.2.

²⁵ Ibid., 1, p.xiii n.3; Anthoine is mentioned as 'conseiller du grand conseil' in 'État des officiers et domestiques ... de Philippe le Bon' in Buchon ed., *Collection des chroniques nationales françaises*, 37 (Paris 1826), p.clxxi.

²⁶ Stein, 'Nouveaux documents', p.5; and on the following passage, see Beaune, pp.xiii-xiv.

²⁷ Stein, 'Nouveaux documents', pp.5-7.

²⁸ Stein, p.11 n.1-3; Beaune, p.xiv n.10; this epitaph is preserved in B.N., *Collection Viesville*, 55, f.138.

This man is not to be confused with another Anthoine de la Marche who had acted as marshall of the lists at the *Pas de la Fontaine aux Pleurs* near Chalon-sur-Saône in 1449-50.²⁹ This second Anthoine is referred to as ‘ung mien cousin germain’ by la Marche,³⁰ and most of the information we have on him is derived from his own testament, dated 12 September 1468.³¹

In comparison to the first Anthoine de la Marche, Olivier's father Philippe cuts a rather unimpressive figure in the judgement of Beaune.³² Yet Philippe de la Marche dedicated his life to the service of the court of Burgundy, in the tradition of his family. His name is mentioned among the domestic officers of Philip the Good as *ecuyer d'ecuyerie*,³³ and he also held the title *gruyer de Bourgogne*.³⁴ The *gruyer* was the officer concerned with the administration of the *eaux et forêts*, waterways and forests of the Duchy, and his court was one of four of equal standing in the judicial hierarchy, the role of which was to hear the appeal of petty tribunals of minor municipal and feudal officers.³⁵ Philip also carried out a number of military duties, including participation in certain campaigns in Champagne and Auxerrois, and as part of the garrison of Charolais in 1435.³⁶

²⁹ *Mémoires*, III, pp.142-204; ‘Le Livre des faits de Jacques de Lalaing’ in Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, VIII, (Brussels 1866); Matthieu d'Escouchy, ‘Chronique’ ed. Buchon (*Collection des chroniques nationales françaises*), xxxv, pp.235-46; A. Planche, ‘Du tournoi au théâtre en Bourgogne. Le Pas de la Fontaine aux Pleurs à Chalon-sur-Saône’ in *Le Moyen Age*, 81 (1973), pp.97-128.

³⁰ *Mémoires*, II, p.51.

³¹ It has been published by Stein ‘Nouveaux documents’, *Pièces Justificatives* no.6, pp.29-37.

³² Beaune, pp.xv-xvi; Stein p.11, and ‘Nouveaux documents’, p.7.

³³ ‘État des officiers ... de Philippe le Bon’, p.cxciv.

³⁴ B.N., *Collection de Bourgogne*, vol.23, f.86v.

³⁵ On the role of the *gruyer*, see Vaughan, *Philip the Bold* (London 1963), pp.120 & 124.

³⁶ On his military duties, see Beaune, pp.xv-xvi.

Olivier's only reference to his father, and one of the very few he made to his family at all, concerns Philippe being stationed at the castle of Joux near Pontarlier in the County of Burgundy in 1434.³⁷ This was done on the orders of Guillaume de Vienne, seigneur de St. George, and was part of a campaign to resist the advances of the Count of Neuchâtel. Because it was assumed that the defence of the castle at Joux would be a long-term affair, it was decided that young Olivier should move to the town of Pontarlier to complete the education he had probably begun at Villegaudin.³⁸ His father, however, seems to have gained no further offices or titles, nor did he perform any feats of great renown. He died shortly after being stationed at Joux. Olivier recorded this as occurring in 1437.³⁹

On 14 March 1421, Philippe de la Marche had allied his family to another prominent Burgundian family with his marriage to Jeanne Bouton, the daughter of the knight Jean Bouton, seigneur du Fay, and Jeanne de Villiers.⁴⁰ Olivier therefore had distinguished ancestors on his mother's side also, though he is silent about this side of his family in *Mémoires*. Jeanne Bouton's nephew, and Olivier's first cousin, was the famous Philippe Bouton, who held the lordship of Corberon near Beaune, and who lived to the extraordinary age of 96.⁴¹ He entered the service of Philip the Good during adolescence and was made *échanson* according to provisions given by the Duke at The Hague on 10

³⁷ *Mémoires*, I, p.189.

³⁸ See above. n.3.

³⁹ *Mémoires*, I, p.251.

⁴⁰ See the marriage contract between Philippe and Jeanne in B.N. *Collection de Viesville*, vol.55, f.137v. published by Stein, p.11 n.8; on the Bouton family, see E.Beauvois, *Un agent politique de Charles Quint: Le bourguignon Claude Bouton seigneur de Corberon* (Paris 1882, reprinted Geneva 1971).

⁴¹ Philippe Bouton lived between 1419-1515. On him and for the following see Beauvois op. cit.; *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises*, pp.1137-8; J. la Croix Bouton, 'Un poème à Philippe le Bon sur la Toison d'Or' in *Annales de Bourgogne*, 42 (1970), pp.5-29; L. Mourin *Le Dialogue de l'Homme et la Femme* attribuable à Philippe Bouton' in *Scriptorium*, 1 (1946-7), pp.145-51.

May 1456. It is noteworthy that his poem on the history of the Golden Fleece, addressed to Philip the Good, had been completed only the previous year, and the appointment of this office could be seen as a reward for this. He also held the title *poète de cour*. He subsequently became *conseiller et chambellan* and *bailli* of Dijon during the reign of Charles the Bold, and wrote a substantial number of poems for the consumption of the court. His son, Claude Bouton, served under Charles V as *conseiller et chambellan*, having been granted access to the court hierarchy thanks to the intervention of Olivier de la Marche.⁴²

Olivier de la Marche: Childhood and Youth (1434-45)

Of the first nine or ten years of Olivier's life, virtually nothing is known. He gave no indication about these years in *Mémoires*, and there is little external evidence available to give any additional clues. We must therefore accept the assumption that his early childhood was spent in the bosom of his immediate family, probably at Villegaudin in the Duchy of Burgundy, where he was both baptised and commemorated after his death.⁴³ It is not until c.1434 that any precise information becomes available. This was the year in which his father was stationed at Joux, and the family's move there was, according to Olivier, his earliest childhood memory.⁴⁴ At that time, he added, the County of Burgundy was ruled by 'ung noble et puissant seigneur, le seigneur de Saint George le Saige'.⁴⁵ This

⁴² On Claude's career, see Beauvois, op. cit.

⁴³ See above, n.3.

⁴⁴ *Mémoires*, I, p.189.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.188.

refers to Guillaume IV de Vienne, governor of the Duchy and County of Burgundy between 1396-1434.⁴⁶ The strengthening of the County's eastern defences, the process in which Philippe de la Marche was involved at Joux, was carried out in response to the activities of certain 'Allemaignes'.

The move appears to have brought with it a considerable amount of upheaval for Philippe and his family. La Marche would later write of the perceived long-term nature of the garrisoning of Joux, which had forced his father to transfer his entire household, including himself, eastwards. This statement appears to imply two points about his early childhood, firstly that he was part of the *mesnaige* or household of his father before 1434, and probably close to his immediate family, and secondly that the move was one of some considerable distance. For young Olivier, it involved being enrolled at a new school (*escolle*), and he wrote that he was sent to the nearby town of Pontarlier on the eastern border of the County, where he received lodgings in the household of a gentleman named Pierre de St. Mauris, *écuyer*.⁴⁷ It was here that he received much of his elementary education in the company of a number of other children currently resident in Pierre's household. Two of these were named by la Marche in *Mémoires*: Jacques de Fallerans and Étienne de St. Mauris. He probably chose to mention these two names specifically because both would go on to enjoy distinguished careers at the Burgundian court. Jacques de Fallerans became *écuyer eschanson* under Philip the Good, and subsequently *écuyer tranchant* under Charles the Bold, and he captured the attention of court chroniclers with his participation in the wars against Ghent in the 1450s, particularly at the battles of

⁴⁶ Ibid., IV, p.336.

⁴⁷ Ibid., I, pp.189-90. Beaune is mistaken in his statement that la Marche met Jacques de Fallerans and Étienne de St. Mauris after, and not before, his entry to the court.

Schendelbeke and Gavre, where he narrowly escaped with his life after his horse was killed beneath him on the battlefield.⁴⁸ Étienne de St. Mauris also fought at Schendelbeke, and la Marche's *Mémoires* include a paragraph specifically devoted to Étienne's single-handed defeat of a vicious Ghenter who had unhorsed Jacques de Fallers, and his being subsequently wounded to the head.⁴⁹ The paragraph demonstrates the value of having close associations with a chronicler or historiographer in terms of reputation during the fifteenth century, for it is thanks to la Marche's inclusion of these names in *Mémoires* that they, of all the thousands who constituted Philip the Good's armies, have found their way into the history books. Étienne, after surviving this battle, went on to serve the Duke as *écuyer panetier* (1463), *capitaine-châtelain* of Pontarlier (1473), and *écuyer d'ecuyerie* (1475).

By 1434 therefore, the young la Marche was settled at Pontarlier, and it is at this point that *Mémoires* begins. At this time, he wrote, he would have been eight or nine years of age.⁵⁰ Over the next year or so, two events were to occur which he would later insert into *Mémoires*. Neither is especially significant in itself, but the author's specific recollection of them above his other hazy memories of childhood, associated as they were with the move to Pontarlier, suggest that they represent a landmark in the awakening process of an eight or nine year old boy to the existence of a wider world beyond the narrow, homely boundaries of early childhood. They are, in short, his own version of a more universally-shared experience, his first 'political memories'.

⁴⁸ *Mémoires*, II, pp.305 & 322.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.305-6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, I, p.190.

The first of these events was the splendid entry of the Neapolitan king Jacques de Bourbon to Pontarlier, ‘environ la Magdeleine’ (i.e. 22 July) 1435.⁵¹ The young la Marche witnessed the procession from the perspective of an *escollier* or schoolboy, and would have seen Jacques mounted on a magnificent litter being led into the town to be greeted by huge crowds, which included the nobility, bourgeoisie and merchants, and then taken to his lodgings. This early childhood experience seems to have had a significant impact on la Marche, and particularly in two principal ways. First and most obviously, he was struck by the enormous power of pageantry and stage-managed spectacle. Years later he would write:

... quant deppuis j'ay pensé et mis devant mes yeulx l'auctorité royale, les pompes seigneurieuses, les delisses et aises corporelles et mondaines, lesquelles en si peu de temps furent par cestuy Roy mises en oubly et en nonchaloir, certes, selon mon petit sens, j'en faiz une extime plaine de merveille ...⁵²

La Marche would subsequently develop this childish sense of awe into one of creativity, and in doing so become the prime mover behind the elaborate, ceremonial pageantry that was to characterise the court of Burgundy in the fifteenth century.

Second, the episode would affect la Marche's outlook in later life with regard to the events that led up to Jacques' coming to Pontarlier.⁵³ He had come to the throne of Naples by virtue of his marriage to the widow and heiress of King Lancelot, who had died on 6 August 1413. Her name was Jeanne de Duras. Jacques had enjoyed stable rule for several years, but for reasons not made clear had lost the confidence of both his wife and some of

⁵¹ Ibid., I, pp.190-5; see also A. Huart, *Jacques de Bourbon, roi de Scicile, frère mineur cordelier à Besançon* (Besançon 1882).

⁵² *Mémoires*, I, p.195.

⁵³ Ibid., pp.190-3.

the Neapolitan nobility, who seized and imprisoned him. La Marche stated that during this period of imprisonment, Jacques had learned to replace his gregarious way of life with a new outlook given over to prayer and contemplation, and under the influence of Ste. Colette, a Picard woman who had reformed the Order of Ste. Clare and had founded seventeen monasteries, was persuaded to renounce the world. On his release, he came to Besançon in the County of Burgundy where he joined the Order of *Cordeliers*, a Franciscan offshoot, and it was during his journey there from Naples that he had come to Pontarlier. La Marche recalled that during the solemn entry to the town, Jacques had worn a grey robe tied with a cord and a white hat known as a *cale*, which was associated with the *Cordeliers*. Immediately after him came four *Cordeliers de l'Observance*, men who had led holy lives. From Pontarlier, Jacques went to Besançon, where he would remain as a *Cordelier* until his death in 1438.⁵⁴ La Marche's account of this episode contains many of the themes that coloured his outlook on life, particularly the notion that the world is ultimately subject to and governed by forces beyond human control, and that misfortune can strike down even the most powerful of men without warning. The unpredictable movements of the ever-changing Wheel of Fortune would provide the context for his explanation of Charles the Bold's downfall in 1477, while elsewhere in *Mémoires* long lists are given of literary and historiographical figures who were cut down in the prime of their lives by the ravages of disease and debilitation.⁵⁵ As we shall see below, it is a theme which permeates much of his literature, and the case of Jacques de Bourbon is certainly linked to his awakening to this fatalistic conception of the ways of the world:

... ne fait il pas à esmerveiller de veoir ung Roy, né et yssu de royal sang,
fuytif de son royaulme, yssant freschement de la prison de sa femme et de la

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 194 on John the Fearless, and pp. 143-4 on Charles the Bold.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 177-80.

servitude de celle qui, par raison du sacrement de mariaige, luy devoit estre subjecte?⁵⁶

Jacques is however praised for turning his misfortune into opportunity, specifically for achieving closer union with God through his adoption of the ways of the *Cordeliers*. It is possible that his fate may have provided the inspiration for a curious short poem, attributed to la Marche, which expresses the sentiments of a man who has taken such vows:

Pour amour des dames de France.
Je suis entré en l'observance
Du très renommé Saint François,
Pour cuider trouver une fois
La douce voye d'aléance.⁵⁷

The second incident that was to affect the young la Marche during his formative years at Pontarlier was the publication of the Treaty of Arras, sealed by King Charles VII and Philip the Good in 1435. By the 1470s, when la Marche was writing this portion of *Mémoires*, this treaty had become an important landmark in the history of Franco-Burgundian relations, and la Marche probably derived some pride from his ability to remember its publication, an experience which many younger courtiers, least of all Charles the Bold, could not have shared. Moreover, la Marche would come to view this treaty as representing the embodiment of ideal relationship between France and Burgundy. In its immediate context, he considered the signing of the treaty to represent the ending of the era

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.195.

⁵⁷ B.N. ms. fr. 1104 f.91; entitled 'Recueil des pièces, complaints, chansons et rondeaux par Charles duc d'Orléans et ses amis ...', the manuscript consists of 153 *ballades*, 7 *complaintes*, including a discourse given by Charles d'Orléans before King Charles VII on the subject of the trial of Jean, Duke of Alençon, 131 *chansons*, 4 *caroles* and 401 *rondeaux*. A note on the inside cover states that the monogram which appears on the front is that of Catherine de Medicis, the wife of King Henry II (1547-59) from whose library she had withdrawn it. The first folio is decorated with a coat-of-arms, quartered, showing a gold *fleur-de-lys* in the first and fourth sections and a white snake on an azur background in the second and third. This represents the union of the houses of Milan and France brought about by the marriage of Louis d'Orléans and Valentina Visconti. La Marche's poem was published by Stein, p.229.

of Franco-Burgundian hostility which had begun with the assassination of John the Fearless at Montereau in 1419.⁵⁸ As the ending of fifteen years of hostility was anticipated, the treaty was naturally greeted with relief and joy in all quarters, and la Marche described the singing, dancing and ringing of church bells that erupted in Pontarlier following the announcement of the peace there by a herald called 'Franche-Comté'. It appears that Pierre de St. Mauris had received copies of the treaty and sent one to Philippe de la Marche at Joux. It is this copy that Olivier would probably have used forty years later for his insertion of the entire text of the treaty into his *Mémoires*.⁵⁹

The Page

The young la Marche spent three years receiving his education at Pontarlier. At some point in 1437, however, he was informed of his father's death at the castle of Joux,⁶⁰ and with this news he now faced another series of upheavals. The immediate consequence was his being placed under the jurisdiction of his uncle, Jacques Bouton.⁶¹ Jacques saw to it that his nephew was accepted into the household of Guillaume de Lurieu and his wife Anne de la Chambre, who resided at Chalon-sur-Saône in the Duchy of Burgundy.⁶² La Marche says little about his experiences in Guillaume's household, where he was to remain for only two

⁵⁸ *Mémoires*, I, pp.195-202. La Marche does not comment on whether the Dauphin was involved in the murder.

⁵⁹ On the copy sent to Philippe de la Marche by Pierre de St. Mauris, see Stein p.16 n.3; for the rest of the treaty itself, see *Mémoires*, I, pp.203-38.

⁶⁰ *Mémoires*, I, p.251. La Marche is quite specific that 1437 was the year of his father's death, the cause of which he does not mention. As for his mother, we know that in 1447 she sold half of a house in Chalon-sur-Saône to the Carmelite convent of the city, and that in 1449 she bought the house and castellany of Louhars from Guillaume de Vienne; Beaune, p.xx n.2. She was still alive in January 1452, and probably died shortly afterwards.

⁶¹ Stein, p.16 n.4; Caron, p.281..

⁶² *Mémoires*, I, pp.251-2; Stein, pp.16-17; Beaune, p.xxii.

years before his opportunity to enter the hierarchy of the ducal court arose. In 1439, according to his own testimony, Guillaume de Lurieu introduced him to Anthoine de Croy,⁶³ Philip the Good's *premier chambellan* and one of the original knights of the Golden Fleece. His request to Philip the Good that he might take la Marche into his household as a page was accepted, and la Marche was happy to concede that this was the result of the services performed by his predecessors.⁶⁴ He was indebted to Anthoine de Croy, and it is perhaps significant that numerous favourable references to him appear in *Mémoires*.⁶⁵

In the company of 'plusieurs aultres josnes nobles hommes de divers pays',⁶⁶ la Marche spent the following years learning the ways of the nobleman, the nature of which emerges with some clarity from works like Anthoine de la Sale's *Petit Jean de Saintré*.⁶⁷ The page would learn the skills of weaponry, horsemanship, shooting, hawking, as well as the more fundamental elements of education such as reading, writing, history, astrology and so on. Thirty years later, la Marche would draw on his experience of the life of the page in the composition of his treatise *État de la maison du duc Charles*.⁶⁸ According to this the Duke had twelve pages, all of noble birth, who were subject to the supervision of the *écuyer*. They were not paid salaries, but were given lodgings at the expense of the prince. Characteristically, la Marche devoted much of his attention to the ceremonial duties of the

⁶³ On Anthoine de Croy, see Vaughan, *Philip the Good* (London 1973), *passim*.

⁶⁴ *Mémoires*, I, p.252.

⁶⁵ He was present at the sealing of the Treaty of Arras (*ibid.*, I, p.205), at Philip the Good's entry to Luxembourg (II, p.41), at the battle of Termonde (II, pp.250-1), and as a participant at the Feast of the Pheasant (II, p.385).

⁶⁶ See above, n.64.

⁶⁷ Anthoine de la Sale, *Little John of Saintré*, ed. I. Gray (London 1931).

⁶⁸ *État de la maison du duc Charles* in *Mémoires*, IV, pp.63-4.

pages who were involved in the day to day life of the court, as well as the frequent mounted processions and other forms of ceremony that the Dukes enjoyed.

In *Mémoires*, la Marche is reticent about these early years at court. The earliest point at which he specifically mentioned seeing Philip the Good was in November 1442 at Besançon, where the Duke received the recently elected King of the Romans, Frederick III of Habsburg, to discuss Burgundian plans for territorial aggrandisement.⁶⁹ La Marche omits all the details about the background to this meeting, preferring instead to dwell on the spectacular pageantry that was on show there, the garments of the princes and horses, the details of the procession during which the two rulers formally met, the parading of relics and other objects by the city's clergy, and the magnificent dinner given at the ducal palace. He specifically recalled seeing Philip wearing a sash decorated with pearls and precious stones valued at over 100,000 crowns.⁷⁰ Only then does he give the briefest hint of the nature of the business in hand, and on its details he is silent. This kind of emphasis characterises much of la Marche's prose work, as a subsequent chapter will demonstrate.

A similar theme can be detected in the chronicler's description of the famous *Pas de l'Arbre Charlemagne*, which took place outside Dijon over a period of forty days beginning 1 July 1443. This was not the first occasion that la Marche had witnessed jousting, having been present at the jousts held to celebrate the wedding of Jean de Salins and Jeanne, the daughter of Duke Louis of Bavaria,⁷¹ but he appears nonetheless to have been extremely impressed by the sheer extent of pomp, pageantry and splendour that was employed at the

⁶⁹ *Mémoires*, I, pp.270-87, esp. p.271. On the background to the Besançon meeting, see Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, pp.285-8.

⁷⁰ *Mémoires*, I, pp.279-80.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.267, 'les premieres joustes que je veiz oncques'; 'Le livre des faits de Jacques de Lalaing' in Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, VIII, ch.8.

Pas de l'Arbre Charlemagne. Consequently, he left a long and detailed description of the event in *Mémoires*.⁷² His reason for writing in such detail is given as follows:

... affin de ramentevoir la chevalerie monstrée de tous les partiz, et aussi par maniere d'escolle et de doctrine aux nobles hommes qui viendront cy après, qui, peult estre, desireront de eulx monstrier et faire congnoistre en leur advenir comme leurs devanchiers, et de monstrier et faire reblandir leurs blasons en leurs cotte d'armes estendue et couchée sur leurs corps, prestz et appareillez de endurer la fortune telle qu'elle, à la chasse et poursuite de noblesse et de renommée, a accoustumé de se donner.⁷³

The man principally responsible for organising the joust was Pierre de Beaufremont, seigneur de Charny, who was a *chambellan* and *capitaine-général* in Burgundy, Charolais, Mâcon and Auxerre from October 1432.⁷⁴ He was aided by thirteen men who had agreed to accept the challenge of all comers. The full text of the chapters of the joust are given by Monstrelet.⁷⁴ Although la Marche was certainly present at this joust, the account of it given in *Mémoires* is so detailed that it is inconceivable that it could have been written from memory alone.⁷⁵ It seems almost certain that he had access to some kind of written record, possibly his own notes made at the time of witnessing the event, but more plausibly some kind of official record. Indeed, he wrote that:

... à mon rapport je demande à tesmoignaige tous les escriptz et registres faictz par les roys d'armes et heraulx presens à ceste chose.⁷⁶

⁷² *Mémoires*, I, pp.284-6 and 290-335; Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, ed. T. Johnnes (London 1840), II, pp.129-31.

⁷³ *Mémoires*, I, pp.290-1.

⁷⁴ See above, n.72.

⁷⁵ In total, eighteen jousts are described in minute detail, from depictions of the armour, horses and coats-of-arms of the participants to blow-by-blow accounts of each joust.

⁷⁶ *Mémoires*, I, p.291.

Although no trace of any surviving heralds' reports of this particular event has come to light, this statement suggests that they were certainly produced, and it is probable that similar written reports, perhaps commissioned by the dukes themselves, were compiled at all the *pas d'armes* witnessed at the Burgundian court. As we shall see in a subsequent chapter, this was certainly the case with the Feast of the Pheasant held at Lille in 1454.⁷⁷

In a sense, the *Pas de l'Arbre Charlemagne* heralds the end of the first period of la Marche's career at the Burgundian court, for he was destined to leave his native Burgundy soon afterwards. Having spent a year in his southern territories, Philip the Good had decided to return to the north, and he left on 25 August 1443.⁷⁸ For the young la Marche, this meant leaving Burgundy in order to follow the Duke to the more urbanised, cosmopolitan and multi-lingual north, where he would spend much of the rest of his life. He would never again reside on any long-term basis in Burgundy, though he would return several times in connection with the business of the court as well as for leisure purposes.⁷⁹

It was probably at this time that la Marche first came into contact with Philippe de Ternant, the Provost of Paris, who was a *conseiller et chambellan* under Philip the Good, as well as being a knight of the Golden Fleece. Ternant took immediate responsibility for la Marche until 1447, when he would recommend the time-served page for promotion.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ See below, ch.2.

⁷⁸ The itinerant nature of the Burgundian court at this time is well known. Philip rarely spent more than a few months in one place at a time, and moved his entire court around with him. Useful itineraries are to be found in M. Canat de Chizy, 'Itineraire du Duc de Bourgogne pendant ses séjours au duché de Bourgogne de 1431-43' in *Memoires inédits pour servir à l'histoire de Bourgogne* (Chalon 1863), pp.486 ff; L.P. Gachard, *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas* I (Commission royale d'histoire, Brussels 1876), esp. pp.71-1090; and Vander Linden, *Itinéraires de Philippe le Bon* (Brussels 1940). Not until the mid 1450s did Brussels begin to emerge as an embryonic capital. On Philip's departure from Burgundy, see Canat de Chizy, I, p.493.

⁷⁹ e.g. in May 1448 he received 36 *livres* for a journey to Burgundy; 'Compte de Guillaume de Poupet' (1450) in A.D.N., B2004, f.308; *Mémoires*, II, p.115.

⁸⁰ See below, n.95.

The page's meeting with Ternant was connected to their mutual involvement in the Duke's 1443 expedition to conquer the Duchy of Luxembourg, a territory over which the Burgundians had long cast a greedy eye, and which was finally acquired after a brief and bloodless campaign that summer.⁸¹

On the political background to the campaign, la Marche's *Mémoires* are characteristically silent,⁸² though much attention is devoted to the events of the conquest. There is a vivid description of the departure of the duke's armies from Burgundy, and the author was once again clearly struck by the splendour of the occasion, pausing only to lament the fact that:

... la journée [fut] laide et pleyne de pluye, et furent toutes ces belles parures moult empirées.⁸³

As a page, la Marche was part of the ceremonial procession that led the army out of Burgundy,⁸⁴ and he would travel right into the heart of Luxembourg. The army went north, passing through Champagne, to Mézières, and then on towards Luxembourg, collecting reinforcements on the way. These men came from a wide array of territories, and la Marche recalled that:

... en nostre compaignie estoient plusieurs Allemans, auxquels les Bourguignons, Picards, Hannuyers et Namurois n'avoient nulle comunicacion de langage pour la difference des langues, pourquoy lesditz Zassons [i.e. soldiers in the service of Duke William of Saxony, a rival claimant to Luxembourg who opposed Philip's campaign]... pouvoient fort approucher nos gens et les prendre d'aguect, pourtant que l'on ne

⁸¹ On the Luxembourg campaign, see *Mémoires*, II, pp.1-50; a useful secondary source is that of Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, pp.274-80.

⁸² Although see the discourse allegedly given by the Duke regarding his rights to Luxembourg, II, pp.25-8: a different version of Philip's declaration, given at Arlon on 26 October 1443, is published by Vaughan, pp.279-80.

⁸³ *Mémoires*, II, p.12.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.11-12.

sçavoit s'ilz estoient amys ou ennemis, jusques à ce qu'ilz le monstroient par effect.⁸⁵

Despite this problem, the majority of towns fell easily to the Burgundians, leaving only Thionville and Luxembourg holding out by November. The latter was taken by assault on the murky night of 21-22 November at about 2 a.m. La Marche and the other ducal pages were with the Duke's personal retinue some five leagues away at this time, and the author would recall the calm and dignified manner in which Philip greeted the news of his victory.⁸⁶ He remained with the Duke while the booty taken from the city was handed to Philippe de Ternant and André, seigneur d'Humières, the duke's *butiniers*, who were responsible for the collection and distribution of the spoils of war. These had to cover the expenses of the campaign, including the troops' wages, and the ransoms of two prisoners, Jean de Rochebaron and Estor du Soret.

The Luxembourg campaign was the first military expedition that la Marche witnessed at first hand. It would not be his last.

Philip the Good left Luxembourg early in 1444 and returned to the Low Countries. For la Marche, this represented his first taste of life in the real heartland of the Burgundian domains. Philip went to Brussels where he spent Lent amid much festivity.⁸⁷ He held *Karesmaux* or *Mardi Gras* that year in Brussels, and jousts organised by Jean de Cleves and Jacques de Lalaing took place before the magnificent ducal palace. The following year, la Marche followed Philip to Ghent where he witnessed the seventh chapter of the Order of

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.18.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp.40-3.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp.52-3.

the Golden Fleece, of which he left a very detailed description in *Mémoires*.⁸⁸ As a page, he would have witnessed the spectacular, ceremonial side of the meeting, but would certainly have been excluded from the 'conclave' or meeting of the knights which only the Duke, the knights and the officers of the Order could attend.⁸⁹ Over the course of four days,⁹⁰ la Marche had an opportunity to speak personally with the memorialist Jean le Fèvre, seigneur de St. Rémy, who had held the position of *Roy d'Armes* of the Order since its foundation fifteen years earlier. Puzzled by the fact that some of the *tableaux* or coats-of-arms which were situated above the seat of each knight in the stalls of St. John's Church (now St. Bavo's cathedral) were blacked out:

... me tiray devers le roy d'armes de la Thoison, qui fut homme tout courtois, et luy demanday pourquoy ne à quelle cause estoit ceste difference, et combien que je feusse paige et du nombre de la petite extime, le bon homme s'arresta à moy et me dit que c'estoient les blasons et les places des bons chevaliers d'icelle ordre qui estoient trepassez depuis la derniere semblable feste tenue, et que, se je veoye et regardoie le surplus de la noble cerimonie, je pourroie veoir et congnoistre lendemain, à la grande messe, plus amplement ce que je demandoie.⁹¹

Adulthood

Still a page in 1445, this first phase of la Marche's career was nevertheless drawing to a close. By this time he would have been among the oldest and most senior of the Duke's pages, and as such performed his last major boyhood duty, as a member of the ducal

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp.83-96; Reiffenberg, *Histoire de la Toison d'Or* (Brussels 1830), pp.24-6.

⁸⁹ *Mémoires*, II, p.94.

⁹⁰ According to la Marche, the chapter began on 6 November at around 2 p.m. He is corrected by his editors, p.82 n.1; see also Reiffenberg, p.28.

⁹¹ *Mémoires*, II, pp.88-9.

entourage that came to Arras in April 1446 to witness the single combat between Philippe de Ternant and Galeotto Balthazar, a Milanese esquire.⁹² Philip the Good made his way to Arras, with la Marche behind him:

... et celluy jour je chevauchay après le duc sur ung coursier couvert de velours noir. J'estoye encoires son paige, et n'avoit après luy paige ne autre parure que moy et ledit coursier.⁹³

Being the only page at the ceremony was a very great honour indeed, and a source of great pride to la Marche years later.

By now, however, he would be in his late teens, and of an age to receive a more senior post. The earliest reference to such a development appears to be the one cited by Beaune, which shows la Marche being listed on the household wage rolls for the year 1 April 1446 - 31 March 1447 as an *écuyer*.⁹⁴ Further promotion came rapidly, and on the instigation of Philippe de Ternant, la Marche was made *écuyer panetier*⁹⁵ shortly after the staging of festivities by the Duke to celebrate the wedding of his illegitimate daughter, Marie, to Pierre de Beaufhemont.⁹⁶ Shortly afterwards, la Marche was part of the ducal party sent to Cologne under the leadership of Philippe de Ternant to resolve the rift that had emerged between the Duke's nephew, Jean Duke of Cleves, and the Archbishop of Cologne, Dietrich von Mors.⁹⁷ Two years later, he was raised to the rank of *écuyer*

⁹² See below, n.100-1.

⁹³ *Mémoires*, II, pp.68-9.

⁹⁴ Beaune, p.xxviii n.2.

⁹⁵ *Mémoires*, II, pp.117-8.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.112-3; see Chastellain, I, p.xxi, where the editor states that from 4 August, la Marche received 3 *sols* daily, the same as the *valets de fruit* and the *roi des ribauds* or fool.

⁹⁷ *Mémoires*, II, pp.113-14; d'Escouchy, xxxv, pp.85-92.

tranchant amid the celebrations held to mark the wedding of Philip the Good's great-niece, Marie de Gueldres, to King James II of Scotland.⁹⁸ This series of appointments, concerned with serving 'le corps et la bouche' of the duke, gave la Marche an insight into the workings of the household on which he would draw heavily in the preparation of his treatise *État de la maison du duc Charles*.⁹⁹

In April 1446, la Marche witnessed the joust between his benefactor, Philippe de Ternant, and Galeotto Balthazar, which he would later describe as being one of the hardest-fought and most dangerous he had ever seen.¹⁰⁰ His account of it places it very much in the tradition of knight-errantry and the chivalrous ideal. Galeotto had therefore:

... s'estoit party de son maistre le duc de Millan, tant pour voyaiger et pour veoir du monde comme pour faire armes de son corps, pour soy avancer en renommée, qui est et doit estre le paradis terrestre de josne noble couraige.¹⁰¹

But the greatest praise is reserved for Ternant, who had resolved to meet this chivalrous squire in combat. Ternant's own knightly qualities were sufficient for la Marche to invite comparison with the Nine Worthies. The chapter on this joust is an excellent illustration of the prestige that was associated with inclusion in chronicles during the fifteenth century. Having helped la Marche up the ladder of the court hierarchy, Ternant was rewarded in this way, and his particular joust, out of the enormous number that took place under the auspices of the court, would be known not only to contemporaries and subsequent generations of knights, but to history.

⁹⁸ *Mémoires*, II, pp.170-8.

⁹⁹ *État* in *Mémoires*, IV, esp. pp.19-58.

¹⁰⁰ See above n.95. On the combat between Ternant and Galeotto, see *Mémoires*, II, pp.64-79.

¹⁰¹ *Mémoires*, II, p.64.

Over the next few years, la Marche followed the itinerant court around. In 1448, he witnessed the so-called *Pas de la Pèlerine* at St. Omer,¹⁰² and the following year he was back in Burgundy to witness part of the year-long *Pas de la Fontaine aux Pleurs*, held near Chalon-sur-Saône by Jacques de Lalaing.¹⁰³ In 1451, he was at Mons in Hainaut, where he witnessed the eighth, and his second, chapter of the Order of the Golden Fleece.¹⁰⁴ By November, he was back in Brussels where it was announced that Charles, Count of Charolais, would perform his first public joust. This took place on the first Sunday of Lent, 1452.¹⁰⁵

In 1452-3, la Marche witnessed some scenes from the war between Philip the Good and the city of Ghent.¹⁰⁶ Conflict between them had been simmering since January 1447 when Philip had attempted to levy a new salt tax, similar to the French *gabelle*, on Flanders in exchange for the abolition of *aides*. The chronicles of Matthieu d'Escouchy and Jacques du Clerq both suggest that it was the refusal of the city to accept this tax that had led to a breakdown in relations between Ghent and the Duke, and ultimately to the war of 1452-3.

La Marche also raised the issue of the salt tax, although he preferred to link it to wider issues:

le bon duc tint, sous la main de Dieu, longuement ses pays en paix et à repoz ... Et à ceste cause multiplient tellement les Gantois en peuple, richesses, augmentement de bourgeois et d'autres biens, que certes il n'estoit point bien heureulx en Flandres qui n'estoit amy, bienveillant, bourgeois ou subject de Gand; et tenoient le pays de Was et celluy des

¹⁰² Ibid., pp.118-35.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp.142 ff.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp.204-6; Reiffenberg, pp.31-4.

¹⁰⁵ On the dating of this joust, see *Mémoires*, II, p.214 n.1; for la Marche's description of the youthful Charles, see pp.214-7.

¹⁰⁶ On the background to the Ghent war, the best summary is that of Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, pp.303-33.

Quatre Mestiers en leur sugECTION, comme leurs bourgeois et obeyssans qu'ils estoient, et quant ils se veirent augmentez de gens, de faveur et de biens, comme dit est, ils s'oublierent aucunement à l'occasion d'une demande de certain droit sur le sel, que leur avoit fait demander le duc deux ou trois ans auparavant, et qu'ilz avoient refusez, et dont le duc s'estoit parti mal content d'eulx ...¹⁰⁷

Thus relations had deteriorated into open hostility. La Marche also pointed out the wider context of urban unrest in general in the fifteenth century, and suggested that the Ghent uprising was no isolated phenomenon. During the siege of Calais, therefore, he accused the men of Ghent and Bruges of deserting the ducal army in its hour of need.

Nevertheless:

... ce sont choses advenues avant mon advenement, et dont je parleroye que par ouyr dire, que seroit contre la forme de mon entreprinse.¹⁰⁸

By 1454 la Marche was back in Lille, where he played an important role in the organisation of the Feast of the Pheasant, held on 17 February to publicise the need for a crusade to the east in the wake of Constantinople's fall to the Turks the previous year. A detailed examination of this event and la Marche's contribution to it, will be given in the following chapter.¹⁰⁹ The following year he was at Nevers, where he and the court chronicler Georges Chastellain devised a series of plays to be performed before the Duke and Duchess of Savoy and the Duchess of Bourbon. We know little about the actual content of these plays, except that they included representations of Alexander the Great,

¹⁰⁷ *Mémoires*, II, pp.211-13.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.212; on the siege of Calais, see Vaughan, pp.75-82.

¹⁰⁹ See below ch.2.

Hector and Achilles.¹¹⁰ This may well have been la Marche's first professional contact with Chastellain, whom he would come to regard as:

mon pere en doctrine, mon maistre en science et mon singulier amy, et celluy seul je puis à ce jour nommer et escrire la perle et l'estoille de tous les historiographes ...¹¹¹

1455-6 were spent for the most part with the court at Brussels and Valenciennes. During 1456 la Marche had his first taste of the diplomat's life, when he formed part of the entourage of Nicholas Rolin, the Burgundian chancellor.¹¹² In 1457, he received compensation from the court 'en consideration des services rendus', and this enabled him to buy a horse at Béthune, a clear sign of his rising wealth.¹¹³ And further promotion would quickly follow. In 1459, he became *premier panetier* in the household of Charles,¹¹⁴ and in 1461 he became the Count's *maître d'hôtel*.¹¹⁵

It was in this capacity that la Marche assisted in the ceremony for Louis XI's coronation at Reims in 1461. During the late 1450s:

se commença à bander le royaume de France, les ungs pour le Roy Charles, le pere, et les aultres pour monseigneur le daulphin, le filz.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ Laborde *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, I (Paris 1849), p.417: 'A Olivier de la Marche, escuier, pour don lui fait par mondit seigneur, en consideration des certains jeux de mistères qu'il a aidé à jouer devant luy, monseigneur le duc d'Orleans, madame son épouse, et madame de Bourbon, estant devers mondit seigneur en la ville de Nevers. XII escuz d'or.'

¹¹¹ *Mémoires*, I, p.184.

¹¹² Stein, p.29 n.6.

¹¹³ Beaune, p.xxxviii.

¹¹⁴ Laborde, II, p.219.

¹¹⁵ Stein, p.30 n.3.

¹¹⁶ *Mémoires*, II, p.420; on the background to this, see Vaughan pp.353-4.

Philip the Good had opted to take Louis into his household and his protection, and the apparent wisdom of this decision was borne out with the King's death in 1461, paving the way for his son's accession. Thanks to his support of Louis, Philip was recognised as first peer of France.¹¹⁷ From his place in the Duke's entourage, la Marche therefore witnessed the king's coronation and the series of banquets and jousts that followed.¹¹⁸

We are now approaching the period in la Marche's career that would see him in his most prominent political, military and diplomatic roles. It is the best documented period of his life. In 1464, he became inadvertently involved in a dispute which was to sour his relationship with the king, Louis XI, for the rest of the latter's life. That September the illegitimate brother of the seigneur de Rubempré had appeared in Holland at the head of an armed galley sent there by Louis.¹¹⁹ The aim of this mission was the arrest of Jean de Rouville, vice-chancellor of the Duke of Brittany, who, it was feared, was arranging a coalition between Brittany, England and the Count of Charolais. On his arrival at Gorinchem, however, the bastard of Rubempré was arrested. Responsibility for this fell on la Marche who, according to Philippe de Commynes, then publicised the accusation that the bastard had been despatched to Holland to seize Charles.¹²⁰ The chronicler Thomas Basin supported this view, adding that the bastard was to bring back the Count's head if he could not be taken alive.¹²¹ Louis reacted swiftly and sent ambassadors to justify his man's presence at Gorinchem. With regard to his own involvement, la Marche wrote:

¹¹⁷ On Philip's relationship with Louis and the coronations of 1461, see Vaughan pp.353-4.

¹¹⁸ *Mémoires*, II, pp.425-6.

¹¹⁹ *Mémoires*, III, pp.3-4; Philippe de Commynes, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Calmette & G. Durville (Paris 1924-5), I pp.4-9; Basin, *Histoire de Louis XI*, ed. C. Sarraman (Société de l'histoire de France, Paris 1963-72), I, pp.140-50; Chastellain, V, pp.75-7; Vaughan, pp.374-6; Bonenfant, *Philippe le Bon* (Brussels 1955), pp.109-11.

¹²⁰ Commynes, I, pp.4-5.

¹²¹ Basin, I, p.43.

le Roy de France ne fut pas contant, mais despescha une grosse embassade, dont fut chief le conte d'Eu; et vindrent trouver le duc de Bourgoingne en sa ville de l'Isle, et firent grans propositions contre luy; et vouloit le Roy de France que je fusse mis en sa main, pour estre pugny à son desir de ce qu'il me mectoit sus que je avoie esté cause de la prinse du bastard de Rubempré ... mais le bon duc, qui fut amesuré en tous ses faiz, leur respondit que j'estoye son subject et son serviteur, et que se le Roy ou aultre me vouloit riens demander, il en feroit la raison. Tuteffois ces choses se paciffierent
122
...

So la Marche escaped Louis' justice. But this episode typified the poor relationship that existed between Louis and Charles and did much to jaundice la Marche's view of the king's character. Despite his care to avoid dishonouring or slandering Louis in *Mémoires*, a real sense of distrust can be detected in its pages.

His role in the Rubempré affair did not, however, damage la Marche's relationship with Charles. In 1465, the Count sent him to Brussels, where the old duke Philip was lying on his sickbed, to request a grant of 100,000 *écus* for the payment of the troops that made up the Burgundian contingent of the army which had been raised against Louis XI in the so-called War of the Public Weal. His mission was successful:

quant le bon duc entendit que son filz estoit allié avecques tant de gens de bien, il fut contant qu'il s'acquittast et qu'il tinst promesse aux aultres princes, et qu'il fist son armée en ses pays telle qu'il la pourroit avoir.¹²³

The War of the Public Weal was the most prolonged revolt against royal authority of the fifteenth century.¹²⁴ According to la Marche, the anti-royal alliance had consisted of over 500 princes, knights, squires and ladies, among them the Dukes of Brittany, Berry, Bourbon, and Alençon, and the Counts of Maine and Armagnac. The alliance was known

¹²² *Mémoires*, III, pp.4-5. Compare this to the version given by Commynes, I, p.5.

¹²³ *Mémoires*, III, pp.8-9. For a summary of the expenses incurred, see p.9 n.1.

¹²⁴ Vaughan, pp.379-91, provides a useful background.

as the 'Public Weal' because their aim was to correct the bad government of the king for the good of the whole kingdom.¹²⁵ On the motives of this alliance beyond this rather vague overview, however, la Marche was silent. He says nothing at all about the reasons for Charles' involvement, which in fact appears to have been primarily directed towards the reacquisition of Péronne, Roye, Montdidier and the Somme towns, ceded to the Crown and the Count of Étampes by Philip the Good two years earlier.¹²⁶

La Marche left Brussels and joined Charles and his army at Le Quesnoy. Though he omitted the detail in *Mémoires*, he was, according to the report of Jean de Haynin, part of the contingent led by Jean de Luxembourg.¹²⁷ The army left Le Quesnoy in May 1465, its first duty being the attempted recapture of the aforementioned territories, a point which la Marche failed to mention.¹²⁸ Only at the end of June did Charles finally head for Paris to join his confederates, and by 5 July his troops were camped at St. Denis.

Now la Marche's narrative becomes more detailed. Louis' troops left Paris and met the allied forces at Montlhéry, where they were decisively defeated on the hot afternoon of 16 July.¹²⁹ It is to the battle itself that la Marche devotes most attention in *Mémoires*, perhaps because this particular episode made exciting reading, or alternatively because of the fact that he had received the honour of being knighted on the battlefield that afternoon.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ *Mémoires*, III, pp.8-9.

¹²⁶ Vaughan, p.380.

¹²⁷ Haynin, cited by Stein p.33 n.1.

¹²⁸ Vaughan, pp.380-3.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.385-91.

¹³⁰ *Mémoires*, III, p.11.

The next few years saw la Marche engaged in a number of high-level diplomatic duties. In 1466, he was sent to Normandy to discuss the transfer of this duchy to the Duke of Berry, according to the terms of the Treaty of Conflans (1465).¹³¹ He was accompanied by Jean Carondelet, the future chancellor, Nicolas Bonesseau, and Anthoine de Lambert, and received 'deux cens sept livres quatorze sols' for the task. Of its actual purpose, little is known, and the accounts refer only to 'affaires secretz'. According to la Marche's own testimony, the embassy proceeded to Rouen, where it was informed that the Dukes of Berry and Brittany had gone to Rennes. While in Rouen, la Marche encountered the King:

[le roy] me demanda où je alloye; et je luy respondiz que monseigneur mon maistre m'envoioit devers monseigneur de Berry, son frere, pour sçavoir son estat, et aussi pour soy affranchir et acquicter du serement qui estoit entre eulx deux: et sur ce me laissa le Roy passer.¹³²

La Marche and the others then proceeded to Rennes, and were received at the castle of Ermine by the Duke of Berry. He had been joined there by some of the leading political figures in France, including Pierre de Beaujeu and the Bishop of Verdun. The Dukes of Berry and Brittany appear to have welcomed Charles' friendship. La Marche returned to the Low Countries with Pierre de Beaujeu. On reaching Tours he was once again summoned by the King and the two men met at Jargneaux. Exactly what passed between them on this occasion is unknown. La Marche is reticent on the subject, but states that:

si les bonnes parolles dont il me donna charge pour les dire à mon maistre de par luy eussent esté vrayes, nous n'eussions jamais eu guerre en France.¹³³

¹³¹ On la Marche's embassy to Normandy and Brittany, see *Mémoires*, III, pp.33-5; Stein, *Pièces Justificatives*, no.23, pp.170-1. For the inclusion of Anthoine de Lambert, see *Mémoires*, III, p.33 n.2.

¹³² *Mémoires*, III, pp.33-4, and for what follows see *ibid.*, pp.34-5.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.34.

The 'war' probably refers to the events of the 1470s. Exactly what Louis' 'bonnes parolles' were, will however, probably remain unknown.

On arriving in the Low Countries, la Marche was then sent across the channel to England where he landed early in 1467. About the nature of his journey, la Marche was again reticent:

en ce temps je me trouvoy en Angleterre ...¹³⁴

He may however have been involved at some level in the diplomatic exchanges that would result in the marriage of Charles the Bold to Margaret of York, and the new Anglo-Burgundian alliance that this would represent.¹³⁵ La Marche left Bruges on 1 January 1467, having received his orders from the ducal messenger, Pietre de Cologne.¹³⁶ About his next steps, nothing is known, but by June he was in London where he would witness the joust between Anthony, Bastard of Burgundy and Anthony Woodville, Lord Scales, which took place at Smithfield on the 11th.¹³⁷

This joust had been organised on the initiative of Lord Scales, a Knight of the Garter.¹³⁸ According to one source, he had found himself surrounded by the ladies of the

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.49.

¹³⁵ A broad range of secondary literature exists on this subject; Vaughan, *Charles the Bold* (London 1973), pp.45-8; C. Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy* (London 1989), pp.33-42; C.A.J. Armstrong 'La politique matrimoniale des ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois' in *Annales de Bourgogne*, 40 (1958), pp.5-58 and 89-139, esp. pp.44-7; this article is reprinted in his *England, France and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century* (London 1983); J. Calmette, 'Le mariage de Charles le Téméraire avec Marguerite d'York' in *Annales de Bourgogne*, I (1929), pp.193-214; L. Hommel, *Marguerite d'York ou la Duchesse Junon* (Paris 1959), pp.27-34.

¹³⁶ Stein, p.38 n.8; Beaune, p.xlii n.2; 'A Pietre de Couloigne, messagier de la ville de Bruges, la somme de douze livres, du pris de xl gros de monnoye de Flandres la livre, qui deue luy estoit pour ung voyage par lui fait dudit lieu de Bruges par devers messire Olivier de la Marche, estant de par ms. de Charrolois au pays d'Angleterre lui porter lettres closes touchant ses besoingnes et affaires.' The ducal accounts would award la Marche 216 *livres* for duties carried out in England 'dont il [Charles] ne veult icy autre declaracion estre faicte.'

¹³⁷ *Mémoires*, III, p.49; S. Bentley, *Excerpta Historica or Illustrations of English History* (London 1833), pp.171-222; Monstrelet, II, pp.345-6.

¹³⁸ On the challenge, see *Excerpta Historica*, pp.176-88; for the Bastard's reply and the subsequent exchanges, pp.194-6.

court one day in April 1465, and these ladies had placed a gold collar on his thigh, obliging him to perform some feat of arms. He wrote to Anthony with a challenge to joust, and despatched Chester Herald to Brussels with the letter. The herald arrived at Brussels on 30 April, and returned to Greenwich on 23 May with Anthony's acceptance.

It is a debated point as to whether or not this challenge formed part of the diplomatic exchanges that culminated in the Anglo-Burgundian alliance of 1468. Samuel Bentley argued that this was not the case, since the original challenge was issued as early as April 1465.¹³⁹ Yet we know that negotiations began in earnest in September of that year, and that by 1467 the joust would certainly have been perceived as constituting part of the process, even if this had not been its original intention. Furthermore it is probably no coincidence that both Lord Scales and the Bastard of Burgundy played prominent roles in the wedding ceremony and the celebrations that followed it.¹⁴⁰

The Bastard received 3000 *écus* from Philip to cover his expenses for this journey.¹⁴¹ He arrived at Gravesend on 19 May, where he was met by John Smert, King-of-Arms of the Garter. The following day he set out for London, and met Edward IV on Tuesday 2 June.

The joust was fixed for 11 June, by which time la Marche had reached Smithfield. He left a long description of it, and although the event did not feature any of the kind of elaborate pageantry that typified the Burgundian court, the chronicler was nevertheless impressed by the splendour of the occasion:

Le Roy Edouart d'Angleterre avoit fait preparer les lices grandes et pompeuses; et pour sa personne fut fait une maison moult grande et moult

¹³⁹ *Excerpta Historica*, p.173.

¹⁴⁰ Weightman, p.33.

¹⁴¹ *Mémoires*, III, p.48 n.3; *Excerpta Historica*, pp.197-208.

spacieuse, et estoit icelle maison faicte en telle maniere que l'on y montoit par degrez au dessus où estoit le Roy. Il estoit vestu de pourpre, la jarretiere en la jambe, et ung gros baston en sa main, et certes il sembloit bien personnaige digne d'estre Roy, car il estoit ung beau prince, et grant et bien amanieré. Ung conte tenoit l'espée devant luy, ung peu sur costiere, et autour de son siege estoient vingt on vingt cinq anciens conseillers, tous blanz de chevelures, et ressembloient senateurs qui fussent là commis pour conseiller leur maistre. Le conte de Volsestre tint lieu de connestable, et estoit accompagné du mareschal d'Angleterre, et sçavoit moult bien faire son office. En descendant du hourt avoit trois hourtz deçà et delà desdits degrez. Au premier estoient chevaliers, au second estoient escuyers, et au troisieme les archiers de la couronne, chascun ung voulge en la main; et au pied desdits degrez avoit deux chaieres, l'une pour le connestable et l'autre pour le mareschal. Et, à l'opposite, de l'autre cousté de la lice, estoit ung hourt, non pas si hault que la maison du Roy, pour logier le maire de Londres et les hondremans.¹⁴²

As soon as the King had sat down, the combatants entered the lists. Of Lord Scales, la Marche wrote:

devez sçavoir qu'il estoit moult pompeusement accoustré, et avoit douze chevaulx couvers, les ungs de drap d'or, les aultres d'orfavrerie, les aultres de velours chargé de campannes, et les aultres couvers de martes, que l'on dit saibles, si belles et si noyres qu'il estoit possible de trouver. Les aultres estoient couvers de brodures faictes moult richement. Les paiges estoient vestuz de mesmes, comme il appartenoit; et certes ce fut une riche suyte, et que le Roy veit volentiers.¹⁴³

They began to fight, but unfortunately the Bastard's horse rammed its head into the side of Lord Scales' saddle and was killed instantly, almost taking its rider with it as it crashed to the ground. The King leapt up, furious in the belief that Lord Scales had cheated, but it quickly became apparent that it had been a mere accident. However, there was no more jousting that day. The following day they met on foot, and la Marche praised the valour shown by both.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² *Mémoires*, III, pp.49-50.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.51.

¹⁴⁴ For a full description of the joust, see *ibid.*, pp.52-4; *Excerpta Historica*, pp.208-12.

Over the next three days further jousts took place, and although the English sources failed to give any details on these, a record was left by la Marche. According to him, jousts took place between Jean de Chassa and a Gascon squire in the service of Lord Scales called Louis de Bretelles, before Philippe Bouton, la Marche's cousin, took on an unidentified English squire.¹⁴⁵

Soon after, la Marche left England:

nous partismes, Thomas de Loreille, bailly de Caen et moy pour aller en Bretagne fournir nostre embassade, et vinsmes à Pleume, attendant le vent et navieres pour nous passer en Bretagne. Et en ce temps vindrent les nouvelles à monseigneur le bastard en Angleterre, que le duc de Bourgoingne estoit trespasé ...¹⁴⁶

Philip the Good had fallen ill at Bruges on the night of 12 June 1467 and had died three days later. Despite having enjoyed good health for most of his life, he had been prone to sickness during his later years and had been ill for some time prior to his death.¹⁴⁷ La Marche must have received the news once he reached Brittany, and although he left some information about the funeral which took place at Bruges on 21 and 22 June,¹⁴⁸ it is clear that he was not actually present at this. He remained in Brittany, and may have assisted at a solemn service held at Rennes in honour of Philip.¹⁴⁹ He was still there in August before arriving in England once more in October.¹⁵⁰ In 1473, Philip's body would be removed

¹⁴⁵ *Excerpta Historica*, p.213; *Mémoires*, III, p.54-5.

¹⁴⁶ *Mémoires*, III, pp.55-6.

¹⁴⁷ Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, pp.131-21; on Philip's last hours see the letter of Poly Balland to the mayor and aldermen of Lille, see *ibid.*, pp.397-8 and in Commynes, ed. Godefroy and Lenglet du Fresnoy (London & Paris 1747), II, pp.607-8.

¹⁴⁸ Chastellain, ch. lxxxix; *Mémoires*, III, p.57 n.1.

¹⁴⁹ Beaune, p.xliii; Stein, p.39.

¹⁵⁰ Stein has published a document which shows that la Marche sent Matthieu Losengier from Brittany to Brussels on 23 August and then again from Rochester in England in October with information to be passed to the Duke. *Pièces Justificatives* no.21, pp.168-9. The exact nature of this *ambassade* is unclear. On la Marche's return to Flanders, see Stein, pp.140-1.

and transferred, along with that of his wife Isabelle of Portugal, to the ducal mausoleum at the Chartreuse de Champmol just outside Dijon.¹⁵¹

With the subsequent accession of Charles as Duke of Burgundy, la Marche overnight became a close confidante of one of the most powerful men in Western Europe.

Charles immediately showed himself to be a force to be reckoned with his brutal repression of the city of Liège at the end of 1467, an incident which la Marche witnessed.¹⁵² The following year, he was again in Brittany and England,¹⁵³ and in July received the honour of organising 'le fait des ouvraiges' for the wedding of the Duke to Margaret of York.¹⁵⁴ A few months later, he was present at the meeting between Charles and Louis XI, during which the two rivals signed the Treaty of Péronne. La Marche would certainly have us believe that during this time he had unparalleled access to the Duke's ear:

et ne retint mondit seigneur avecques luy que moy seullement.¹⁵⁵

Following this, he witnessed the attack on Liège, led jointly by Charles and Louis.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ *Mémoires*, III, pp.58-61. See the oddly-named poem, *Vie de Philipe le Hardi*, the majority of which is given over to a description of this ceremony. The poem survives in one manuscript only, and was published by Stein, pp.209-18.

¹⁵² *Mémoires*, III, pp.63-8; on the background to this, see Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, pp.11-37.

¹⁵³ Records of payments made to la Marche for ambassadorial duties are abundant for this year. See Stein, *Pièces Justificatives* nos. 25-31, pp.172-6. In most cases, however, the exact purpose of la Marche's voyages are not made clear.

¹⁵⁴ Stein, *Pièces Justificatives*, no.23, pp.170-1: 'A messire Olivier de la Marche, chevalier, conseiller et maitre d'ostel de mondit seigneur, la somme de treize livres dix sols dudit pris, pour du commandement d'icellui seigneur avoir vaqué en sadite ville de Bruges pour le fait des ouvraiges de la feste de ses nopces depuis le xxi^e jusques au xxxvi^e jour d'avril derrain passé ...' For a full analysis of la Marche's role in this wedding, see below ch.2.

¹⁵⁵ *Mémoires*, III, p.83; see also the account given by Commynes, then still part of Charles' entourage in his *Mémoires*, I, pp.125-45; also, Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, pp.53-8; and P. Murray Kendall, *Louis XI* (London 1974) pp.244-77.

¹⁵⁶ *Mémoires*, III, pp.84-8; Haynin, I, p.142; Commynes, I, pp.145-68; Forster-Kirk, *History of Charles the Bold* (London 1863-8), II, pp.264-72.

1469-77: The Military Years

By the end of the decade, la Marche held the positions of *conseiller* and *maître d'hôtel* under the new Duke of Burgundy.¹⁵⁷ In September 1469, he was made governor, captain and provost of Bouillon,¹⁵⁸ and in 1471 he was made captain and bailiff of Lucheux and Orville in Picardy, following the ousting from this post of the Count of St. Pol at the hands of the Duke.¹⁵⁹

The 1470s would see la Marche play a far more prominent role in Charles' armies than he had previously done. From 1469, the Duke dedicated himself to creating a new standing army built up entirely of professional soldiers and volunteers.¹⁶⁰ Little seems to have developed, however, until the issuing of his famous Abbeville ordinance on 31 July 1471. According to this, his army would be organised into 1240 'lances', each of which consisted of a man-at-arms with a mounted page and swordsman, three mounted archers and a culvrineer, a crossbowman and a pikeman. Every 100 lances formed one company under the leadership of a *conducteur*, and within each of these were ten separate sections which were themselves divided into two *chambres*, one led by a *disnier* and the rest by a *chef de chambre*.

This new military machine, which had led Commynes to remark that the Duke of Burgundy had never had such a fine army,¹⁶¹ first went into action in northern France in the

¹⁵⁷ See above, n.154.

¹⁵⁸ Stein, *Pièces Justificatives*, no.38, p.177.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., no.24, pp.78-9.

¹⁶⁰ On Charles the Bold's armies, and for the following comments, see C. Brusten 'L'Armée bourguignonne de 1465 à 1477' in *Revue internationale d'histoire militaire*, 20 (1959), pp.452-66.

¹⁶¹ Commynes, *Mémoires*, I, p.234.

summer of 1472, and one of the new companies was placed under the command of la Marche.¹⁶² He was present at the occupation of Abbeville in June, and led the assault on the town of Gamaches and Loupy shortly after.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, Charles' army failed to take Beauvais, and were soon forced to retreat back to the Low Countries. All the land they had occupied in northern France was subsequently re-taken by the King. To all intents and purposes, the campaign was a disaster.¹⁶⁴

This does not appear to have adversely affected la Marche, however, and early in 1473 he became the captain of the Duke's personal guard.¹⁶⁵ This unit acted as a kind of personal bodyguard to the Duke, and consisted of 126 men under the captain and two lieutenants. There were four squadrons each consisting of thirty men-at-arms and thirty archers, each of which were headed by a *chef d'escadre*. Shortly afterwards, Charles issued letters patent which named la Marche as *maitre de la monnoye de Gueldres*.¹⁶⁶

1473 was a relatively peaceful year for Charles and his entourage. On 30 September, the Duke met the emperor Frederick III at Trier for the ill-fated discussions over his acquiring a crown.¹⁶⁷ Among the splendour of the Duke's retinue, la Marche was

¹⁶² Stein, *Pièces Justificatives* no.36, p.180; *Mémoires* III, p.74; C. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford 1913), pp.381-2.

¹⁶³ Stein, p.55 n.1; Commynes, I, p.234 n.4; *Mémoires*, III, p.74, n.1.

¹⁶⁴ *Mémoires*, III, pp.74-81; Basin, *Louis XI*, II, pp.127-39; Commynes, I, pp.233-9; Monstrelet, II, pp.401-4.

¹⁶⁵ The earliest reference to la Marche in this title appears in a document issued by Gerard de la Roche, *maitre de la chambre aux deniers* dated 8 July 1473, published by Stein, p.55 n.9. As far as I am aware, no document dating from any earlier than this refers to this title. On the structure of this body of troops, see *État de la maison du duc Charles* in *Mémoires* IV, esp. pp.72-6; and Brusten p.461.

¹⁶⁶ Stein, *Pièces Justificatives* no. 37, pp.180-1.

¹⁶⁷ Vaughan, *Charles the Bold* pp.123-55; P. Frédérix, *La Mort de Charles le Téméraire* (Paris 1966), pp.35-49.

present as captain of the guard, wearing crimson velvet robes and satin *pourpoints* lined with taffeta.¹⁶⁸

The first half of 1474 saw Charles making a journey to his southern territories, and la Marche accompanied him there. On 23 January, the Duke made a solemn entry to Dijon, the first time he had visited the city since his accession.¹⁶⁹ Addressing the assembled *États* of the Duchy, Charles spoke of the ancient kingdom of Burgundy that had been usurped by the French, and which he had tried, unsuccessfully, to revive at Trier. This issue of territorial sovereignty was destined, as we shall see, to dominate the political agenda of the late fifteenth century.¹⁷⁰

It is probable that during this journey to Burgundy, Charles appointed la Marche to the post of Bailiff of Amont in the County of Burgundy, one of its three principal bailliages. The earliest reference we have to la Marche's being in this office dates from 5 July 1474.¹⁷¹ His appointment may have been a reward for his role in the seizure and imprisonment of the troublesome Bailiff of Montbéliard in the County of Burgundy.¹⁷²

The later part of 1474 saw la Marche back in his military role. Using the recent ousting of his cousin Robert of Bavaria from the Archbishopric of Cologne by the Cathedral chapter and the neighbouring cities as an excuse, the Duke decided to pursue his territorial ambitions in Alsace, the area that separated his northern and southern territories.

¹⁶⁸ This document has been published by Dom U. Plancher, *Histoire de Bourgogne* (Dijon 1739-81), IV, pp.416-7; and Vaughan, pp.141-3.

¹⁶⁹ P. Quarré 'La joyeuse entrée de Charles le Téméraire à Dijon en 1474' in *Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 51 (1969), pp.326-40.

¹⁷⁰ For a further discussion of this, see below ch.6.

¹⁷¹ Stein, *Pièces Justificatives* no. 38, p.182.

¹⁷² *Mémoires*, III, pp.207-8.

This invasion, initiated under the guise of providing military aid to Robert, may also have been motivated by a desire for vengeance over the recent execution of his Alsatian bailiff, Pierre de Hagenbach.¹⁷³ He laid siege to the Alsatian city of Neuss, which had strongly opposed Robert, and a document shows that la Marche was present among the city's besiegers on 30 July 1474, for which he received thirty *sols* daily.¹⁷⁴ He remained at Neuss until 4 February 1475, when he left to lead an expedition to relieve the siege of nearby Linz, under threat from imperial troops. He was aided by 100 archers under the Viscount of Soissons, 100 lances under Philippe de Berghes, and 200 footmen under Edward de la Marck. Naturally enough, a large space is devoted to this expedition in *Mémoires*.¹⁷⁵ His objective of getting supplies into Linz so that the inhabitants could resist the siege was completely successful, and gained him high praise in the chronicle of Jean Molinet:

pour achieving ceste emprinse [le duc] choisy messire Olivier de la Marche, supérieur conducteur de sa garde, très renommé chevalier, prudent et de hardy entreprendre.¹⁷⁶

The undertaking was a dangerous one, and la Marche even went as far as to compare it to being in purgatory or even hell. Yet the mission was a success. What la Marche failed to mention, however, is that the city would in fact surrender to its imperial assailants on 17 March, only a few weeks after his expedition, so his efforts were in the long term in vain.

¹⁷³ On the background to this, see Vaughan, pp.261-34; and Frederix, pp.50-98.

¹⁷⁴ B.N. *nouvelles acquisitions françaises* 5903, no.50; 'le sire de la Marche, maistre d'ostel de mondit seigneur et capitaine de ladicte garde, pour ses gaiges de ce jour, xxx s[ols]'; Stein, *Pièces Justificatives* no. 38bis., pp.182-3.

¹⁷⁵ *Mémoires*, II, pp.92-5. On the subsequent surrender of Linz, see Vaughan, p.342.

¹⁷⁶ Molinet, *Chroniques*, ed G. Doutrepoint & O. Jodogne (Brussels 1935-7), I, p.67.

La Marche returned to Neuss, but he had abandoned the camp by 24 June.¹⁷⁷ Charles himself left three days later, having concluded the siege to be a waste of time and energy.

The following year, la Marche was part of the ill-fated campaign led by Charles the Bold and Edward IV into France. The outcome was the signing of a nine-year truce. By this time, it seems, Charles was less interested in France than Lorraine, on whose acquisition he was bent. He was however about to suffer three heavy defeats at the hands of its defenders.¹⁷⁸ La Marche was absent from the battle of Grandson on 2 March 1476, since he was suffering from an unknown illness at the time,¹⁷⁹ and he also missed the equally disastrous encounter at Morat on 22 June, having been in Italy in order to secure aid from the Duke's old ally, Milan.¹⁸⁰

Furious over his defeats, Charles reacted rashly. Having long suspected that the sister of Louis XI, Duchess Yolande of Savoy, had acted in conjunction with her brother to aid the opposition to the Burgundian presence in Lorraine, he now decided to imprison the Duchess. The duty of seizing her fell to la Marche, who carried out his orders on the night of 26-27 June:

moy estant à Genesve, il me manda, sur ma teste, que je prinse madame de Savoye et ses enffans, et que je les ammenasse; car, ce jour, madicte dame de Savoye revenoit à Genesve. Et pour obeir à mon prince et mon maistre, je fiz ce qu'il me commanda, *contre mon cuer*; et prins madame de Savoye et ses enffans, au plus près de la porte de Genesve. Mais le duc de Savoye [Philibert] me fut desrobé, car il estoit bien deux heures en la nuyct ... et ce

¹⁷⁷ Stein, p.64 n.1, and for what follows, *ibid.*, pp.64-5.

¹⁷⁸ Vaughan, pp.359-432; Frederix, pp.121-221; see la Marche's brief sketch of these campaigns, *Mémoires*, III, pp.209-11 and 238-42, and compare it to Commynes' more critical view, *Mémoires*, II, p.98-158.

¹⁷⁹ *Mémoires*, III, p.210.

¹⁸⁰ Gingins la Sarra, *Dépêches des ambassadeurs milanais* (Paris & Geneva 1858), II, pp.193 ff; Beaune, pp.lxii n.1, lxii n.1-4, and lxiv n.1-2.

que j'en fiz, je le fiz pour saulver ma vie; car le duc mon maistre estoit tel,
qu'il vouloit que l'on feist ce qu'il commandoit sur peine de perdre la teste.

La Marche attempted to find the young duke, but failed:

Et devez sçavoir que le duc fit très mauvaise chiere à toute la compaignie,
et principalement à moy; et fus là en dangier de ma vie, pour ce que je
n'avoye point emmené le duc de Savoye.¹⁸¹

This passage reveals la Marche at his most candid regarding his relationship to the Duke. His words were carefully chosen, but he appears to have regarded the entire undertaking as having been ill-conceived from the outset. Commynes spoke of the despair into which Charles lapsed after Morat and of his fear of an alliance between Louis and Yolande, although in his view the relationship between brother and sister was one of mutual antipathy. The Duke's precise motive in imprisoning Yolande has not been adequately explained. What is clear, however, is that the action brought no positive gain, but instead succeeded in creating outrage in Savoy, France and Milan.¹⁸²

La Marche managed to survive the fiasco with his head intact and continued to follow the Duke's orders. He was next recorded as being present in the County of Burgundy where, as Bailiff of Amont, he organised the acquisition of chariots to transport armour and equipment to Lorraine. Charles' next manoeuvre was to attempt to destroy the garrison placed by René of Lorraine at the town of Nancy in the heart of the duchy. His armies arrived at the town late in 1476, and were engaged in a bloody and decisive battle on 5 January 1477.

¹⁸¹ *Mémoires*, III, pp.234-6; compare this to the account of Commynes, II, pp.123-8.

¹⁸² Stein, pp.74-5.

The story of the battle of Nancy has been told many times and there is little reason to repeat it here.¹⁸³ It is however generally agreed that the bedraggled remnants of Charles' army were no match for the numerically superior and highly disciplined forces that René had been able to muster. The result was that the Burgundians were utterly routed, with hundreds being cut down on the field of battle and others dying in the hospital beds of St. Nicholas in Le Neufbourg as a result of frostbite and horrific wounds. Charles himself perished while attempting to flee across a stream near the Lake of St. John, north-west of the city. According to one source, the Duke had suffered a blow to the head which had sliced from just above his ear through to the teeth along with numerous other wounds.¹⁸⁴

As for la Marche, he survived the battle but was among the large number of Burgundian nobles who were imprisoned by René's troops.¹⁸⁵ Two days after the battle he undertook the distressing task of identifying the remains of Charles' body, an episode which is entirely omitted in *Mémoires*.¹⁸⁶ He was then held captive for several months. His captor was a man called Jehannot le Basque, 'un compatriote des d'Aguerre' in the words of Stein.¹⁸⁷ He was taken to the Foug near Toul in Barrois, where he would languish in captivity until Easter, by which time he had managed to put together the cost of his ransom,

¹⁸³ Good accounts of the battle are given by Vaughan, pp.424-32; Frederix, pp.200-12; useful source material includes *Mémoires*, III, pp.238-42, and I, pp.141-3; Molinet, I, pp.165-7; Basin, II, pp.336-46; Commynes, II, pp.148-53; Monstrelet, II pp.428-31, which is little more than a copy of Jean de Troyes, *Chronique Scandaleuse*. ed. Petitot, vol.14, pp.291-310; 'La vraie declaration du fait et conduite de la bataille de Nancy' in Commynes ed. Godefroy and Lenglet du Fresnoy, III, *preuves* no. cclxxx, pp.491-3; 'S'ensuit la desconfiture de monseigneur de Bourgogne fait par monseigneur de Lorraine' in Commynes, cit. supra., pp.493-6; see also the letter written by G.P. Panigarola, the Burgundian ambassador of Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza of Milan, to whom it is addressed, in Frederix, pp.235-46.

¹⁸⁴ 'S'ensuit la desconfiture...', p.495; for a fuller discussion of Charles' demise and its aftermath, see below, ch.5.

¹⁸⁵ His capture is recorded in 'S'ensuit la desconfiture ...' p.496, along with Anthony, Bastard of Burgundy and other nobles; see also Molinet, I, p.168.

¹⁸⁶ 'S'ensuit la desconfiture ...' p.495; la Marche was accompanied by Matthieu, a Portuguese doctor in Burgundian service, the Bastard of Burgundy, the Duke's chaplain Denys and some of the *valets de chambre*. On his imprisonment, see *Mémoires*, III, pp.240-2.

¹⁸⁷ Stein, p.76 n.5.

an enormous 4000 *écus*. During this time he wrote one of his early poems, *Le Debat de Cuidier et de Fortune*. The ransom paid, he was taken to Ivry in the Ardennes where he was met by 100 men of the ducal guard of which he had been captain. Three days later he returned to Flanders and presented himself to Mary of Burgundy, the sole heiress of Charles the Bold. He would remain in the service of Mary and her successors for the rest of his days.¹⁸⁸

1477-1502: The Later Years

La Marche quickly went into active service under his 'souveraine princesse'.¹⁸⁹ He spent the summer of 1477 at Malines with Margaret of York, or 'Madame la Grande', on whose shoulders responsibility for the survival of Charles' inheritance rested.¹⁹⁰ He then went to Cologne, accompanied by the seigneur du Fay and the seigneur d'Irlain to greet Maximilian of Austria, who was travelling to Flanders for his marriage to Mary of Burgundy, and while at Cologne he was given the post of *grand et premier maître d'hôtel* in Maximilian and Mary's household.¹⁹¹ He subsequently assisted at the wedding at Ghent on 18 August.

In April of the following year la Marche was in Bruges, where he was the 'principal conducteur' of the solemn ceremony held at St. Saviour's church to revive the Order of the

¹⁸⁸ For a full analysis of la Marche's motives in retaining his loyalty to the house of Burgundy, see below ch.5.

¹⁸⁹ A term he frequently employed, e.g. in *Mémoires*, III pp.224, 244, etc.

¹⁹⁰ Weightman, cit supra.

¹⁹¹ *Mémoires*, III, p.244; A.D.N. B2117, contains a letter dated 8 January 1478 which includes a record of payment to la Marche in the previous year for certain duties.

Golden Fleece under its new sovereign, Maximilian.¹⁹² In June, he was part of the embassy to France which succeeded in bringing about a one-year truce between Louis and Maximilian.¹⁹³ On 22 July, he assisted at the baptism of Maximilian and Mary's son Philippe, his future sovereign lord.¹⁹⁴

From 1478 to the mid 1480s la Marche remained active, but it is apparent that the nature of his duties was changing, becoming less military and more administrative and diplomatic in character. He was by now in his fifties after all. An important task was to provide a link between Maximilian and the great cities of the Low Countries over whom the Archduke was now sovereign. Stein collected evidence of his presence at several cities during the later part of 1478:

nous avons des mentions authentiques et indiscutables de son passage à Grammont le 11 septembre, et à Nieuport le 11 octobre. Dans chacune de ces deux villes, on le gratifie de deux pots de vin de Beaune ou du Rhin. Y était-il envoyé par l'archiduc pour surveiller les affaires municipales, pour organiser des recrutements de gens d'armes, ou pour y apporter des ordres spéciaux?¹⁹⁵

We may never know. It is however clear that Maximilian's need to raise revenue, particularly given the large costs of the war against Louis XI of France,¹⁹⁶ necessitated his plundering of all possible sources of revenue. In 1481, he sent la Marche to Mons in Hainaut to attend a meeting of the *États* on 16 February in the hope of raising revenue, and he successfully persuaded them to contribute the money to pay 300 archers over a two-

¹⁹² Molinet, I, p.249; on the significance of this, see below ch.5.

¹⁹³ Kendall, *Louis XI*, p.397; Stein p.81.

¹⁹⁴ *Mémoires*, III, pp.252-3.

¹⁹⁵ Stein, p.82.

¹⁹⁶ On which see below, ch.6.

month period.¹⁹⁷ On 12 September, he was back in Mons to assist at the celebrations held there for the birthday of Philippe le Beau.¹⁹⁸

In return for his service, he received numerous rewards. At some point between 1477-80, he was granted seigneurial rights over the territories of Somerghem and Lowerghem.¹⁹⁹ In 1481, he received the title *seigneur de la Gouarderie de la paroisse de St. Juval* near Dinant,²⁰⁰ while the following year he received the lordships of Rieux near Cambrai and Vieux-Condé near Valenciennes, in the wake of their confiscation from Jean de Humières.²⁰¹

In 1479, he received further property rights through his marriage to Isabeau Machefoing.²⁰² This was la Marche's second marriage. About his first, little is known, except that his wife was Odette de Janley, the daughter of Jean de Janley and Jeanne de Molain.²⁰³ More is known about his second wife, the daughter of the knight Jean de Machefoing, Bailiff of Thiel in the County of Flanders who was killed in this office by means unknown.²⁰⁴ Isabeau had been married twice previously. Her first husband was Jean Coustain,²⁰⁵ who was executed in 1462 for allegedly attempting to poison the Count

¹⁹⁷ Stein, p.85 n.6.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.86 n.2.

¹⁹⁹ Beaune, p.lxxiii n.4.

²⁰⁰ Stein, p.86.

²⁰¹ Stein, *Pièces Justificatives* no.47, p.191; for a more complete list of the gifts and grants of land made to la Marche in this period, Stein, pp.86-7 and Beaune, pp.lxxii-lxxiv.

²⁰² Caron, p.149; on la Marche's acquisition of the lordship of Boussu near Namur see Stein, *Pièces Justificatives* no.43, pp.185-6.

²⁰³ B.N. *Collection de Bourgogne* vol. 101, f.323 for Odette de Janley and la Marche's children. On Odette's family, see Stein, p.11 n.13.

²⁰⁴ Beaune, p.lxxxi n.1; Chastellain, IV, p.276.

²⁰⁵ Stein, *Pièces Justificatives*, no.41, p.184; on Coustain, see Chastellain, IV, p.235 n.1; Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, p.344.

of Charolais. The facts surrounding this incident are obscure. Chastellain's suggestion, that Isabeau was herself in part responsible since she had incurred the Count's wrath by conspicuously outdressing the Countess of Charolais, is perhaps a little imaginative. More recently Vaughan has argued that the accusations made against Coustain were instigated by some hostile third party. Either way, Isabeau found herself widowed for the first time in 1462. She remarried two years later, this time to Jean de Montferrat, Bailiff of Courtrai and a *conseiller et chambellan* under Charles. An enthusiastic knight, he was mentioned by la Marche as having accompanied the Bastard of Burgundy to the Smithfield jousts in 1467, and having participated in the *Pas de l'Arbre d'Or* held to celebrate the wedding of Charles and Margaret of York the following year.²⁰⁶ He died in c.1473.

An act of 6 July 1481 shows that, by this point, la Marche and Isabeau had married.²⁰⁷ The union does not appear to have produced any children, however, since la Marche's two daughters and one son were all born before this date and would therefore have been the children of Odette de Janley. His daughter Philipotte was held at the baptismal font by Philip the Good in 1456.²⁰⁸ She would later marry Thierry de Charmes, a soldier who had fought at Rupelmonde in 1452, and then Philippe de Lenoncourt, seigneur de Loches, who was her husband at the time that la Marche wrote his testament.²⁰⁹ His other daughter, Louise, was married to Sebastien Rolin, the son of the famous Burgundian chancellor, according to a contract drawn up on 9 September 1469.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ *Mémoires*, III, p.49 and p.128.

²⁰⁷ Stein, *Pièces Justificatives* no.42, p.185; Caron p.159.

²⁰⁸ Beaune, p.lxxx n.1.

²⁰⁹ See la Marche's testament in B.N. ms. fr. 4332, published by Beaune and d'Arbaumont in their edition of *Mémoires*, I, pp.clix-clxvi.

²¹⁰ Stein, 'Nouveaux documents', *Pièces Justificatives* no.7, pp.37-43.

She may however have died during her father's lifetime since there is no reference to her in la Marche's testament. Finally, la Marche had a single son, Charles, who would inherit the lion's share of his father's inheritance in 1502. He was probably the youngest of the three, but was born sufficiently early to allow him to participate at the battle of Guinegate in 1479. Although this was a decisive victory for Maximilian against the French, the outcome for Charles was imprisonment.²¹¹ He married Catherine Chamboye, but died without posterity.²¹²

From about 1485, la Marche's name begins to figure less frequently in the records and it appears that by now he was beginning to retire from public life. In 1483, with his sixtieth birthday looming, he wrote what was to become his most famous work of poetry, *Le Chevalier délibéré*, in which he used allegorised imagery to portray his own passage into the autumn years of life.²¹³

His single most important function during these later years was his role as tutor to Philippe le Beau from 1485. La Marche would have had the task of educating Philippe in a wide range of disciplines, and would use this position of mentor as the basis for a number of treatises addressed to the young Archduke. He would be required to exercise strict discipline over his young protégé, and something of their relationship can be detected from a moral poem written by la Marche for Philippe 'pour sa nouvelle escolle' in which the tutor states:

Quy ces chincq poins veult en nonchaloir mettre
Pugny doit estre sans merchy par le maistre;

²¹¹ Molinet, I, p.313.

²¹² B.N. *Collection de Bourgogne*, vol.101 f.323.

²¹³ For a discussion of this, and la Marche's other poems, see below ch.4.

Ceste doctrine & ces vers vray disans
Vous souffissent soubz aige de dix ans.
Puis j'ouvriray le secret de mon arche,
Car à vous est le viellart de La Marche.²¹⁴

The secret of his 'arche' (Ark) could refer to his later teachings, perhaps even the contents of the 'Introduction' to *Mémoires*, on which la Marche was probably beginning work when this poem was written.

In 1486, la Marche was promoted to the position of *premier maître d'hôtel* in Philip's household. He still held this post by the time he was writing the later sections of *Mémoires* in the 1490s.²¹⁵ Only by 1501 had he been replaced, by Philip, Bastard of Burgundy.²¹⁶

This period was also the most productive in la Marche's life in terms of his literary outpourings, and most of his major works date from after c.1483. It is noteworthy that despite the common association made between these and the world of the Valois dukes, most of his literature was in fact written after the death of the last of them. He would have had more time on his hands by this period, and his ideal that idleness ought to be avoided in later life through the pursuit of study is a central concept in the poem *Le Chevalier délibéré*. He continued to live in close proximity to the court and was in receipt of numerous pensions and gifts for the rest of his life. Several payments were made by Maximilian in 1487-8 for various, often unspecified, missions and duties, while between 1492 and 1496 he was in receipt of new pensions annually, as well as the lordships of

²¹⁴ Published in C. Ruelens ed., *Recueil de chansons, poèmes et pièces en vers français relatifs aux Pays-Bas* (Société des Bibliophiles de Belgique, III, Brussels 1878), pp.7-8.

²¹⁵ *Mémoires*, IV, p.286.

²¹⁶ Gachard, *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas*, I, p.349.

Fillievie and Conchy-sur-Canche in Artois.²¹⁷ In 1488, he bought a house called *Den Os* in Malines, fast becoming the recognised capital of the Burgundian domain, and a record of this purchase survives in the city's archives.²¹⁸ He also undertook the occasional diplomatic duty in the 1490s; thus we find him at Mons for the annual assembly of the Hainaut *États* between 26-31 October 1495, during which he secured an *aide* of 15,000 *écus*. The following year he was in Germany on diplomatic business.

However the end of his life was drawing near. He was unable to attend the Golden Fleece chapter of 1501, although he was able to complete and dedicate a treatise to Philippe le Beau on the procedures that should be followed during a chapter of the Order.²¹⁹ By 8 October he had drawn up his testament, and on 1 February 1502 he died in Brussels.

At his own request, he was buried in the Church of St. Jacques-sur-Coudenberg, near to the ducal palace, in a stone tomb in front of the altar.²²⁰ Today, the visitor can admire this impressive church with its triangular external facade supported by six pillars, and its austere, simple interior, more reminiscent of classical architecture than northern Gothic. The church had been very important to the Dukes in the second half of the fifteenth century. It was here that Mary of Burgundy was baptised in 1451, that the funeral of Charles the Bold's second wife Isabella of Bourbon was held in 1465, and that the funeral of Maximilian and Mary's third child, who died in infancy, took place. To be buried in such a place, so close to the house of Burgundy, was a final acknowledgement of

²¹⁷ Stein, *Pièces Justificatives* nos. 48-50, pp.192-4; and see p.92 and 93 n.3.

²¹⁸ Ibid., no.51, pp.194-5; for what follows see pp.92-3.

²¹⁹ *Mémoires*, IV, pp.158-89; on la Marche's physical inability to attend the chapter, see p.158.

²²⁰ On his testament, see above, n.210.

how close la Marche had been to the dukes throughout his life. Nothing survives of his tomb, the church having been sacked in an iconoclastic rage during the Wars of Religion in 1579. We do, however, have a record of the tomb's inscription, which read:

Cy gist messire Olivier de la Marche qui trespasa l'an 1501, le premier jour de février, et dame Isabeau Machefoin son espouse qui trespasa l'an 1510, le iie jour de novembre.

As well as this there was a marble plaque with the inscription:

Cy gist Olivier de la Marche, seigneur
Et grand maistre d'hostel, rempli de tout honneur,
Qui fut saige et discret, léal et magnifique,
Et qui fit maints beaux dicts en belle rhétorique;
L'an quinze cens et ung, le premier février,
Mourut plein de vertus. Veuillez pour lui prier.
Dame Isabeau Machefoin mourut neuf ans après,
Sa compaigne et espeuse, et gist icy emprès.
Priez que paradis à elle soit ouvert.
Et au bon chevalier lequel a tant souffert.²²¹

In his testament, la Marche detailed his intention to make a donation to the brotherhood of St. Jacques-sur-Coudenberg for the provision of masses for the aid of his soul, and he donated *200 livres de 40 gros* to them.²²² He appears to have maintained a close relationship with this fraternity in his later years. Stein published a document dated 20 January 1501 in which the brothers acknowledged receipt of a beautiful gold and silver Eucharistic vessel from 'messire Olivier de la Marche, chevalier, conseiller et premier maistre d'hostel de monseigneur l'archiduc d'Austriche, et de madame Ysabeau Machefoins, sa compaigne',²²³ while his widow continued to make donations after his death.²²⁴ La

²²¹ His epitaph was published by Stein, p.96, and Beaune, p.bxxxix.

²²² 'Testament' in *Mémoires*, I, p.clx.

²²³ Stein, p.94 n.8.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, *Pièces Justificatives*, no.57, p.205.

Marche was certainly not exceptional among the late medieval nobility in making donations of this kind to such an organisation. Margaret of York for example was a patron of the *Devotio Moderna* movement.²²⁵ She came into contact with leading clerical reformers and became involved on her own initiative with reform. She also donated generously to churches and monasteries in the Low Countries, chiefly those of the Franciscan-based Order of the Poor Clares, and owned and donated numerous devotional manuscripts. It was probably at her behest that the first house of Observant friars to be founded in England was created at Greenwich during the reign of her brother, Edward IV. La Marche's involvement with the order of St. Jacques-sur-Coudenberg was therefore part of a wider tradition.

Although interred at Brussels, la Marche never forgot his Burgundian origins, and his testament requested that a chapel be set up in Villegaudin in the Duchy of Burgundy, where his predecessors were interred. His heart was to be buried in a lead container before the altar, and requiem masses were to be sung for his soul.²²⁶

His testament also reveals something of the extent of his inheritance by the end of his life.²²⁷ The main beneficiary was his son Charles who received the sum of '4270 livres de 50 gros' as well as the revenues from the castle of Chastelgiraud in the Duchy of Burgundy, amounting to 3700 *livres*. Charles also received his father's debts. In terms of property he received his father's house in Brussels, but not until after the death of Isabeau Machefoing, and he also gained the family lordships of la Marche, Esnay and Chassée. Should he die heirless - as he in fact would - these would pass to Philipotte and her

²²⁵ On Margaret's role as a religious reformer, see Weightman, esp. pp. 198-203.

²²⁶ 'Testament', pp. clx-clxi.

²²⁷ Ibid., pp. clxi-clxvi.



husband. Philipotte herself received the sum of *200 francs de 35 gros*. Isabeau Machefoing received most of her late husband's moveable possessions, as well as an annual rent of *150 livres de 40 gros* from property held in Hainaut, and this would pass to Charles after her death. She also received the house of Malines to dispose of as she pleased.

In summary, the major events to which la Marche was witness during his lifetime seem to chart the familiar story of the decline and eventual eclipse of Valois Burgundy, from its zenith at the Feast of the Pheasant and the Smithfield jousts to its destruction in 1477. Yet la Marche survived the battle of Nancy, and continued to serve the successors of the Valois Dukes for a further 25 years. A major theme of the subsequent chapters is to demonstrate that the post-Valois period contains some surprising continuities with the past, continuities to which la Marche's career and writings give illuminating testimony.

CHAPTER 2. The Courtier: Ceremony, Pageantry and Stage-Management

To contemporaries, as well as to modern historians, Olivier de la Marche was probably best known through his role as part of the machinery of the court that engineered the elaborate day-to-day ceremonies that have fascinated historians ever since, as well as for his role in organising some of the more elaborate *fêtes* of which the Burgundian dukes were so fond. Tremendous weight is given to these matters by la Marche, not only in his *Mémoires* but in other works also. The famous Feast of the Pheasant held at Lille in 1454 is therefore given enough space to fill more than 40 pages in Beaune and d'Arbaumont's edition, while the description of the wedding of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York held at Bruges fourteen years later runs to 100 pages.¹ Compare this to the superficial attention that Charles the Bold's campaigns against René II of Lorraine in 1476-7 is given; it amounts to two pages for the campaigns of Grandson and Morat, and only six for the siege and battle of Nancy and the death of Charles. Immediately, the reader begins to get an idea of la Marche's sense of priority. Moreover, two of his prose works, *État de la maison du duc Charles* and *Epistre pour tenir et célébrer la noble feste de la Thoisson d'Or* are principally concerned with providing a practical guide to the elaborate and highly detailed etiquette to be followed by members of the ducal household.

Principally, la Marche's day-to-day income was derived from his duties as *maître d'hôtel*, a post he held under the Count of Charolais from 1461, and which he retained from Charles becoming Duke in 1467 until the latter's death in 1477. In August of that year his functions were renewed under Maximilian of Austria, who further elevated him

¹ *Mémoires*, II, p.340 and III, pp.101-201. On the campaigns of 1476, see *ibid.*, III, pp.209-11 and 238-42.

to the post of *grand et premier maître d'hôtel*.²

What were la Marche's duties in this capacity? His own treatise, *État de la maison du duc Charles*, provides a good source of information on this.³ According to it, Charles the Bold employed four ordinary *maîtres d'hôtel*, of whom the author was one from 1461-77. Their duties were generally 'le regart à la police de la maison du duc' i.e. to ensure the smooth running of the Duke's domestic household. These responsibilities were in part ceremonial, and included overseeing and participating in the elaborate procedures that governed the feeding of the Duke and his court. But the *maître d'hôtel* also had responsibilities with regard to the Duke's expenses, and particularly the costs of the food supply. Every day, there was a meeting which the *maître d'hôtel* attended along with the *maître de la chambre aux deniers* concerning the previous day's expenses as far as the 'gages et dépenses de bouche' were concerned. The *contrôleur* had to confirm that the expenses were legitimate, while the clerks ensured that all expenses were written down on a roll of parchment. There was one roll for every day which would include a record of expenses for all parts of the court. With regard to wages, lists of names were written on the rolls and the *maîtres d'hôtel* had to confirm the wages paid to each individual at their own discretion. The elaborate financial system that operated under the Burgundian dukes is well known,⁴ and is too complex to consider in detail here. It appears, however, that the role of the *maîtres d'hôtel* was more than a ceremonial one.

Supervising the four *maîtres d'hôtel* was one *premier maître d'hôtel* who also attended the daily meetings at which the Duke's expenses were discussed. His supervision

² On his appointment to these positions, see above ch.1.

³ *État* in *Mémoires*, IV, pp.1-94; on the role of the *maîtres d'hôtel* see below.

⁴ M.Mollat, 'Recherches sur les finances des ducs Valois de Bourgogne' in *Revue historique*, 219 (1958), pp.285-321.

was particularly concerned with overseeing the feeding of the court. He enjoyed the right to dine with the upper circle of the ducal household and at the same time as the prince, a sign of elevation above the rank and file of domestic servants. In addition, the Duke employed one *grand maître d'hôtel*, an elevated officer who was exempt from involvement in the practical detail of the dining ceremonies, since the task of getting food from the kitchens to the ducal table fell only to the *premier maître d'hôtel* and his four subordinates. The *grand maître d'hôtel* was responsible for attending to the Duke's needs throughout the meal, ensuring that serviettes, cutlery, bowls of water, and so on were delivered when appropriate. Physical proximity of this kind to the Duke's person was an important sign of distinction. The *grand maître d'hôtel* was also responsible for leading the procession that actually brought the Duke's food to him. Furthermore, and on a more general level, this officer enjoyed considerable access to the Duke's ear, and he was entitled to give counsel to the Duke on all matters, including affairs of justice and war.

In his role as a *maître d'hôtel* of Charles the Bold, la Marche naturally had a deep understanding of the nature of these offices. Because his duties could have been concerned with the feeding of the Duke and his court every day he was also very familiar with those other sections of the household that were similarly involved, and left a lengthy and detailed section in his treatise discussing these. In all, there were four 'estates' whose duty was to 'serve the body and mouth of the Duke', and la Marche's analysis of their functions fills 38 pages, between a third to half of the entire treatise.⁵

Two things immediately strike the reader about the dining etiquette of the Burgundian court, the sheer numbers of those employed for this function and the bewildering complexity of detail that characterised the procedures that were followed.

⁵ For what follows, see *État*, pp.19-58.

With regard to the personnel, the Duke's staff was vast. Those whose duty was to physically transport food and drink from the kitchens to the table of the Duke - and the Dukes rarely dined alone, often entertaining guests, visitors, family members, and ambassadors - were divided into three 'estates'; these consisted of the *panetiers* whose duty was to transport food and condiments to the table, the *échansonniers*, concerned with the service of wine, and the *écuyers tranchant*, literally those who carve the food. Each of these was headed by one official, the *premier panetier*, *premier écuyer d'échanson*, and the *premier écuyer tranchant* respectively. In addition, each 'estate' consisted of 50 members, who were divided into five squadrons, each of which was led by a *chef de chambre*. Thus 150 people were employed on a regular basis as 'waiting staff'. In addition, there were eight *valets* responsible for the service of bread, eight ushers whose duties included the preparation of tapestries and cushions at the Duke's place, the *sommelier* who had to cover the tables with cloths, the *lavandier* who washed and cleaned linen, and so on. Then there was the staff of the kitchen itself. These employees were headed overall by the *écuyer tranchant* and two *écuyers de cuisine*. In addition, there were three *queux* who were employed on a four-monthly basis, and whose duties included the inspection of the quality of the food that was to be served to the Duke. The *queux* also had overall responsibility for the smooth running of the kitchen itself; he had, la Marche states, to have a seat which was ideally placed to keep a watchful eye on all that went on. He had to dress in 'ung honneste habit' with a white napkin over the right shoulder, and have a large wooden spoon at the ready at all times, firstly to test soup and secondly to chase children out of the kitchen. He also had to guard seasoning and other spices, and ultimately decide which was to be used. The kitchen workers themselves comprised a total of 25 men, many of whom had assistants, plus several unpaid children who were

there to learn. These staff include the *rôtisseur*, who attended to the meat with the aid of a companion, the *potaiger*, concerned with soup, *saussiers*, responsible for sauces and dressings, as well as numerous more menial servants, such as *buchiers* who brought wood, *potiers* who cleaned all the kitchen vessels, *soufflés* who operated the boilers, and *galopiers*, general dogsbodies who performed a number of minor duties. Finally, there was the *fruiterie* which was as its name suggests concerned with the supply of fruit, although the two *fruitiers* who headed this section were also responsible for the supply of wax for candles and torches as well as other forms of lighting fuel, and had overall responsibility for the maintenance of candelabras.

It is not necessary to go into the procedures that governed the actual service of the prince - intrepid readers may discover them for themselves by delving into la Marche's treatise. Suffice it to say that the finer points of etiquette are overwhelming in their complexity, and are all discussed in meticulous detail and with loving care by the author. There are rules governing exactly who should carry what to the table and in what order, how salt-cellars and goblets should be carried, where they should be placed, where cutlery should be placed, by whom and at what point in the proceedings, when and how bread should be brought to the table, and so on. If the Duke required a serviette, it took three officials to perform the ceremony of fetching it, bringing it to the table, and then removing it once soiled. And a complex procedure involving at least three officials, several knives, at least three serviettes, and a mass of detailed rules was used simply to bring the Duke some bread. It is this kind of detail that la Marche knew intimately, and his expertise in this area was responsible for his being 'recognised throughout Western Europe as the greatest authority of the age on court ceremonials and rules.'⁶

⁶ A.R. Myers, *The Household of Edward IV: The Black Book and the 1478 Ordinance* (Manchester 1959), p.4.

All the above detail was, of course, only concerned with the day-to-day feeding of the court, but the Burgundian dukes were well-known for their frequent staging of elaborate feasts and banquets of various sorts.⁷ The following example is given by Professor Vaughan:

Philip [the Good] gave a supper for the Ladies of Brussels on 11 November 1460 ... the provisions included 74 dozen rolls, cress and lettuce, 6 joints of beef, 43 pounds of lard, 21 shoulders of mutton, 6½ dozen sausages, 3 pigs, tripe and calves' feet for making jellies, a bittern, 3 geese, 12 water-birds, 4 rabbits, 159 chickens, 16 pairs of pigeons, 18 cheeses, 350 eggs, pastries, flour, cabbages, peas, parsley, onions, 100 quinces and 150 pears, cream, 6 pounds of butter, vinegar and oranges and lemons.⁸

Clearly, this would keep the household staff very busy, not least of all because this would run to many courses and could last for several hours. An observer at the famous Feast of the Pheasant held at Lille in 1454 remarked that he had taken the trouble to stay up until 4 a.m. to witness the proceedings,⁹ although this particular feast was admittedly exceptional. La Marche's treatise does not take into account the extra preparations required to stage banquets such as these (his is principally a treatise on the day-to-day functioning of the ducal household), but he gave some indication of the procedures that had to be followed for banquets that were held during the intermittent chapters meetings of the Order of the Golden Fleece.¹⁰

The Duke's *maîtres d'hôtel* were, as we might assume, actively involved in the

⁷ Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, pp.142-5; Cartellieri, *The Court of Burgundy* (London 1929, reprinted 1971), ch.8.

⁸ Vaughan, p.42.

⁹ See the letter of J. de Pleine in B.N. ms. fr. 5044 ff.30-1, published in Vaughan, pp.144-5.

¹⁰ *Epistre pour tenir et célébrer la noble feste du Thoisson d'Or* in *Mémoires* IV, pp.158-89; and in B. Prost ed. *Traitiés du duel judiciaire*, pp.97-133. I have used the former edition. For background information, see Reiffenberg, *Histoire de la Toison d'Or* and Kervyn de Lettenhove, *La Toison d'Or*.

preparations for the chapters, and particularly for the banquets.¹¹ La Marche therefore had first hand evidence of how the banqueting hall should be set up, and he gave a description of this: there had to be a great table for the Knights of the Order, a smaller one beside it for the four officers. Other tables were set up for ducal officials and visiting ambassadors - a crucial factor. The *maîtres d'hôtel* were responsible for showing each person to their appointed place and had to ensure that each was correctly placed according to rank. They supervised the service of the food, and had to keep a careful account of these expenses incurred over the entire chapter, which usually ran to four days, and these had to be written down on *escroes*.

As a Burgundian *maître d'hôtel* from 1461,¹² la Marche was ideally placed to observe the workings of the ducal household in its entirety, and it is clear that his knowledge extended beyond his own personal territory. The treatise *État de la maison du duc Charles de Bourgogne* is in essence a practical blueprint of the structure and organisation of the household, and is written with the detail we might expect from a man who was operating within this machinery.¹³ Thus, the reader can discover details about Charles' personal chapel, his Council, which dealt with matters of policy, justice and government, the Council of War, the machinery of finance, the equerry, the heralds and officers-at-arms, archers, and the ducal guard of which la Marche was captain from 1473.

This particular treatise is one of the earliest of la Marche's literary works, and is also one of the best known - a total of sixteen surviving manuscripts have been

¹¹ *Epistre*, pp.173-6, 181-4, 186-7 and 189.

¹² See above, ch.1.

¹³ See above, n.3.

identified.¹⁴ It is intended as a guide for the construction of a princely household based on that of Charles the Bold, and seems to have been in wide circulation in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The treatise was written at the request of King Edward IV of England, who approached the Burgundian household via Richard Whetehill, the victualler of the English-held port of Calais:

En accomplissant à vostre requeste, monseigneur l'avitailleur de Calais, j'ay mis en brief ce que j'ay peu comprendre de l'estat de la maison du duc Charles de Bourgoingne, mon très souverain seigneur, ensemble des ordonnances de sa guerre.¹⁵

La Marche finished the work by giving its date of completion:

... au siege de Nuyse en Alemaigne ou mois de novembre l'an mil CCCC LXXIII ...

He ended by signing it:

Olivier de la Marche, chevallier, conseiller et maistre d'ostel de monseigneur le duc de Bourgoingne, capitaine de sa garde et son bailly d'Amont ou comté de Bourgoingne,

and then by reproducing his famous device:

Tant a souffert la Marche ('So much as la Marche borne').¹⁶

This request on the part of Edward IV is usually seen as part of his desire to build up the profile of the royal court in the years that followed his return to the throne in 1471 after a brief period of deposition by his Lancastrian enemies.¹⁷ During his exile in 1470-

¹⁴ Stein, pp.135-6; 'Nouveaux documents', p.15; Beaune, pp.cxiv-cxx.

¹⁵ *État*, pp.1-2; A.F.Sutton, 'The Court and its Culture in the Reign of Richard III' in J. Gillingham ed., *Richard III, a Medieval Kingship* (London 1993), p.88.

¹⁶ *État*, p.94.

¹⁷ Myers, pp.3-4; C. Ross, *Edward IV* (London 1991), pp.259-60.

1, Edward had been given refuge in Flanders, and was a guest of Louis de Bruges, seigneur de la Gruthuse, under whose influence he rapidly acquired a taste for magnificent books and illuminated manuscripts. More generally, the kind of courtly opulence that Edward had witnessed during his exile made him anxious to vie with the Burgundians and to emulate this apparently wealthy and stable court, hence his request. He had already begun a restructuring of the royal household as expressed in the so-called 'Black Book of the Household' (1471-2)¹⁸ when he made the request for la Marche's treatise in 1474. While la Marche's work spends much time analysing the ceremonial duties of the household officers, and very much reflects the point of view of a *maître d'hôtel*, the Black Book is an altogether different work and is more concerned with issues of finance and the control of expenditure rather than ceremonial points. Indeed, Myers has suggested that the Black Book very much reflects the view of a person who was involved in the English counting house, and that the cofferer John Elrington may very well have made a considerable contribution to the work's compilation.¹⁹ If the Black Book was therefore concerned principally with finance, la Marche's treatise may have acted as a useful complement.

It was not only the King of England, however, who was to make use of la Marche's treatise. It seems that it was also the basis of the household of Charles' successors in the post-Valois history of Burgundy and the Low Countries, as the existence of a short treatise written by la Marche, dated 10 June 1500 and entitled *Advis des grans officers que doit avoir ung Roy et de leur pouvoir et entreprise*, suggests.²⁰ It was

¹⁸ See this document in Myers, pp.76-197.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp.28 and 23-4.

²⁰ Beaune, pp.cxv-cxvi; the treatise is published in *Mémoires*, IV, pp.153-7.

addressed to 'monsigneur Maximilien, par la clemence divine Roy des Romains, Empereur apparant et toujours auguste', and is signed:

Olivier, seigneur de la Marche, indigne premier maistre d'ostel de monseigneur l'archiduc d'Austriche vostre filz, et à vous humble serviteur et subject, aiant receu voz lettres qui me valent commandement par lesquelles me mandez que je vous envoie ce que je sçay et ay appris des officiers qui appartiennent à l'estat d'un Roy ... je employray la capacité de mon entendement à mettre par escript ce que je en ay peu enquerir, sçavoir et retenir.²¹

The treatise is an analysis of all the principal officers that a King should employ.

Interesting though this is, the most significant feature of this manuscript is the following statement:

je vous envoie en ce present volume l'estat du duc Charles, qui fut pour ung duc grant et magnificque, et en la maniere que je l'enregistray, nous estant au siege devant Nuys, à la requeste du Roy Edouart d'Angleterre qui m'envoya l'avitailleur de Calais pour avoir ledit estat par escript, pour ce que en celluy temps il vouloit descendre en France à puissance d'armes et se monstrar en son estat grant Roy et puissant, ce qu'il fist et descendit.²²

Furthermore, the Vienna manuscript contains a copy of *État*, as well as this new treatise.

This is a very significant statement in that it firstly confirms the view that Edward IV did wish to increase the prestige of the royal household, based on the Burgundian model, between 1473 and 1474, and secondly because it shows that Maximilian was interested in obtaining a blue-print of Charles' household as late as 1500. La Marche's treatise was destined to influence European courtly society beyond the boundary of Charles the Bold's Burgundy.

Moreover, it seems certain that the household of Philippe le Beau was, from 1493,

²¹ Ibid., p.153.

²² Ibid., p.154.

modelled very closely on la Marche's treatise. We know that the library of the Burgundian dukes' successors possessed at least one copy which probably post-dated 1487 in that it does not appear in any inventory drawn up earlier than that year.²³ Beaune has suggested that the entry in the library inventory may correspond to a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris.²⁴ In any case, the structure of Philippe le Beau's household at the end of the fifteenth century bears an almost identical resemblance to that of Charles the Bold as described by la Marche. The following is a summary of the main offices of Philippe's household, based on an ordinance of the Archduke issued on 1 November 1502;²⁵ the exact numbers of men employed varies in places from the numbers given by la Marche, but the essential structure is the same. The references in parentheses are to la Marche's treatise:

Grand Chapelle, headed by the Chapelain; 30 names receiving 3-24 *sols* daily (IV, pp.1-3).

Petite Chapelle, 10 names: 6-12 *sols* daily (la Marche makes no distinction between *grande* or *petite chapelle*)

Chambellans, under the *grand et premier chambellan* held by 'Monsieur de Ville' in the absence of Englebert, Count of Nassau; 8 names receiving 36 *sols* daily, and a further 9 on 30 *sols* daily (pp.12-13)

Maîtres d'hôtel, under Philippe, bastard of Burgundy, *grand et premier maître d'hôtel*, who each received 60 *sols* daily.

3 names, receiving 30 *sols* daily (pp.13-15)

The 4 'Estates' each receiving 18 *sols* daily;

- *panetiers* 11 names (pp.20-31)

- *eschansons* 12 names (pp.31-42)

- *ecuyers tranchant* 11 names (pp.42-8)

- *ecuyers d'ecuyerie* 11 names (pp.58-67)

Valets servans, receiving 12 *sols* daily (pp.25-9), 7 names

²³ J. Barrois, *Bibliothèque prototypographique ou la librairie des fils de Charles V* (Paris 1830), no. 2237; this entry is included in Barrois' 'Appendice' which contains items that formed part of the ducal library but which did not figure in the inventories of 1467, 1485 or 1487. Included in the same entry is an account of the 'État Général de Tours en 1484' suggesting that the manuscript cannot have pre-dated this year.

²⁴ See above n.22.

²⁵ 'Ordonnance de Philippe le Beau pour la composition et le gouvernement de sa maison pendant son voyage en Espagne, 1^{er} novembre 1501' in Gachard ed., *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas*, I, pp.345-72.

Prevost d'hôtel 18 sols daily (no mention in la Marche)
Menus officers: sommeliers de la panneterie, 12 sols daily, 1 name (p.30):
garde linges, 12 sols 6 deniers daily, 2 names (p.30): *porte-chappe* 1 name, 6 sols daily (p.30), *oufleyeur*, 7 sols 6 deniers daily, and 1 assistant receiving 3 sols (p.31): ushers, 2 names, 9 sols daily (pp.29-30) *sommelier d'eschansonnerie*, 12 sols daily, 2 names (no reference in la Marche).
 Kitchen - 'cuisine' 1 name, 12 sols daily (possibly refers to the *ecuyer cuisine* p.48).
 - *maîtres cueux*, 2 names, 12 sols daily (p.48)
 - *companions cuisines*, 8 names, 6 sols daily (pp.49-52)
 2 *huissiers*, 1 *portier*, 1 *valet de cuisine*, 2 water-carriers, 2 *garde-linges*, 1 *cuisinier*, 3-6 sols daily, pp.52-3)
 - 2 *saulsiers* with 2 assistants, 10 sols and 6 sols respectively (p.54)
 - 1 *valet de chambre*, 3 sols daily (p.54)
Fruiterie, 6 names, 4-10 sols daily (pp.53-7)
Escuierie, 4 *coustilliers*, 12 sols daily (p.79)
 - 12 pages, 5 sols daily (pp.63-4)
 - numerous *aides* and *valets*, 4-6 sols daily (pp.64-6)
Fourier, 2 *escuyers de logis*, 23 sols daily (p.79)
Chambre - numerous officials 6-18 sols daily (p.79)
Medecins, 3 names, 16 sols daily (pp.16-17)
Cyruigiens, 2 names, 12-16 sols daily (p.17)
Garde des joyeaux, 24 sols daily (p.18), numerous minor officials
Grand ausmonier, 18 sols daily (pp.2-3)
Chappellain des maîtres d'hôtel, 6 sols daily (no reference)
 2 *sergens d'armes*, 12 sols daily (pp.80-1) and 3 *huissiers*, 10 sols daily (p.81)
Roix, Heraulx et Pour-suivans d'armes union (pp.67-71)
Archiers, 2 captains, 24 sols daily, 40 archers receiving 12 sols and a chaplain receiving 4 sols (pp.71-2)
Maîtres des requestes, two names, 23 sols (no reference)
 5 *Secretaires* 16-18 sols daily (no reference)
 Musicians, 8-9 sols daily (p.71)
Maîtres des requestes, 24 sols daily, 10 names, and numerous secretaries (no direct references)

The pattern between the households of 1474 and 1501 is very similar indeed. As a symbol of the general continuity that exists between Charles the Bold and Philippe le Beau, the ducal household is very important, and this continuity weighs very heavily against the idea that in 1477 Burgundy simply collapsed. A spectacular household and court was, as Edward IV realised,²⁶ an important reflection of the magnanimity and

²⁶

See above n.11.

stateliness of fifteenth century princes, and this lesson was not lost on Charles' successors.

Rather than being denied their inheritance, Charles' successors successfully built upon it.

État de la maison du duc Charles enjoyed wide enough circulation in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to be translated into two other languages, Spanish and Dutch. A total of five Spanish versions of the treatise have survived, all of which are at the National Library at Madrid.²⁷ It is highly probable that the treatise was also used as a blueprint for the household of Charles V, the great-grandson of Charles the Bold, and indeed one of the surviving manuscripts dating from the late sixteenth century includes, besides the Spanish version of la Marche's treatise, a *Relación de la forma de servir que se tenía en la casa del Emperador Don Carlos nuestro señor que ays gloria el año de 1545* written by one Juan Sigarey, who was the *contrôleur* of Charles' household.²⁸ With regard to the Dutch edition, it is less easy to define the purpose of the text. Only one Dutch manuscript survives, and dates from the end of the fifteenth century.²⁹ The translator is anonymous, but the text is dedicated to one 'Daniel de Milan', about whom no further information is available.

A further and rather more glamorous side to la Marche's activities at court concerned his role in organising the spectacular ceremonial pageantry for which Burgundy was renowned in the fifteenth century. Although he assisted in some capacity at numerous ducal entries to cities, Golden Fleece chapters, banquets and receptions, two major examples stand out high above the rest and merit some detailed attention here; the

²⁷ For details of these manuscripts, see Beaune, pp.cxviii-cxix.

²⁸ Beaune, cit. supra.; and C. Claveria, *Le Chevalier délibéré d'Olivier de la Marche y sus versiones espagnoles del siglo XVI* (Saragosa 1950), pp.43-4.

²⁹ Beaune, p.cxix.

Feast of the Pheasant, held at Lille in 1454; and the wedding of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York held at Bruges in 1468.

It is not necessary to review the secondary work that has already been devoted to outlining the exact course of events that constituted the Feast of the Pheasant, a sumptuous banquet staged by Philip the Good to publicise the need for a crusade following the fall of Constantinople to the Turks the previous year.³⁰ The fullest contemporary accounts of the Feast appear in the chronicles of la Marche and Matthieu d'Escouchy.³¹ It appears that these accounts may be semi-official, or are at least based on a separate official source. The details that each contains are far too complex to have been drawn from memory alone, and although la Marche was obviously a witness to the event and even participated in it, it is clear that his account must have relied on an external source much as his accounts of the great *pas d'armes* of the *Arbre Charlemagne*, the *Pèlerine* and the *Fontaine aux Pleurs* were derived from a combination of eye-witness detail and heralds' reports.³² The most striking thing about the accounts of la Marche and d'Escouchy is that they are virtually identical, word-for-word, the only significant difference being that la Marche reproduces only 22 of the vows taken on the Pheasant, while d'Escouchy reproduces a total of 93, including that of la Marche himself, curiously omitted by the memorialist.³³ This exact similarity suggests that either one chronicler copied the other or,

³⁰ Useful summaries include A La Fortune-Martel, *Fête noble en Bourgogne au XV^e siècle: le Banquet du Faisan 1454, aspects politiques, sociaux et culturels* (Cahiers d'études médiévales, no.8, Montréal-Paris, 1984): Cartellieri, pp.135-53; Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, pp.143-5; Doutrepont *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne*, (Paris 1909), pp.106-17; J. Chipps-Smith, *The Artistic Patronage of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, 1419-67* (University of Columbia, PhD thesis, 1979), esp. pp.142-9; G. Orgelfinger, 'The Vows of the Pheasant and Late Chivalric Ritual' in H. Chickery & T.M. Seiler eds., *The Study of Chivalry. Resources and Approaches* (Michigan 1988), pp.611-43.

³¹ *Mémoires*, II, pp.340-94: d'Escouchy, xxxv, pp.83-185.

³² See above, ch.1, n.76-7.

³³ For the vows, *Mémoires*, II, pp.381-94; and d'Escouchy, pp.115-73, who reproduces La Marche's vow in full.

as is more likely, both were using a common source. The probable source survives in a Paris manuscript which contains an 'Ordonance du banquet que fist en la ville de Lisle très hault et tres puissant prince Philippe, par la grace Dieu Duc de Bourgogne, de Brabant etc. l'an mil quatre cens cinquante trois [old style] le XVII^e jour de fevrier', as well as a 'Registre des voeux qui furent faits en l'intencion d'aler sur les Turcs ...'³⁴ This manuscript contains exactly the same detail as the two chronicles, and is in all probability the source to which both turned, although la Marche copied only some of the vows while d'Escouchy copied them all. The manuscript is a very fine one, and although it contains no illuminations, the Gothic lettering is beautifully constructed with many sumptuously decorated initials. The arms of Burgundy appear on folios 1 and 193, suggesting that it belonged to the ducal library.³⁵ The manuscript was produced some time after the Feast of the Pheasant, as the inclusion of a 'Coppie de la bulle donnée l'an LXIII [1463] par le Pape Pius [II]' implies.³⁶ It is, however, probable that the account of the Feast contained in it is a direct copy of an official version of the event drawn up at the time of its being staged, while the manuscript itself may have been drawn up some time after 1463 as part of the renewed sense of enthusiasm for the crusade that gripped the court in this period.³⁷ No indication of the author's identity is given, but it is fair to assume that it was drawn up by an employee of the court, possibly a herald. Philip was certainly anxious to acquire literary summaries of the event, as the following document, signed by Jean de Visen, suggests:

Droin Ducret, cleric à Dijon, reçoit du Duc 5 fr. (28 fr. 40s.) pour avoir

³⁴ B.N. ms. fr. 11594, ff.1-142r.

³⁵ Barrois, no.1328; this entry certainly fits the description of the manuscript.

³⁶ B.N. ms. fr. 11594, ff.145 ff; this bull relates to the Burgundian-inspired crusade of 1463.

³⁷ On the abortive mission that set out under Anthony, Bastard of Burgundy, see Vaughan, pp.320-2.

escript in parchemin l'histoire et dictié du banquet du Duc faict à Lille le 17 fevrier 1453, contenant LXVI feuillets ou volume.³⁸

Publicity was very much the Duke's objective in staging the Feast. The sumptuous and magnificent pageantry speaks for itself and was an effective means by which Philip could convey his crusading message to a wide audience. It would seem that, despite the condemnation of the event given by Huizinga and others,³⁹ it did fulfil a serious and valid purpose. Besides the written record of the event which circulated in its aftermath, and which found its way into the works of la Marche and d'Escouchy, there was a further vital aspect to the spectacle - the public viewing gallery:

Là estoient cinq hours bien adornez pour ceulx qui ne vouldroient point seoir à table, qui tantost furent pleins d'hommes et de femmes, dont la pluspart estoient desguisées, et tant en sçay, qu'il y avoit des chevaliers et des dames de grans maisons, et qui là estoient venuz de loing, les ungs par mer et les aultres par terre pour veoir la feste, dont il estoit grant renommée.⁴⁰

Some of the guests wrote enthusiastic letters home about what they saw, including Jean de Pleine who noted 'I took the trouble to stay up until nearly 4 a.m., and I believe that nothing so sublime and splendid has ever been done before.'⁴¹

The importance of these guests cannot be exaggerated, for it was Philip's principal objective to rally support for his idea of a crusade to recover Constantinople. He was very much aware that his own resources were insufficient to mount such an enormous expedition alone, and although he made various efforts to raise resources from his

³⁸ E.C. Peignot, *Catalogue d'une partie des livres composant l'ancienne bibliothèque des ducs de Bourgogne de la dernière race* (Paris 1830), pp.xxxvii-xxviii.

³⁹ J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth 1955), pp.89-90.

⁴⁰ *Mémoires*, II, p.354.

⁴¹ See above, n.9.

northern and southern territories between 1454-5, and even commissioned a detailed plan of the proposed campaign in 1456,⁴² he certainly sought to enlist the support of other western leaders. In this sense the Feast of the Pheasant should not be seen as an inward-looking or self-conscious piece of self-glorification on the part of the Burgundians, but as an attempt to spread the appeal for the crusade throughout Western Christendom. Moreover, it should be seen in the context of certain other measures taken by Philip towards this end. In 1451, Jean Germain, Bishop of Châlon and Nevers, and Chancellor of the Golden Fleece, was sent by the Duke to France where he delivered a lengthy appeal to Charles VII to support a crusade. Germain invoked the memory of Charlemagne, Godefrey de Bouillon and St. Louis, all of whom had defended the Church against the ravages of the Infidel, before finally exhorting Charles to heed the Duke of Burgundy's appeal and take the initiative in a new campaign.⁴³ It is significant that Philip's crusading vow, taken at the Feast, was careful to emphasise the fact that the Duke would go on crusade if and when the King took the initiative, and would support him fully.⁴⁴ There is nothing in Philip's vow to suggest that he could shoulder it alone. And while the King of France was the principal target of the Duke's appeal, he was not the only one, since Philip's vow also included a provision for his leading the crusade in the absence of the

⁴² Vaughan, pp.358-65.

⁴³ C. Schefer, 'Le Discours du voyage d'Outremer au très victorieux roi Charles VII' in *Revue de l'Orient Latin*, 3 (1891), pp.303-42; Doutrepoint, pp.250-1; A.Atiya, *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (London 1938), pp.205-7

⁴⁴ *Mémoires*, II, pp.381-2, 'Je voue ... que se le plaisir du très chrestien et très victorieux prince monseigneur le Roy est de prendre croisée et exposer son corps pour la deffense de la foy chrestienne, et resister à la dampnable emprise du Grand Turc et des infidelles, et se lors je n'ay loyal ensoigne de mon corps, je le serviray en ma personne et de ma puissance audit saint voyaige ... et se les affaires de mondit seigneur le Roy estoient telz qu'il n'y peust aller en sa personne, et son plaisir est d'y commettre aucun prince de son sang ou aultre seigneur chief de son armée, je à son dit commis obeiray et serviray audit saint voyage, le mieulx que je pourray, et ainsi que se luy mesme y estoit en personne. Et se ... que aultres princes chrestiens à puissance convenable empreignent le saint voyaige, je les y accompagneray, et me employeray avecques eux à la deffense de la foy chrestienne le plus avant que je pourray, pourveu que ce soit du bon plaisir et congé de monseigneur le Roy ...'.

King if there were other parties involved, and if the King gave his express consent to this. Indeed, the election of Alphonso V, King of Aragon and Naples, to the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1456 has been shown to have been linked to Philip's crusading projects, especially because Alphonso's control of the Mediterranean basin made him an invaluable sea-borne ally, capable of transporting troops to attack the Turks in the Holy Land.⁴⁵

Such an extravagant exhibition was of course very expensive and required a high degree of organisation at all levels. With regard to costs, la Marche, basing his account on the official version, showed an awareness that the expenses incurred could potentially lead to criticism:

je pensay en moy mesme les oultraigeux excès et la grant despense qui, pour la cause de ces banquetz ont esté faictz puis peu de temps ... que je nommoye ceste chose oultraigeuse et desraisonnable despense, sans y trouver entendement de vertu sinon touchant l'entremectz de l'Eglise et des veuz de ce ensuyvans ...⁴⁶

His doubts were quickly dispelled by an unidentified 'seigneur, conseiller et chambellan et bien privé de mondit seigneur le duc', who persuaded him that the banquet was justified because its objective was principally the defence of the Church, the Faith and God. The Duke, furious at the damage done to Christendom by the Turks, had decided to show his conviction in desiring vengeance against them, in the general interest of Christianity. Because of this ultimate objective of the Feast, the expenses were therefore justified. The reader must however assume that the fact that this issue was raised by the official reports at all suggests that criticism of the Feast and its huge costs had in fact been made.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ C. Marinesco, 'Documents espagnols concernant la fondation de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or' in *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, (1956), pp.401-17.

⁴⁶ *Mémoires*, II, p.369. Although la Marche includes this comment in *Mémoires* the sentiments are not his own. Exactly the same ethical dilemma is considered in both d'Escouchy and ms.fr.11594.

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp.369-71. For a full survey of the expenses incurred by the Feast, see Laborde, *Ducs de Bourgogne*, I, pp.442-9.

As well as being a witness, participant and chronicler of the Feast, la Marche was heavily involved in its organisation, as he indicates in his *Mémoires*:

Et conduisoient ceste chose messire Jehan, seigneur de Lannoy, ung chevallier de l'ordre de la Thoison, homme saichant et nouvel, et ung escuyer nommé Jehan Boudault, homme moult notable et discret. Et me fit le bon duc tant d'honneur, qu'il voulut que je y fusse appelé, et pour ceste maitiere se tindrent plusieurs consaulx, où fut appelé le chancelier [Nicolas Rolin] et le premier chambellan [Antoine de Croy], qui lors estoit revenu de la guerre qu'il avoit menée en Lucembourg, et dont il est escript cy dessus. Et furent à ce conseil des plus grans et des plus privés appelez; et, après deliberacion d'opinions, furent les cerimonies et les misteres concluz telz qu'ilz se devoient faire. Et voulut le duc que je fisse le personnage de Sainte Eglise, dont il se voulut aider à celle assemblée, et fut une solempnelle chose, et qui vault le ramentevoir et sert à nostre propos. Si ay enregistré avec ceste ledit banquet, le plus largement que j'ay peu, afin d'en avoir memoire.⁴⁸

The duty of heading the committee, as the ducal accounts show, fell to Jean de Lannoy and Jean Boudault, while la Marche's role seems to have been limited to the 'cerimonies' and 'misteres'.⁴⁹ The reference to 'mysteries' almost certainly alludes to the three-part play depicting the mythical story of Jason's conquest of the Golden Fleece from Colchis, and it is apparent that la Marche had some involvement in the writing of these.⁵⁰ After all, this was a man who was to produce numerous allegorical and symbolic works later in life, and these plays contain the type of symbolism that he would employ in, for example, *Le Chevalier délibéré*.

In the first play, Jason was attacked by two monstrous fire-breathing oxen, and a fierce battle ensued which Jason won thanks to his use of a certain liquid contained in a phial given to him by his lover, the sorceress Medea, by means of which he tamed the

⁴⁸ *Mémoires*, II, pp.339-40.

⁴⁹ The overall responsibility given to Lannoy and Boudault is detailed in Laborde, pp.428-9.

⁵⁰ On the content of the plays, *Mémoires*, II, pp.357-8, 359-60 and 361.

animals. In the second, Jason was attacked by a hideous serpent or dragon breathing fire and smoke, and fierce combat again ensued - 'et en ce feirent si bon devoir que ce ne sembloit pas mistere, ains sembloit trop mieulx une tres aigre et mortelle bataille' - until Jason was victorious, this time through the use of a ring given to him by Medea with which he was able to render the monster harmless. Finally, Jason was seen tending the land in the guise of a ploughman with the two oxen pulling the plough. He descended and planted the dragon's teeth which he had removed from its corpse and from which armed men sprang up. These immediately began to fight among each other until all were dead. The curtain fell.

What sense is to be made of these plays? In the first place, the legend of Jason and the conquest of the Fleece was one which enjoyed popularity at the Burgundian court, and a definitive version of it addressed to Philip the Good was created by the ducal chaplain Raoul Lefèvre in the mid 1450s, around the time that the Feast of the Pheasant was held.⁵¹ Furthermore, the Duke's own Order of the Golden Fleece derived its symbolism from this legend. The plays do imply an equation between Jason the mythical hero and Philip, whose chivalric order was based on the exploits of this hero, the link that existed between them should be seen as a symbolic one and not, as La Fortune-Martel has suggested, a genealogical one.⁵² The conquest of the Fleece represented Philip's proposed leadership of a new crusade to re-take Constantinople, in which the Duke would be remembered as the prime mover of the enterprise, or else as the French king's lieutenant should Charles fail to go on crusade. These plays were absolutely central to the

⁵¹ *Caxton's History of Jason translated from the French of Raoul Lefèvre*, ed. J. Munro (London 1913). The work was translated into English by William Caxton at the request of Edward IV (p.1), and the translator noted the connection between the legend and the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece.

⁵² La Fortune-Martel, p.135.

iconographic message of the Feast as a whole, and the device of evoking the memory of ancient heroes to motivate contemporary leaders is a common medieval technique.

There was, however, a further dimension to this symbolism because the crusade was ultimately a holy venture, designed to protect the interests of Christendom, the Church and the Faith. As a pagan hero, Jason was therefore not an ideal model. Furthermore, the legend shows him to have possessed some remarkably undesirable qualities, particularly his deceit of Medea, whom he abandoned after she had aided him in his conquest of the Fleece. This action went against all the basic principles of Western chivalry, with its emphasis on loyalty and truthfulness. Two solutions were derived to get around this problem; first, the replacement of Jason as the patron of the Order by Gideon, whose story is told in the Book of Judges,⁵³ and second, the solution that applied at the Feast, the creation of a new Christianised Jason.⁵⁴

To understand the significance of the Jason plays, therefore, they must be viewed in a Christian context, and a useful interpretation of them can be derived from *Un poème à Philippe le Bon sur la Toison d'Or* written by none other than Philippe Bouton, Olivier de la Marche's cousin.⁵⁵ The poem, which is addressed to Philip the Good, was written in

⁵³ G. Doutrepoint, 'Jason et Gedeon, patrons de la Toison d'Or' in *Mélanges offerts à Godefroid Kurth* (Paris & Liege 1908), pp.191-205. See also the comments of la Marche in *Epistre* in *Mémoires*, IV, pp.164-5. According to the Book of Judges the humble Gideon, who had been chosen by God to lead an army against his enemies the Midianites, tested God's power by placing a fleece on the ground and requesting that it be covered in dew the following morning while the ground remained dry. This was done. Then Gideon again tested God by asking that the fleece remain dry while the ground became wet. This was again done, and Gideon knew that God was with him. (*Judges*, VI:36-40).

⁵⁴ The rehabilitation of Jason as a morally acceptable figure is one of Raoul Lefèvre's main themes. His prologue tells of his meeting with a man overwhelmed by sorrow and when prompted by the author the man states that he is Jason, once a renowned figure, but now maligned by certain people because of his deceit of Medea. He requests that the author write a book outlining his virtues to be presented to the 'father and lover of all virtue', Philip the Good.

⁵⁵ On Bouton and his link to the la Marche family, see above ch.1; and on his poem see J. la Croix Bouton 'Un poème à Philippe le Bon sur la Toison d'Or'. A partial interpretation of the plays appears in La Fortune-Martel, pp.124-7; and M. Célérier, *Regards sur la symbolique de la Toison d'Or* (Les Éditions du Bien Publique, 1990), pp.48-50.

1455 shortly after the Feast of the Pheasant had taken place, and the similarity between its contents and the Jason mysteries is such that we can assume that the former was certainly inspired by the latter either through the author's presence at the Feast, or perhaps via his connection to la Marche, who was of course involved in the preparations for the 'cerimonies et misteres'. The poem contains an account of the conquest of the Fleece but with one important modification; it is presented in a Christian context. Given the overall subject matter of the Feast's symbolism, it is probable that the audience at Lille would have also viewed these plays as Christian allegories.

In the poem, Medea the sorceress becomes a symbol of Christian virtue:

C'est sainte par laquelle est méry
Ce hault guerdon qui le croit fermement ...⁵⁶

Her virtues are seen to triumph over the evil represented by pagan gods:

O Medée dame de grand vertu
Quand tu destruis les enchantements faulx
de déable Mars qui n'a pouvoir vers tu
tu es la foy qui ne mens ni ne faulx ...⁵⁷

The potion and the ring that Jason uses in the Pheasant plays are interpreted in the poem as Christian virtues which can overcome the evil represented by the hero's adversaries:

Premier viendray aux baillans médécins
Que t'a baillie de ses riches trézors
Foy dont Médée en a monstre les signes
Pour toy garder des trois pechiez très ors ...⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Bouton, p.17.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.18.

The sins, Bouton informs us, are represented by the oxen or bulls and a serpent or dragon, a direct echo of the Pheasant plays. The first ox represents the sins of the flesh, the second the pleasures of the world, lust, plunder, and avarice. These must be overcome. Finally, the serpent/dragon represents vain glory, a deed without honour. To the audience at Lille, this creation would have been a clear allusion to the Devil, and recalled both the image of the serpent which had tricked Adam and Eve (*Genesis*, 3:1-13), as well as the dragon which represented the enemy of God (*Revelation*, 12:7-12, 'and there was war in heaven, and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.'⁵⁹). The monster, by extension, could be interpreted as simultaneously representing the Turks, the enemies of the faith.

Having defeated these enemies Jason was able to take the Fleece. The poet then repeated the bizarre sequence of events that constituted the third part of the mystery, the oxen/bulls ploughing a field, the planting of the dragon's teeth, and the combat between the armed men which sprang up from these. The oxen may have previously embodied the sins that Jason had to overcome, but it appears that an alternative symbol was being employed in the third part. The ox was traditionally associated with the animals that were present at the birth of Christ, and was viewed as a symbol of patience and strength, 'to represent all who patiently bear their yoke while labouring in silence for the good of others.'⁶⁰ The image of the oxen pulling a plough may represent penance. Bouton wrote:

A la façon de ces deux beufs lier
fault ung lien de penitence faire⁶¹

⁵⁹ On the symbolism of the dragon/serpent, see L. Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, I, (Paris 1955-9), pp.111-12; and G. Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (Oxford 1961), pp.16-17.

⁶⁰ Ferguson, p.22.

⁶¹ Bouton, p.23.

The author continued:

C'est ce qui fait la char humilier
dont l'ung des beufs signifie l'affaire
L'autre lien pour tout tenure parfaire
Est ausmosne la bonne et doulce dame
Qui fait à Dieu joindre le corps et l'âme.⁶²

If the first ox represents the temptation of the body when it becomes detached from the soul, and the second the temptation of the soul when detached from the body, then the third scene represents the ideal state when the body and soul are joined. The reference to 'tenure' recalls the feudal tie that existed between lord and vassal, including the condition that the latter should follow the former into war and, in the context of the Feast, Holy War. As for the armed men, they may represent sins sown from the dragon's teeth which are exposed by the soil tended by the repentant oxen, possibly an allegory of confession.

Unable to defeat the repentant Christian, the sins obliterate themselves:

Puis sement quant viendra la saison
Tous ces péchiez par confession vraye
dont de despit le grant diable s'effraye
et fait yssir de deables une route
qui s'entreocist d'avoyr perdu la proye
dont puis Jason le seurplus bien arroute.⁶³

Besides these mysteries, the Feast of the Pheasant included the exhibition of a large number of *entremets* which constituted a kind of iconographic programme centred around the call for the crusade. It is likely that all of these *entremets* were designed with a specific iconographic meaning, though at least one observer has argued that in many cases the iconography of the individual *entremets* is negligible, and that they are intended only

⁶² Ibid.; and for what follows, see Célérier, p.50.

⁶³ Bouton, pp.23-4.

to create a bizarre and colourful setting.⁶⁴ It certainly has to be conceded that the exact meaning of the images can be very difficult to pinpoint.⁶⁵ Some are relatively straightforward; on the Duke's table there was a cross with a bell sounding, representing the call to good Christians to go on crusade.⁶⁶ Elsewhere, a fountain made of glass and lead in the middle of which stood a model of St. Andrew, the patron saint of Burgundy, and which jetted rosewater into a garden of rocks and flowers, is a representation of the holy and fertile condition of Burgundy itself.⁶⁷ In one corner of the banqueting hall stood the naked figure of a woman from whose breast hypocras flowed, while at her feet a chained lion guarded her with the words 'Ne touchez à ma dame'.⁶⁸ In this case, the woman probably represents the Church. Her nudity is suggestive of the natural state of humanity,⁶⁹ while the wine-dispensing breasts may represent the motherly attributes of love and nourishment, as well as the notion of abundance.⁷⁰ The lion represents many things, but is in general a symbol of strength, majesty, courage and fortitude. The medieval belief that this animal slept with its eyes open also made it a symbol of watchfulness, and in this sense it acted as the guardian of the woman and by extension the Church.⁷¹ The lion is good and opposes the serpent, and has therefore been interpreted as

⁶⁴ Chipps-Smith, p.146.

⁶⁵ Some interpretation of the *entremets* is given in La Fortune-Martel, esp. pp.111-34.

⁶⁶ *Mémoires*, II, p.348; La Fortune-Martel, p.112. The cross was the traditional symbol of the crusaders from 1095; see J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London 1993), pp.22 and 24-5, while the bell summons the faithful to prayer.

⁶⁷ *Mémoires*, II, p.350; La Fortune-Martel, pp.114-5. St. Andrew was associated with the Order of the Golden Fleece, and chapter meetings were held on St. Andrew's Day down to 1451; Reiffenberg, pp.xxix-xxxi; Célérrier, pp.89-96. The fountain represents sanctity and fertility, and was a common feature in fifteenth century Flemish art.

⁶⁸ *Mémoires*, II, p.354; La-Fortune Martel, pp.140-1.

⁶⁹ Ferguson, p.49.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.46.

representing Philip himself, although it could equally be interpreted as a symbol of Flanders on whose arms it appears, and may in this sense represent an acknowledgement of the County's role in the staging of the Feast.⁷²

Other *entremets* were however more puzzling, such as the one representing the figure of a boy on a rock urinating rosewater. Elsewhere, a magpie sat on a windmill while several figures at the food fired arrows at it. A barrel containing two types of wine, one good and the other bad, bore lettering urging the viewer to take his pick. Finally, at one stage a dragon flew into the hall, passing over the heads of the people below. At the climax, *Sainte Église*, perched on the back of an elephant, was led into the hall by a giant dressed as a Saracen, symbolising her captivity. On approaching the assembly, *Sainte Église* made a plea for those present to defend her. This female figure was played by la Marche himself who delivered the message in a falsetto voice. Following the plea, the vows to go on crusade were taken on the Pheasant. The symbolism attached to this bird lies in its name, 'faisan', which according to some authorities was said to derive from the River Phisan, one of the four branches of the great river which flowed from the Garden of Eden (*Genesis* II:10-11). An alternative view is that of Isidore of Seville who contended that the Phasis river flowed into the Black Sea near Colchis where the Fleece was kept.⁷³

There is enormous scope for more work to be done on the iconography of the Feast. Because this present thesis is devoted principally to the contribution of Olivier de la Marche, this may have to await another paper.

⁷¹ Réau, pp.92-4; Ferguson, pp.21-2.

⁷² La Fortune-Martel, p.141.

⁷³ On the symbolism of the Pheasant, see Célérrier, pp.51-2, and Chipps-Smith, p.144. The swearing of the chivalric oath on a bird was not uncommon in the later Middle Ages; see M. Keen, *Chivalry* (Yale 1984), pp.213-14, and plate 39 for an illustration of the 'Vows of the Peacock' based on Jean de Longuyon's *Roman d'Alexandre*.

The Wedding of Charles the Bold to Margaret of York, 1468

If the evidence that links la Marche to the *entremets* of the Feast of the Pheasant is circumstantial, then by contrast there is better evidence to connect him to the wedding of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York held at Bruges fourteen years later. The sheer opulence of this event had led the English nobleman John Paston to write:

As for the Duke's court, as of lords, ladies and gentlewomen, knights, squires and gentlemen, I heard never of none like to it, save King Arthur's court.⁷⁴

We know that between 21 and 26 April 1468, la Marche was busy working 'pour le fait des ouvraiges de la feste'.⁷⁵ Moreover, the ducal accounts show that he and Jacques de Villiers, an *échanson* in the household of Margaret of York, were given charge of organising the *entremets* and entertainments to be used at the series of banquets that took place over the nine days that followed the wedding. These two were aided and advised by artists such as Jean Hennekart, Pierre Coustain, Jacques Daret, and Jean Scalkin, the last of whom had created the St. Andrew fountain seen at the Feast of the Pheasant.⁷⁶ Also involved was Michault de Chaugy, the Duke's *premier maître d'hôtel*.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ *The Paston Letters*, ed. Davis (Oxford 1983), pp.164-7; *Mémoires*, III, p.101-201 and IV, pp.95-144; Haynin, *Mémoires*, ed. D.D. Brouwers (Liège 1906), II, pp.17-63; Jean de Wavrin, *Chronicles*, ed. W. Hardy, V, pp.559-62; Adrien de But, *Chronicae* in Kervyn de Lettenhove ed., *Chroniques relatives à l'histoire de la Belgique* (Brussels 1870), pp.489-90; S. Bentley ed., *Excerpta Historica*, pp.223-39; C. Weightman, *Margaret of York*, pp.30-60; L. Hommel, *Marguerite d'York*, pp.25-52; Cartellieri pp.124-34; D.M. Stuart 'The Marriage of Margaret of York to Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, July 1468' in *History Today*, 8 (1958), pp.256-63; Vaughan *Charles the Bold*, pp.47-53.

⁷⁵ Stein, *Pièces Justificatives*, no. xxiii, pp.170-1.

⁷⁶ Laborde, *Ducs de Bourgogne*, II, p.322 'Ouvraiges ... pour aorner la feste de ses [Charles'] noepces, pour servir aux bancquetz d'icelles, et lesquelz entremets ont esté fais selon l'advis et ordonnance de Mss. Olivier, seigneur de la Marche, maistre d'ostel d'icelui seigneur et Jaques de Villiers, escuier eschançon de madame. la duchesse ... avec l'advis de Jean Hennekart et Pierre Coustain, ses peintres et varlet de chambre, de maistre Jean Scalkin, aussi varlet de chambre, et de plusieurs autres ouvries ...' See also the payment made to the artists and craftsmen for their work 'qu'ilz ont fais par l'advis et ordonnance de Ms. le Conte de Charny, messire Michault de Chaugy

Both la Marche and Jacques de Villiers had participated in the Feast of the Pheasant,⁷⁸ and had learned much about the organisation of such events.

It is therefore unsurprising that, given the importance of his role in organising the event, la Marche should leave behind such a long and detailed description of it in his *Mémoires*. This section appears to have been written separately from the bulk of *Mémoires* and was only added at the appropriate place by either la Marche, or possibly a compiler of one of the early manuscripts.⁷⁹ The chapter is in fact a letter which is addressed to ‘Gilles du Mas maistre d'ostel du tres hault et tres puissant prince monseigneur le duc de Bretagne’, and which sets out a detailed account of the wedding, because, as la Marche informs the recipient:

en si haulte et triumphale maison, où vous estes en estat pour avoir charge de conduyre les grans festes et recueillettes des princes et princesses quant elles surviendront, et que je ne sçay si en cette noble feste des nopces de monseigneur Bourgoingne pourroit avoir aucune chose dont la memoire vous puist servir en temps et en lieu, j'ay recuilly grossement et selon mon lourt entendement, ce que j'ay veu en ceste dicte feste pour le vous envoyer.⁸⁰

The account is therefore designed to aid Gilles du Mas in his own duties, although there can be little doubt that la Marche was simultaneously basking in the glory of having already accomplished such an achievement. Elsewhere, la Marche wrote a second account of the proceedings which contains slightly less information on the banquets and

seigneur de Chisse, de messire Olivier, seigneur de la Marche, de Jaques de Villiers, de Jean de Salins et des peintres de MdS’, (ibid., p.332).

⁷⁷ See n.74.

⁷⁸ d'Escouchy, xxxvi, pp.162.3.

⁷⁹ For a discussion of the editorial process that governed the early versions of *Mémoires*, see below, ch.3.

⁸⁰ *Mémoires*, III, p.102.

places rather more weight on the jousts.⁸¹ The exact purpose of this version is less clear, and la Marche gives no indication of his reason for writing beyond a conventional remark about the need to preserve the memory of great things.⁸² Only three manuscripts containing this version have survived, and the impact of this work was probably less significant than that of the version contained in *Mémoires*. It has, however, been suggested that one of these manuscripts may have been sent to the Count of Savoy shortly after the wedding.⁸³

La Marche and his team created a wide and wonderful array of *entremets* which were used over the course of six banquets, held on Sunday 3, Monday 4, Tuesday 5, Thursday 7, Sunday 10 and Monday 11 July.⁸⁴ Although the overall iconographic message of the *entremets* is rather less obvious than the blunt crusading appeal of the Feast of the Pheasant, there are certain themes which run through the entertainments. These are a celebration of the ideal of love and the institution of marriage, the union of the houses of England and Burgundy, the outstanding nobility of these two great households, and the chivalrous and virtuous character of the noble lifestyle. Because la Marche had headed the committee responsible for the *entremets*, we can assume that his personal contribution towards these themes was considerable.

A significant component of the *entremets* was the performance of twelve short plays portraying the deeds of Hercules. These took place on Monday, Thursday, and the second Sunday. The creation of the elaborate props for these plays came under the

⁸¹ Ibid., IV, pp.95-143.

⁸² Ibid., p.95-6.

⁸³ Beaune, pp.cxx-cxxi; Stein, pp.136-7; 'Nouveaux documents', p.15.

⁸⁴ *Mémoires*, III, pp.1338-8, 142-8, 151-4, 165-71, 183-7, 195-8; Laborde, II, pp.322-31.

jurisdiction of la Marche and his team,⁸⁵ and these craftsmen would have been responsible for the building of the stage on which they were performed, hence the inclusion of carpenters in the team.⁸⁶ The figure of Hercules had long been a favourite at the Burgundian court although the commonly-held view, that the Burgundians thought of him as an ancestor of the Dukes, does not in fact apply in this period; this genealogical link was unknown until Olivier de la Marche discovered, or created, it in c.1488.⁸⁷ Before c.1488, the association was purely symbolic.

The best expression of the 'Burgundian Hercules' is given by the chaplain Raoul Lefèvre in his *Recueil des histoires de Troyes*,⁸⁸ written for Philip the Good in 1464. The second book of this was devoted to Hercules' life, labours, and death. This text gave the court its own 'official' Hercules legend, the most striking feature of which is the courtly chivalric setting in which the action takes place. Hercules grows up and, aware of his prowess, seeks to learn the ways of knighthood.⁸⁹ His institution of the games of the Olympiad was hugely successful and attracted the flower of Greek chivalry as participants, while Hercules himself excelled at all sports.⁹⁰ This idealised hero reaches the dizzy heights of the near-perfect knight, although there is a more humanistic side to his character as well, and his mastery of science, philosophy and astronomy acts as a complement to his physical excellence.⁹¹ Finally, Hercules displayed the traditional

⁸⁵ Laborde, II, pp.324-5.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.332.

⁸⁷ For a full discussion of this view, see below ch.7.

⁸⁸ *Recueil des histoires de Troyes*, ed. O. Sommer (London 1894).

⁸⁹ Ibid., I, p.1.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.261.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp.393-4.

chivalric qualities of prudence, courtesy, gentility, sobriety and modesty.⁹²

The Burgundian court accepted Hercules as the ideal role-model, and the hero made frequent appearances in works of art relating to the courtly milieu. An early appearance in a work of tapestry was made at the Feast of the Pheasant, where at one end of the banqueting hall was hung 'une tapisserie en quoy estoit faicte la vie d'Hercules.'⁹³ No further information about this work appears to be available, however, and there is no satisfactory evidence to link it to any of the surviving Hercules tapestries dating from this period. Nevertheless, its existence in 1454 indicates that Hercules was a popular figure at the court long before Raoul Lefèvre wrote his book.

A contemporary tapestry which survives at the Royal Museum in Brussels bears the arms of Cardinal Archbishop Charles de Bourbon, who ordered it between 1476-88.⁹⁴ He was allied to the house of Burgundy through his mother Agnes, and one observer has pointed out the similarities between the scenes depicted on the tapestry and the corresponding ones in Raoul Lefèvre's book, making it highly plausible that the former derived from the latter.⁹⁵ Another very interesting tapestry, now preserved in the Burrell Collection in Glasgow, depicts Hercules initiating the Olympic Games.⁹⁶ The artist and date are unknown, but the work depicts a noble gathering which bears a resemblance to Lefèvre's description of the initiation of the Games. The figure who is marked 'Hercules'

⁹² Ibid., p.247.

⁹³ *Mémoires*, II, pp.348-9: d'Escouchy, xxxvi, p.94.

⁹⁴ W. Wells, 'An Unknown Hercules Tapestry in the Burrell Collection' in *Scottish Art Review*, VIII no. 3 (1962), pp.13-20 & p.30.

⁹⁵ Wells, p.14; see the relevant section in Lefèvre, ed. Sommer, I, pp.238-61. The tapestry shows the birth of Hercules, his strangling the serpents, his presentation to King Eristeus, and the request that he hold *pas d'armes* on Mount Olympus, as well as his participation in the Games.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

bears a striking resemblance to Philip the Good, while the horseman to his right may well represent his son Charles. It is quite probable, as William Wells has suggested, that this tapestry was woven to commemorate Charles' first joust which took place in 1451 in the 'parc de Bruxelles', shortly before his participation in his first real tournament held in the city's *Grand Place*.⁹⁷ The crowded group of nobles, many of whom are carrying weapons, recalls la Marche's description of the other young men jousting for the first time in Brussels:

... là eust grant assemblée et grant noblesse, et fut emmené le conte Charles sur les rangs, et accompagné par la conte d'Estempes, son cousin, et par plusieurs aultres princes, chevaliers et nobles hommes.⁹⁸

Indeed, the iconography of this picture does suggest that it is the Charles figure who is about to joust. His horse appears to be moving out of the semi-circle formed by the other figures towards an unseen point and the rider holds his blunted lance as if ready to strike. The Hercules/Philip figure gestures with one hand as if to hold back the rest, and in the other hand carries a white baton, similar to that used by the judge of a tournament or joust.⁹⁹

If the tapestry does indeed commemorate this joust, then it must date from c.1461 or shortly afterwards. By 1468 therefore, the figure of Hercules would be well-established at the Burgundian court, though courtiers may not have previously witnessed a moving representation of him.

The twelve plays represented episodes from Hercules' life, although they were not in fact the more famous twelve labours. The content of the plays was derived entirely

⁹⁷ See above, ch.1; *Mémoires*, II, pp.214-16.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.215.

⁹⁹ *Mémoires*, II, p.69.

from Raoul Lefèvre's text, with the exception of one scene only, and can be seen to represent a Burgundian version.¹⁰⁰ The scenes together with the appropriate references to Lefèvre's work were as follows:

Monday 4 July;

- (1) Hercules kills serpents as they attack him and his brother in their cradle (Lefèvre, I, pp.240-2).
- (2) Hercules and Theseus encounter golden sheep and take their fleeces (I, pp.262-20).
- (3) Hercules saves the heroine Hesione from a gruesome sea-monster (I, pp.271-80).
- (4) Three lions attack Hercules and Philotes, who takes refuge in a tree with a peasant. Hercules defeats them and takes their skins. (I, pp.279-308).

Thursday 7 July;

- (5) Hercules and Theseus enter the Underworld to rescue Prosperine from the god of the dead, and Hercules defeats the three-headed dog Cerberus. (II, pp.329-37).
- (6) Hercules and Theseus fight two Amazons. No victor emerges and the play ends indecisively. (II, pp.366-70).
- (7) Hercules fights the Hydra, a hybrid serpent-man, and burns it (II, pp.388-94).
- (8) Hercules defeats a group of giants who are terrorising Cremona in Italy. (II, pp.428-36).
- (9) Cacus steals Hercules' bulls. Hercules kills him and recovers the bulls. (II, pp.440-54).

¹⁰⁰

Mémoires, III, pp.143-7, 161-71 and 184-7; see also M.R. Jung, *Hercule dans la littérature française du XVI^e siècle: de l'Hercule courtois à l'Hercule baroque* (Geneva 1966), pp.32-5.

Sunday 10 July

- (10) A boar attacks a village, killing one person. This episode is more difficult to trace in Lefevre's text, but two episodes in the book refer to it. While discussing Hercules' victory over the evil king Achelous, Lefèvre wrote:

'The poetes escyve and write this conquest that hercules made upon Achelous ffayining that Achelous fought first in the guyse of a man and that then he was vaynquysshid. After he chaungyd hym self in guyse of a serpent this is to understande in subtyllesse and in malyce as he dide in assaillyng hercules by night. ffinably he fought in the guyse of a booll. And that hercules brak his own horne. That is to understande that at the last achelous was fiers as a booll ffor he deyde veli nyhe for pryde and sorowe that he was taken. And that hercules brak hys horne that is to understande that he brak his royame and destroyed hit.' (II, p.384).

This is the same version of Hercules' defeat of Achelous at that given in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.¹⁰¹ Achelous fought as a man, a serpent and a bull, and was in each case defeated by Hercules. The latter grabbed at the bull's horn and wrenched it off, mutilating the animal's brow until naiads filled the horrific wound with flowers and fruit. The loss represented Achelous' fall from power, and was the only humiliation deemed necessary.

This episode is the nearest in Lefèvre's work to the events of the play. Only one other brief reference to the boar appears: 'Hercules came from Archade where he had newly slayn a wyld boor.' (II, p.487).

- (11) Hercules finds himself in a desert and is attacked by arrows on all sides, though

¹⁰¹ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. M.M. Innes (Harmondsworth 1955), pp.204-6.

these fail to injure him. The closest scene in Lefèvre's text is Hercules' defeat of Diomedes:

'... his honderd theuys emuyd them and assayllid hercules on all sides ... largely arrows and dartes and some brake their glagues on hym. Alle thise thynges empayred no thyng the armes of hercules. His hawberc and his helme were of fyn steel forged and temprid hard. He stode there amonge them lyke a montagne.'
(II, p.479).

(12) Hercules plants his famous pillars. (II, p.396).

Each of these plays was performed against an impressive backdrop, vividly described by la Marche in *Mémoires*. The moral of each was made clear to the audience by the use of a short poem which appeared attached to the front of the curtain as it fell at the end of each scene.¹⁰² These poems reveal much about the messages the plays were intended to convey.

In the first play the message was clear, that God controls all things and that ill fortune can strike suddenly and unexpectedly, often with tragic results as in the case of Hercules' brother, who died 'innocent et sans vice'. The poem warned:

Bien devons Dieu doubter de cueur et de pensée;
Car c'est cil qui depart où il veut sa souldée.¹⁰³

The theme is developed in the sixth play, where the Amazons give unexpectedly hard opposition in battle:

Exemple est qu'on doit craindre et bataille et discors,
Son ennemy doubter, foible menhot ou tors;

¹⁰² See above n.100; Jung cit. supra.; and G. Kipling, *The Triumph of Honour* (Leiden 1977), p.157.

¹⁰³ *Mémoires*, III, p.144.

Car on a veu souvent, qui bien est en recors,
Que les victoires sont où Dieu donne les sors.¹⁰⁴

This message is one which la Marche stressed repeatedly in his prose work. In the first book of *Mémoires*, he urged Philippe le Beau to attribute all earthly glory to God because he could change the course of events at will.¹⁰⁵ God was responsible for the fall of the ancient kingdom of Burgundy, and even aided the pagan but virtuous king Clovis against the evil king Gundebaud.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Robert the Pious, the son and successor of Hue Capet, triumphed over his enemies because he performed service to God, and his story shows that devotion can often be a more effective weapon than the sword.¹⁰⁷

Some of the other plays represented the defeat of an enemy, often a gruesome and formidable monster. Thus there is the defeat of the lions, Cerberus and the Hydra (plays 4, 5 and 7). In each case the poem which followed stressed the essential role of virtue as the first step to victory, and this recalls Robert the Pious' appeal to God. After the defeat of the lions the poem read:

Or, soyons bataillans de glaives de vertuz,
A ce que de noz ames Dieu en face reffuz.¹⁰⁸

After the battle with Cerberus and the rescue of Prosperine the poem read:

Or soyons Hercules, le valliant et louable.
Combatons Cerberus par vertu honorable;
Soyons à Prosperine secourans et aidable,
C'est de tirer noz ames hors de tout vice dampnable.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.169

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., I, pp.13-14.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp.53-4.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp.65-7.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., III, p.147.

Finally, the seven heads of the Hydra may be interpreted as representing the Seven Deadly Sins:

Faisons comme Hercules a l'ennemy injure;
Tranchons luy les sept testes, qui sont plaines d'ordure,
Et nous gardons de faire à vice norriture.¹⁰⁹

These plays therefore celebrate the role of virtue as the first step to victory and in this sense they recall the method used at the Feast of the Pheasant where Jason defeated the monsters using Christian virtue.

Other plays were more specific in their meaning. In the scene where Hercules captures the golden-fleeced sheep, he takes his prize to Greece so that their value can be shared out among all. The poem praises him:

Et employer le temps par travail, sans lassure,
Pour le publicque bien, lequel ilz ont en cure.¹¹⁰

The point is reiterated in Hercules' defeat of the boar and his saving of the village. The poem added that it is the duty of the lord to seek out injustice in his lands so that his subjects may live freely. The defeat of the sea-monster and the rescue of Hesione refers to the traditional knightly duty of honouring women. The battle against the giants stressed the point that valour should be shown, even if the odds are not favourable. And the killing of Cacus and the recapture of the bulls was followed by a warning that Hercules' righting of injustice must be emulated. Like the boar scene, it also stressed the duties of a lord to his subjects.

The final two scenes are the most perplexing and offer no immediately obvious

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.168-70.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.145.

moral. The poem which followed the arrows scene made a reference to ‘faulses langues qui contre luy mesdirent.’¹¹¹ This notion of the arrows representing false words may contain a coded reference to some kind of criticism recently levelled at Charles the Bold and although the audience may very well have been aware of the issue being acknowledged here, it is very difficult for the modern reader to pinpoint it with any accuracy since we do not have contemporaries’ mental frame of reference. The ‘false words’ may be connected to French hostility towards the Anglo-Burgundian alliance that this wedding represented, and if so the play represents a carefully-coded attack on the French position. Alternatively, the ‘false words’ might have come from a source much closer to home. Almost a generation had passed since Philip the Good’s effective ending of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance in 1435, and it is fair to assume that the Duke’s support of the English claim to the French Crown in the 1420s had become something of an embarrassment in his later years. Diplomatic relations between England and Burgundy had remained tense until the creation of a new alliance during the 1460s. To many courtiers who had survived Philip, this kind of diplomatic flirtation may have appeared very dangerous indeed, particularly in view of Edward IV’s apparent intention to revive English interests in Normandy and Guienne, as well as the old claim to the French Crown.¹¹² If there had indeed been criticism of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance, it is equally possible that it originated from Burgundian francophiles.

Given the lack of concrete evidence it is however, difficult to be precise about the exact nature of these false words whatever they may have been. Similarly, the last play which represents Hercules planting his pillars offers no immediately obvious moral. It

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.186.

¹¹² M. Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages* (London 1973), p.476.

may be an allusion to the need to preserve the memory of worthy things so that their influence can reach future generations. Just as Hercules' pillars recalled the great man's deeds, so the wedding itself could be presented as a kind of historical landmark. Thus the message of the last play involves every single member of the audience, whose very presence is helping to build their own, contemporary 'pillars of Hercules'. Beyond that, la Marche's written record represents a further contribution. In the alternative version to that contained in *Mémoires*, he wrote:

Les fais et advenues louables ne se doibvent des bons souffrir extaindre,
mais collegier et mettre par escript, affin de perpetuelle memoire ...¹¹³

These plays therefore represent the transposition of Raoul Lefevre's book into dramatic form and gave the audience at Bruges the opportunity to witness familiar stories in a new and exciting medium.

Besides the Hercules plays the guests who attended the six banquets were entertained by a series of elaborate and often bizarre *entremets*, the iconography of which represented the themes suggested above.

The banqueting hall was entirely surrounded by tapestries showing the history of the Golden Fleece, although la Marche and Haynin disagree as to whether these portrayed Jason or Gideon.¹¹⁴ Both were however struck by the richness of the tapestries, as well as the centrepiece depicting the arms of the Duke. Two candelabras made in the manner of castles hung at either end. Their bases were crafted like mountains in the sides of which figures could be seen, while beneath these were mirrors offering panoramic views of the

¹¹³ *Mémoires*, IV, p.95.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., III, p.118; Haynin, *Mémoires*, II, pp.17-62.

entire hall. These were, according to la Marche, the work of the artist Jean Scalkin.¹¹⁵ During the first banquet, the audience was entertained by the entry of a unicorn bearing the arms of England and carrying a leopard, 'the fierce and feared leopard of England'. The unicorn went round the company until it reached the Duke and a *maître d'hôtel* invited Charles to take a *fleur de marguerite* from it.¹¹⁶ This is a clear allusion to Charles' taking Margaret who is represented by the flower. The common view of the leopard as a symbol of chastity is a reference to Margaret's virginity.¹¹⁷ Shortly after, a golden lion carrying a dwarf entered the hall, and was followed by a small greyhound and a shepherdess carrying the arms of Burgundy. The dwarf was 'madame de Beaugrant'. The lion sang as it went around the hall, and when it reached Margaret, a *maître d'hôtel* told her of the various lands she was about to rule, as shown by the banners, before presenting her with the shepherdess who symbolised virtue.¹¹⁸ Finally, a dromedary harnessed in Saracen armour entered carrying a man dressed in 'a strange manner' who unleashed painted birds of Indian origin.¹¹⁹ The dromedary, or camel, was usually associated with the Orient, but could represent royalty and dignity, while the birds might represent the spiritual side of humanity or even the soul.¹²⁰

Over the course of the following banquets, more lavish entertainment was provided. A major *entremets* consisted of a tower which symbolised a tower containing goats and wolves. Some of these played instruments and sang. The theme of love as a

¹¹⁵ *Mémoires*, III, pp.118-9; Laborde, II, p.322 & 332.

¹¹⁶ *Mémoires*, III, pp.134-5; Laborde, II, p.325.

¹¹⁷ Réau, pp.89-92; Ferguson, p.26.

¹¹⁸ *Mémoires*, II, pp.135-7; Laborde, II, p.325.

¹¹⁹ *Mémoires*, III, pp.137-8.

¹²⁰ Ferguson, pp.12-13.

universal and all-encompassing force was stressed when four asses appeared from the tower and launched into a song expressing their love for a lady-ass:

Faictz vous l'asne, ma maistresse?
Cuydez vous, par vostre rudesse,
Que je vous doye habandonner?
Jà pour mordre ne pour ruer
Ne me aviendra que je vous laisse.¹²¹

The asses then state their reverence for a 'she-ass' who is the recipient of the song. This particular *entremets* is loaded with humour. A form of inversion is being employed since the animals' song is very much in the vein of medieval courtly love songs, such as the one attributed to Charles the Bold, 'Ma dame trop vous mesprenés'. And yet although it is a self-mocking parody on one level, the *entremets* celebrates the theme of love being a universal binding force, even at its most bestial level. The scene is rounded off with the appearance of seven swans who are led by the tower's watchman into a *morisque*.

The closing banquet featured a small number of *entremets* on the tables including a palace sculpted by Jean Scalkin, next to which was the figure of John the Baptist and a fountain which jetted rosewater high into the air to land in a lake filled with fish.¹²² But this was just a curtain raiser for what was in la Marche's view the biggest and most ambitious *entremets* ever seen. It is also the most perplexing in terms of meaning.¹²³ It was a sixty-foot long whale, so high that two men on horseback would not have been able to see over it. Its eyes were made of mirrors, and it moved in a way that suggested it was alive. Two giants led it into the hall to the sound of trumpets, and when they halted the

¹²¹ *Mémoires*, III, p.153; Laborde, II, pp.326-7.

¹²² *Mémoires*, III, p.197; Laborde, II, pp.329-30.

¹²³ *Mémoires*, III, pp.197-8; Laborde, II, p.328.

mouth opened and out came two sirens who began to wail. At the sound of this, twelve 'chevaliers de mer' holding clubs emerged from inside the whale. A tune was struck up and the sirens danced with the men, but amorous jealousy quickly built up leading to fighting among the men. This continued until the giants had managed to usher everyone back inside the whale. The mouth closed and the giants led the whole lot back out.

It is possible that this *entremets* contains an allusion to the medieval legend which held that the whale was often mistaken by mariners for a huge island, and that the ships that were subsequently anchored to the side were dragged down to their destruction. Because of this, the animal was seen as being deceitful and this led to an association with the Devil. The wide open mouth in turn became associated with the gates of Hell.¹²⁴ If this interpretation applies then there is a parallel in the sirens, who were traditionally able to lure sailors by their strange singing only to watch the boats being destroyed on the rocks of their island. In this case, the whale could be paralleled with the concept of 'Sirenland', the home of these creatures and the sepulchral island which received the souls of their victims.¹²⁵ In both cases there is the concept of temptation, of men being deceived and cunningly led towards their own destruction, and this could in turn suggest a further parallel. Men being attracted to beautiful women are provoked into jealousy and this inevitably leads to conflict as the *entremets* shows. Here, the traditional medieval view of woman as Eve the temptress comes to mind, and the *entremets* could be interpreted as a warning to resist such temptation.

If however this view is credible other questions remain unresolved, particularly the issue of how this fits into the general iconography of the wedding.

¹²⁴ Ferguson, p.26; Réau, pp.107-8.

¹²⁵ R. Graves, *The Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth 1960), II, p.249 no.3.

1468 represented the zenith of la Marche's role as the stage-manager, and he would never again accomplish such a spectacle. None of the weddings that he witnessed during the rest of his life appear to have included this level of opulence, and the Feast of the Pheasant was unique in terms of its scale and purpose. La Marche was certainly present at the wedding of Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian of Austria in 1477, but the fact that this wedding was a relatively low-key affair is due to a number of factors, particularly a lack of available resources to fund it.¹²⁶ Commynes blamed this situation on Maximilian who, he claimed, was stricken by poverty and cut a very poor figure next to the Valois dukes. He did not consider the strain put on Burgundian finances by Charles the Bold to be particularly significant, although the view of Professor Vaughan, who has suggested that Charles was far from financial ruin by the mid 1470s, might confirm his view as accurate.¹²⁷ Without question, however, cash was short, and the funding of an elaborate wedding would have been unacceptable to Burgundian financiers by 1477. Similarly, la Marche appears to have played no role in organising the wedding of Philippe le Beau to Jeanne de Castille in 1496.¹²⁸ This may of course have been due to his age, for by then he would have been around seventy, and may have felt that the organisation of such an event should be the duty of a younger man.

¹²⁶ This wedding merited only a brief mention in chroniclers' works; *Mémoires*, I. pp.155-6 and III, pp.244-5; Molinet, I, pp. 234-5; Commynes, II, p.255, and note this last chronicler's remark that in contrast to the French, the Germans were 'ruddes et vivent ruddement', ('uncouth folk who live boorishly'), p.256.

¹²⁷ Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, pp.407-15.

¹²⁸ H. d'Hulst, *Le Mariage de Philippe le Beau avec Jeanne de Castille à Liège, le 20 octobre 1496* (Antwerp 1958).

Olivier de la Marche and the Urban Environment

A previously unexplored area of Olivier de la Marche's life and career concerns his involvement in an environment distinct from the world of the court, namely that of the great cities of the Low Countries. This thesis is principally concerned with la Marche's relationship to the Burgundian dukes and their court, but it is appropriate that some attention is given to the significant role that he played in the cultural life of the urban world.

The fragments of evidence that exist indicate some level of involvement on la Marche's part in the cultural life of two cities in particular. The first of these is Ghent, where Philippe le Beau was held captive by the self-styled 'Council of Flanders' between 1482 and 1485, and where he and his father made a solemn entry on Thursday 7 June 1485. A single piece of evidence suggests that la Marche was responsible for the organisation of this ceremony, and it comes from the chronicle of Molinet:

Et quand vient à ii heures à l'aprez disner, monseigneur le duc Philippe, le seigneur de Ravenstein, le grand bastard de Bourgogne, le seigneur de Bèvres, son filz, et aultres illustres et nobles personages yssirent hors de Gand et s'arrestèrent à une église; illec vint parler à eulx messire Olivier de la Marche pour dresser les besognes et leur dire ce qu'ilz avoyent à faire.¹²⁹

Exactly how far la Marche was involved with the civic authorities of Ghent with regard to the staging of this entry is, however, unclear. As for the entry itself, it occupies no more than a cursory mention in contemporary accounts.¹³⁰ Maximilian and Philippe rode into the city at the head of a splendid noble retinue to be greeted by bare-headed, kneeling Ghenters. Historical tapestries lined the streets along which the procession moved. On

¹²⁹ Molinet, I, p.462.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

reaching the Church of St. John, solemn oaths were sworn to maintain peace, while the head dean of the city, Mathias Payard, was knighted by Maximilian as a sign of goodwill towards his once-rebellious subjects.

Far more evidence is available to connect la Marche to another great city, Brussels. As the first chapter has shown, la Marche was buried in the city's Church of St. Jacques-sur-Coudenberg, having spent many of his later years resident in the city.¹³¹ His house appears to have been granted to him by the civic authorities. An entry in the communal archives dated 1497 refers to:

... eenen huyse d'welc de stad t'anderen tijde ... gehuert hadde tot behoeff von doctor Hannetten ende messire Oliviers de la Marche ... (a house which the town at a previous time gave the rise of Doctor Hannetten and messire Olivier de la Marche).¹³²

This may well be the same house that la Marche referred to in his testament.

If la Marche was granted a house by the civic authorities, it follows that he must have performed some kind of service to the town. There is evidence to show that he received payment of forty francs 'voer zekeren dienst' (for certain duties) carried out between 1 October 1485 - 23 June 1486, although no indication of what these might have been has survived.¹³³ A major contribution to the cultural life of Brussels does however appear to have been made by la Marche and Isabeau Machefoing as members of the Dutch-speaking *chambre de rhétorique* called *De Leliebloem* or the Lily Flower, of which they are listed as being members in 1498.¹³⁴ These *chambres de rhétorique* were

¹³¹ See above, ch.1; and la Marche's testament appears in *Mémoires*, I, p.clxiii.

¹³² J. Duverger, *Brussel als kunstcentrum in de XIV^e ende XV^e eeuw* (Antwerp 1935), p.80; and on la Marche's owning a house in this city, see H. Pleij, *De sneuwpoppen van 1511: Stadscultuur in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam 1988), pp.160 & 180.

¹³³ Duverger, p.84; Pleij, p.180.

¹³⁴ Duverger, pp.87-8; Pleij, p.161-180.

common features of many northern French and Netherlandish cities in the fifteenth century. One of the oldest in Brussels was *Le Livre*, created in 1401, and it was followed by others like *La Fleur du Blé*, *La Violette* and *La Branche d'Olivier*.¹³⁵ Other cities were home to more *chambres*, and Ghent could boast five major groups all dating from the later fifteenth century including *Jesuz metter Balsemblomme* founded in 1492 by Philippe le Beau.¹³⁶ The *chambres de rhétorique* were responsible for cultivating drama and organising the performance of plays and mysteries in public places. In this sense, la Marche may have found a new outlet for the organisational skills he had cultivated at court. Most of these bodies were in receipt of subsidies from the civic authorities in return for which they were expected to stage public performances on certain days of the year.¹³⁷ La Marche's membership of *de Leliebloem* is surprising in that this was a Dutch-speaking group, and there is no evidence to suggest that he was conversant in that language. What then was his role in the group? Although the evidence is at best circumstantial, it is reasonable to suggest that it may have been to provide the *chambre* with French literature, perhaps originating from the court, in order that it be circulated throughout the Dutch-speaking world. It is perhaps no accident that the name of the *chambre* invokes the symbol of the kingdom of France.

Some observers have noted that the civic *rhétoriciens* of the late fifteenth century were very interested in French literature, and were able to gain access to it through the mediation of courtiers.¹³⁸ There is certainly evidence to show that some of la Marche's

¹³⁵ A. Henne and A.J. Wauters, *Histoire de la ville de Bruxelles* (Brussels 1845), I, pp.179 ff.

¹³⁶ J. Jacquot ed., 'Les fêtes et cérémonies au temps de Charles Quint', vol.2 of his *Les fêtes de la Renaissance* (Paris 1960), pp.282 ff.

¹³⁷ Henne and Wauters, cit. supra.; H. Liebrecht, *Les chambres de rhétorique* (Brussels 1948).

¹³⁸ Duverger, pp.79 and 87.

poetry was read with interest in the Dutch-speaking world. In particular, we know that *Le Chevalier délibéré* was in circulation in the Dutch-speaking Low Countries in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and evidence survives to prove the existence of two Dutch translations of it. The first of these was produced by Jan Steemner, alias Perceval, a citizen of Brussels.¹³⁹ Significantly, Perceval was a fellow member of *De Leliebloem* and the list of members for 1498 refers to him as being ‘prinche’ of the *chambre*. Besides his translation of *Le Chevalier délibéré*, Perceval was responsible for writing a verse version of the plays ‘Zeven Weëen’ (‘Seven Sorrows’) performed in Brussels in 1511, and in doing so was aided by Jan de Baertmaker Smeken, also a member of *De Leliebloem*.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, a second Dutch translation of *Le Chevalier délibéré* was produced by Pieter Willemsz.¹⁴¹

The influence of *Le Chevalier délibéré* can be measured in other ways also. An allegorical work by Jan Baptista Houwaert entitled *Generaelen Loop der Werrelt*, which contains symbolic descriptions of the great struggles faced by humanity and its ultimate encounter with the ‘vreesselijcken camp der doot’ (the dreadful knight of the dead), contains sections which are modelled very closely on *Le Chevalier délibéré*.¹⁴²

Furthermore, *Le Chevalier délibéré* was not the only French courtly poem to find an audience in the Dutch-speaking world. Amé de Montgesoie's *Le Pas de la Mort*, a work familiar to la Marche, was translated into Dutch in the early sixteenth century by yet

¹³⁹ Jan Perceval, *Den Camp van der Doot* (Amsterdam 1948). On Perceval and for what follows, see Pleij, p.254, and Duverger, pp.79 and 87.

¹⁴⁰ Duverger, op. cit. These two were responsible for the creation of the ‘Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows’ which organised annual dramatic representations of this theme.

¹⁴¹ M.E. Kronenberg, ‘Een onbekende nederlandsche vertaling van *Le Chevalier délibéré* door Pieter Willemsz gemaakt’ in *Tijdschrift voor nederlandsche taal en letterkunde*, 51 (1932), pp.178-96.

¹⁴² J.F. Vanderheijden, ‘J.B. Houwaert en Olivier de la Marche’ in *Tijdschrift voor nederlandsche taal en letterkunde*, 51 (1932), pp.49-64.

another Brussels *rhétoriqueur*, Colijn Caillieu and entitled *Dal sonder wederkeeren*.¹⁴³

And in 1514, another of la Marche's poems, *Le Parement des Dames*, was translated into Dutch by Thomas van der Noot under the title *Den triumphe ende palleersel van den vrouwen*.¹⁴⁴

It is clear that more work needs to be done on la Marche's involvement with the cultural life of the cities, but in the context of the cultural life of the court, he was certainly a leading player. The use of spectacle and pageantry was not of course uncommon during the later medieval period but the new sense of exhibitionism and scale introduced by la Marche and the Burgundians can be seen to anticipate the cultural forms of the early Tudor court in England and the imperial court of Charles V. Although the iconographic messages of the *fêtes* of 1454 and 1468, particularly the Jason and Hercules plays, were largely derived from traditional feudal values, it is significant that these heroes were the stuff of classical literature, although admittedly la Marche's inspiration almost certainly came from medieval reworkings of these tales. Nevertheless, Hercules in particular was to become an important part of the cultural landscape of the early sixteenth century, and nowhere more so than at the French royal court. In 1490, Charles VIII entered Vienne to be greeted by five *tableaux vivants* depicting the deeds of Hercules, while at Lyon in 1515, the *entremets* created to greet the arrival of Francis I included a depiction of Hercules defeating Atlas to enter the garden of Hesperides, an allusion to the King's recent defeat of Milan.¹⁴⁵ In this sense, la Marche's use of this cultural icon in a

¹⁴³ C. Caillieu, *Del sonder wederkeeren* (Ghent 1936); Duverger, p.84; Henne & Wauters, I, p.272.

¹⁴⁴ Cited by Pleij, pp.220;1.

¹⁴⁵ Jung, pp.37-9.

dramatised setting cannot be dismissed as in any way anachronistic, but instead as a pointer to the future. Finally, la Marche's knowledge of the workings of a princely court was unsurpassed during his lifetime, and he was probably regarded by contemporaries as an expert on these matters. Indeed, his treatise on the household of Charles the Bold was almost certainly the blueprint on which those of Edward IV of England, Maximilian of Austria, and Charles V were based in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Composed in 1474, *État de la maison du duc Charles* was one of the earliest of la Marche's literary works. It was, however, around this time that he was beginning work on what would become his most ambitious literary project of all, *Mémoires*.

CHAPTER 3. *Mémoires*

To the modern reader, *Mémoires* remains the best-known and most widely cited of all Olivier de la Marche's literary works. Traditionally, the work has been placed in the school of chronicle-writing that reached its height in the post-Froissart period, and which placed an emphasis on the chivalrous values of the late medieval aristocracy. La Marche's pages are certainly full of vivid descriptions of the magnificent tournaments and banquets that characterised the Burgundian court. Some have suggested that the work belonged to a 'Burgundian school' of chronicle writing, which included such well-known names as Georges Chastellain, Enguerrand de Monstrelet, Jean Lefèvre seigneur de St. Rémy, Jacques du Clerq, Jean Wavrin and Jean Molinet. To the historians Molinier and Doutrepoint, both of whom were writing in the early twentieth century, these chronicles could be collectively identified, and represented a propaganda machine whose duty was the glorification of the Burgundian dukes.¹ More recently, however, the existence of this corporate mentality has been called into question and in fact, of the leading lights of the group, only Chastellain, and after his death in 1475 Molinet,² appear to have been employed as professional historians or *indiciaires* by the court. The remainder of the group cannot be seen as court employees in this sense and, since no evidence exists to suggest that *Mémoires* was commissioned in any part by the dukes, it is very difficult to see la Marche as part of a propaganda machine. We must look for other, more personal reasons to explain why la Marche put pen to paper as he did.

¹ Molinier, *Les sources de l'histoire de France*, V, p.1; Doutrepoint, *La littérature française*, pp.441-52; Hommel, *Chastellain* (Brussels 1945), pp.65-8.

² Kervyn de Lettenhove, 'Notice' in *Oeuvres*, I, (Brussels 1863), pp.xxvii-xxviii. On Molinet, see *ibid.*, p.xxvii. Both were honoured in an epitaph composed by Molinet's own successor, Jean Lemaire des Belges.

Mémoires covers a period of fifty three years going from 1435-88, and it is reasonable to assume that la Marche intended to continue his work into the next decade since the text is unfinished and was certainly interrupted by the author's death.³ The work embraces the 'golden age' of Philip the Good's reign, which la Marche witnessed as a wide-eyed page and subsequently as a rising star in the court hierarchy, the war-torn years of Charles the Bold when the author was at the peak of his career, and finally the troubled and uncertain time of Mary of Burgundy and her son Philippe le Beau, during which the house of Burgundy struggled to maintain its position of supremacy in the face of great hostility.

The work is very much couched in the language of chivalry. Men are praised for their bravery, their loyalty, and their pursuit of virtue. One of la Marche's great heroes, Jacques de Lalaing, who was accidentally killed in a decidedly unspectacular manner while examining the damage done to the walls of the castle of Poucques by Burgundian artillery fire, was described as:

noble chevalier ... la renommée de ses vertuz et de son sens et de sa chevalerie vivra et demourera en estre et en memoire ... [son] ame, par la misericorde de Dieu et par l'apparence de la vie du bon chevalier, donne espoir de prendre le chemin de paradis.⁴

Elsewhere Jacques is described as only wishing to perform chivalrous deeds,⁵ and this kind of chivalrous yardstick is used to describe men throughout the work. Occasionally, la Marche invoked mythical or literary figures with whom he knew his audience to be familiar and at times when words appear to have failed to adequately

³ *Mémoires*, III, p.319.

⁴ *Mémoires*, II, p.310.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.238.

portray a man's chivalrous character. Thus, Philippe de Ternant is compared to one of the Nine Worthies during his joust against Galeotto Balthazar at Arras in 1446.⁶

Besides the personal qualities of men much of *Mémoires* is concerned with the details of chivalric display, especially jousts and *pas d'armes*. There are lengthy accounts of the *Pas de la Pèlerine* and the *Pas de la Fontaine aux Pleurs*, held by Jacques de Lalaing at Châlon-sur-Saône between 1449-50. This event appears to have brought Jacques great prestige. La Marche wrote that he had wished to fight thirty men by the time he was thirty years of age, and had attempted to achieve this by opening the *pas* to all challengers. He chose Châlon as a location because of its geographical position on the main connecting routes between Scotland, France, Spain and Rome, and with 1450 being Jubilee Year, he expected to attract many travellers making their way to the holy city.⁷ In general terms, the staging of a *pas d'armes* was undertaken to bring a sense of chivalrous renown to its organiser, and la Marche gave long descriptions of the events in order to demonstrate the great things that could be achieved by the chivalrous mind.⁸

Elsewhere, la Marche showed great interest in the wars of the Burgundian dukes. His accounts of these tend to be limited to pitched battles, and these were themselves viewed as a series of single combats in which selected individuals were seen to shine. There is less weight attached to tactics and strategy, or to the general humdrum reality of siege warfare, blockades and forced surrender.⁹ Thus in describing the battle against the Ghenters at Lokeren on 18 May 1452, he wrote:

⁶ Ibid., p.72.

⁷ Ibid., pp.143-4.

⁸ See above, ch.2.

⁹ See for example his account of the Ghent wars in *Mémoires*, II, pp.211-35.

... il fault bien à ce besoing, que je parle du bienfaict et de la vaillance que fit ce jour le bon chevallier Jaques de Lalain. Il couroit en sa personne là où il veoît la plus grant presse d'ennemies et le plus grant besoing pour ses gens secourir. Il combattoit l'espée au poing, comme ung chevallier sans peur et sans doubte, passa et reppassa la riviere par plusieurs fois, et sauva si grant nombre de gens de mort et de peril, que tous luy donnerent l'honneur de la journée ... Et qui me demanderoit qui furent ceulx qui le suyvirent, et dont il se loua fort de leur bonne compaignie pour celluy jour, certes je le sçay par ledit messire Jaques; et fut Gaspard de Dourtan, ung escuyer bourguignon, qui fit armes à luy en Bourgoingne, Jehan Rasoir, escuyer de Hainnault, son serviteur, qui fit armes aussi en Bourgoingne contre Michault de Certaines, comme il est escript cy dessus, et un fol joyeux, qui estoit au conte de Charrolois, nommé Andrieu de la Plume; et de ces trois se loua fort le chevallier, pour celluy jour, sur tous aultres.¹⁰

This emphasis on individual achievement instead of tactics and strategy typifies the author's approach, even though his accounts of battles were in some cases relatively short.

This is certainly the case with regard to Charles the Bold's campaigns of the mid 1470s,¹¹ and given their outcome this is perhaps entirely understandable.

Another area is certainly to facilitate the construction of a continuous narrative ceremony, and la Marche gave numerous, detailed descriptions of Golden Fleece chapters,¹² as well as the Feast of the Pheasant and Charles the Bold's wedding as we have seen, together with the coronation of Louis XI at Reims which Philip the Good attended as first peer of France.¹³

If there is any consistent theme of *Mémoires*, therefore, it lies in the clear emphasis placed on matters relating to etiquette, ceremony and stage-managed display, as well as the celebration of the values of knighthood and the ideals of chivalry. What

¹⁰ *Mémoires*, II, pp.248-9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, III, pp.209-11, 238-9.

¹² Including those held at Ghent in 1445, II, pp.83,95, Mons in 1451, II, pp.204-6, Bruges in 1478, III, pp.248-51.

¹³ *Mémoires*, II, pp.423-7.

emerges from the work is a series of detailed, literary *tableaux* drawn from the world of the court which are designed to convey the same impression to a reader as that which would have been gained by a spectator at the events. The prose is all about facade and the aspects of court life that were designed for public consumption. Much attention is therefore devoted to the Feast of the Pheasant, but there is very little on the political issues that lay behind it. Similarly, the wedding of Charles and Margaret is described in minute detail, but the years of political negotiation that had brought it into being, with which la Marche as a ducal ambassador would have been familiar, are neglected. The Golden Fleece chapters are also described in glowing detail, but as soon as the knights go to their chamber to discuss the serious ‘business of the Order’, the doors are closed on the reader. Philip the Good's military campaigns against Ghent are recounted at length, and with some relish, but very little is said about the issues that had caused them. It is the ‘set-pieces’ on which la Marche concentrates, and the day-to-day affairs of the court, its politics, treaties, legal, and financial administration are not included. Yet la Marche was, as a previous chapter has indicated, a man very much at the centre of the diplomatic, military, and political world of the court. His omission of the more serious aspects of court life is therefore not to be attributed to ignorance or naïvety. It was instead a matter of choice.

Methods of Composition

La Marche offered some clues as to the methods by which he constructed *Mémoires* in his preface:

Et n'entens pas que ceste ma petite et mal acoustrée labour se doibve appeler ou mettre ou nombre des cronicques, histoires ou escriptures faictes et composées par tant de nobles esperis qui aujourd'uy et en cestuy

temps de ma vie ont si sollempnellement labouré, enquis et mis par escript, et principalement ce tres vertueux escuyer George Chastelain, mon pere en doctrine, mon maistre en science et mon singulier amy, et celluy seul je puis à ce jour nommer et escrire la perle et l'estoille de tous les historiographes qui, de mon temps, ne de pieça, ayent mis plume, ancre ne papier en labeur ou en oeuvre; seullement est mon entendement, pour ce que coustumierement je vois et chemine en divers lieux et en maintes places, et luy est occupé en songneuse labeur et estude, et en ce secret de sa chambre il amasse et rassemble plusieurs rapportz, opinions, advis et ramentevances à luy rapportées, dictes et envoyées de toutes pars et dont de tout, et de toutes parties, il fait si notablement le prouffict de sa matiere, qu'il n'en fait pas seullement à loer, mais à gloriffier, priser et aymer de tout les nobles cueurs du monde, dont et à ceste fin, et pour faire mon debvoir et moy acquicter de la verité des choses advenues devant mes yeulx, me suis deslibéré de mectre par memoire ce que j'ay veu et retenu au passé temps de ma vie, tendant à fin que, s'il y a chose dont ledit George ou aultre, en leurs haultes œuvres, se puissent ayder ou servir, ils le preignent et le retirent, s'ilz me survivent, hors de ronces et espines de mes ruydes et vaines labeurs, pour les coucher ou noble lict paré et embasmé de ces nobles et riches termes, inventions et fruicts, dont le goust et l'entendement ne peult jamais empirer ne mourir.¹⁴

His approach is therefore very different to that of Chastellain. While Chastellain spent time gathering reports and accounts of incidents he had not actually witnessed, rather like the modern historian, la Marche intended to concentrate instead on recording all the important events he had actually seen. This eye-witness element is central to the text, and historians have usually interpreted this as being the most valuable aspect of it.¹⁵ La Marche would remain conscious of this commitment throughout his work, and it of course allowed him an opt-out from discussing certain episodes about which he knew little, or chose to remain reticent. He thus avoided a discussion of Philip the Good's siege of Calais in 1436 on the grounds that:

... ce sont choses advenues avant mon advenement, et dont je parleroye que par ouyr dire, qui seroit contre la forme de mon entreprinse.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Mémoires*, I, pp.184-5.

¹⁵ Stein, pp.117-8.

¹⁶ See above ch.1 no.108.

It is, however, clear that *Mémoires* is not based solely on memory, and other forms of gathering information are occasionally evident. As is shown above, the accounts of some of the great *pas d'armes* were based as much on heralds' reports of the events as memory.¹⁷ His account of the Feast of the Pheasant was certainly based on an official report, while that of the 1468 wedding took the form of a letter to Gilles du Mas in Brittany.¹⁸ In some places, entire treaties are inserted into the text, such as the Treaty of Arras (1435) and the Nine-Year truce signed by Charles the Bold and Louis XI (1475).¹⁹ Elsewhere, and particularly in the later part of the work, la Marche inserted sections detailing events to which he was certainly not witness. He did not witness many of the events he described with regard to Maximilian of Austria's relations with the cities of Bruges and Ghent between 1482-92. He even admitted as much:

Or ay je devisé grant partie et le plus beau de ce que j'ay veu de mon temps; toutesfois à cause de ma vieillesse je n'ay peu estre partout; si ne me puis je tenir, combien que ce soit contre ce que j'ay dit au commencement de mes Memoires que je ne parleroye ou escriroye que de ce que j'ay veu de mon temps; et aussi il me seroit bien dur que je ne escrivisse du Roy des Rommains ce dont je suis au vray adverty, car j'ay veu, de son commencement, tant de vertu, de sens et de vaillance, que ce me sembleroit grant faulte à moy que je ne ramentasse comment il a poursuy, qui a tousjours esté de bien en mieulx.²⁰

Furthermore, la Marche had witnessed some but not all of the great deeds he ascribed to Maximilian. The rest were based on hearsay and oral evidence:

Et de ces choses j'ay veu la pluspart en son service, et du surplus je suis se bien acertené que le puis et doy escripre. *Item*, est temps que j'escripve de ses haultz faitz ce que je n'ay pas veu, à cause de mon ancienneté.²¹

¹⁷ See above, ch. 1.

¹⁸ On the Pheasant, see above ch.2, n.34; on the wedding, see ch.2, n.80.

¹⁹ On Arras, *Mémoires*, I, pp.203-40; on the Nine Year Truce, see *ibid.*, III, pp.214-34.

²⁰ *Mémoires*, III, p.304.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.306-7.

The gaps in la Marche's memory were therefore filled by second-hand information. His motive here was certainly to facilitate the construction of a continuous narrative which omitted no important developments. This is important given the nature and character of *Mémoires* which, although based for the most part on eye-witness information, cannot quite be classified as a work of autobiography. Rather, it sits somewhere between the familiar concept of autobiography and history, and appears to the modern reader to have a rather blurred focal point. Is the author's ultimate objective to give an account of the history of the Burgundian dukes first and foremost, or is it instead a portrayal of his own career within this milieu? This ambiguous approach is shared in a sense by some of his contemporaries such as Philippe de Commines, whose principal subject matter seems to shift between his own career and the life of Louis XI,²² and is far removed from the straightforward, self-centred approach exemplified by the Italian sculptor Benvenuto Cellini in the following century.²³ The focus of la Marche's work is fixed slightly away from the author, who remains a shadowy figure on the fringes of many of the events it describes, though never far away. La Marche rarely commented or passed a direct opinion preferring to allow the events described to speak for themselves.

Finally, la Marche certainly consulted a number of literary sources in the compilation of his work. It is an often overlooked fact that he was, by the standards of his time, a relatively well-read man, and this became increasingly apparent during his later years when he would have had more time on his hands and probable access to the ducal

²² *Memoirs* ed. M. Jones (Harmondsworth 1972). In his introduction the editor gives a useful summary of the historical debate which has taken place over the issue of whether Commines' work should be interpreted as an impartial history of Louis XI, as the author would have us believe, or a more cynical attempt at self-justification. See pp.39-45.

²³ Cellini, *Autobiography*, ed. G. Bull (Harmondsworth 1956).

library.²⁴ The extent of his learning is probably better expressed in some of his other works of prose, but hints of it certainly exist in *Mémoires*, particularly in the first book or 'Introduction'. This differs enormously from the rest of the work in that it contains a history of Philippe le Beau's ancestors stretching back to earliest times and obviously well beyond the lifetime of the author. In this book, la Marche created real history based on the study of books and other written sources;²⁵ this is an issue to be addressed in a subsequent chapter.

Mémoires is therefore a work based principally on eye-witness evidence in accordance with the author's stated objectives, but it is clear that, in order to complete it satisfactorily, la Marche had recourse to other sources of information both oral and literary.

When was *Mémoires* written?

It is certain that the writing of *Mémoires* was a long-term project which occupied la Marche intermittently for much of his adult life. He appears to have begun the work at some point between January and August 1473, as a previous chapter has shown.²⁶ The work is unfinished, and he was apparently still in the process of completing it at the time of his death in 1502. Two principal clues suggest that this was the case; first, there is a

²⁴ See his remarks on the virtues of study in *Le Chevalier délibéré* ed. Lippmann (London 1898), p.31, and *Mémoires*, I, p.31. Unlike many of his contemporaries, la Marche does not appear to have owned many manuscripts. However, a manuscript entitled 'Traité contre les devineurs', which had at one time belonged to John the Fearless, has written on it the name and device 'La Marche, Tant a souffert', Dogaer and Debae, *La librairie de Philippe le Bon. Exposition organisée à l'occasion de 500^e anniversaire de la mort du duc* (Brussels 1967), no.123.

²⁵ There are two areas in particular where la Marche seems anxious to impress the reader with his erudition, *Mémoires*, I, pp.110-15 and 177-81. See also M.S. Hardy, *Olivier de la Marche*, p.137.

²⁶ See Appendix 1, esp. n.18-22.

reference to Maximilian's wars against the Swiss in 1499;²⁷ and second, and even more strikingly, a date is given in the closing passages:

... à l'heure que je escripvis cestes, qui fut le treziesme jour de juing l'an mil cinq cens et ung ...²⁸

The work therefore occupied la Marche even in his final years, and was in the process of completion over a period of almost three decades.²⁹ This is an important point to bear in mind, in that the social and political circumstances to which la Marche was subject must have changed dramatically over the various sections of the work. Is it possible, therefore, to show with greater precision which sections of the work were written at which particular time? To a certain extent this can indeed be demonstrated. Taken as a whole, *Mémoires* seems to have been written in three principal stages.

The first of these was the months or years that followed the first half of 1473, and it was during this phase that la Marche wrote the part of the work covering the period from 1435-c.1455.³⁰ The early stage did not include the 'Introduction', but began with the section that follows it. It included the entry of Jacques de Bourbon into Pontarlier in 1435, the publication of the Treaty of Arras, the Luxembourg campaign, the *Pas de l'Arbre Charlemagne*, the Golden Fleece chapter of 1445, the *Pas de la Pèlerine*, the *Pas de la Fontaine aux Pleurs* and ended with Philip the Good's wars with Ghent. When recounting his promotion to the post of *écuyer tranchant* in 1448, la Marche stated that Charles the Bold was 'à present mon souverain seigneur et maistre',³¹ which suggests that

²⁷ *Mémoires*, III, pp.310-12; Hardy, p.10.

²⁸ *Mémoires*, III, p.310.

²⁹ According to this date, he was still writing four months or less before he drafted his testament.

³⁰ See above, ch.1, n.98.

³¹ *Mémoires*, II, p.118.

he could not have been writing any later than 5 January 1477. Furthermore, in his account of the death of Jacques de Lalaing during the Ghent wars of 1452, there is a reference to Chastellain as 'nostre grant historiographe', who, along with his fellow historians, 'n'oublieront point, en leurs ramentevances et escriptz, cestuy messire Jacques de Lalain.'³² There is every indication that Chastellain was still alive and, because he died in February or March 1475,³³ la Marche must have been writing earlier than that date. Assuming, therefore, that *Mémoires* was written more or less in chronological order - and there is nothing in the text or elsewhere to suggest that this was not the case - the section going down to the Ghent wars was completed between 1473 and 1475.

Immediately after the account of the Ghent wars comes the description of the Feast of the Pheasant, which was a direct copy of an official report and could have been written at another time for insertion into *Mémoires*. There follows a short chapter on the events of 1454-5,³⁴ and this is in turn followed by a chapter describing the judicial duel which la Marche witnessed at Valenciennes on 20 May 1455.³⁵ In his preamble to this section la Marche wrote:

j'aye parlé de ceste matiere au volume que j'ay fait du gaige de bataille.³⁶

This can only refer to *Livre de l'advis de Gaiges de Bataille*, written in 1494,³⁷ and it must be concluded that this particular part of *Mémoires* was written after that date.

³² Ibid., p.310.

³³ Kervyn de Lettenhove, 'Notice' in *Oeuvres*, I, p.xxxvi.

³⁴ *Mémoires*, II, pp.394-401.

³⁵ Ibid., pp.402-6.

³⁶ Ibid., p.403.

³⁷ *Livre*, in Prost, pp.1-54.

Significantly, the treatise itself does not contain any hint that a description of the Valenciennes duel existed in *Mémoires*, probably because it had not yet been written.

The pages that follow the Valenciennes episode contain further hints concerning the date at which they were created. There is a reference to Anne de Beaujeu holding the title 'Duchess of Bourbon'³⁸ which she did not acquire until 1488; and there are passages which refer to the rupture of the marriage between Charles VIII of France and Margaret of Austria as well as Margaret's return to Malines in May 1493.³⁹

Leaving aside the 'Introduction' for the moment, it therefore appears that the rest of *Mémoires* was written in two overall stages. The section covering the period from 1435-c.1455 was written between 1473 and c.1475, while the remainder of the work was not produced until much later, probably between c.1494 and 1501. If this view is correct, several loose ends are tied up. First, it would explain why so much of the later sections of the work are so concerned with the wars between Maximilian of Austria and his French and Flemish enemies.⁴⁰ With the signing of the treaties of Cadsand in 1492 and Senlis in 1493, the menace posed by these enemies was removed; in other words the long period of war that had existed since 1477 had been brought to an end. It is highly possible that la Marche decided to devote the later sections of *Mémoires* towards giving a history of the troubled years between 1477-93, troubles which he hoped were now safely in the past.

A second point concerns the often levelled criticism that la Marche's work is prone to making errors of chronology. Historians who have criticised *Mémoires* in this way have tended to view the section covering the period from the mid 1460s to 1477 as being

³⁸ *Mémoires*, III, p.28.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.259-60.

⁴⁰ This is very much the theme of the later sections of the work, *ibid.*, III, pp.242-319.

the most haphazard of all,⁴¹ and in this sense they are correct. If, however, la Marche was writing this section of *Mémoires* as late as the mid 1490s, it should perhaps not surprise us that his worst errors occur in this section since he would have been casting his mind back two, even three, decades. It is also significant that the errors become less apparent as the author moves into the period after 1477.

Thus far, *Mémoires* appears to have been written in two broad stages. However, to these must be added a third stage during which time the author wrote the 'Introduction'.

There can be no doubt that he intended this section to form part of the overall *Mémoires*,⁴² although the only surviving manuscript that could have been produced during his lifetime contains the 'Introduction' only, and does not include the rest of the work.⁴³

As shown above, the 'Introduction' was probably begun in 1488,⁴⁴ and was, with the exception of the last chapter, completed by 1491. It is unlikely that the bulk of it could have postdated 1491, first because the author stated that Jean de Bourgogne, a member of the ducal family, was alive at the time of writing, and we know that he died on 25 September 1491;⁴⁵ and second because of two references given very near the end of the text which refer to Margaret of Austria being Queen of France at the time of writing, a title she lost following her repudiation by Charles VIII in December 1491.⁴⁶ Based on this evidence, it would appear that the 'Introduction' was written between 1488-91. It was

⁴¹ Stein, p.115; he points out that la Marche placed the siege of Beauvais (1472) before the Treaty of Péronne (1468); that the submission of Liège (1468) is immediately followed by the siege of Neuss (1474); and that the battles of Grandson and Morat (1476) come before the Treaty of Soulevre and the Nine Year Truce (1475).

⁴² He frequently alludes to the 'reste de mes memoires' e.g. I, pp.33, 86, 171; and he refers to the 'Introduction' as the 'premier volume de mes memoires', I, p.177.

⁴³ B.N. ms. fr. 2868.

⁴⁴ Appendix 1 n.17.

⁴⁵ *Mémoires*, I, p.73; for his death, III, p.222.

⁴⁶ Ibid., I, pp.40 and 156.

certainly complete by 1494 when the author wrote his treatise on the wagers of battle.⁴⁷

The only problem with this theory is the curious last chapter of the 'Introduction' in which la Marche spoke of the dangers faced by all mortals with regard to disease. He wrote:

Frederic, ce noble Empereur, vostre grant pere, qui fut si grant, qui regna toute sa vie sans estre decliné de son imperiale puissance, toutesfoix par ung feu qui luy prist en la jambe, il luy convint la jambe copper, et dont il morut en la fin de l'an. Le Roy Charles, VIIIe de ce nom, en ses plus beaux jours ayant fait grans conquestes, et toutesfoix en brief termine morut soudainement et en peu d'heure, comme eut fait le mendre bergier ou porchier de son royaume.⁴⁸

The problem concerns the fact that although Frederick III did not die until 1493 and Charles VIII was still alive as late as 1498, here is a record of their deaths. How can this be, given the dating of the 'Introduction'? The picture is further complicated by the fact that both are mentioned elsewhere in the 'Introduction' as being alive,⁴⁹ and no attempt has been made to resolve this apparent contradiction by the author or his scribe. The only explanation seems to be that the final chapter was added to the end of the 'Introduction' at least seven years after its completion, although the reasons for this are unclear.

The Paris manuscript, which includes only the 'Introduction', and which is the earliest surviving copy of any part of *Mémoires*, does contain the final chapter, and there is no question of its having been inserted at any point after the creation of the manuscript.⁵⁰ This manuscript is, in the view of Stein, an original copy which may have

⁴⁷ Gaiges, ed. Prost, pp.1-2. In his preface, la Marche informed Philippe le Beau that he had already completed 'le premier volume de mes Mémoires qui traicte de vostre généalogie et noble descente.'

⁴⁸ *Mémoires*, I, p.180.

⁴⁹ On Frederick III, see *Mémoires*, I, pp.26-7 and 33; on Charles VIII, *ibid.*, I, p.164.

⁵⁰ B.N. ms. fr. 2868, f.5.

been produced for the Archduke himself, and contains a miniature depicting the author presenting his work to Philippe.⁵¹ The inclusion of the final chapter in this manuscript suggests one of two things. Either its presentation was not made to the Archduke until after 1498, a full decade after the work had been started, or, as seems more likely, this manuscript is not in fact the original one, but is instead a very high quality copy based on a lost original which was produced right at the end of the fifteenth century, and to which the final chapter has been added.

To recap, it would appear that *Mémoires* was written as follows. The first part, going down to c.1455 was written between 1473-5. A gap then followed before the work was revitalised with the production of a new introduction between 1488-91. The rest of *Mémoires*, covering the period c.1455-88, was written during the 1490s. Finally, an extra chapter was added at the end of the 'Introduction' at some point after 1498. The work's unfinished character can be explained by the author's death in February 1502.

No original copies of *Mémoires* have survived, and the earliest complete version dates from the early sixteenth century.⁵² It is a well-preserved volume although it contains no miniatures of any kind and the lettering is far from ornate. This manuscript was probably copied by a scribe from original, now lost, notes left by la Marche after his death.

In 1504, according to Jean Molinet, Charles de Lalaing posthumously charged la Marche with compromising the honour of his father, Josse, who it was said had been accused of favouring the rebellious Ghenters in the text of *Mémoires*. Charles obtained a court order which forced la Marche's widow to surrender the text of *Mémoires* to a

⁵¹ Stein, p.131; on the miniature, see below n.76.

⁵² B.N. ms. fr. 2869; Beaune, pp. cv-cix; Stein, p.129.

committee of nobles consisting of Charles de Croy, Pierre de Lannoy, and Claude Bonard, in order that the offending passages be removed. Molinet's description suggests that the appropriate pages were physically torn out.⁵³

Because the complete Paris manuscript shows no sign of having had pages removed, and gives no hint of misconduct on the part of Josse de Lalaing, we can assume that the book in question was an earlier, now lost, copy, possibly in the author's own writing. It is also probable that the scribe who prepared the Paris manuscript had access to such notes. It seems that la Marche never revised or amended this original notes, since all the surviving manuscripts begin with his being the servant of Charles the Bold and end shortly after the reference to the date 1501, with no attempt being made to resolve this inconsistency. The notes used by the scribe must have been unrevised and may have been very disparate in nature. If so, some of the more obvious chronological blunders may be as much the error of the scribe as the author.⁵⁴

Why did la Marche write *Mémoires*?

For the time being we will leave aside the 'Introduction', to which full consideration will be given in a subsequent chapter,⁵⁵ in order to concentrate on the earliest parts of *Mémoires* proper. The exact purpose of *Mémoires* and the author's reason for writing it has never been properly considered beyond the assumption that it is purely Burgundian propaganda, a view which would appear unfounded given the fact that the work was not

⁵³ Molinet, II, pp.546-8; Beaune, pp.cvii-cviii; Stein, pp.230-1.

⁵⁴ See above, ch.2, esp. n.79-80.

⁵⁵ See below, chs. 6 and 7.

commissioned by the dukes nor by any other courtier. The 'Introduction' is certainly addressed to Philippe le Beau, but was again not commissioned by him, while the rest of the work is addressed to no particular reader, and there are no dedications. As far as the author's perceived audience is concerned, he may have imagined Philippe le Beau to be a reader during the writing of the later sections since he had resolved to present the Archduke with a complete version of his work, but with regard to the earlier sections, this cannot have been the case. It seems likely, however, that la Marche imagined himself to be addressing his own peers drawn from the world of the court and the nobility. In his account of the *Pas de l'Arbre Charlemagne* he wrote:

Or est bien temps que je me boute ou temps oiseulx et plain de plaisances et de honnestes pasetemps, et que je recite l'execution de cestuy noble pas, crié et publié par tous les royaumes et seigneuries chrestiens, affin de ramentevoir la chevalerie monstrée de tous les partiz, et aussi par maniere d'escolle et de doctrine aux nobles hommes qui viendront cy après, qui, peult estre, desireront de eulx monstrier et faire congnoistre en leur advenir comme leurs devanchiers.⁵⁶

This statement, reminiscent as it is of Froissart,⁵⁷ contains as much information as la Marche ever gives about his perceived audience, and it does very little for our understanding of his motives in writing *Mémoires*.⁵⁸

Some further indication of his motives are given in the original preface, where la Marche cited the wisdom of Socrates to show that since idleness and vice are closely linked, he would avoid the latter by putting his time to a useful project, the writing of *Mémoires*. This sentiment however appears to owe more to literary convention than anything else since the period in which he wrote these lines was one of the busiest of la

⁵⁶ *Mémoires*, I, p.290.

⁵⁷ Froissart, *Chronicles*, ed. Brereton (Harmondsworth 1968), p.37.

⁵⁸ See above, ch.1.

Marche's entire life in terms of his career, and he could hardly have been accused of idleness. Elsewhere, he suggested that his work may provide useful material for greater historiographers than himself, such as Chastellain, to use in their own works.⁵⁹ It is, however, unlikely that la Marche saw his work as amounting to little more than mere raw material for Chastellain and others to plunder.⁶⁰ La Marche may have felt that the eyewitness character of his work gave him an edge over Chastellain since he could verify the 'truth' inherent in every line he wrote in a way which Chastellain could not. A third possible motive, hinted at in the preface, concerns the author's age, which was almost forty-five.⁶¹ Although the exact accuracy of the age given is questionable, la Marche may have viewed the forties as being an age at which it would be appropriate for a man to write his memoirs. After all, Benvenuto Cellini would write in the following century:

No matter what sort he is, everyone ... ought to write the story of his own life in his own hand; but no-one should venture on such a splendid undertaking before he is over forty.⁶²

Nevertheless the above factors probably never amounted to more than secondary motivations since none is particularly satisfying in itself. Some central factor or set of factors compelled la Marche to begin work on this particular piece of literature at this exact time. What could these be?

It is apparent that the answer to this is linked in some way to the following sentiments expressed in the preface. The author describes himself as having reached a

⁵⁹ See above, n.14.

⁶⁰ It is perhaps significant that Commynes' stated objective in writing his memoirs is to provide raw material for Angelo Cato, Archbishop of Vienne, to use in his own work on Louis XI, *Mémoires*, I, p.1. Few historians would accept this to be his real reason.

⁶¹ See Appendix 1.

⁶² Cellini, p.15.

certain point in his life where he ought to pause and reflect:

... ainsi, sur ce my chemin ou plus avant, je me repose et rassouage soubz l'arbre de congnoissance, et ronge et assavoure la pasture de mon temps passé, où je trouve le goust si divers et la viande si amere, que je prens plus de plaisir à parachever le chemin non cogneu par moy, *soubz l'espoir et fiance du Dieu tout puissant, que je ne feroye, et feust il possible, de retourner le premier chemin et la voye dont j'ay desjà achevé le voiaige. Et toutesfois, entre mes amers goustz, je trouve un assouagement et une substance à merveilles grande, en une herbe qui s'apelle memoire, que celle seulle me fait oblier paines, travaulx, miseres et afflictions*, et prendre plume, et employer ancre, papier et temps, tant pour moy desannuyer, comme pour accomplir et achever, se Dieu plaict, mon emprise, esperant que les lisans et oyans suppleront mes faultes, agréeront mon bon vouloir, et prendront plaisir et delect de ouyr et savoir plusieurs nobles, belles et solempnelles choses advenues de mon temps, et dont je parle par veoir, non pas par ouyr dire.⁶³

It would appear that some misfortune as represented by the 'bitter tastes', had befallen la Marche, and the way to avoid becoming depressed was to engage in memoir-writing. Why, however, should he be subject to melancholy? After all, the early 1470s was a time when he was at the very apex of his career at the court, so where do the 'bitter tastes' come from?

It is likely that the answer to this question is connected to certain events of 1472, particularly the campaigns of the Burgundian army in northern France that summer. This campaign marked the climax of three years' work spent building a new army, a process with which la Marche was involved as the captain of one of the Duke's new *companies*.⁶⁴

This position marked the zenith of his military career and was probably among the most prestigious offices he ever received from the Duke. It was a personal triumph.⁶⁵

That the 1472 campaign ended in disaster may have been the principal reason for

⁶³ *Mémoires*, I, pp.186-7.

⁶⁴ On the campaign of 1472, see above, ch.1.

⁶⁵ Note Commynes' remark that the Duke had never had such a fine army, above, ch.1, n.164.

the apparent melancholy expressed by la Marche in his preface, although he preferred to gloss over the details of the campaign. The account given by Commynes⁶⁶ certainly suggests that Charles had been soundly defeated at Beauvais, had failed to make any headway against Rouen, and had by the end of the summer lost any ground gained in the earlier stages of the campaign. Furthermore, Commynes noted the extremely harsh conditions and food shortages being faced by Charles' men, a view shared by an Italian report of early October which stated that the Burgundian troops were living on fruit and suffering from dysentery.⁶⁷ As for la Marche's personal contribution, he appears to have been principally remembered for the brutal burning of the town of Gamaches,⁶⁸ a violent and bloody deed which would have been haunting him months later, even if he had only been following orders.

It appears that a major problem facing the Duke in 1472 was one of military personnel.⁶⁹ Problems of recruitment were the principal factors behind the three-year delay that had existed between the issuing of Charles' first military ordinance in 1469, and the final campaign into northern France. Furthermore, the appalling conditions faced by the troops would have encouraged desertion. The Duke's problems of recruitment were such that from the end of 1472 he began to look outside his own lands for troops. On 2 October, Bernhart von Ramestein wrote to Pierre de Hagenbach stating that 'because of this [i.e. the failure of the 1472 campaign], my lord wants to engage foreign troops insofar as he can'.⁷⁰ Indeed, virtually all of Charles' subsequent campaigns would include large

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Cited by Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, p.82.

⁶⁸ Ch.1 n.166.

⁶⁹ This is a view of Vaughan, pp.213-16, to which I am indebted for some of the following points.

⁷⁰ Cited by Vaughan, p.224.

numbers of foreign, particularly Italian, troops.

As a military captain, it is probable that la Marche would be inclined to look for causes of the military disaster in the problems of recruitment and desertion rather than strategy. He may have despaired of the lacklustre complacency of contemporary soldiers. Thus, his decision to highlight the great and magnificent things that he had seen at the court of Burgundy along with his constant emphasis on the importance of the values of honour, loyalty and valour, should be interpreted as an attempt to instil these values into a new generation of knights and soldiers in order that they would not succumb to the apathy and cowardice that lay behind the disasters of 1472.

There may of course be more to the issue of the 'bitter taste' than this explanation allows. An alternative cause of la Marche's apparent melancholy may lie in his ever closer relationship to Charles the Bold. Of course he only ever spoke of the duke in the most flattering of terms, but it is clear that Charles was a man who made enemies, not least of all within his own court. The campaigns of 1472 certainly caused a sense of disquiet in certain court circles as an example of Charles' overly bellicose attitude towards his neighbours, in this case the French, and the months that followed would witness a gradual build-up of hostility towards his policies. By April 1473, a sufficient level of resentment existed for a group of courtiers to openly criticise his conduct towards them during the Golden Fleece chapter held at Valenciennes,⁷¹ around the time when la Marche was beginning to write his memoirs.

According to the account of Martin Steenberch, Charles was reprimanded for the following offences; speaking too sharply to his servants, becoming too emotional when

⁷¹ On the following comments, see Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, pp.172-8, who publishes an account of this event written by the Clerk of the Order, Martin Steenberch. This account includes details of the criticism levelled at Charles, together with his response.

discussing other princes, working too hard, failing to ensure that his armies avoided oppressing his own subjects, allowing errors with regard to the exercise of justice, failing to keep his word and to uphold certain provisions agreed by his late father, and involving his people in warfare with very little warning and without due consultation with his advisors, particularly the knights themselves whom, according to the statutes of the Order, he was obliged to consult.

These are all sentiments which la Marche may well have shared to some extent. The last point is particularly interesting in that it appears to contain a veiled reference to the French wars of 1472 which, it is implied, were undertaken without the formal consent of the knights. Indeed, Charles' reply to these criticisms was defensive; he denied responsibility for starting the war with Liège, but with regard to the French campaigns of 1472, he could only remark '... God knows who started it ...'

He ended by promising to uphold peace, but more ominously added that he was 'content to defend what he has and what belongs to him'. La Marche probably shared the view that Charles was overly bellicose in his attitude towards his neighbours, and this excessive bellicosity had been apparently punished by the disastrous outcome of the 1472 campaigns.

Moreover, there is a range of more general grievances which, if shared by la Marche, may have contributed to his downcast attitude. If true, the knights' claim that Charles was too harsh to his servants and worked them too hard would certainly have implications for la Marche, given his recently elevated status by 1473. In a sense, la Marche may have felt himself to be a victim of his own success in that his promotion to the post of captain of the guard would bring with it increased doses of the same harsh treatment. Furthermore, throughout the series of criticisms levelled at the Duke, there is

an underlying, implied contrast with the character and policies of the late Philip the Good, and this contrast is highlighted with regard to the knights' comments about Charles' failure to uphold certain provisions agreed by Philip. In la Marche's literary work, Philip the Good is constantly presented as a supreme model of princely virtue, and it is always he, and never Charles, that Philippe le Beau is urged to emulate.⁷² It is conceivable that by 1473 la Marche had come to share with some of his colleagues a yearning for the less intensive, less bellicose way of life that had existed under Philip. In short, his comments sprang from the seeds of a perception which would reach full bloom by the end of the century, that Philip's reign represented a 'golden age' in the history of Valois Burgundy.

This first period of memoir-writing, however, only occupied la Marche for a few years, and much of the work was written in the 1490s, by which time he was living in a very different set of political and cultural circumstances. Charles the Bold was dead, and his successors had suffered fifteen years of conflict against the French and the great Flemish cities. By this period, la Marche's objectives in writing *Mémoires* had certainly changed, and the later sections exhibit a more overtly political feel, particularly with regard to the strong defence of Mary of Burgundy, Maximilian of Austria, and Philippe le Beau.⁷³ Perhaps the bluntest expression of this political outlook is the celebration of Maximilian and his achievements in defeating the rebellious Ghenters, and defending Mary's inheritance against the aggression of the French Crown.⁷⁴ He went on:

Quantes paroles semées hayneusement contre luy par ce noble Roy [des Romains] endurées et ouyes! ... Quantz heurtz de guerre! Quantes batailles et rencontres il a soubstenus et portés en sa personne, et

⁷² See for example *Mémoires*, I, p.100, 'Prenez exemple d'ensievyr ses bonnes meurs, et jamais homme ne vous en dira note de reproche ...'

⁷³ On the later sections of *Mémoires* and the history of Burgundy and the Low Countries after 1477, see below chs.5 and 6.

⁷⁴ *Mémoires*, III, pp.304-7.

mesmement venant de ses subjectz! Jusques à estre prisonnier et detenu en prison fermée par ceulx de Bruges, et en sa presence murdrir, gehenner et decappiter ses loyaulx officiers et aultres, et les plus grans de sa maison livrez ès mains de ses ennemys! ... mais touteffois ce Cueur d'acier demeura tousjours en la bonne esperance et fiance de Dieu, et tant endura et actendit sa meilleure fortune qu'il eschappa de ce dangier, et luy et ses serviteurs dessusditz. Ces choses considerées, je demeure en ceste oppinion qu'il a le cueur aussi fort et aussi ferme que d'acier, et je le espreuve par experiment.⁷⁵

Who read *Mémoires*?

The lack of documents containing any evidence of copies of *Mémoires* being commissioned, as well as the fragmentary nature of the evidence that the surviving manuscripts provide as to their provenance, ensures that this is a difficult question to answer comprehensively. La Marche certainly imagined that his work would be read by a noble audience drawn from the world of the court, and it is certain that one set of specific readers of his work were the dukes themselves. Charles the Bold does not appear to have owned any copies of la Marche's work, but he died in 1477, long before the completion of large sections of the text. There is, moreover, evidence to show that Charles' successors did possess copies of *Mémoires*. The 'Introduction' is of course unique in that it was addressed and presented to Philippe le Beau.⁷⁶ It seems likely, however, that the ducal library possessed a fuller copy of the text, and the inventory indeed contains a reference to:

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp.313-14.

⁷⁶ See above. n.50. On this manuscript, see Stein, pp.130-1; Beaune pp.civ-v; and for a reproduction of the miniature, see P. Durrieu, *La miniature flamande au temps de la cour de Bourgogne, 1415-1530* (Paris & Brussels 1921), plate lxxiii.

Histoire de Bourgogne par Olivier de la Marche, in-folio sur papier.⁷⁷

Although it is difficult to determine which, if any, of the surviving manuscripts this entry may be referring to, it is perhaps significant that this particular title corresponds exactly to the one that appears on a copy which survives in the Bibliothèque Royale at Brussels,⁷⁸ although there is no firm evidence to link this manuscript to the ducal household. Indeed, the ducal manuscript may not have survived at all since, of the 900 that made up Philip the Good's collection, only 350 have survived.

It was not only Philippe le Beau who read la Marche's work. His son Charles was also an enthusiastic reader, notably of *Mémoires* which gave a history of his much-valued 'circle of Burgundy'.⁷⁹ Margaret of Austria, who had requested works of poetry from la Marche in the 1490s, was another reader.⁸⁰

It is hardly surprising that Charles the Bold's Habsburg successors were interested in la Marche's work. This interest in the history of a newly acquired territory echoes Philip the Good's wish to acquire books on the histories of Brabant and Hainaut years earlier,⁸¹ while the close dynastic link between the Habsburgs and Burgundy, and

⁷⁷ Barrois, *Bibliothèque protypographique*, no.2236.

⁷⁸ B.R. ms. 10999.

⁷⁹ On Charles V, see M. Rady, *The Emperor Charles V* (London 1988), p.98. Rady also suggests that Charles' enthusiasm for Burgundian ideals of chivalry may have derived from a reading of la Marche's works, p.52.

⁸⁰ Margaret of Austria was a literary enthusiast as the inventory of her library reveals; see le Glay, *Correspondance de Maximilien Ier et de Marguerite d'Autriche* (Brussels 1839), II, pp.468-77. She certainly requested certain works of poetry to be written by la Marche, including the 'Vers et petit traictiez faite à la requeste de madame Marguerite d'Autriche, princesse de Castille, et donné par la Marche à monseigneur l'Archiduc en l'eage de vingtz ans' published in C. Ruelens ed., *Recueil de chansons, poèmes et pièces en vers français relatifs aux Pays-Bas*, pp.20-4. A manuscript preserved in the Plantin-Moretus museum in Antwerp contains a copy of *Mémoires* under the title 'Mémoires sur la maison d'Autriche'; see *Margareta van Oostenrijk en haar hof. Tentoonstelling 26 juli-1 september 1958* (Malines 1958), p.29 n.301. Might this have belonged to Margaret, or a member of her household?

⁸¹ Edmund de Dynter, *Chroniques des Ducs de Brabant*, ed. P.F.X. de Ram (Brussels 1854-60); and note the famous copy of Wauquelin's 'Chroniques de Hainaut' with its widely reproduced frontispiece, attributed to Rogier van der Weyden, which depicts the author presenting his book to Philip the Good, B.R. ms. 9241.

particularly the defence of their rights over Charles' territories, is a central theme in the work.⁸²

Besides the dukes, we can identify some other readers. The Paris manuscript contains a note written by Denis Sauvage, the 'éditeur' of the earliest printed edition of *Mémoires*, which indicates that the manuscript came from the 'librairie de la noble maison de la Chaux ou comté de Bourgogne.'⁸³ This Burgundian family appears to have been allied to that of la Marche, whose maternal uncle, Jacques Bouton, had married into the Poupet family, some of whom took the title 'Seigneurs de la Chaux'.⁸⁴ They were, furthermore, loyal servants of the successors of the Valois dukes in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. One of them, Charles de Poupet seigneur de la Chaux, is named as a *chambellan* in the 1501 ordinance of Philippe le Beau's household.⁸⁵ His son, Jean Poupet seigneur de la Chaux, the probable owner of the manuscript, continued the tradition of service with Charles V, under whom he became head of the Emperor's *gentilshommes de la chambre* according to the household ordinance of 1556.⁸⁶ Jean was one of a number of Burgundians who constituted a sizeable faction in Charles' household in the first half of the sixteenth century, and appears to have made a brilliant career. When Charles abdicated in 1556, Jean accompanied him to Yuste, and following the death of the Emperor two years later he returned to court to serve Philip II.⁸⁷

⁸² On which see below, ch.6.

⁸³ B.N. ms. fr. 2869, f.1: on this, see also Beaune, pp.cv-cvi. Sauvage was historiographer to Henry II of France, Hardy p.11, and appears to have used this manuscript as the source for his printed edition.

⁸⁴ Beaune, p.cvi.

⁸⁵ Gachard, *Collection des voyages*, I, p.348.

⁸⁶ L. Febvre, *Philippe II et la Franche-Comté* (Paris 1970), p.99.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.254.

As one of the many noble families who served the Burgundian dukes and their successors, the Poupet family would have found much of interest in *Mémoires*. Another reader who came from an established background of service was Philippe de Cleves. An inventory of his possessions made at the time of his death in 1528 contains the following items:

le tableau de monseigneur Olivier de la Marche
le chevalier délibéré couvert de cuyr rouge
deux livres des Memoires de messire Olivier de la Marche: ung livre pour
faire tournoi;
ung livre du roy Edouart d'Angleterre en parchemin.⁸⁸

The reference to 'two books' of *Mémoires* suggests that this particular manuscript contained the same basic structure as the Chaux version, and it must have been produced at some point before 1528.

About its owner there is much information available. He was the son of the famous Adolf de Cleves, seigneur de Ravenstein,⁸⁹ who had been a loyal supporter of the Valois dukes, although he had from 1483 been part of the self-appointed Flemish council that acted as Regent for Philippe le Beau.⁹⁰ Philippe had supported Maximilian in his campaigns against Audenarde and Ghent during the mid 1480s,⁹¹ but following the

⁸⁸ A.D.N., B3664, f.68r, 70v and 71v respectively. On this document, see Le Glay, *Inventaire sommaire des Archives Départementales du Nord, série B*, VIII, pp.432 and 434. The reference to a book on Edward of England is intriguing. It may be that this was a copy of the propaganda piece *The Arrival of Edward IV*, French translations of which certainly existed in this period; J.A.F. Thomson, 'The Arrival of Edward IV - the Development of the Text' in *Speculum*, 46 (1971), pp. 84-93.

⁸⁹ La Marche had much to say about Adolf de Cleves, such as his participation in the Luxembourg and Ghent wars (II, pp.12, 234, 245, 250-2, 287, 307, 312), his role at the Feast of the Pheasant (II, pp.361-2, 245 ff.), and at the 1468 wedding (III, pp.105, 110, 123, 125, 131-2, 172-5, 190). He continued to serve Maximilian of Austria after 1477, and it was he who conferred the sovereignty of the Order of the Golden Fleece on the Archduke in 1478, (III, p.250). He was also the godfather of Philippe le Beau (III, p.250). At one time he had sought to arrange a marriage between his son, Philip, and Mary of Burgundy, (II, p.245, n.5).

⁹⁰ *Mémoires*, III, p.265; C.A.J. Armstrong, 'The Burgundian Netherlands, 1477-1521' in *New Cambridge Modern History*, vol.1, pp.224-58, esp. p.232; W.P. Blockmans, 'Autocratie ou polyarchie? La lutte pour le pouvoir politique en Flandre de 1482 à 1492' in *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire*, 140 (1974), pp.251-368, esp. p.279.

⁹¹ *Mémoires*, III, p.270 and 272.

detention of Maximilian by the citizens of Bruges and the Archduke's subsequent release in 1488, he was left behind as a hostage. He was forced to defend the so-called Peace of Bruges which had abolished Maximilian's Regency in Flanders, and replaced it with a new Flemish committee.⁹² From now until 12 October 1492, Philippe threw in his lot with the Flemish enemies of Maximilian, leading la Marche to condemn him as having

se tourna ennemy du Roy [des Romains] et de son prince.⁹³

He finally capitulated after a lengthy siege of his naval stronghold at Sluis.⁹⁴

Given his opposition to Maximilian and the condemnation suffered at the hands of la Marche, it may seem surprising that Philippe de Cleves should possess a copy of *Mémoires*. Yet for much of his life he had served the dukes faithfully, and following his rehabilitation in 1492, he never again chose to attack ducal authority.⁹⁵ Furthermore, throughout the four years between 1488 and 1492, he constantly professed his loyalty to the ducal household and its *prince naturel*, Philippe le Beau, as a letter to Maximilian dated 9 June 1488 suggests.⁹⁶ He reproached Maximilian for having broken the Peace of Bruges and restarting the war against Ghent, a charge of which Maximilian was almost certainly guilty. Philippe swore that his opposition to Maximilian was solely in the interests of defending his *prince naturel*, to whom he remained loyal, and whose interests the Flemish committee was supposed to serve. Furthermore, in 1491 he issued a statement responding to those who had questioned his honour and defending his actions

⁹² Armstrong, pp.335-6; Blockmans, pp.298-9.

⁹³ *Mémoires*, III, p.294, and his subsequent war against Maximilian, pp.294-302.

⁹⁴ Described by Molinet, II, pp.309-19.

⁹⁵ Armstrong p.242; on the peace between him and Maximilian, see *Mémoires*, III, pp.301-2, and Molinet, II, pp.321-8.

⁹⁶ See the letter published in Blockmans, pp.355-7, and in Molinet, II, pp.46-8; Molinet also reproduces Maximilian's reply and subsequent letters pp.48-56.

since 1488.⁹⁷

In the long-term context, therefore, Philippe de Cleves should not be viewed as an enemy of the dukes. In fact he came from a family with a long tradition of service to the Burgundian dukes, and in this sense epitomises the kind of reader that la Marche's literature was likely to attract.⁹⁸

‘With Olivier de la Marche, we return to a humbler, more ordinary level, that of the straightforward memorialist ... [who] lacked the intellectual ability of Chastellain.’⁹⁹ Joseph Calmette's rather simplistic overview of la Marche's achievement certainly fails to do justice to his work, as the previous pages have sought to demonstrate. Whatever the relative merits of the efforts of la Marche and Chastellain, it is clear that *Mémoires* is a work of some complexity with regard to its composition and purpose. Its author was far from being the naive and straightforward memorialist that Calmette assumed him to be,¹⁰⁰ but was a man of intelligence and experience, whose prose should be understood as a response both to his own life's events and to the political and cultural climate of the milieu of his perceived audience. It is also clear that his work enjoyed popularity well beyond his death and into the sixteenth century, and it was indeed at the court of the Habsburg successors of the Valois dukes of Burgundy that *Mémoires* found its most receptive audience.

However, despite the fact that *Mémoires* is today his best-known literary work,

⁹⁷ Molinet, II, pp.264-84.

⁹⁸ For a fuller discussion of the issue of continuity between the reigns of Charles the Bold and those of his successors, and on la Marche's pro-Habsburg standpoint, see below, chs. 5 and 6.

⁹⁹ J. Calmette, *The Golden Age of Burgundy* (London 1962), p.195.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.196.

this may not necessarily have been the case during the author's lifetime or in the period immediately after his death. A considerable number of his prose and poetic works were in circulation at this time, and some of these may well have been better known to contemporaries. This is the theme to which the next chapter is devoted.

CHAPTER 4. *Poems and Treatises*¹

Besides *Mémoires*, Olivier de la Marche produced a considerable body of literature during his lifetime, particularly in the period between c.1470 and 1501. It is indeed probable that some of these pieces were better known to contemporaries than *Mémoires*, and the survival of relatively large numbers of manuscripts containing some of these does reinforce this view. As was the case with *Mémoires*, the principal milieu in which these works were circulating during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was the court, and as far as specific patrons and readers can be identified, virtually all came from this background. This stands as a testimony to the survival of this institution as a major centre of literary activity long after the death of the last of the Valois dukes.²

POETRY

Early Poems

La Marche wrote many pieces of poetry during his lifetime. Some of these consisted of only a few verses or lines, and have survived in only a handful of copies.³ Others, however, were larger and more complex in their conception. An early example is *Débat*

¹ This section will include a discussion of the major works only. For further information on the manuscripts and editions, see Stein, pp.120-48, and his 'Nouveaux documents', pp.15-18; and Beaune, pp.cxiv-clii.

² On which see below, ch.5.

³ For example, *Nouvelles propheties*, a short poem of advice to ladies, published by Stein, pp.207-9; *Huitain*, an 8-line piece of contemplation poetry published in *ibid.*, p.229; a *Rondeau*, on which see ch.1; and his *Humble Supplique ... à l'honneur de la trèsacrée, intermelée et inviolée mère de Dieu* published in Silvestre, *Poesies, romans et chroniques* (Paris 1842). Beaune has listed a number of other works, although there is considerable doubt as to whether they can be attributed to la Marche, pp.cxliv-cliii.

de Cuidier et de Fortune,⁴ which was composed by la Marche during his period of imprisonment between January and Easter 1477:

En tel estat fis les vers en prison,
Prins la iournée de plains et de douleur
La ou morut mon souverain seigneur.
Tant a souffert, la Marche.⁵

Given these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the tone of this poem is sombre, and it is this sense of melancholy which has led some observers to assume that la Marche was by nature a dour and cynical man who retained a deep sense of disillusionment throughout his life.⁶ The poem concerns a debate between the twin personifications of *Cuidier* ('Will' or 'Intent'), and *Fortune*, in which the achievements of the former are seen to be diminished by the relentless machinations of the latter. This notion of all things being subjected to a kind of battle between the opposing forces of premeditated human action, which is within our capacity, and fortune or fate, a force for change which operates entirely outwith human will, looms large in much of la Marche's literature and thinking. The circumstance which led him to ponder this on-going conflict was certainly the recent death of Charles the Bold, which he would later attribute to the mysterious ways of God, over which humankind had no control or even understanding.⁷ This concept emerged

⁴ *Debat*, published in *Revue franc-comtoise. Sciences, lettres et arts* (Besançon 1843), pp.244-59. On it, see Stein, pp.127 & 145, and Beaune pp.cxxxviii-cxxxix, where full details on the surviving manuscripts can be found.

⁵ *Debat*, p.259.

⁶ The view expressed by E. Mongon in her introduction to *Le Chevalier délibéré* (Washington 1945), p.vii; 'he appears to have been a rather dour, melancholy individual of intelligence and determination. His long active life as a diplomat could have led him to cynicism. Some private grief (he was married three times) or a severe psychomachia might have been the source of his dejection and of his motto'. In fact he was only married twice, fewer times than many of his contemporaries, and was outlived by his second wife. As to his 'psychomachia', it is difficult to perceive this as being the dominant characteristic in works like *Epistre pour tenir et célébrer la noble feste de la Thoison d'Or*, or his treatises on the tournament held by Claude de Vauldre at Ghent, and the wedding of Charles the Bold; nor does it characterise in any way some of the later sections of *Mémoires*.

⁷ See ch.5, n.12; *Mémoires*, I, pp.143-4. For a fuller discussion of la Marche's reaction to Charles' death, see below, ch.5.

elsewhere in his work. It formed the basis of the poem *De la puissance de nature et comment les corps célestiaux gouvernent le monde*, which he may have translated into French from the original Latin,⁸ while within his own writings the theme is consistently played upon throughout *Mémoires* in a number of ways. In his address to Philippe le Beau, he warned the young prince to maintain his devotion to God, who could in a single blow destroy all earthly honour, glory and wealth,⁹ while elsewhere the concept of all things being subject to the ever-changing Wheel of Fortune is similarly emphasised.¹⁰

This particular poem does not appear to have attracted an enormously wide audience. Only three manuscripts containing it have survived, although it was among the earliest of all la Marche's literary works to be produced in printed form, by Jean de Liège at Valenciennes in c.1500.¹¹

The melancholy tone of *Débat de Cuidier et de Fortune* was maintained by la Marche in his next major work of poetry, *Complainte sur la mort de Marie de Bourgoingne* and *Dialogue de l'âme et de l'oeil* (1482).¹² In this, the lament over Mary's death with its seemingly dire consequences for the house of Burgundy acts as a kind of preface to the *Dialogue*, in which the tearful eye and the more self-controlled soul are

⁸ Beaune, pp.cxl-cxli. He does not acknowledge the existence of a very fine manuscript containing this poem preserved in the British Library, ms. Sloane 2936. The full title of this manuscript is *Le livre des moralités translaté de latin en françois par Olivier de la Marche*, and the first section of this is the aforementioned poem. A note inside the manuscript reads 'Text printed from ms. 26 of the Palais des Arts at Lyon under the title "Olivier de la Haye, poème sur la Grande Peste en 1348 par Georges Guigne, Lyon 1888".'

⁹ See below, ch.6 n.13.

¹⁰ Philippe le Beau is informed that Fortune has decreed that he should be born into a noble household, *Mémoires*, I, p.177, while the many examples of virtuous men who have fallen victim to disease is explained in terms of their attracting ill fortune, *ibid.* pp.177-80. Fortune is random and could strike arbitrarily. To la Marche, the only way to avoid its destructive power was through devotion to God and to the Virgin Mary who, as the intercessor between heaven and earth, could deflect such disasters, *ibid.* p.180.

¹¹ Beaune, pp.cxxxviii-cxxxix; Stein, p.145 and 'Nouveaux documents', p.17.

¹² Published by C. Ruelens, ed., *Recueil de chansons, poèmes et pièces en vers français relatifs aux Pays-Bas*, pp.25-38.

seen to represent the opposing forces of emotion against intellect, ephemeral grief against long-term hope, and the fickle heart against the measured mind. As in *Débat*, each figure speaks a verse, and the paired structure of these ensures that the short-sighted view of the eye, shackled as it is by the bonds of human frailty and emotion, is redressed by the rational soul, whose eternal nature enables it to free itself from these restrictions and see events through a wider perspective that goes beyond the earthly existence.

Again, only a handful of manuscripts containing this poem have survived,¹³ and it is impossible to draw any firm conclusions about their provenance. Epitaphs of this kind were widely produced in the literary circles of the period, and la Marche's poem is hardly original in its conception. A possible source of inspiration for him was Amé de Montgesoie's *Complainte de treshaulte et vertueuse dame madame Ysabel de Bourbon Contesse de Charolois*¹⁴ written in 1465, which although not structured in the form of a dialogue, showed the same sense of lamenting the fickle ways of Fortune as the poetry of la Marche. The likelihood that la Marche was aware of this poet's work is confirmed by his certain use of another of Amé's poems in the writing of what is without doubt his greatest poetic achievement, *Le Chevalier délibéré*.¹⁵

Le Chevalier délibéré (1483)

This is certainly the best known of all la Marche's poems, as well as being one of his most mainstream. Its wide circulation in the late fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth made it without question the most successful of all la Marche's literary works,

¹³ On which see Stein, pp.145-6, and 'Nouveaux documents', p.17; Beaune, pp.cxxxix-cxl.

¹⁴ Published by T. Walton, 'Les poèmes d'Amé de Montgesoie' in *Medium Aevum* (II, no.1, March 1933), pp.1-33, esp. pp.21ff..

¹⁵ On la Marche's debt to Amé for this poem, see below n.40.

and the one for which he was probably best known by his and subsequent generations. It survives in some eighteen manuscripts, and more than ten printed versions had been produced even before the end of the fifteenth century.¹⁶ During the fifteenth century and first half of the sixteenth, it was translated into three other European languages, Flemish,¹⁷ Spanish,¹⁸ and English.¹⁹ No other work written by la Marche appears to have enjoyed such a wide contemporary audience, or displayed such staying power.

Some conclusions can be drawn about the specific readers of the poem. In the first place, a manuscript containing the poem formed part of the ducal library at the end of the fifteenth century,²⁰ and this is thought by some to be the same as a surviving copy now in Paris.²¹ The Paris manuscript is a very fine volume, and contains twelve magnificent miniatures illustrating the text. It dates from the late fifteenth century, and almost certainly belonged to the heirs of Charles the Bold. If this is the same copy as the one that existed in the ducal library, it was probably presented during the reign of Philippe le Beau, and may well have been read by him. The poem certainly formed part of the reading matter of Philippe's successors, Margaret of Austria and Charles V. It was indeed at the instigation of Charles that the poem was translated into Spanish, and the earliest Castilian translation, that of Hernando de Acuna produced in 1552-3, was dedicated to

¹⁶ Beaune and Stein, op. cit. Not all the manuscripts are, however, contemporary with la Marche or the generation which followed him.

¹⁷ On which see above ch.2, n.138-40.

¹⁸ Several Spanish manuscripts have survived, Beaune and Stein, op. cit.; on the Spanish version that was produced in the sixteenth century, see Claveria, esp. p.61 ff., and E. Picot & H. Stein, eds., *Recueil des pièces historiques imprimées sous le règne de Louis XI* (Paris 1923), pp.339-44.

¹⁹ Slightly later, a single English edition of 'The Resolved Gentleman' exists, translated by Lewes Lewkenor Esq. On it, see Picot & Stein, p.348.

²⁰ Barrois, no. 2250, 'Chevalier délibéré par Olivier de la Marche. Écrit en ancien bâlard. 47 feuillets en f-o sur vélin avec 12 miniatures.'

²¹ B.N. ms. fr. 24373; this manuscript certainly fits the description given in Barrois.

him.²² Moreover, letters patent given by Charles at Antwerp on 8 December 1552 to Jean Cristovel Calvete de Strella authorised him to print the volume 'composé en rhyme par D. Hernando de Acuna' to sell in Brabant as well as Spain.²³ It is entirely probable, however, that Charles was familiar with the poem long before he had it translated into Spanish, and it may have formed part of his boyhood reading. Certainly, historians are fond of suggesting that it was his favourite poem.²⁴

To Claveria, Charles' fondness for the poem is very much part of his strong awareness of the Burgundian character of certain parts of his inheritance.²⁵ This awareness can be seen in his embracing the Burgundian ideals of chivalry and etiquette, his imitation of their extravagant tournaments and banquets, their crusading rhetoric, and their sovereignty of the Golden Fleece. More tangibly, his first will expressed the desire that he be buried in the Chartreuse de Champmol near Dijon, the ancestral burial place of the Valois dukes; and during the early sixteenth century, he pressed for the recovery of the Duchy from the French.²⁶ A strong influence on this may have come from his aunt and Regent, Margaret of Austria, who in 1530 urged Charles 'non abolir le nom de la maison de Bourgogne.' Given Charles' standpoint, therefore, his literary world was full of the ideals and values that had characterised the Burgundian court, and the works of la Marche gave him a link to this.²⁷

Besides the dukes, it is possible to identify some other owners of copies of the

²² Claveria, p.65 ff.

²³ Picot & Stein, p.340.

²⁴ Claveria, p.67; Rady, p.98.

²⁵ For the rest of this paragraph, see Claveria, pp.35-60.

²⁶ Ibid., pp.38-9.

²⁷ Ibid., p.52.

poem who had connections to the Burgundian court. One was Philippe de Cleves, seigneur de Ravenstein, whose collection of manuscripts included a copy of ‘... le chevalier délibéré, couvert de cuyr rouge ...’²⁸ Another manuscript, which contains this poem and numerous miniatures, can be said with some certainty to have belonged to a member of the Lalaing family in the late fifteenth century, on account of the document bearing the family's arms.²⁹ The Lalaings were a powerful family of Burgundian origin, whose history of service to the court stretched from the early years of Philip the Good's reign well into the sixteenth century.

However, the readers of *Le Chevalier délibéré* were not entirely confined to the world of the Burgundian-Habsburg court of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Evidence exists to suggest a wider audience in France. A copy of the poem existed in the library of King Francis I,³⁰ while the more general distribution of the poem in France seems to have been widespread. It is perhaps significant that, of the many printed editions of the poem that were published during this period, the majority were produced in the printing-houses of the great cities of France, notably Paris and Lyon. In addition, the existence of two Flemish translations suggests a high level of interest in the poem outwith the more traditional circle of la Marche's readers.³¹

The contents of *Le Chevalier délibéré* are as follows. In his autumn years, the author, accompanied only by *Pensée* (Thought), is informed that he must accept the

²⁸ See above, ch.3 n.88.

²⁹ Beaune, pp.cxxxii-cxxxiii, who cites Ashburnian Library no.478. On the Lalaing family, see below, ch.5.

³⁰ Stein, p.124.

³¹ See the editions of Antoine Vérard (Paris 1488), Jean Lambert (Paris 1493), Jean Trepperel (Paris 1500), Martin Harvard (Lyon c.1510), Michel le Noir (Paris c.1512), and again in c.1519), and Denis Janot (Paris c.1530). There are also editions of uncertain provenance that were published at Gouda in 1490, and Scheidam in 1503. On the Flenish versions of the poem, see above ch.2. Picot & Stein, pp.322-38.

challenge of one of two knights, *Accident* and *Débile* in the forest *Atropos* (Fate). He sets off, but is quickly defeated in an encounter with *Hutin*, son of *Gourmandise* (Gluttony), although he is saved by the intervention of *Reliques de Jeunesse* (Relics of Youth). Progressing onwards, he meets a hermit called *Entendement* (Understanding), who welcomes and feeds him, and warns him of the power of *Accident* and *Débile*. The following morning, the Hermit shows the author a reliquary containing relics relating to *Accident's* victories, such as the burning shirt of Hercules and the lance with which Achilles killed Hector. *Entendement* gives the author a sword called *Gouvernance*, and with this he sets off once again. He approaches the 'Plain of Time', where he is defeated by *Eiage* (Age), who promises to release him only if he rejects the joys and fruits of youth. Bearing a grey beard, the author again moves on until he approaches the *Palais d'Amours* (Palace of Love). Here, *Desir* attempts to lead him inside, but *Souvenir* (Recollection) shows him a mirror in which he can see his own grey beard and, over his shoulder, the figure of *Eiage* pursuing him. Entering the 'Plain of Old Age', the author comes to the abode of *Bonne Aventure* (Good Hap), a place of study, where he is admitted. There, *Fresche Mémoire* (Fresh Memory) shows him a place full of the tombs of those who have succumbed to either *Accident* or *Débile*. These include figures from Greek legend and the Bible, as well as real historical and contemporary figures. *Fresche Mémoire* then takes the author to a dry, sandy spot, where a series of jousts, or duels, are held in the presence of the judge *Atropos*. In the first combat, Philip the Good is defeated by *Débile*, while in the second and third, *Accident* slays Charles the Bold and Mary of Burgundy. Infuriated, the author challenges the knights, but *Atropos* declares the jousting to be at an end for the time being and the author is forced to leave. *Fresche Mémoire* then takes the author to view more recent victims of the two knights, the later of them

being King Edward IV of England, before leaving him with *Entendement*. The author now takes the armour *Repentir* (Repentance), and prepares his soul so that it will be in a state of virtue when his own forthcoming death catches up with him.

The poem has been variously described as ‘an allegory of the struggle between spiritual life and death’, and more waywardly as a celebration of the deeds of Charles the Bold.³² In part, its contents reflect la Marche's state of mind at the point that his life had reached in 1483.³³ The melancholy edge can be attributed to the recent death of Mary of Burgundy, described in the poem, and the subsequent problems that this caused for her successors. There can be no doubt that la Marche's sense of grief over this disaster was very sincere. The notion of accumulating age and the passage into the autumn years of life is also central, and is drawn from la Marche's own experience. By this point, he was approaching the age of sixty, and was taking a less active role in the affairs of the court. An entire decade had passed since he had begun to write up *Mémoires*, and although he would live for almost twenty more years, it was with this poem that his literature began to include perfunctory lamentations about his old age.³⁴

Nevertheless, the poem contains more than mere autobiographical musings, and shows some awareness of contemporary literary traditions. The use of allegory was of course common to much medieval literature, and the device of personifying abstract

³² Mongon, p.ix.

³³ For details of which see above, ch.1.

³⁴ In his ‘Introduction’ (c.1488) he claimed he was ‘plain de jours, chargé et furny de diverses enfermetez et persecuté de débile viellesse’, *Mémoires*, I, p.8-9; in the same year he wrote a poem for Philippe le Beau describing himself as ‘... le viellart de la Marche’, Ruelens p.8. Three years later, in a treatise addressed to Maximilian, he flippantly stated he was ‘si viel que je suis l'un des pieds en la fosse’ (‘so old, I've got one foot in the grave’). In *Gaiges de Bataille* (c.1494) he complained of ‘... ma débile et impotente viellesse’, Prost, p.3. In *Advis des Grands Officiers que doit avoir un Roi* (1500), he was ‘le veillard de soixante seize ans’, *Mémoires*, IV, p.157. Finally, in *Epistre pour tenir et célébrer la noble feste de la Thoison d'Or* (1500-01), he wrote of his inability to attend Philippe's first chapter as full sovereign, *Mémoires*, IV, p.158.

concepts and emotions is a feature of works like the *Romance of the Rose*, written in the thirteenth century, and enjoying huge popularity in the fifteenth, nowhere more so than at the court of Philip the Good.³⁵ More specific influences on the poem may have included the commonplace works known as *Voies de paradis*, dream sequences based on the use of allegory, or the *Pèlerinage de vie humaine* of Guillaume de Digulleville composed in c.1330, in which the journey of the author, accompanied by Memory, echoes that of la Marche's *Chevalier*.³⁶ Another influential body of works that was in circulation in the late fifteenth century was the so-called *Ars moriendi* or *Art de bien vivre et bien mourir*, many of which existed in editions containing illustrations very similar in conception to the 1498 edition of *Le Chevalier délibéré*.³⁷ They were moralistic works, devoted to instructing the reader on how best to prepare his or her soul for the onset of death, since only the repentant and virtuous soul could be assured a smooth passage into the paradise of the next world. This theme is very much echoed in the contemplative closing section of *Le Chevalier délibéré*, in which the author prepares for death by symbolically arming his soul with the virtues. The emphasis on the ephemeral and fleeting nature of earthly existence, so well expressed by the image of the plain of tombs and no doubt inspired by the untimely death of Mary of Burgundy, recalls the sentiment expressed in the *Testament* of François Villon, where the author's question about the fate of the ladies Flora, Heloise, Queen Blanche, Bertha, Beatrice and Joan of Arc is answered by a further question, 'Où

³⁵ *Romance of the Rose* by G. de Lorris & J. de Meung, trans. C. Dahlberg (Hanover & London 1971). On its presence in the ducal library, see Barrois, *passim*.

³⁶ These possible sources have been suggested by Ménage, 'Le voyage délibéré du chevalier de la Marche' in *Sénéfiance*, 2 (1930), p.216; on the *Voies de paradis*, see *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises*, pp.1489-91; on Guillaume de Digulleville, see *ibid.*, pp.614-7.

³⁷ Ménage, *op. cit.*; *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises*, pp.96-9. On the issue of the illustrations, see Lippmann's preface to the poem, p.vii, and see la Marche's tombs in *Le Chevalier délibéré*, pp.37-42 and 56-7.

sont les neiges d'antun?' (Where is the drift of last year's snow?).³⁸ Finally, the description of the tombs climaxes in the author's narrating a kind of frenzied, literary *Danse Macabré*, in which he describes the common fate of men and women of all estates and conditions, all of whom are led away by Death.³⁹

It is impossible to unravel all the specific influences that acted on la Marche in the writing of *Le Chevalier délibéré*, and he was probably aware of some or all of the above traditions. However, in the poem he did refer to one specific source:

le traittie qui tant point et mort
Que fist Ame de mont ie soye
Plus riche que dor ne de soye
Du merueilleux pas de la mort.⁴⁰

Amé de Montgesoie⁴¹ first entered the hierarchy of the Burgundian court in the service of Isabella of Bourbon, the second wife of Charles the Bold, where he remained for eight years down to 1465. Following the death of Isabella, he became a *valet* in the service of Mary of Burgundy, under whose jurisdiction he appears to have remained for the rest of his life. In 1477, he became a *huissier d'armes*, and began to play a more prominent role in the ceremonial side of court life. He was with Mary on 3 April when Chancellor Huguenot and the seigneur d'Humbercourt were executed at Ghent, and assisted at the Duchess's *joyeuse entrée* to Antwerp on 19 June. He was almost certainly present at the wedding of Mary and Maximilian at Ghent on 18 August. His last recorded appearance

³⁸ Francois Villon, *Testament* in *Selected Poems*, ed. and trans. P. Dale (Harmondsworth 1978), pp.66-9; and see la Marche's tombs in *Le Chevalier délibéré*, pp.37-42 and 56-7.

³⁹ *Le Chevalier délibéré*, p.42.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.3.

⁴¹ For the following biographical comments, see T. Walton, 'Amé de Montgesoie, poète bourguignon du XVe siècle' in *Annales de Bourgogne*, 2 (1930), pp.134-58.

was in 1478 when he was present at the baptism of Philippe le Beau in Bruges, but thereafter he disappears from the records.

Amé composed two major literary works, *La Complainte sur la mort d'Isabelle de Bourbon* (1465) and *Le Pas de la Mort*, dedicated to Isabella and therefore written some time earlier.⁴² *Le Pas de la Mort* concerns the author witnessing a tourney, in which the two challengers, *Accident le Sudain* and *Anticque le Debile* take on all comers, while *Mort*, or death, sits in judgement. This image represents the passage of the soul into the next world, and appears in the form of a joust, very much akin to the tournaments that characterised the cultural life of the Burgundian court in the fifteenth century. The jousts took place in purpose-built lists, with pavilions at each end, and banners all around. Heralds supervised their smooth running, while the figure of *Mort* acted as judge. Although the outcome of the duel was always certain - in every case the agents of Death would win - the important factor was the performance of the combatant. Those who came to the *pas de la mort* in a state of virtue and repentance would receive infinite bliss, while those who came armed with vice would be dishonoured and see their souls condemned.⁴³

This concept is echoed in *Le Chevalier délibéré*, whose debt to Amé's poem is chiefly based on the centrepiece scene of the jousts. In this, the outcome of the duels was also seen to be less important than the performance of the combatants, and Philip, Charles and Mary are all seen to perform honourably. A direct correlation is made between the weapons used and the combatants' character, and this idea of being 'armed with virtue' is a direct echo of the Jason plays that were staged at the Feast of the Pheasant in 1454.⁴⁴

⁴² Both are published by Walton, 'Les Poèmes', cit. supra.

⁴³ *Pas de la Mort*, ed. Walton, pp.17-18.

⁴⁴ *Le Chevalier délibéré*, pp.46-54. On the Pheasant plays, see above, ch.2.

The overriding theme is the need to prepare the soul so that it will be in a state of virtue when the final combat comes, and it is to this end that the author devotes himself in the closing scenes of *Le Chevalier délibéré*. This is his 'resolution'.

Though he borrowed much from Amé de Montgesoie, la Marche did more than merely copy his work slavishly. Much of the action owes no direct debt to *Le Pas de la Mort*, and is probably derived from some or all of the works considered above. Also, some of the details concerning the *pas* have been altered, not the least of which is the figure of the judge. In *Le Pas de la Mort* the judge is *Mort* or Death, but in *Le Chevalier délibéré* his figure has been refined as *Atropos*.⁴⁵ According to Greek mythology, *Atropos*, whose name means 'Unalterable' or 'Irreversible', was the eldest of the three sisters known as the Fates, the other two being *Clotho* the Spinner and *Locheves* the Measurer. The symbolism is centred on the idea that life was a thread which *Clotho* spun, *Locheves* measured, and *Atropos* cut with her shears or some other cutting instrument. She was therefore the final judge in whose hands the life and death of each individual person held. In replacing *Mort* with this new symbolic judge, la Marche has created an allegory which is rather more subtle in its symbolism, though no less terrifying, than that of Amé. Furthermore, the idea that the lifeline of each person was ultimately in the hands of the Fates recalls his earlier poems where he portrayed a world in which events were ultimately controlled by the random forces of Fortune, over which humankind had no control.

The various depictions of *Atropos* in the early manuscripts and printed editions show a sense of imaginative diversity. The Scheidam edition of 1503 depicted the judge

⁴⁵

For the following comments on *Atropos*, R. Graves, *The Greek Myths*, I, p.48, and *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edn., II (1960), p.877. *Atropos* is mentioned in the works of Homer, Virgil and Herodotus, but possibly the best detail is given in Plato, *Republic*, ed. D. Lee (Harmondsworth 1974), p.485. Exactly where la Marche derived the information is unclear.

in a way which is very closely related to Amé's *Mort*. It is a grinning skeleton figure wearing a long robe with a crown on its head, and holding a long spear or lance. It sits on a throne in the centre of the lists, raised several feet off the ground.⁴⁶ The use of the skeleton figure very much recalls the traditionally late medieval depiction of the Death figure, exemplified in the now destroyed *Danse Macabré* that once adorned the cloisters of the Church of the Holy Innocents in Paris. Elsewhere, however, the figure is portrayed differently. The Paris manuscript⁴⁷ contains a miniature depicting *Atropos* seated on a throne in front of a blue pavilion and wooden lists. The figure wears a kind of turban on its head, and has a beard. Its robe is blue and green, and is made of a strange-looking material that appears to resemble a thick covering of feathers. Like its skeletal counterpart, it also holds a spear. The symbolism is puzzling, and the character of the figure is clearly very different to the traditional skeleton.

La Marche's decision to insert *Atropos* in the place of *Mort* is very much in keeping with the main theme of this, and other, poems. Drawn from a wide range of literary inspiration, he has created a visually striking and haunting piece of poetry, and it is perhaps unsurprising that this should be his most successful work. Its main themes very much reflect the state of mind of the author at the time of writing, since he had reached a point in his life where profound, and not always welcome, changes were taking place. *Le Chevalier délibéré* is the product of a period when la Marche was taking stock of his life, and allowing himself to ponder some of the great universal questions concerning the earthly existence, the spirit, and the eternal soul.

⁴⁶ *Le Chevalier délibéré*, ed. Lippman, who reproduces the miniatures from the Scheidam edition of 1503. *Atropos* is depicted on pp.44, 48 and 52.

⁴⁷ B.N. ms. fr. 24373, f.34.

The Poems of the 1490s

After the achievement of *Le Chevalier délibéré*, la Marche continued to write poetry, but would never again produce anything on the kind of creative scale he reached in 1483. Some years went by before he wrote any further poems, and his last significant piece of the 1480s was a short work addressed to Philippe le Beau in 1488, concerning his notion of the ideal relationship between tutor and student, and which acts as a kind of prologue to his 'Introduction'.⁴⁸ By the following decade, however, he had picked up his poetic pen once more. Two particular areas are worthy of mention: the poem *Le Parement et triumphe des dames*, and the series of short poems he dedicated to Philippe le Beau and his children in the last decade of his life.

Between 1493-4, la Marche produced one of his longest poems, *Le Parement et triumphe des dames*.⁴⁹ The poem basically contains a list of the virtues that should be possessed by the ideal lady, and these virtues are symbolised by the various components of her dress. This concept develops the idea that a person can be 'armed with virtue' as seen in some of his earlier works. Thus the blouse of the lady represents the virtue of honesty, the corset chastity, the slippers humility, the laces loyalty, the hatpin patience, the purse liberality, the ring faith, the gloves charity, the ribbon fear of God, and so on. As Stein has pointed out, the detailed description of the lady's attire given in the poem has long been a source of fascination for historians of costume,⁵⁰ but the poem also tells the

⁴⁸ Ces vers furent donnez par la Marche à Monseigneur l'Archiduc pour sa nouvelle escolle, published in Ruelens, pp.7-8, on which see above, ch.1 n.226.

⁴⁹ Published by Julia Kabfleisch-Benas, *Le Triumphe des Dames von Olivier de la Marche* (Rostock 1901). On it, see Stein, pp.124-6, 142-4; 'Nouveaux documents', pp.16-17; Beaune, pp.cxxxv-cxxxviii; and G.A. Pérouse 'Une édition méconnue d'Olivier de la Marche au XVI^e siècle' in *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance*, 39 (1977), pp.307-10.

⁵⁰ Stein, p.125, who cites Jules Quicherat's *Histoire du costume* (Paris 1877) as an example.

historian something about the ideals and values of the late medieval aristocracy, particularly in its attitude towards women. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the virtues that la Marche saw as being appropriate to the lady were very much in keeping with traditional medieval ideals, and the qualities of humility, grace, temperance, honesty, obedience, charity and loyalty appear frequently.⁵¹ These ideals were first expressed by la Marche in another short poem entitled *Nouvelles propheties* in which he urged 'toutes nobles princesses, toutes dames dignes' to listen to his advice about how they ought to conduct themselves.⁵²

The work is not the most original of la Marche's achievements. Although his authorship is now established virtually beyond doubt, the early printed editions of the poem have been altered by Pierre Desrey de Royes, who added several passages taken from the Scriptures.⁵³ Furthermore, la Marche's own composition is far from being original in its conception, being based on a work of the same name written by Rodriguez de la Chambre.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the poem was one of la Marche's better known works in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and survives in eight manuscripts as well as four printed editions dating from the period.⁵⁵ The ducal library possessed at least one copy of it in the late fifteenth century,⁵⁶ and another copy was owned by Margaret of

⁵¹ On this subject, see for example E. Power, *Medieval Women* (Cambridge 1975); and S. Shahar, *The Fourth Estate* (London and New York 1983); the idealisation of women's place in society was a common enough subject in late medieval literature.

⁵² *Nouvelles Propheties* in Stein, pp.207-9. This is a little-known work, and only two manuscripts containing it survive, *ibid.* p.239. Its date is uncertain, though la Marche's declaration that he is 'serf et serviteur d'une', [i.e. lady], suggests that he may have been in the service of Mary of Burgundy, thus placing the date of composition between 1477-82.

⁵³ Stein, pp.125-6; Beaune, p.cxxxv. The only printed editions which contain the various alterations include those of Jean Petit (Paris 1500), Michel le Noir (Paris 1520) the widow of Jean Trepperel (Paris 1512-24) and Oliver Arnoullet (Lyon, undated).

⁵⁴ Beaune, p.cxxxv, esp. n.1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.cxxvii-cxxviii; Stein, pp.145-6; Kabfleish-Benas, pp.xvi-xvii.

⁵⁶ Barrois, no.2289, a fifteenth-century collection of poetry including work by Alain Chartier, and la Marche's *Parament*.

Austria and subsequently placed by her niece, Mary of Hungary, Regent of the Low Countries, into her personal collection.⁵⁷ The prevalence of editions published at Paris in this period again suggests the possibility of a wider audience throughout France, although the only specific owner of a copy that has been identified was one Gilles van Wissenkerke, whose name is inscribed in the copy that survives at Antwerp.⁵⁸ About this man, little is known.

Le Parament et triumphe des dames was, however, the last of la Marche's long, conceptual poems and, with one exception, the rest of his output in the 1490s and 1500s was altogether different in character. During this period, he composed a series of shorter poems which were directly addressed to either Philippe le Beau or his children. All these contained words of advice about the way to live the virtuous life of a good prince or princess. None of these poems have survived in more than a handful of manuscripts and do not appear to have been published until the last century, and this reflects the character of the works. In contrast to *Le Chevalier délibéré* and *Le Parament et triumphe des dames*, these works are very personal in nature, and appear to have been dedicated to the recipient as a kind of personal gift. Their existence suggests that during the 1490s, la Marche was still closely attached to the ducal household, and that he continued to take his role as a mentor to the young princes and princesses very seriously.

Three of the poems are dedicated to Philippe le Beau. In the first, entitled *Vers dorez*, written for and dedicated to Philippe le Beau at the age of fifteen,⁵⁹ la Marche stated that he was impelled:

⁵⁷ Beaune, p.cxxxvi.

⁵⁸ Stein, pp.143-4; Beaune, p.cxxxviii; *Margareta von Oosterrijk en haar hof*, n.302, p.29.

⁵⁹ Published in Ruelens, pp.9-15.

... A faire vers, par forme de doctrine,
Tendans à fin que prenons et sievons
Nobles vertus, meurs & conditions.⁶⁰

What follows is a catalogue of virtues which Philippe le Beau should exhibit. He must firstly fear God and remain devoted to him, a familiar theme. He must speak moderately, dress well, act with courtesy, remain healthy, show diligence, sobriety, truthfulness and so on. La Marche discussed the seven cardinal virtues of faith, charity, magnanimity, prudence, temperance, justice and clemency, before appealing to his sovereign prince to live according to the ways of God and no other.

A second poem was entitled *Ces vers furent faiz à la requeste de Msgr. de Ravenstein et donnez par la Marche à son maistre l'archiduc en l'eage de XVIII ans* (1496).⁶¹ This is interesting in that it includes an address to the apparent patron, the seigneur de Ravenstein, Philippe de Cleves, who was the owner of copies of *Mémoires* and *Le Chevalier délibéré* among other of la Marche's works.⁶² The author stated that he understood Cleves' objective in requesting that the poem be written, which was:

... que l'enffant le puisse mieulx entendre,
Nostre archiduc, Phelippe nostre prince,
Pour le prouffit de toute sa province.⁶³

In this poem, four philosophers meet to discuss the means by which a certain dishonoured and defeated prince could regain his prestige. The first emphasises the need to show faith and exercise princely justice; the second emphasises the need to protect the common

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.9.

⁶¹ Published in *ibid.*, pp.16-19.

⁶² See above, ch.3.

⁶³ Reulens, pp.18-19.

good; the third warns against the dangers of heeding the words of bad advisors; while the fourth stresses the overriding factor, which is to acknowledge God. La Marche's emphasis on the fallen kingdom which must be reconstructed may be an allusion to the defeat of Charles the Bold in 1477, and the subsequent difficulties faced by his successors.⁶⁴ In this context, the poem acts as a warning to Philippe to avoid a similar fate.

Finally at Christmas 1498, la Marche wrote a poem called *Ces vers et petit traictié fu fait à la requeste de Madame Marguerite d'Austrice, princesse de Castille, et donnez par la Marche à msgr. l'Archiduc en l'eage de XX ans.*⁶⁵ This poem, like *Vers dorez*, is unusual among la Marche's works in that it was directly commissioned by a member of the ducal household, in this case Margaret of Austria. The poem contains an evocation of the Christmas story. Addressed to Philippe le Beau, and 'fait par la Marche à soixante-dix ans', it urged the prince to honour and revere the figures of Mary, Joseph and the Christ child, and to maintain his devotion to God. Exactly how enthusiastically the young Archduke would have received this and the other poems from the old knight, who could still remember the times when his great-grandfather exercised power, is open to question; it is however tempting to see him stifling a tiny yawn, or perhaps hiding a kindly smile, as the next set of verses was presented.

The sentiments expressed in these poems are conventional, and derived from la Marche's own beliefs. However, the inspiration behind the moral ideals is hinted at in the Christmas verses of 1498:

⁶⁴ For a full discussion of la Marche's interpretation of Charles' downfall, see below ch.5; and on the problems faced by the Duke's successors, chs. 6 and 7.

⁶⁵ Ruelens, pp.20-4.

... s'il y a bien, il vient du sens et art
Du bon prescheur frère Olivier Maillard.⁶⁶

About this man, Olivier Maillard, some information is available.⁶⁷ A graduate of the University of Paris, he became highly reputed as a theologian during the 1450s. From c.1460 he began to preach daily and travelled through the Low Countries, Spain, Germany, Hungary and England, but most of his time was spent in France, where he preached at the great cities of Poitiers, Tours, Nantes, Toulouse and Paris. On the accession of Charles VIII, Maillard entered royal service as the King's confessor. In 1485, he represented the French Crown over the issue of the suppression of the Pragmatic Sanction, and in doing so set himself on collision course with Pope Innocent VIII. As a *Cordelier de l'Observance* he became involved in the reform of the Franciscan Order from the late fifteenth century until his death in 1502. He wrote numerous literary works, including *Confession général du frère Olivier Maillard*, and *Histoire de la passion de Jesus-Christ*, as well as numerous sermons, such as the one preached at Bruges in 1500, and published at Antwerp two years later. His views were uncompromising. He attacked the luxury of the bourgeoisie and their lack of morality, especially merchants and usurers. The clergy were criticised for failing in their duties and succumbing to the sins of the world. Priests were attacked for their avarice and their practice of simony. The hierarchy of the Church had ushered in an era of decadence, and even the Pope himself, whose authorisation of indulgences and the sale of benefices had accelerated the decline, was not immune from Maillard's wrath.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.24.

⁶⁷ *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises*, p.1086-7; Molinier, VI, p.158; A Samouillan, *Olivier Maillard, sa prédication et son temps* (Toulouse 1891); A. Renaudet, *Préréforme et humanisme à Paris pendant les guerres d'Italie, 1494-1517* (Paris, 2nd edn. 1953); Maillard's works are published by A. de la Borderie, *Oeuvres françaises d'Olivier Maillard publiées d'après les manuscrits originaux* (Nantes 1877).

Exactly how great a debt la Marche owed to Maillard, or how far he showed his views on morality, is unclear. Nor is it clear how la Marche came to be aware of Maillard's teachings. He may have read Maillard's work, but it is more probable that he became aware of him as a popular preacher, and may even have witnessed him in action during one of his visits to the Low Countries. Either way, it is apparent la Marche shared some of Maillard's views on morality, and this is expressed in his address to Philippe le Beau. It is also certain that la Marche maintained considerable interest in certain forms of popular religion, such as those encapsulated by Maillard, who was a *Cordelier de l'Observance*. The short poem composed by la Marche in which he described the taking of the cord shows him to have had some empathy with this Order.⁶⁸ Furthermore, he maintained contacts with the brotherhood of St. Jacques-sur- Coudenberg in Brussels in his later years, and this kind of involvement with religious brotherhoods was mirrored among numerous late medieval aristocrats, notably Margaret of York.⁶⁹ The quiet, humble piety that was the hallmark of these fraternities appealed to la Marche's sense of devotion, and formed a central component of his moral writings.

With the birth of the children of Philippe le Beau and Jeanne de Castille around the turn of the century, and the emergence of a new generation of princes and princesses, la Marche was inspired to put pen to paper again. To Eleanor of Austria, Philippe and Jeanne's eldest daughter, he dedicated a poem entitled *Les cinq sens* or *Doctrine et loz pour madame Aliénor d'Austrie*,⁷⁰ in which his musings over the five human senses are coupled with familiar moral teachings. His final poem, and the most imaginative offering

⁶⁸ On this, see ch. 1.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Published by Stein, pp.219-28.

since *Le Chevalier délibéré* was written in c.1500, and addressed to the newly born prince, Charles. It is entitled *Les sept fées et leurs dons à l'empereur Charles faict par la Marche*.⁷¹ In it, the author describes waking up in a garden of flowers, birds and fountains, where he sees a magnificent pavilion under which a baby child lies:

Soubz ce pavillion grant & riche
Dort cest enffant en son repos,
Nez de la grant maison d'Austrice.⁷²

The child is of course Charles. He is approached by seven ladies dressed in white who arrive on rich golden carriages. They are the seven *fées* (fairies) of the title. Each of them gives the child the gift of a virtue and the seven virtues given correspond almost exactly to those of the 1493 *Vers dorez* addressed to Philippe le Beau.⁷³ The first gives him prudence, the second magnanimity, the third temperance, the fourth justice, the fifth faith, and the seventh charity. The sixth fairy gives hope instead of clemency. The awestruck nature of the author's reaction to this scene is not merely due to a sense of bewilderment at finding himself in this surreal, allegorical setting, but is determined by the fact that he is witnessing the birth of the male heir of the houses of Austria, Burgundy and Spain, the next prince in a long and distinguished line:

O noble Charles né de roix et d'empire,
Ensuiz les meurs de tes bons ancesseurs,
Qui furent telz qu'on n'en peult trop bien dire.
Leurs cronicques se font louer & lire
Pour exemple de toutes bonnes meurs
Les destinées de moy [la première fée] et de mes seurs
Qui te sont cy en pur don présentées
Soient par toy en temps executées.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Published by Ruelens, pp.39-60.

⁷² Ibid., p.43.

⁷³ See above, n.59.

⁷⁴ Ruelens, p.44. Elsewhere, the author notes the presence of the arms of Austria, Spain and Burgundy.

This poem, written to celebrate the birth of a new generation of princes was however la Marche's last, and his closing lines appear to suggest the imminent approach of his death, even as Charles' life is only beginning:

Delibéré, je le [the poem] laisseray
Ez mains de ceulx qui me pevent survivre
Pour presenter à ce prince mon livre.⁷⁵

To summarise, it is fair to say that nowhere in la Marche's poetry does he show any real sense of originality or literary innovation, although in some cases he has reworked the traditional ideals of the late medieval milieu very well. If there is any consistent theme to the poems, it lies in their emphasis on traditional morality. Their author comes across as a man of genuine piety, awed in the presence of a God so omnipotent that his ways can be understood by humankind only insofar as they are absolute and all-encompassing, and can in no way be questioned or challenged. Be humble and dutiful before God, la Marche thundered, or lose all earthly goods. This fatalistic emphasis was hardly unusual during the late Middle Ages, yet for la Marche its veracity may have been strengthened even further by his witnessing of the untimely demise of one of the greatest princes that western Christendom had ever seen.

Elsewhere, the poems contain a strong emphasis on the traditional ideals and values of the late medieval nobility. Whether he is directly addressing a member of ducal household or a general audience, la Marche endeavours to stress the values of piety, humility, temperance, magnanimity, liberality, justice and truth. Again, there is little of striking originality here, but la Marche does appear to have held these values as central to

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.60.

the building of a just world, and urged their adoption with some conviction, utterly convinced that within them the key to the virtuous life could be found. The closing passages of *Le Chevalier délibéré*, during which the author symbolically adopts virtues in preparation for his coming death, is probably intended as a representation of a model for others to emulate.

If his morality is traditional, then the influences that appear to have acted on him are even more so. His apparent reliance of the teachings of Olivier Maillard is reflective of a general trend among the northern aristocracy. He rarely displays any interest in harnessing the ideals of the Renaissance, and although he was certainly aware of the presence of classical works in the ducal library, he does not appear to have devoted much time to studying these. Instead, his influences are almost exclusively of northern medieval origin. He makes extensive use of allegory, particularly in *Le Débat de Cuidier et de Fortune*, *Le Chevalier délibéré* and *Les sept fées*, thus harnessing a well-established literary trend. In some cases, he directly initiated familiar literary formats. For example, he drew on the so-called *Ars moriendi*, common in northern Europe in the fifteenth century, and used it to great effect in *Le Chevalier délibéré*, while his *Complainte* for the death of Mary of Burgundy is based on a familiar medieval format. Nevertheless, he should not be dismissed as a mere anachronism. Although his moral outlook was in many ways traditional, this does not imply that his ideas lacked credibility with the generation that followed him. He does offer some pointers towards the ideals of the sixteenth century, not the least of which is his emphasis on the notion of Fortune, which was destined to permeate the work of a number of Italian scholars including Machiavelli.⁷⁶ Moreover, the traditional qualities of loyalty, powers, honour and courtesy, often seem as

⁷⁶ Most of Machiavelli's major works, including *Discourses* and *The Prince* include a discussion of the notion of *fortuna*. For a useful summary, see S. de Grazia, *Machiavelli in Hell* (London & Basingstoke 1992), pp. 202-15.

typically 'medieval', were to become central to the character of the ideal courtier portrayed by Castiglione in the first half of the sixteenth century.⁷⁷ In this sense, la Marche's values look to the future as much as the past.

Few of the poems are addressed to any particular reader. Those that are devoted to Philippe le Beau and his siblings are, for the most part, straightforward moral works, easily understood by a child. The longer poems have no dedications, but it is very clear that la Marche perceived his audience to be drawn from the world of the court, and as far as specific readers can be identified, all came from this background.

Finally, why did la Marche choose to write these poems? No single answer appears to exist to this question since the poems are of a diverse range of styles and were written at intermittent points over a long period of time. Certainly, it is probable that la Marche viewed poetry-writing as a pastime appropriate to a nobleman entering his autumn years, in the tradition of men like Charles d'Orléans or Anthoine de la Sale. More specifically, he probably experienced a range of motives. Some of the poems were directly inspired by the events of his own life, such as the melancholy *Débat de Cuidier et de Fortune*, written while the author was languishing in prison in the months that followed the death of Charles the Bold, and *Le Chevalier délibéré*, certainly his most intensely personal work, in which the adverse circumstances created by the recent death of Mary of Burgundy and the author's own conception of growing old combine to create a potent emotional brew of a less than cheerful character. Other poems were inspired by events taking place at court. These included the sorrowful *Complainte*, written for the death of Mary of Burgundy, and at the other end of the emotional scale *Les sept fées*, written to celebrate the joyful birth of a son and heir to Philippe le Beau and Jeanne de Castille.

⁷⁷ Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier*, trans G. Bull (Harmondsworth 1967).

Elsewhere, however, it is difficult to glean any precise motive or perceived purpose. *Le Parement et triumphe des dames*, for example, is a remarkably unoriginal work, aimed at no immediately obvious audience, while the shorter *Nouvelles propheties* is equally puzzling as to its purpose.

Therefore, although la Marche's poems are far from being original or innovative in their conception, their presence among the works that circulated during the period does suggest that they enjoyed some degree of popularity with contemporaries. Their existence shows that, to a certain extent, the traditional values and literary forms of the northern medieval aristocracy continued to hold sway. It is well known that the 'new' learning had certainly reached the Burgundian court by the time of Charles the Bold, and was to colour the writings of men like Jean Molinet, but it is very clear that la Marche was no child of the Renaissance, and that his ideals, values and influences were for the most part derived from the traditional, feudal world of the north.

PROSE

Besides poetry, la Marche also wrote a substantial number of prose treatises. Although they vary considerably in type, some generalisations can be made at the outset. Most, though not all, were specifically dedicated to an individual recipient, and most should be interpreted as essentially didactic works, designed for practical instruction and information in one way or another. The exact nature of this instruction is generally aimed at far more tangible ends than the general moralistic teachings of the later poems.

The principal exception to this last point is the earliest surviving prose treatise which can be attributed to with certainty la Marche, *Traictié d'un tournoy tenu à Gand par*

Claude de Vauldrey seigneur de l'Aigle l'an 1469 [o.s.].⁷⁸ This account of a *pas d'armes* held by Claude de Vauldrey is of a similar character to those sections of *Mémoires* which deal with the great tournaments of the *Arbre Charlemagne*, the *Fontaine aux Pleurs* and the *Belle Pèlerine*. It opens with the dedication, followed by the chapters of the *Chevalier à la Dame Sauvage*, the allegorical theme on which the *pas* was based. There is a detailed description of the setting before la Marche launches into a step-by-step account of the tournament, in which he deals with the jousts of each of the sixteen challengers who fought over the course of five days, before ending with some sentences on the closing banquet. The treatise is carefully structured, and the narrative is relayed in a sober and detailed manner. The inspiration for it may have come from the kind of heralds' accounts and official reports of the great tournaments witnessed under Philip the Good, to which la Marche acknowledges his debt as a source of information in the writing of *Mémoires*.⁷⁹ In fact, the treatise can be interpreted as la Marche's own attempt to create such a record.

It is addressed to 'monseigneur le conte de Bresse et de Baugy.'⁸⁰ This is Philippe, Comte de Bresse et de Bâgé, who ruled the territory of Bresse in the County of Burgundy from where la Marche's family had originated. The fifth son of Louis Duke of Savoy and Anne de Lusignan, he would succeed to the Duchy of Savoy in 1496, less than a year before his death. As the grandson of Mary of Burgundy, daughter of Philip the Bold, he was related to the Burgundian ducal household, and la Marche's stated objection in sending him the treatise was:

pour ce que je sçay que vous avés le coeur eslevé à oyr et sçavoir toutes

⁷⁸ This is published by B. Prost, *Traictiés du duel judiciaire*, pp.55-95.

⁷⁹ See above, ch.1.

⁸⁰ *Traictié* in Prost, p.55. On the identity of this person, see ch.1, n.1 and 2.

choses honnourables et dignes de loenges, et principalement par inclination de amour et d'affection vostre désir est de sçavoir du bon estat et de la disposition de ceste noble maison de Bourgongne, dont vous estes parent et que je sçay bien que c'est la maison du monde dont vous désirés avoir meilleurs nouvelles ...⁸¹

Only three manuscripts containing this treatise survive.⁸² Of these, one was produced by Jacques le Boucq, painter and genealogist, and herald of the Order of the Golden Fleece under Charles V; the other two are of uncertain provenance.

All the subsequent prose treatises to be considered here have essentially didactic aims, and all are addressed to members of the ducal household. Chronologically, they were all written in the last decade of the author's life. It was common for la Marche to begin by pointing out his inability to render the kind of service he had formerly done as a younger man, but by adding that he would render a new form of service to the dukes through his pen. His self-perception was that of a master who had lived through the reigns of several dukes and a duchess, and therefore had a wealth of experience to draw on for the benefit of the recipients of his work.

Two treatises were dedicated to Maximilian of Austria. The first is entitled *Advis au Roy des Rommains Maximilian premier donné l'an 1491 ... touchant la manière qu'on se doit comporter à l'occasion de rupture avec la France*.⁸³ In this, la Marche justified Maximilian's quarrel with the French:

causée en forfait contre vous, monseigneur votre fils, et madame vostre fille, par oppression et violence de celle qui debvoit estre vostre femme, reboutement de vostre noble fille sans cause de droit, détention, de si noble personne que de fille de Roy et deshéritement par force de vos seigneuries,

⁸¹ Ibid., pp.55-6.

⁸² Beaune, pp.cxxi-cxxii; Prost, pp.xi-xii.

⁸³ *Advis*, published by Stein, pp.232-5.

et des biens de monseigneur vostre fils ...⁸⁴

The main section of the treatise contains observations on the military tactics of the French, their ability as foot-soldiers and horsemen as well as their well-developed sense of cunning, and offers some suggestions as to the best way to deal with them. Interestingly, la Marche criticised the unreasonably heavy tax burden which the French Crown had imposed on its subjects, and pointed out that Maximilian, should he succeed in conquering any part of the kingdom, ought to lighten this.⁸⁵ The treatise is very short - we should perhaps hesitate before labelling it a treatise at all - and may have been an attempt by la Marche to turn Maximilian's attention back towards the problem of the French. Since his defeat of the rebels at Bruges in 1488, Maximilian had increasingly channelled his energies towards imperial affairs, and away from those of his son's inheritance. La Marche may have believed that his resolve ought to be re-awakened.

The other treatise dedicated to Maximilian was written in 1500 and entitled *Advis des grands officiers que doit avoir un roi*.⁸⁶ As we have seen, this was presented to Maximilian as an accompaniment to a copy of the treatise *État de la maison du duc Charles*, and contained some additional points that had not been included in the original treatise and which concerned the nature of a princely household. In it, la Marche informed Maximilian that as a King (of the Romans), he should have a *confesseur*, a *grand chambellan*, a *connestable*, a *chancelier*, an *admiral de la mer*, a *mareschal*, a *grand maistre d'ostel*, and a *premier valet de chambre*. The two treatises were, in all

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.232.

⁸⁵ This notion of conquest may be a reference to the Duchy of Burgundy, in French hands for the past fourteen years, and still a thorny political issue. For further detail on the political circumstances in which this treatise was written, see below, ch.6.

⁸⁶ Published in *Mémoires*, IV, pp.153-7. On it, see above, ch.2.

probability, designed to serve as a practical blueprint for Maximilian, and seem to have been commissioned by him; la Marche wrote:

je, Oliver, seigneur de la Marche ... aiant receu vos lettres qui me valent commandement par lesquelles me mandez que je vous envoie ce que je sçay et ay appris des officiers qui appartiennent à l'estat d'un Roy ...⁸⁷

Neither of them would appear to have been widely read; the first survives in no contemporary manuscripts, and the earliest version we have is an edition published at Brussels in 1635. The second survives in a single manuscript, which also includes the *État de la maison du duc Charles* - could this be the original?⁸⁸

If these two treatises were known to a very limited audience only, the final two to be considered here were certainly more widely distributed. Both were addressed to Philippe le Beau, and in each case, it is clear that la Marche was writing from the familiar perspective of the Archduke's mentor.

Le Livre des Gaiges de Bataille (c.1494)⁸⁹

This was certainly one of la Marche's better-known works, and as many as ten manuscripts have survived although only six of these date from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁹⁰ Few of them contain any indication as to their provenance, although we can identify two probable readers in Philippe le Beau, and Philippe de Cleves, seigneur de

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.153.

⁸⁸ On the 1491 treatise, see Beaune, p.cxxvii, and this is the version published by Stein, op. cit. On the 1500 treatise, see Beaune, p.cxx. The surviving manuscript is at Vienna, Imperial Library ms.3360.

⁸⁹ Published in Prost, pp.1-54.

⁹⁰ Prost, pp.vi-viii, though he only acknowledges seven versions. For the full list, see Stein, p.138; 'Nouveaux documents' p.15; Beaune, pp.cxxiv-vi. Oddly, no printed edition emerged until that of Jean Richer in Paris in 1586, Stein, ibid.

Ravenstein.⁹¹

La Marche's stated purpose was to educate Philippe le Beau on the procedures involved in the staging of a contest known as a *gaige de bataille* or wager of battle:

je suis délibéré de mectre par escript quelle chose c'est que d'ung gaige de bataille, comment le prince et le juge s'y doit conduire selon raison et bonne equité⁹²

The wager of battle, or judicial duel as it is often known, was a form of combat between two evenly matched opponents designed to resolve some bone of contention between them. They resembled in some ways the jousts and *pas d'armes* that were so popular at the Burgundian court, with one very important exception. They were real. The object was not to maximise the number of lances broken against the opponent, but to force his submission completely, even if this entailed his death.

La Marche outlined the distinction between the two forms of combat very succinctly:

... gaige de bataille est une outrecuydance, orgueil et presumption, volonté de meordre et désir de destruyre sa partie d'honneur et de vie ... et les armes de plaisance se font pour exercer les armes et pour continuer le mestier, pour habiller les corps et apprendre à valloir pour la deffense du bien publique ...⁹³

A further distinction between the two forms of combat was that, while *armes à plaisance* were commonplace events in the fifteenth century, *gaiges de bataille* were extremely rare.

⁹¹ The work is addressed to Philippe le Beau, and was probably presented to him, though no reference to it appears to exist in Barrois. On Philippe de Cleves, the inventory of 1527 refers to 'ung livre pour faire tournoi', possibly this treatise. See above, ch.3 n.88.

⁹² *Gaiges* in Prost, p.2.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp.23-4.

La Marche wrote that, in sixty or so years at the Burgundian court, he had witnessed over thirty examples of *armes à plaisance*, but had not seen a single *gaige de bataille* take place under the jurisdiction of the dukes. The only duel he ever witnessed took place at Valenciennes in 1455, and although Philip the Good had been present, he had had no power to preside over it.⁹⁴

The reason that the judicial duel was such a rare event - and all late medieval commentators agree on this point - was that it was an immoral and dangerous undertaking, condemned by all laws, canon and civil. Certainly, the law-codes of the French kings St. Louis and Philip the Fair, as well as the *Constitutions of Melfi* of the emperor Frederick II, and the *Decretals* of Pope Gregory IX, bear this out.⁹⁵ La Marche was quite outspoken on the point, condemning the hot-headed young men ('les jeunes hommes èsquilx cuidier, verdeur et sang bouillant domine ...') whose pride and arrogance leads them to place their honour, their lives, and their very souls in danger.⁹⁶ Despite this, however, instances of the judicial duel taking place did exist,⁹⁷ and most commentators agreed that while generally to be shunned, the judicial duel could take place under certain circumstances. One of la Marche's principal aims was to determine exactly what these circumstances were;⁹⁸ the duel could, he argued, take place when one man had accused another of a criminal offence, most often murder or treason, and when it had been determined that

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.2-3.

⁹⁵ On which see R. Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water: the Medieval Judicial Ordeal* (Oxford 1986), esp. ch.6.

⁹⁶ *Gaiges*, p.3.

⁹⁷ There are examples in the chronicles of Froissart, ed. Johnnes (London 1839), II, pp.203-6, in which the author describes a duel between two nobles at Paris in 1387; and in the chronicles of Monstrelet, I, pp.586-7, where a duel held in the presence of Philip the Good at Arras in 1431 is described. Both of these were known to la Marche, see *Gaiges*, pp.14-17 and pp.21-3 respectively.

⁹⁸ Expressed in *Gaiges*, pp.9 and 28-30. This is borrowed from the treatise addressed to Philip the Good by the seigneur de l'Isle Adam on the issue of the judicial duel, which la Marche reproduced in its entirety as part of his own treatise.

there was no other way of discovering the culpability of the accused. The duel was therefore the final resort of the judicial process. There should be certain knowledge that a crime had been committed, and that it was a crime normally punishable by death. The crucial point is the invocation of the judgement of God, who would make his will known through the outcome of the duel. La Marche gave numerous historical examples of this occurring.⁹⁹ Yet it was this very idea, the notion of God being tempted, that led so many to condemn the judicial duel as immoral and dangerous.

La Marche justified his acceptance of the judicial duel through an appeal in part to historical precedent, but crucially through an understanding of treatises of law, notably the works of Bartolus of Sassoferrato, and the *Somme Rural* of Jean Boutelier.¹⁰⁰ His most important source, however, was probably the *Arbre de Batailles* of Honoré Bouvet, a late fourteenth century manual on the laws and ethics of warfare, whose presence in the ducal library would have ensured la Marche's ability to gain access to it. It contains a section devoted to the *gaige de bataille*, and la Marche certainly borrowed many of his legal and moral principles from it, as well as numerous other points of procedure.¹⁰¹

In terms of its origins, the judicial duel was derived from the earlier medieval ordeal, common in western Europe from c.800 down to the thirteenth century as a means for testing the culpability of an accused person.¹⁰² In this the accused had to grip white-hot metal or place his or her arm in a cauldron of boiling water for a number of seconds

⁹⁹ *Gaiges*, pp.11-17.

¹⁰⁰ Cited in *ibid.*, pp.41-2 and 26-8 respectively.

¹⁰¹ Honoré Bouvet, *Tree of Battles*, ed. G. Coopland (Liverpool 1949), esp. pp.195-203. Often known as Honoré Bonet, most modern scholars now accept Bouvet to be correct spelling of this author's name; *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises*, pp.685-6.

¹⁰² On the ordeal, see Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water*, cit. *supra*.

and, depending on how far the resulting wound had healed after a given period of time, judgement would be pronounced. A clean wound showed the accused to be innocent while a wound that had gone septic was a sure sign of guilt. The connection between the judicial duel and the earlier ordeal was acknowledged by la Marche, who wrote:

du temps des payans et infidelles, et avant que la pratique de la bataille de deux personnes fut trouvée, l'on usoit de porter ung fer ardent en sa main nue, certain nombre de pas, pour avérer ou l'accusant ou l'accusé du proposé et de la demande qui estoit faicte. Et semblablement faisoient iceulx payens ung espreuve de mettre leur bras nud en une chaudière plaine d'eau bouillant ... et plusieurs hommes et femmes se sont purgez de ce qu'on leur mectoit sus, et ont faict icelles espreuves de bonne foy et de bon couraige et, comme innocens, Dieu estoit pour eulx, et n'empiroient point ne du feu ne de l'eau bouillant.¹⁰³

It is interesting that la Marche confined the use of the ordeal to 'pagan times', for it is clear that it spread into western Europe with Christianity, and that its procedures included strong priestly and liturgical involvement.¹⁰⁴ This error suggests that he was attempting to put some distance between the ordeal and the judicial duel of his own day. In order to be acceptable, two vital principles had to be applied to the staging of a judicial duel; the first was the laws and customs of chivalry, and the second was the ultimate and absolute authority of the prince.

On the first point, the lavish use of knightly etiquette figures strongly in all late medieval works devoted to the subject, such as the treatise of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, and the legal manual of Honoré Bouvet.¹⁰⁵ To la Marche, it was vital that the duel be governed by the same rules of etiquette that applied to the more common

¹⁰³ Gaiges, p.11.

¹⁰⁴ Bartlett, esp. chs. 2 and 3.

¹⁰⁵ Thomas of Woodstock, 'The Ordinance and Form of Fighting Within Lists' in T. Twiss ed., *Monumenta Juridica: Black Book of the Admiralty*, I (Rolls Series, LV, 1871), pp.300-29; Bartlett and Coopland, op. cit.

pas d'armes, and only those who could prove they were 'gentlemen' could participate.

Only in the case of treason could non-gentlemen participate, and even then they had to wear armour made of boiled leather and use blunted weapons to mark out their villain status.¹⁰⁶

When the principles of chivalry and nobility were not applied, then, in la Marche's view, the duel became an abhorrent and degrading spectacle, and this is how he sought to characterise the one duel he actually witnessed in his lifetime. It took place at Valenciennes in 1455 between two members of the bourgeoisie, one of whom had accused the other of murder. If we are to believe the reports of la Marche and the chronicler Mathieu d'Escouchy,¹⁰⁷ the event was absolutely horrific. Neither of the combatants showed any of the trappings of knighthood, but wore leather armour on their bodies, with their feet bare and their heads shaved. Each carried a blunt weapon and a wooden shield which bore the image of a saint in place of a coat-of-arms. Both were covered in grease to prevent them from holding on to each other, and they rubbed their hands with ashes to provide a grip on their weapons. Sugar was put in their mouths to prevent them from salivating. They started the fight, with the weaker combatant gaining an immediate advantage by throwing sand in his opponent's face - and it is worth noting here that for one combatant to be significantly weaker than the other went against all the ethics of the duel. The stronger man nevertheless gained the upper hand. He gouged out his opponent's eyes, and strangled him before throwing him out of the lists. This he did despite the repeated cries of submission of the other man, which also went against the

¹⁰⁶ Gaiges, pp.43-6.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp.2-3; *Mémoires*, II, pp.402-7; d'Escouchy, ed. Buchon, xxxvi, pp.240-9; Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, ed. Kervyn de Lettentove, III, pp.58 ff.

ethics of the duel. To d'Escouchy, this was a 'chose abominable' to record,¹⁰⁸ while la Marche, intent on demonstrating that the duel should be governed by the laws of chivalry, compared this sickening spectacle to another feat of arms that had taken place between two noblemen at Valenciennes some time afterwards in which both fought chivalrously, without any great harm being done to either. These men, la Marche concluded, had been sent there by God to restore some honour to Valenciennes, for the original duel had brought the city nothing but shame.¹⁰⁹

However, la Marche was also anxious to downgrade the earlier duel because it had taken place outwith the jurisdiction of the prince. It had gone ahead because of certain privileges possessed by the city, and was only endorsed by Philip the Good as a sign of goodwill.¹¹⁰ These privileges stipulated that any man who had committed murder could seek asylum in Valenciennes, and could only be punished if challenged to, and defeated in a judicial duel. This was the background to the 1455 duel, and Philip therefore had no power to authorise or judge it. In fact, d'Escouchy stated that the Duke's son Charles, then his Lieutenant-General in his northern territories, had been opposed to the duel, but had failed to prevent it taking place.¹¹¹ It is perhaps to the fact that the duel took place outwith, and even in spite of, ducal authority, based on an old civic privilege, that la Marche objected most. The 1450s were a period in which Philip the Good was attempting to clamp down on the rebellious cities of his northern territories, and only two years earlier he had succeeded in defeating Ghent after a long and draining war, sweeping away

¹⁰⁸ d'Escouchy, p.248.

¹⁰⁹ *Mémoires*, II, pp.406-7.

¹¹⁰ On the Valenciennes privilege, see *Mémoires*, II, p.402; and d'Escouchy, pp.245-6.

¹¹¹ d'Escouchy, pp.244-5.

many of the city's privileges. The staging of a duel based on a civic privilege might be interpreted as a sign of resistance to princely authority. Furthermore, by the time la Marche was writing, Philippe le Beau was in the position of rebuilding ducal authority over the cities after his recent defeat of Ghent in 1492, and there is here a kind of historical parallel with the 1450s. More generally, it has recently been suggested that the late Middle Ages witnessed a trend for princes to stamp out the practice of duelling among the aristocracy, and by extension to control these events as far as possible themselves.¹¹² Given this background, it should come as no surprise to discover that the principal theme of la Marche's treatise is a statement of the prince's absolute right to control every single aspect of the judicial duel, from authorising its taking place, to fixing a setting and date, and acting as judge on the day. The prince had to ensure the equal physical status of the combatants, determine their good characters, establish the validity of the accusation, check the noble credentials of the combatants and so on. The duel could be stopped at any point and for any reason if the prince wished it. These principles were emphasised by la Marche, and his treatise was designed to ensure that Philippe le Beau was aware of them, and of his rights and responsibilities. Control over the practice of the judicial duel may have only been a tiny part of the reconstructed authority of the duke - but it was nevertheless a start.

Epistre pour tenir et célébrer la noble feste de la Thoison d'or (1500-01)

La Marche's last treatise was addressed to Philippe le Beau around the time that he was presiding over his first chapter of the Order of the Golden Fleece as full sovereign, at

¹¹²

Bartlett, cit. supra.

Brussels in 1501.¹¹³ His declared motive for writing is familiar:

Il est notoire que suis en la LXXVIe année de ma vie, et n'a plus de corps
que le bon vouloir et ne vous puis suyvre ne servir comme je vouldroye.
Et pourroit estre par la faulte de vie ou pour non povoir labour de mon
corps, je ne pourroye estre ès lieux où vous tiendrez la solempnité de la
noble feste de la Thoison ... [mais] je me delite et prens le labour et traveil
de mon entendement de mettre par escript la manière de tenir et
solempniser ceste haulte solempnité tant à l'ordre qu'il appartient de tenir à
icelle feste soit à l'eglise, à la maison et aux seances des salles et des tables

¹¹⁴
...

La Marche then went on to discuss the origins and nature of the Order, and the importance attached to its existence; these issues will be considered in a subsequent chapter.¹¹⁵ The bulk of the treatise is, however, aimed at giving a set of practical instructions about the procedures which should be followed during the staging of a chapter of the Order, and the didactic theme is reminiscent of many other parts of la Marche's work. Since this was Philippe's first chapter as sovereign of the Order, it was appropriate that he should receive these instructions, and after a lifetime at the Burgundian court, la Marche was certainly familiar with the procedures employed at a Golden Fleece chapter. As *maître d'hôtel* from 1461, he would have had a role to play in the ceremonial side of these, and had been principal organiser of at least one.¹¹⁶

The contents of the treatise also throw some light on his principal role as *grand et premier maître d'hôtel* in Maximilian and Philippe's household. There is very little detail given on the business of the Order that would have been discussed when the knights 'se

¹¹³ Published in *Mémoires*, IV, pp.158-89, and Prost, pp.97-133. All references are to the Beaune version.

¹¹⁴ *Epistre* in *Mémoires*, IV, pp.158-9.

¹¹⁵ See below, ch.5.

¹¹⁶ On the 1478 chapter, with whose organisation la Marche was entrusted, see above ch.1, and below, ch.5. On his role as *maître d'hôtel*, see ch.1.

retireront en leur conclave' to 'besoignier à leurs affaires', and this is very much in keeping with the tone of *Mémoires*.¹¹⁷ All the attention is concentrated on the ceremonial side, the elements designed for public consumption, and this of course reflects those aspects with which la Marche was most familiar. He described the setting of the Church when the various services of the Order were held, and the hall in the ducal palace where the banqueting would take place. He recounted the manner in which the knights, clad in their crimson robes and golden collars, would make their way through the streets to the church, and back to the palace. On the banquets themselves, the organisation of which was the responsibility of the *maîtres d'hôtel*, there is of course enormous detail; much is said about appropriate seating arrangements, and the elaborate ceremonies that governed the service of food and wine to the assembled guests. La Marche ended the treatise by pointing out that it was the duty of the *maître d'hôtel*, the *contrôleur* and the *clerc* to add up all the expenses incurred, and record them on *escroes*. Once again, this would have been one of his own duties.

How far Philippe le Beau and his successors heeded la Marche's advice in their staging of subsequent chapter is unclear. Only three manuscripts containing the treatise have survived, and of these only one dates from the sixteenth century. Beaune has, however, suggested that this manuscript may have acted as a source document for a compilation composed by the secretary Laurent du Blioul on the orders of Charles V when the Order met at Tournai in 1531. This compilation was passed to 'vénérable messire Phillipe Nigri, docteur ès droiz, grand archidiacre de Théroutanne et doyen le Saint-Rombault à Malines, chancelier, à messire Jehan Micault, seigneur et maire de Lalouet, aussi chevalier, trésorier, et à Thomas Ysacq, dict Thoisson d'or, roy d'armes dudit

¹¹⁷ *Epistre* in *Mémoires*, IV, pp.186 and 181. On *Mémoires*, see ch.3.

ordre.¹¹⁸

To conclude, it appears that in contrast to the majority of his poems, la Marche's prose works were first and foremost didactic pieces, aimed at the education and instruction of a specific reader or set of readers. *État de la maison du duc Charles* was certainly intended as a practical blueprint to be used for the establishment of a princely household, and it is almost certain that it was used for this purpose by the Habsburgs a generation after it was written. Similarly, *Epistre pour tenir et célébrer la noble feste de la Thaison d'Or* is a dry, practical manual outlining the procedures to be employed at a chapter of the Order, while *Le Livre des Gaiges de Bataille* contains precise instructions about the procedure to be followed in the event a wager of battle taking place under the auspices of the court. By the time that most of these treatises were being written, it is probable that the Habsburg rulers of Burgundy and the Low Countries saw la Marche as a wise and experienced knight, and an invaluable advisor on matters of etiquette and ceremony. Such a perception would have pleased la Marche immensely since it gave him the opportunity to hand down to subsequent generations all the values he held so dear.

As in the case of his poetry, it is certainly fair to suggest that la Marche's prose treatises lack any real sense of originality or novelty. *Gaiges de Bataille* is basically a conglomeration of information and detail drawn from a range of sources that included Thomas of Woodstock, Honoré Bouvet, and the seigneur de l'Isle-Adam. *Epistre pour tenir et célébrer la noble feste de la Thaison d'Or* contains procedures and rituals that dated back to the Order's foundation in 1430. La Marche's advice to Maximilian of Austria about how to structure his household is based on a model which was by then thirty

¹¹⁸

Beaune, p.cxxiii. On the mss., see also Stein p.140 and 'Nouveaux documents', p.15; Prost, p.xii. The sixteenth century copy survives in B.N. ms. fr. 5046, which includes documents relating to the Golden Fleece.

years old. And yet it is in this apparent lack of novelty that we have the key to la Marche's intentions in writing these treatises. He saw himself as a champion of the traditional ways. It was his intention to keep traditional values and procedures alive, and to pass them on for the benefit of future generations. Moreover, his emphasis on the importance of tradition could be interpreted as a sign that he believed it to be under attack.

From the 1470s onwards, the political and cultural world of Burgundy and the Low Countries was to come under threat to an extent that had not been witnessed since before the advent of the Valois dukes. The defeat and death of Charles the Bold on the battlefield of Nancy in 1477 would trigger a crisis of unimagined proportions. Olivier de la Marche would live through this period of upheaval, during which time he would come to see his familiar world come close to collapse. Yet he would survive the demise of Charles and remained a loyal servant of the Duke's Habsburg successors, to whom he may have seen himself as a bridge to the Valois past. This is the theme to which the following chapters are devoted.

CHAPTER 5. *The End of Valois Burgundy? Olivier de la Marche and the Habsburg*

Succession¹

Charles the Bold died on Sunday 5 January 1477 on a bitterly cold winter's morning a short distance from the city of Nancy, the capital of the Duchy of Lorraine. He had lain siege to the city a few months earlier in the hope of exacting a terrible revenge for the two defeats he had received at the hands of the Swiss armies at Grandson and Morat, whilst attempting to achieve the realisation of his dream of uniting his northern and southern territories.² As a weak sun struggled to cast its light through the heavy snow clouds, the Duke's armies began to leave their camp, only to find themselves hemmed in between the river Meurthe to the east and the troops of Lorraine to the west. The sudden and unexpected attack on the flanks of the Burgundians had caught Charles' men napping. With both flanks closed off, and the wooded land to the south providing a difficult obstacle, Charles' men fled northwards towards the city of Nancy and thousands met grisly deaths there amid the chaos and confusion.³ The body of Charles himself was not

¹ Most of the books on Valois Burgundy end abruptly in 1477, but general reading can be found in C.A.J. Armstrong, 'The Burgundian Netherlands, 1477-1521'; W.P. Blockmans, 'Autocratie ou polyarchie? La lutte pour le pouvoir politique en Flandre 1482-92 d'après des documents inédits'; and his 'La Position du Comté de Flandres dans le Royaume à la fin du XVe siècle' in B. Chevalier and P. Contamine eds., *La France de la fin du XVe siècle* (Paris 1985), pp.73-89; C. Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy 1446-1503*; L. Hommel, *Marguerite d'York ou la Duchesse Jeanne*; and his *Marie de Bourgogne ou le Grand Héritage* (Brussels 1945); G. Dumont, *Marie de Bourgogne* (Paris 1982); W. Prevenier & W.P. Blockmans, *The Burgundian Netherlands* (Cambridge 1982); and *Cinq centième anniversaire de la Bataille de Nancy, 1477. Actes du colloque organisé par l'Institut de recherche originale en sciences sociales humaines et économiques de l'Université de Nancy* (Nancy 1977); for some useful documents, see U. Plancher, *Histoire de Bourgogne*, esp. vol.IV.

² The background to the battle of Nancy has been analysed many times, and does not need further comment here. The best secondary sources are Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, esp. pp.427-32, and p.427 n.1 for a detailed list of references. See also his 'Quelques observations sur la Bataille de Nancy' in *Cinq centième anniversaire*, pp.23-32; P.Frederix, *La Mort de Charles le Téméraire*, pp.200-12; J. Bartier, *Charles le Téméraire* (Brussels 1945), pp.235-70.

³ Once again, the actual course of the battle has been well documented, and does not need to be re-iterated here. The most recent analysis is that of Vaughan, 'Quelques observations'.

found until two days after the battle, lying on the frozen surface of the pond of St. John to the south-west of the city. The body had been stripped of clothes and jewels. The principal cause of death had been a blow from a mighty Swiss halberd which had cloven the Duke's head open from just above the ear to the teeth. Another blow had been delivered to his thighs, and the rest of the body was covered in stab wounds. Wolves or dogs had torn away much of the face, and the body was in fact only recognisable to some of Charles' closest advisors, including la Marche, because of the existence of certain distinguishing marks such as missing upper teeth, a scar on the throat received at Monthléry, another on the shoulder, the long finger nails, and a missing toenail.⁴ It was without question an ignoble end to a man who had for ten years ruled over one of the most powerful and prosperous principalities in western Europe. And his grisly death has been a continuing source of fascination to historians as it had indeed been to Charles' contemporaries.

The initial reaction to the news was one of stunned disbelief. La Marche recalled the sense of uncertainty that pervaded the Burgundian court as its members anxiously awaited news of the fate of the Duke:

... aucungs ont voulu dire que le duc n'estoit pas mort à celle journée; mais si fut ... et le duc demoura mort au champ de la bataille, et estendu comme le plus pauvre homme du monde ...⁵

News began to filter through to Margaret of York and Mary of Burgundy at Ghent on 8

⁴ 'S'ensuit la desconfiture de monseigneur de bourgogne faicte par monseigneur de Lorraine' in Philippe de Commynes, *Mémoires*, ed. Godefroy & Lenglet du Fresnoy, III, *preuves* cclxxxi, pp.493-6; Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, II, pp.429-30; Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, p.432; Frederix, pp.213-21. In addition, see the references given above in ch.1, n.183.

⁵ *Mémoires*, III, p.240.

January, although the hope that such rumours were erroneous was still very much in evidence.⁶ Margaret's letter to the city of Malines, dated 15 January, expressed the hope that 'by the grace of God he is alive and well, and out of the hands of his enemies.'⁷ And as late as 23 January, Mary wrote to the Council of Dijon referring to her father 'la mort duquel n'ay encore certainté',⁸ although by this stage such sentiments amounted to little more than diplomatic convention rather than a genuine expression of hope. This is particularly apparent in light of the fact that confirmation of the duke's death had reached the ears of Louis XI as early as 9 January. According to the account of Philippe de Commines, the King could hardly contain his excitement,⁹ and when the rumours were confirmed three days later, he wrote to the citizens of Poitiers referring to the 'bonnes et agréables nouvelles'.¹⁰

To Commines himself, Charles' untimely death was to be explained as the result of God's intervention. The Duke had, he argued, placed his subjects under enormous strain because of his excessively bellicose attitude towards his neighbours and his obsessive desire to resemble the victorious princes of antiquity about whom he had read. He went on to suggest that the effect of Charles' death upon his subjects was disastrous, not least of all because the house of Burgundy was deserted by all the nobles who had survived the battle.¹¹ His views were in one sense echoed by la Marche, who also chose

⁶ Hommel, *Margareite d'York ou la Duchesse Junon*, p.93; Weightman, *Margaret of York*, pp.104-5.

⁷ Weightman, *op cit.*; the translation is the author's.

⁸ See Mary's letter, published in Plancher, *Histoire de Bourgogne*, IV, *preuves* no.269.

⁹ Commines, II, p.159.

¹⁰ A. Bailly, *Louis XI* (Paris 1936), p.360.

¹¹ Commines, II, pp.154-7.

to explain Charles' death as the outcome of God's will.¹² Nevertheless, he disagreed with Commynes on two major points. First, he argued that Charles' aggressive military policy had in fact been directed towards the good of Christendom:

... la volonté et extreme zele qu'il avoit au service de la foy crestienne et à l'augmentacion de l'Eglise luy faisoit entreprendre et faire ce qu'il faisoit. Car son desir et affection estoit d'aller contre des infideles en sa personne, et desiroit de se faire sy grant et sy puissant qu'il peust estre conducteur et meneur des autres, car à nulluy ne vouloit estre subject, et, se Dieu lui eust donné vie et prosperité, il eut monstré par effect que mon recit en ceste partie est veritable, car je le sçay par luy mesmes, non pas par ouy dire à aultruy.¹³

Second, he denied that Charles' successors had been deserted by all their traditional supporters. As he explained to Philippe le Beau, many had chosen to remain loyal to Mary of Burgundy:

Toutesfois fut elle gardée et servie d'aucuns nobles personnaiges et autres, dont cy après serez adverty à la poursuyte de mes memoires, et dont vous devez rendre grace à Dieu et à recongnoistre leurs benefices et services.¹⁴

Few observers were however as well-disposed towards Charles as la Marche had been. Even Molinet, who had been the official chronicler of the court since 1475, criticised the Duke's poor military judgement, and suggested that it was his arrogant behaviour towards the Count of Campobasso that caused this valuable ally to abandon him in his hour of need.¹⁵ And from within Alsace and Lorraine, the reaction was even more hostile than that of Commynes. In 1506, René II of Lorraine erected a tomb in the Church of St.

¹² *Mémoires*, I, pp.143-4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.145.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.143.

¹⁵ On Molinet's reaction to Charles' death, see J. Devaux, 'La Fin du Téméraire, ou la mémoire d'un prince ternie par l'un des siens' in *Le Moyen Age*, 95 (1989), pp.105-28.

George in Nancy, ostensibly dedicated to the memory of Charles, but in reality a commemoration of René's achievement. Besides this, he erected a number of monuments, including a double-headed stone cross which stood at the spot where Charles had fallen.¹⁶ In literary terms his victory was celebrated in the *Liber Nanceydos* or *Nancéide* of Pierre de Blarru.¹⁷ In Alsace, the reaction to the Duke's demise was similarly triumphal. In 1477, a Strasbourg bourgeois named Conrad Pfettisheim wrote an anti-Burgundian poem entitled *Chronique Rimée des Guerres de Bourgogne*, in which he contrasted the aggressive and tyrannical character of Charles with the devout resilience of René and his confederates.¹⁸ This theme was echoed in the anonymous *Légende Bourguignonne*, produced in Strasbourg the same year.¹⁹ In this, the author mocked Charles' much-flaunted crusading ideals, and accused him of neglecting his Christian duty to use his military might against the Infidel, and preferring instead to bring about the spilling of Christian blood.

¹⁶ The inscription, originally in Latin, read: 'Sous ce tombeau est enfermé Charles, gloire de la nation bourguignonne et qui autrefois fut la terreur de l'Europe. Le peuple de Gand révolté fut dompté par lui, perdit les lois paternelles et subit perpétuellement le joug. La terre de Liege éprouva aussi ses vengeances sanguinaires, quand la ville fut ravagée par le fer et par la flamme. A Monthéry sa redoutable épée avait effrayé et mis en fuite les cohortes françaises avec le roi lui-même. Il chassa les ennemis d'Édouard d'Angleterre, ramena ce prince dans son royaume et restitua le trône de son enfance. Méprisant les armes des ducs, des rois et de l'Empereur, il n'était joyeux qu'au milieu des flots de sang. Mais enfin lorsque, confiant dans le succès ordinaire de ses armes, il eut en sa témérité attaqué le duc de Lorraine, il exhala au milieu des combats son âme sanguinaire et sur une terre ennemie il laissa la Toison d'Or. Ainsi René victorieux a remporté sur un si grand prince la palme du triomphe, au siècle des siècles. O toi qui ambitionnas tant de terres, Charles, que Dieu te donne le ciel et les trésors de la paix que tu as autrefois dédaignés. Et maintenant, en voyant du haut de l'éther des murs de Nancy, dis-toi: Moi si fier je reçois la sépulture ici d'un ennemi clément. Apprenez combien peu il faut se fier aux choses de la terre. Celui qui a été tant de fois vainqueur est enfin vaincu'; Frederix, pp.220-1; see also G. Tourney-Thoen, 'A propos de quelques épitaphes latines pour la mort de Charles le Téméraire' in *Lias*, 5 (1978), pp.1-11, esp. p.4.

¹⁷ Pierre de Blarru, *Le Nancéide ou la guerre de Nancy. Poème latin de Pierre de Blarru avec la traduction française*, ed. and trans. F. Schütz, 2 vols. (Nancy 1840); on it, see P. Marot, 'Le Duc de Lorraine, René II et la bataille de Nancy dans l'historiographie et la tradition Lorraine' in *Cinq centième anniversaire*, pp.83-126, esp. pp.98-100.

¹⁸ Published in E. Picot & H. Stein, eds., *Recueil des pièces historiques imprimées sous le règne de Louis XI*, pp.91-118.

¹⁹ Published in *ibid.*, pp.65-90.

Charles' death therefore had a profound effect on the imagination of writers on all sides, and although most would ultimately attribute it to the will of God, some disagreement existed as to why God should have chosen to act as he did, as well as to the effect that the Duke's death would have on his successors and their inheritance. Indeed, the last point is an issue which occupies the minds of modern historians.

The Habsburg Succession

Conventional historical wisdom states that with the defeat of Charles the Bold, the Burgundian 'state', which had been over a century in the making, collapsed, marking the end of a historical era. At the end of his magnificent four-volume work on the Valois dukes, Professor Vaughan stated:

With him [Charles] fell the Burgundian state which his great-grandfather Philip the Bold had founded ... for what survived after 1477 was in many respects a different political entity, bereft as it was of the Duchy of Burgundy. The death of Charles the Bold was indeed a decisive event.²⁰

Years earlier, the historian Joseph Calmette had viewed Charles' death in even more dramatic terms:

It is abundantly clear that it was the ambition of the Valois of Burgundy to restore the Kingdom of Lotharingia or to create a new state of Burgundy ... it is clear too that at the height of the last four ducal reigns this ambition was very nearly achieved ... the Burgundian State, which had appeared like a blinding flash across the horizon of history, suddenly and for ever vanished on that fatal day of the Nancy disaster.²¹

Following this collapse, historians have tended to assume that the old Burgundian

²⁰ Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, p.432.

²¹ Calmette, *Golden Age of Burgundy*, p.432.

territoires were simply divided between the Empire and the kingdom of France. Such is the view of Auguste Bailly, in whose judgement the acquisition by Louis XI of all Charles' territories, with the exception of those abandoned to the Empire, coincided with the formation of the early modern French state and the beginnings of absolutism.²²

There are, however, some problems with these views. In the first place, Calmette's use of the term 'state' to describe Valois Burgundy is misleading. Despite the use of some political rhetoric concerning the creation of a new, independent Burgundy on Charles' part,²³ it is clear that he had in fact been far from achieving this reality. As Professor Vaughan has himself demonstrated, Charles' Burgundy fell a very long way short of fulfilling the criteria required for a modern 'state'.²⁴ The component territories had no common name, and were separated between north and south by a 200-mile stretch of land. There was no common language or any sense of shared national identity. The highly piecemeal nature by which the territories had been assimilated by the Burgundians meant that the systems of government that existed in each were very diverse, and often subject to local customs, traditions and privileges.²⁵ The main administrative advances concerned the development of some judicial and financial centralisation and the construction of a magnificent court,²⁶ although no capital city to house this ever really existed. Overall, it would be misleading to exaggerate the contrast in terms of political and administrative cohesion that existed between the entity which survived 1477 and the

²² Bailly, *Louis XI*, pp.370-5.

²³ Basin, *Louis XI*, II, pp.179-81; he accuses Charles of rejecting Frederick III's offer of a crown for Brabant only, preferring to restore the ancient Kingdom of Burgundy.

²⁴ R. Vaughan, 'Chasing a Sphinx: Charles the Bold's Burgundy' in *History Today*, 37 (May 1987), pp.24-9.

²⁵ Vaughan, *Valois Burgundy* (London 1974), ch.2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, chs.5-6; Prevenier & Blockmans, ch.5.

one that had preceded it.

More importantly, the idea that a complex political structure that had taken over a century to build could simply collapse and vanish for ever after a single battle is puzzling to say the least. The main loss that was incurred on 5 January 1477 was the rule of an impetuous and egotistical duke who had seriously underestimated his enemies' strength.²⁷ With him fell also some of his more ambitious schemes concerning the revival of the old 'middle kingdom' of Lotharingia, for none of his successors appeared interested in these projects. Maximilian of Austria's regency coincided with a period of crisis in which ducal authority was forced onto the defensive by the twin menace of France and the Flemish cities. His lack of enthusiasm for reviving Charles' schemes was demonstrated by his apparent loss of interest in the inheritance following his accession as King of the Romans in 1486, and his subsequent delegation of duties to Albert, Duke of Saxony.²⁸ As for Philippe le Beau, he was not a warlike figure, and his reign in fact coincided with the most peaceful period in Franco-Burgundian relations for three decades. He only undertook one major military campaign in his entire life, the invasion of Guelders in 1504,²⁹ and failed to show any interest in reviving his grandfather's schemes.

Beyond the elaborate ambitions in which Charles had allowed himself to indulge, it is very difficult to see what actually collapsed in 1477. In Olivier de la Marche, we have a man whose career in Burgundian service survived the upheavals of 1477 and who remained loyal to Charles' successors for the rest of his life. How could this be the case if there was no Burgundy left to serve? An analysis of the period that followed 1477 shows

²⁷ R. Vaughan, 'Quelques observations', pp.23-32.

²⁸ Armstrong, p.237; on Maximilian's election as King of the Romans, see *Mémoires*, I, pp.175-6; and R. Benecke, *Maximilian I, 1459-1519, an Analytical Biography* (London 1982), p.138.

²⁹ Molinet, II, pp.535-7.

that in fact the impact of Charles' death was far less cataclysmic than historians have allowed, and that the period is actually characterised in many respects by a strong sense of continuity with the Valois past.

Territorially, the heartland of the Valois dukes' power remained intact after 1477, and Bailly has certainly exaggerated the extent of the gains made by the Crown. The most important loss was of course the Duchy of Burgundy, which capitulated to French troops in the summer of 1477.³⁰ It was never recovered by Charles' successors, although, as a subsequent chapter will demonstrate, its destiny was the subject of inflamed political controversy right down to the sealing of the Treaty of Senlis in 1493.³¹ Furthermore, it was the only permanent acquisition made by the Crown. In 1482, Louis XI had admittedly gained the Counties of Burgundy and Artois according to the terms of the Treaty of Arras, but these territories were subsequently returned to Philippe le Beau by the Treaty of Senlis.³² Elsewhere, Louis XI failed to penetrate the real heartland of the Duke's northern territories. The Duchies of Brabant, Luxembourg, Flanders, Hainaut, Holland and Zeeland succumbed neither to the Crown nor to the Empire, since Maximilian's authority over them had never amounted to anything more than that of Regent in his son's name. Louis XI's military campaigning on the frontiers of the French territories had reached stalemate within two years of Charles' death, while his matrimonial policy, and in particular his efforts to achieve a marriage between the Dauphin and Mary of Burgundy, proved equally fruitless. The Treaty of Senlis confirmed Philippe le Beau

³⁰ On the capitulation of the duchy, see Plancher, IV, *preuves*, nos.268-75.

³¹ See below, ch.6.

³² For the Treaties of Arras (1482) and Senlis (1493), see Commynes, ed. Godefroy & Lenglet du Fresnoy, *preuves* no. ccclxix, pp.95-125, pp.95-125, and 'partie seconde', *preuves*, no. vi, pp.23-37 respectively; see also *Mémoires*, III, pp.258-60; Hommel, *Marguerite d'York*, pp.179-211.

as lord of all the old Burgundian territories, with the exception of the Duchy of Burgundy, and he recognised the suzerainty of the Crown in respect of his French fiefs.³³ In 1498 his ambassadors, headed by the Count of Nassau, renewed homage to Louis XII in respect of the French fiefs in the Treaty of Paris.³⁴ With the exception of the Duchy of Burgundy, therefore, ducal power was upheld in all the old Burgundian principalities in a manner very much akin to that which had existed under Philip the Good, and the view expressed by Bailly, that Louis XI made lasting and significant inroads into these territories, is greatly exaggerated. Indeed, their cohesion after 1477 could be seen to be even greater than at any point under the Valois dukes with the emergence of a capital city in Malines, the home city of Margaret of York since the 1470s, and fast becoming the permanent physical centre of ducal authority.³⁵

On another level, it appears that the events of 1477 had no particular implications for the economy of Burgundy and the Low Countries. Two recent papers by prominent historians have indeed suggested that there was no particular rupture with the past. According to Henri Dubois,³⁶ the rising cereal prices that have often been seen as symptomatic of such a rupture should in fact be seen in a longer-term context. He argues that from 1463-4, cereal prices began to rise and continued to do so consistently until the end of the century, and so the rises that occurred in 1477-8 were no more than part of this general trend. Charles' death had little effect on agricultural production or commerce. The main commercial shift of the period was the decline of Bruges and the subsequent

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Plancher, IV, *preuves*, nos. 306 & 7.

³⁵ Hommel, *Marguerite d'York*, pp.155-72 on the role of Malines.

³⁶ H. Dubois, '1477: Une rupture dans la vie économique des pays bourguignons?' in *Cinq centième anniversaire*, pp.147-74.

rise of Antwerp as the major maritime centre of the Low Countries, but Dubois argues that this shift was very gradual and had roots that stretched back into the middle of the century. Professor Nicholas has shown that with the silting up of the River Zwin, and the expensive efforts to dredge the canals that linked the waterways of Bruges, the decline of the city had become very much apparent as early as c.1460. By 1470, Antwerp had already lured large numbers of merchants away from Bruges, and most of those left behind finally departed by 1488, spurred on by Maximilian's financial inducements to do so. If there was an economic decline in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, therefore, its causes had nothing to do with Charles' demise.³⁷

Similarly, Peter Spufford has addressed the issue of monetary policy and has concluded that the events of 1477 failed to produce any kind of rupture at all and should in no way be seen as a turning point.³⁸ In fact the period that followed 1477 showed a remarkable sense of continuity with the Valois past in this respect. Spufford has shown that in terms of the coinage being struck there was, at least until 1485, continuity. The *double patards* and *patards simples* of the Low Countries continued to be struck after 1477, as did the French *parpailloles* and the *florin St. André*. In terms of monetary policy, Maximilian continued the Burgundian dukes' stable policy of *monnaie ferme et durable*, which stated that currency could not be minted by the prince for his immediate profit. *Monnaie ferme et durable* was upheld until 1485 when, faced by the crippling costs of war, Maximilian devalued the coinage of the Low Countries. In 1489 however, the Habsburgs once again returned to the Burgundian policy of *monnaie ferme et durable*.

³⁷ D. Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders* (London 1992), pp.390-1.

³⁸ P. Spufford, 'Dans l'espace bourguignon; 1477, un tournant monétaire?' in *Cinq centième anniversaire*, pp.187-204; and his *Monetary Problems and Policies in the Burgundian Netherlands*, (Leiden 1970), pp.140-2.

The rising volume of currency in circulation was not therefore affected by the actions of the dukes and was part of a wider, European trend.

Furthermore, according to A.G. Jongkees, the events of 1477 had no particular bearing on the religious life of Charles' territories.³⁹ The Burgundian tradition of patronising religious houses was upheld with Margaret of York being a central figure. Even the crusading ideal, clearly associated with the Burgundy of Philip the Good, was not entirely neglected by the Habsburgs, and Maximilian in particular showed considerable zeal for it. The idea of holy war in the east may certainly have been becoming increasingly unrealistic at the end of the fifteenth century, but Maximilian used the rhetoric of crusade as propaganda, very much as Charles had done before him.⁴⁰

There are several other ways of measuring the extent of continuity which existed before and after 1477. One is with regard to the institutions of state created by the Valois dukes. As a previous chapter has indicated, the ducal household retained the same basic structure in 1501 as it had under Charles the Bold, and was in all probability deliberately based on it. Besides this, the continued presence of a magnificent court, so much a hallmark of the Valois dukes, persisted after 1477. An ordinance dated 9 March 1496 reveals the existence of a vibrant court life at Malines, and this showed the same concern for the finer points of etiquette and ceremony as had been seen under the Valois dukes.⁴¹ Much of this ordinance is given over to questions of expenses and wages and there is

³⁹ A.G. Jongkees, 'État et Église dans les Pays-Bas bourguignons avant et après 1477' in *Cinq centième anniversaire*, pp.237-47.

⁴⁰ On the crusade, see R.J. Walsh, 'Charles the Bold and the Crusade: Politics and Propaganda' in *Journal of Medieval History*, 3 (1977), pp.53-84.

⁴¹ Hommel, *Marguerite d'York*, pp.222-3.

evidence to suggest that large numbers of employees, many of them local, worked for the Court. Philippe le Beau exhibited the same enthusiasm for *fêtes* as his grandfather and namesake had done, and banquets were common occurrences at the Malines court. Olivier de la Marche's purchase of a house in the city, in 1488 took place only three years after Philippe's arrival in the city, and it is probable that his motive was to remain as close to the court as possible.⁴²

The court also retained its role as a centre of cultural patronage. The milieu in which la Marche's works were circulated at the end of the fifteenth century was, as we have seen, a courtly one, and with the exception of his contacts in the civic life of Brussels, he never appears to have looked any further afield for patrons and readers.⁴³ A key figure in the patronage and collection of manuscripts was once again Margaret of York.⁴⁴ About twenty-five manuscripts have been positively identified as being in her possession, most of which were on religious subjects, though there was a handful of secular texts. Many of these were illustrated by great artists such as Dreux Jean, Simon Marmion, Guillaume Vrelant and the so-called Master of Mary of Burgundy, whose career began under Margaret's patronage.⁴⁵ Some of these had survived as employees of the court since the reign of Philip the Good.⁴⁶ Among the surviving manuscripts is an illuminated *Chronique des Comtes de Flandres* made at Ghent in 1477. It bears the arms of Margaret, though it has been suggested that it was commissioned by Mary of Burgundy

⁴² See above, ch.1.

⁴³ On la Marche's literary milieu, see above, chs. 3 & 4; on his role in Brussels, see ch.2.

⁴⁴ Weightman, pp.203-12.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.207; on the Master of Mary of Burgundy, see O. Pächt, *The Master of Mary of Burgundy* (London 1948).

⁴⁶ *La miniature flamande. Le mécénat de Philippe le Bon* (Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels 1959).

and given to Margaret as a gift.⁴⁷ Perhaps the best-known beneficiary of Margaret's patronage was William Caxton, whose production of the first printed book in English at Bruges was the direct outcome of her involvement.⁴⁸

Margaret was not alone in her enthusiasm for literary patronage, and some of the most magnificent manuscripts that have survived from the late fifteenth century owe their existence to courtiers. One of the most beautiful copies of *Romance of the Rose* to have survived was commissioned by Englebert, Count of Nassau, a knight of the Golden Fleece who acted as Philippe's Lieutenant-General in the Low Countries while the Archduke was in Spain in 1501.⁴⁹ A dedicated bibliophile, Englebert owned numerous manuscripts including a magnificent Book of Hours now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.⁵⁰

The Habsburg court therefore upheld the Burgundian tradition of literary patronage, and Maximilian's experiments with writing in his autobiographical works *Thenedont* and *Weisskonig* reflect this influence.⁵¹ Other kinds of artists were also employed by the court in this period, much as they had been under the Valois dukes. The Bruges-based painter Gerard David was hired to perform the rather mundane task of painting the shutters of the room in which Maximilian was held during his period of imprisonment in the city in 1488. This artist's famous and rather gruesome Cambyses panels were intended as a statement of repentance for the wrongful actions of certain sections of the city's population in seizing their sovereign lord.⁵²

⁴⁷ A. Arnoul & J.M. Massing, *Splendours of Flanders* (Cambridge 1993), no. 48, pp.148-9.

⁴⁸ Weightman, pp.209-12; the book was an English translation of Raoul Lefèvre's history of Troy.

⁴⁹ B.L. ms. Harley 4425; T. Kren, *Renaissance Painting in Manuscripts: Treasures from the British Library* (New York 1983), pp.49-58.

⁵⁰ Kren, p.56.

⁵¹ Benecke, pp.17-22; Weightman, p.208.

⁵² Weightman, pp.162-3.

Just as the court survived the upheavals of 1477, so too did the mechanisms of government and the institutions of state that had been the mainstay of Valois power.⁵³ The main institutional casualty of 1477 was the *Parlement* of Malines, set up by Charles the Bold in 1473 as a supreme court of appeal for all his territories.⁵⁴ The existence of this institution, whose presence removed the influence of the Paris *Parlement* entirely, has often been interpreted as representing Charles' intentions to sever his ties with France completely, though it must be remembered that its presence was short-lived. Its existence was justified by la Marche, who criticised those who had sought to undermine it:

A ce je respons que, par appointment fait [et] par paix jurée entre le Roy de France et luy [Charles], fut accordé par le Roy que, ou cas qu'il rompist, allast ou contrevenist à la paix de Peronne, il quittoit le duc de toute fidélité et hommaige qui luy povoient appartenir pour luy et pour ses hoirs Roys de France au prouffit du duc et ses hoirs; et de ce je parleray plus à plain. Laquele paix fut rompue et contrevenue par icelluy Roy de France, comme maintenoit le duc ...⁵⁵

La Marche lamented the destruction of this institution in 1477, and he was in no doubt about where to place the blame:

Mais, luy trespasé, les pays se meutinerent contre madame vostre mere, leur princesse, et volurent ravoit vieux privileges et nouveaux à leur plaisir; par quoy ledit parlement fut rompu et aboly.⁵⁶

Yet the fall of this institution did not lead to judicial impotence on the part of Charles' successors. Important judicial functions were carried out by the *Grand Conseil* set up by the *Grand Privilège* of 1477.⁵⁷ This body, whose members included the famous Flemish

⁵³ Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, ch.6 on the mechanisms of Valois government.

⁵⁴ A. Matthieu, 'Histoire du grand conseil de Malines' in *Annales de l'Academie d'Archéologie de Belgique* (1874); Bartier, *Charles le Téméraire*, pp.177-82.

⁵⁵ Mémoires, I, p.132.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.133.

⁵⁷ On the *Grand Conséil*, see M.A. Arnoul, 'Les lendemains de Nancy dans les pays de par deçà, jan-avr 1477' in W. Blockmans ed., *Het algemene en de gewistelijke privilegien van Maria van Bourgogne voor de Nederlanden*,

lawyer Philippe Wielant, continued to exercise judicial supremacy over the entire network of territories. In fact, its duties were not unlike those entrusted to the *Grand Conseil* of Philip the Good, which had heard appeals from all parts of the Duke's territories down to the transfer of power to the Malines *Parlement* in 1473. Its daily routine and structure had been fixed by Charles in an ordinance of 1469, and this would provide the basis of its functioning after 1477.⁵⁸

Several other important offices of state also survived. The central fiscal institution created by Charles at Malines was certainly a further casualty,⁵⁹ but central control was preserved and passed back to the three *chambres des comptes* or *Rekenkamers* at Lille, Brussels and The Hague.⁶⁰ These institutions had roots stretching far back into the Valois period. The Lille *chambre* had been created by Philip the Bold based on the existing model at Dijon, and whose functions were derived from the old Flemish *chambre* initially at Ghent and from 1379 at Lille.⁶¹ The Brussels office had existed since 1404 when it had been set up by Anthony of Burgundy, Duke of Brabant. It was based on its Lille counterpart, though differed in that it had its own chancery and chancellor. The *chambre* at The Hague had gained autonomy in 1446.⁶² The principal machinery of fiscal administration after 1477 was therefore based on traditional institutions. Another important office which survived Charles' death was that of Chancellor of Burgundy, once

1477; *Le privilège général et les privilèges régionaux de Marie de Bourgogne pour les Pays-Bas 1477* (Courtrai & Heule 1981), pp.1-83, esp. p.51; Armstrong, p.231.

⁵⁸ Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, pp.193-6.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp.185-8.

⁶⁰ Armstrong, p.230.

⁶¹ Vaughan, *Philip the Bold*, pp.127-32.

⁶² Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, p.194.

held by the mighty Nicolas Rolin. Though vacant for a short time after Charles' death, the post was nevertheless filled in March 1480 with the appointment of Jean Carondelet, a native of the County of Burgundy. His appointment could be seen as a gesture of defiance to the French, given their failure to penetrate this territory.⁶³

Overall, the survival of the institutions of government and the extent to which they were allowed to do so was determined by the terms of the *Grand Privilège* concluded between Mary of Burgundy and the *États* of Flanders on 11 February 1477, and by the corresponding charters agreed with Holland, Zeeland, Namur, Brabant and Luxembourg.⁶⁴ The very fact that each territory received its own individual charter is testimony to the fragmented nature of the Burgundian 'state' even at its apparent height. As to how far these agreements hindered the exercise of central authority, the chronicles are silent. La Marche and Molinet were vague, and kept their analysis to the suppression of the Malines *Parlement*, while Commynes spoke loosely of the Flemings' attempt to restore 'ancient liberties'.⁶⁵ More recently, historians have debated the degree of significance that should be attached to these charters.⁶⁶ Many in the eighteenth century viewed them as the expression of the achievement of liberty, and thus comparable to Magna Carta. To the nationalistically-minded Belgian historians of the nineteenth century, they were expressions of their own ideals. Gachard viewed them as a victory over the despotism of the Burgundian dukes, while to Wouters they represented the emergence of an embryonic federal state based on a pact between the executive and the people. To Pirenne, however,

⁶³ Armstrong, p.230.

⁶⁴ Blockmans ed., *Het algemene*, esp. the articles by Arnoul, Blockmans, Jongkees, Douxchamps, Lefèvre, van Uytven and Petit.

⁶⁵ *Mémoires*, I, pp.133 & 154-5; Commynes, II, p.191.

⁶⁶ Arnoul in Blockmans ed., *Het algemene*, pp.36-47 for the following summary.

the process did much to encourage a sense of provincialism and to destroy the sense of national cohesion he assumed the Valois dukes to have created. By this century, Dumont and Hommel were taking a more positive view, claiming that the *Grand Privilège* had laid the basis for an all-encompassing federal state. Van Ussel believed that it had united the disparate territories in a newly-structured government, while to Bonenfant it had created a federalistic structure in an increasingly nationally-conscious state.

There are some problems with the interpretations of these modern historians, not the least of all being the fact that the *Grand Privilège* applied to the County of Flanders only and that all the other territories fixed their own settlements. This hardly backs up the idea of national cohesion. Furthermore, the survival of so many of the Valois institutions provides a further reminder that the contrast between the pre-1477 and post-1477 systems of government should not be overstated.⁶⁷ Moreover, many of the concessions granted by Mary were subsequently revoked in a piecemeal fashion after Maximilian's arrival in the Low Countries in August 1477. On 16 September, he wrote to the *chambre des comptes* at Lille instructing them not to ratify any of the documents signed by Mary which might encourage the diminution of central authority, arguing that his wife had been forced to sign under unreasonable duress.⁶⁸ The *Grand Conseil's* passing of 107 judgements in 1479, many of which concerned issues to be dealt with by local courts, went against the conditions of the *Grand Privilège*, and is indicative of the persistence of central authority.⁶⁹ The process of clawing back central authority culminated in 1494 with the

⁶⁷ Blockmans, 'Break of continuitet: De vlaamse privilegien van 1477 in het licht von het staatsworming process' in *Het algemene*, pp.97-125; and Arnoul, pp.48-9.

⁶⁸ A.D.N. B17726.

⁶⁹ Armstrong, cit supra.

formal abolition of all Mary's privileges.⁷⁰

The constitutional impact of 1477 was therefore not as great as some have assumed. Indeed, the charters should be seen not so much as a progressive attempt to redefine the political milieu as an opportunistic attempt to exploit the crisis that Charles' death had created so that certain practical objectives could be achieved.⁷¹ Of the 47 articles making up the *Grand Privilège*, the first quarter dealt almost exclusively with the corruption of certain ducal officers regarding the removal of certain urban magistrates from office. Some judicial and financial decentralisation was required with a call for local courts to be maintained and native judges to be appointed to them. Ducal authority would be required to acknowledge and use the language of the territory with which it was dealing, and for Flanders this implied the use of Flemish.⁷² Furthermore, the demands called for the removal of all restrictions on trade and for the consent of the *États* to be sought before *tonlieux* and other taxes could be imposed. Finally, ecclesiastical liberties had to be acknowledged. These general themes were common to most of the charters, and hardly amounted to revolutionary measures.

Finally, Charles' successors continued to be major players on the international stage, and did not become puppets of France or the Empire. The traditional Burgundian position of the pivot between the opposing nations of France and England was not entirely lost. Edward IV clearly perceived the benefits to be gained from having an ally so close to the French frontier, and by 1480 he had adopted a position which was openly

⁷⁰ Blockmans, 'Break of continuitet?', p.125.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp.124-5; and his 'La signification constitutionnelle des privilèges de Marie de Bourgogne' in *Het algemene*, pp.495-516.

⁷² Armstrong, 'The Language Question in the Low Countries' in J. Hale, R. Highfield & B. Smalley eds., *Europe in the Later Middle Ages* (London 1965), pp.386-409.

favourable to Maximilian.⁷³ The survival of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance was due principally to Margaret of York, who undertook several journeys to England after her husband's death to reinforce the support of her brother the King for the house of Burgundy.⁷⁴ In the summer of 1480, she persuaded Edward to reject the 15,000 crowns he was receiving annually from the French, providing that Maximilian could match this pension together with an initial payment of 25,000 crowns. Edward accepted, and in return for this payment he met with Margaret's request for armed assistance against the French, as well as agreeing to put diplomatic pressure on them. If France had failed to declare peace by Easter 1481, Edward would declare war on them in support of Burgundy. Finally, a marriage alliance between his daughter Anne and Philippe le Beau was agreed for 1486, with Edward contributing a dowry of 100,000 crowns which would in effect be offset by the continuing annuity payments.

Edward drove a hard bargain. But he was aware of the potential value of an alliance with Maximilian, and Margaret seems to have hinted that as well as acting as an ally on the boundaries of France, the Archduke would support him against his enemies in Scotland.⁷⁵

Charles' successors did not renew his English alliance alone. They also sought the renewal of one of the Public Weal allies which had a long tradition of hostility to the power of the Crown, the Duchy of Brittany. The renewal of the Breton alliance in 1480, in the view of one commentator 'restored the Duke of Austria to something of the position

⁷³ C. Ross, *Edward IV*, pp.249-56.

⁷⁴ Weightman, pp.121-2 & 134-7; for her written appeal to Edward dated 18 March 1478, Plancher, IV, *preuves* no. 288. Edward responded by despatching Thomas Daret to pressurise Louis XI, *ibid.*, *preuves* no. 289.

⁷⁵ Weightman, p.137. It should be noted that the English alliance continued to hold firm down to the end of the fifteenth century and beyond; see S.B. Chrimes' *Henry VII* (London 1972), pp.272-97.

which Charles the Bold had held as leader of the feudatories in France.’⁷⁶ The traditional network of Burgundian diplomacy was indeed intact.

The more closely the impact of Charles' death on his inheritance is examined, the more difficult it becomes to see exactly what collapsed. His successors certainly lost the Duchy of Burgundy, and this issue will be addressed in a subsequent chapter. This aside, however, the impact of the Nancy disaster was far less apocalyptic than some commentators have suggested, and the contrast between the Valois and Habsburg periods should not be overstated.

This accepted, it becomes evident that Olivier de la Marche, whose career spanned some thirty years on either side of 1477, can be viewed as a symbol of this sense of continuity. This can be seen in two ways, first through his career, his continued service to the successors of the Valois dukes and his vigorous defence of their rights, and second though his literary works, and in particular the first book of *Mémoires* or ‘Introduction’, an analysis of which reveals some very significant insights into the ideals of the changing political and cultural milieu in which he was living at the end of the fifteenth century.⁷⁷

The Survival of the Burgundian Nobility

On his release from imprisonment in April 1477, Olivier de la Marche went to Ghent where he renewed his allegiance to Charles' heiress and successor. His allegiance to Mary of Burgundy is confirmed by his consistent references to her as ‘ma souveraine princesse’,

⁷⁶ Armstrong, p.229.

⁷⁷ On the significance of the ‘Introduction’, see below, chs. 6 and 7.

and in the 'Introduction' he referred to her as 'ma souveraine dame et seule heretiere de ceste grande maison de Bourgogne'.⁷⁸ The reader is left with few doubts about where his loyalty lay. La Marche never seems to have been tempted to follow the example of some of his contemporaries and go into the service of Louis XI.

The circumstances created by the events of 1477 made life difficult for la Marche. He firstly had to pay a ransom of 4000 *écus* to his captor, Jehannot le Basque, and the difficulties he found in raising this cash explain the long duration of his imprisonment.⁷⁹ He then ran into further financial difficulties. On 19 October 1479, he wrote from Courtrai to the *chambre des comptes* at Lille requesting payment due to him for certain duties performed as *maître d'hôtel* and captain of the guard under Charles. He expressed a real sense of urgency about this payment:

Vous savez que je suis destruiect pour garder ma leaulté, et encoires j'ay de present mon filz prisonnier pris à la bataille avec Monseigneur, et ne me puis aidier que ce qui m'est lealment deu. Sy vous prie que vous bailliez avoir pité de moy.⁸⁰

The battle at which la Marche's son was captured took place at Guinegate on 7 August, in which Charles de la Marche had helped Maximilian to defeat the French.⁸¹ It seems that his father could not afford the ransom, prompting him to appeal to the *chambre des comptes*.

A further letter to the *chambre* was written at The Hague on 2 May 1480, and it sheds further light on la Marche's financial difficulties at this time. Once again he

⁷⁸ *Mémoires*, I, p.40.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, IV, pp.240-1; Stein, p.76 n.5.

⁸⁰ A.D.N. B17728; Stein, 'Nouveaux documents', *Pièces Justificatives* no. 12, pp.48-9.

⁸¹ See above, ch.1 n.212.

appealed for payments due to him since Charles' reign, though this time he elaborated further on the causes of his difficulties:

Je vous tiens assez recors des grans pertes que j'ay eues depuis la mort de monseigneur le duc Charles que Dieu absoille, car j'ay perdu toutes mes terres en Bourgoingne et trois maisons arrazees, arses et destruietes, j'ay payé grande rençon, et encoires est mon filz prisonniers, et de toutes ces pertes il ne sera point trouvé que j'aye esté recompencé d'un seul denier venant de Monseigneur ... Honnorez seigneurs, mes pertes montent plus de cinquante mil escuz, et si ne say que me coustera mon filz à racheter.⁸²

Given his dire financial straits in these years, it may appear rather surprising that la Marche did not apparently consider going into the service of Louis XI. After all, his homeland lay in the Duchy of Burgundy and would have been occupied by French troops in 1477. For his part, Louis XI may very well have entertained the idea of luring la Marche into his service, much as he had successfully wooed Charles' own half-brother Anthony.⁸³ A letter dated 16 October 1478 and addressed by the King to his *conseiller et chambellan*, the sire du Bouchage, hinted at the possibility of la Marche and the Count of Chimay, Philippe de Croy, coming into royal service:

Guillaume de Thouars m'a fait savoir que monseigneur de Cimay et messire Olivier de la Marche s'en vouldroient bien venir à moy, et j'ay grant paour que ce soit quelque tromperie; toutesfoiz il n'est riens que plus je désirasse que d'avoir ledit sieur de Cimay comme vous savez, et pour ce je vous pryé que sachez que c'est, et si vous voyez que ce soit à bon escient, que vous y besongnez à toute diligence, et ce que vous promettez pour leur appoinctement, je le tiendray et incontinent me advertissez de tout.⁸⁴

The possibility of luring la Marche, as well as Philippe de Croy, was therefore

⁸² A.D.N. B17732; Stein, 'Nouveaux documents', *Pièces Justificatives* no.13, pp.50-2.

⁸³ See his oath in Plancher, IV, *preuves* no. 276.

⁸⁴ Stein, p.179. He believed this document to have dated from 1472, but more recently, J. Vasaen has shown that it almost certainly dates from 1478; see his review of Stein in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 50 (1889), esp. pp.588-9.

very much in the King's thoughts at this time. Yet the switch of allegiance failed to materialise. Why was this the case?

The answer may be in part a simple matter of loyalty in the best tradition of the chivalrous man, and this is certainly the interpretation la Marche would have us accept. In *Le Chevalier délibéré*, he expressed his sense of allegiance to Philip, Charles and Mary as he watched them capitulate to the agents of Atropos:

Et peut ch[asc]un lisant entendre
Que ce mest desplaisance dure
De voir mors et en terre estendre
Iceulx trois a qui ie dois rendre
Amour foy hommaige, droiture
Car soubz eulz iay pris noureture
Ils mont nourry et esleue
Qui ne doit pas estre oublie⁸⁵

Yet these sentiments are only a form of dressing for an important career decision which would ultimately be dictated by financial and professional criteria. His continued service to Mary was probably the best of a series of options that he must have weighed up at the time, even though it had short-term drawbacks. He would have assumed that in the long term, his career would be best served by upholding his loyalty to the house of Burgundy, and an analysis of his post-1477 rewards would seem to confirm this assumption.⁸⁶ It is unlikely that la Marche would have been as well rewarded under Louis XI, and his distrust of this king almost certainly persuaded him that it would be too risky to try to find out.⁸⁷ Besides this, it is probable that the house of Burgundy sought la Marche's service as strongly as he sought its favour. It is significant that on his release

⁸⁵ *Le Chevalier délibéré*, ed. Lippman, p.54.

⁸⁶ See above, ch.1.

⁸⁷ See for example his barely concealed criticism of the king, in *Mémoires*, III, p.34.

from captivity he was met at Igney in Château-sur-Mosel by one hundred men of the ducal guard of which he had been captain since 1473, no doubt sent there by senior court officials to escort him back to Flanders.⁸⁸

Much has been written about the high rates of desertion from Burgundian service and defection to that of the Crown among the prominent courtiers and nobles that had been the mainstay of Valois power. Such an exodus is generally associated with the 'collapse' of Valois Burgundy. And yet Olivier de la Marche provides history with an example of a man who refused to defect, and preferred to retain his loyalty to Mary of Burgundy almost as if the passage of power to the princess had been no more problematic than its passage from one Valois duke to the next. What is to be concluded from this? Is it fair to view la Marche as an exception to the more commonplace tendency of nobles to leave Burgundian service? Or should he be seen as typifying the actions of other prominent nobles in continuing his service to Charles' successors after 1477?

On one level, it is certainly fair to argue that such switches of allegiance were not uncommon phenomena, and had in fact taken place during the reign of Charles the Bold. The most famous example is that of Philippe de Commynes, who left Burgundian service in 1472 to take up a lucrative position under Louis XI.⁸⁹ Others followed a similar path. Charles' half-brother Baudouin and his associate Jean de Chassa fled from Burgundy in 1470, complaining of the 'most vile, detestable and dishonest things he [Charles] indulges in against God our creator, against our law and against all the rules of nature.'⁹⁰ It would

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.241.

⁸⁹ See the introduction of M. Jones in his edition of *Memoirs*, pp.42-5.

⁹⁰ Vaughan, *Charles the Bold* 141 y

however be misleading to assume that the defections of 1477 represented a mere continuation of traditional practice. The scale of the desertions and the large number of senior figures involved suggest a more serious phenomenon.

Major figures certainly left for France. Conspicuous among these was Anthony, Bastard of Burgundy who swore an oath of allegiance to Louis XI on 15 August 1477,⁹¹ and who spent the rest of his career in royal service. Others included Philippe Pot, a favourite of Philip the Good and a loyal *conseiller et chambellan* under both Philip and Charles.⁹² The most notorious of all the deserters, however, was Philippe de Crevecoeur, seigneur des Cordes.⁹³ Crevecoeur had served Charles as Governor of Picardy, Artois and Boulonnais, Senechal of Pontheiu, captain of Crotoy and Governor of Péronne, Roye and Montdidier. His decision to switch allegiance to the Crown appears to have been prompted by financial and career opportunism above all else. His sphere of influence lay directly within those lands that were occupied by French troops in 1477 and, as Commynes notes, his switch of allegiance was directly prompted by his surrendering of the citadel of Arras on 4 March. It is fair to assume that the 'bonne intelligence' that Louis and Crevecoeur are said to have reached contained a promise of reward for the latter if he capitulated.⁹⁴ Crevecoeur must have considered it unlikely that Louis XI would allow him to continue holding his existing offices if he did not renounce his allegiance to Mary of Burgundy. His reward for doing so would, however, be his maintaining these

⁹¹ On which see above, n.64.

⁹² On Philip's apparent fondness for Philippe Pot, see P.M. Kendall, *Warwick the Kingmaker and the Wars of the Roses* (London 1972), pp.118-19.

⁹³ For what follows, see the article by G. Guillaume in *Biographie nationale de Belgique*, IV (Brussels 1873), col. 500-4.

⁹⁴ Commynes, II, p.183.

titles, as well as his being made captain of the castle of Hesdin and *marechal et grand chambellan* of France, a highly prestigious title.⁹⁵ His opportunistic switch of allegiance prompted Molinet to compare Louis XI to the mythical siren, whose magnetic powers were said to be able to attract all who came into her vicinity.⁹⁶ From now on, Crevecoeur identified his career with the French military campaigns in Picardy and Artois, and is recorded as being the 'principal conducteur' or 'lieutenant-general du roy' in these regions by Molinet.⁹⁷

Philippe de Commynes, for his part, chose to play down the significance of Crevecoeur's switch of allegiance:

Ledit seigneur des Cordes, se tenant à deschargé du service de sa maistresse par ce consentement que avoient baillé ces ambassadeurs qu'il mist le roy dedans ladicte cité d'Arras, se delibera de faire le serment au roy et de devenir son serviteur, considerant que son nom et ses armes estoient deçà la Somme, près de Beauvais; car il a nom messire Philippes de Crevecueur. Et aussi ces terres que la maison de Bourgongne avoit occupé sur la rivière de Somme, dont assez ay parlé, vivans les ducz Philippes et Charles, revenoyent sans nulle difficulté au roy par les condicions du traicté d'Arras, par lequel elles furent baillées au duc Philippes pour luy et ses hoirs masles seulement, et le duc Charles ne laissa que ceste fille dont j'ay parlé. Et ainsi ledict messire Philippes de Crevecueur devenoit homme du roy sans difficulté.⁹⁸

He makes it sound very straightforward, but the subtle Commynes was clearly aware that there were ethical dilemmas to be encountered in making such a switch of allegiance as he may have discovered himself in 1472. He therefore chose to play down its significance and deftly escaped having to pass judgement over it, yet still managed to create a

⁹⁵ Ibid., n.2.

⁹⁶ Molinet, I, p.212.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.306.

⁹⁸ Commynes, II, pp.184-5.

distinction between Crevecoeur's defection and his own:

[Crevecoeur] n'eust sceü mesprendre à se mectre au service du roy, s'il n'avoit faict serment de nouveau à ladicte damoysselle et en luy rendant ce qu'il tenoit du sien. Il s'en est parlé et parlera en diverse façon, par quoy m'en rapporte à ce qu'il en est.⁹⁹

Commynes then went on to suggest that Crevecoeur's action was not unusual, and that the majority of Charles the Bold's nobility were wiped out as a result of his death:

... à ceste dernière bataille estoit consommée toute la force de son pays et mortz et destruitz ou prins tous ses gens, c'est assavoir ceulx eussent sceü ou voulu deffendre l'estat et l'honneur de sa maison.¹⁰⁰

This statement must be treated with extreme caution. On one level, it is far from clear that all contemporaries shared the view that Crevecoeur's defection was an unremarkable and natural thing to do. On the contrary, it provoked uproar, particularly in Burgundian sources. La Marche was characteristically reticent on the issue, though he was clearly hostile to the general idea of defection. Molinet was more openly critical, and recorded the fury felt by the inhabitants of Arras at Crevecoeur's apparent betrayal of them.¹⁰¹ He also composed a short Latin epitaph to commemorate Crevecoeur's death in 1494. This poem is a masterpiece of language structure. When read conventionally, an orthodox celebration of Crevecoeur's career emerges, but if read backwards, a more critical view emerges.¹⁰²

Perhaps the most damning criticism of Crevecoeur however was the epitaph

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.185.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.156.

¹⁰¹ Molinet, I, p.188.

¹⁰² L. Thorpe, 'Philippe de Crevecoeur, seigneur d'Esquerdes; two epitaphs by Jean Molinet and Nicaise Ladam' in *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire*, 119 (1954), pp183-206, esp. p.186.

composed in the same year by Nicaise Ladam.¹⁰³ This author was born in Béthune in c.1465 and became a king-at-arms under Maximilian and Charles V.¹⁰⁴ He was the author of a rhyming chronicle covering the period from 1485 - 1545, and a work entitled *Généalogie de la maison d'Austrice*.¹⁰⁵ The epitaph takes the form of a dialogue between Philippe de Crevecoeur and the personification of 'Bourgogne', or the house of Burgundy.

It is structured on the basis of paired, four-line verses. In each part, the first verse is spoken by Crevecoeur who looks both over his life, while in the second verse 'Bourgogne' replies, passing comments on Crevecoeur's words. In the early passages Crevecoeur speaks of his early career, and 'Bourgogne' largely agrees with the sentiments expressed, pointing out Crevecoeur's popularity:¹⁰⁶

Chacun t'en sceust gre bon;
Aussi pour ton service on te fist bon guerdon...¹⁰⁷

But on the subject of his loyalty, Crevecoeur begins to flounder and 'Bourgogne' introduces a bitter note:

Se tu eusse ton prinche aimé parfaitement
Après sa mort ne l'eusse delaissé ensement;
Et croy que pour certain sa noble geniture
Tu n'eusse habandonné sans raison ne droicture.¹⁰⁸

A torrent of criticism follows. Crevecoeur is attacked for accepting the king's reward of membership of the Order of St Michael without returning the collar of the Golden

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp.191-206.

¹⁰⁴ E. van Artenbergh, article on Ladam in *Biographie nationale*, XI (Brussels 1890-1), col. 15 -21

¹⁰⁵ B.R. ms. 14864-5.

¹⁰⁶ Thorpe, p.191.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.193.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.194.

Fleece.¹⁰⁹ He is strongly criticised for his failure to defend the land against the French onslaught, and indeed for helping them.¹¹⁰ Elsewhere, 'Bourgogne' hints that his participation at the peace talks held at Senlis in 1493 was merely a means of allowing him to show the king the places he had conquered, and cynically seeking his favour.¹¹¹ The poem ends with 'Bourgogne' recounting the negative influence that Crevecoeur's entire life had had in the general scheme of things, and yet in the tradition of the epitaph still prays that his soul might yet be saved:

Combien que de grant maux tu ais au monde fait,
 Puis qu'a ton anemy requiers pardon de fait,
 Je suplye et requiers au tresbegnin Jesus
 Que la tiengne ame soit en la gloire lassus.¹¹²

To Nicaise Ladam, active within the milieu of Habsburg-Burgundian court, Crevecoeur's switch of allegiance was not the natural and unremarkable course of action that Commynes had suggested it was, but a highly controversial decision which damaged his honour enormously.

The second area in which we should treat the Commynes' view with some scepticism concerns the scale of the desertions. His comment that all Charles' nobility were obliterated and unable to defend his family's honour hardly applies to Olivier de la Marche. To try and get some indication of the scale of those who survived the upheavals and remained loyal to the house of Burgundy, it is useful to analyse the changing membership of the Order of the Golden Fleece as a representative microcosm of the upper nobility after 1477.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.195.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.197.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.203.

¹¹² Ibid., p.206.

The Order of the Golden Fleece as an Instrument of Continuity

The Order has a well documented history¹¹³. Founded by Philip the Good in 1430, its membership consists of initially 24 and then 30 knights drawn from the whole range of the Duke's territories. According to Chastellain, the Order, whose setting up had been a long-term objective of the Duke, was created by Philip in order to justify his refusal of Duke John of Bedford's offer of membership of the Garter in 1422. Although historians have been sceptical about the validity of this view, there is much to suggest that the Order of the Garter did provide Philip with a model. A concrete link between the English and Burgundian orders lies in the figure of William Bruges, King-of-Arms of the Order of the Garter between 1415 and 1450. From 1415 to 1430, Bruges made several journeys to Burgundy and, according to his biographer, made the acquaintance of Jean Lefèvre, seigneur de St. Rémy, in c.1426. Lefèvre was destined to hold the position of King-of-Arms in the Burgundian order from 1430. Furthermore:

the fact that Bruges was in Flanders in 1429 and 1431 is particularly apposite. There can be little doubt that he was consulted concerning the new Order, and that it was in imitation of his office of Garter, perhaps on his suggestion, that the Duke of Burgundy instituted the office of Toison d'Or King of Arms.¹¹⁴

Bruges' biographer has furthermore pointed out the link between the armorial of the Order of the Garter known simply as 'Bruges' Book' and the corresponding armorial of Lefèvre.

¹¹³ Reiffenberg, *Histoire de la Toison d'Or*; Kervyn de Lettenhove, *La Toison d'Or*; J. d'Arcy Boulton, *Knights of the Crown* (Suffolk 1987), ch.13: on the origins of the Order, see V. Tourneur, 'Les origines de l'ordre de la Toison d'Or et la symbolique des enseignes de celle-ci' in *Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique. Classe des Lettres*, 42 (1956), pp. 300-23; for the statutes of the Order, Jean Lefèvre de St. Rémy, *Chronique*, ed. Morand (Paris 1876 & 81), I, pp.210-53.

¹¹⁴ H.S. London, *The Life of William Bruges* (London 1970), p.43; Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, I, p.5.

Great personal renown and honour was to be acquired through membership of the Order, although in many ways the principal beneficiary was the Duke himself who received firm oaths of allegiance from all members. The potential value of this was not lost on Charles the Bold's successors, whose determination to uphold its survival of the Order after Charles' death is testimony to its importance as a form of continuity between the Valois and Habsburg periods, first as a symbol of the power of the house of Burgundy with which it was inextricably associated, and second as a means by which the loyalty of large numbers of its members could be ensured.

On the first point, a good indication of the symbolic significance of the Order can be found in Olivier de la Marche's treatise on it, addressed to Philippe le Beau:

c'est le principal parement de vostre maison et l'honneur que vous devez maintenir et exaucer, et rebouter ceulx qui le voudroient reculler ou estaindre...¹¹⁵

To la Marche, the Order was the supreme symbol of continuity between Philippe and his Valois predecessors:

bien est vray que monseigneur Maximilien, à present Roy des Romains, releva ceste ordre aruynée et deschutte par la mort de feu le duc Charles, dont Dieu ayt l'ame. Et depuis vous fustes né de luy et de madame Marie, heretiere de ceste maison, dont Dieu ayt l'ame, vostre noble mere, et demourastes seul filz et duc de Bourgoigne par le trespas d'icelle. Et pour ce que cest[e] ordre fut fondée pour chief pour le duc de Bourgoigne et ses successeurs, vous parvintes, dès icelle heure que Dieu l'a prise, à estre chief d'icelle noble ordre. Et vostre noble père, Roy des Romains, tant pour ce qu'il avoit relevé ledit ordre comme pour ce qu'il est vostre pere, est demeuré en estat et nom de chief d'icelle ordre comme vous...¹¹⁶

The birth of Philippe therefore allowed Maximilian to revive the Order, over which he would preside as sovereign during Philippe's minority. His revival of the Order was a

¹¹⁵ *Epistre in Mémoires*, IV, p.159.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.160.

clear tactical move, and in return for the oaths of allegiance he received he confirmed the privileges that members had traditionally enjoyed.¹¹⁷ La Marche recorded the anxiety felt by Maximilian and his supporters that Louis XI might try to get his hands on the Order:

l'archiduc fut conseillé de relever ladicte ordre, vacquant par la mort du duc Charles; et estoit commune renommée que le Roy Loys vouloit relever ladicte ordre de la Thoison d'or, comme duc de Bourgoingne; et vouloit dire que par les ducz de Bourgoingne estoit celle ordre fondée, et sembloit qu'il se fortifieroit pour relever icelle ordre, et que sa conquête de Bourgoingne en vauldroit de mieulx. Mais l'archiduc l'anticipa, et vous declaireray la maniere qui fut tenue à relever icelle ordre.¹¹⁸

The revival of the Order was therefore a symbolic victory for Maximilian. With regard to his being 'conseillé' (advised) to revive the Order, some commentators have suggested that it was in fact la Marche himself who gave this advice.¹¹⁹ There may be some truth in this, and his emphasis on the symbolic importance of the Order certainly gives the view credence. Furthermore, in 1478 he was involved in the building work that was carried out at both the ducal palace and the cathedral of Ste. Gudule in Brussels in order to accommodate the future staging of a chapter of the Order. The city granted 3000 crowns the following year for the construction of a new entrance to the ducal palace and undertook further restorations in 1479 at the request of Mary of Burgundy.¹²⁰ Despite la Marche's efforts, however, the city would not play host to a Golden Fleece chapter until 1501. Maximilian's plans to hold a chapter there in 1486, at the expense of Bruges and Malines, never in fact materialised due to the Archduke's new commitments as King of

¹¹⁷ B.N. ms. fr. 5046, ff. 61-7.

¹¹⁸ *Mémoires*, III, pp.248-9.

¹¹⁹ Beaune, p.cxxi; M Vale, *War and Chivalry* (London 1981), p.38 n.26.

¹²⁰ Henne & Wauters, *Histoire de la ville de Bruxelles*, III, p.321.

the Romans.¹²¹

Whatever la Marche's exact role in the revival of the Order, it is certain that he was responsible for the organisation of the first chapter under Maximilian's sovereignty, held at St. Saviour's Church in Bruges in April 1478.¹²² Amid the familiar pomp and splendour of the occasion, the red-robed knights ceremonially informed Maximilian of their wish to see the Order revived under his sovereignty. They solemnly made their way through the streets of Bruges to St. Saviour's Church, carrying a cushion on which rested the sovereign's collar. They entered the church, and the Bishop of Tournai delivered a speech to the Archduke on the nature of his investiture. Following this, Maximilian was solemnly knighted by Adolf de Cleves before being led into a side chapel to don the robes of the Order. This scene is depicted in a miniature of the manuscript of the *Excellente Chronycke van Vlaanderen* which survives at Bruges. It shows a kneeling Maximilian dressed in the red robes of the Order, and surrounded by four knights, one of whom places a sword on his shoulder while another offers him the collar of the Golden Fleece. The scene takes place in an intricately detailed church interior on a raised platform in front of which the arms of the Burgundian dukes can be seen.¹²³ This done, Maximilian returned to the church to hear mass. Today, the stalls of St. Saviour's church still display the coats-of-arms of every knight who attended this ceremony.

The Order now began to function very much as it had under the Valois dukes, with further chapters being held at Bois-le-Duc in 1481, Malines in 1491, and Brussels in

¹²¹ Ibid., p.298.

¹²² He is recorded as being the 'principal conducteur' of the ceremony by Molinet, see above, ch.1 n.193; see also *Mémoires*, III, pp. 248-51.

¹²³ *Trésors de la Toison d'Or. Exposition placée sous le haut patronage de la République d'Autriche et le Royaume de Belgique* (Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels 1987), no.36, pp.122-3.

1501, the first over which Philippe le Beau presided as full sovereign.¹²⁴ These meetings followed the standard procedures laid down by Philip the Good in 1430.

The Order does, however, appear to have taken on some new functions in the post-Valois period. Between 8 and 14 June 1484, the members met the Flemish Regency Council at Termonde to discuss Maximilian's position as Regent in Flanders. The function of the Order was to act as a mediator between the opposing sides.¹²⁵ There is no evidence to suggest that the Order had ever acted as a single unit in this way before 1477, and this new role reflects in part the fact that its membership was divided over the issue of the Regency, with five members actually supporting the Regency Council and not the Archduke.¹²⁶ While fully accepting the rights of Philippe le Beau as their 'prince naturel', the Members of Flanders nevertheless rejected Maximilian's rights as Regent during his son's minority, preferring that government be exercised in Philippe's name by the so-called Regency council. It was left to the knights of the Golden Fleece to resolve the issue.¹²⁷ After some deliberation they concluded that while Maximilian's marriage to Mary of Burgundy had given him no rights as *mambour* or guardian, he could claim these rights as the father of the prince, according to 'la coutume du pays'. He was therefore free to dispose of Charles' inheritance only as *mambour* and not as sovereign lord. He should emphasise the temporary nature of his role by use of the title 'archiduc d'Autriche...et père et mambour de notre très chier et très amé Philippe, par la mesme grace de Dieu, archiduc d'Autriche. duc de Bourgogne etc.' He could not use the term 'notre' to designate any

¹²⁴ *Mémoires*, IV, p.158.

¹²⁵ Blockmans, 'Autocratie ou polyarchie?', pp. 284-7.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.284.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, document no. 7, pp.344-9.

town or place in Philippe's lands. Furthermore, the Order concluded that Maximilian could not use Mary's arms in any way detrimental to the well-being of his children.¹²⁸

These recommendations were a clear attempt to bridge the gulf that existed between Maximilian and his Flemish subjects at the time. It must admittedly be conceded that in the long term their efforts failed since it would take a determined military effort by Maximilian to bring the Flemish rebels to heel.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, the episode shows the continuing importance of the Order as an instrument of princely power since it had supported Maximilian's authority in all but name.

As well as creating a symbolic bridge between Valois and Habsburg rule, the Order also provided a sense of continuity in terms of its membership. It is an interesting exercise to examine the membership of the Order as a representative microcosm of the upper nobility to see how far the traditional aristocrats' support of the Burgundian dukes was lost after 1477. Did Maximilian, as Commynes implied, bring with him a new group of German nobles to defend the inheritance of his wife and to bolster his own position? Or did he rely on the traditional supporters of the Valois dukes? And exactly how typical was la Marche's decision to maintain his service to Charles' successors?

An analysis of the Order's membership between 1473, the year in which Charles presided over his last chapter, and 1478, when Maximilian revived it, is revealing.¹³⁰ Of the thirty members, excluding the sovereign, who constituted the Order in 1473, only six had left Burgundian service by 1478, hardly the overwhelming exodus that Commynes had imagined. These six included Philippe de Crevecoeur, Philippe Pot and the Bastard

¹²⁸ Ibid., document no. 8, pp.350-3.

¹²⁹ Armstrong, p.234; Blockmans, pp.289-93.

¹³⁰ Kervyn de Lettenhove, *La Toison d'Or*, pp.89-102; *Mémoires*, IV, pp.248-51; Molinet, I, pp.249-51.

of Burgundy.¹³¹ Of the remaining twenty-four, twelve had died in the interim period and twelve were retained as members of the Order.¹³² Of these twelve survivors, four were foreign monarchs,¹³³ reflecting the importance of Maximilian's standing on the international stage, and the other eight were familiar and established courtiers. They included Jean de Lannoy, the governor of Holland, a member of a prominent Burgundian family who had assisted Philip the Good during the Great Wars and had helped to stage the famous Feast of the Pheasant.¹³⁴ They also included Adolf de Cleves, whose history of service to the dukes stretched back to the Luxembourg campaign of 1443, and Philippe de Croy who had fought at Nancy.¹³⁵

Perhaps most interesting of all are the names of the eight new knights who were elected in 1478. Of these only one, Bartholomé de Lichtenstein, could be in any way described as a foreigner in Commynes' sense of the term.¹³⁶ The rest were all members of the Burgundian and Low Countries families that had traditionally supported the Valois dukes. They included Josse de Lalaing, a member of the powerful Burgundian family whose history of service to the dukes had been consistent over much of the fifteenth

¹³¹ The other three were Jean de Neuchâtel, Jean de Luxembourg and Jean de Damas; Kervyn de Lettenhove and Molinet, cit. supra. All six of these were still alive in 1478, but none turned up for the chapter at Bruges.

¹³² The deceased knights were Anthoine de Croy (d.1475), Jean de Créquy (d.1474), Simon de Lalaing (d.1476), Regnauld de la Brederode (d.1473), Jean seigneur de Ber et d'Auxi (d.1474), Jean, Duc d'Alençon (d.1476), Louis de Chalon (d.1476), Jean de Luxembourg (d.1476), Guy de Brimeu (d.1477, executed by Ghenters), Baudouin de Lannoy (d.1474), Adolph, Duc de Gueldres (d.1477) and Jean de Rubempré (d.1477), Kervyn de Lettenhove, pp.92-3; their dates are given by Beaune & d'Arbaumont in their index in *Mémoires*. IV, *passim*.

¹³³ These were Edward IV of England, John of Aragon and Navarre, Ferdinand of Naples and Ferdinand of Castile, Kervyn de Lettenhove and Molinet, cit. supra.

¹³⁴ Laborde, *Ducs de Bourgogne*, I, p.429; *Mémoires*, III, p.339.

¹³⁵ The other five were Jean de Melun, Jean, Duc de Cleves, Englebert, Conte de Nassau, Philippe de Savoye and Louis de Bruges. Admittedly, this last member would subsequently throw in his lot with the Flemish rebels.

¹³⁶ Commynes, II, p.257.

century, as it would continue to be into the sixteenth.¹³⁷ Josse had been a *chambellan* under Charles and his presence is recorded among the forces that besieged Neuss between 1474-5.¹³⁸ In 1468, he had participated in the jousts of the *Arbre d'Or* at Bruges.¹³⁹ His membership of the Order can be interpreted as a reward for his continued service after 1477, and his long-established family background is a characteristic shared by all the other new members.¹⁴⁰

It appears that some of the members who had left Burgundian service were not replaced in 1478, and their names appeared on the stalls in St. Saviour's Church. They were to be given until the following chapter to answer to the charges of desertion that were levelled against them.¹⁴¹ Many places must have been left empty during the 1478 chapter, and la Marche, in his recollection of the event, would lament that the number of knights who attended was not very great.¹⁴²

It was not until his second chapter, held three years later at Bois-le-Duc, that Maximilian felt strong enough to avenge the defectors.¹⁴³ Five members were solemnly condemned for their failure to support him. They included Philippe de Crevecoeur, who had betrayed his oath of loyalty to the house of Burgundy which had granted him land and offices:

¹³⁷ For example the famous Jacques, an archetypal hero: see 'Le Livre des faicts du bon chevalier Jacques de Lalaing' in Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, VIII. His descendants Simon and Charles were also prominent Burgundian supporters.

¹³⁸ *Mémoires*, III, p.91 n.2.

¹³⁹ *Mémoires*, IV, pp.118, 127 & 135.

¹⁴⁰ The other five new members were Wolfert de Borsele, Jacques de Luxembourg, Philippe de Bourgogne, Pierre de Luxembourg and Jacques de Savoy; Kervyn de Lettenhove, p.93.

¹⁴¹ Reiffenberg, pp.93-4.

¹⁴² *Mémoires*, III, p.248.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, IV, pp.146-52; Molinet, I, pp.360-6; Reiffenberg, pp.107-13.

au contraire de ce les a rendues au Roy et lui fait serment, et avec ce a delaissée à porter ledit colier dudit ordre de la Thoison d'or, en mal reconnoissant les grans biens et honneurs qui lui ont par cy devant esté fais par lesdits ducs Phelippe et Charles, et, qui plus est, s'est mis et a fait guerre ouverte contre les pays de par deçà en livrant bataille devant Viefville, car il estoit lors chief et capitaine de l'armée du Roy de France, en commettant par ce et autrement faulse trahison et desleauté, pour lesquelles causes, à grande et meure deliberacion, il a esté au chapitre dudit ordre presentement tenu, etc., privé et debouté dudit ordre, jugié et déclaré inhabille et indigne de jamais le porter.¹⁴⁴

As a sign of his disgrace, Crevecoeur's arms were taken down from his stall in the nave of the church and brought to the outside of the grand portal where they were hung upside down.¹⁴⁵ Similar proclamations were made against the other deserters, Philippe Pot, Jean de Neuchâtel, Jacques de Luxembourg and Jean de Damas.¹⁴⁶ Their arms were blacked out¹⁴⁷ but not reversed like those of Crevecoeur who had been uniquely condemned because of his active assault against the house of Burgundy at the head of the French army. With regard to the Bastard of Burgundy, the Order stopped short of condemning him and delayed judgement until the next chapter.¹⁴⁸ This would not in fact take place for another ten years, but the 1491 chapter at Malines agreed that he must be ejected from the Order and instructions were given to his son Philippe to secure the surrender of his collar.¹⁴⁹ The Malines chapter was also the occasion for further condemnation of Philippe Pot and Philippe de Crevecoeur by means of written plaques which were placed on a wall inside the church. That of Philippe Pot, which can still be seen in a side chapel of St.

¹⁴⁴ *Mémoires*, IV, pp.149-50.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Molinet, I, p.364.

¹⁴⁶ *Mémoires*, IV, pp.148-51.

¹⁴⁷ Reiffenberg, p.111.

¹⁴⁸ Molinet, I, p.366.

¹⁴⁹ Reiffenberg, p.199; on the importance of returning the collar, see St. Rémy, *Mémoires*, pp.280-1.

Rombaudo's Cathedral, read:

Pour ce que vous, messire Philippe Pot, seigneur de la Roche et Nelay, jassoit ce qu'il vous ayt esté suffisamment signifié que par sentence de cestui très noble Ordre de la Thoison d'Or vous estiez deuement privé, et pour ce que vous a esté jà pièche par ii fois expressement enjoint de renvoyer le colier dudit ordre soliez porter et estimé imitation que, se ne le faisiez, on procederoit contre vous selon les status dudit Ordre et autrement comme il appartient; et néanmoins en enfreignant le serment que aviez à l'ordre vous declarent avoir commis criesme de parjurement.¹⁵⁰

Another plaque contained similar accusations against Philippe de Crevecoeur.¹⁵¹

These chapters were not, however, solely devoted to the condemnation of deserters. They were also responsible for the election of new members. Eight new members were elected to the Order at the 1481 chapter, and as in the case of the Bruges chapter, these were drawn from the traditional noble basis of Valois support. They included Baudouin de Lannoy who had served as a *chambellan* under Charles, and as *chambellan, conseiller et premier maître d'hôtel* under Mary.¹⁵² Also elected in 1481 was Guillaume de la Baume, *chambellan et conseiller* under Charles, and governor of the two Burgundies. He had received the honour of carrying the banner at the funeral ceremony of Philip the Good and Isabella of Portugal at the Chartreuse de Champmol near Dijon in 1473. Following Charles' death he retained his service to the house of Burgundy. He had accompanied Olivier de la Marche and the other ambassadors who had met Maximilian on his journey to Ghent in 1477, and spent the last decade of his life as *chevalier d'honneur* in the household of Margaret of York.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Molinet, I, p.225.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.159.

¹⁵² Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, passim.

¹⁵³ *Mémoires*, III, p.59 n.2 & p.244; Weightman, p.125 and passim. The other six elected in 1481 were Claude de Toulangeon, Jean de Ligny, Pierre de Henin, Jean de Berghes, Martin seigneur de Polheim and Philippe le

Virtually all of those who were elected to the Order in 1478 were therefore members of the noble families who had traditionally been the bedrock of Valois power. Many were rewarded for their continued service after Charles' death. There is no question of Maximilian enticing a new elite of German nobles into the Low Countries. By the time the Order met at Brussels in 1501, this situation had scarcely changed at all. Although the number of German members had grown slightly to three, the majority were drawn from the traditional milieu.¹⁵⁴

Of course the Order only encompassed a very small section of the Burgundian nobility, and it would be erroneous to suggest these conclusions can be automatically extended to the whole class. Nevertheless, as a representative sample of the crucial aristocratic sections of the noble class, the Order is very significant. It was, moreover, from this aristocratic caste that many of the dukes' most prominent bureaucratic counsellors, diplomats and captains were drawn, and the ceremonial duties that were expected of members of the Order were counterbalanced by the holding of important offices of state. Thus, Philippe de Bourgogne, the son of the Bastard, held the offices of Governor of Artois and Admiral of Flanders as well as being a member of the Council of France. His loyalty to the house of Burgundy continued well beyond Charles' death, and he is recorded as being among the nobles present at the wedding of Philippe le Beau and Jeanne de Castile in 1496.¹⁵⁵

Another prominent nobleman to survive 1477 was Englebert, Conte de Nassau. As Charles' *conseiller*, he was elected to the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1473 and

Beau, now Count of Charolais. The first three had all served under the Valois dukes; Kervyn de Lettenhove, p.93.

¹⁵⁴ Molinet, II, pp.479-82; on the knights elected under Philippe's sovereignty, Kervyn de Lettenhove, cit. supra.

¹⁵⁵ Hulst, p.48.

appointed to the post of lieutenant of Brabant and Limbourg the same year.¹⁵⁶ His service under Maximilian was highly distinguished and he was part of the Burgundian contingent that defeated the French at Guinegate in 1479.¹⁵⁷ In 1491, as the city of Bruges stirred once more in rebellion, Englebert was the head of a contingent which captured the Brugeois captain Picamet near Damme and in the wake of this he led the successful negotiations that culminated in the treaty of 19 November.¹⁵⁸ In 1494 he was named President of the *Grand Conseil*,¹⁵⁹ and by 1498 had become 'Lieutenant Général de Monseigneur l'Archiduc en tous ses pays.'¹⁶⁰ Finally in November 1501, as Philippe was preparing to depart for Spain, Englebert was appointed as his deputy. Letters to the town of Béthune dated 12 December are signed 'De par le conte de Nassau Lieutenant Général.'¹⁶¹ Englebert also showed great enthusiasm for the patronage of manuscripts in the tradition of the Valois dukes and their courtiers.¹⁶²

A number of conclusions therefore suggest themselves. First, the events of 1477 were nowhere near as cataclysmic as some historians have suggested, as there is in many ways a strong thread of continuity between the Valois and Habsburg periods. Olivier de la Marche's decision to retain his service to the house of Burgundy was in no way exceptional, but in keeping with large numbers of nobles in Burgundy and the Low Countries. Admittedly, the savage condemnation of those nobles who did leave

¹⁵⁶ Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, p.247.

¹⁵⁷ Dumont, p.259.

¹⁵⁸ *Mémoires*, III, pp.276-7, esp. p.276 n.4.

¹⁵⁹ Hulst, pp.46-7.

¹⁶⁰ Plancher, IV, *preuves* no 307.

¹⁶¹ Gachard, *Collection des voyages*, appendix 1, p.373.

¹⁶² See above, n.49-50.

Burgundian service does suggest that movement between courts was increasingly viewed as unacceptable, but the scale of the desertions has been exaggerated, and it is clear the noble support enjoyed by Charles' successors was in the main derived from the traditional props of Valois authority.

Second, the effect of Charles' death was not the destruction of his inheritance, since its infrastructure largely survived. There can, however, be no doubt that his successors faced a series of challenges that threatened to destroy their authority, and that the following fifteen years would constitute a period of upheaval. Charles' death may be interpreted as having caused a crisis of succession which saw both the French Crown and the *États* of Flanders seeking to exploit the successors' vulnerability to maximise their own gains, and in doing so threatening to undermine the political stability of the inheritance. This threat was met by a determined political and military campaign, as well as an outpouring of propaganda on the part of Charles' successors, and one of the most significant voices to speak up in favour of this would be that of Olivier de la Marche. These are the issues to which the next chapter will be devoted.

CHAPTER 6. The First Book of Mémoires in its Political Context

La Marche began to write the first book of *Mémoires* or 'Introduction' as an alternative opening to the work he had begun some fifteen years earlier.¹ It differs from the rest of *Mémoires* in a number of ways. First, it is addressed directly to its recipient, Philippe le Beau. Second, the subject matter covers several centuries of history and is not confined to personal recollections. Third, its composition required a good deal of preparatory reading and research on the part of the author. Finally, it is a well-structured piece of literature with clearly-defined parameters, and certainly contains a more coherent sense of purpose than the rest of the work. Although la Marche intended it to form part of the finished *Mémoires* as a whole, the fact that the earliest surviving manuscript contains the 'Introduction' only suggests that it was able to stand as a complete self-contained piece of literature by itself.²

Conventional wisdom has tended to dismiss the 'Introduction' as an insignificant and nonsensical piece of fantasy, of little value to the historian. The 1785 edition of *Mémoires* actually omits the 'Introduction' altogether.³ More recently, la Marche's biographer Henri Stein has dismissed it as 'une fantaisie généalogique à négliger', and declared that it was 'inutile de nous arrêter plus longtemps à toute cette série d'inventions fabuleuses qui s'appuient, sous un faux prétexte d'érudition, sur des traditions soi-disant historiques.'⁴ But for Stein the principal value of *Mémoires* lay in the wealth of detail with which it could provide the historian about the Valois dukes, their characters, their military

¹ On the dating of the 'Introduction', as well as the rest of *Mémoires*, see above ch.3.

² On the ms. and the character of the 'Introduction', see above ch.3.

³ In *Collection universelle des mémoires particuliers relatifs à l'histoire de France*, VIII, pp.XIV-422 & IX, pp.1-359 (London & Paris 1785).

⁴ Stein, p.120 and p.110.

organisation, their *fêtes* and so on.⁵ He was only interested in obtaining tangible historical facts, and was less aware of the work's potential to shed some light on the more abstract history of values and ideals. The 'Introduction' ought to be interpreted as being significant on three levels; first, as a political work, whose central message can only be understood as a response to the changing political climate of the late fifteenth century; second, as a didactic piece, aimed at the education of a young prince; and finally, as a work which has a significant place in what might be termed the 'Burgundian historical tradition'.

In terms of its structure, the 'Introduction' is a genealogical work which explores Philippe le Beau's ancestry on both his mother's and father's sides. Chronologically, it begins with the mythical Trojan origins of the house of Austria and the even more obscure origins of the ancient kingdoms of Burgundy and France. It is addressed to 'mon souverain seigneur, mon prince et mon maistre, Phelippe, par la grace de Dieu archeduc d'Austrice, premier de ce surnom, duc de Bourgoingne ... filz de très illustre et très sacré prince Maximilian d'Austrice ... et de ma souveraine princesse, feue de très noble memoire, madame Marie, duchesse de Bourgoingne, dame et seule heretiere de la très haulte, puissante, doubtée et renommée maison de Bourgoingne', and is written by 'Olivier, seigneur de la Marche, chevalier, natif de Bourgogne, grant et premier maistre d'ostel de vostre maison'.⁶

Early in the work, la Marche outlined his reasons for writing. These were:⁷

1. He intended to reveal Philippe le Beau's ancestry to him so that the prince could thank God for the nobility of his blood and, crucially, so that he could imitate his

⁵ Ibid., p.117.

⁶ *Mémoires*, I, pp.7-9.

⁷ For the following summary, see *Mémoires*, I, pp.10-14.

ancestors in the ways of virtue; ‘se vous ne suivez et tenez le chemin et sente des vertus fructueuses, comme ont fait voz bons ancesseurs, vous en ayez honte devant vos yeulx et vous reprenez de vous meismes et chaistiez de vos deffaulz.’⁸

2. He would make Philippe aware of the rights by which he had come to the inheritance left to him by his grandfather, Charles, via his mother and the sole heiress, Mary.
3. He would record everything worthy of mention that had taken place at the house of Burgundy during his time there so that Philippe could follow his ancestors' examples. This last point probably applies to the rest of *Mémoires* rather than the ‘Introduction’, and its sentiments are anticipated in the original preface which dates from c.1473.⁹

These stated aims are central to an understanding of the work.

As a didactic work aimed at the education of a young prince, this section of *Mémoires* is revealing.¹⁰ There were many lessons to be drawn from it. It contained a wealth of information on history and although the modern historian may scoff at the fantastic nature of much of this, contemporaries do not appear to have seen such a clear distinction between history and mythology.¹¹ The importance of history as part of a

⁸ Ibid., p.11.

⁹ Ibid. p.153-4

¹⁰ On la Marche's role as tutor to Philippe, see above, ch.1.

¹¹ Many of the works of ‘history’ that were presented to Philip the Good contained elements of each. Philip was particularly anxious to receive histories of newly-acquired territories, such as Edmund de Dynter's *Chroniques de Brabant*, and Jean Wauquelin's French version of the *Chroniques de Hainaut*. See evidence of the Burgundian library's possession of this kind of work in Barrois, *passim*, and note the famous copy of the *Chroniques de Hainaut* with its widely reproduced frontispiece, attributed to Rogier van der Weyden, which shows the author presenting his book to the Duke, B.R. ms. 9241.

noble's education was emphasised by Guillaume de Lannoy in his mid-fifteenth century treatise on the education of the nobility.¹² La Marche also had much to teach Philippe about issues of morality and conduct. Above all, Philippe should learn to attribute all worldly success to the will of God:

Mon souverain seigneur, il est bon que vous entendez que les grans seigneuries sont portées et entretenues de Dieu seulement, non pas par la puissance des Roys ou des princes qui sont hommes mortelz; et, selon qu'ilz acquierent envers Dieu merite de regner et qu'ilz entretiennent leur peuple en justice et à la discipline de la sainte foy crestienne et à garder ses commandemens, Dieu leur permet et fait ayde à demourer princes puissans et en honneur et prosperité, ou les laisse perir, et leur peuple souffrir par l'abomination de leurs vices.¹³

This is a recurrent theme in the 'Introduction', and was in all probability inspired by the author's recollection of Charles the Bold's untimely demise.¹⁴ Here is a clear warning to Philippe to avoid neglect of God. Time and again historical episodes and the fate of the characters involved are interpreted in this way.¹⁵

Elsewhere, the importance of the work as a genealogy which not only confirms Philippe's place in a noble lineage but actually helps to create it should not be neglected. Genealogies of this sort were common in the late Middle Ages. Maximilian of Austria showed considerable enthusiasm for such works, and commissioned Jacob Mennel among others to provide him with them. He even sought to show that the Habsburgs had connections with the Merovingians, the Carolingians, and the lineage of King Priam the

¹² Guillebert de Lannoy, *Oeuvres*, ed. C. Potvin (Louvain 1878), pp.443-72: on the background to this treatise, see J.H. Hexter, 'The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance' in *Journal of Modern History*, 22 (March 1950), pp.1-20, esp. p.15.

¹³ *Mémoires*, I, p.51.

¹⁴ See below, ch.6.

¹⁵ *Mémoires*, I, pp.65-7, where la Marche uses the example of the French king Robert the Pious who defeated enemies through the use of prayer.

Great of Troy.¹⁶ In la Marche's work there is a similar concern with establishing the pedigree of Philippe's ancestry, and links were made to the Trojans, the Merovingians and others.¹⁷

La Marche's stated motives are enlightening, but the circumstances that led him to formulate these motives are less clear. The following passage is, however, crucial:

le duc Charles, vostre grant pere que Dieu absoile ... morut vray possesseur [de votre héritage], et les laissa en succession possessant à feue de très vertueuse souvenance madame Marie de Bourgoingne, que Dieu absoile, vostre mere *et sa seule heretiere*. Et de son temps, par guerres, griefz, traictiez, contraires et aultres violences à elle faictes et survenues, *pluseurs des seignouries susdictes ont esté et sont tirées et distraictes de vostre main et pouvoir, comme plus à plain pourrez à la croissance de voz jours voir, et mesmement par la poursuite de ces presentes memoires*, se Dieu m'en donne temps et grace. Et dont en augmentant le nombre de mes ans et en diminuant de corps de vie, le coer me croit et ravive en bon espoir que Dieu, se vous le servez devotement, vous donnera grace de retourner conquerre et vengier les tors fais à vous, à l'honneur, prouffit et gloire de ceste noble vostre maison arruinée, destruite et grevée par vos ennemis privez et estranges.¹⁸

The work is an attempt to make Philippe aware of the injustices that had been perpetrated against him regarding his inheritance and the author prays that he can, with the aid of God, avenge his enemies. The enemies 'privez et estranges', from within and without, can only refer to the rebellious Flemish *États* on one hand and the French Crown on the other. In order to understand the context of these remarks, it is first necessary to understand the political background against which they must be seen.

¹⁶ On this topic, see M.S. Hardy, *Olivier de la Marche*, ch.5, pp.125-35, and appendix 2, pp.158-64.

¹⁷ For a further analysis of this, see below, ch.7.

¹⁸ *Mémoires*, I, pp.12-13.

The Political Background. 1. The French

According to Commynes, Louis XI's first reaction to the news of Charles the Bold's death, after he had got over his elation, was to seize the Duke's French territories so that the power of the troublesome house of Burgundy might be broken.¹⁹ As we have seen, his long-term gains were not particularly great, but he did of course gain an important prize in the Duchy of Burgundy. He immediately sent troops into the Duchy, and on 29 January his ambassadors agreed on a treaty with the *États* which confirmed that the territory would revert to the jurisdiction of the Crown as a result of Charles' death.²⁰ The *États* promised obedience to the King in return for which all French troops would be removed from the Duchy, the landed possessions of the nobility and clergy would be safeguarded, and the franchises and privileges granted by Philip the Good to the cities and elsewhere would be upheld. These privileges were re-affirmed by Charles VIII on his accession to the throne in 1483.²¹ The *États* retained their rights over the granting of *aides* to the King, much as they had under the Dukes. The terms of his treaty seem to suggest that the response of the *États* was prompted by a basic instinct to survive. Overwhelmed by French troops, they could do little but capitulate and attempt to maximise the preservation of their rights.

In the north, Louis XI seized parts of Artois and Picardy, and attempted to wage economic warfare against the other territories although, in contrast to the south, he encountered prolonged opposition here. A one-year truce signed by Louis and Maximilian

¹⁹ Commynes, II, pp.168-9.

²⁰ Published by Plancher, IV, *preuves* no.270.

²¹ Ibid., *preuves* no.302.

interrupted the fighting with effect from 11 July 1478,²² but it quickly resumed and continued down to 1482, broken only by a second period of truce lasting from August 1480 to March 1481.²³ The political settlement that was embodied in the Treaty of Arras (23 December 1482) ended the dispute over these territories, with Artois and the County of Burgundy being ceded to the King as part of the dowry that Margaret of Austria would bring to her marriage with the Dauphin, and with the acceptance of Philippe le Beau's rights over the County of Flanders, for which he would do homage to the Crown.²⁴ At face-value at least, this ended Louis' interests in the northern territories, although he continued to encourage rebellion in the Flemish cities. French control over the ceded territories now took effect, although they were returned to Philippe in 1493 according to the terms of the Treaty of Senlis.²⁵ This treaty accepted Philippe's suzerainty over Flanders, Artois and Picardy, and this constitutional position was confirmed by the Treaty of Paris (2 August 1498).²⁶ The Archduke now held his lands as French fiefs, as Philip the Good had done half a century earlier.

It was, however, the Duchy of Burgundy that became the centre of political controversy in the years after Charles' death, in spite of the fact that fighting here was minimal. The issue of its fate remained explosive down to 1493, and constituted the biggest point of contention between the Crown and Charles' successors. Louis XI justified his policy of military annexation by arguing that the Duchy was an appanage of France, and

²² Ibid., *preuves* no.186.

²³ Armstrong, p.228.

²⁴ The Treaty of Arras is published in Commynes, ed. Lenglet du Fresnoy, see above, ch.6 n.13.

²⁵ The Treaty of Senlis, published in *ibid.*; see above, ch.6 n.13.

²⁶ The Treaty of Paris is published in Plancher, IV, *preuves* no.307.

could never be inherited by a female successor. In the event of its holder dying without male heirs, the appanage automatically reverted to the Crown, and the armed conquest of the Duchy amounted to no more than the enforcement of the King's rights.²⁷ The ban on property passing to a woman was a principle enshrined in Salic Law, based on the belief that female succession would inevitably lead to the dismemberment of the kingdom.²⁸ To underline his claims, Louis enlisted the services of two French jurists, the diplomat Guillaume Cousinot, and the royal *conseiller*, Dupuy, whose duty it was to construct a legal framework for the King's actions. Basing his work on the assumption that Burgundy was an appanage of France, and therefore inseparable from it, Cousinot, who traced the union back to Charlemagne's time, declared that it could only be granted to a prince by the King, and that in the absence of a male heir it must return to the King. Dupuy echoed this view, arguing that the union was sacrosanct. If broken, the kingdom of France would fragment, as the errors of the Merovingian and Carolingian Kings had demonstrated. To Marie-Thérèse Allemande, these principles are built upon something even more fundamental. She argues that the jurists' concept of the kingdom shows an awareness of the characteristics of the modern state. Sovereignty over the kingdom was inalienable from the Crown, but there was a growing separation between the Kingdom and the royal person who administered it, such that the former had to survive fully intact after the latter had passed away. Burgundy must therefore not pass to a woman, otherwise, with her marriage to a foreign prince, France would break up.

²⁷ These views are best expressed in a document dated June 1478, in which the King gave instructions to his ambassador Yves de la Tillaye about how royal policy should be justified during the forthcoming meeting with the King of England; Plancher, IV, *preuves* no.283.

²⁸ On this and the following paragraph, see the extremely useful article by M.-T. Allemande 'La réversion du duché de Bourgogne au royaume de France vue à travers des mémoires contemporains' in *Cinq centième anniversaire*, pp.207-35.

Louis, however, felt that these arguments did not constitute sufficient grounds to justify his actions by themselves. In May 1478, he issued a proclamation in which he accused the deceased Duke of treason, disloyalty, disobedience and rebelliousness, in the light of which he had forfeited all rights as Duke of Burgundy.²⁹ The King's instructions to his ambassador in England, Yves de la Tillaye, contained similar sentiments. La Tillaye was required to inform Edward IV that Charles had committed crimes of *lèse-majesté* against his lord, the King, and that his daughter Mary had attempted to usurp the lands which must by right revert to the Crown, and in doing so had waged open warfare against her sovereign lord. Louis was therefore in no sense the aggressor, but was merely attempting to protect his rights.³⁰

For their part, the Burgundians developed a series of counter-arguments designed to discredit the King's declared rights over Burgundy. An early indication of the forthcoming political and legal conflict was given in a letter sent by Mary of Burgundy to the Council of Dijon on 23 January 1477, in which she urged her Burgundian subjects to uphold their allegiance to her and resist the advances of the French. She justified her rights to the succession of the Duchy:

Vous estes bien informez que le Duché de Bourgogne ne fut oncques du domaine de la couronne de France, mais estoit en ligne d'autre nom et d'autres armes, quand par la mort du jeune duc Philipppe [de Rouvre], elle vint et echeu au Roy Jean [II] comme son cousin germain du costé et ligne dont la Duché procedoit, *et laquelle fut après lui donnée à monseigneur le duc Philippe [le Hardi] son fils, pour lui et toute sa posterité quelconque, et n'est aucunement de la nature des appanages de France.* Aussi le Comté de Charrolais fut acquis par mondit seigneur le duc Philippe du Conte d'Armagnac. Et les Comtés de Macon et d'Auxerre ont esté transportés par le traité d'Arras à feu monseigneur mon ayeul [Philippe le Bon] pour lui et ses hoirs *masles et femelles* descendans de lui, lesquelles choses ce fait ne l'avez, vous remonstrerez, et oultre que j'ay envoyé devers

²⁹ Plancher, IV, *preuves* no.280.

³⁰ See n.27.

le Roy et se mettent les choses en communication et appointement; car le Roy fait savoir qu'il ne me veut rien oster de mon héritage.³¹

These points, which were probably representative of the most radically anti-French section of the Burgundian court, laid the groundwork for the justification of Mary's rights. An early piece of propagandist literature was printed at Bruges in 1477 or 1478 and entitled *La Deffense de Msgr. le Duc et Madame la Duchesse d'Austriche et de Bourgongne*³² Its author is unknown, but his apparent knowledge of chancery documents suggests that he came from Maximilian's household, and it is conceivable that he was commissioned to write the work by the court. Its editors have indeed suggested that it may have been produced after the signing of the truce of 1478 as a manifesto to be circulated throughout Mary's lands.³³ It starts with a historical introduction which discusses the beginnings of the Franco-Burgundian conflict. Louis' disgraceful conduct against Mary and Maximilian is then fiercely denounced, and the author ends with a vibrant appeal for the population at large to support Mary and Maximilian. A similar piece of literature, entitled *Exhortation d'Antonio Gratia Dei aux sujets de Maximilian d'Austrice pour combattre les français* was printed at Louvain in 1479.³⁴ It contained an appeal to the subjects of Mary and Maximilian to take up arms in support of the Archduke in his conflict with the French. Its author was a *frère mineur* in the service of Maximilian who was to become 'professeur extraordinaire de théologie' at Louvain University in 1479, although he left Maximilian's service four years later.

³¹ Mary's letter to the Council of Dijon is published in Plancher, IV, *preuves* no.269.

³² The work is published, with editorial comment on which the following remarks are based, in Picot & Stein, *Recueil des pièces historiques*, pp.213-60.

³³ Ibid., pp.213-14.

³⁴ On it, see *ibid.*

The Burgundian literature of these years, however, included other works with a more subtle message than these rallying calls to arms. The best example is the work of Jean d'Auffay, a *maître de requêtes* in the service of Mary of Burgundy.³⁵ It contained an attempt to defend Mary's rights to her inheritance and to discredit the claims of the Crown.³⁶ The argument was based on the assumption that the inheritance was a corporal possession, very much linked to the person who wielded authority over it. To some observers, this fusion of the territory and its ruler can be interpreted as a traditionally feudal concept which contrasts with the more 'modern' notion of the indivisible kingdom envisaged by the French jurists.³⁷

More specifically, Jean d'Auffay justified Mary's rights on three basic principles. First, he argued, the Crown's claim that Charles the Bold had failed to honour his feudal obligations, and therefore forfeited all rights in his French territories, did not apply to his daughter. The annexation of the duchy was the response to a personal dispute, and the King had no right to continue pursuing his vendetta against Mary. Second, the Duchy of Burgundy was not an appanage of France, but a fief, separate from the royal domain. John II's uniting of Burgundy with the Crown in 1361 had subsequently been annulled with the granting of the duchy to Philip the Bold. On this point, d'Auffay appears to have taken his lead from the sentiments expressed by Mary in her letter to the Council of Dijon, though he had developed these significantly.³⁸ Third, he stated that the inheritance could pass to a female successor. He cited the examples of John II of France, who had held the duchy

³⁵ The work survives in numerous manuscripts, including B.R. ms. 5022-7; and B.N. ms. fr. 6874, the best contemporary source.

³⁶ For a useful summary of his main points, see Allemande, pp.212-20.

³⁷ This is the view of Allemande, p.211.

³⁸ See Mary's letter, above n.31.

through his mother, Jeanne, and Alphonse de Poitiers, whose inheritance had only passed to the Crown in 1284 thanks to the King's being the nearest living relative to Alphonse. The concept that women were excluded from the inheritance of landed property was, according to d'Auffay, foreign to the Kingdom of France and could only be applied in certain specific cases, of which Mary's was not one.

The sophistication of both sides' arguments, as well as the very different sets of premises on which each was built, ensured that this would not be an easy issue to resolve. Indeed, the fate of the Duchy of Burgundy was the main political controversy that existed between France and Charles' successors for a decade and a half, and its recovery was among Maximilian's objectives during the 1480s.³⁹ The issue was quietly omitted by the Treaty of Senlis, and the inclusion of a statement that both the King and Archduke would be permitted 'à poursuivre par voie amiable ou de justice et non autrement tels droits et actions qu'ils prétendent avoir es choses qui ne sont appointées par cette paix'⁴⁰ is almost certainly an acknowledgement of the fact that disagreement had not been fully eradicated. In late 1493, Charles VIII felt the issue to be sufficiently urgent to undertake a high-profile tour of the principal cities of Burgundy, during which he re-iterated his rights to the Duchy, while a letter from Lodovico Sforza of Milan to Erasme Brasca written the following year seems to confirm Maximilian's continued interest in the recovery of the Duchy.⁴¹ As late as 1496, the Archdeacon of Anais, Raimond Péraud, urged Charles VIII to prepare for a

³⁹ T. Labande-Mailfert, 'Autour du traité de Senlis: la Bourgogne en question' in *Cinq centième anniversaire*, pp.249-68. To her, Maximilian's ultimate failure to regain the Duchy was because of his inability to promote Philippe le Beau as its true heir. Philippe personified the house of Burgundy, but to the French Maximilian represented the house of Austria, and was therefore a dangerous, imperial threat to the framework of the Kingdom.

⁴⁰ See above, ch.6 n.13; Labande-Mailfert, p.256.

⁴¹ Labande-Mailfert, pp.265-6.

crusade by making peace with Maximilian, even if it meant the surrender of the Duchy.⁴²

More generally, Charles' successors continued to use the title 'Duke of Burgundy' to the end of the fifteenth century and beyond. It was upheld by Charles V, who continued to challenge the French to surrender the duchy to the Habsburgs down to his final acceptance of Francis I's rights to it in the Peace of Cambrai signed in August 1529.⁴³

The issue of the Duchy of Burgundy was therefore very much alive when Olivier de la Marche began work on the 'Introduction', and his text gives some fascinating insights into his own views on the matter and on the relationship that existed between Burgundy and France. In the first place, he made it very plain that he assumed Philippe le Beau to be the only true heir to the Duchy and the rest of Charles the Bold's territories, and in his stated objectives he emphasised that one of his principal aims was to illustrate the means by which this had come about.⁴⁴ In a later chapter of *Mémoires*, he wrote:

il [Philippe le Beau] estoit en l'eage de trois on quatre ans; et lors mourut et trespasa de ce siècle feu de noble memoire madame Marie de Bourgoigne, sa mere, et par celle mort fut successeur ce josne archiduc de toutes les seigneuries appartenant à la maison de Bourgoigne, ou il avoit cinq duchiez et dix-sept contez, toutes terres grandes et seigneurieuses, comme la duchié de Bourgoigne [etc.].⁴⁵

⁴² Ibid., p.267.

⁴³ M. Rady, *The Emperor Charles V*, pp.40-1.

⁴⁴ See above, n.7. Elsewhere, la Marche informed Philippe '... [vous] estes demouré seul fils et heretier de droit en toutes ces belles et grandes seignouries, combien que aucunes voyes vous soient plusieurs seignouries ostées', *Mémoires*, I, p.40; and on his reinforcement of this view, see p.94.

⁴⁵ *Mémoires*, III, p.316.

Louis XI's decision to invade the Duchy was therefore to be condemned. This action was, la Marche insisted, in breach of the terms of the nine-year truce of 1475, and the premise on which the King's presence in Charles' lands was justified was a false one:

le Roy de France ne tint riens de la treve de ix ans faict avecques le duc Charles. Mais prestement, soubz faine de vouloir estre protecteur et garde des biens de ladicte Marie, sa parente et filleuille, soubz ombre d'amistié et à main forte, il prist en sa main tous les pays de Bourgoingne, duchié, conté visconté d'Ausonne, la seigneurie de Salins [etc] ... Et ainsi ceste grande et noble ducesse se trouva guerroyée par ce très grant et puissant Roy de France.⁴⁶

In a rare moment of subjectivity, la Marche vehemently condemned Louis' action and argued that God would right this injustice:

Et combien que le Roy de France, par puissance et par haulteur, ayt prins et mis en sa main plusieurs d'icelles seigneuries, toutesffois c'est à tort et sans cause, et Dieu qui l'a permis, quant il luy plaira il les rendra à celluy qui a le droit.⁴⁷

'He who has the right' is certainly Philippe le Beau. Philippe was declared to be the descendant of and natural successor to the Valois dukes:

Le duc Philippe [le Hardi], filz du Roy de France, fut nostre premier duc deppuis le temps que le Roy Philippe de Valois succeda à ladicte duchié, par estre yssu d'une fille de Bourgoingne; *et luy vint la succession par femme comme il est assez notoire et publicq par tout le monde.*⁴⁸

John II had received the duchy through his mother, Jeanne de Bourgogne, the daughter of the Duke Robert II.⁴⁹ La Marche's insistence that he acquired it through a female link is

⁴⁶ *Mémoires*, I, p.154.

⁴⁷ *Mémoires*, III, p.316.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.314; la Marche has made an error here, since the King who succeeded to the duchy was actually John II.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.314 n.2.

extremely significant. He was attempting to counter the argument that Mary of Burgundy could not inherit the duchy, and in doing so to invalidate the arguments of the Crown. He was probably aware of the ideas of Jean d'Auffay and, although no expert on legal affairs, he had clearly absorbed this key point. Having accepted the validity of Philippe's claim to the Duchy, la Marche then emphasised the direct means by which he had come to this succession:

de luy [Philippe le Hardi] vint le duc Jehan, qui fut surnommé Jehan sans Peur. Du duc Jehan vint le bon duc Philippe, qui fut surnommé Philippe l'Assuré. Du duc Philippe vint le duc Charles, qui fut surnommé Charles le Travaillant. Du duc Charles vint madame Marie, qui espousa ce noble prince Maximilian, archiduc d'Austriche, lequel noble duc nous appellons Maximilian Cœur d'acier. De l'archiduc Maximilian vient l'archiduc Philippe, que nous appellons Philippe Croy conseil. Et aussi j'ay rendu compte de tous les ducz de Bourgoingne venuz à ma cognoissance.⁵⁰

Elsewhere, la Marche gave a detailed history of Burgundy from the reign of Philip the Bold to his own day.⁵¹ In this, he showed some concern with establishing a kind of cult of the house of Burgundy, which had been founded by Philip the Bold and had passed to a number of charismatic dukes before coming to the possession of Philippe le Beau. A clear justification of Philippe's rights was one of his foremost objectives in the 'Introduction', and in this sense the work was directly related to some of the pressing political issues of the period.

La Marche's vigorous defence of Philippe's rights gives rise to a further question. Given his apparent awareness of the ideas of Jean d'Auffay, how far did he accept the idea that Burgundy was not an appanage of France, but a semi-autonomous fief? And by

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.315. La Marche fully accepted the right of Charles successors to take the title 'Duke of Burgundy', and this is part of the title given to Philippe le Beau in the 'Introduction's dedication, *Mémoires*, I, p.8.

⁵¹ See his account of Valois Burgundy from the accession of Philip the Bold to his own day in *Mémoires*, I, p.8.

extension, how far did he believe that Burgundy should be seen as a sovereign political entity, independent from the Kingdom of France?

The question of the constitutional character of fifteenth-century Burgundy and its relationship to the Kingdom of France has been widely discussed, and the only objective here is to shed some light on la Marche's conception of the issue.⁵² The reign of Charles the Bold is often seen to coincide with the period when anti-French feeling was at its height in Burgundy. Thomas Basin wrote of this duke:

Il voulait aussi être élevé à la dignité de roi des Bourguignons, en relevant cet antique royaume de Bourgogne dont des générations de princes avaient accepté la disparition ou la suppression. Il voulait être non plus duc, mais roi de Bourgogne et, pour y parvenir, il assiégea l'empereur et son entourage de toute sorte d'instances.⁵³

This view is apparently backed up by the contents of the speech given by Charles to the Burgundian *États* in the ducal palace at Dijon in 1474, in which the Duke invoked the ideal of the ancient Kingdom of Burgundy which had long ago been usurped by the Kings of France, and reduced to the status of duchy.⁵⁴

This anti-French stance was not, however, a view that was universally shared at the court of Burgundy. Others pointed out that the Valois dukes were descended from the Kings of France, a highly prestigious royal dynasty whose long association with the ideas of literacy, chivalry and the crusade was very much prized by the dukes. Many therefore

⁵² In the following paragraphs, this question will be considered on a political level only. For a discussion of la Marche's conception of Burgundy's historical evolution over the centuries, and its changing relationship with the Kingdom of France, see the following chapter.

⁵³ Basin, *Histoire de Louis XI*, II, pp.179-81.

⁵⁴ P. Quarré, 'La joyeuse entrée de Charles le Téméraire à Dijon in 1474' in *Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 51 (1969), pp.326-40.

opposed the rupturing of ties with France. The dukes' own historiographer, Chastellain, showed little enthusiasm for a separate Burgundy. He was, in his own words, 'léal François avec mon prince', 'François de naissance', and declared 'je n'ay amour à region chrestienne que à celle de France.'⁵⁵ As for la Marche, it is certainly arguable that his rejection of French claims to the Duchy of Burgundy and his vigorous defence of Philippe le Beau's rights show him to be acting as a good Burgundian instead of a Frenchman.⁵⁶ His insistence that Louis XI's breaking of the terms of the Treaty of Péronne had absolved Charles of 'toute fidelité et hommage qui luy povoient appartenir pour luy et pour ses hoirs Roys de France au prouffit du duc et ses hoirs'⁵⁷ would appear to back this assumption up. Nevertheless, this statement applies only to the function of the *Parlement* of Malines, which had removed the power of its Paris counterpart, and should be seen in this context alone. It is intended as a means to justify Charles' creation of his much-criticised *Parlement*, and is not intended as a definitive statement about the overall relationship between king and duke. Furthermore, la Marche reluctantly accepted that with the demise of Charles in 1477, the *Parlement* had to be abolished.⁵⁸

More generally, it appears that despite his defence of Philippe's rights to Burgundy, la Marche did not share the radically anti-French status that might be associated with Jean d'Auffay and others. Far from viewing Burgundy as an independent kingdom or 'state', he instead urged Philippe le Beau to rule as a French prince, and in doing so to pay homage to

⁵⁵ Chastellain, quoted by Hardy, p.87.

⁵⁶ It might be suggested that la Marche's claim to be 'natif de Bourgogne' provides further evidence, although I do not believe this to be the case. In the context in which la Marche was using the term 'natif', it merely referred to the place in which he was born, and this is not necessarily to suggest that he saw Burgundy as being separate from the Kingdom of France. See above n.6.

⁵⁷ *Mémoires*, I, p.132.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.133.

the Crown much as Philip the Good had done several decades earlier. In his 'Introduction', la Marche consistently portrayed Philip the Good as a loyal Frenchman, as demonstrated with his reconciliation with Charles VII at Arras in 1435:

Ce bon duc Phelippe soustint la guerre contre le Roy de France XXII ans. Il estoit allyé des Anglois et aydié, et prosperoit luy et ses pays en guerre; mais en continuant et approuchant ce darnier nom à luy donné le bon duc, il se laissa legierement conseiller à faire paix, comme celluy qui de sa nature fut vray, bon et entier Francois. Et mis en son front, au parfond de son coer et devant ses yeulx, le bien et l'honneur qui luy venoit d'estre yssu de la très crestienne et royale maison de France ... la paix fut faicte en la ville d'Arras entre le Roy Charles de France, septiesme de ce nom, et le duc Philippe de Bourgoingne ...⁵⁹

Subsequent events are related in such a way as to emphasise Philip's pro-French position. In 1436, he had laid siege to Calais 'pour monstrier que ceste paix n'estoit point fainte de sa part et qu'il vouloit se monstrier Francoix.'⁶⁰ Elsewhere, his protection of the exiled Dauphin in the late 1450s is interpreted as being less of a challenge to the Crown as an attempt to foster good relations with its heir, and to actually preserve French unity:

s'il [le Dauphin] n'estoit aydié, porté et soustenu en ceste vostre maison, il passeroit en Angleterre, et s'alieroit aux anciens ennemis du royaume de France pour préserver sa personne, dont il estoit en singuliere doubte. Le bon duc, cognoissant que c'estoit l'heretier de France et son seigneur apparant, de nativité, de nom et de plusieurs seignouries, le rechupt en ses pays.⁶¹

Philip's pro-French stance was to be praised and had, according to la Marche, led to many years of peace between Burgundy and France. He therefore urged Philippe le Beau to

⁵⁹ *Mémoires*, I, pp.98-9.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.100.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.103.

follow the example of his namesake.⁶² The peace had been broken during the reign of Louis XI, and la Marche was in no doubt as to where the blame for this lay:

le Roy Loys de France ne recognu pas bien les biens et les honneurs qu'il avoit receu en ceste maison, mais traficqua debas entre les serviteurs du duc et de monsieur de Charolois, son filz, [dont le debat vint entre le pere et le filz], qui fort estonna ceste maison.⁶³

Despite the recent treachery of the French, however, Philippe was urged to remain loyal to the Crown:

Ce prince [Philip the Good] fut moult valliant, doux et debonnaire ... Prenez exemple d'ensievyr ses bonnes meurs, et jamais homme ne vous en dira note ne reproche, *et je prie à Dieu que ceulx qui ont l'administracion de ce noble et très crestien royaulme de France se conduisent sy bien et si raisonnablement envers vous et voz pays, que vous ayez cause de demourer bon et entier Franchois.*⁶⁴

This statement is crucial to an understanding of la Marche's outlook, and resolves any apparent inconsistency in his view of Burgundy's relationship to France. The implication is that the breakdown in Franco-Burgundian relations had been caused by the Crown's unjust conduct towards Burgundy, but given the advent of a more responsible administration in France, the rift could be healed. The death of Louis XI in 1483 may have given la Marche some cause for optimism, for there can be little doubt that it was the treachery of this king that he saw as being the root of the troubles.⁶⁵ With his death, la Marche assumed that

⁶² Ibid., p.100.

⁶³ Ibid., pp.104-5.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.100.

⁶⁵ See above n.47 and n.61. Throughout *Mémoires*, Louis is portrayed as a scheming, calculating figure who was obsessed with destroying the house of Burgundy. See, for example, his role in stirring rebellion in Liège in the late 1460s, *Mémoires*, I, pp.129-30, and at St. Quentin and Amiens in 1470, *ibid.*, p.130. Similarly, it was the King who broke the Treaty of Péronne leading to war between France and Burgundy in the 1470s, *ibid.*, p.133, and who encouraged the *États* of Flanders to revolt against the authority of Charles the Bold's successors, *ibid.*, pp.167-8.

Philippe le Beau might have the opportunity to conclude a lasting peace with France, much as Philip the Good had done in 1435 after a period of French treachery which had involved the murder of John the Fearless in 1419.⁶⁶

La Marche therefore recognised the injustices, as he saw them, that had been perpetrated against the house of Burgundy by the Crown, but sought a conciliatory settlement that would preserve the ties that existed between them. His 'Introduction' represents encouragement to Philippe le Beau to seek such a settlement. His apparent longing for a return to the situation that had existed under Philip the Good⁶⁷ could be interpreted as mere nostalgia, given the fact that this period had coincided with his boyhood at the court. Nevertheless, he may have been opposed to the aggressively anti-French position held by some during the reign of Charles the Bold,⁶⁸ and saw the accession of Philippe le Beau as an opportunity to create a more stable and peaceful relationship with the Crown.

The Political Background. 2. Flanders

If la Marche condemned the policies of the 'enemy from without' in and after 1477, then his attack on the 'enemy from within' was even more vehement. The *États* of Flanders had shown opposition to Maximilian's rule from the very beginning, and had risen in rebellion

⁶⁶ *Mémoires*, I, pp.86-7. La Marche's views on this episode are developed in *ibid.*, pp.196-9.

⁶⁷ La Marche pointed out that Philippe le Beau had been named after Philip the Good, *Mémoires*, III, p.352. He clearly hoped that his symbolic continuity would herald the return to the prosperity and tranquillity of the latter's reign.

⁶⁸ He does appear to have opposed certain elements of Charles the Bold's policies; see for example his apparent reservations about the Duke's warlike policies in *Mémoires*, I, p.145, although he mounted a defence of these. Also, see his apparent opposition to the bizarre decision to imprison the Duchess of Savoy in 1476, above, ch.1.

on an intermittent basis from 1477 down to their final capitulation in 1492.⁶⁹ These troubles, often seen as indicative of the ruin of Burgundy after 1477, stemmed from the refusal of the *États* to recognise Maximilian as the legitimate *mambour* to Philippe le Beau. While accepting Philippe as their 'prince naturel', they nevertheless argued that government should be exercised in his name by a Regency Council, which would consist of two representatives of the so-called Members of Flanders and two others to be appointed by the Archduke. This position was confirmed following the death of Mary of Burgundy in the Treaty of Arras (1482), which accepted the Council's authority and required Philippe to perform homage to the French Crown. The treaty also reasserted the rights of the Paris *Parlement* over Flemish affairs, thus confirming the County's status as an integral part of the kingdom. This settlement marked a low point for Maximilian's fortunes. His major problem was, in the judgement of Commynes, his foreign status:

Qui encores leur [Charles' subjects] a esté plus forte à porter, ceulx qui les deffendoient estoient gens estranges, qui naguères avoient esté leurs ennemys; c'estoient les Allemans.⁷⁰

There may be some validity to Commynes' statement. It is apparently backed up by an observation made by la Marche in the treatise *Advis au Roy des Romains Maximilian premier donné en l'an 1491 ... touchant le manière qu'on se doit comporter à l'occasion de rupture avec la France*, in which he conceded that Maximilian's difficulties stemmed in part from his being a 'prince estrangier'. He nevertheless justified Maximilian's actions as

⁶⁹ For the following summary of the main events, see Armstrong, 'The Burgundian Netherlands'; Blockmans, 'Autocratie ou polyarchie?', and his 'La position du comté de Flandres dans le royaume à la fin du XV siècle' in Chevalier & Contamine eds., *La France de la fin du XVe siècle*, pp.73-89; Weightman, chs.4-6; Hommel, *Marguerite d'York*; F. Hugenholtz, 'The 1477 Crisis in the Duke's Domains' in J.S. Bromley & E.H. Kossman eds., *Britain and the Netherlands*, II (Groningen 1964), pp.145-88.

⁷⁰ Commynes, II, p.155; see also his view that Maximilian's problems derived in part from his being in a foreign country, in *ibid.*, p.257.

being necessary because of the injustices that had been perpetrated against Philippe's inheritance.⁷¹

With the death of Louis XI in 1483, however, French royal policy became less interested in encouraging rebellion in Flanders, and this gave Maximilian an opportunity to pursue a more aggressive policy against the rebels. In September 1483 he dismissed the alternative government, and with the support of most of the other territories that comprised the Burgundian inheritance, launched a military offensive against the Flemish. In doing so, he forced the capitulation of Ghent and the hasty departure of the city's leaders in the summer of 1485. Philippe was released from his three-year captivity there, and was taken to the ducal palace at Malines. All charters and privileges granted to Flanders since 1477 were annulled according to the terms of the Treaty of Écluse, signed on 28 January 1485.

Temporarily victorious, Maximilian nevertheless attempted to re-open hostilities with the French. His failure to push back the French troops stationed on the frontiers of Flanders in 1486-7 led to his being discredited in the eyes of his subjects. Moreover, the Flemish *États* resented his decision to station troops in their country. In February 1488, terrified at the prospect of a German garrison being stationed in their city, the citizens of Bruges imprisoned Maximilian and appealed to the Paris *Parlement* over the validity of his regency. On 16 May, the so-called Peace of Bruges once again abolished Maximilian's regency. In exchange for this, the Archduke was released from captivity, but he immediately restarted military operations around Ghent. Civil war once again erupted with Maximilian's nephew, Albert Duke of Saxony, leading his campaign. Flemish hopes were crushed when the support they had enjoyed from the Crown was lost following the

⁷¹

Advis, in Stein, pp.232-5, esp. p.232.

armistice agreed by the King and Maximilian on 22 July 1489. Bruges capitulated in July 1490, starved into submission by Maximilian's blockade, and although Ghent continued to hold out for another two years, the city finally surrendered on 29 July 1492. The agreement reached in the Treaty of Cadsand brought in a new era of peace. By now, with Philippe le Beau approaching his majority, the issue of Maximilian's regency lost its urgency, and with Philippe's assumption of full power two years later, it ceased to exist altogether.

To those who might interpret 1477 as marking a historical watershed, these events can be seen to typify the chaos that arose with the collapse of Burgundy. Nevertheless, there are some important considerations to bear in mind. First, the County of Flanders was the only territory of all those ruled by Charles the Bold to have opposed Maximilian's regency, and even then they had unhesitatingly accepted Mary's rights to the County in 1477, and Philippe's in 1482. They had even agreed to allow Maximilian a consultative role over the decisions taken by the *États*. In general, hostility to his presence was confined to the three great cities of Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, and, even then, Ypres remained relatively loyal to him.⁷² Second, the attempts made by the Crown to bring Flanders under its direct jurisdiction ended in ultimate failure. The Crown was unable to destroy the sense of loyalty felt by the *États* to the house of Burgundy, and the stationing of troops on the frontier of the County did little to endear the French to its inhabitants.⁷³ Third, the constitutional

⁷² Blockmans, 'Autocratie ou polyarchie?', pp.264-8.

⁷³ The issue of French policy towards Flanders after 1477 has been discussed by Blockmans, 'La position ...'. He argues that the failure of the French to absorb the County was due to a number of factors, such as Flemish loyalty to Charles the Bold's successors, and opposition to the French military presence on their frontiers. Furthermore, Louis XI's attracting the support of the three great cities, through the extension of trading monopolies, was achieved at the expense of the support of the rest of the County. The unstable regimes of Ghent and Bruges made them subject to internal strife, and therefore shifting loyalties. The French military presence was half-hearted, and became even more so with the accession of Charles VIII, who never shared his father's obsessive desire to destroy his old enemy's inheritance. Whatever the reasons the failure of the French to absorb Flanders does little to support the concept that after 1477, Charles' territories were neatly packaged up and divided between France and the Empire.

changes of 1477 were far from revolutionary, and all the changes that were made were subsequently revoked by the Treaty of Cadsand. This treaty broke the power of Ghent, and placed the city in a position of subjection very similar to that of 1453 as defined by the Treaty of Gavre.⁷⁴ The County's status in relation to the house of Burgundy and the Crown did not change substantially. Blockmans has furthermore suggested that the causes of the upheavals of the 1480s may not have been exclusively due to the death of Charles the Bold. He has shown that from c.1470, the prosperity enjoyed by the County under Philip the Good had begun to decline, leading to economic difficulties in the following decades. Charles' wars had placed a further strain on already stretched resources. The economic contraction of Flanders, which gave rise to tension and open rebellion during the 1480s, had roots that stretched back much earlier than 1477.⁷⁵

Contemporaries did not of course share the benefit of hindsight enjoyed by historians, and these long-term economic changes may not have been evident, even though their immediate effects were. To la Marche, the cause of the uprisings was the weakening of ducal authority that had resulted from Charles' death, and the desire of some of his subjects to 'ravoir vieux privileges et nouveaux à leur plaisir.'⁷⁶ When he came to write the 'Introduction', the problem of the Flemish rebels was far from being settled. This becomes clear from his opening remarks in which he expressed the hope that Philippe le Beau would be able to overcome the threat posed by them.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Blockmans, 'Autocratie ou polyarchie?', p.306.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.311.

⁷⁶ See above n.58.

⁷⁷ See above n.18.

In keeping with the author's stated intentions, the 'Introduction' contains a defence of Philippe's rights to Flanders, as well as those of Maximilian as his *mambour*. The rebels, for their part, are fiercely condemned as 'les mauvais'⁷⁸ and 'vos enemies et rebelles'.⁷⁹ La Marche's objective was to explain how the troubles had arisen and to warn Philippe of the errors committed by Maximilian that had allowed it to happen:

Prenez exemple de jamais [ne] donner auctorité sur vous à ceulx qui doivent vivre et regner soubz vostre main. Mais je conseille bien que vous leur devez demander conseil et ayde pour vos grans affaires conduire et soustenir. Ce bon prince, soubz [bon] espoir et fiance qu'il deust avoir grant ayde de pecune d'iceulx leur permist et souffrit rompre et refraire son estat, oster, mettre et desmettre les officiers domesticques de sa maison; mais assez il congnt leur vindication et oppinion. Et toutesfois le bon prince en endura moult longement, et tellement qu'ilz gouvernerent la pluspart de Flandres par le nom des membres de Flandres, et se porterent du Roy de France, et tant luy complurent qu'ilz contraindirent leur prince à marier madame vostre seur à monseigneur le daulphin, à present Roy de France. Et luy donnerent en mariage tant des belles parties et tant des grandes seigneuries qu'il sambloit mieulx qu'ils vouloient affoiblir leur prince que le faire puissant, et, si tost que feu de noble memoire madame vostre mere fut trespassee, ilz voulurent gouverner tous les pays à vous appartenans, soubz tiltre et couleur d'aucuns privileges qu'ilz dient avoir. Et se mirent hors de toute l'obeyssance vostre pere, et refuserent tous deniers, rentes et aydes, et avoient en leurs mains vostre noble personne. Et, soubz umbre de vous, faisoient guerre à vostre noble pere et en vostre nom. Et combien que le Roy de France eust paix et alliance avecques vous par le traictié et par le mariage fait en l'an IIIIxx et deux, toutesfois le Roy et les Franchois furent bien joyeux de ce debat, et par subtil et cauteleux moyen favoriserent les Flamens, lors ennemis de vostre pere, à leur pover à l'encontre de luy.⁸⁰

This statement comes close to representing the central purpose of the 'Introduction', and provides the clearest indication of all about the identity of the enemies from within and without as well as the nature of the injustices perpetrated against Philippe

⁷⁸ *Mémoires*, I, p.170.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.171.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.163-4.

le Beau. It is a highly subjective and partisan account addressed directly to the Archduke, and implies that Philippe ought to take steps to right the injustices.

In the last section of *Mémoires*, written after the 'Introduction' was completed, la Marche gave full vent to his anger over the conduct of the Flemings. Comparing Maximilian to St. Eustace, whose children were held captive by a wolf and a lion,⁸¹ he condemned the 'evil' activities of rebel leaders like Jan Coppenolle,⁸² and mocked the idolised, god-like status apparently bestowed on Guillaume Rijm.⁸³ He was fiercely critical of the behaviour of the people of Bruges in 1487:

et au regard de ceulx de Bruges, ilz firent mourir autant qu'ilz en peurent attaindre; et pour monstrier leur mauvaise volenté, ilz firent crier que tout homme serviteur du Roy des Rommains, qui voudroit partir hors de Bruges, se trovast, en une heure nommée, sur le vieil marchié, et on leur donroit passaige; et pour ce faire s'assemblerent un grant tas des plus mauvais garçons de la ville, et trouverent sur ledit vieil marchié gens de tous estatz, qui cuydoient partir hors ladicte ville, comme on l'avoit crié. Mais iceulx mauvais garçons frapperent dessus, en meurdrirent à leur volenté, et ceulx qui peurent eschapper nagarent le fossé. *Et voilà la justice et la raison qui, en ce temps, regnoit à Bruges.*⁸⁴

This condemnation is contrasted with the lavish praise heaped upon Maximilian:

Quantz batailles et recontres il a soubstenus et portés en sa personne, et mesmement venant de ses subjectz! jusques à estre prisonnier et detenu en prison fermée par ceulx de Bruges, et en sa presence murdrir, gehenner et decapiter ses loyaulx officiers et aultres, et les plus grans de sa maison livrez ès mains de ses ennemys! ... toutesffois ce Cueur d'acier demeura tousjours en la bonne esperance et fiance de Dieu, et tant endura et actendit sa meilleure fortune qu'il eschappa de ce dangier, et luy et ses serviteurs dessuditz.⁸⁵

⁸¹ *Mémoires*, III, p.266.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.290.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.273.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.291.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.313-14.

Given the author's political leanings, this work would have enjoyed an enthusiastic reception at the court of Philippe le Beau, and there can be little doubt that it was la Marche's intention to defend the rights of the Archduke. His treatment of the Flemings was, however, bound to cause offence in certain quarters. In 1566, a printed edition of *Mémoires* was published at Ghent with editorial footnotes by one Jean Lautens de Gand.⁸⁶

Most of these footnotes consisted of points of clarification, corrections, additions and observations on the text. There are however several instances where the editor, certainly a patriotic Fleming, allowed himself to indulge in some subjective criticism of la Marche's work, particularly in the sections on the wars in Flanders.

Jean Lautens disputed the idea that Maximilian had been entitled to assume automatic *mambourie* to Philippe le Beau - it seems that the issue could provoke controversy almost a century later - 'pour la crainte qu'on eulst que le régime et l'administration desdicts pais en particulier et en général ne tombait pas par le moyen es mains d'estrangier.'⁸⁷ As a result the Regency Council was created to maintain the identity of the County and to uphold peace, and la Marche's criticism of its intention was therefore incorrect. Furthermore, with regard to Maximilian's victory over Ghent in 1485, Jean Lautens rejected the view that the citizens were happy to submit to the Archduke's authority, preferring to emphasise the carnage that took place.⁸⁸ Elsewhere, Lautens was openly critical of la Marche's selective approach to his writing of history. He cited the author's failure to discuss Maximilian's aggressive military assault on Flanders in 1486-7

⁸⁶ Olivier de la Marche, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Lautens de Gand (Ghent 1566). The editor's footnotes have also been reproduced in the English translation of *Memoirs* by G. Grace and D.M. Stuart.

⁸⁷ *Mémoires*, ed. Jean Lautens, p.624.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.633.

and the resentment and dislocation this had caused, before suggesting that the omission of this kind of detail was entirely due to the prejudice of an author whose sole objective appeared to be the pursuit of 'une perpetuelle guerre à l'encontre l'honneur et bonne renommée des villes dessusdits.'⁸⁹

If some historians have perhaps failed to detect the bias that exists in the 'Introduction', this editor certainly did not. Finally, Lautens questioned the notion that it was the actions of Flemings that had caused the upheavals of the 1480s as la Marche had clearly believed. He preferred to place the blame on those 'Burgundians' who had defected to the Crown, an issue on which, Lautens stressed, la Marche was silent since he was himself a 'Burgundian'.⁹⁰ This statement suggests an awareness on Lautens' part that there was a huge identity gulf between himself, a Fleming, and la Marche, a Burgundian, and he demonstrates no sense of shared identity or common nationhood existing between these two. Lautens was Flemish and la Marche, like Maximilian, was ultimately 'un étranger'.

It is therefore apparent that la Marche's 'Introduction' is in part a political work. It contains a justification of Philippe le Beau's rights in the face of hostility from the twin menace of France and Flanders. It is, in this sense, a response to a specific set of political circumstances, and its significance cannot be fully understood without an appreciation of these circumstances. La Marche expressed the hope that Philippe le Beau would regain that which had been lost and there is a clear message to him concerning the need to emulate his predecessors' heroic deeds in order to bring this about.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.638.

⁹⁰ Grace, pp.611-12, vol.15.

A final point for consideration concerns the role of la Marche himself in the events he recounted. Why should he be so anxious for Philippe to defend his inheritance? Throughout, there is little information given on the author's part in the events being described, yet his career was inextricably tied up with them. At one point, he informed Philippe that the survival of his inheritance had depended entirely on the loyalty shown by significant numbers of nobles and others. The appropriate passage is worth re-quoting:

elle [Marie] fut gardée et servie d'aucuns nobles personnages et autres dont cy aprez serez adverty à la poursuyte de mes memoires, et dont vous devez rendre grace à Dieu *et à eulx et recognoistre leurs benefices et services.*⁹¹

La Marche's apparent intention here is to draw to Philippe's attention the fact that his survival had been entirely due to the actions of those nobles and others who had chosen not to desert his mother in her hour of need. These men, he implies, had to be rewarded for their loyalty. While their identity is left unspecified, it is inconceivable that la Marche was not firmly including himself among them, and in this sense he was not writing the 'Introduction' solely as a means of serving Philippe in the present, but to remind him of services already rendered.⁹² In doing so, he may have been intriguing for material reward, and as we have seen he certainly received countless gifts, pensions and grants of land and office from the Habsburgs. He may, however, have also seen this as an opportunity to write himself into the history books, as a man whose loyalty to the house of Burgundy had helped ensure its survival in the most adverse circumstances.

⁹¹ *Mémoires*, I, p.143.

⁹² Molinet, who also placed much hope in Philippe le Beau's ability to revive past Burgundian greatness, acknowledged the role of Olivier de la Marche in bringing this about. Philippe is described as 'ung second duc Philippe ressuscité au monde: et aveuc ce qu'il estoit naturellement enclin à bonnes meurs et seigneureuses conditions, il avoit personnages de meismes, comme sire Olivier de la Marche, son grand maistre d'hostel, et aultres qui à ce l'ensengnoient et moriginoyent.' Molinet, I, p.527.

CHAPTER 7. The First Book of Mémoires in its Historiographical Context

As well as offering some insight into the contemporary perceptions of the political world of the late fifteenth century, la Marche's 'Introduction' holds a significant place in late medieval historiography, and a reading of it sheds some light on the way in which contemporaries viewed the Burgundy of the Valois and Habsburg dukes in terms of its identity, its historical development, and its relationship to the Kingdom of France.

Austria and the Trojan Myth

La Marche began his work with an account of the earliest of Philippe le Beau's Austrian ancestors who, he claimed, were directly descended from the Trojan king, Priam the Great.¹ The notion of royal households or dynasties being descended from Trojans is far from being an original concept, and was a feature of many historiographical works from various parts of Europe throughout the Middle Ages. Professor Hay has written about the 'general acceptance from the twelfth century onwards of the Trojan origins of the British and other continental peoples ...'² Moreover, Professor Hay has questioned the significance of perceived Trojan ancestry:

... it would be wrong to suggest that these matters bulk large in the medieval chronicle. They do not. More often, they are included as perfunctory tributes to a saga tradition, and to the genealogical preoccupations of the historical books of the Old Testament ...³

¹ *Mémoires*, I, pp.17-22. On this aspect of the 'Introduction', see the useful commentary by M.S. Hardy, pp.18-37.

² D. Hay, *Europe, the Emergence of an Idea* (Edinburgh 1957), pp.48-50.

³ *Ibid.*, p.50.

Without doubt, some fifteenth century works of history do appear to use the Trojan myth as little more than a convenient starting point as well as to acknowledge the medieval concern with the formation of comprehensive and complete genealogies. This can be seen to apply to Edmund de Dynter's *Chroniques des Ducs de Brabant*⁴ or Jean de Wavrin's *Chroniques et Anciennes Histoires de Grande Bretagne*,⁵ whose reworking of the Trojan origin of the kings of Britain amounted to little more than an embellished copy of the version found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century *History of the Kings of Britain*, an enduring version of the Trojan origin of the Britons.⁶ But in other works the myth contained the potential to be adapted to specific political or cultural points. Bernard Guenée has pointed out its value as one of the component parts of the history of a nation, arguing that the concept of a common Trojan ancestor played a significant role in the formation of a coherent French identity during the late medieval period.⁷

The idea that the various parts of Europe were occupied and settled by fugitives from the collapsing city of Troy was very well established by la Marche's lifetime. An embryonic version of it existed as early as the first century BC in the famous *Aeneid* of Virgil (70-19 BC), which tells of the flight of the Trojan prince Aeneas to Italy where he

⁴ Ed. P.F.X. de Ram, 3 vols (Brussels 1854-60).

⁵ Jean de Wavrin, *Chroniques et anciennes histoires de Grand Bretagne*, ed. W. Hardy.

⁶ Geoffrey of Monmouth. *History of the Kings of Britain*, ed. L. Thorpe (Harmondsworth 1966), esp. pp.53-74. Geoffrey described the coming of Brutus, grandson of the Trojan fugitive Aeneas, to the island of Britain. According to his narrative, Brutus, an illegitimate son of Sylvius, was expelled from Italy, and became the chosen leader of a group of Trojan fugitives, who had been imprisoned by Pandrasus, King of the Greeks. He received a prophecy from the goddess Diana which told him of an island beyond the realms of Gaul, once occupied by giants, but now empty and ready for Brutus and his followers to colonise. He therefore set off with his followers, passing the African coast and the pillars of Hercules, and going round the west coast of Gaul. They finally reached Britain, where Brutus defeated the last of the giants, and built his Troia Nova on the banks of the Thames. With this, Geoffrey succeeded in creating an enduring legend of the origin of the Britons.

⁷ B. Guenée, 'Etat et nation au Moyen Age' in *Revue historique*, 237 (1967), pp.17-70.

and his followers laid the foundations of the city of Rome.⁸ It is perhaps significant that Virgil's work was very much in vogue among late medieval literary circles, and Olivier de la Marche was certainly familiar with it.⁹ It was not however until the mid seventh century that a direct connection was made between a Trojan fugitive and a specific European nation. The chronicle of Fredegar¹⁰ stated that the first King of the Franks was the Trojan king, Priam the Great. His followers split and a group led by Francio moved into the region between the Rhine and the Danube where they established a settlement, and Fredegar accepted this as being the origins of the Franks. The idea re-appeared about a century later in the anonymous *Liber Historiae Francorum* (c.727),¹¹ which also suggested that the Frankish people were descended from the westward-moving fugitives of Troy. The *Liber* developed the legend with a reference to the city of Sicambria in Pannonia, which was said to have been founded by those Trojans who were identified with the original Franks. This idea echoes the tradition voiced in Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks*, which suggested that the original Franks had come westward from somewhere in Pannonia.¹² There they annihilated the Alain race in recognition of which the Emperor Valentinien gave them ten years of freedom and named them Franks in acknowledgement of their fierce nature. According to the *Liber*, the original Franks emerged from the first generation of Trojan fugitives and particularly King Priam and Antenor, while to Fredegar the

⁸ Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. ed. W.F. Jackson Knight (Harmondsworth 1958).

⁹ See for example *Mémoires*, I, pp.114.

¹⁰ Ed. Monod (Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études, II, fasc. 63, 1885). On Fredegar, see E. Faral, *La légende arthurienne*, 3 vols (Paris 1929), I, pp.169-81; J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Fredegar and the History of France' in his *The Long-Haired Kings* (London 1962); and see his edition of *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar* (Edinburgh 1960).

¹¹ On which see Faral, pp.281-5.

¹² Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks* ed. L. Thorpe (Harmondsworth 1974), p.125; on Priam's descendants, see *ibid.*, pp.120-1.

descendants of this generation, especially Francio, should be seen as the original Franks. The *Liber* also considered the fate of the descendants of Priam and Antenor, particularly Marcomir and Sunno who were pushed westwards by the Roman advance towards the Rhine. This tradition appears to have had a greater influence on subsequent writers than that expressed by Fredegar, and Faral has noted that some fifty manuscripts have survived.¹³

From this period onwards the notion that princely and royal households over western Europe could boast Trojan origins emerged in a number of forms in a range of literary works. Often, the notion could be manipulated towards a specific political or cultural point. An interesting example is *De Moribus et Actis Primorum Normanniae Ducum* written by the Norman Dudo de St. Quentin at the request of the Norman duke Richard I between c.995 - c.1026.¹⁴ To Davis, this work was a significant part of the creation of a distinctly Norman sense of identity, and was thus part of the 'Norman myth'. According to Dudo, the pagan Danish warriors, who had been guided by God to the land of Normandy under the leader Rollo, could boast Trojan origins. His contention that the 'Danois', the original pagan settlers in Normandy, were descended from the Trojan Prince Antenor was reached, according to Lair, by confusing Orusius' term 'Daci' for 'Dani'.¹⁵ Whatever the merits of this, Dudo used the Trojan myth to stress the noble ancestry of the early Normans, and thus gave them a common ancestor which helped to distinguish them from their Danish and French contemporaries, making them 'Norman'.¹⁶ In this case, the

¹³ Lair, pp.31-2.

¹⁴ Ed. J. Lair (Caen 1865). On Dudo and his background, see the editor's introduction; Molinier, II, no.1962, pp.214-6; and for much of what follows, see R. Davis *The Normans and their Myth* (London 1976), esp. ch.2.

¹⁵ Lair, pp.31-2.

¹⁶ In Davis, this is an essential component of the formation of the 'Norman myth'.

use of the Norman myth amounts to more than mere historiographical convention.

Centuries later, the myth was again re-modelled in the early fifteenth-century text *Débat des herauts de France et d'Angleterre*, in which two heralds, one English and the other French, exalt the merits of their respective nations.¹⁷ The French herald bases his argument on the idea that the Trojan origins of the original Franks give the French of his day a sense of supremacy over the English, who are descended from the Saxons, a heathen people who had pushed the ancient Britons to the outer reaches of the island. The English therefore lack the venerability and nobility of the French, and the French herald refutes the suggestion that they have any connection to the Trojan Prince Brutus or the great King Arthur at all. In another contemporary source, this view was manipulated to deny the validity of the English cause in France in the early fifteenth century, and a direct political statement is made.¹⁸ The anonymous author stresses that the English have no rights over Normandy or Aquitaine, which have been inseparable from the kingdom of France since the reign of Charles the Simple, because of their separate ancestry. They are

une secte de gens mauldicte, contredisans à tous biens et à toute raison ...
resemblants à la nature des oyseaulx de proye qui vivent en rappine, et au
depens de leurs simples et debonnaires voisins...¹⁹

Similarly, the author denies English claims over Brittany on the basis that in the time of Maximus the territory was ruled by Conan Meriadoc and peopled by Britons, particularly

¹⁷ Text published by Pannier & Meyer (*Société des anciens textes français*, Paris 1877), for what follows, see pp.7-11.

¹⁸ A. Bossuat, 'Les origines troyennes; leur rôle dans la littérature historique au XV^e siècle' in *Annales de Normandie*, 8 (1958), pp.187-97. The source is an unpublished collection of documents whose objective is to portray the English wars in France as fundamentally unjust.

¹⁹ Bossuat, pp.196.

those of Cornwall, all of whom had Trojan ancestry. England is excluded from the common ancestry of France, Brittany and Great Britain.

The use of the Trojan myth could therefore serve a number of ends. It satisfied the needs of medieval historiography and its concern with genealogical completeness. It could create a sense of cohesion among a people and help to build a common sense of identity through a shared, common ancestor. It could justify the political pretensions of a prince based on a sense of dynastic continuity. And it could create a sense of pedigree, or a nobility of the bloodline, and represented the idea of civilisation triumphing over barbarism. These points were not lost on Olivier de la Marche, and his use of the idea that the house of Austria, and therefore Philippe le Beau, had a Trojan ancestor was closely linked to them as well as to his stated objectives of illustrating the nobility of Philippe's blood, and his rights as a ruler.²⁰

La Marche's version of the legend is as follows. Following the destruction of Troy:

ung prince exillié, parent et filœl [fils du fils] du Roy Priam de Troyes, par la permission de Dieu, [luy et son peuple] descendirent en aucunes parties de la terre, à présent nommée Austrice, et s'espandirent par le payz, et tant firent que ilz conquisterent la terre. Et se fist icelluy prince, qui s'appelloint Priam, Roy d'Austrice, et y regna chevaleureusement et en grant puissance. Celluy Priam eut pluseurs enfans et grant lignie, et dont l'un qui n'estoit point l'aincé fut appelé Marchomires, moult bon, vaillant saige et renommé prince, et chevalier de grant conduite et adresse.

Et en ce temps pareillement Francio, fils du preux Hector, exillié et dechassé de Troye, par bonne fortune tant traveilla qu'il arriva au noble et fertile pays que l'on appelle France, où il augmenta celle belle cité de Lutesse qu'il fist nommer Paris, du nom de son oncle Paris de Troyes, et fist moult de biens au pays.²¹

He then went on to consider the origins of the name of France and acknowledged the

²⁰ On la Marche's stated objectives, see above, ch.3.

²¹ *Mémoires*, I, p.18. For a summary of la Marche's text, see Hardy, pp.24-5.

existence of both traditions; first that they were so-called by the Romans because of their fierce nature, and second that they were named after their leader Francio. The latter was la Marche's preferred theory, on the basis of Francio's re-naming of Lutesse as Paris after his uncle. After Francio's death his subjects sought a new leader, and it so happened that Marcomir, son of Priam of Austria came to the land of the Franks where he was welcomed as a fellow Trojan and appointed leader of the Frankish people. Moreover, he had a son named Pharamond who became the first King of the Franks, and la Marche pushed this last point well home:

Et fut Pharamon, filz de Marchomires d'Austrice, le premier Roy qui oncques fust en France, et, combien que celle lignie ne demoura pas longuement, et qu'elle faillist assez tost, selon la Cronicque martinienne et aultres, toutesfois vous avez cest honneur que de vostre nom d'Austrice sont yssus les premiers Roys de France.²²

La Marche's separation of the Austrian and French Trojans is interesting, and is almost certainly derived from the *Grandes Chroniques de France* which contained the most comprehensive version of the Trojan myth of any medieval text.²³ The appropriate section of this work, itself based on Rigord's *Gesta Philippi Auguste*²⁴ (c.1190), concerns the general dispersal of Trojan fugitives and points out that the existence of a large number of peoples claiming Trojan ancestry was explained by the widespread nature of the fugitives' settlement across much of Europe. The text then considered the origins of the Franks suggesting that it came about as a result of the split between the different groups of Trojans who had settled at Thrace on the banks of the Danube and the subsequent formation of

²² *Mémoires*, I, p.20.

²³ *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, ed. J. Viard (Paris 1920), I, pp.9-15; this work would have been available to la Marche through its presence in the ducal library; Barrois, *Bibliothèque protypographique*, nos. 1410-23. On the probable connection between this section of la Marche's work and the *Grandes Chroniques*, see Hardy, pp.25-30.

²⁴ Ed. Guizot (Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, XI, Paris 1825).

new settlements under Francio and Turcus. The *Grandes Chroniques* gave both versions of the naming of the Franks, and then recounted the westward migration of those led by Marcomir, Sunna and Gundebaud. Marcomir, who had led the Franks into France:

... avoit esté au roy Priant d'Osteriche, qui estoit descenduz de la lignie le grant roi Priant de Troie.²⁵

The Franks accepted Marcomir as their leader, and because they wanted a king 'comme les autres nascions', they chose this prince's son Pharamond who, as the first King of the Franks, re-named Lutesse as Paris.

This text shares much with that of la Marche. Both have taken Francio as their starting point, and each has avoided unravelling the complex traditions that existed about his exact relationship to the last Trojan king. La Marche made more of the Austrian connection which the *Grandes Chroniques* limited to a single line. Both texts acknowledged the existence of two traditions concerning the naming of the Franks, though only la Marche opted to express a preference. Both discussed the coming of Marcomir to Gaul, the coronation of Pharamond, and the re-naming of Lutesse. The principal difference concerns the flow of events that occurred after the split between Francio and Turcus. La Marche stressed Francio's settlement at Paris, but the *Grandes Chroniques* states that he remained near the Danube where he founded the city of Sicambria, and that it was not until after his death that his people migrated westwards under the leaders Marcomir, Sunna and Gundebaud. Before reaching Lutesse, they paused at the Rhine and allowed their numbers to increase, but soon moved on under Marcomir's leadership, to avoid paying tributes to the Romans. There is no mention of the fate of Sunna or

²⁵

Grandes Chroniques, I, p.18.

Gundebaud. On reaching Lutesse, they discovered a settlement of 23,000 Trojan people who had migrated there a generation earlier under the leadership of Ibor.²⁶

Despite this difference, it seems apparent that la Marche used the *Grandes Chroniques* as his principal source, and it was here that he found a reference to a King Priam of Austria which suggested the existence of a separate Austrian settlement from which the early Frankish kings were descended. There is, however, much confusion over the identity of this Austrian King Priam, who must be distinguished from the Trojan king Priam the Great. The most illuminating source is Rigord's *Gesta Philippi Auguste*, which included a discussion of this second Priam.²⁷ Rigord's text proceeded along similar lines to the *Grandes Chroniques* and la Marche's 'Introduction', but provided some additional information about the mysterious Priam 'Roy d'Austrice'.²⁸ Rigord spoke of:

Marcomir, fils de Priam, roy d'Austrice, qui descendait de Francion, petit-fils de Priam, roy de Troie par une succession inutile à détailler ici.²⁹

Unwilling, or unable, to create the exact relationship between these characters, Rigord settled for a simple genealogy which is:³⁰

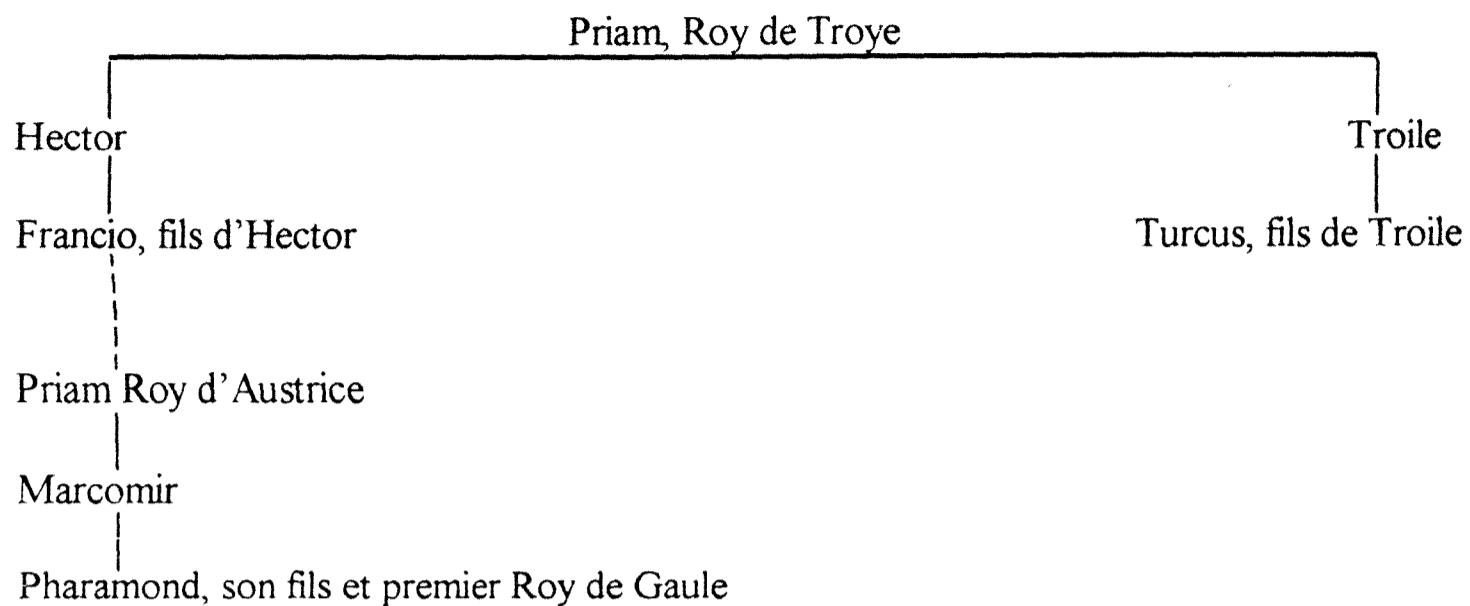
²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Rigord, pp.46-52.

²⁸ According to Hardy, the term 'Austrie', as used by Rigord, may have been misinterpreted by la Marche, who speaks of 'Austrice' in terms of the household and archduchy that was familiar to him in the fifteenth century. In fact, Hardy suggests, 'Austrie' and 'Osteriche' (the term used in the *Grandes Chroniques*) literally means 'eastern Kingdom' or 'eastern realm', and may refer to the Merovingian Kingdom of Australasia. Under Charlemagne, this eastern kingdom had become synonymous with 'francia orientalis' or the East Mark, and had constituted the easternmost part of the Carolingian empire. Not until 1156 was the Duchy of Austria Created by Frederick Barbarossa, and it is to this entity that la Marche was probably referring; Hardy, pp.29-30; *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th edn., 1910), III, p.5, for the evolution of the term 'Austrie' and the creation of the East Mark under Charlemagne.

²⁹ Rigord, p.50.

³⁰ Ibid., p.48.



The relationship between Priam of Austria and Francio is not specified, but Rigord did acknowledge that such a link existed. This relationship was entirely omitted by la Marche, who merely stated that Francio was alive at the same time as Priam but failed to acknowledge the possibility that they might be related. It is impossible to conclude whether this omission was a conscious choice of the author or merely stemmed from an ignorance of Rigord's text, but either way to acknowledge the relationship would be to endanger the idea of a separate Austrian settlement and the Austrian origin of the first Frankish king, for if Francio was an ancestor of the second Priam, both the French and Austrian kings would have a common ancestor. This may have been contrary to la Marche's aims.

Having established the Trojan origin of the Austrian rulers, la Marche needed to connect this to the Habsburg lineage and thus to Philippe le Beau. This was achieved in his view through the marriage of an unnamed descendant of the original Austrians, a lady who was very ugly of appearance but full of virtue and nobility who married 'ung noble prince, conte de Abpsebrouch [Habsburg], et les enffens d'eulx deux reprenoit le nom et des armes d'Austrice comme il advint, et de celle lignie vous [Philippe] estes par vraye

succession yssu'.³¹ Following this, la Marche recounted some of the key figures and events of the history of the house of Austria down to Philippe's time. In doing so, he established Philippe's rights to the succession, but the myths are double-edged, in that the implication that Philippe must emulate his predecessors' virtues and deeds lies as a direct challenge behind and between the lines.

The existence of this Austrian dimension in the writings of Burgundian historiographers was not, of course, a concern of those men who were writing such works during the reigns of the four Valois dukes. By the time the 'Introduction' was completed, however, the historical evolution of their successors' position and title was bound to incorporate this new dimension, given the union of the houses of Austria and Burgundy that occurred in 1477. La Marche's idea of the dukes' historical inheritance was therefore very different to anything that had preceded it. Despite the new focus, however, the Burgundian side of Philippe's inheritance remained extremely significant. It was from here that much of his inheritance was derived, and it was of course this side, and not the Austrian one, that was under attack from his enemies. Furthermore, it was the Burgundian side that la Marche could profess familiarity with, and from here that his perspective of Philippe's birthright was shaped. It is therefore hardly surprising that he should give an informed history of Philippe's maternal ancestry, and in doing so, he offered an extremely significant contribution to contemporaries' conception of the historical evolution of the entity that was 'Burgundy' at the end of the fifteenth century.

³¹ *Mémoires*, I, pp.25-6; Hardy, pp.32-3.

Burgundy and France

La Marche's history of Philippe's maternal ancestors can be summarised as follows. He began with the claim that the first Burgundian kings were descended from Hercules, who had married a Burgundian noblewoman from which this lineage was descended. He then spoke of the pagan kingdom of 'Allobrogiens' and discussed the means by which these people became known as 'Burgundians'. He then recounted the coronation of the first Christian king of Burgundy, Trophime, who had been converted to the faith after encouragement from Mary Magdalene, and went on to discuss this king's successors and their exploits, which included the bringing of the Cross of St. Andrew to the Abbey of St. Victor in Marseille, then part of the ancient kingdom. He followed this with an account of the conversion of the Frankish king Clovis under the encouragement of his Burgundian wife Clotilde, and the subsequent reduction of the status of Burgundy from the kingdom to duchy under the jurisdiction of the French Crown. Then follow some brief notes on a handful of French kings, down to Philip VI and John II, whose son Philip the Bold received the Duchy as the first of the Valois dukes. There is considerable detail on the four Valois dukes, ending with the marriage of Mary to Maximilian and the birth of Philippe le Beau.

There is much in this text to be discussed. The detailed later sections, particularly those on Philip the Good and Charles the Bold, are probably derived as much from memory and oral evidence as from literary research, and this is hardly surprising, given La Marche's lifelong career at the Burgundian court. The earlier sections are however based more firmly on reading and private research such as a modern historian might recognise, and constitute a fascinating account of Burgundy's genesis and early history.³²

³²

Mémoires, I, pp.42-106 and 121-47.

Pagan Burgundy

The idea that Hercules was the ancestor of the first Burgundian kings is the starting point.

A highly renowned figure in the cultural circles of the Burgundian court for much of the fifteenth century, la Marche wrote of him:

... Hercules, en faisant ses voyages et mesmes en allant en Espagne, passa par le pays que l'on nomme à present Bourgoingne, et [y] print en mariage, selon la loy, l'une de ses femmes nommée Alise, laquelle fut dame de moult grant beaulté, et du plus noble sang et linage qui fust au pays. Et dit que de ceste Alise il eut generation, dont sont venus et yssus les premiers Roys de Bourgoingne. Et pour appreuve, vous trouverez ou duchié de Bourgoingne, ou quartier que l'on nomme Lauchois, apparence d'une cité ou ville qui se nommoit Alise, que celle dame fonda et luy donna son nom. Mais la ville a esté destruite et arruynée par les guerres, qui de longtemps ont regné dans ce quartier.³³

Given Hercules' popularity at the Burgundian court,³⁴ it is tempting to assume that this passage is indicative of a Burgundian tradition which made the hero an ancestor of the Burgundian dukes. This is not, however, quite accurate. In the first place, the connection is between Hercules and the early Burgundian kings only, and as we shall see below, this does not necessarily extend to the Valois dukes. Second, it would appear that la Marche was the first and only late medieval historiographer to make a genealogical connection between these. No other literary or artistic source appears to make this link. Certainly, some such as the Burrell Tapestry create an association between the Duke and Hercules, but this does not necessarily imply a genealogical link, since, after all, the Duke had been previously compared to Jason though not as his descendant.

³³ Ibid., pp.43-4.

³⁴ On which see above, ch.2.

La Marche's declared source of this information was the work of Diodorus Sciculus, and he took great care to name this source:

Dyodore le Cecilien, ung moult ancien historiographe grec et grant clerc, et duquel les euvres et les escriptures qu'il a faictes [sont moult] recommandées entre les orateurs ...³⁵

It is unusual for la Marche to pinpoint his source so carefully. Throughout the 'Introduction' he certainly names sources, but usually restricts this to a cursory mention of 'anciennes chroniques', 'chronique martinienne', or at best cites an author by name only, e.g. 'Orose', 'Sallust'. This apparently unusual sense of accuracy may be explained by the novelty of the information he found there. Furthermore, the way in which he approaches this issue is very hesitant:

Et ne fut que tant de notables clerks ont approuvé ses magnifiques fais, je, plain de simplesse, craindoye beaucoup de allegger ceste matiere devant vostre seigneurie. Mais je prens courage et hardement de reciter ce que dist Dyodore ...³⁶

The reader almost feels that la Marche was embarrassed to relate the information that learned men had apparently omitted, and was probably conscious that his discovery would give contemporaries a new perspective on the history of Burgundy.³⁷

³⁵ *Mémoires*, I, pp.42-3.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.43.

³⁷ It is worth noting that la Marche, like his contemporaries, failed to distinguish between the various traditions that constituted the Hercules or Heracles myths. Jung has pointed out the distinction that exists between the famous Greek hero and the lesser-known 'Hercule plus ancien', who stemmed from Egyptian legend. Only in 1498, in Annius of Viterbo's *Antiquities*, was this distinction acknowledged, Jung, pp.41-51. The distinction was certainly known to the writers of antiquity and was summarised in the fifth century BC by the traveller and historian Herodotus, who wrote during a visit to Egypt: 'I was told that this Hercules was one of the twelve gods. Of the other Hercules with whom the Greeks are familiar, I could get no information anywhere in Egypt. Nevertheless, it was not the Egyptians who took the name Hercules from the Greeks. The opposite is true; it was the Greeks who took it from the Egyptians. The Egyptians have had a god named Heracles from time immemorial, and they say that 17,000 years before the reign of Amasis, the twelve gods were produced from the eight, and of these they hold Heracles to be one ...' Herodotus, *Histories*, trans. A. Selincourt (Harmondsworth 1972), pp.146-7. The author also described his visit to the temple of Hercules, which boasted magnificent adornments 'not the least remarkable being two pillars, one of pure gold and the other of emerald, which gleamed in the dark in a strange radiance ...' (*ibid.*) This apparent reference to the famous

However, it should be stated that la Marche does not appear to have been entirely accurate in his handling of the information. The history of Diodorus certainly confirms Hercules' foundation of the city of Alesia though its name derived from a different source:

Hercules ... passing into Celtica ... founded a great city which was named Alesia after the 'wandering' (ali) on his campaign ... The Celts up to this present time hold this city in honour, looking upon it as the hearth and mother city of all Celtica ...³⁸

Furthermore, Diodorus in fact made no specific link between Hercules and the early kings of Burgundy, and it must be concluded that la Marche has taken some liberties with his source:

Now Celtica was ruled in ancient times by a renowned man who had a daughter who was of unusual stature and far excelled in beauty all the other maidens ... Hercules visited Celtica and there founded the city of Alesia, and the maid on seeing Hercules, wondered at his powers and his bodily superiority and accepted his embraces with all eagerness, her parents having given their consent. From this union she bore Hercules a son named Galates who far surpassed all the youths of his tribe in quality of spirit and strength of body. And when he attained to a man's estate and had succeeded the throne of his fathers, he subdued a large part of the neighbouring territory, and accomplished great feats of war. Becoming renowned for his bravery, he called his subjects Galates or Gauls after himself, and these in turn gave their name to all Galatia or Gaul.³⁹

pillars of Hercules further reflects the fusion of the two Hercules in the fifteenth century, in that this foundation is usually attributed to the Greek hero. Herodotus concluded that the worship of Hercules was very ancient, and that the Greeks who stole the name knew nothing of Egyptian customs.

³⁸ Diodorus Sciculus, *Histories*, ed. C. Oldfather, 12 vols (London and New York 1933-67), II, pp.405-7. An earlier editor has suggested that 'Celtica' in fact refers to France; C. Booth, *The History of Diodorus the Scicilian in 15 Books* (London 1814), I, p.235; and that Alesia refers to Arras, *ibid.* According to Oldfather, however, Alesia is to be found in the area that would become the Duchy of Burgundy.

³⁹ Diodorus, ed. Oldfather, II, pp.161-3. The reference to 'succeeding the throne of his fathers' may be la Marche's evidence, since the capital city of this territory appears to have been Alesia. The tradition that Hercules may have been an ancestor of the kings of Gaul, rather than Burgundy, appears to have been echoed in the sixteenth century. See below, n.105 and 106.

La Marche has therefore introduced a specifically Burgundian element in place of a general Gallic one, and his justification was the location of the city of Alesia, from where Hercules' lineage derived.

It remains to be seen why la Marche chose to include the Hercules myth in the history of Burgundy. His inability to create a clear genealogical link between him and the Valois dukes of Burgundy suggests that the inclusion of Hercules is not merely as a counterweight to the Trojan origins of Philippe's paternal ancestors.⁴⁰ Of course, it may be in part an acknowledgement of the historiographical tradition that demanded completeness in genealogical constructions. It may also be a means of providing Philippe le Beau with a further role-model to emulate in keeping with la Marche's stated objectives, and in this context he may be echoing Molinet whose account of the twelve great deeds of Charles the Bold can be interpreted as a parallel to the labours of Hercules.⁴¹ A further possibility is that la Marche merely wished to show off his own erudition, and because of the high regard in which Hercules was held at the Burgundian court, he would have been assumed an interested reading audience. Finally, the use of the myth may be reflective of contemporaries' growing acknowledgement of the existence of Burgundy, as a reasonably well-defined political entity, whose historical roots went back beyond its Christian rulers, and certainly before its becoming a duchy under the jurisdiction of the French.

This idea is developed in the next stage of la Marche's history, which considers the Burgundy of pre-Christian times, and the re-naming of the native Allobrogiens as 'Burgundians'. This, in the author's view, stemmed from their settlement in fortified towns

⁴⁰ See above.

⁴¹ See above, ch.5 n.24.

known as 'bourgs'.⁴² Much of this section is directly lifted from sources such as Orosius' *Seven Books Against the Pagans*, with which la Marche was certainly familiar,⁴³ but he added further information on the numerous battles that took place between Burgundy and France around the time of Christ's life, and pointed out that victory went ultimately to the Burgundians.⁴⁴ However, la Marche sought to distance this Burgundy from the one which Philippe le Beau had inherited, arguing that Philippe had no direct genealogical relationship with the ancient kings:

... d'iceulx vous n'estes en riens descendu, synon en nom seulement prins par voz ancesseurs de celle très ancienne seigneurie, qui toutesfois n'est point le vray surnom de vos prochains ancestres ... mais c'est le cry vray et notoire de ceste maison de Bourgoingne ...⁴⁵

Orosius had referred to the conversion of the Burgundians to the Christian faith,⁴⁶ though added little to this. For la Marche, however, the conversion of the Burgundians marked the starting point for his next section - though his source material now had to be found elsewhere.

Early Christian Burgundy: la Marche and the *Chroniques de Bourgogne*

La Marche's account of the early Christian kingdom of Burgundy is a fascinating piece of

⁴² *Mémoires*, I, pp.44-8.

⁴³ He refers to this source on, I, p.46. The idea that the Burgundians were originally an offshoot of the Vandals, and received their name from their living in 'bourgs' is lifted from Orosius' *Seven Books Against the Pagans*, trans. I.W. Raymond (Columbia 1936), pp.371-2.

⁴⁴ *Mémoires*, I, p.48.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.47-8.

⁴⁶ Orosius, p.372.

history.⁴⁷ During the fifteenth century Burgundy was later in receiving the attention of historiographers working for the Valois dukes, in the way that Brabant and Hainaut had been the subject of such works.⁴⁸ La Marche's text was therefore a significant landmark, but it was not unique. Another version was compiled during his lifetime and contained a history of the most prominent incidents of Burgundian history from 14 AD to the late fifteenth century. The work is usually known by the title *Les Chroniques des roys, contes et ducs de Bourgogne depuis l'an quatorze après la resurrection nostre Seigneur*.⁴⁹ No modern edition of this work appears to exist, and its only appearance in printed form was in the sixteenth century, when it was published at Lyon (c.1510).⁵⁰ No copies of this, however exist in either the British Library or the Bibliothèque Nationale,⁵¹ and only the manuscripts remain.

One of these survives in Paris.⁵² It forms part of a sixteenth-century collection of pieces relating to Burgundy which also includes a fragment of la Marche's *Mémoires*, and a copy of his poem *Le Chevalier délibéré*. The *Chroniques* is probably a copy of a lost original, and there is no indication given of the author's identity, the date of composition, or the source from which the work was compiled.

⁴⁷ *Mémoires*, I, pp.49-57.

⁴⁸ See the works of Edmund de Dyncer and Jean Wauquelin respectively. On the presence such works in the ducal library, see Barrois *passim*.

⁴⁹ I am indebted to Dr. Graeme Small for pointing out this reference, and for suggesting a number of ideas about it. Secondary works which have acknowledged this work include; *Bibliothèque Ambroise Firmin Didot: Catalogue illustré des livres rares et précieux, manuscrits et imprimés* (Paris 1878), n° 65 pp.48-51; P Meyer, *Girart de Roussillon* (Paris, 1884), pp.cxvi-cxix; G. Doutrepont, *Jean Lemaire des Belges et la Renaissance* (Brussels 1934), pp.69-70, and his *La littérature française*, pp.453-4; H.Y. Thompson, *Illustrations from 100 Manuscripts in the Library of Henry Yates Thompson* (London 1918), VII, pp.13-15 and plates L-LX; J. Chipps-Smith, *The Artistic Patronage of Philip the Good*, pp.385-6; and its contents are summarised, though with little further analysis, in Hardy, pp.116-8.

⁵⁰ Brunet, *Manuel du libraire* (5th edn., 1865), VI, col.1360.

⁵¹ *A Descriptive Catalogue of 14 Illuminated Manuscripts Completing the 100 in the Library of Henry Yates Thompson* (Cambridge 1912), pp.23-6.

⁵² B.N., ms.fr. 4907. The *Chroniques* are to be found on f f.109-111.

The other surviving manuscript is more interesting.⁵³ Formerly a part of the collection of Henry Yates Thompson, it is entitled *S'ensuivent aulcunes chroniques, extraittes d'aulcuns anciens registres et aultres enseignements d'anciens roix, princes et plusieurs saintes personnes issues de la très noble et anchienne maison de Bourgogne*. Far more ornate than the Paris manuscript, this copy includes eleven magnificent miniatures, each of which occupies a full page. Again there is no reference to the author, or date of composition or dedication. The main clue is the first miniature which reveals a full-length portrait of a man holding a banner on which appears the title of the work. He is magnificently dressed, and stands in a sumptuous gallery, in one corner of which a collection of books can be seen, leading one observer to conclude that the man may be a librarian or *garde des joyaulx* of the Burgundian court.⁵⁴ The connection to Burgundy is clearly made by the presence of the Burgundian arms, flanked by two lions in the top left corner.

This manuscript is a fine volume, possibly intended for presentation to the Burgundian court. Henry Yates Thompson's analysis of it is as follows:

Formerly in the library of M. Ambroise Firmin Didot, M. Pawlowski has told me that M. Didot bought this volume from a man at Dijon, who said that it had been found walled up in a cupboard in a house in that city, and that the miniatures were by Hugues de Tollens.⁵⁵

The inside cover of the manuscript contains a date, 'c.1500'. This is probably accurate, and indeed the miniatures have been likened to those of a Josephus manuscript,

⁵³ British Library, ms. Yates Thompson 32.

⁵⁴ *Illustrations from 100 Illuminated Manuscripts*, p.13; the miniature appears in Y.T. ms. 32, f.l.v.

⁵⁵ *Illustrations from 100 Illuminated Manuscripts*, p.23; the 'M. Pawlowski' referred to is Gustav Pawlowski, who assisted at the sale of the books of the Firmin Didot library in 1878 - see *Bibliothèque Firmin Didot*, title page. On the subject of Hugues de Tollens, see below.

formerly in the possession of the Bastard of Burgundy, which dates from the late fifteenth century.⁵⁶ A distinct resemblance exists between the manuscript's miniatures and those of the earliest surviving copy of la Marche's 'Introduction',⁵⁷ particularly in terms of the border illuminations, and the style and posture of the figures. Both were probably produced in the Low Countries, possibly at Ghent or Bruges, at the end of the fifteenth century.

The prevailing view about the *Chroniques de Bourgogne* is as follows.⁵⁸ The work was produced during the reign of Maximilian of Austria (1477-93) and was presented to him before February 1486 (when he was made King of the Romans, a title to which no reference is made in the text). The Yates Thompson manuscript is probably a presentation copy. It was made for Maximilian as a means to register a protest against the annexation of the Duchy of Burgundy by the Crown as an incentive for him to reclaim it. Some have gone as far as to identify an author, one Philippe Martin, a former *chambellan* of Philip the Good, who was retained by Maximilian after 1477, although nobody has produced any specific references to support this view.⁵⁹

There are several problems with this analysis. The first of these concerns the author. There appears to be no evidence to suggest that anyone called Martin was active at the Burgundian court in the second half of the fifteenth century, nor does the surname appear to have existed at all. There is, however, evidence to show the existence of a

⁵⁶ This connection has been made by Henry Yates Thompson in *Illustrations from 100 Illuminated Mss.*, pp.13-15; and by Chipps-Smith, p.385: he believed that the artist who worked on both the Yates Thompson ms. and the Josephus ms., to have been the so-called 'Maître aux Têtes Triviales', a name coined by P. Durrieu, *La miniature flamande*, plate LXIII.

⁵⁷ B.N. ms. fr. 2868, f.5.

⁵⁸ Drawn from esp. Doutrepoint, *Jean Lemaire*, pp.68-70; Chipps-Smith, pp.385-6; *Bibliothèque Firmin Didot*, p.48-51; Meyer, pp.cxvi-cxix; *Illustrations from 100 Manuscripts*, pp.13-15.

⁵⁹ Doutrepoint, *Jean Lemaire*, op. cit.; Chipps-Smith; and Hardy, p.116.

Philippe Martin,⁶⁰ but the likelihood that this man was the author of the work, or would have had any involvement with any copy made after 1477, is ruled out by the existence of a manuscript which contains an account of an 'enquête tenue le 28 et 29 mai 1478 par Simon Damy et Guillaume Dauvet, conseillers et maistres de requestes de l'hotel du roi, et de Jean de Beauvoirs, conseiller au parlement, données à Arras le 11 du même mois sur l'identité de la lettre écrite de la main propre par le feu duc Charles au roi à Péronne, le 8 octobre 1468, pour l'engager à venir en cette ville ...'⁶¹

Among those invited to identify Charles' letter was one 'Philippe Martin, écuyer'. His presence among the King's men in 1478 suggests that if he was ever attached to the Burgundian court, he may well have been one of those who left for the service of the king after Charles' death. This possibility is supported by the identity of some of the other men who were invited to identify the letter; these included Anthony, Bastard of Burgundy, and Philippe de Crevecoeur seigneur des Cordes, both of whom had left Burgundian service in 1477. It may be that this was a summons to Charles' former employees, who would be in the best position to identify his letter, possibly by the handwriting or signature. Anyway, Martin's presence at the French court in 1478 deems it highly unlikely that he would have been involved in the production of a manuscript containing Burgundian history and designed for presentation to the court, at least after 1477.

Another problem concerns the dating and purpose of the work. It may well have been presented to the ducal court, as an inventory entry for the ducal library suggests:

Enseignements des Princes de Bourgogne. Petit en 4 en vellin, vielle reliure, ornée de fleurs-de-lys et du chiffre de la maison de Bourgogne, fermoirs d'argent. Entremelé de miniatures au nombre de 11 et de feuilles

⁶⁰ The name used by Meyer, p.cxix.

⁶¹ L.P. Gachard, *La Bibliothèque Nationale à Paris. Notes et extraits des manuscrits qui concernent l'histoire de Belgique* (Brussels 1875), I, p.348.

écrites qui contiennent la généalogie des anciens et des nouveaux ducs de Bourgogne jusqu'en 1478.⁶²

This is thought by some observers to be the Yates Thompson manuscript itself, and its presence in Barrois' *Appendice* suggests that it post-dates 1487.⁶³ It was certainly not produced any earlier than 1482, because it contains a reference to the death of Mary of Burgundy.⁶⁴

However, while it is conceivable that this *particular* manuscript was presented to the ducal court after the death of Charles and Mary, it is unlikely that the text was actually written at this time. The manuscript is in fact a copy made from a lost original which was not written with the annexation of the Duchy of Burgundy in mind. The evidence for the existence of an earlier version comes in part from the Paris manuscript.⁶⁵ With a few minor variations, this is the same text as that contained in the Yates Thompson version, but with one very important exception; it only goes down as far as the reign of Charles the Bold, and has no information at all on Mary, Maximilian or Philippe. It ends as follows:

Oudit monseigneur le duc philippe de bourgogne descendit très victorieux,
très chrestien prince charles *à present duc et conte de bourgogne que dieu
en veuille gardier donner victoyre contre ses enemies.*⁶⁶

Following this, an added Latin inscription refers to the death of Charles at Nancy.

⁶² Barrois, no. 2241.

⁶³ Including Yates Thompson himself, *Catalogue of 14 Illuminated Manuscripts*, op. cit.; and Chipps-Smith p.385. Barrois' *Appendice* includes books found in the ducal library which were not included in the inventories of 1467, 1485 or 1487. The ms. therefore probably post-dates 1487.

⁶⁴ Y.T. ms. 32, f.15v.

⁶⁵ B.N. ms. fr. 4907, ff.109-11.

⁶⁶ Ibid., f.111.

This is a sixteenth-century manuscript, but probably copied from a lost original, and the existence of the words quoted above suggests that it could have been compiled as early as 1467. The Yates Thompson manuscript therefore appears to be an updated version of a work which was probably two or three decades old. Moreover, its original composition could not have had any bearing on the question of the annexation of Burgundy.

Finally, as far as the question of authorship is concerned, there is very little evidence to work with. However, the following document may be significant:

1460, le duc paye à Hugues de Tolins, son chroniqueur, qui estoit venuz es pays de pardeça où il avoit esté envoyé pour enquerir et savoir, tant par les fondations des églises comme aultrement, les noms des rois et ducs qui ont esté en Bourgogne le temps paseé, et les fondations et choses par eux faictes durant leurs vies afin d'icelles rediger et faire chronique 8 fr. 3 gs.⁶⁷

The 'chronique' being requested certainly fits the description of the *Chroniques de Bourgogne*. Also, the name 'Hugues de Tolins' was connected to the work, though apparently not quite accurately, by Henry Yates Thompson.⁶⁸ Is this therefore the elusive author of the *Chroniques*? It is difficult to prove outright, though further references to him do appear to strengthen the possibility. A payment was made to him in 1460-1:

A maistre Hughes de Tolins, croniqueur de Monseigneur, la somme de XII livres pour lui aider avoir ung cheval en consideration des services qu'il lui a par ci-devant fais.⁶⁹

And the same year a further payment was made:

A maistre Hugues de Tolins, prebtre, maistre es ars, pour lui aidier à supporter ses necessités pour le temps passé et soy entretenir en vacquant

⁶⁷ E.G. Peignot, *Catalogue d'une partie des livres composant l'ancienne bibliothèque des ducs de Bourgogne de la dernière race*), p.XXVIII: Doutrepont, *La littérature*, pp.450-1. Once again, I am indebted to Dr. Graeme Small for this reference.

⁶⁸ See above n.55.

⁶⁹ Doutrepont, p.451.

et besongant un certain martirologie et abregée du commencement des batailles qu'il a entrepris à faire pour icelui [seigneur] L fr. XL gr.⁷⁰

Clearly active as a 'chroniqueur', and working on a 'martirologie' in 1461, Tolins' authorship of the *Chroniques de Bourgogne*, and the date this was completed, are still not proven beyond dispute. However, given the evidence, there is a high probability that he was in fact responsible for the work.

Olivier de la Marche's debt to the *Chroniques de Bourgogne*

Even if the *Chroniques* predates 1477, the existence of a copy that postdates it does suggest a renewed interest in the history of Burgundy in the Habsburg period, and this is reflected in la Marche's decision to produce a new version of Burgundian history.

A comparison of the two texts offers some very interesting results. The *Chroniques* begins fourteen years after the Resurrection of Christ, with the conversion of the King and Queen of Burgundy at Marseille, a ceremony performed by St. Maximian at the instigation of Mary Magdalene. It goes on to list the numerous kings, dukes and counts of Burgundy, and some of their outstanding deeds. Many saints who were linked to the house of Burgundy are also considered, and this reflects one of the major themes of the work, which is to illustrate the piety of the house of Burgundy. Familiar historical names appear, including Gerard de Roussillon, the son of a Burgundian king who had led Burgundian forces to victory over the French, St. Bernard, founder of the Cistercian Order,

⁷⁰

Laborde, *Ducs de Bourgogne*, I, no. 1842, and Doutrepont, op. cit. One author, Pinchart, even went as far as to suggest that Chastellain was not the first writer to obtain the titles *chroniqueur* and *indiciaire*, and implies that this may have applied to Tollens; see Doutrepont, p.451 n.3. There is, however, little evidence to back up this assertion.

who is said to be 'descendy de la maison des roix de Bourgoingne',⁷¹ and Frederick Barbarossa, the great crusading Emperor, here made out to be the brother of King Boson of Burgundy.⁷² Many of the connections made between these persons to Burgundy are tenuous in the extreme, and of course the historical validity of many of the statements given, such as the existence of Burgundian kings as late as the time of Frederick Barbarossa, is to the modern historian risible.⁷³ Nevertheless, the author has insisted on the validity of the work, and we must remember that these are fifteenth-century perceptions. The progression goes on to the Valois dukes, stopping with Charles the Bold in the Paris manuscript, and Philippe le Beau in the Yates Thompson version.

Comparing this text with that of la Marche, there are similarities as well as very significant differences. There are three principal points on which the texts converge, all on the early period, and in places they are so similar that it seems certain that la Marche was not only familiar with the *Chroniques*, but used it as source material.

The first area concerns the conversion of Trophume, the first Christian King of Burgundy. La Marche wrote:

L'an XIII^e après la crucifiement de Nostre Seigneur, la glorieuse Magdelaine vint au lieu de Marcelle en Prouvence, et là converty à la sainte foy crestienne le Roy et la Royne de Bourgongne, et, par la predication et ennort de la sainte dame, les baptisa saint Maximien à Arles en Prouvence, et prinrent la sainte baptesme le Roy et la Royne, et tous ceulx de leur royaulme firent baptisier ou morir. Et fut nommé ce premier Roy de Bourgongne crestien à son baptesme Trophume, et fut son parrin saint Trophume, nepveu de saint Pol l'apostele, lequel fut depuis archevesque d'Arles et le premier.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Y.T. ms.32, ff.2-2v.

⁷² Ibid., f.10r. This is certainly one of the *Chroniques*' more outrageous claims.

⁷³ For a more accurate history of early Burgundy against which this version can be compared, there are useful introductions in Calmette, chs. 1 & 2; E. James, *The Origins of France* (London 1982), pp.21-6 and *passim*; Hardy, pp.106-9; for greater detail, see H. Chaume, *Les origines du Duché de Bourgogne* (Dijon 1925).

⁷⁴ *Mémoires*, I, p.49.

The corresponding passage of the *Chroniques de Bourgogne* reads:

En l'an quatorze après la resurrection Nostre Seigneur, la glorieuse Magdelaine [convertit] a marseille le roy et la royne de bourgongne. Et depuis furent baptisiez par saint maximin a Aix en Prouvence. Et eurent ung filz par la priere de la ditte marie magdelaine. Le premier roy de bourgongne dessusdit eust nom trophume pour saint trophume premier archevesque d'arles lequel fut nepveu de monseigneur saint pol l'apostre.⁷⁵

There is a striking resemblance between the two texts, and all the points made by la Marche are covered in the *Chroniques*, including the forced conversion of the entire Kingdom, made in a subsequent line.⁷⁶

The two texts are also in agreement with regard to the second Christian King of Burgundy, and his adoption of the Cross of St. Andrew as his ensign. La Marche wrote:

Après cestuy Roy de Bourgongne, le premier crestien de ce nom, regna Estienne, son filz, qui fut cinquante ans Roy de Bourgongne, et fut celluy qui la Magdelaine fit resusciter, et moult bon catholicque fut, et fist apporter en grand devocion à Marcelles la croix où fut martirizé le glorieux corps monsieur saint Andrieu, laquelle est encore à St Victor lez Marcelles. Celluy Roy Estienne augmenta la foy de Nostre Seigneur et eut la croix saint Andrieu en tele devocion et reverence, qu'il la prist pour ensaigne toutes et quantes fois qu'il yroit en gherre ou en bataille.⁷⁷

Once again, the details le Marche chose to include are all given in the *Chroniques de Bourgogne*:

Le second roy eust nom estienne et fut celui que dieu a la priere de ladicte magdelaine fist resusciter, et la royne sa mere aussi. Et regna roy de bourgogne chinquante deux ans. Et fut celui qui fist porter la croix de saint andrieu à saint victor lez marseille, et la prist et la vult porter pour son enseigne. Et ordonna estre portee a tous ceulx quy seroient christien en son royaume. Car il fist crier que tous ceulx qui ne se feroient baptisier

⁷⁵ Y,T. ms.32, ff.2-2v.

⁷⁶ Ibid., f.2v.

⁷⁷ *Mémoires*, I, pp.49-50. On the cross of St. Andrew, see P. Gras, 'La Croix de Bourgogne' in *Publications du centre européen d'études burgundo-medianes*, 21 (1981), pp.21-5.

widassent son royaume. Et depuis a esté et est encore laditte croix
l'enseigne des princes de bourgogne.⁷⁸

The third point of contact concerns the conversion of Clovis, King of France, at the instigation of his Burgundian wife, Clotilde. Both take care to emphasise the point that the Burgundian kings were Christian before their French counterparts, and that the conversion of the French was achieved thanks to the influence of a Burgundian.⁷⁹ As with the other two examples, the striking similarity in terms of the specific details included between the texts, suggests that one acted as a source for the other.

These traditions about the early Kings of Burgundy may have been widely acknowledged and cherished in the oral culture of the Burgundian court in the late fifteenth century. Their appeal is implied by a number of references in a diary composed by Anthoine de Lalaing, seigneur de Montigny, in 1501 entitled *Voyage de Philippe le Beau en Espagne en 1501* on which the Archduke was accompanied by the author.⁸⁰ The section of interest is that in which the author and two companions, Philippe de Viesville and 'l'escuyer Bouton' left the Archduke to visit Marseille and the surrounding area, a journey of obvious interest to the author because of the significance of these places in early Christian Burgundy.

Anthoine de Lalaing described how the travellers visited the Abbey of St. Victor just outside Marseille, famous as being the place where King Étienne brought the Cross of St. Andrew, and, as the author noted:

en celle abbaye entre autres reliquaires est la croix où St. Andrieu pendist.

⁷⁸ Y.T. ms.32, f.2v-3r.

⁷⁹ *Mémoires*, I, p.56; Y.T. ms.32 ff.2v-3r; this point is also made by Molinet, I, p.231. This belief existed long before the fifteenth century and a very similar version is given in Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks*, p.143.

⁸⁰ The text is published in Gachard, *Collection des voyages*, I, pp.121-340.

And further:

Là est aussi la boîte d'alabastre ... où on dit qu'elle mangeoit et plusieurs autres choses qui l'ont servit.⁸¹

The following day the travellers visited a priory attached to the monastery of St. Victor just outside Marseille where they viewed more precious objects relating to the Magdalene. They also visited the town and monastery of St. Maximian, named as they were after the saint who performed the baptism of the early Burgundian monarchs. Here they viewed the last resting place of Mary Magdalene and of St. Maximian. Afterwards they visited Tarascon where the body of Marthe, sister of Mary, lay preserved, before returning to Avignon to rejoin the Archduke.

Despite the importance of the points of contact between the works of la Marche and the *Chroniques*, there are some very significant differences between them. There are areas in la Marche which are entirely absent from the *Chroniques*, particularly those on the pagan kingdom, traditions about which the author of the *Chroniques* was probably ignorant. Indeed, la Marche's stated sources for this section, which included Diodorus Sciculus, Orosius, Tacitus, the *Chronique Martinienne*, were probably never consulted by the author of the *Chroniques*.

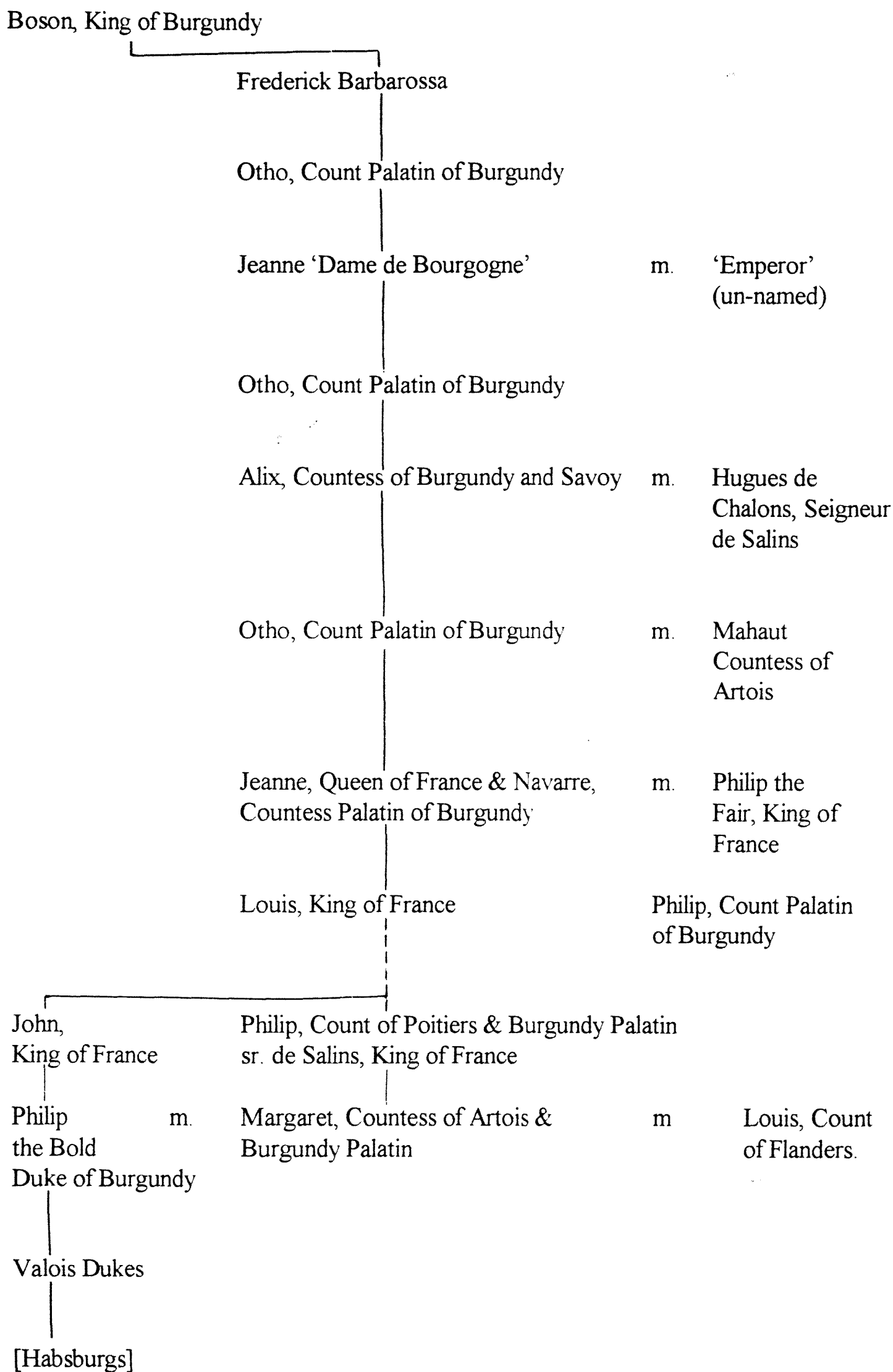
On the other side of the coin, much of the content of the *Chroniques* is omitted - deliberately - by la Marche, whose debt to this text is for the most part limited to the points outlined above. The later exploits of kings, saints and heroes are entirely ignored by him, and the very selective nature of his borrowings suggests much about his intentions. In the

⁸¹ Gachard, I, p. 272; for the following passage see *ibid.*, pp. 272-4.

first place, he was only interested in the conversion of the early kings and their role in the conversion of their French neighbours, and having made this point la Marche's espousal of Burgundian piety had been sufficiently made. Second, the *Chroniques* was only interested in Burgundy itself, Duchy and County, while la Marche was concerned with establishing Philippe le Beau's birthright in all his territories, and this inevitably covers a wide range of genealogical history. His was in essence a political piece which required no more than a cursory acknowledgement of past Burgundian piety; in contrast, the *Chroniques* is more clearly related to the kind of historical material that was commissioned by Philip the Good on, for example, Brabant and Hainaut.

These are general differences of approach. However, within the contents of the texts there are two fundamental differences of outlook concerning the relationship of Burgundy to France. First, la Marche was not concerned with establishing a specifically Burgundian link between the early kings and the Valois dukes and their successors. His account of a separate Burgundy only went as far as Gundebaud and his defeat by Clovis, and the narrative then went on to discuss the early kings of France. The *Chroniques*, by contrast, established a uniquely Burgundian link. The text gave a list of Burgundian kings from Trophume down to Boson who was, we are told, the brother of Frederick Barbarossa. We are thus in the mid twelfth century.⁸² From then onwards, the author's genealogy looks like this:

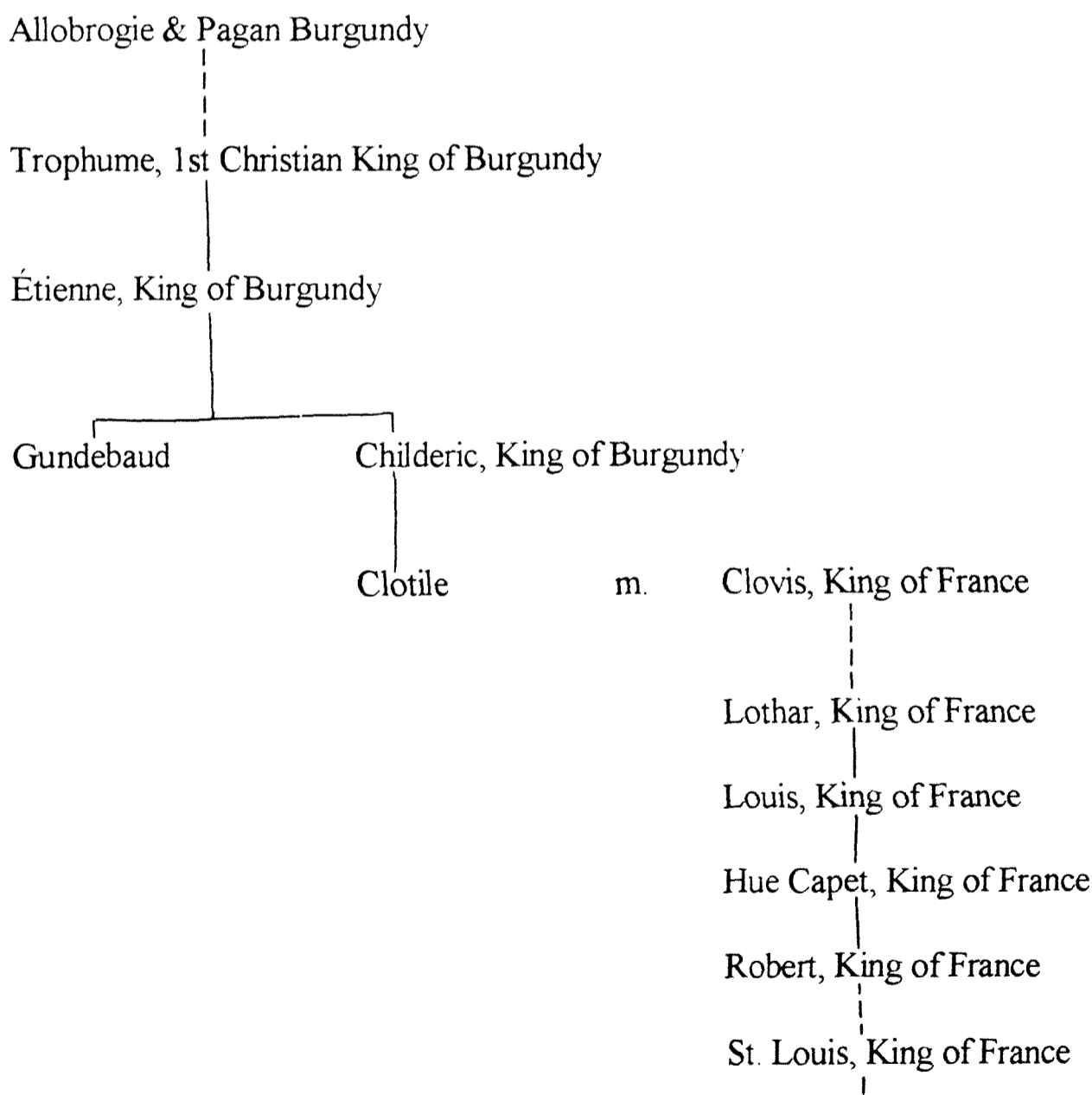
⁸² Y.T. ms.32, ff2-10. As is stated above (n.78), we must suspend judgement on the historical validity of these claims.



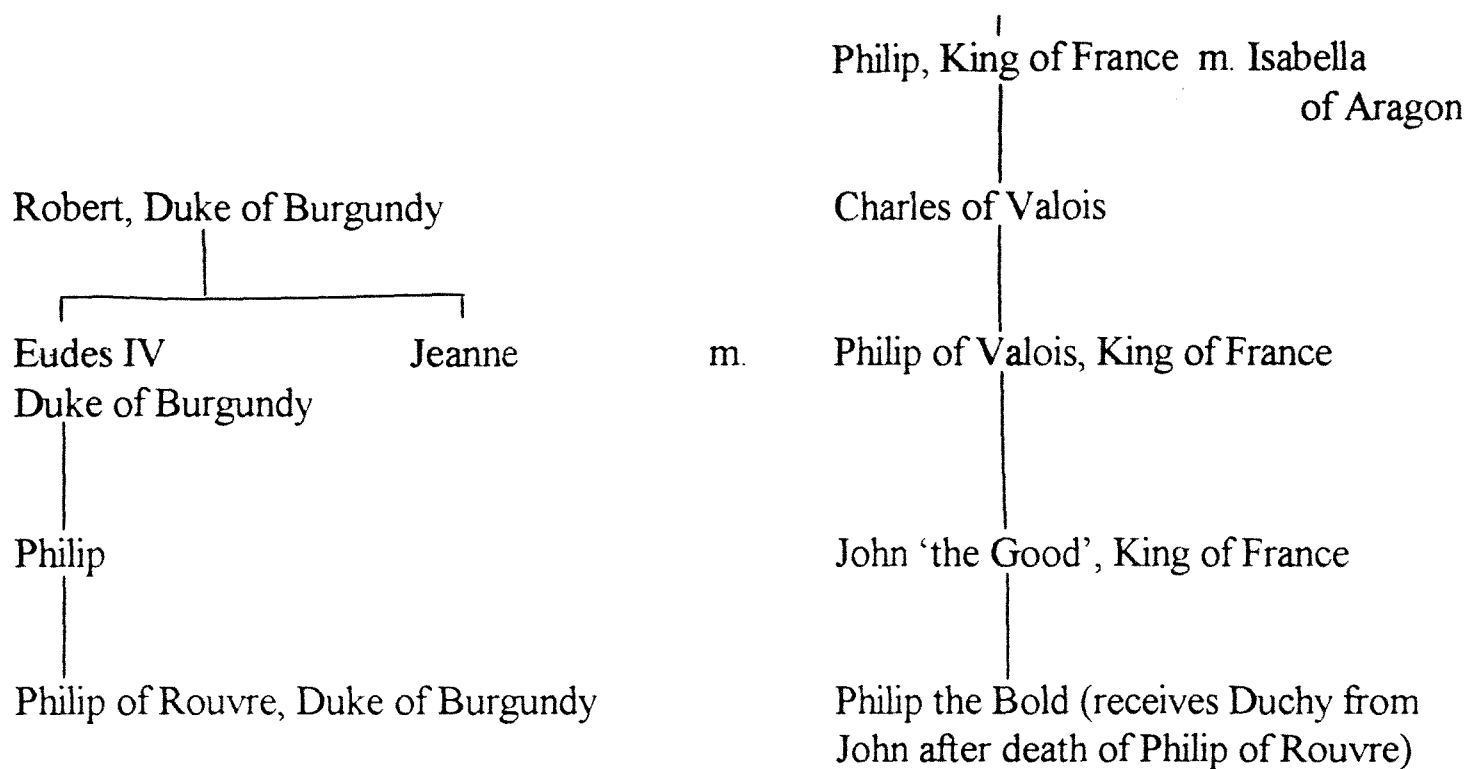
The author has therefore established a direct link between the ancient house of Burgundy, and the Valois and Habsburgs through the inheritance of the County of Burgundy. It is here, and not in the French duchy, that continuity exists, and the French kings only appear on an incidental basis.

This is in contrast to la Marche, who acknowledged no kind of continuity existing in the County of Burgundy, nor in deed of any such line independent from the bloodline of the Kings of France. According to him, the independent lineage had died out with Gundebaud, who had died childless.

The following table is an outline of la Marche's genealogy:⁸³



⁸³ Derived from *Mémoires*, I, pp. 17-180.



To la Marche, the only link between the Valois dukes and the ancient house of Burgundy lay in the bloodline of the kings of France, and in this sense it is difficult to see him as being in any way intent on the establishment of a separate Burgundy based on historical precedent, although this did not detract from his vigorous defence of Philippe le Beau's rights over the Duchy of Burgundy.

Closely linked to this is the question of Burgundy's relationship to France, and once again there is a fundamental difference between the two texts. The *Chroniques* entirely neglects the defeat of Burgundian Gundeaud by the French king Clovis and the subsequent incorporation of the kingdom into that of France, and this allowed the author to speak of Burgundian kings down to the twelfth century.⁸⁴ La Marche, by contrast made much of this event. The evil Gundeaud, who had imprisoned his brother, the king Childeric, ruled Burgundy as a tyrant. Childeric's daughter, Clotilde, however managed to persuade her evil uncle to marry her to the virtuous, but as yet pagan, French king Clovis,

⁸⁴

Y.T. ms.32, f.5.

and on reaching France she promised herself she would avenge her father's death in Gundebaud's prison:

elle mesmes fist commencer la gherre et mettre les feuz au royaume de Bourgoingne, qui fut mis en tele subjection que vous ne trouverez point que gaires depuis icelluy temps nulz Roys de Bourgoingne portast couronne, ne nom de Roy, et fut Dieu en l'ayde du sarrazin [i.e. pagan Clovis] tenant mauvaise loy, pource qu'il estoit en ses fais droiturier et homme de justice, et confondit le crestien qu'il trouva faulx, tyran, torturier et homme vicieux.⁸⁵

He concludes:

et tant fut diminué le royaume, qu'il devint duchié.⁸⁶

and adds that while Clovis and Clotilde had heirs, Gundebaud had none, officially ending the independent royal house of Burgundy.

It is perhaps significant that la Marche almost certainly derived this section of his work from the *Grandes Chroniques*. A parallel reading of the two texts reveals much similarity in the details given on the marriage of Clovis and Clotilde, the birth of their children, the conversion of Clovis at the battlefield at Tolbiac, his baptism and the conversion of the entire kingdom, and the defeat of the Burgundian usurper, King Gundebaud.⁸⁷ La Marche's decision to repeat the traditions found in this standard medieval

⁸⁵ *Mémoires*, I, pp.53-4.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.57.

⁸⁷ See the points of contact regarding the marriage of Clovis and Clotilde in *Mémoires*, I, p.33 and *Grandes Chroniques*, I, pp.59-64; their children, *Mémoires*, I, p.57, *Grandes Chroniques*, I, pp.64-5; the battle of Tolbiac and the conversion of Clovis, *Mémoires*, I, pp.55-6, *Grandes Chroniques*, I, pp.65-6; Clovis' baptism and the conversion of his kingdom, *Mémoires*, I, pp.56-7, *Grandes Chroniques*, I, pp.71-2; and the defeat of Gundebaud, *Mémoires*, I, pp.53-4, *Grandes Chroniques*, I, pp.63-4 & 75-6. On this last point, the *Grandes Chroniques* does not state specifically that Burgundy became a duchy at this time, but it is clear that the Burgundians were soundly defeated. Similarly, Gregory of Tours stated that Gunabad, son of Gunduic 'King of the Burgundes' (p.140), had been forced to pay yearly tribute to Clovis as a result of his defeat by him, pp.145-7. La Marche used this information as a means of understanding why this former 'kingdom' had become so diminished in status.

narrative of French history, rather than the version of events he must have encountered in the *Chroniques de Bourgogne* certainly suggests that he was more comfortable with the notion of Burgundy existing as part of the kingdom of France, instead of as an autonomous kingdom or state, than was the author of the *Chroniques*. This is entirely consistent with the political views he expressed on the ideal relationship between the Burgundian dukes and the French Crown.⁸⁸

In conclusion therefore, la Marche's approach to the history of Burgundy may at first sight appear contradictory. On one hand, he was clearly aware of the well-established historical roots of 'celle très ancienne seigneurie',⁸⁹ for not only did he re-tell the myths surrounding the early Christian kingdom, but sought to extend the kingdom's history back even earlier, and to give it a genesis of literally Herculean proportions. Yet at the same time, he was well aware of the contemporary status of Burgundy, and sought an explanation of how its reduced stature had come about in the history books. His apparent willingness to accept the incorporation of Burgundian history into that of France betrays some of his political principles on this issue. A political 'conservative' in the sense that he opposed radical change and preferred that the status quo, with which he had been familiar throughout his life, be upheld, he has fashioned his version of Burgundian history accordingly. It remains to be seen how far his views influenced his contemporaries, and the future generations.

⁸⁸ On which see above, ch.6.

⁸⁹ La Marche's phrase; see *Mémoires*, I, pp.47-8.

The Sixteenth Century View: Jean Lemaire des Belges

The continued interest which the Habsburg rulers took in their Burgundian inheritance in the early sixteenth century is reflected in their apparent enthusiasm to read about its history. The circulation of la Marche's works that existed at the court of Charles V has already been examined, and it is certain that the works of other Burgundian historians, notably Chastellain, were still widely read at this time.⁹⁰ However, the early sixteenth century also saw early Burgundian history appearing in new texts, the outstanding example being Jean Lemaire des Belges' *Illustrations de Gaule et Singularités de Troye* written between 1508 and 1512.⁹¹ Divided into three books, the first two dealt mainly with Trojan history, going down as far as the great Greco-Trojan wars. The third book, which is of interest here, dealt with the destruction of Troy and the dispersal of the Trojan nobility throughout Europe to form the beginnings of the nations and dynasties that existed in Lemaire's time.⁹² This was of course a well-worn theme, but Lemaire succeeded in offering a certain sense of novelty in that his was a serious and 'scientific' approach to the problems of constructing genealogical histories. He made frequent references to his sources throughout, indicating a desire to produce information which was accurate and authentic. Also, he frequently set out to show that his facts were not self-contradictory, and that his chronology was realistic - and this approach is central to his discussion of Burgundian history.⁹³

⁹⁰ On which see above, ch.3.

⁹¹ Jean Lemaire des Belges, *Illustrations de Gaule et singularités de Troye*, ed. J. Stecher (Louvain 1882-91, reprinted in four volumes, New York 1972). All subsequent references to Lemaire will be to this second edition.

⁹² See the prologue to book three in Lemaire, II, pp.259-60. This gives a clear indication of the author's purpose.

⁹³ An example of this approach can be found in Lemaire's analysis of Francus, 'Roy de la Gaule Celtique'. He appealed to Vincent de Beauvais to confirm the accuracy of his version of Francus' accession and reign, and went on in a section entitled 'Icy est respondu à plusieurs arguments et objections qui ont pourroient faire contre la verité de ceste histoire, et sont toutes les solutions prouvées par aucteurs authentiques' to show that his story was true. See Lemaire, II, pp.267-74.

In order to understand the significance of Lemaire's version of Burgundian history, some facts about his life and career must be borne in mind.⁹⁴ Having served Pierre II de Beaujeu, the husband of the French Regent Anne de Beaujeu during the minority of Charles VIII, Lemaire came to Lyon, a hot-bed of literary activity in the early sixteenth century, where he established himself in 1503. The following year he entered the service of Margaret of Austria, then the wife of Philibert Duke of Savoy, who died on 19 September of that year. By 1507, the widowed Margaret had become Regent of the Low Countries following the death of her brother Philippe le Beau in Spain, and Lemaire followed her to her new residence at Malines. As a *rhétoriqueur*, he wrote numerous pieces at her request, including an account of the funeral ceremony held at Malines in July 1507 for Philippe le Beau. In September of the same year, he succeeded Molinet as *indiciaire et historiographe* in Margaret's household, and the following year he began work on the first book of *Illustrations*, completing it in 1510 and dedicating it to Margaret.⁹⁵

However, events were to ensure that this was the only one of the three books that would be dedicated to Margaret. Book two was composed:

par Jehan Lemaire de Belges, très humble secretaire et indiciaire ou historiographe de très haute, très excellent et très chrestienne princesse madame Anne, par la grace de Dieu deux fois Royne de France, Duchesse heretiere de Bretagne etc. ... et dedié expressement au nom très excellent et très gracieux chere princesse Claude, première fille de France ... et présenté au chasteau royal de Blois, le premier jour de mai l'an mille cinq cens et douze.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ *Biographie nationale de Belgique*, XI (Brussels 1890-1) col. 769-78, article by J. Stecher; Doutrepoint, *Jean Lemaire*; P. Spaak, *Jean Lemaire de Belges, sa vie, son oeuvre et ses meilleures pages* (Geneva 1975).

⁹⁵ See the dedication in Lemaire, I, p.3.

⁹⁶ Lemaire, II, p.9.

And, most importantly, the third book, which contained the Burgundian section, was dedicated thus:

Dedié à très haute, très chrestienne et sacrée princesse madame Anne, par la grace de Dieu deux fois Royne de France, Duchesse de Bretagne Armanique.⁹⁷

It appears therefore that at some point between May 1510 and May 1512, Lemaire switched allegiance to become *indiciaire* to the Queen of France. The exact circumstances of this apparent switch are unclear. Doutrepont believed it must have angered Margaret of Austria immensely, although having already switched allegiance from the Regency monarchy of the late fifteenth century to the service of Margaret in 1504, Lemaire may have merely been resorting to his original patrons. Stecher has reproduced two letters written in 1512 which have a bearing on this switch.

The first is a letter from Lemaire to Margaret of Austria written at Blois 'au jardin du roy' on 14 May.⁹⁸ He tells Margaret that:

la royne m'a commandé compiler les croniques de sa maison de Bretagne, et pour ce faire m'envoye expressement par tous les pays de Bretagne affin que je m'enquiere par les veilles abbayes et maisons antiques de toute l'histoire brittanique.

This commission is very similar in detail to that given by Philip the Good to Hugues de Tollens half a century earlier. In the same letter, Lemaire made a reference to his apparent replacement at Margaret's court:

J'entends que vous avez créé ung nouvel indiciaire nommé maistre Remy, bourguignon.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.247.

⁹⁸ Ibid., IV, pp.423-6.

This is almost certainly a reference to Remy du Puys, who was made *chroniqueur et historiographe* of Margaret's court according to letters patent dated at Malines 15 February 1511.⁹⁹ Lemaire's switch therefore occurred between May 1510 and February 1511.

A second letter written by Jean de Paris to Margaret of Austria at Blois on 17 October of the same year confirmed that Lemaire 's'en est allé demourer en Bretagne'.¹⁰⁰ He was still occupied in French service in 1514 when he wrote his *Traitté des pompes funèbres dédié à très haute et excellente princesse Claude de France ... composé peu de temps après les obèques d'Anne de Bretagne, sa mère vers l'an 1514*.¹⁰¹ From now on, though, his level of influence at the French court began to wane, and he failed to enjoy the same level of patronage under Francis I as he had under Anne.

When he came to produce his version of Burgundian history, therefore, Lemaire was firmly attracted to the French court, not to that of Margaret of Austria. This is important, considering some of the alterations he made to the versions of the fifteenth century authors. Much was attacked and re-written.

As the historiographer of Margaret of Austria, Lemaire was in all probability aware of the works of la Marche, although he never referred to this author by name; and he was certainly familiar with the *Chroniques de Bourgogne* to which a specific reference is made.

About the early kings of Burgundy, he wrote

je ne sçay que l'abregé vulgaire qui se intitule les Chroniques des Roys, Ducs
et Contes de Bourgogne depuis l'an quatorze apres la Resurrection Nostre
Seigneur.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ See the article by van der Meersch in *Biographie nationale de Belgique*, VI (Brussels 1878), col.326-7.

¹⁰⁰ Lemaire, IV, pp.389-91, and his quote on p.390.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp.269 ff.

¹⁰² Ibid., II, pp.392ff. Lemaire's use of the term 'abregé' suggests that the original version of the *Chroniques de Bourgogne* may have been much longer than the surviving copies.

This may have been Lemaire's only source for Burgundian history. This lack of surviving manuscripts on the subject suggests that it was not a popular theme for historians, and Lemaire lamented the difficulties he encountered in compiling such a history:

J'ay eu grand peine de recueillir en divers lieux. Car je l'ay nulle part trouvé,
tout en un corps comme il sera icy réduit.¹⁰³

There is much about the prevailing notions about Burgundian history that Lemaire refuted. Three principal areas are noteworthy.

The first concerns the origin of the Burgundians. Although Lemaire's text was written only some 24 years after that of la Marche, and despite the fact that the former may have read the latter's work, there is no mention of Hercules being the ancient forefather of the early Burgundian kings. In this context, Lemaire shared at least one characteristic with the *Chroniques de Bourgogne*. La Marche's view of the Herculean origin of the early Burgundian kings appears therefore to have gained little credibility by the early sixteenth century, and Lemaire did not apparently deem it fit for inclusion in his work.

With regard to the Hercules myth in general, Lemaire shows himself to be far more erudite than la Marche. He showed an awareness of the different Hercules figures, whereas la Marche and his generation had rolled them all into one.¹⁰⁴ Lemaire discussed the lineage of Hercules of Libya, not to be confused with the better known Greek figure, who was in the author's view, the ancestor of Rhemus, King of Gaul as the founder of the city of Rheims, who ruled at the same time as Priam was enjoying supremacy in Troy. Rhemus himself was the son of Namnes, who founded Nantes in Brittany, and who ruled at the

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.367.

¹⁰⁴ Such as Raoul Lefèvre in his *Recueil des histoires de Troyes*; on the issue of the two Hercules, see above n.37.

same time as King Laomedon, a contemporary 'petit Hercules Grec qui desroba Troye'.¹⁰⁵

The notion that the Libyan Hercules as the ancestor of the Kings of Gaul, which in fact shows itself to be closer to the view expressed in Diodorus Sciculus than to la Marche's interpretation,¹⁰⁶ may explain the prominent role of Hercules at the court of Francis I.

With regard to the Burgundian kings, Lemaire did not accept that they were descended from Hercules, but simply came from a branch of Germanic kings, and particularly King Vandalus who was descended from 'Tuyscon le Géant', first king of Germany, and son of Noah.¹⁰⁷ During the reign of the emperor Octavian Augustus, this King Vandalus moved his people from the region of 'Vandalie' westwards towards the Rhine, and when they were attacked by the troops of the emperors Drusus and Iberius, they defended themselves in 'bourgs', hence the name 'Bourguignons'.¹⁰⁸ On this point at least, Lemaire's views echoed those of la Marche, but he has refuted the latter's concept of the independent ancestry of the early Burgundian kings.

The second area where Lemaire differed profoundly from the writers of the previous generation was on the cherished tradition surrounding the conversion of Clovis, and the crucial role played by the Burgundian princess, Clotilde.¹⁰⁹ Lemaire directly refuted this view, and attributed the conversion of Clovis to Austrasius, Duke of Tongres and Brabant, 'Gouverneur de Gaule Belgique', and a valuable ally of Childeric, Clovis' father.¹¹⁰ This Austrasius had accepted the faith before Clovis, and had converted his lands

¹⁰⁵ On the Libyan Hercules and the connection to the early Gallic kings, see Lemaire, II, pp.267-8.

¹⁰⁶ See above, n.39.

¹⁰⁷ Lemaire, II, pp.373-80, for the genealogical connection between Noah and Tuyscon le Géant to Vandalus.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp.381-2.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp.381-2.

¹¹⁰ For Lemaire's account of the conversion of Clovis, see II, pp.364-5.

into a single Christian unit called Austrasie. Lemaire accepted that the subsequent conversion of Clovis occurred at a battle against Germanic troops, but insisted that it was Duke Austrasius, not Princess Clotilde, who persuaded him to do so:

Comment en l'effort de la bataille, la bende des François commencast à decliner et estre foulée de la puissance et multitude des Allemans; le duc Austrasius commença à s'escrier hautement: 'Ha, roy Clovis, appelle à ton ayde le très puissant Dieu des chrestiens, c'est celuy qui ne peult estre vaincu de nul; et celuy seul auquel la Royne Clotilde, ta compaignie, croit.' Alors le Roy Clovis contraint par nécessité voua de se faire baptiser, *ce qu'il n'avoit encores voulu faire à la requeste de sa femme.*¹¹¹

He therefore accepted Clotilde's Christianity - but rejected her powers of persuasion.

Not content with this, Lemaire went further. Not only did he deny Burgundian responsibility for the conversion of the French kings, but implied that in a sense that the process existed in reverse. While still pagan, the Burgundian lands suffered a series of attacks from the Huns, and to resist this they were persuaded by their neighbours to take the Christian faith. They did this in an un-named city in Gaul, and received the baptism from an equally anonymous prelate, for according to Lemaire Christianity had existed in certain pockets of Gaul long before the kings officially became converts. This text reads:

Estoit deslors nostre foy catholique en bruit et en estimes presque en toutes les contrées de Gaule ... et les peuples des Bourguignons ... se tirent vers une cité de Gaule, de laquelle l'histoire n'exprime point le nom, suppliants humblement au prelat d'icelle cité qu'ilz peussent recevoir Baptesme ... il leur prescha les articles de la foy, et au huitième jour les baptisa ...¹¹²

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., pp.389-90.

The third significant departure in Lemaire's work once again concerns the conversion of the early Burgundian kings.¹¹³ The title that Lemaire gave to this section of his work really speaks for itself:

Confutation de l'erreur de ceulx qui cuident que du temps de la Magdeleine,
il y eust aucun prince qui se nommast Roy de Bourgogne. Et de la verité de
l'histoire du Roy Gundenges qui premier fut institué par les Bourguignons,
et de ses gestes ...¹¹⁴

It is here that Lemaire made his reference to the *Chroniques de Bourgogne*, and it is against the information contained in it that this attack appears to be directed. He accepted that Mary Magdalene may have converted someone named Trophume at Marseille - but this person was not a king of Burgundy, for according to 'auteurs authentiques', the Burgundians only arrived in Gaul in the year 376. No King of Burgundy could therefore have existed at the time of Mary Magdalene.

Furthermore, the Burgundians remained without a king for 38 years, until 414 when Gundengus became the first monarch, at the same time as Pharamond was ruling France. A further thirteen years later, the Burgundians became Christian. Gundengus' four sons split up their father's estate, but by violent and treacherous means, one of them, Gundebaud, usurped the entire inheritance. His daughter married Clovis, King of France, who in turn deported the evil Gundebaud. From this point of view, the text begins to once more recall that of la Marche, and his own probable source, the *Grandes Chroniques de France*.

By the early sixteenth century, therefore, there was still sufficient interest in the traditions of early Burgundian history for Lemaire to deem it worthy of inclusion in his work. But in doing so, he discredited many of its cherished ideals, and did much to

¹¹³ Note the fundamental agreement between the *Chroniques de Bourgogne* and la Marche on this point.

¹¹⁴ Lemaire, II, pp.392-7, on which the following paragraphs are based.

undermine the whole concept of the ancient, independent kingdom, whose history had been carefully constructed by the men of the previous generation.

Epilogue

On the evening of Wednesday 18 April 1515, Charles V undertook a magnificent entry to the city of Bruges, an account of which was written up by the *indiciaire* of the Habsburg court, Remy du Puys.¹¹⁵ The pageants that were put together for this were extensive, and Charles passed by twenty-seven of them, as well as a mock naval battle, en route. He was so impressed by them that he requested that the entire ceremony should be repeated in daylight, and this was hastily arranged for the following Sunday.¹¹⁶

Among the pageants, one, constructed by the guild of Bruges tanners, consisted of a long bridge surmounted by a tower at the top of which was a globe of the world. As Charles passed below, the globe opened to reveal a glittering maiden representing Bruges, flanked on either side by the Burgundian dukes Philip the Good and Charles the Bold. The purpose of the pageant was to show how the reigns of these dukes had coincided with a Brugesois 'golden age', as a message on the globe suggested.¹¹⁷ This theme was repeated in another pageant, organised by the 'seigneurs du Franc'. It took the form of a short play in which Philip the Good was seen before a throne, holding a sword of justice and distributing letters of privilege to the assembled knights and gentlemen. In an adjacent

¹¹⁵ Remy du Puys, *La triumpante entrée de Charles, prince des Espagnes, en Bruges, 1515*, ed. S. Anglo (Amsterdam and New York 1975); on this, see also Chipps-Smith, pp.379-84.

¹¹⁶ Remy du Puys, p.12.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., pp.27-8. Note Anglo's comment that this may represent a reminder to the current rulers of the city of the decline which Bruges had suffered since the Burgundian period, and a challenge to put this right.

chamber, a vision of the Golden Age was unveiled with Saturn, the Sybil, Pan and Ceres, with three nymphs, dancing a *branle*.¹¹⁸ Again, a clear association is made between Philip and the Golden Age of Franc-Bruges.

The use of these images certainly suggests the persistence of the Burgundian past in the minds of the dukes and subjects of the Low Countries at this time. It may be suggested that the figure of Philip the Good had been idealised in the works of la Marche, and this is true to an extent. But in this pageant, the emphasis has changed. By 1515, only a minority of the population would have even been alive during Philip's reign, and few could have had first-hand experience of his rule. The image of this prince was therefore very much idealised, and the association made between him and a golden age that consisted of pagan gods dancing with beautiful nymphs shows how far he had passed into the realms of legend and myth. It seems probable that by this period, contemporary perceptions about the Burgundian past were evolving, and being narrated on an imagined and idealised basis.

Moreover, the Habsburg view of their past was increasingly given to submerging the Burgundian component into a far wider context, for by the reign of Charles V, their territory included an enormous sweep of land across western Europe which covered much of modern-day Germany and Spain, as well as the Netherlands. The old issue of the annexation of Burgundy had therefore lost its sense of urgency. The scope of this is revealed in one of the major genealogical histories of Charles' reign, the 'Breviaire concernant la royale et tres ancienne lignie de sa sacrie, imperiale et catholique majesté Charles cinquiesme, roy des Espaignes etc., du tres illustre prince Ferdinand roy de Bohème et de la très illustrée dame Marguerite, leur tante, archiducs d'Austrice, ducs de Bourgogne,

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp.29-30.

de Brabant etc., et de tous aultres archiducs, ducs d'Austrice, Contes de Hapsbourg, leurs progeniteurs, depuis deux mille ans ...'¹¹⁹ Its author was, according to his own signature, 'Jean Franco, secretaire'.¹²⁰ The work includes an enormous sweep of genealogical history, from the Trojan origins of the house of Habsburg, down to the time of Charles V, and in this context can be seen to have been anticipated some forty years earlier by the Austrian history of Olivier de la Marche.

To the Habsburgs, Olivier de la Marche represented a link to a past they had never had, but desperately wished to acquire. His version of Burgundian history was tailor-made for the new lords of this territory at the end of the fifteenth century. Just as he drew on and adapted the traditions that had been in vogue in the Burgundy of Philip the Good, so his successors would develop and amend many of his own innovations in order to recreate the histories for a sixteenth-century audience, drawn from the world of the Emperor Charles V and the French king Francis I. La Marche represents a fundamental bridge in the development of literary history, and this is reflective of the general importance of the cultural values of Valois Burgundy to the Habsburgs. Charles V in particular looked to the Burgundy of the Valois dukes for inspiration. As late as 1548, shortly after his victory at

¹¹⁹ B.N. ms.fr. 5616; the fifth appears on f.1. See also Gachard, *Le Bibliothèque Nationale à Paris*, I, pp.100-02: and Omont, *Catalogue des manuscrits français*, n°5616.

¹²⁰ Some background information on Jean Franco has been given by Gachard, I, pp.100-2. From 15 August 1523, Franco was in receipt of fifteen 'sous' daily as 'secretaire signant au privé conseil', and from 24 March 1525, he received a pension of 50 *livres* 'tant et jusques' à ce qu'il seroit pourveu de l'estat de secretaire ordinaire'. He also received payment from Margaret of Austria for 'aulcuns chroniques que à l'ordonnance de madite feu dame il a translâtées d'allemand en françois, et icelles environ un Demy-an avant le decès de madite dame deliverées en ses mains ...' Finally, Gachard believes Franco to be of Germanic origin, due to his apparent knowledge of the German language, and because of payment made to him on 9 February 1524 'pour l'aider à retourner dans ses pays'. Besides this major work, Franco executed at least one other piece of prose for Margaret of Austria, a translation of 'Les dangiers rencontrés en partie et les adventures du digne tres renommé et valeureux chevalier Chiermerciaut par Melchior Pfinzing, trad. par J. Franco, secretaire'; B.N. ms. fr. 24288, and Omont, *op. cit.* This manuscript contains a dedication to Margaret, and was completed at Malines on 4 January 1528.

Mühlberg, he was depicted in a famous painting by Titian on horseback wearing the collar of the Golden Fleece.¹²¹ The cultural baggage of his Valois ancestors was to persist well into the sixteenth century, and the work of la Marche played a significant role in the creation of a link to them.

¹²¹

H.E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, II, *The Portraits* (London 1971), plates 141-2.

CONCLUSION

Since the 1880s, little has emerged by way of a systematic attempt to analyse the career and literary works of Olivier de la Marche within the context of the political and cultural world of the later fifteenth century. Such an analysis is the principal theme of this thesis.

Despite the lack of such a work, however, it is immediately apparent that la Marche's name features in the indices of an enormous number of books devoted to late medieval French history. Time and again he is quoted, or some aspect of his career history is examined. More often than not, he is presented as being in some respect the model courtier,¹ half a century before Castiglione. He is usually seen as a man steeped in the ideals of chivalry, as an expert on matters of ceremony and etiquette, as a source of factual information on the history of Valois Burgundy, and as a man who composed interesting, though hardly innovative, poetry and prose treatises. To Joseph Calmette, he was the humble memorialist, utterly faithful to his Valois masters, sincere in his work yet ultimately lacking the intellectual capacity of some of his contemporaries.² To Elizabeth Mongon, he was a dour and cynical man, disillusioned with the world around him.³ To Georgina Grace and Dorothy Margaret Stuart, he was a 'tranquil and serene' man,⁴ responsible for a series of works that they described as 'quaint', 'delightful' and 'charming'.⁵ And in the view of Huizinga, he and his Burgundian contemporaries were inextricably linked to the dying

¹ Huizinga, p.227.

² See above, 'Introduction', n.9.

³ See above, ch.4 n.6.

⁴ See above, 'Introduction', n.12.

⁵ Ibid.

medievalism of the northern world. In attempting to identify what he called the 'true moderns' of fifteenth-century French literature, Huizinga wrote:

Assuredly it is not, whatever their merits may have been, the grave and pompous representatives of the Burgundian style; not Chastellain, la Marche or Molinet. The novelties of form which they affected were too superficial, the foundation of their thought too essentially medieval, their classical whimsies too naive.⁶

We might assume that la Marche's 'model courtier' persona is also to be condemned as a feature of the decaying medieval world, yet Castiglione, the ideal Renaissance courtier, is usually seen as the embodiment of the early modern statesman. 'Medieval' though la Marche may have been, it is clear that such labels are unsatisfactory, since he does in some respects point to the future rather than the past.

Moreover, as the preceding pages have sought to demonstrate, the other sentiments expressed above are at best only partially correct, and at worst somewhat wide of the mark. In Olivier de la Marche, we have a man very much at the centre of the political and cultural world of the court, and one who understood its workings very well indeed. Rather than the mere faithful and even sycophantic servant, he was an ambitious career man whose determination and drive led him into a wide range of offices and positions within the court hierarchy. He was at once a diplomat, bureaucrat and military captain. As the Duke's *maître d'hôtel* from 1461, and *grand et premier maître d'hôtel* to Maximilian from 1477, he had enormous responsibility for the running of the household, with a role to play in the organisation of events and a duty towards budgeting for these. He played a significant role in the staging of the Feast of the Pheasant, but it was his contribution to the wedding of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York fourteen years later that stands out as his major

achievement in this context, since it was he, with the aid of Jacques de Villiers, who had overall charge of its organisation. This nine-day extravaganza is arguably the most spectacular example of the *fêtes* that characterised the late medieval period. It was described in a considerable number of contemporary chronicles and other sources, and has continued to fascinate historians for more than five centuries. In terms of scale, it was the most extravagant *fête* that western Europe had ever seen. Is this the work of a humble man, given to cynicism and disillusionment? Such a suggestion must be questioned.

The pursuit of a successful career such as that of la Marche requires a certain degree of determination and ambition. He was acutely aware of the nature of career progression in the often hazardous world of the court, and sought to exploit the system to his best advantage through the establishment and maintenance of contacts and favour. Indeed, his first book of *Mémoires*, addressed to Philippe le Beau, contains a subtle reminder to this prince of services already rendered, for which rewards were expected. Being at the centre of the court machine, he was also very much aware of its potential as a centre of literary patronage. Having lived through much of the reigns of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold, he would certainly have witnessed the building of the great ducal library and been aware of the bibliophile tendencies of men like the Bastard of Burgundy and Louis de Bruges.⁷ Thus, while few of his literary works were directly commissioned by courtiers, he was able to ensure their circulation within this milieu, where he knew they would be read. Many of his literary works were, arguably, 'light' pieces, as Grace and Stuart have suggested. Poems like *Le Parement et triumphe des dames* and *Les Sept fées* are hardly innovative or challenging in their conception. But despite this, some of the

⁷ On whom see A. Boinet, 'Un bibliophile du XV^e siècle. Le Grand Bâtard de Bourgogne' in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 67 (1906), pp.255-69; and M. Vale, 'An Anglo-Burgundian Nobleman and Art Patron. Louis de Bruges, Lord of la Gruthuyse and Earl of Winchester' in C. Barron and N. Saul eds., *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages* (London, 1995), pp.115-31.

works did have very serious objectives, and were derived from hard experience. *État de la maison du duc Charles* is a scholarly work, designed to give practical instructions on the building of a princely household, and appears to have been used as such by Edward IV of England, Maximilian of Austria, and Charles V. *Epistre pour tenir et célébrer la noble feste de la Thoison d'Or* is likewise a practical manual, designed as a guide for the staging of Golden Fleece chapters. *Le Livre des Gaiges de Bataille* is also a very serious work which exhibits genuine erudition, though admittedly little originality. Drawn from a range of sources, it is a guide to the procedures that should be followed by a prince in the event of his having to preside over a wager of battle, and involved a discussion of some genuinely thorny ethical issues. This work is very far from having the 'quaint' or 'delightful' character conferred upon his literature by some observers. And despite the outwardly chivalrous veneer that characterises *Mémoires*, it is very clear that this is not the work of a naive or idealistic mind. Indeed, its character should be seen as the result of a conscious choice on the part of the author.

La Marche was therefore capable of producing 'serious' literature, and not just whimsical, allegorical poetry. Perhaps the outstanding example of how his achievement has been misinterpreted by historians is the neglected first book of *Mémoires* or 'Introduction'.

Dismissed as amounting to little more than schoolboy history and mythology,⁸ it is clear that the work was in fact much more than this. Indeed, it must be understood as a response to the changing political and cultural circumstances of its day, and as such sheds some light on the upheavals of the late fifteenth century, as well as the author's own perception of these. Most importantly, the 'Introduction' consists of a vigorous defence of Philippe le Beau's birthright. This is justified principally through the reconstruction of his ancestry

from its mythical origins down to his own day, and in achieving this, la Marche reveals the means by which Philippe had come to his birthright. His recounting of the virtuous deeds of Philippe's ancestors also provides the prince with a set of role-models to emulate. Elsewhere, and with less subtlety, la Marche vehemently condemns the injustices that had been perpetrated against Philippe by the enemies 'from within and without', almost certainly a reference to the rebellious Flemish *États* on the one hand and the King of France on the other, and declares that with God's aid, he would avenge these injustices. In this sense, the 'Introduction' can be seen as a polemical work, and a response to a specific set of political circumstances.

Yet the 'Introduction' is a more complex work than this analysis allows. It contains observations about the nature of princely power in the late fifteenth century, and it also comments on the relationship that ought to exist between the dukes and their subjects, as well as their French overlords. In this context, la Marche urges an emulation of the policies of Philip the Good, which would allow Philippe le Beau full rights over his territories yet allow him to remain a prince of the kingdom of France in respect of his French principalities. This, the author implies, is the ideal political relationship. Moreover, the 'Introduction' holds a significant place in the development of a historiographical tradition of Burgundy and the Low Countries. It might in fact be seen as the connecting link between what could be termed the Valois and the Habsburg perceptions of this past. Drawing on the ideals of historians who had been active under Philip the Good, la Marche's prose reworked and adapted these stories to suit a new audience, before itself being subject to amendment and reconstruction by the generation which followed him.

To the Habsburgs, la Marche certainly represented a link to the Valois past, and his ideas about their history were invaluable to them. But to the historian, la Marche can be

seen as a bridge between the Valois and Habsburg periods in a number of other ways. His continued service to the successors of Charles the Bold was in keeping with the actions of large numbers of noble families who had traditionally supported the Valois dukes, and is thus representative of a wider historical trend. His outspoken defence of Mary and Philippe's right to their inheritance was echoed by a major campaign on the part of the Burgundian court after 1477. His apparent encouragement of Maximilian to revive the Order of the Golden Fleece, and his subsequent comments to Philippe le Beau on the significance of the Order, stand testimony to his realisation that symbolic continuity of this sort was absolutely crucial to ensuring that the rights of Charles' successors were upheld. Association with this chivalric order was highly prized by the Habsburgs, and as Titian's portrait of Charles V at Mühlberg shows, the Emperor had retained his enthusiasm for the cultural baggage of Valois Burgundy as late as 1548. Through an examination of la Marche's role, the historian is forced to question the existing notion about exactly what happened to Valois Burgundy after Charles' death, for whatever the outcome of such a debate, it is apparent that his experience demonstrates that it is not acceptable to argue that Burgundy simply collapsed overnight, to be divided up between the King of France and the Emperor. The events that took place in the years after 1477 might best be interpreted as a crisis of succession, in which the rebellious Flemish *États* and the French Crown sought to exploit the vulnerability of Mary of Burgundy in order to maximise their own gains. But their efforts would be met by a concerted attempt to defend the rights of Mary, Philippe and their inheritance, and one of the most prominent supporters of their case would be Olivier de la Marche. Once again, we might ask, is this the work of a humble and naive man? Nothing could be further from the truth.

And yet, despite his pragmatic and ambitious character, la Marche remained a pious

man, and one of high principle. Central to his moral outlook was his highly developed sense of devotion. La Marche's God was an immensely powerful being, to whom all the affairs of the world were subject, and on whom all earthly glory and prosperity were dependent. Perhaps the most outstanding reminder of the power of God, and the one which would haunt la Marche for much of his life, was the death of Charles the Bold, an event which as contemporary writings show created enormous shockwaves throughout Europe. This conception of the world was shared by some of his contemporaries, notably Comynes, and the notion of a world ultimately subject to forces beyond human control is, like much of his moral outlook, derived largely from the thought-world of the north. Yet once again, it would be superficial to dismiss la Marche as an anachronistic representation of the dying medieval world. Closely linked to his views on the power of God was the notion that the world was similarly subject to the whims of fortune, over which humankind had no direct influence, and in this sense he anticipates a theme central to the work of Machiavelli in the early sixteenth century.⁹ La Marche may indeed have been a product of the feudal north, but it should not be assumed that his ideas lacked credibility in the following century.

Elsewhere, his years of experience in the cut-and-thrust world of power and politics do not appear to have destroyed entirely his moral integrity. He genuinely appears to have believed in the importance of the traditional values of his day, the ideals of loyalty, of honour, and of truth, although he may well have accepted that these ideals could be difficult to sustain in the real world. His literary works are nevertheless full of moral messages, and these are overwhelmingly drawn from the traditional ideals and values of the northern aristocracy. Morally speaking, la Marche was probably an old-fashioned, traditional kind

⁹

See above, ch.4 n.76.

of man, not overly fascinated by the 'new' learning of the Renaissance, although he was certainly aware of the existence of classical works and can in some ways be seen to anticipate the values of the sixteenth-century aristocracy. In political terms, his traditionalism was paramount. He was eager to see a return to the relative political stability that had existed under Philip the Good, an era he believed to have been genuinely blessed with men of high principle, not least of all the good duke himself who emerges as an idealised prince in much of his literature. The years of upheaval and conflict that followed the death of Charles the Bold, which la Marche would attribute in part to the demise of the traditional values, may well have intensified his yearning for the halcyon days of his childhood, and led him to entertain the idea that Philip the Good's reign did indeed represent a Burgundian 'golden age'. Drafting his testament at his home in Brussels in the late summer of 1501, he may have hoped that with the recent accession of Philippe le Beau, and the conflict of the previous decades safely in the past, a new era of stability had truly begun. As he lay on his deathbed, pondering the past and future, he may just have experienced a glimmer of optimism.

APPENDIX 1. Olivier de la Marche's Date of Birth

Much disagreement exists over this issue, and since no single surviving piece of evidence exists, it is necessary to collect clues from a wide range of sources in order to pinpoint, with reasonable accuracy, the year in which Olivier de la Marche was born. The exact dates of a number of significant events that occurred during his lifetime, including the year in which he was accepted to the court as a ducal page and the time that he began to write *Mémoires*, are equally unclear. These pages will attempt to resolve some of these problems.

On the question of la Marche's date of birth, a wide range of possibilities has been suggested. Henri Stein, in his biography of la Marche, believed him to have been born in 1425.¹ His view was shared by Michaud and Vallet de Viriville,² as well as Molinier.³ Petitot placed it slightly later, in 1426.⁴ According to Henri Beaune, la Marche could not have been born until 1428 or even 1429,⁵ while by way of contrast Kervyn de Lettenhove placed his birth as early as 1420.⁶ The last word on the debate went back to Stein, who modified his original view and suggested 1422 to be a more reasonable date.⁷ Since then no commentator has directly addressed the issue,

¹ Stein, p.11.

² Stein, 'La date de naissance d'Olivier de la Marche' in *Mélanges d'histoire offerts à Henri Pirenne*, II (Brussels 1926), pp.461-4, esp. p.461.

³ Molinier, *Les sources de l'histoire de France; Le Moyen Age*, IV, p.200.

⁴ Petitot, *Collection des chroniques sur l'histoire de France*, 1st series, IX (Paris 1820), p.7.

⁵ *Mémoires*, I, pp.xviii-xix.

⁶ Kervyn de Lettenhove, *Lettres et negociations de Philippe de Commines*, III (1874), p.viii.

⁷ Stein, 'La Date', pp.463-4.

preferring instead to side with one of the above suggestions. The correct year could therefore be any one between 1420 and 1429.

To resolve the issue, the first area of evidence to check is la Marche's own works, where he frequently gives an indication of his age at the time of writing. Unfortunately, once all these references have been analysed, it becomes clear that they are inconsistent. For example, in *Advis des grands officiers que doit avoir ung Roy*, dated 10 June 1500, the author declared that he was 76 years old.⁸ Furthermore, in *Epistre pour tenir et célébrer la noble feste dela Toison d'Or*, he states that he is in the 76th year of his life.⁹ This text was certainly written in 1501, since the author regrets that he could not be at the place where Philippe le Beau was holding 'la noble feste de la Toison', a clear reference to the Golden Fleece chapter held that year in Brussels.¹⁰ Both these references would therefore suggest a date of birth in 1424 or 1425.

However, contradictory evidence emerges elsewhere in la Marche's work. In the 'Introduction' to *Mémoires*, he states that he is 66 years old, while Philippe le Beau, to whom the work is addressed, is 'dessoubs dix ans'.¹¹ Because Philippe was born in 1478, la Marche would have been writing in 1488, and by this reckoning his date of birth would be as early as 1422. It was partly on this evidence that Stein based his modified view.¹² It is probable that la Marche was aware of Philippe's age without

⁸ *Advis* in *Mémoires*, IV, pp.153-7, esp. p.157.

⁹ *Epistre* in *ibid.*, p.158.

¹⁰ On which see Reiffenberg, *Histoire du noble ordre de la Toison d'Or*, pp.223ff; and Kervyn de Lettenhove, *La Toison d'Or*, p.70.

¹¹ *Mémoires*, I, p.9.

¹² Stein, 'La date', p.461.

the possibility of inaccuracy. He had, after all, been very close to Philippe since becoming his tutor in 1485.¹³ Moreover, Philippe's birth and baptism were recorded by a large number of observers, all of whom are wholly consistent with la Marche that this took place in 1478.¹⁴ 1488 is therefore the year in which la Marche began his 'Introduction', and this suggests a date of birth in 1422.

Yet another view emerges from book 1 of *Mémoires* proper, written some fifteen years earlier than the modified 'Introduction'. Here, la Marche claimed he was approaching 45 years of age.¹⁵ No exact date is given in the text, and estimates have placed its being written at some point between 1470 at the earliest to 1473 at the latest.¹⁶ The most probable the year is 1473, since la Marche gives his title at the time of writing as being 'chevalier, conseiller et maître d'hôtel et capitaine de la garde'.¹⁷ This last title is important, since the earliest reference to la Marche holding this post was written early in 1473.¹⁸ Furthermore, Charles is described as 'Duc de Gueldres',¹⁹ and we know that he did not adopt this title until early 1473.²⁰ This evidence suggests that the work could not have been begun any earlier than the beginning of 1473. In addition, la Marche's failure to mention his holding the title *maître de la monnaie de Gueldres* might be due to the fact that he had not yet received

¹³ See ch.1, n.214.

¹⁴ *Mémoires*, I, p.159; see also Commynes, II, p.258.

¹⁵ *Mémoires*, I, p.186.

¹⁶ Stein, p.109; Beaune, p.civ.

¹⁷ *Mémoires*, I, p.185.

¹⁸ Stein, p.55 n.9.

¹⁹ *Mémoires*, I, p.185.

²⁰ Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, pp.117-22; Bartier, *Charles le Téméraire*, pp.162-5.

it, and if so he would have been writing at some point before 18 August 1473.²¹ It therefore seems reasonable to suggest *Mémoires* to have been begun between January and August 1473, and on this evidence, together with the fact that la Marche was 45 years old at the time of writing, his date of birth must be placed in 1428-9.

It is therefore apparent that we cannot rely on la Marche's testimony alone, since there are too many inconsistencies. As unlikely as it may appear to the modern observer, it is conceivable that la Marche was in fact unaware of his exact date of birth, and therefore age. He may have been forced to estimate his age, and this would explain the inconsistencies.²² A recent article by Creighton Gilbert has sought to show that statements about age are notoriously inaccurate during the Renaissance period, partly because of error and partly due to deliberate exaggeration or diminution.

Gilbert states:

... when Brunelleschi was fifty, he knew his age, but six years later he thought he was over sixty. Baldovinetti leaps from forty to sixty in ten years, where in probable fact he was only going from forty-five to fifty-five ...²³

Brunelleschi may, Gilbert suggests, have exaggerated his age to avoid the Florentine head-tax, from which men over 60 were exempt. With regard to biographies of individuals, such as the work of Vasari, Gilbert shows that statements about age are wholly unreliable. While these examples do not have any direct bearing on Olivier de la Marche, they do suggest that the need to be accurate about one's age was not

²¹ Stein, *Pièces Justificatives*, no.xxxvii, pp.180-1.

²² The view that la Marche may have been unaware of his own age is supported by Beaune, p.xvii.

²³ C. Gilbert, 'When did a Man in the Renaissance Grow Old?' in *Studies in the Renaissance*, 14 (1967), pp.7-32; the following paragraph is based on pp.19-22.

considered enormously important during the period, and that instances of error existed widely.

To pinpoint a more accurate date of birth, it is therefore necessary to re-examine the evidence of Beaune and Stein to check their validity. Beaune's view, that la Marche was born in 1428-9, is based on the premise that la Marche was 45 when he began to write *Mémoires*, and that this was in 1472-3. Beaune adds that in *Vers et petit traictié*, written for Margaret of Austria in 1498, the author stated that he was 70 years old.²⁴ Yet both these conclusions rely solely on an old man's own statements about his age, and this kind of evidence cannot be accepted unquestioningly.

Beaune's strongest piece of evidence, however, concerns the entry of the young la Marche to the court at Châlon-sur-Saône in the Duchy of Burgundy during a rare visit by Philip the Good to his southern territories.²⁵ According to Beaune's analysis, la Marche could not have joined the court until March 1442 at the earliest, despite the chronicler's own statement that this event had taken place three years earlier. Because he was around thirteen years of age at the time, again according to his own testimony, la Marche must have been born in 1428-9. Beaune denies that la Marche could have joined the court in 1439 since, as he convincingly shows, Philip the Good was not in Burgundy in 1439, but did undertake an extensive tour there in 1442-3.

External evidence certainly confirms the view that Philip the Good did not visit Burgundy in 1439, and on this point at least, la Marche is mistaken.²⁶ Evidence also

²⁴ Beaune, p.cxlili n.1.

²⁵ Ibid., p.xviii & p.247-52.

²⁶ M. Canat de Chizy, 'Itinéraire du duc de Bourgogne pendant ses séjours au duché de Bourgogne' in *Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire de Bourgogne*, (Châlon-sur-Saône 1863), I, pp.486ff, this shows that Philip was present in the Duchy between May 1434-April 1435 (p.490), and that he did not return until December 1441 (p.491). He reached Châlon-sur-Saône on 17 March 1442, and stayed there until 7 April. It was during this period that Beaune suggests he accepted the young la Marche as a page.

exists to show that Philip was in his northern territories for the first half of 1439.²⁷ But Beaune's analysis is still inconclusive, and in fact raises as many new problems as it solves. In the first place, while he accepts that la Marche was thirteen when he entered the court, he entirely dismisses the chronicler's statement that he was eight or nine when he first came to Pontarlier in 1434, where he would witness the entry of Jacques de Bourbon to the city the following year.²⁸ If la Marche's estimate about his age is even remotely accurate, he could hardly have been born as late as 1428-9.

Furthermore, la Marche is quite specific in *Mémoires* that he entered the court in 1439, two years after the death of his father, and immediately after the period he spent in the household of Guillaume de Lurieu. Beaune has entirely dismissed this claim. Finally, Beaune's conclusion forces him to accept that la Marche began to write his 'Introduction' as late as 1493.²⁹ This view is untenable since, as chapter 3 of this thesis demonstrates, Margaret of Austria was still Queen of France at the time of writing, and this places the work in a period that pre-dates 1491.³⁰ Furthermore, if the 'Introduction' was begun in 1493, Philippe le Beau would not have been ten years old, but fifteen, and Beaune's implication that la Marche was capable of mistaking a fifteen-year old adolescent, with whom he had a close relationship as tutor, for a ten-year-old boy, is wholly unconvincing.

²⁷ Le Glay, *Inventaire Sommaire: Nord*, I, p.358, B 1517; this describes the 'séjour du duc de Bourgogne et du comte de Charolais à Bruxelles' and 'à la Haye' between January-March 1439; note also the 'séjour du duc de Bourgogne et du comte de Charolais, de Nevers et d'Étampes Engheim, à Ath, à Tournai, à Lille, à la Bassée, à Aire, à St. Omer ...' between April-June 1439, *ibid.*, p.370, B 1518.

²⁸ *Mémoires*, I, p.190; on Jacques de Bourbon's entry to Pontarlier, see above, ch. 1.

²⁹ *Mémoires*, I, p.9 n.6, and p.10 n.2.

³⁰ For a full discussion of the dating of the 'Introduction', ch.3.

So how watertight is his evidence? Although la Marche made a clear association in *Mémoires* between his entry to court and Philip the Good's journey to Burgundy,³¹ he may in fact have been mistaken. La Marche did not go directly into the service of the Duke immediately upon his entry to court, but that of Philip's *premier chambellan*, Anthoine de Croy.³² In his recollection of his presentation to and acceptance by this prominent courtier, the chronicler gives absolutely no hint that he met, or even saw, Philip the Good at the time. In fact, the earliest date at which he specifically mentions seeing the Duke was in November 1442, when Philip received Frederick III at Besançon.³³ It could be suggested that la Marche's admittance to court predated Philip's visit to Burgundy by three years, a period which may have been spent under the supervision of Anthoine de Croy. If so, his association between the two events is an erroneous one, which might be explained as either a sign of uncertain recollection - after all, he was writing about boyhood events almost 35 years after they took place - or literary embellishment.

Having concluded that Beaune's evidence is at best inconclusive, it is necessary to then examine the view of Stein, who argued that la Marche was born as early as 1422.³⁴ Stein based this view on a number of pieces of evidence. First, he accepted that la Marche was 66 when he began to write his 'Introduction', and that this was in 1488. Second, he claimed to have discovered a hitherto unknown period of la Marche's adolescence. Having accepted Beaune's view that la Marche could not have

³¹ *Mémoires*, I, pp.247-52.

³² See ch. I, n.63.

³³ *Mémoires*, I, pp.271-82.

³⁴ Stein, 'La date'; the following paragraph is a summary of his main argument.

been admitted to court earlier than 1442, Stein suggested that he spent part of the period between 1437-42 studying in Paris. This assumption is based on the existence of a document that he discovered in the *Archives de la Seine* in the city. The document is the testament of one Étienne Postelet, an inhabitant of the parish of St. Jean-en-Grève, and is dated July 1438. The important entry reads:

Item, Olivierius de la Marche debet et, ut asseruit, unam salutarium auri pro resta majoris somme.

Stein concluded that la Marche had therefore borrowed a sum of money from this citizen. Because he would have been unable to do this until he had reached the age of sixteen, he could not have been born any later than the summer of 1422.

This analysis, however, like that of Beaune, actually raises more problems than it solves. For example, if la Marche was born in 1422, how could he have been eight or nine years of age when he moved to Pontarlier in 1434? And more strikingly, we would have to dismiss la Marche's perfectly plausible statement that he was about thirteen when he became a ducal page. Indeed, on Stein's evidence, and bearing in mind the fact that he assumed la Marche to have entered the court in 1442, la Marche would have been a twenty-year old page at the very start of his career, an absurd supposition.³⁵ Even if we were to accept 1439 as the year of his entry to court, he would have been seventeen on becoming a page, which is still rather old. Pages appear to have been considerably younger than this at the commencement of their careers; in *État de la maison du duc Charles*, la Marche states that pages were employed as

³⁵

Stein himself admits that this is an unresolved problem, *ibid.*, p.464.

‘enfants’,³⁶ while the hero of Anthoine de la Sale's *Petit Jean de Saintré* is seen to start his career at court as a young adolescent.³⁷

Moreover, Stein's evidence is far from satisfactory. There is no external evidence whatsoever to support the view that la Marche had spent some of his teenage years studying in Paris. The chronicler says absolutely nothing about it in *Mémoires*, and instead suggests that the two years between his father's death and his entry to court were spent in the household of Guillaume de Lurieu and Anne de la Chambre.³⁸

How then can we explain the testament of Étienne Postelet, and the apparent debt owed to him by la Marche? A solution might be to suggest that the debt was undertaken not by Olivier himself, but by an ancestor, possibly his father. We know very little about Phillipe de la Marche's activities before his stationing at the Castle of Joux in 1434, but it is reasonable to assume that he may have taken out a such loan of money. Although the testament is dated July 1438, there is no indication as to when the loan was actually made, and it may have been very much earlier. Also, if la Marche is correct in his statement that his father died in 1437, he would have inherited among other items any debts that his father had incurred, and this would explain the presence of his name in Étienne Postelet's testament. His own debts would, after all, be passed on to his son, Charles, according to the terms of his own testament.³⁹

It is therefore necessary to reject the views of both Beaune, who opted for 1428-9, and Stein, who preferred 1422, on the grounds that both sets of evidence are

³⁶ *État* in *Mémoires* IV, pp.63-4.

³⁷ Anthoine de la Sale, *Little John of Saintré*, ed. and trans. I. Gray.

³⁸ La Marche's exact words are: ‘audit lieu de Chalon ... messire Guillaume de Lurieu, seigneur de la Queuille m'amena à la court, lequel seigneur de la Queuille et dame Anne de la Chambre, sa femme, me nourrirent en leur hostel depuis l'an trante sept que non père mourut, jusques à l'an trante neuf ...’, *Mémoires*, I, p.251.

³⁹ See ch.1, n.227.

not only inconclusive, but in fact create more problems than they solve. Given the complexity of the issues, it would appear that the most satisfactory solution is the one that raises the fewest problems, rather than one which could be proven unequivocally.

Generally, the evidence that exists suggests that Stein's original estimate is in fact the most satisfactory, and that the year in which la Marche was born is 1425, or at the outset the very end of 1424. If we accept this as being the correct year, we can also accept the idea that la Marche was eight or nine when he moved to Pontarlier (1434), and thirteen when he joined the court (1439). He therefore died at the age of 76. Furthermore, if this view is correct, it appears that the problems that remain are of one type only - the references to his own age that la Marche gives in some of his literary works.⁴⁰ And as we have seen above, inaccuracy of this sort was not an uncommon feature of his era, and can be reasonably attributed to error or embellishment on the author's part.

⁴⁰

Particularly in his 'Introduction' where he claims to be 66; above n.12; and in the first book of *Mémoires*, see where he claims to be 45; see above n.16.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscripts

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

- ms. fr. 1104, *Recueil des pièces, complaints, chansons et rondeaux par Charles, duc d'Orleans et ses amis*
- ms. fr. 2868, *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*
- ms. fr. 2869, *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*
- ms. fr. 4332, *Testament d'Olivier de la Marche*
- ms. fr. 4907, works relating to Burgundy
- ms. fr. 5044, ff.30-1, letter of Jean de Pleine
- ms. fr. 5046, documents relating to the Order of the Golden Fleece
- ms. fr. 5616, *Bréviaire concernant la royale et très ancienne lignée de la sacrée imperiale et catholique majesté Charles cinquième, roy d'Espaignes*
- ms. fr. 6874, works of Jean d'Auffay
- ms. fr. 9456, ff.400-11, extracts from the *Mémoires* of Olivier de la Marche.
ff. 412 ff. *Vie d'Olivier de la Marche prononcée par l'Avocat Général de Frasnè à la séance du 21 février 1758*
- ms. fr. 11594, ordinance of the Feast of the Pheasant
- ms. fr. 23232, *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*
- ms. fr. 24373, *Le Chevalier délibéré*
- ms. *Collection de Bourgogne*, vol.23
- ms. *Collection de Bourgogne*, vol.100 f.323
- ms. *Collection Viesville*, vol. 55, f.138
- ms. *nouvelles acquisitions françaises* 5903.

Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels

ms. 5760, *Chronyk van Brabant*

ms. 9241, *Chronique de Hainaut*

ms. 10999, *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*

ms. II, 1044, *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*

ms. 5202-7, works of Jean d'Auffay

ms. 14864-5, *Genealogie de la maison d'Austrice*

British Library, London

ms. Harley 4425, *Roman de la Rose*

ms. Sloane 2936, *Le livre des moralites translaté du latin en françois par Olivier de la Marche*

ms. Yates Thompson 32, *S'ensuivent aulcunes chroniques extraittes d'aulcuns anciens registres et aultres enseignements d'anciens roix, princes et plusieurs saintes personnes issues de la très noble et anchienne maison de Bourgogne*

Archives Départementales du Nord, Lille

B 2004, 'compte de Guillaume de Poupet'

B 2117, letter of payment made to Olivier de la Marche

B 3664, *Inventaire des livres trouvez en la librairie de monseigneur de Ravenstein*

B 17726, letter of Maximilian to the *chambre des comptes*

B 17728, letter of Olivier de la Marche to the *chambre des comptes*.

B 17732, letter of Olivier de la Marche to the *chambre des comptes*

Bibliothèque de Lille

ms. 329, *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*.

Bibliothèque de la ville de Valenciennes

ms. 581, *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*

Bibliothèque Royale de la Haye

ms. 1344, fragments of *Mémoires*.

Published Primary Sources

Barrois, J., *Bibliothèque protypographique ou la librairie des fils de Charles V* (Paris 1830).

Basin, T., *Histoire de Louis XI*, ed. C. Saraman, 3 vols. (Paris 1963-72).

Bentley, S., *Excerpta Historica or Illustrations of English History* (London 1833).

Blarru, Pierre de, *La Nancéide ou la guerre de Nancy. Poème latin de Pierre de Blarru avec la traduction française*, ed. and trans. F. Schütz, 2 vols (Nancy 1840).

Borderie, A de la, *Oeuvres françaises d'Olivier Maillard, publiées d'après les manuscrits originaux* (Nantes 1877).

Bouton, J. de la Croix, 'Un poème à Philippe le Bon sur la Toison d'Or' in *Annales de Bourgogne*, 42 (1970), pp.5-29.

Bouvet, Honoré, *Tree of Battles*, ed. G. Coopland (Liverpool 1949).

But, Adrien de, 'Chronicae' in H. Kervyn de Lettenhove ed., *Chroniques relatives à l'histoire de Belgique*, I (Brussels 1870).

Callieu, Colijn, *Del sonder wederkeeren* (Ghent 1936).

Castiglione, Baldasar, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. G. Bull (Harmondsworth 1967).

Cellini, Benvenuto, *Autobiography*, ed. G. Bull (Harmondsworth 1956).

Chastellain, Georges, *Oeuvres*, ed., H. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 8 vols. (Brussels 1863-6).

Commynes, Philippe de, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Calmette & G. Durville, 3 vols. (Paris 1924-5).

Commynes, Philippe de, *Mémoires*, ed. Godefroy & Lenglet du Fresnoy, 4 vols. (London & Paris 1747).

Commynes, Philippe de, *Memoirs*, trans. and ed. M. Jones (Harmondsworth 1972).

Débat des herauts de France et d'Angleterre, ed. Pannier & Meyer (Société des anciens textes français, Paris 1877).

Dynter, Edmund de, *Chronique des ducs de Brabant*, ed. P.F.X. de Ram (Brussels 1854-7).

Escouchy, Mathieu d', *Chroniques*, ed. J. Buchon (*Collection des chroniques nationales françaises*, XXXV-XXXVI, Paris 1826).

Fredegar, *Compilation dite de Fredegair. Reproduction litterale du ms. 10910 du fonds latin de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, ed. G. Monod (Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études, II fasc, 63, 1885).

Fredegar, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, ed. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill (London 1960).

Froissart, Jean, *Chronicles*, trans. and ed. T. Johnnes, 2 vols. (London 1839).

- Froissart, Jean, *Chronicles*, trans. and ed. G. Brereton (Harmondsworth 1968).
- Gingins la Sarra, F. de, *Dépêches des ambassadeurs milanais* (Paris & Geneva 1858).
- Grandes Chroniques de France*, ed. J. Viard (Société de l'histoire de France, I, Paris 1920).
- Haynin, Jean de, *Mémoires*, ed. D.D. Brouwers (Liège 1905-6).
- Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. and ed. A. Selincourt (Harmondsworth 1972).
- Laborde, L. de, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, 3 vols. (Paris 1849-52).
- La Marche, Olivier de, *Le Chevalier délibéré*, ed. F. Lippman (London 1898).
- La Marche, Olivier de, *Le Chevalier délibéré*, ed. Ed. Mongon (Washington 1945).
- La Marche, Olivier de, 'Debat de Cuidier et de Fortune' in *Revue franc-comtoise, sciences, lettres et arts* (Besançon 1843), pp.244-59.
- La Marche, Olivier de, *Mémoires*, ed. H. Beaune & J. d'Arbaumont (Société de l'histoire de France, 4 vols., Paris 1883-8).
- La Marche, Olivier de, *Mémoires*, ed. Petitot (Mémoires sur l'histoire de France, 1^{er} serie, ix-x, Paris 1820).
- La Marche, Olivier de, *Memoirs*, trans. and ed. G. Grace & D.M. Stuart (British Library typescript, 1930).
- La Marche, Olivier de, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Lautens de Gand (Ghent 1566).
- La Marche, Olivier de, *Mémoires* (Collection universelle des mémoires particuliers relatifs à l'histoire de France, VIII, pp.xiv-422, & IX pp.1-359, London & Paris 1785).

La Marche, Olivier de, *Mémoires* in J. Buchon ed., *Choix de chroniques et mémoires sur l'histoire de France* (Paris 1876), pp.295-599.

La Marche, Olivier de, *Le Triumph des Dames von Olivier de la Marche*, ed. J. Kabfleisch-Benas (Rostock 1901).

Lannoy, Guillaume de, *Oeuvres*, ed. C. Potvin (Louvain 1878).

La Sale, Anthoine de, *Little John of Saintré*, trans. and ed. I. Gray (London 1931).

Lefèvre de St. Rémy, Jean, *Chronique*, ed. F. Morand (Société de l'histoire de France, 2 vols., Paris 1876 & 1881).

Lefèvre, Raoul, *Caxton's History of Jason, translated from the French of Raoul Lefèvre*, ed. J. Munro (Early English Text Society, London 1913).

Lefèvre, Raoul, *Recueil des histoires de Troyes*, ed. O. Sommer, 2 vols. (London 1894).

Le Glay, A., *Correspondance de Maximilien Ier et de Marguerite d'Autriche*, 2 vols. (Brussels 1839).

Le Glay, A. et. al., *Inventaire sommaire des archives départementales du Nord, serie B*, 10 vols. (Lille 1863-1906)

Lemaire des Belges, Jean, *Illustrations de Gaule et singularités de Troye*, ed J. Stecher (Louvain 1882-91; reprinted in 4 vols., New York 1972).

Lorris, Guillaume de & Meun, Jean de, *Romance of the Rose*, trans. and ed. C. Dahlberg (Hanover & London 1971).

Molinet, Jean, *Chroniques*, ed. G. Doutrepoint & O. Jodogne, 3 vols. (Brussels 1935-7).

Monmouth, Geoffrey of, *History of the Kings of Britain*, ed. L. Thorpe (Harmondsworth 1966).

Monstrelet, Enguerrand de, *Chronicles*, trans. and ed. T. Johnnes, 2 vols. (London 1840).

Myers, A.R., *The Household of Edward IV: The Black Book and the 1478 Ordinance* (Manchester 1959).

Orosius, *Seven Books Against the Pagans*, trans. I.W. Raymond (Columbia 1936).

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. M.M. Innes (Harmondsworth 1955).

The Paston Letters, ed. N. Davis (Oxford 1983).

Peignot, E., *Catalogue d'une partie des livres composant l'ancienne bibliothèque des ducs de Bourgogne de la dernière race* (Paris 1830).

Perceval, Jan, *Den Camp van der Doot* (Amsterdam 1948).

Picot, E. & Stein, H., *Recueil des pièces historiques imprimées sous le règne de Louis XI* (Paris 1923).

Plato, *Republic*, ed. D. Lee (Harmondsworth 1974).

Prost, B. ed., *Traictiés du duel judiciaire et relations de Pas d'armes et tournois par Olivier de la Marche etc.*, (Paris 1872 & 1878).

Puys, Remy du, *La triumpante entrée de Charles, prince des Espagnes, en Bruges, 1515*, ed. S. Anglo (Amsterdam & New York 1975).

Quicherat, J., *Histoire du costume* (Paris 1877).

Rigord, *Gesta Philippi Auguste*, ed. J. Guizot (Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, XI, Paris 1825)

Ruelens, C., ed., *Recueil de chansons, poèmes et pièces en vers français relatifs aux Pays-Bas* (Société des Bibliophiles de Belgique, III, Brussels 1878).

St. Quentin, Dudo de, *De Moribus et Actis primorum Normanniae Ducum*, ed. J. Lair (Caen 1865).

Sciculus, Diodorus, *Histories*, trans. and ed. C. Oldfather, 12 vols. (London & New York 1933-67).

Sciculus, Diodorus, *History of Diodorus the Sicilian in Five Books*, ed. C. Booth (London 1814).

Silvestre, A., *Poesies, romans et chroniques* (Paris 1842).

Thorpe, L., 'Philippe de Crevecoeur, seigneur d'Esquerdes; two epitaphs by Jean Molinet and Nicaise Ladam' in *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire*, 119 (1954), pp.183-206.

Tours, Gregory of, *History of the Franks*, ed. L. Thorpe (Harmondsworth 1974).

Troyes, Jean de, *Histoire de Louis XI, autrement dicte la Chronique Scandaleuse*, ed. Petitot (Mémoires sur l'histoire de France, XII-XIV, Paris 1820), pp.237-456 & 1-118.

Villon, F., *Selected Poems*, trans. and ed. P. Dale (Harmondsworth 1978).

Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. and ed. F. Jackson Knight (Harmondsworth 1958).

Walton, T., 'Les poèmes d'Amé de Montgesoie' in *Medium Aevum* (II, no. 1, March 1933), pp.1-33.

Wavrin, Jean de, *Recueil des Chroniques*, ed. W. Hardy (Rolls Series, 5 vols., London 1864-91).

Woodstock, Thomas of, 'The Ordinance and Forme of Fighting Within Lists' in T. Twiss ed., *Monumenta Juridica: Black Book of the Admiralty*, I (Rolls Series, LV, 1871), pp.300-29.

Secondary Works

Allemande, M.-T., 'La reversion du duché de Bourgogne au royaume de France vue à travers des mémoires contemporains' in *Cinq centième anniversaire de la bataille de Nancy, 1477. Actes du colloque organisé par l'Institut de recherche originale en sciences sociales, humaines et économiques à l'Université de Nancy* (1977), pp.207-35.

Armstrong, C.A.J., 'The Burgundian Netherlands, 1477-1521' in *New Cambridge Modern History*, I, pp.224-58.

Armstrong, C.A.J., 'The Language Question in the Low Countries' in J. Hale, R. Highfield & B. Smalley eds., *Europe in the Later Middle Ages* (London 1965),

Armstrong, C.A.J., 'La politique matrimoniale des ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois' in *Annales de Bourgogne*, 40 (1968), pp.5-58 & 89-139, reprinted in his *England, France and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century* (London 1983), pp.386-409.

Arnoul, A., 'Les lendemains de Nancy dans les pays de par deçà, jan-avr 1477' in Blockmans ed., *Het algemene en de gewistelijke privilegien van Maria van Bourgogne voor de Nederlanden, 1477; le privilège général et les privilèges régionaux de Marie de Bourgogne pour les Pays-Bas, 1477* (Courtrai & Heule 1981), pp.1-83.

Arnoul, A. & Massing, J.M., *Splendours of Flanders* (Cambridge 1993).

Atiya, A., *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (London 1938).

Bailly, A., *Louis XI* (Paris 1936).

Bartier, J., *Charles le Téméraire* (Brussels 1944).

Bartlett, R., *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal* (Oxford 1986).

Beauvois, E., *Un agent politique de Charles Quint. Le bourguignon Charles Bouton, seigneur de Corberon* (Paris 1882; reprinted Geneva 1971).

Benecke, R., *Maximilian I, 1459-1519; an Analytical Biography* (London 1982).

Bibliothèque Ambroise Firmin Didot. Catalogue illustré des livres rares et précieux, manuscrits et imprimés (Paris 1878).

Biographie nationale de Belgique (Brussels 1866-1938).

Blockmans, W.P., 'Break of continuitet: de Vlaamse privilegien van 1477 in het licht von het staatsworming process' in his *Het algemene en de gewistelijke privilegien van Maria van Bourgogne voor de Nederlanden, 1477; le privilège général et les privilèges régionaux de Marie de Bourgogne pour les Pays-Bas, 1477* (Courtrai & Heule 1981), pp.97-125.

Blockmans, W.P., 'La Position du Comté de Flandres dans le royaume à la fin du XV^e siècle' in B. Chevalier & P. Contamine eds., *La France de la fin du XV^e siècle* (Paris 1983).

Blockmans, W.P., 'Autocratie ou polyarchie? La lutte pour le pouvoir politique en Flandre de 1482-92' in *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire*, 140 (1974), pp.251-368.

Blockmans, W.P., 'La signification constitutionnelle des privilèges de Marie de Bourgogne' in his *Het algemene en de gewistelijke privilegien van Maria van Bourgogne voor de Nederlanden, 1477; le privilège général et les privilèges régionaux de Marie de Bourgogne pour les Pays-Bas, 1477* (Courtrai & Heule 1981), pp.495-516.

Boinet, A., 'Un bibliophile du XV^e siècle. Le Grand Bâtard de Bourgogne' in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 67 (1906), pp.255-69.

Bonenfant, P., *Philippe le Bon* (Brussels 1955).

- Boulton, J. d'A., *Knights of the Crown: The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe* (Suffolk 1987).
- Bossuat, R. et. al., *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises. Le Moyen Age* (new edition, Paris n.d.).
- Bossuat, A., 'Les origines troyennes; leur rôle dans la littérature historique au XV^e siècle' in *Annales de Normandie*, 8 (1958), pp.187-97.
- Brunet, J.C., *Manuel du libraire* (5th ed., Paris 1865).
- Brusten, C., 'L'Armée bourguignonne de 1465 à 1477' in *Revue internationale d'histoire militaire*, 20 (1959), pp.452-66.
- Calmette, J., *The Golden Age of Burgundy* (London 1962).
- Calmette, J., 'Le mariage de Charles le Téméraire avec Marguerite d'York' in *Annales de Bourgogne*, I, (1929), pp.193-214.
- Canat de Chizy, M., *Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire de Bourgogne* (Châlon 1863).
- Caron, M.T., *La noblesse dans le Duché de Bourgogne, 1315-1477* (Lille 1987).
- Cartellieri, O., *The Court of Burgundy* (London 1929, reprinted 1972).
- Célérier, M., *Regards sur la symbolique de la Toison d'Or* (Les Éditions du Bien Publique, 1990).
- Chaume, H., *Les origines du Duché de Bourgogne* (Dijon 1925).
- Chipps-Smith, J., *The Artistic Patronage of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, 1419-67* (University of Columbia, PhD thesis, 1979).
- Chrimes, S.B., *Henry VII* (London 1972).

Cinq centième anniversaire de la Bataille de Nancy, 1477. Actes du colloque organisé par l'Institut de recherche originale en sciences sociales, humaines et économiques à l'Université de Nancy (Nancy 1977).

Claveria, C., *Le Chevalier délibéré d'Olivier de la Marche y sus versiones espagnoles del siglo XVI* (Saragosa 1950).

Davis, R.H.C., *The Normans and their Myth* (London 1976).

A Descriptive Catalogue of 14 Illuminated Manuscripts Completing the 100 in the Library of Henry Yates Thompson (Cambridge 1912).

Devaux, J., 'La fin du Téméraire, ou la mémoire d'un prince ternie par l'un des siens' in *Le Moyen Age*, 95 (1989), pp.105-28.

Dogaer, G. & Debae, M., *La librairie de Philippe le Bon. Exposition organisée à l'occasion du 500^e anniversaire de la mort du duc* (Brussels 1967).

Doutrepoint, G., 'Jason et Gedeon, patrons de la Toison d'Or' in *Mélanges offerts à Godefroid Kurth* (Paris & Liège 1908), pp.191-205.

Doutrepoint, G., *Jean Lemaire des Belges et la Renaissance* (Brussels 1934).

Doutrepoint, G., *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne* (Paris 1909).

Dubois, H., '1477; Une rupture dans la vie économique des pays bourguignons?' in *Cinq centième anniversaire de la Bataille de Nancy, 1477 Actes du colloque organisé par l'Institut de recherche originale en sciences sociales, humaines et économiques à l'Université de Nancy* (Nancy 1977), pp.147-74.

Dumont, G., *Marie de Bourgogne* (Paris 1982).

Durrieu, P., *La miniature flamande au temps de la cour de Bourgogne, 1415-1530* (Paris & Brussels 1921, reprinted 1929).

Duverger, J., *Brussel als kunstcentrum in de XIV^e ende XV^e eeuw* (Antwerp 1935).

Encyclopaedia Britannica (11th edition, II, 1910).

Faral, E., *La légende arthurienne*, 3 vols. (Paris 1929).

Febvre, L., *Philippe II et la Franche-Comté* (Paris 1970).

Ferguson, G., *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (Oxford 1961).

Forster-Kirk, J. *Charles the Bold*, 3 vols. (London 1863-8).

Frederix, P., *La Mort de Charles le Téméraire* (Paris 1966).

Gachard, L.P., *La Bibliothèque Nationale. Notes et extraits des manuscrits qui concernent l'histoire de Belgique* (Brussels 1875).

Gachard, L.P., *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas*, I (Commission royale d'histoire, Brussels 1876).

Gilbert, C., 'When did a Man in the Renaissance Grow Old?' in *Studies in the Renaissance*, 14 (1987), pp.33-48.

Gras, P., 'La Croix de Bourgogne' in *Publications du centre européen d'études burgundo-medianes*, 21 (1981), pp.21-5.

Graves, R., *The Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth 1960).

Grazia, S. de, *Machiavelli in Hell* (London & Basingstoke 1992).

Guenée, B., 'État et nation au Moyen Age' in *Revue historique*, 237 (1967) pp.17-70.

Guichenon, S., *Histoire de Bresse et de Bagey* (Lyon 1650).

- Hardy, M.S., *Olivier de la Marche and Chivalry and Monarchy in the Fifteenth Century* (University of London, M.Phil. thesis, 1970).
- Hay, D., *Europe, the Emergence of an Idea* (Edinburgh 1957).
- Henne, A. & Wauters, A.J., *Histoire de la ville de Bruxelles*, 3 vols. (Brussels 1845).
- Hexter, J.M., 'The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance' in *Journal of Modern History*, 22 (March 1950), pp.1-20.
- Hommel, L., *Chastellain* (Brussels 1945).
- Hommel, L., *Marguerite d'York ou la Duchesse Junon* (Paris 1959).
- Hommel, L., *Marie de Boulogne ou le Grand Héritage* (Brussels 1945).
- Huart, A., *Jacques de Bourbon, roi de Sicile, frère mineur cordelier à Besançon* (Besançon 1882).
- Hugenholtz, F., 'The 1477 Crisis in the Duke's Domains' in J.S. Bromley & E.H. Kossman eds., *Britain and the Netherlands*, II (Groningen 1964), pp.145-88.
- Huizinga, J., *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth 1955).
- Hulst, H. d', *Le Mariage de Philippe le Beau avec Jeanne de Castille à Lierre, le 20 octobre 1496* (Antwerp 1958).
- Jacquot, J., 'Les fêtes et cérémonies au temps de Charles Quint' in *Les fêtes de la Renaissance*, II (Paris 1960).
- James, E., *The Origins of France* (London 1982).

- Jongkees, A.G., 'État et Église dans les Pays-Bas bourguignons avant et après 1477' in *Cinq centième anniversaire de la bataille de Nancy, 1477. Actes du colloque organisé par l'Institut de recherche originale en sciences sociales, humaines et économiques à l'Université de Nancy* (Nancy 1977), pp.237-47.
- Jung, M.R., *Hercule dans la littérature française du XVI^e siècle; de l'Hercule courtois à l'Hercule baroque* (Geneva 1966).
- Keen, M., *Chivalry* (Yale 1984).
- Keen, M. *England in the Later Middle Ages* (London 1973).
- Kendall, P.M., *Louis XI* (London 1974).
- Kendall, P.M., *Warwick the Kingmaker and the Wars of the Roses* (London 1972).
- Kervyn de Lettenhove, H., *Lettres et negociations de Philippe de Commynes*, 2 vols. (Brussels 1867-8).
- Kervyn de Lettenhove, H., *La Toison d'Or* (Brussels 1907).
- Kingsford, D., *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford 1913).
- Kipling, G., *The Triumph of Honour* (Leiden 1977).
- Kren, T., *Renaissance Painting in Manuscripts: Treasures from the British Library* (New York 1983).
- Kronenberg, M.E., 'Een onbekende nederlandse vertaling van *Le Chevalier délibéré* door Pieter Willemsz gemaakt' in *Tijdschrift voor nederlandse taal en letterkunde*, 51 (1932), pp.178-96.
- Labande-Mailfert, T., 'Autour du traité de Senlis; la Bourgogne en question' in *Cinq centième anniversaire de la Bataille de Nancy, 1477. Actes du colloque organisé par l'Institut de recherche originale en sciences sociales, humaines et économiques à l'Université de Nancy* (Nancy 1977), pp.249-68.

La Fortune-Martel, A., *Fête noble en Bourgogne au XV^e siècle. Le Banquet du Faisan, 1454, aspects politiques, sociaux et culturels* (Cahiers d'études médiévales, no.8, Montréal & Paris 1984).

Liebrecht, H., *Les chambres de rhétorique* (Brussels 1948).

London, H.S., *The Life of William Bruges* (London 1970).

Lourin, L., 'Le Dialogue de l'Homme et la Femme attribuable à Philippe Bouton' in *Scriptorium*, 1 (1946-7), pp.145-51.

Margareta van Oostenrijk en haar hof: Tensonstelling 26 juli - 1 september 1958 (Malines 1958).

Marinesco, C., 'Documents espagnols concernant la fondation de l'ordre de la Toison d'Or' in *Comptes rendues de l'Academie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* (1956), pp.401-17.

Marot, P., 'Le duc de Lorraine, René II, et la Bataille de Nancy dans l'historiographie et la tradition Lorraine' in *Cinq centième anniversaire de la Bataille de Nancy, 1477. Actes du colloque organisé par l'Institute de recherche originale en sciences sociales, humaines et économiques à l'Université de Nancy* (Nancy 1977).

Matthieu, A., 'Histoire du grand conseil de Malines' in *Annales de l'Academie d'archéologie de Belgique* (1874).

Ménage, R. 'Le voyage délibéré du chevalier de la Marche' in *Sénéfiance*, 2 (1930), pp.211-19.

Meyer, P., *Girart de Roussillon* (Paris 1884).

La miniature flamande. Le mécénat de Philippe le Bon. Exposition organisée à l'occasion du 400^e anniversaire de la Bibliothèque Royale de Philippe II, 12 avril 1559 (Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, April-June 1959).

Molinier, A., *Les sources de l'histoire de France. Le Moyen Age* (Paris 1901-06).

Mollat, M., 'Recherches sur les finances des ducs Valois de Bourgogne' in *Revue historique*, 219 (1958), pp.285-321.

Mourin, L., 'Le dialogue de l'homme et la femme attribuable à Philippe Bouton' in *Scriptorium*, 1 (1946-7), pp.145-51.

Nicholas, D., *Medieval Flanders* (London 1992).

Omont, H, et al., *Catalogue des manuscrits français* (Paris 1868-1918).

Orgelfinger, G., 'The Vows of the Pheasant and Late Chivalric Ritual' in H. Chickery & T.M. Seiler eds., *The Study of Chivalry. Resources and Approaches* (Michigan 1988), pp.611-43.

Pächt, O., *The Master of Mary of Burgundy* (London 1948).

Pérouse, G.A. 'Une édition méconnue d'Olivier de la Marche au XVI^e siècle' in *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance*, 39 (1977), pp.307-10.

Planche, A. 'Du tournoi au théâtre en Bourgogne. Le Pas de la Fontaine aux Pleurs à Châlon-sur-Saône' in *Le Moyen Age*, 81 (1973), pp.97-128.

Plancher, U., *Histoire de Bourgogne*, 4 vols. (Dijon 1739-81).

Pleij, H., *De sneuwpoppen van 1511: Stadscultuur in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam 1988).

Power, E., *Medieval Women* (Cambridge 1975).

Prevenier, W. & Blockmans, W.P., *The Burgundian Netherlands* (Cambridge 1982).

Quarré, P., 'La joyeuse entrée de Charles le Téméraire à Dijon en 1474' in *Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique; Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 51 (1969), pp.326-40.

Rady, M., *The Emperor Charles V* (London 1988).

Réau, L., *Iconographie de l'art chrétien* (Paris 1955-9).

Reiffenberg, H. de, *Histoire du noble ordre de la Toison d'Or* (Brussels 1830).

Renaudet, A., *Préréforme et humanisme à Paris pendant les guerres d'Italie, 1494-1517* (Paris, 2nd edn., 1953).

Riley-Smith, J., *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London 1993).

Ross, C., *Edward IV* (London 1991).

Samouillan, A., *Olivier Maillard, sa prédication et son temps* (Toulouse 1891).

Schefer, C., 'Le Discours du voyage d'outremer au très victorieux roi Charles VII' in *Revue de l'Orient Latin*, 3 (1891), pp.303-42.

Shahar, S., *The Fourth Estate* (London & New York 1983).

Spaak, P., *Jean Lemaire des Belges; sa vie, son oeuvre et ses meilleures pages* (Geneva 1975).

Spufford, P., 'Dans l'espace bourguignon; 1477, un tournant monétaire?' in *Cinquantième anniversaire de la Bataille de Nancy, 1477. Actes du colloque organisé par l'Institut de recherche originale en sciences sociales, humaines et économiques à l'Université de Nancy* (Nancy 1977), pp.187-204.

Stein, H., 'La date de naissance d'Olivier de la Marche' in *Mélanges d'histoire offerts à Henri Pirenne*, II (Brussels 1926), pp.461-4.

Stein, H., 'Étude sur Olivier de la Marche' in *Mémoires couronnés de l'Académie royale de Belgique*, XLIX (1888).

Stein, H., 'Nouveaux documents sur Olivier de la Marche et sa famille' in *Mémoires de l'Académie royale de Belgique. Lettres*, (2) ix (1) (Brussels 1922).

Stuart, D.M. 'The Marriage of Margaret of York to Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, July 1468' in *History Today*, 8 (1958), pp.256-63.

Sutton, A.F., 'The Court and its Culture in the Reign of Richard III' in J. Gillingham ed. *Richard III, a Medieval Kingship* (London 1993).

Thompson, H.Y. *Illustrations from 100 Manuscripts in the Library of Henry Yates Thompson* (London 1918).

Thomson, J.A.F., 'The Arrival of Edward IV - the Development of the Text' in *Speculum* 46 (1971), pp.84-93.

Tourneur, V., 'Les origines de l'ordre de la Toison d'Or et la symbolique des enseignes de celle-ci' in *Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique. Classe des Lettres*, 42 (1956), pp.300-23.

Tourney-Thoen, G., 'A propos de quelques épitaphes latines pour la mort de Charles le Téméraire' in *Lias*, 5 (1978), pp.1-11.

Trésors de la Toison d'Or. Exposition placée sous le haut patronage de la République d'Autriche et le Royaume de Belgique (Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, 16 September-16 December 1987).

Vale, M., 'An Anglo-Burgundian Nobleman and Art Patron. Louis de Bruges, Lord of la Gruthuyse and Earl of Winchester' in C. Barron & N. Saul eds., *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages* (London 1995), pp.115-31.

Vale, M., *War and Chivalry* (London 1981).

Van den Gheyn, J., *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique*, 13 vols. (Brussels 1901-42).

Vanderheijden, J.F., 'J-B Houwaert en Olivier de la Marche' in *Tijdschrift voor nederlandse taal en letterkunde*, 51 (1932), pp.49-64.

Vander Linden, H., *Itinéraires de Philippe le Bon* (Brussels 1940).

Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold* (London 1973).

Vaughan, R., 'Chasing a Sphinx; Charles the Bold's Burgundy' in *History Today*, 37 (May 1987), pp.24-9.

Vaughan, R., *Philip the Bold* (London 1963).

Vaughan, R., *Philip the Good* (London 1970).

Vaughan, R. 'Quelques Observations sur la Bataille de Nancy' in *Cinq centième anniversaire de la Bataille de Nancy, 1477. Actes du colloque organisé par l'Institute de recherche originale en sciences sociales, humaines et économiques à l'Université de Nancy* (Nancy 1977), pp.249-68.

Vaughan, R., *Valois Burgundy* (London 1975).

Wallace-Hadrill, J.M., 'Fredegar and the History of France' in his *The Long-Haired Kings* (London 1962).

Walsh, R.J., 'Charles the Bold and the Crusade: Politics and Propaganda' in *Journal of Medieval History*, 3 (1977), pp.53-87.

Walton, T., 'Amé de Montgesoie, poète bourguignon du XV^e siècle' in *Annales de Bourgogne*, 2 (1930), pp.134-58.

Weightman, C., *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503* (London 1989).

Wells, W., 'An Unknown Hercules Tapestry in the Burrell Collection' in *Scottish Art Review*, VIII no.3 (1962), pp.13-20 & p.30.

Wethey, H.E., *The Paintings of Titian, II, the Portraits* (London 1971).