

# Book Collections and their Use

## *The Example of the Library of the Dukes of Burgundy*

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The study of medieval book collections has many aspects and involves some fundamental questions that are not always easy to answer. What is a library? What does it mean to own a library? How is it used? By whom is it used? And what does the analysis of a library tell us about other aspects of its owner's life? In this article, while remaining within the field of princely and noble libraries and more specifically the books of the Valois dukes of Burgundy, I will touch on some of these general questions, though I make no pretence to treat them thoroughly.

In the later Middle Ages the book collections of monasteries and university colleges such as the Sorbonne grew into real libraries in the sense that the books were kept in a special room, arranged in a logical order, each with its own marked place on a shelf to which it was often chained, and, last but not least, they were available to a public, even if that public was a restricted one. Can the same development be discerned in the book collections of nobles and princes in France and the Low Countries?

### Origins of the library of the Dukes of Burgundy

The dukes of Burgundy of the Valois dynasty may not have been kings but they lived like kings, had the power of kings, and kingly ambition too.<sup>1</sup> They also built up a library that could match or even surpass that of kings. It was under the rule of the Valois dukes of Burgundy that between the late fourteenth and early sixteenth century a political unity was created in the Low Countries, linked to the Duchy and County of Burgundy further south. The bibliophilism of these dukes is a beautiful subject which has been well-studied for many years. Even so, much remains to be discovered.

The Valois dukes of Burgundy were important patrons of the arts, especially the first, Philip the Bold (1342-1404), youngest son of John II of France, and the third, Philip the Good (1396-1467). These two Philips had an intense interest in books, particularly beautiful books. Philip the Bold's wife, Margaret of Flanders (1350-1405), also had a large library: through her the book collection of the counts of Flanders became part of the ducal library. In 1467, when Philip the Good died, the ducal library included some 900 manuscripts. Many though not all of these were lavishly illuminated. They

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1 In general, see: Blockmans & Prevenier 1999; Schnerb 1999.

were used by the ducal successors, amongst whom was yet a third Philip, Philip the Fair (1478–1506).

Table 1 Inventories of the Burgundian Library made between 1404 and 1504

Year	Place	When the inventory was made	Number of manuscripts	
1404	Paris	on the death of Philip the Bold	80	229
1405	Arras	on the death of Margaret of Male	149	
1420	Dijon	on the death of John the Fearless	252	283
1424	Dijon	on the death of Margaret of Bavaria	31	
1469	Bruges	on the death of Philip the Good	878	878
1477	Dijon	on the death of Charles the Bold (inventory made for Louis XI of France)	93	693
1485	Ghent	under Maximilian of Austria (referred to as 'part of the possessions of Mary of Burgundy')	22	
1487	Brussels	under Maximilian of Austria	546	
1504	Bruges	under Philip the Fair	32	

The table shows how the number of manuscripts mentioned in the inventories increases from 229 in 1404–1405 to 283 in the 1420s, and to almost 900 in 1469, then falls slightly to 700 in the late fifteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Obviously some rulers had more interest in books and spent more time on them, and so contributed more to the expansion of the library. But that is not to say that the less well known or perhaps shorter-lived rulers, who had less time or possibly less inclination to buy books, were also less important, for they represent a continuity of bibliophile endeavour.

There are various ways to approach the collections. One is via the surviving manuscripts, but another is through the rich and numerous inventories that have been preserved.<sup>3</sup> The data in Table 2 show the survival rate of the manuscripts, which also increases in the course of time from less than a fifth in the early fifteenth century to more than half in the late fifteenth century.

Table 2 Identifications made of the manuscripts mentioned in the four phases of the various inventories of the Burgundian Library (1404–1504)

Inventories	Number of manuscripts	Number of identified manuscripts	% of identified manuscripts
1404, 1405	229	41	18%
1420, 1424	283	96	34%
1469	878	394	45%
1485, 1487, 1504	600	362	60%

Before 1504 the library consisted exclusively of manuscripts. Even in the early sixteenth century no printed books were acquired, meaning that after the death of Philip

<sup>2</sup> For more information about these figures, see Wijsman 2010a, 145–170.

<sup>3</sup> New and complete editions of the inventories will soon be published: Falmagne & Van den Abeele (forthcoming).

the Good in 1467 fewer new books entered the collections. This also shows that in the later fifteenth century a culture of manuscripts, one could even say of nostalgia, reigned at the Burgundian court. We shall return to this below.

Where did the idea of building a library come from? The Burgundian dynasty branched from the house of the French kings. The Burgundian love of books had the same origins. John II of France, called John the Good, had four sons who were all lovers of books and other beautiful things. The best known is the third son, John, Duke of Berry, commissioner of the *Tiès riches heures* and many other magnificent manuscripts. The second son, Louis of Anjou also collected books, and the fourth son was the aforementioned Philip the Bold, founder of the new dynasty of dukes of Burgundy.<sup>4</sup>

The eldest son, who succeeded his father and was anointed King of France in 1364, was Charles V, known as Charles the Wise. He was the founder of the first real French royal library, which became one of the greatest libraries of the time, containing around one thousand manuscripts. He not only collected books. Charles V of France was a monarch with ideas about the power of knowledge. He therefore had Latin texts translated into French, so that the nobility would have access to them more easily. Jean Corbechon translated Bartholomeus Anglicus's encyclopaedic text *De proprietatibus rerum*, Nicole Oresme the Latin versions of Aristotle's treatises on politics, economics and ethics, Simon de Hesdin Valerius Maximus's work on Roman values, *De facta et dicta memorabilia*, and Raoul de Presles Augustine's *De civitate Dei*.<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting to speculate to what extent the nobility was meant to come and read the texts in a sort of semi-public royal library. In any case, what happened was that the nobility acquired other copies of these texts, mainly written in the thriving Paris workshops of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century. Charles's library grew from a purely personal collection to a dynastic collection, and then into a library – the 'Bibliothèque du Louvre' – that had some sort of official status and was kept in a tower of the Louvre palace. But this was not the only place where the king's books were kept. There were books in the castles of Melun, Vincennes, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Beauté-sur-Marne and Vincennes as well.

Charles V realised that it was important to narrow the traditional gap in medieval society between those who gathered knowledge (the clergy) and those who ruled (the nobles and princes). These two groups literally spoke another language, hence the importance Charles accorded to translations from Latin into the vernacular. He was not the first to have this idea, but he launched a new 'programme'. Knowledge should be available in French to the ruling classes. Before, the nobility did have knowledge, but they knew other things, because they used different sources. Charles's idea was to have intellectual knowledge translated and thus accessible to the ruling classes as a whole. This included the nobility, of course, but also the new, rising class of court functionaries, in which nobility and the urban elite (especially of Paris) mixed. Most of these 'légistes' had studied at university, knew Latin, and owned at least some books.

<sup>4</sup> De Winter 1985; Delisle 1907.

<sup>5</sup> Delisle 1907; Tesnière 2009. Charles V was not alone in promoting translations and they were part of a larger tendency of the period. Pierre Bersuire, for example, translated Livy already in 1354–1356 for Charles's father John the Good.

The nobility also owned books but different ones, in French. Charles's translation scheme is often seen as the start of French as an intellectual language. Being able to study ethics, moral behaviour, the classics or the church fathers in French opened up new possibilities. This cultural blooming has sometimes been called a proto-humanism in the French language, by scholars like Jacques Monfrin.<sup>6</sup>

The French royal library is of great importance to understanding the Burgundian library in the following century. Charles V died rather young in 1380. His son, Charles VI, reigned for 42 years but was afflicted with periodic fits of madness. His reign was weak as royal authority waned and others vied for power in name of an absent king. The protagonists of these struggles were the king's brother Louis of Orleans and his uncles John, Duke of Berry and Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy.

During Charles VI's reign a culture of patronage continued, reaching a peak around 1400. Gift-giving was also a significant element of French court life at this time, and lavishly illuminated manuscripts were part of this.<sup>7</sup> Princes, princesses, ladies in waiting, noblemen and -women all gave each other beautiful presents. Most of these were goldsmiths' work (rings, cups, plates, etc.) often including pearls and precious stones. But for the lovers of books an exquisitely illuminated manuscript was ideal. The advantage of a book is that it is not only precious and beautiful to look at but also has content. The disadvantage, materially speaking, is that it is only a collection of painted parchment leaves. Gold objects had an intrinsic value: they could be melted down and transformed into money to buy cannons or pay soldiers if the need arose.

This French court culture came to a sudden end around 1415. On 25 October of that year a large part of the French nobility perished at Agincourt, although even since 1407 the strife between 'Burgundians' and 'Armagnacs' had caused nobles to leave Paris. In 1416 the great bibliophile John of Berry died. Only several decades later new bibliophile princes would emerge and they placed their commissions in other areas. A good example is Philip the Good, who patronised book production in the Southern Netherlands. What little remained of French court patronage ceased with the English occupation of Paris in 1422, the year Charles VI died.<sup>8</sup> Notwithstanding that by the 1450s the Paris book trade had already started to recover it was only towards the end of the century that courtly commissions began to be received in quantity again, now in the new context of printed books. Between 1420 and 1436 Paris was in English hands. In 1425 John of Lancaster, duke of Bedford, who was regent in France in name of the English king, bought the entire royal library. His love of books was certainly a motivating factor, but it was also a highly symbolic deed. The Valois dynasty lost its crown and its library. The library ceased to be royal and was transported to Rouen. When John of Lancaster died in 1435, the books were dispersed. Some passed to his brother Humphrey of Gloucester. Only about 10% of them are known today.<sup>9</sup>

6 Monfrin 1972; Wijsman 2009.

7 Hirschbiegel 2003 (specifically on the manuscripts, see p. 100–111); Buettner 2001.

8 English and pro-English noblemen commissioned manuscripts as well, of course but far fewer. Apparently a certain momentum had passed and the existing second-hand manuscripts sufficed for the moment to fulfill part of the demand. We await the announced study of Gregory Clark about the production of illuminated manuscripts in Paris under English rule.

9 It is to be expected that this percentage will rise as a result of the research undertaken by Marie-Hélène Tesnière

The duke of Burgundy was a close ally of the English occupier in northern France, first in the person of John the Fearless and, after his assassination in 1419, of his son Philip the Good. By 1430 Philip had significantly enlarged the dynasty's power, especially in the Low Countries. He had thus slowly moved away from the French court, where he had been raised. 1435 was a key year. As mentioned above, from that year on the French royal library was definitively dispersed and thus lost. And in that year Philip was also reconciled with the French king when he signed the Treaty of Arras. Yet even though the war against England had turned in France's favour and the French were slowly pushing the English from the continent, the French court was still far from what it had been several decades before. So it was Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy who took up the role of continuator of the Valois cultural heritage. His court was by far the most lavish in Europe in the 1430s, 1440s and 1450s. It was big, it was rich, it was the place to be. Fashion in clothes changed all the time.<sup>10</sup> Huge banquets, jousts, and events were organised, such as the Feast of the Pheasant held in 1453 in Lille.

And then, from 1445 onwards, when Philip was about fifty years old, he quite suddenly started to develop an interest in books. Between 1445 and his death twenty-two years later he commissioned hundreds of manuscripts, many of which were beautifully illuminated. I would not call Philip an intellectual prince, like his grand-uncle Charles V of France. But he was driven by a will to prove his dynasty's importance and one of the ways of doing this was by building up a library and assembling the knowledge of the world. A lot of it was rather eclectic.<sup>11</sup> He had a specific interest in history, however. The fifteenth century is the age of chronicles and many of the French histories were written and translated in the Burgundian court circle. Philip the Good's library contained chronicles of earlier times and many of more recent periods. It included chronicles of many of the lands ruled by the dukes: Hainaut, Brabant, Holland, Burgundy, Flanders. Many already existed in Latin and were especially translated for the duke. Not all of these works were commissioned by Philip himself. He was surrounded by advisors, courtiers, and other intermediaries who had these texts written and/or translated.<sup>12</sup>

Although Philip commissioned hundreds of books he acquired them in other ways as well. Authors in search of a patron were likely to go to Brussels, Bruges, Hesdin (or wherever the duke happened to be) to offer their text to Philip, who would often recompense them well. A rare source describes such a proceeding. In 1460 Fernando da Lucena's *Triomphe des dames*, a translation of the Castilian work by Juan Rodríguez de la Cámara, which argues woman's ascendancy over man, was offered to Philip the Good. In the surviving presentation copy, dated 1460, it is stated that the translation was the initiative of Vasco Quemada de Villalobos (an equerry of the Burgundian court and one of the several Portuguese employed there) and that he gave the manu-

and her associates at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, who are working on the edition of the inventories of Charles V and VI's books and on a virtual reconstruction of the library.

<sup>10</sup> Jolivet & Wijsman 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Wijsman 2010a, 253–255.

<sup>12</sup> Small 1997, 102–116; Wijsman 2010a, 238–243.

script to Philip the Good. The frontispiece miniature shows the young courtier offering the book to his lord. The Portuguese link, as well as the contents of the text (on women) strongly suggests that Philip's wife, Isabella of Portugal, played an important role in all this. It is very tempting to see Isabella's hand at work in a presentation to Philip the Good of a text on the pre-eminence of the female sex in a manuscript copied three years after she herself withdrew from political life. It shows how she sought to influence her husband through gifts of books.<sup>13</sup>

But Vasco Quemada de Villalobos did not stop there. He wanted the text that had been translated by Fernando da Lucena to have a wider audience as well. A copy was also presented to the duke's daughter-in-law, Isabelle of Bourbon, Charles the Bold's wife. This we learn through a letter that survived in the Croy family archive, part of which was published in the nineteenth century. Vasco Quemada de Villalobos, the letter's author, states that he had first offered this work on woman's superiority over man to Philip the Good and goes on to describe how the duke had it read to him by four courtiers, Philippe Pot, Anthony of Burgundy (the Great Bastard), Jean de Croy, and Bernard, bastard of Comminges.<sup>14</sup> Evidently the reading went down well, for the duke apparently ordered an illuminated copy. Now that the work had ducal approval, Villalobos also hoped to offer it to Isabelle of Bourbon and asked her not only to have an illuminated copy made for herself but also to send copies to all French princesses she knew. The inference is that Villalobos offered a simple version of the text and expressed the hope that Isabelle would find it so worthwhile that she would have a luxury copy made. It sheds an interesting light on how these things worked: an author (or a middleman) could first present a text in a draft version; the duke would have it read (to him) by noblemen at court, would hear their opinion on it, and would also ask the author to defend the work before him.

I think that this is exactly the way we should see Philip the Good in his role as a patron of the arts and as a bibliophile. He was a prince who worked as a magnet. He initiated the production of some of the works in his collection, but most books reached him through the initiatives of others.

### The contents of the library of Philip the Good

The court culture and the kind of library Philip the Good was building can be seen in a comparative perspective in its own time. An interesting way to look at the Burgundian court is to see it as a kind of alternative to the Italian humanist culture flourishing in the same period.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Gachard 1846; Lemaire & Henry 1991, 121–123.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*. A scene just like the one described is depicted in the frontispiece miniature of the second volume of the *Chroniques de Hainaut*, painted in these same years: Brussels, KBR, 9243, f. 1.

<sup>15</sup> More in general about this idea see: Wijsman 2009; Wijsman 2010b.

Table 3 Languages in the 878 manuscripts mentioned in the 1469 inventory of the Library of the Dukes of Burgundy and in the 402 preserved and identified manuscripts

Languages	Number of manuscripts mentioned in the 1469 inventory	%	Number of preserved and identified manuscripts	%
Latin	134	15%	33	8%
Latin and French	23	3%	9	2%
French	685	78%	354	88%
Other (mainly Dutch, German, English)	28	3%	6	2%
Unknown	8	1%		
Total	878	100%	402	100%

Linguistically speaking the Burgundian library was a French library. Of the almost 900 manuscripts owned by Philip the Good, almost 80% were in French and about 15% in Latin. These figures are very reliable for they are based on the very detailed inventories. Interestingly, the figures based on the identified manuscripts differ slightly. Almost 90% of these are in French and less than 10% are in Latin.<sup>16</sup>

These percentages show that manuscripts in French seem to have survived better than those in Latin. This is not surprising considering the special interest in French texts that prevailed in the two principal places in which the books were kept over the centuries: Brussels and Paris. But we should beware of drawing overhasty conclusions. It is also possible that the differences in the figures are due to the fact that the French manuscripts are more often illuminated than the Latin ones, and are thus more likely to have survived.

There is, however, a third possibility – that the French language manuscripts are simply better studied than those in Latin. The dukes of Burgundy are well known for their interest in chronicles, literature and moral-didactic texts in French. It is on these works that much research has been done, especially over the last century, since George Doutrepont published his fundamental monograph on French literature at the court of Burgundy in 1909. Not many of the Burgundian library's Latin manuscripts have been studied. Systematic research will certainly reveal more hitherto unidentified Latin manuscripts. There are still things to be discovered.

It seems obvious that the library I am describing is not humanist in spirit, even if it belongs to the same century as Leonardo Bruni and Lorenzo Valla. Still the question of the relationship between the Burgundian Library and humanism is worth asking. It can help our interpretation. Are there any classical or humanist texts among the Latin works in the collection?

I will first focus on the preserved and identified manuscripts. Of these 41 manuscripts, completely or partly in Latin, most are religious books typical of all libraries in later medieval Europe. There are four bibles, ten books of hours or prayer books,

<sup>16</sup> About the manuscripts in other languages than French and Latin see: Wijsman 2010d.

several psalters, missals and breviaries, and a pontifical. Certain other texts are also of the kind that were widespread in medieval libraries: two medical treatises, Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, Albertanus of Brescia's *De arte loquendi et tacendi* and *De amore et dilectione*. Among the remaining texts there are indeed some that could be described as humanist but not specifically so: Seneca's *Tragodiae*, Cicero's *De officiis*, *De paradoxis*, *Epistolae ad familiares* and *De somnis Scipionis Affricani*, Valerius Maximus's *De facta et dicta memorabilia*, Petrarch's *Epistolae*, and Benvenuto da Imola's *Romuleon*. So although there are some classical and humanist texts they are few when considered in the light of the library as a whole. Among the 100 or so unidentified Latin manuscripts in the inventories are some other texts that would have interested humanist readers, such as Terrence's *Tragedies*, Seneca's *Ad Lucilium*, *De ira*, *De tranquillitate animi*, and *De providentia Dei*, Cicero's *Rhetorica*, *De senecute* and *De amicitia*, and Ovid's *De Punto*.<sup>17</sup>

What does it mean that in a library of almost 900 manuscripts, 80% of which are in French, we also find a handful of classical Latin texts? The answer lies not so much in the *owning* of books as in the *use* of books. In the case of the Burgundian library we are fortunate in knowing exactly what the dukes owned, thanks to the existence of the inventories, which are a marvellous – because very precise – source of information. The question of what they actually *did* with these books is far more difficult to answer, however.

Arjo Vanderjagt has published several articles on the relationship between the knowledge of classical culture and the construction of political power at the court of Burgundy.<sup>18</sup> He states that at the fifteenth-century Burgundian court there are indeed humanist influences to be discerned, but that the backbone was lacking: the study and the practice of classical Latin.<sup>19</sup> Vanderjagt has demonstrated on several occasions that at the court of Burgundy texts about political ideas were written and read, but there is no use in looking for humanism in that. There were classical texts at the Burgundian court in French translation: Aristotle, Cicero, Macrobius, Xenophon, Vegetius, Augustine. Can we call this, as French scholars have sometimes done, 'a humanism in the French language'?<sup>20</sup>

It is indeed important to know that Philip the Good read Cicero in French, because it is thus that the past was 'expropriated' (the term is Vanderjagt's) by translations that were essentially adaptations to a new ideology.<sup>21</sup> When Jean Miélot (who wrote many books for Philip the Good) translated Cicero, for instance, he wrote 'chevalerie' for 'militaris' and 'pays' for 'patria'. It is probably because of this that Johan Huizinga and many others have suggested that the court of Burgundy was in the first place a centre of chivalry, splendour and colours, but not of intellectual culture.<sup>22</sup>

Some nuance should be added here, however. The court of Burgundy was not humanist, but it was a place where intellectuals were welcome and where they were

<sup>17</sup> For more details about the Latin texts and the manuscripts see: Wijsman 2009, 129–132.

<sup>18</sup> Vanderjagt 2001; Vanderjagt 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Vanderjagt 1995, 268.

<sup>20</sup> Monfrin 1967; Monfrin 1972.

<sup>21</sup> Vanderjagt 2001, 179–183.

<sup>22</sup> See: Vanderjagt 1995, 269–270; Vanderjagt 2001, 180.



heard and read. I think we should beware of looking too much through the lens of a teleological historiography that thinks in terms of an autumn of the Middle Ages and a Renaissance of classical antiquity.<sup>23</sup>

### The use of the library after 1467

What happened to this library after Philip the Good's death? It passed into the hands of his son and successor Charles the Bold, but barely a decade later the ducal dynasty and the territories it ruled fell into much turmoil. Charles's daughter and heiress to the Burgundian lands, Mary of Burgundy, and her son Philip the Fair, both died young and never had the chance to continue a patronage of the same grandiose scale as their predecessors. Nonetheless, any of the dynasty's different scions is worth taking a closer look at.<sup>24</sup>

Philip the Fair (1478–1506), Philip the Good's great-grandson, inherited – along with his dozens of titles – hundreds of books. Did he actually use and read this huge collection, and if so, how? My research of the last years has shown that there are, in fact, quite a lot of scattered data available that together give us a fairly clear picture.<sup>25</sup> Even though he was only twenty-eight when he died, we can discern a real interest in certain texts and certain manuscripts. He did read some of the very manuscripts that Philip the Good commissioned or acquired, but his chief interest seems to have been in the even older volumes in the collection he had inherited. Like several of his contemporaries, around 1500 he was displaying a pronounced taste for fourteenth-century manuscripts.

Philip the Fair had several manuscripts restored, refreshed and rebound that dated from the late fourteenth century and contained texts (translations) that had been dedicated to Charles V of France. We can discern a real francophile tendency, a love of French culture (not only linguistically speaking, but in terms of lineage). This is striking because his father Maximilian of Austria, German King and Emperor, maintained a very anti-French position. How to explain this love for the French origins of the Burgundian dynasty?

In the first place the phenomenon can be interpreted in the context of the various factions and spheres of influence at Philip the Fair's court, represented by various advisors. One of the most pro-French was François de Busleyden. He had been Philip's tutor for several years and must have had a significant influence on him. In 1494, at the end of his education, the city of Douai presented a beautifully written Cicero, in Latin, to the young Philip, in which a full-page miniature reminded of this tutor-pupil relationship.<sup>26</sup> This gift seems to conform very much to the new humanist vogue,

<sup>23</sup> See Wijsman 2009; Wijsman 2010b.

<sup>24</sup> On Mary of Burgundy, see: Karaskova 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Wijsman 2010c.

<sup>26</sup> El Escorial, Bibl. del Monasterio, h IV 23. See: Wijsman (forthcoming). I had previously thought the Escorial manuscript to be a present from François de Busleyden to his pupil (Wijsman 2010c, 30–33). Though this remains a possibility, the identification with a Cicero manuscript mentioned in an account of the city of Douai (kindly brought to my attention by Olga Karaskova) seems a very probable hypothesis.

but there is no sign that Philip made any particular use of it and it was no longer in the Brussels library in the sixteenth century (or maybe never even ended up there).

But Philip's familiarity with books began much earlier than this. Between 1482 and 1485 – i.e. from his fourth to seventh year – the young prince was held in Ghent by the Flemish Regency Council, to all intents and purposes a hostage and cut off from the influence of his father, Maximilian of Austria. Flanders was ruled in his name by the council, the most prominent members of which were the renowned bibliophiles Louis of Bruges, lord of Gruuthuse and Adolph of Cleves, lord of Ravenstein.<sup>27</sup>

In 1485 Maximilian regained the city of Ghent and took over the education of his son once more. At the same time he ordered an inventory of the ducal palace in Ghent. Among the contents were twenty-two books, almost all luxury manuscripts. It is certain that Philip's tutors, especially Louis of Bruges, lord of Gruuthuse, had used this collection in the years just previous, since Louis de Bruges had copies of several manuscripts made for himself: fifteenth-century facsimiles faithfully reproducing both text and images.<sup>28</sup> So we can conclude that this small library was very probably used for young Philip's education as well.

Table 4 manuscripts in the 1485 inventory

No.	Contents	Present shelf mark
1	<i>Éthique</i> , Aristotle	Brussels, KBR, 9505-6
2	<i>Mortifiement de vaine plaisance</i> , René d'Anjou	Brussels, KBR, 10308
3	Bréviaire	Brussels, KBR, 5513-17
4	<i>La chasse aux oiseaux</i> , Frederick II of Hohenstaufen	Paris, BNF, fr. 12400
5	<i>Livre de chevalerie</i> , Geoffroi de Charny	Dresden, LB, O. 61 (b)
6	<i>Livre de la chasse</i> , Gaston Phœbus; <i>Jeu des échecs moralisé</i> , Jacques de Cessoles	Dresden, LB, O. 61 (a)
7	<i>Dialogues</i> , Gregory the Great	Brussels, KBR, 9553
8	<i>Miroir de la salvation humaine</i>	Chicago, Newb. Libr., 40
9	<i>Pontifical de l'église cathédrale de Sens</i>	Brussels, KBR, 9215
10	<i>Guerre des Juifs</i> , Flavius Josephus	Paris, BNF, fr. 6446
11	Livre d'heures (prayers)	The Hague, KB, 76 F 2 (?)
12	<i>Décades</i> , Titus Livius (vol. 1)	Brussels, KBR, 9049
13	<i>Décades</i> , Titus Livius (vol. 2)	Brussels, KBR, 9050
14	<i>La Cité de Dieu</i> , Augustine	Brussels, KBR, 9015
15	<i>Roman de Mélusine</i>	London, BL, Harley 4418
16	<i>Bible historique</i> (in Dutch)	Brussels, KBR, 9020-23
17	<i>Perceforest</i> (vol. 1)	Paris, BA, 3483-84
18	<i>Perceforest</i> (vol. 4)	Paris, BA, 3489-90
19	<i>Perceforest</i> (vol. 6)	Paris, BA, 3493-94
20	<i>Perceforest</i> (vol. 2)	Paris, BA, 3485-86
21	<i>Casus institutionum</i> , Guillelmus Accursius	Brussels, KBR, 5680-82
22	<i>Roman du roi Florimont</i>	Paris, BNF, fr. 12566

<sup>27</sup> Blockmans 1974.

<sup>28</sup> Wijsman 2007, 248-252.

I will not go into further detail about this list here but the contents are interesting.<sup>29</sup> The 22 manuscripts are all in French, most of them are illustrated, and they contain a mixture of historiographic, literary and didactic texts (including a pontifical and a breviary). Moreover, several items refer directly to the French court culture of the second half of the fourteenth and the early fifteenth century, because the French translations of these texts were made for Charles V or his sons and because most of the physical manuscripts themselves date from that period as well: Aristotle's *Ethique*, Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, Livy's *Décades*, Augustine's *Cité de Dieu*, Flavius Josephus's *Guerre des Juifs*.<sup>30</sup>

These things apparently had an indelible effect on Philip's taste in books. In 1496 he wed Joanna of Castile and Aragon in Lier (near Mechelen). In 1501, with Joanna now the successor to the Spanish throne, the couple travelled to Spain to receive the fealty of the Cortes. It was a long, two-year journey through the Iberian Peninsula (November 1501 to November 1503). In June 1501, not long before they left, the Bruges bookbinder Antonius van Gavere was paid for the restoration and rebinding of several volumes and three years later, in June 1504, he was paid again for the same volumes.

It seems clear that Philip took these books with him on the long trip: they were smartened up just before the journey began and they returned worn by the many miles spent on wagons and ships. They contained Seneca's *Epistres*, Aristotle's *Ethique*, Valerius Maximus's *Faits et dits mémorables*, Augustine's *Cité de Dieu* and Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*.<sup>31</sup> These are classical texts, but they are all translated in French. They all refer to the culture that flourished at the French court of Charles V and Charles VI in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century which is sometimes referred to as early or French humanism.

Through the accounts we also learn that Philip the Fair apparently had a particular taste for certain chivalric romances such as the *Guiron le Courtois*, a thirteenth-century 'prequel' about heroes from the generation of the fathers of King Arthur, Lancelot, and Tristan, and the *Perceforest*, a vast fourteenth-century compilation linking the stories about Alexander the Great to those of the Grail cycle. In October 1495 a parchment copy of the *Guiron le Courtois* was completely restored. In March 1500 six volumes of a *Perceforest* received a new binding. Another source from 1509 informs us that a second copy (a different manuscript, since it was on paper) of *Guiron le Courtois* was among the books Philip the Fair had with him when he died in Burgos in September 1506. It is particularly interesting to see that four of the six volumes of the *Perceforest* rebound in 1500 had been among the books at the young prince's disposal in Ghent in 1483-1485.<sup>32</sup>

We are used to thinking of history in terms of the Middle Ages followed by a Renaissance that started in Italy. Thus the era around 1500 is usually studied as one of the

<sup>29</sup> Wijsman 2010c, 21-25.

<sup>30</sup> Respectively the manuscripts Brussels, KBR, 9505-6, 9553, 9049-9050, 9015, Paris, BNF, fr. 6446.

<sup>31</sup> Three identifications are very probable: Brussels, KBR, 9091 (Seneca), 9505-6 (Aristotle), and 9015-9016 (Augustine). The Valerius Maximus is probably Paris, BNF, fr. 6185 and the Gregory the Great is a manuscript mentioned in the inventories but at present unidentified. See: Wijsman 2010c, 75-79.

<sup>32</sup> The first *Guiron le Courtois* is the manuscript Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal, 3477-3478; the second was lost. The *Perceforest* is Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal, 3483-3494. See: Wijsman 2010c, 22-25, 69-70, 73-74, 85.

spread of Italian Renaissance culture throughout Europe. But for studying Europe around 1500, it can be clarifying to think in terms of several cultural models which all had their influence and offspring elsewhere. On the specific subject of libraries, the Italian model was followed in Hungary, for example, where Matthias Corvinus built up an enormous book collection in the period 1450–1490, relying entirely on Italian inspiration. This is not surprising. Corvinus was a new ruler without dynastic tradition. For inspiration he looked to the nearby flourishing Italian culture.<sup>33</sup> Philip the Good and his successors in Burgundy, on the other hand, did have a tradition to fall back upon: the French court. And the Burgundian Library was exemplary in its turn: in the 1470s Edward IV of England built up a royal library modelled on the Burgundian one.<sup>34</sup>

In the second half of the fifteenth century many things changed. The printing press gave a new dimension to libraries and book collecting. The Burgundian court ceased to exist, but many elements were passed on to the Spanish Court of the sixteenth century. What is essential, I think, is to see where princes were raised and which cultural influence was dominant in their education. For Philip the Fair this was clearly Burgundian and French as it was for his son, the future Emperor Charles V, at least in the beginning. It was only well into the sixteenth century that things gradually began to take another turn. The readings of members of the dynasty now started to include printed books, new sixteenth-century texts, and texts in other languages than French.<sup>35</sup>

### Some concluding remarks

The library of the Burgundian dukes might be exceptional because of the lavishness of many of its manuscripts and the availability of many sources (inventories, other archival material, surviving manuscripts), but I think the various arguments and processes can be extrapolated to all kinds of situations.

In the fourteenth century and well into the fifteenth, this library was primarily a personal library. Philip the Bold was a younger son, did not inherit the French Royal Library and so acquired books of his own. The addition of the inherited and personal books of his wife Margaret of Flanders more than doubled the number of volumes.

We see that two different inventories were made on the deaths of Philip in 1404 and Margaret in 1405 respectively, emphasising the personal nature of these collections. This was also the case for John the Fearless and his wife Margaret of Bavaria. But then things changed. Philip the Good died in 1467, his third wife Isabella of Portugal only in 1471. But no specific inventory of her books is known. All the books of the dynasty were listed together in one long inventory of almost 900 manuscripts. It is quite clear that some of the books mentioned were Isabella's. So we see that by that time an idea of a dynastic library had been born, even if it was not yet referred to as such.

<sup>33</sup> Maillard, Monok & Nebbiai 2009.

<sup>34</sup> Backhouse 1987; McKendrick 1990.

<sup>35</sup> About Emperor Charles V see: Gonzalo Sánchez-Molero 2008.

With the sudden death of Charles the Bold in 1477 the dynasty died out in the male line.<sup>36</sup> It was not until 1485 in Ghent (as mentioned above) and 1487 in Brussels (when after much trouble and civil war Maximilian of Habsburg had succeeded in controlling most of the territories) that a new inventory was made. It shows, by the way, that books were lost. Perhaps not all that many, as some were kept elsewhere and simply were not counted at that time.

In the years around 1500 Philip the Fair used the library, as we have shown above, as did others as well: members of the dynasty, such as Margaret of York, widow of Charles the Bold, or courtiers like Philip of Cleves. Indeed, the 1487 inventory was used in the following decades: there are notes in the margins that show how noblemen and other courtiers borrowed books.<sup>37</sup> Recently an actual list of borrowed books dating from the same period was discovered by Thomas Falmagne and Baudouin Van den Abeele.<sup>38</sup>

In the sixteenth century, inventories continued to be drawn up regularly, no longer on the deaths of the individual rulers, however, but at the change of the keepers. The library had always been part of the 'joyaux', the precious possessions of the dukes, so from the beginning there had never been a librarian as such. The 'garde des joyaux' had responsibility for the library, made the inventory, registered the lending of books, and so on. Céline Van Hoorebeeck has recently published new insights into the managing of the collection and the changing role of these 'librarians'.<sup>39</sup> They were courtiers, of lower rank and no intellectuals or authors. In the accounts we see them fetch a book somewhere or pay a binder or parchment dealer. From the late fifteenth century onwards they were assisted by an 'aide du garde des joyaux'.

What is interesting here is that we observe a gradual transformation of the library of the Burgundian dukes. From a personal collection it turned into a dynastic collection and then in the middle of the sixteenth century, still dynastic, it also acquired a territorial dimension, since it remained in Brussels as 'Librairie de Bourgogne' and was not transferred to Spain to the court of Philip II. His foundation of a Royal Library in Brussels in 1559 shows that the books had become part of the Low Countries, territories cut loose from the duchy of Burgundy but to which the adjective 'Burgundian' still applied.

So I do not think we can say that there was an all-encompassing programme behind the book collecting of the Burgundian dukes, neither of the dynasty, nor of one prince or the other. There were, however, many ideas behind book collecting: ideological, political or educational. Philip the Good acquired manuscripts with chronicles and other historical or pseudo-historical writings with the underlying idea of creating a unity in his territories and to legitimate the position of his dynasty at the head of these. The young Philip the Fair was encouraged to feel like and to be a gen-

<sup>36</sup> No inventory was made except the one in Dijon of 1477, but that is a different case because it lists the books that were confiscated, like the whole duchy, by the French crown.

<sup>37</sup> Falmagne & Van den Abeele (forthcoming); Wijsman 2007, 265-267 & 271.

<sup>38</sup> Falmagne & Van den Abeele (forthcoming).

<sup>39</sup> Van Hoorebeeck 2009.

uine Burgundian prince by means of the books he read. The library was used by the duke and by his whole family, not least by his children and also by the women of the dynasty. To me this seems one of the most interesting leads in research on libraries: the questions about how the books were used, by whom, and for whom.

### Samenvatting

In dit artikel worden vragen met betrekking tot de functie en het gebruik van laat-middeleeuwse boekencollecties behandeld aan de hand van het voorbeeld van de bibliotheek van de hertogen van Bourgondië. Met name de boeken van Filips de Goede (1396-1467) en Filips de Schone (1478-1506) worden nader bekeken. De eerste breidde de bibliotheek uit van 300 tot bijna 900 handschriften, waardoor de collectie een van de grootste van Europa werd. De tweede verwierf weinig nieuwe boeken, maar dankzij verschillende bronnen (met name inventarissen en rekeningen) kunnen we reconstrueren voor welke boeken uit de door hem geërfde bibliotheek hij zich vooral interesseerde, namelijk Franse vertalingen van klassieke teksten in handschriften uit de late veertiende eeuw. Beide vorsten lieten zich op die manier inspireren door de wortels van hun dynastie, het hof van koning Karel V van Frankrijk. In de loop van de vijftiende eeuw zien we de persoonlijke boekencollecties van vorsten en vorstinnen zich langzaam ontwikkelen tot een dynastieke bibliotheek die door leden van de dynastie en andere hovelingen werd gebruikt.

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