

Paul Delsalle, Gilles Docquier, Alain Marchandisse, Bertrand Schnerb (eds.) *Pour la singulière affection qu'avons a luy. Études Bourguignonnes offertes à Jean-Marie Cauchies* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2017, 570 pp., ISBN 978 2 503 56483 8).

This volume is in many ways an extraordinary one. The herculean labour undertaken by the editors – bringing together the contributions of no fewer than forty-seven authors – is cause enough for admiration. So too is the all-encompassing range of themes covered within the wider Burgundian and Habsburg world of later medieval Europe. From high politics to street songs, military campaigns to private devotion, courtly manners to urban pride, manuscript illumination to climate change, firearm openings to stained glass windows, abbeys to archives: few readers, even with specialist interests, are likely to leave the book's pages disappointed. The scope of *études bourguignonnes* has indeed become much more than the study of the Valois Burgundian dukes; and in large measure, the cause for this has been the work of the book's honouree. Jean-Marie Cauchies' own scholarship, and especially his many years directing the *Centre Européen d'Études Bourguignonnes*, has helped made Burgundian studies the vital force it is today. The number of state-of-the-art contributions to this volume allows one to take the pulse of current scholarship; the size of the volume is a measure of the esteem and affection in which the book's honouree has been held. The range of subjects covered apparently defeated any editorial attempt to order the contributions thematically: authors are placed alphabetically. Readers may choose their own themes, and dwell on subjects that particularly intrigue them.

Those absorbed by high politics will find their interests well served, with insights into Burgundian relations with the Empire (Delobette-Delsalle) and into the implications of Habsburg rule in Spain (Dumont; Ladero Quesada); the effect of transition to Habsburg rule on the notion of the 'House of Burgundy' (Moeglin); and on the meaning of 'Burgundy' (Delsalle). But royal French interest in towns of the Low Countries also persisted (Demoulin). Another dimension to diplomacy is provided by the focus on the involvement of female consorts such as Isabella of Portugal (Contamine) and regents such as Margaret of Austria (Docquier). Yet another perspective on political life, by considering climate, should perhaps also be considered by historians (Gresser).

Relations of the ruling dynasty with the nobility are discussed from the widest perspectives, within and without the Burgundies (Paviot), and beyond into Savoy (Demotz), and Italy (Chittolini). The complexity of loyalties and partisanship, a constant feature of the composite Burgundian polity, are

fully entertained (Bischoff; Morerod and Oguey). Several contributors explore the *mentalités* of courtly elites: perspectives on the Low Countries that emerge from Maximilian's *Theuerdank* (Noflatscher); the 'proto-touristic' activities of noble travellers (Fagel); the virtues of equanimity propounded by Olivier de la Marche (Devaux); and the less salubrious tastes represented by the audience of the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*. Their unexpected transtextual links with pardon letters are examined with forensic insight (Prevenier).

The refinements of Burgundian court culture did not always conceal the brutalities of power behind it. Duke Charles the Bold preferred the martial camp to the domestic household, and his military efforts are discussed in new ways in this volume: why he confronted his enemies at Nancy is reappraised (Depreter), as is the precedent he set for royal guards that were to form around European rulers (Hortal Muñoz), and the military revolution he encouraged with his army reforms (Verreycken). Even his defeat inspired a re-evaluation of discourse on war in Burgundian lands (Masson). Changing conditions of warfare are chronicled architecturally in castle fortifications (Bragard). Although some towns, like Liège and Dinant, suffered the full force of Charles's armies, others, such as Mulhouse, were able to resist (Kammerer).

Valois Burgundian relations with their urban subjects, especially in the northern lands, have long formed a strong focus of scholarly debate, to which this volume adds significantly.

'State' power was not simply built by military means. Asserting rights of collation to benefices was one form of princely power (Van Peteghem). Another was the control and archiving of information on princely territories, such as Hainaut (Stein). The rich archives of Burgundian and Habsburg rule in fact deserve a history in their own right (Van Eeckenrode). The long history of ducal negotiation with representative assemblies in Flanders, Brabant and Holland reveals a great deal of the priorities, political and economic, of urban communities (Blockmans). These were also reflected in the preponderance of economic issues appearing in the ordinances of Duke Philip the Good (Yante). The expansion in the public powers of city magistrates is shown in the measures they took to counter plague (Bulst). The basis of Bruges' wealth lay in its ability to profit from a period of economic 'globalisation' c.1250, though it was left stranded by a different 'globalisation' by 1550 (Racine). Bruges was one of many cities that had proved difficult for rulers to manage; but political strife was not always a straightforward conflict between city and state. As the differing loyalties of Antwerp and Zierikzee during revolt in Flanders demonstrate, cities could be divided amongst each other (Sicking).

Political relations and troubles were imprinted on cultural and religious life. The assassinations involving the Burgundian dukes in the early fifteenth century left their mark on illuminations in versions of Froissart's chronicle, and their presentation of the murder of Pedro the Cruel (Raynaud). Relations between ruler and subject were ideally presented in illuminated manuscripts, such as the Malines *Livre de Chœur* in 1515 (Bousmar).

The underestimated importance of songs in political communication and in collective memories, both to legitimate ducal power and to resist it, to justify or combat oppression, is fascinatingly revealed (Dumolyn and Haemers). Liège bore the brunt of Burgundian might more than once: its destruction in 1451 was ‘prophesied’ in a sermon that served as a homily on the corruptions of urban life (Delville); memory of the earlier defeat at Othée in 1408, lived a varied afterlife in Dutch, Brabantine and Liègeois sources, mirroring relations between prince and subjects (Verbij-Schillings). Princely power – with urban collusion – could also be affirmed by investment in religious foundations, such as those of the favoured Cordelier sisters, in the town of Poligny (Theurot). It also found expression in histories chronicling the antecedents to Burgundian rule: the surprising appearance of St Bernard at the church of Saint-Servais in Maastricht, in an illumination of the *Chronique des rois*, represents the incorporation of the saintly founder of the Cistercians into the pantheon of intercessors who could serve Burgundian authority (Wijsman).

The religious history of Burgundian lands does not have to be written within the framework of relations between subjects and rulers. The diverse forms of piety found in Burgundian lands answered to needs that were not always political. Private devotion in Dijon c.1400, far from the birthplace of the *Devotio*, seems heavily impregnated by the liturgy c.1400 (Tabbagh). The spread of small religious houses containing third-orders sisters in northern France from the end of the fourteenth century marks the influence of another strand of piety (Delmaire). The urban networks of Low Countries served Erasmus well in the dissemination of his humanistic learning (Bierlaire). Yet traditional Catholic piety was also strong. The testaments of Jean III of Luxembourg and his wife Jeanne de Béthune, show a catalogue of penitential bequests, but also reveal the social constraints placed on noble widows as to their expressions of piety (Marchandise and Schnerb). Evidence for the devotional interests of other groups in society – merchants, craft guilds and local sailors – survives in a register of reliefs that were once displayed in the abbey of Saint-Wulmer of Boulogne (Clauzel). Windows that do survive, half-forgotten, and originally placed in church of Dion-le-Val in the duchy of Brabant, demonstrate traditional devotion towards Christ and the Virgin Mary among their noble donors in the early sixteenth century (Vanden Bemden).

Such is the sheer range of themes that one might expect this volume, like many eclectic collections, to be good only in parts. Instead, it defies expectations: there are too many gems inside. With this book, Jean-Marie Cauchies has been gifted not a curate’s egg but a Fabergé.

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