



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Title	Margaret of York, Princess of England and Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503 : Female Power, Influence and Authority in Later Fifteenth-Century North-Western Europe
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Qualification	PhD
Year	2007

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Margaret of York, Princess of England and Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503.

**Female Power, Influence and Authority in Later Fifteenth-
Century North-Western Europe.**

Harry Schnitker.

**PhD.
The University of Edinburgh.
2007.**



To my children, Ben and Emily, whose arrival happily overshadows Margaret of York.

A.M.D.G.

Abstract.

Margaret of York, princess of England and duchess of Burgundy (1446-1503), is the central figure in this examination of the role and function of women within the power structures of fifteenth-century north-western Europe. Born into the English royal family, she was closely involved in the process that turned the Low Countries from the lands of the duke of Burgundy into a part of the Habsburg domain, and, as such, was important in ushering in the political constellation of the next century. Her role in all this as a woman is all the more striking, as she lacked that essential female contribution to the medieval political process: children. By carefully distinguishing Margaret's influence from her power, and her power from her authority, her life challenges conventional ideas about boundaries imposed upon late medieval women through gender.

In addition, her life sheds light onto the cultural as well as the political relationships between England and the Low Countries. Margaret of York's role within this relationship asks some pertinent questions of long-held beliefs on the importance of Burgundy as the source of late medieval culture. The context of her own powerbase in the Low Countries also calls into question the standard theories on the aftermath of the Wars of the Roses. Finally, Margaret's life adds to our understanding of the role of piety, and of the Church, in the wider culture and society of the period. Her fine manuscript collection, as well as her involvement with new devotional cults, and her reliance upon men of the Church as her political allies, combine to provide a more holistic picture of piety and devotion amongst aristocratic ladies of the fifteenth century.

Declaration.

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own composition, and that it contains no material previously published, or submitted for the award of any other degree.

Harry Schnitker.

Acknowledgements

It is frequently said that writing and research are two lonely tasks, but it is my pleasure to prove that the opposite is true. The large numbers of people who have been involved in this project in one way or another are testimony to the community of scholarship which exists amongst medievalists, archivists, librarians, and caretakers of churches and monuments all over the world. Spending six years in the company of Margaret of York has had many pleasant aspects, but this was the most pleasing by far.

None of the other people mentioned here will begrudge my special note of thanks to Professor Anthony Goodman. When I approached him with a vague idea to study Anglo-Burgundian relations, it was he who put me on the trail of Margaret of York. He has been casting a steady eye on the proceedings ever since, and has saved me from more pitfalls than I care to remember. His own experiences in chasing an often-shadowy medieval woman in the shape of Margery Kempe, as well as his skills as a biographer, honed by his work on John of Gaunt, have proved invaluable to this thesis. Discussing some obscure element of English history, and particularly his ideas on cultural exchange, over a cup of coffee or lunch in Edinburgh are amongst my fondest memories of this thesis.

The friendship and highly professional skills of my two supervisors, Dr. Andrew Brown and Dr. Graeme Small, also needs to be specially acknowledged. Their respective historical specialities, and, above all, their huge knowledge of the secondary literature, frequently saved me from making some enormous mistakes.

Co-operating with Dr. Dagmar Eichberger on the 2005 exhibition *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York and Margaret of Austria*, in Mechelen, taught me a great deal about the way in which women in the late Middle Ages passed on their knowledge. Dr. Eichberger's insights and help frequently show in what follows, and her assistance is gratefully recorded here.

I also wish to thank all the other scholars who have helped by discussing their own particular speciality with me, by searching out articles that were difficult to trace, or who have cast their eyes over some of the material found in these pages. In particular, Dr. Edgar de Blicq, who completed his own PhD under the supervision

of Dr. Graeme Small as I was working on mine, Dr. Eric Bousmar, Dr. Joanna Chamberlayne, Dr. Hans Cools, Dr. John Currin, Dr. Gary Dickson, Dr. Joseph Flahive, Dr. Steven Gunn, Dr. Wim Hüsken, Dr. Gordon Kipling, Dr. Iona McCleery, Dr. Helen Maurer, Dr. Sharon Michalove, Professor Mark Ormrod, Professor Walter Prevenier, Professor Compton Reeves, Professor Miri Rubin, Dr. Raphael de Smedt, Dr. Susie Speakman Sutch, Dr. Tom Tolley, Dr. Livia Visser-Fuchs, and Dr. Paul de Win. It goes without saying that any remaining mistakes are mine, and mine alone.

I would like to thank Dr. Visser-Fuchs, in particular, for her efforts at procuring for me the Richard III Society's bursary in 2001. Money is always an issue in research of this kind, and the bursary went some way to helping to realise the completion of this thesis. The Richard III Society's Edinburgh branch also very kindly invited me to give a talk on Margaret of York. I am afraid that some of my conclusions will not please their membership, but hope that they will think their money well spent.

From the community of archivists, my special thanks go, first and foremost, to Mr. Henri Installé, archivist of the archive of the town of Mechelen. Mr. Installé's enthusiasm for Margaret of York is infectious, and his knowledge of the vast archives in Mechelen unrivalled. He frequently came to my aid, and it was a real pleasure to sit with him on the scientific committee of the 2005 exhibition.

In addition, my gratitude goes to Luc Coenen, archivist of Lier, Claire Collins, the archivist of the Shropshire Records & Research Centre, Drs. Aart van der Houwen and Mr. Geuze, of the Streekarchief Voorne-Putten en Rozenburg, Mr. Aloïs Jans, former archivist of the Archive Archiepiscopali Mechliniensi, Michael Stansfield, archivist of the City and County of Canterbury, Dr. Ubels of the Koninklijk Huisarchief in 's-Gravenhage, the staff at the archive of Aachen, and of all the archives which I have used.

Amongst the librarians, my first debt of gratitude is reserved for the five main libraries used for this thesis. The staff at the Main Library and at Special Collections of The University of Edinburgh, of the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, of the library of the UFSIA in Antwerp, of the Stadsbibliotheek in Antwerp, and of the library of the highly specialised Ruusbroekgenootschap in Antwerp, were all very helpful, courteous, professional and forbearing when I came with yet another strange

request. In addition, I would like to thank Fr Bede Bailey, O.P., librarian of the English Dominican Province, Susan L'Engle, Assistant Curator of the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, Jonathan Harrison, librarian of St John's College, Cambridge, Peter Kidd of the British Library, R.S. Wieck of the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, Bernard Nurse of the Society of Antiquaries in London, Emma Stewart, of the Royal Library, Windsor Castle, Mr. Wagner, Conservateur du fonds iconographique at the Bibliothèque-Médiathèque Pontiffroy, at Metz, and the librarians at the Royal College of Physicians for their co-operation and help. Finally, a word of thanks to all the people at the manuscript departments of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in 's-Gravenhage, of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I in Brussels, and of all the other libraries I used. Libraries are the life-blood of historical research and their staff is frequently undervalued: I could not have done this without them.

Others who have given of their time or knowledge whom I would like to thank in particular are the midwives of Stirling Royal Infirmary, who took off time scanning our unborn baby to discuss medieval pregnancy, Paul Delbaere of the Koninklijke Kring voor Oudheidkunde, Letteren en Kunst van Mechelen, Fr Simon Gaine, O.P., regent of the Dominican Study House in Oxford, Lynda McLeod, librarian of Christie's Archives in London, Mother Abbess and the sisters Arme Klaren-Koletienen of the Bethlehem convent in Gent, R. Pasold in Switzerland, and Mrs. Renault of the *Kerkfabriek* at Halle. All these contributed in some way to this thesis, for which I am grateful.

Finally, I would like to thank those who assisted in the completion of this thesis in other ways. My parents and my in-laws, for their financial assistance and constant encouragement, and my mother-in-law for her sterling work at proofreading the whole text. My brother Edmond, himself a PhD student in history at University College, London, for the endless debates over the phone and in person. My young son, Ben, for smiling when I was feeling down, plodding through the endless task of revising the final draft. And, of course, my wife Jane, a fine historian in her own right. She drove me to archives, libraries, churches and castles all over England, Holland, Belgium and Germany, even flew to New York with me. In spite of the continuous presence of Margaret of York and the work on her own PhD thesis, and in spite of her pregnancy during some of the time, she maintained her interest, helped

me with difficult palaeographical challenges, and discussed themes, details, and ideas. Her input on this has been tremendous.

It may seem a little odd to thank Margaret of York, but that is exactly what I want to do. She has allowed me a peek into her world, and it has been a privilege. There were times when I wished I had never heard of her, and times when I felt I knew her in person. I have met her in the streets of Mechelen and in the ruins of Fotheringhay, and particularly amongst the pages of her manuscripts. I hope that I have not lost sight of the fact that she was a living person, loved by many: somebody's daughter, sister, wife, and stepmother. Historians have the power to shape another's identity: I just hope that the princess of England who became duchess of Burgundy and *Madame la Grande*, is pleased with my shaping.

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Female Hands Out of the Patriarchal Glove: Margaret of York and Female Power.¹

The life of Margaret of York, princess of England and duchess of Burgundy, is one of the great stories of late fifteenth-century Europe. Her life spanned the second half of the fifteenth century and bridged the North Sea, to include both England and the Low Countries. Margaret was born on 3 May 1446, and died on 23 November 1503. During this time she was witness to, and participated in, many of the major events of the end of the Middle Ages in north-western Europe. Hers was frequently a life of sorrow: her father and eldest brother were killed when she was fourteen. After eight-and-a-half years of marriage, her husband was killed on the battlefield at Nancy, leaving her childless. The one person she incontestably loved, her stepdaughter, Mary of Burgundy, owed her husband to Margaret, but died whilst with child during a hunting accident, aged only twenty-five. A contemporary poem graphically describes the incident,

“Die voirs. vrouwe Maria, sijnde
te peirde in de jacht, en springende
metten peirde, soe viel sy ter
aerden, bevruucht sijnde, ende wairt
gequeyst van den pairden, dat op
hair trat, dates dar aff sterfte”.²

The unfortunate Mary left two children behind, for whom Margaret cared, but not before she had to undergo the agony of seeing the boy, Philip the Fair, held as hostage by Flemish rebels for over a year.³ In 1483, she received the news of the premature death of her brother, Edward IV of England, whilst five years earlier her other brother, George, duke of Clarence, had been executed for treason. Her

¹ Erler, M. and Kowalski, M. (eds), *Gendering the master narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, 37.

² “the aforementioned lady Mary, being on horseback during the hunt, and jumping with that horse, was thrown onto the ground whilst pregnant, and she was injured by that horse when it trampled upon her, so badly that she died thereof”. Willems, J.F. (ed), “Kronykjen van s’Hertogenbosch van de jaren 1312-1517”, *Belgisch Museum*, III, (1839), 84.

³ Appendix One provides a chronological framework.

nephews, Edward and Richard, disappeared the year their father died. Her brother Richard III was killed on the battlefield at Bosworth in 1485.

Yet Margaret's life had its compensations. Her piety, an element of her life that all commentators have agreed upon, must have provided strong comfort. She could also count on the unswerving loyalty of the towns of her dower. She may occasionally not have seen eye-to-eye with the magistrates, but in a crisis they stood by their lady. This was also the case with the members of her affinity. Mary of Burgundy and her children held Margaret in the highest regard, and provided her with the family she could not produce. She was also very wealthy. A brief description of Margaret on the road, travelling to Brugge in March 1487, reveals the ostentatious opulence with which she was surrounded,

“Item up den 5den dach in Meerte, anno 87, doe quam ter Gendpoorten in, myn vrouwe de duwarierge, ons houde prinsesse, de weduwe van hertoghe Kaerle, te zaleger gedachte; zo quam in met zeere schonen, heerlicken ende rycklicken state, toot int hof van den prince”.⁴

Contemporaries held the princess in high esteem. This is evident from some of the sources, particularly from the reports on her death.⁵ As one might expect from a late medieval woman, her death and her wedding are the two episodes of Margaret's life which are best documented. Overall, though, she suffers from the same problem as all powerful medieval women: the chroniclers were blind, or almost blind, to their role.⁶ The most striking instance of this in Margaret's life is the *Mémoires* of Olivier de la Marche. De la Marche spent much of his life after January 1477 in the dowager's vicinity, yet has very little to say about her political role. He gives some asides on her role in the arrangement of the marriage of Mary of Burgundy to Maximilian, and has something to say on Margaret's role in the affairs of the

⁴ “Item on the 5th day of March in the year 1487, then there came through the Gent Gate, my lady the dowager, our old princess, the widow of duke Charles of pious memory; she came in very beautiful and rich company to the palace of the prince”. *Het boeck van al 't gene datter gheschiedt is binnen Brugghe*, 147.

⁵ A.o. Vinchant, Fr., *Annales de la Provence et Comté d'Hainaut*, 138; Molinet, II, 526; *Voyage de Philippe le Beau*, 338 ; Barlandus, H., *Rerum gestarum a Brabantiae ducibus historia*, 91; Aurelius, C., *Die cronymcke van Hollandt, Zeelandt ende Vrieslant*, f. 425.

⁶ Arnade, P., *Realms of Ritual*, 24.

dynasty, but that is all.⁷ He reserved most of his ink for the wedding of Margaret and Charles in 1468, in the organisation of which he had played an important role.⁸

De la Marche, then, like that other great contemporary Burgundian, Jean Molinet, suffered from what Chris Given-Wilson has called “a certain ambivalence in chronicler’s treatment of female witnesses”.⁹ Clearly, one has to read between the lines of the chroniclers’ works to establish the role and personality of Margaret of York. Does this ‘reading’ occasionally cause one to ‘invent’? Possibly. One may recall the words of George Duby, who wrote that

“Historians have to struggle to make progress over a difficult terrain (medieval gender studies) whose boundaries constantly recede before our eyes. For us, the women of that distant period have neither faces nor bodies. We may imagine them ... but the actual bodies ... will always remain invisible to us”.¹⁰

But this imagining is restrained by many factors. Conclusions may at times be based on shallow foundations, but there are, nevertheless, always foundations to build upon.

The problems one faces with the chroniclers are repeated with regards to the ostensibly more factual records. The rich archives of France, Belgium and the Netherlands allow one to catch extensive glimpses of the duchess. Richest amongst these are the archives of her dower towns, in particular those of Mechelen and Binche, which are the ‘natural’ repositories for anyone interested in Margaret. These are complemented by the *Archives du Département du Nord* in Lille and smaller holdings in Brussels and The Hague. Here one can find Margaret participating in the governance of the Burgundian lands, dispensing justice in her dower towns and beyond, recruiting for the Burgundian army, on pilgrimage, encouraging and facilitating the foundation of new monasteries and convents, even testing a new cannon. However, when it comes to interpreting the evidence, problems frequently arise. One example illustrates this well. In November 1470, Margaret and Mary held an entry into Mons. One would expect the record of this to be straightforward, and

⁷ E.g. *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 242-4; 252-3; 257; 298. Even then, he failed to note her presence at the baptism of François, third child of Mary and Maximilian. *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 261-2.

⁸ *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 101-201 and IV, 95-144.

⁹ Given-Wilson, Ch., *Chronicles*, 12.

¹⁰ Duby, G., *Women of the Twelfth Century*, 1.

mostly it is. It contains the usual references to the type of plays put on during the entry, the route followed by the duchess' entourage, and the hopes the magistrate wished to express through the reception.

For anyone wishing to examine Margaret's household, as opposed to her role in a *Joyeuse Entrée*, the account is much more difficult to interpret. It mentions Margaret and Mary joining Anthoine Duterne, for dinner.¹¹ Anthoine was the guardian of the Franciscan house in Mons and confessor of Margaret's brother-in-law, Anthony, the Great Bastard. At the same time, the town accounts of Mons mention a payment to Anthony's household jester, Lottin, for his presence at the banquet.¹² This raises many questions. Was the presence of these two accidental, or did Anthony and Margaret share some personnel in their households? If so, was this part of Charles the Bold's desire to integrate his new wife into the life of the Burgundian Low Countries?¹³ Perhaps Anthony was just nearby, keeping a watchful eye on the proceedings. We just do not know.

The lacunae in the chronicles and the difficulties in interpreting many of the sources have led to some widely divergent views on Margaret of York amongst historians. In the most recent assessment, that by Wim Blockmans, she appears as a woman without a personal vision, who carried out what the male princes in her vicinity wanted her to do. Her activities as a widow he calls "bescheiden".¹⁴ Both her previous biographers, however, saw her quite differently. Luc Hommel considered her role in the re-conquest of the crown by Edward IV in 1471 as vital.¹⁵ Christine Weightman believed her to be the main instigator of the plots against Henry VII,¹⁶ a view shared by Henry's court poet, Bernard André.¹⁷

This ephemeral quality of the princess has been enhanced by the remaining depictions of her. There is not one single portrait that can unequivocally be said to represent Margaret of York. Three, nevertheless, almost certainly depict her, although only one is strictly contemporary. The first is in the Louvre in Paris, and

¹¹ Lacroix, A., *Relation en prose vers, de la Joyeuse Entrée à Mons*, 23.

¹² *Ibid*, 27.

¹³ See Appendix Two, pp. 377-8.

¹⁴ "modest". Blockmans, W.P., "Margareta van York. De subtiële invloed van een hertogin". In *Dames met klasse*, 99.

¹⁵ *Hommel*, 75.

¹⁶ *Weightman*, chapter six.

¹⁷ André, B., "Les Douze Triomphes de Henry VII". In J. Gairdner (ed), *Historia Regis Henrici Septimi*, Rolls Series, X.

probably dates to around 1468, the year of her marriage to Charles the Bold.¹⁸ This shows a slight, young woman, richly dressed, hair-line fashionably receding. Around her neck hangs a heavy collar, embossed with red and white roses, and pendants with the letters C and M. The painting is very small, and may have been made for Charles the Bold before the wedding, to show what his new wife looked like. To modern eyes, the woman in the picture looks rather determined, with a stern, clenched mouth. What Charles made of it is anyone's guess, although the girl in the painting did answer to the contemporary idea of beauty.¹⁹

A second portrait, kept by the Society of the Antiquaries in London, is more problematic.²⁰ Tree ring measurements made on the painting give a date of conjectural usage of 1583- 1613, which confirms that this is a later copy of an original. The argument has been put forward that this is, in fact, Isabella de Bourbon, Charles the Bold's second wife. That raises the question why a Tudor painter wished for a copy of a painting of that particular princess, a question to which no satisfactory answer may be given. Since the frame states that this is, indeed, Margaret of York, one cannot see any reason to doubt the identification.

Margaret is depicted at a later stage of her life than on the panel from the Louvre. The painter was far from accomplished, but the image is clearly of an ageing woman, the face plump and the eyes puffy. The presence of a fifteenth-century original in the English royal collection of a portrait showing the ageing duchess is easily explained in the light of the peace overture made by Henry VII following the debacle around the Perkin Warbeck episode. It is possible to speculate that bishop Henry de Glymes of Cambrai, one of Margaret of York's principal allies, took the portrait with him when he went to London to try and restore the fractured relationship between the dowager and the English king.²¹

¹⁸ See illustration, I, p. 30.

¹⁹ For this, q.v. Eco, U., *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages, passim*; Amis-Lewis, F. (ed), *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389-1464; essays in commemoration of the 600th anniversary of Cosimo de' Medici's birth, passim*.

²⁰ I would like to acknowledge the use I have been able to make of an unpublished study on the painting by Pamela Tudor-Craig. See illustration, II, p. 32.

²¹ See in particular Part One, 124-5. I would like to thank Dr Tom Tolley for his suggestions on the use of portraits in missions of reconciliation.

Finally, there is the depiction of the princess in that collection of late medieval faces, the sketch-book of Arras.²² This again shows a fleshier woman, still richly attired, but rather less stern than on the Louvre panel.²³ More stylised, Margaret also makes several appearances on the pages of the manuscripts which once graced her library. This wealth of visual representation dwarfs the pictorial evidence available for both her brothers, kings Edward IV and Richard III. Yet it is also curiously ambivalent in what it tells us about Margaret of York. Was she the pious woman, always at prayer as her manuscripts show, or was she the richly dressed lady of the panel paintings; was she the equally sumptuously dressed woman in the courtly setting on some of the other miniatures of her manuscripts, or was she all or none of these? Bearing in mind the idealisation of women in portraiture, these are, once more, difficult questions to answer.

This wealth of available evidence, for all its weaknesses, should have ensured a lively interest in Margaret of York, and to some extent it has. It is true that her visibility has been reduced for several reasons. The material remains of her life are small and intimate. Of those most public of artistic statements, the palaces, almost nothing has remained. Her own story is easily eclipsed by the myth of Mary of Burgundy, who was even more tragic. A shadow is cast, too, by her *protégée* Margaret of Austria, whose life and interests were so similar to that of her step-grandmother, but whose sense of self-advertisement ensured a stronger memory.²⁴ In Britain, the extra-ordinary interest in the figure of Richard III has tended to somewhat overshadow other members of the Yorkist dynasty.

Add to this the difficulties with the sources, and one is forced to echo Michel Hicks, and affirm that it is, indeed, “difficult for biographers of late-medieval people to recapture the personalities of their subjects”.²⁵ This elusiveness had her English biographer, Christine Weightman, sighing that “Margaret will continue to elude

²² See illustration III, p. 33.

²³ A fourth depiction, which Weightman believed to be of the princess, is attributed to Petrus Christus, and is now in the Robert Lehman Collection in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Weightman*, 69. The woman on the panel does, indeed, resemble Margaret of York, but there is not a hint that it is the princess who graces this elegant painting.

²⁴ A fact reflected in the recent exhibition on the two women in Mechelen.

²⁵ Hicks, M.A., “The Piety of Margaret, Lady Hungerford (d. 1478)”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XXXVIII, (1987), 19.

history”.²⁶ Her Belgian biographer, Luc Hommel, had no such qualms.²⁷ Yet the Margaret of York that emerges from his pages is barely credible. He frequently ignored sources and never signposted them, and this allowed him to portray a very romantic woman, who was instrumental in the birth of modern Belgium! These are, indeed, gloomy thoughts at the outset of a work on Margaret of York. Is it that difficult to provide an outline of Margaret’s life? The answer is no, provided one does not attempt to colour in the sketch, or add too much detail. Biographies of Margaret, or of most medieval women (and men) tend to revolve around the great events of their lives, and become a ‘times-and-life’ rather than a ‘life-and-times’. In Margaret of York’s case, both her previous biographers have pegged her life down to a handful of events: her wedding, the death of Charles the Bold, her role in her dower lands and her involvement in the Simnel and Warbeck episodes. This is supplemented by her activities in the field of manuscript collecting and her piety.

As Appendix One shows, however, there was much more to Margaret’s life, but, unfortunately, that ‘much more’ does not create a biography. The alternative approach to writing on Margaret of York has been to concentrate on one aspect of her life. Patricia Robins and Serge Dauchy concentrated on Margaret’s dower. Robins devoted a detailed study on its composition, its value, and the way in which Margaret acquired her lands.²⁸ Dauchy explored the way in which the dowager aided Maximilian in his struggle with the Estates of Flanders during the 1480s through her dower.²⁹ These two studies were recently supplemented by Jean Richard’s examination of the fate of Margaret’s dower lands in the duchy of Burgundy.³⁰ None of these three works is much concerned with the figure of Margaret of York; their main interest lies in the structure and legal position of her lands.

²⁶ *Weightman*, 218.

²⁷ Two examples will suffice to illustrate Hommel’s rich imagination. He refers to her education, on which nothing is known, as being very advanced, having just written “nous ne possédons aucun détail sur les années de Marguerite à Fotheringhay”. *Hommel*, 15. Then he proceeds to assume that her upbringing in a climate of civil war marked her for the rest of her life, adding that the events shaped her personality and explain her subsequent passion and fanaticism. *Hommel*, 8.

²⁸ Robins, P., *Le veuvage et le douaire de Marguerite d’York dans les Pays-Bas (1477-1503)*, memoire de licence, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1977; Robins, P., “Le veuvage et le douaire de Marguerite d’York dans le contexte politique de 1477 à 1503”, *HKKOM*, XCV, (1991).

²⁹ Dauchy, S., “La douaire de Marguerite d’York, la minorité de Philippe le Beau, et le Parlement de Paris, 1477-1494”, *BCRH*, CLV, (1989).

³⁰ Richard, J., “La douaire de Marguerite d’York au duché de Bourgogne”, *CEEB*, XLIV, (2004).

Two unpublished theses have attempted to explore Margaret's political role. Kwikkelberghe's effort reveals little that is new, but that by Laporte is important.³¹ Substantial, and with great understanding of the primary sources, his thesis overplays Margaret's political importance somewhat, but still provides an essential and much needed counterbalance to the indifference of the chroniclers. However, he had little interest in Margaret's cultural activities, and even less in her spirituality. The latter aspect has been in the spotlight in the last decades. Myriam Cheyns-Condé places Margaret's spiritual activities besides those of other Burgundian duchesses.³² Both Bousmar and Clauzel-Delannoy have examined specific elements of Margaret's devotional activities, more particularly her patronage of monastic orders and her pilgrimages in the Boulonnais.³³

Recently, most of the attention has been focused on Margaret's book collection. Beginning with Chesney's studies of 1951, Margaret's manuscripts have been subjected to intense scrutiny.³⁴ Dogaer, Hughes and Barstow have all compiled lists, to which some new manuscripts have been added over time.³⁵ A symposium followed,³⁶ and recently many of Margaret's manuscripts have found their way into a major international exhibition examining the artistic importance of illuminating in the late medieval Low Countries.³⁷ Most of these works have had an art-historical bias, although the Malibu symposium produced the most influential assessment of

³¹ Kwikkelberghe, J. van, *Margaretha van York. Rol en invloed van een Bourgondische vorstin op het politieke en sociale leven (1468-1503)*, licentiaatsverhandeling, Rijksuniversiteit Gent, 1993; Laporte, J., *Marguerite d'York, Duchesse de Bourgogne (1446-1503)*, licentiaatsverhandeling, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1941.

³² Cheyns-Condé, M., "Expression de la piété des duchesses de Bourgogne au XV^e siècle dans la vie quotidienne et dans l'art", *CEEB*, XXIX, (1989).

³³ Bousmar, E., "Marguerite d'York et les putains de Mons, entre charité dévote et offensive moralisatrice (1481-1485). Autour d'une foundation de Repenties", *CEEB*, XLIV (2004). Clauzel-Delannoy, I., "Marguerite d'York et la pays boulonnais au temps du Téméraire", *CEEB*, XLIV, (2004).

³⁴ Chesney, K., "Notes on Some Treaties of Devotion Intended for Margaret of York (MS. Douce 365)", *Medium Aevum*, XX, (1951).

³⁵ Dogaer, J., "Margareta van York, Bibliofiele". In A. Monballiey, G. Dogaer & R. De Smedt (eds), *Studia Mechliniensia. Bijdragen aangeboden aan Dr. Henry Joosen ter gelegenheid van zijn vijftenzestigste verjaardag*, *HKKOM*, LXXIX, (1975); Hughes, M.J., "The Library of Margaret of York", *The Private Library*, VII, (1984); Barstow, K.A., "The Library of Margaret of York and Some Related Books". In T. Kren (ed), *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and The Vision of Tondal*, Malibu, 1992.

³⁶ Kren, T. (ed), *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and The Vision of Tondal*, Malibu, 1992.

³⁷ Kren, T. and McKendrick, S., *Illuminating the Renaissance: the Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe*, Los Angeles and London, 2003.

Margaret of York to date, Wim Blockmans's *The Devotions of a Lonely Duchess*.³⁸ Blockmans has returned to his topic recently, with another contribution to an exhibition catalogue, entitled *Margareta van York. De subtiële invloed van een hertogin*.³⁹ His portraits of Margaret are subtle, but the nature of the pieces enforced a brevity that has caused the princess to be squeezed into oversimplified categories such as that of the 'pious lady'.

Margaret of York has also featured in two exhibitions. The first was dedicated to her, and took place in Brussels in 1967.⁴⁰ Judging from the catalogue, this was a fine exhibition, but once more the sources skewed the image of the princess. Much attention was paid to her manuscripts, but even at this event dedicated specifically to her, Margaret was somewhat overshadowed by other members of the houses of Burgundy and York. This certainly was the case at the most recent exhibition featuring Margaret of York, where she was, at times, lost behind the welter of material devoted to her granddaughter, Margaret of Austria.⁴¹

For the most balanced assessment of the princess one has to travel back to the nineteenth century. Galesloot's fine monograph on all aspects of Margaret's life still stands as the single most influential, and best informed, of all scholarly work on the princess.⁴² With his rich knowledge of the archives, Galesloot managed to show a woman of power and authority, leaning on the support of her dower towns, affectionate towards Mary, loyal to Charles and Maximilian. He touches upon her cultured outlook, and her deep piety, and even hints at her involvement with Humanists. It is, by all standards, a remarkable achievement in what are, after all, only a few pages contributed to a local periodical.⁴³ He could, in turn, draw upon earlier work. The most outstanding amongst these was from the pen of the archivist

³⁸ Blockmans, W.P. "The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess". In T. Kren (ed), *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and The Vision of Tondal*, Malibu, 1992.

³⁹ Blockmans, W.P., "Margareta van York. De subtiële invloed van een hertogin". In *Dames met klasse*, Leuven, 2005.

⁴⁰ *Marguerite d'York et son temps*, Exhibition Catalogue, Brussels, 1967.

⁴¹ Eichberger, D., et al, *Dames met klasse. Margareta van York en Margareta Oostenrijk*, Leuven, 2005.

⁴² Galesloot, L., "Marguerite d'York, Duchesse Douirière de Bourgogne (1468-1503)", *Annales de la Société d'Émulation pour l'Étude de l'Histoire et des Antiquités de la Flandre*, XXX, (1879).

⁴³ Imitation being the highest form of flattery, Galesloot's work was plundered for the writing of Robinson, W.C., "Margaret of York", *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, XXXVIII, (1913). Both Hommel and Weightman also lean heavily on his judgement.

of Antwerp, Génard. His publication on the relative roles of Margaret and Maximilian in the Warbeck affair has been ignored too often.⁴⁴

Earlier still was Münch's assessment of Margaret and Mary.⁴⁵ Again solidly based on the sources, it is marred only by his blind conviction that a successful outcome of Charles the Bold's quest for a crown and of his dream of a restored Lotharingia would have prevented every European war since 1477. Finally, the first assessments of Margaret were made in her homeland. David Hume was less than enamoured by Margaret, accusing the duchess of vindictiveness and hatred,

“The dutchess dowager of Burgundy, who, rather irritated than discouraged by the bad success of Simnel's advent, resolved to make one effort more for disturbing the government of Henry VII, whom she mentally hated”.⁴⁶

Horace Walpole, finally, eager to pick a fight with the eminent Hume, defended Margaret's honour, although only to protect that of Hume's villain, Richard III. He argued with more conviction than evidence that the dowager actually believed Warbeck to have been her nephew. Walpole was no historian, as the statement that Margaret never returned to England after 1468 reveals.⁴⁷ Naturally, the clashes of the ideologies represented by Hume and Walpole informed their judgement. It also informed that of that fine historian, Henri Pirenne, for whom Margaret came to embody the saviour of the Belgian nation, through her efforts in securing the Habsburg wedding. He, too, made some mistakes; amongst others stating that Margaret corresponded with van Rijkel and with Caxton, without providing a source.⁴⁸ However, the assessment of Margaret of York on the following pages concurs with his judgement:

“l'intelligente et savante Marguerite d'York, capable de resolution et d'énergie”.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Génard, P., “Marguerite d'York, Duchesse de Bourgogne et la Rose Blanche (1495)”, *BCRH*, II, (1875).

⁴⁵ Münch, E., *Maria von Burgund nebst dem leben ihrer Stiefmutter Margarethe von York, Gemahlin Karls des Kühnen*, 2 vols, Leipzig, 1832.

⁴⁶ Hume, D., *A Complete History of England*, 176. Hume was, of course, Scottish.

⁴⁷ Walpole, H., *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard the Third*, 83 and ff.

⁴⁸ Pirenne, H., *Histoire de Belgique*, III, 481-4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, III, 4.

Of course, in all these studies, except for those by Galesloot, Hommel and Weightman, and in the two monographs by Blockmans, Margaret of York is a decidedly peripheral character. Nevertheless, taken together these works have provided a solid body of biographical detail. What they have not answered, or only partially answered, are questions on where and how Margaret of York stood in the greater scheme of things during the later fifteenth century. With the biographical element provided by others, this study intends to return to Galesloot's approach, and submit the available evidence to new questions, in the way he did in 1879. The result is a tripartite division of the material, each examining questions about power, influence, authority, and the boundaries imposed by gender. These are the impact of the princess on the political development of the Low Countries; the expression of power, influence and authority by Margaret; and, finally, the intellectual basis of her power, influence and authority.

Part One explores the question of female power, authority, and influence in the late fifteenth century. The difference between direct power and influence has recently been examined by Wim Blockmans, but he contrasted Margaret of York's influence with the direct power of Margaret of Austria, based on the latter's authority as regent. Yet distinctions between power and influence may be made within the life of Margaret of York. That many men dislike powerful women is nothing new, and that dislike grows if the woman in question happens to be one's enemy. Bernard André's attack on Margaret of York has been noted above, and the fact that he called the dowager Juno was not intended as a compliment.⁵⁰ He did, inadvertently, show just what power Margaret of York could wield. He was as forthright with respect to his patron's mother, Margaret Beaufort, this time praising her for her steadfastness and courage.⁵¹

Perhaps what distinguished Margaret Beaufort's role from that of Margaret of York in André's eyes, besides the fact that the former was his patron's mother, was that Margaret Beaufort exercised her power through the authority of her son. Margaret of York was, as seen, childless. To the despair of Henry VII, she seemed impervious to the authority of either Maximilian I or Philip the Fair. As Rosenthal noticed, "women

⁵⁰ André, B., "Les Douze Triomphes de Henry VII", 135.

⁵¹ André, B., "Vita Henrici Septimi". In J. Gairdner (ed), *Memorials of King Henry VII*, Rolls Series, 14-6.

without men were anomalies in society”.⁵² However, Margaret was far from immune from the power of the men who held authority. One example will suffice to illustrate this. In 1492, she issued letters of marque, authorising Low Countries’ pirates to capture English merchant vessels.⁵³ A horrified merchant community on both sides of the North Sea swung into action. The Lord Mayor of London and his Brugge counterpart petitioned Maximilian, then regent of the Low Countries. Stung by their complaint, the archduke quickly overturned Margaret’s letter.

Clearly, Margaret’s power, like the power of other landowners, was restricted by the authority of whoever ruled in the Low Countries. She did achieve periods of power, although even then this was indirect power, derived from the authority of others. This was most noticeably the case in 1477, when her power derived from Mary of Burgundy as heiress of Charles the Bold. Harriss defined royal power as the ability of kings to “govern through the capacity to involve and mobilize the participation of the political elite”.⁵⁴ The king, Harriss continued, distributed patronage and harmonised tension, and provided a sense of direction. As Part One explores, this is exactly what Margaret of York did in 1477, in particular through her involvement in the epoch-making Habsburg wedding that year. The fact that she carried out Charles the Bold’s wishes is immaterial here: Maximilian was needed after Charles’s death, indeed, was the only man who could conceivably rescue some of the Burgundian inheritance. And it was that, rather than her late husband’s wishes, which motivated Margaret.

Direct female power was recognised by the Bible, the greatest source of authority in medieval society. In both Judges and 1 Samuel there was much food for thought for women wishing to exercise power. Particularly during periods of disruption, women were encouraged to wield direct power, even go to war.⁵⁵ In Part Two, a reflection of contemporary thinking may be seen during Margaret’s *Joyeuse Entrée* in Mons. Margaret organised the defence of her dower, and, whilst duchess, of whole territories. When Maximilian was imprisoned in 1488, she convened the Estates

⁵² Rosenthal, J.T., “Aristocratic Widows in Fifteenth-century England”. In B.J. Harris and J.K. McNamara (eds), *Women and the Structures of Society*, 36.

⁵³ Bisson, D.R., *The Merchant Adventurers of England*, 73.

⁵⁴ Harriss, G.L., “Political Society and the Growth of Government in Late Medieval England”, *Past and Present*, CXXXVIII, (1993), 56-7.

⁵⁵ Coogan, M. (ed), *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, 144. C.f. Chamberlayne, J., *English Queenship*, 147.

General, on her own authority. Power was not something unknown to her then, but mainly restricted to periods when she *had* to exercise it.

More usual was the exercise of influence. This was something women were expected to do, and mothers in particular were known for the influence they could wield. The Milanese ambassador reported of Margaret's mother, Cicely Neville, that she could rule her son, Edward IV, as she pleased.⁵⁶ In Scotland, the Spanish ambassador, De Puebla, reported, albeit retrospectively, that James IV was completely under the domination of his mother.⁵⁷ He told the same of Henry VII and Margaret Beaufort.⁵⁸ Naturally, ambassadors could get it wrong. Margaret Beaufort was singularly unsuccessful in finding a richer diocese for her friend and confessor, John Fisher.⁵⁹ The same was true for Margaret of York. For all her influence, she failed to get her *protégée*, Nicolas de Ruter, appointed as *audiencier* of the *Grote Raad*.⁶⁰

Influence did not always come from the sway that Margaret held over the male members of the dynasty. In a much more subtle fashion, it was exercised through her household and her affinity. Part One examines her affinity, the full extent of which remains hidden due to a lack of sources. Nevertheless, a substantial element of Margaret's affinity can be revealed, and the power structures through which she exercised her influence made clear. The role of churchmen in this will not come as a great surprise, nor will the intimate intertwining of the religious and secular nobility. However, the idea that Margaret of York's affinity is very much the precursor, perhaps even the originator, of what would come to be called the 'English Party' under the regency of Margaret of Austria is certainly a new one. Around the English princess, there gathered those opposed to France, and generally pro-Habsburg, although they, too, balked at the absorption of the Burgundian lands into a greater Habsburg domain.

Margaret's impact on the shift of the centre of power in the Low Countries during the later part of the fifteenth century, which has gone unnoticed to date, is also

⁵⁶ *Milanese Calendar*, 59.

⁵⁷ Bergenroth, G.A. (ed), *Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, Relating Negotiations between England and Spain*, 163.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Underwood, M.G., *op.cit.*, 43.

⁶⁰ Rompaey, J., *De Grote Raad van de Hertogen van Bourgondië en het Parlement van Mechelen*, 213.

revealed in Part One. From being based largely in Flanders and the French-speaking south, the centre of Burgundy moved to Brabant, and, to a lesser extent, to Holland. One would not wish to argue that this was just Margaret's doing; long-term trends certainly already favoured just such a shift.⁶¹ However, she did contribute to their consolidation. The loyalty of towns and aristocratic families to Margaret, and through her to Maximilian, proved vital in this respect, a fact recognised by contemporary chroniclers. Finally, Part One re-examines the role of *Madame la Grande* in the uprisings against Henry VII, which were the dying embers of the Wars of the Roses. Following Génard, Margaret's actions are placed against the requirements of Burgundy and her main ally, Maximilian. Paradoxically, whereas most of Part One attributes a much greater power and authority to Margaret of York than previous historians have been willing to concede, here one has found it necessary to reduce her role. Her paramount loyalty lay to her family by marriage and not to her family by birth, and it was this that informed her activities in England.⁶²

Part Two turns to the function of art in the expression of authority, power and influence. Usually, historians have restricted their field of research to pageantry, leaving architecture and painting to art historians. Pilgrimage and other devotional activities, for which, in Margaret's case, the sources are relatively plentiful, are almost never placed in this context. Here, a holistic approach is taken, intended to take the debate on female participation in the presentation of power beyond the confines of theories on the 'theatre-state'. Margaret's life also asks renewed questions on the validity of Huizinga's ideas in his *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen*, occasionally with surprising results. What becomes very clear is the continued importance of dynasty within the political process, and just how much scope that provided for women to exercise some control over that process. Particularly with regard to the education of the children of the dynasty, but also with respect to weddings and baptisms, Margaret of York managed to manipulate events to her own advantage. That she could, adds to our understanding of the role of women: it

⁶¹ Paravicini, W., "Expansion et integration", *BMGN*, Vol. XCV, (1980). I owe this reference to Dr. Malcolm Vale.

⁶² And rejects Patricia Robins conclusion that "Marguerite resta incontestablement une princesse Anglaise attachée à l'intérêt de sa Maison". Robins, P., *Le veuvage et le douaire de Marguerite d'York*, 99.

challenges the notion that women could only exert power through their husbands or sons.

Part Two also concentrates on the exchange of ideas between England and the Low Countries, and challenges the widely-held assumption that Margaret must have been overawed by what she saw in the Low Countries. It casts a critical eye on the notion that Burgundy was the cultural hub of northern Europe, without calling into doubt its indisputable cultural wealth. However, the suggestion made openly by Luc Hommel, and implicitly many times since, that Edward IV, when exiled in 1470-71, found with Louis, *heer* of Gruuthuse, a luxury he could not conceive of, is here dismissed.⁶³ In its stead, Margaret of York's own experiences are used as a case-study for a much more complex exchange of ideas and culture, epitomised in the music of her wedding.⁶⁴

The inclusion of devotional activities and piety in Part Two leads on to Part Three, where the intellectual foundations of Margaret of York's political and religious outlook come under scrutiny. Here, the marvellous book collection that once belonged to Margaret, or rather, those manuscripts which have survived, form the perfect source for such a study. Contextualised for the first time, the content of her collection is systematically categorised to provide an analysis of the intellectual world in which Margaret of York lived. This is subsequently strengthened by the new list of manuscripts in Appendix Three. Some of the conclusions are, once more, hardly surprising. One sees, for example, the dominant role of the mendicant orders, in particular of the Dominicans, but also of the Carthusians.

Yet more important is the underlying 'great idea', which previous biographers have missed. Her passionate interest in the *renovatio* of Church, society, and state, are very clear, not only from her manuscripts, but also from her involvement with, and protection of, new devotional cults, such as the Rosary and the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady. The links with her affinity, and more particularly with the university-educated men of her affinity, once again come to the fore in Part Three. Margaret's patronage of humanists, and their regard for her, sits uneasily with earlier portrayals of Margaret as a little old-fashioned, as a woman of the medieval past. Strangely, her

⁶³ Hommel, 70. See in this respect the essays in Vale, M.G.A. and Jones, M. (eds), *England and her neighbours, 1066-1453 essays in honour of Pierre Chaplais*.

⁶⁴ K.B.B. Ms. 5557.

passionate support for the reform of monasteries is frequently cited as evidence for this. However, this was only part of a wider felt need for reform, as the humanists recognised.

Ultimately, the need to reform was to find its greatest expression and greatest disappointment, under the reign of the man she held over the baptismal font, and who spent the first three years of his life at her court: Charles V. As Hugh Trevor-Roper wrote,

“The European establishment ... was about to accept the new message of *humanist reform* ... Such was the exaltation of spirit, the confidence of liberal men, the belief in the possibility of *reform* and enlightenment at the beginning of the Emperor’s reign”.⁶⁵

There has been a tendency to see the court of Margaret of Austria as the well-spring for this sentiment. Part Three demonstrates that it should be looked for at the court of this earlier Margaret, who, after all, was the cultural and political teacher of the later one.

Chronology.

The thematic approach adopted here precluded a strict chronological structure. This may cause some confusion. The following chronology, together with Appendix One, should provide enough of a framework to guide the reader through the following chapters.

On 3 May 1446, on the Feast of the Holy Cross, a baby girl was born to the duke and duchess of York. The event took place, in all likelihood, at Fotheringhay. That day, in the Yorkist stronghold beside the river Nene, nobody would have been able to imagine the impact the small girl was to have. To her parents, although they were undoubtedly happy with their new baby, she was hardly essential politically. They had sons and daughters aplenty, Margaret was the sixth child, and their line seemed secure. And this was important, for the house of York was to become, the year after Margaret was born, the designated heir of the, as yet, childless Henry VI. Margaret

⁶⁵ Trevor-Roper, H., *Princes and Artists*, 20-1. Italics mine.

of York was just another younger daughter, who, in the fullness of time, would be handy to cement a political alliance.

Nothing is known of Margaret's early life. This is not due to a gender-specific problem with the sources as one faces similar obstacles with her brothers, George and Richard.⁶⁶ However, whereas one may be certain that George and Richard enjoyed an education similar to that of their well-documented nephews, the sons of Edward IV, the same cannot be said of Margaret.⁶⁷ Yet with Sharon Michalove we may, indeed, "assume that brothers and sisters [of the dynasty] got the same education",⁶⁸ the same or at least similar.⁶⁹ The educational achievements displayed by Richard III are, with the exception of Latin, very close to that of his sister Margaret.⁷⁰ In both their cases, for example, it would be reasonable to assume that they owed their excellent command of French to the teachings of their wet nurse, the Normandy-born Anne of Caux.⁷¹ Whatever the education with which Margaret was provided, it may be clear, and it will become clear from what follows, that her intellect was well-developed before she married Charles the Bold.

Margaret of York's birth occurred in the final years of peace in England before the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses, and in the final years of the English crown's conflict with the kings of France, the Hundred Years' War. Although the internal divisions amongst England's nobility have been overplayed,⁷² there is little doubt that Margaret's father, Richard, duke of York, was struggling to retain his position at the time of his daughter's birth.⁷³ This may also explain why Margaret remained unmarried, even unbetrothed, during her father's life-time. Margaret was fourteen when her father was killed at the battle of Wakefield, and would have been considered old enough to get married.⁷⁴ However, the rather isolated position of her

⁶⁶ Hicks, M.A., *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence*, 14; Ross, C., *Richard III*, 6.

⁶⁷ Orme, N., *Medieval Children*, 207-8; 245.

⁶⁸ Michalove, S.D. "The Education of Aristocratic Women in 15th-Century England". In S.D. Michalove and C. Reeves (eds), *Estrangement, Enterprise and Education in 15th-Century England*. 126.

⁶⁹ As Nicholas Orme would have it, girls' education was somewhat less formal, but no less meaningful for that. Orme, N., *From Childhood to Chivalry*, 17.

⁷⁰ Sutton, A.F. and Visser-Fuchs, L., *Richard III's Books*, 5 and 17.

⁷¹ Orme, N., *From Childhood to Chivalry*, 121. For wet nurses, c.f. Shahar, S., *The Fourth Estate*, 140.

⁷² Pollard, A.J., *Late Medieval England 1399-1509*, 122-37.

⁷³ Lander, J.R., *Government and Community*, chapter 6.

⁷⁴ Orme, N., *Medieval Children*, 309.

father within the wider community of nobles had caused him problems before with regard to marrying his daughters. Margaret's oldest sister, Anne, was married to Henry, duke of Exeter, only after her father had handed over the unprecedentedly large dowry of 6,000 marks.⁷⁵ And so Margaret was to spend her youth in her mother's household. Again, there is no way of verifying this. However, there are no reports of Margaret's leaving to live in another noble household, and neither did her two younger brothers.

From 1459, the outside world must have begun to intrude upon the life of the young English princess. Aged only thirteen, she was, in all likelihood, forced to witness the violent aftermath of the rout of her father's troops outside the Yorkist stronghold of Ludlow. This included the maltreatment of her mother, an event which, if she was, indeed, at Ludlow, she would have seen.⁷⁶ This was followed by her family's disinheritance by the Coventry parliament. Margaret must have wondered what future was left for her. Within half a year, the tables had been turned, and Margaret's father was back in command, only to die another six months later. The period from her father's death to her brother Edward's *coup d'état* was a very short one, but one that must have felt rather long to Margaret. Whereas there had still been hope after the rout at Ludlow, there must have been very little after the battle of Wakefield.

Yet Edward's capture of the crown transformed Margaret's fortunes almost as much as that of her brother. The unmarried sister of a king, she was now a desirable bride. However, it would still take another five years before a suitable candidate emerged, in the form of the claimant to the crown of Aragon, Don Pedro. In the meantime, Margaret lived first in her mother's household, and subsequently in that of the queen, Elizabeth Woodville. The sudden death of Don Pedro in 1466 left Margaret as an eligible bride once more. This time, fate was kinder to the princess. The recently widowed duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, was looking to renew the Anglo-Burgundian alliance which had been such a success earlier in the century. To cement this alliance, he wished to marry Edward IV's sister.

⁷⁵ Hicks, M.A., *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence*, 14.

⁷⁶ Riley, H.T. (ed), *Registra quorundam abbatum Monasterii S. Albani*, I, 345. The pro-Yorkist stance of the chronicler has frequently been used to discredit the story, but somehow it strikes one as odd that such a story could be bandied about without it being true, when there had been so many witnesses. C.f. Gransden, A., *Historical writing in England, vol. 2, c.1307 to the early sixteenth century*.

And so, in June 1468, Margaret, now aged twenty-two, left England to begin a new life as the wife of the richest ruler north of the Alps. Charles and Margaret soon developed a solid political partnership, marred only by their lack of any children. Margaret stood in for Charles during *Joyeuse Entrées* within two years of getting married, and a year later she was involved in international politics, helping her exiled brother, Edward, to regain his crown. Much has been made of the childlessness of the couple and of Charles's feelings for Margaret. This will be explored in part in the following chapters, but some comment is required on the wilder assumptions. Richard Vaughan, Charles's principal biographer, suggested that Margaret and Charles rarely spent time together, indeed, that Charles may have been homosexual.⁷⁷

Both Margaret's main biographers, Luc Hommel and Christine Weightman, have certainly proven that Margaret's attitude towards her husband was one of respect. Vaughan was definitely somewhat off the mark. When Charles did visit his wife, it was with a purpose. On 12 April 1473, for example, hearing of Charles's intention to visit her, she instructed the carpenters of the Gent palace, the Hof Ten Walle, to nail three planks to the side of the duke's bed.⁷⁸ It has been suggested, rather discreetly, that this was to prevent the duke's bedclothes from slipping, but other ideas spring to mind! When the castle of Male went up on fire in 17 April the year before, the duke and duchess fled the burning building, naked.⁷⁹

Was Margaret infertile? It is another question that has exercised many.⁸⁰ Naturally, it is impossible to make any definite retrospective diagnosis. Many, including both Margaret's biographers, have argued that her devotional activities betray the fact that it was Margaret who was infertile. This argument has several problems. Firstly, her devotion to St Colette simply cannot be attributable to Margaret's wish for a child. Colette is, indeed, invoked by women wishing to become pregnant, but, whilst alive, had enjoyed the protection of the male and female members of the Burgundian dynasty, who all had children.

⁷⁷ Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 158-9. He based this on the far from reliable Wielant. Wielant, Ph., "Receuil des antiquités de Flandre". In J.J. de Smet (ed), *Receuil des chroniques de Flandres*, IV, 56.

⁷⁸ Laporte, D. et al, *Het prinselijk hof Ten Walle*, 197.

⁷⁹ Cafmeyer, S., "Het kasteel van Male", *SEB*, LXXXII, (1946), 29.

⁸⁰ And gave rise to the above-mentioned influential essay by Wim Blockmans: Blockmans, W.P. "The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess". In T. Kren (ed), *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and The Vision of Tondal*.

Her devotion to the black Virgin of Halle, explored in detail in Part Two, has also been cited as evidence for Margaret's infertility. However, the statue's counterpart in 's-Gravenzande was invoked by Charles the Bold, who went there to make a donation after the birth of Mary of Burgundy.⁸¹ In fact, all Margaret's devotional activity can be explained by reasons other than her wish for children. The fact is that Charles and Margaret spent such little time together, that the chances of her getting pregnant were very small.⁸² In addition, her mother, Cicely Neville, had taken years to become pregnant. This added up to a rather difficult set of obstacles to Margaret's chances of conceiving a child.

As shall be discussed, the lack of children did not really affect Margaret's position in the Low Countries. Her great love for her step-daughter, Mary, and her care for Mary's children, created a substitute family, who repaid Margaret's loyalty with their own. This stood her in good stead when her husband's military adventures in the Alsace ended in his death at the battle of Nancy in January 1477. The dramatic consequences of Charles's political and military activities came together to cause the implosion of the power of his dynasty. The French king, Louis XI, moved to occupy the duchy of Burgundy and as much of his late opponent's lands as he could. In the Low Countries, uprisings occurred against the centralising policies of the late duke.

Margaret played an important role in consolidating the situation. She helped calm the political unrest in the Low Countries by urging Mary to grant concessions, and began to work for a marriage between Mary and Maximilian I of Habsburg. Her vital role in all of this was understood by the rebels in Gent. They executed her allies, the chancellor Hugonet and Charles the Bold's *confidant*, Guy de Brimeu. Margaret was too exalted to kill, so she was separated from Mary. By that time, however, Margaret and her associates had managed to contain the damage, and the Habsburg wedding went ahead.

The arrival of Maximilian cemented Margaret's position in the Low Countries. The recipient of an enormous dower, she developed a particularly close personal and political friendship with her step-daughter's husband. This becomes clear not just from their close political co-operation, examined in Part One, but also in the

⁸¹ Velden, H. van der, *The donor's image*, 16.

⁸² For the time spent together, see Vander Linden, H., *Itinéraires de Charles, duc de Bourgogne, passim*.

affectionate tone of their correspondence.⁸³ With Maximilian as the effective, if not unchallenged, ruler of the Low Countries, Margaret frequently played the same political role as she had done when married to Charles the Bold. She took active part in government in times of crisis. This was particularly the case between 1482, when Mary died and Maximilian's entitlement to the regency was challenged in Flanders, and 1485, when a temporary peace was achieved. Then, in 1488, the rebellion broke out afresh, and once more *Madame la Grande*, as the dowager was known in Burgundy, played an active role in government.

During this time, she was also involved in Maximilian's plans for England, following the death in 1485 of Margaret's last surviving brother, Richard III, during the battle of Bosworth. Twice she helped her Habsburg ally to plot the overthrow of Henry VII, firstly in 1487, and then between 1493 and 1497. Twice they failed, and such was the importance of English trade to the economic well-being of the Low Countries, that twice they concluded peace with their Tudor adversary.

Madame la Grande remained politically active until her death in November 1503. Internally, she was much concerned with the welfare of her dower lands, and with upholding justice within them. Within the Habsburg-Burgundian dynasty, she continued to represent a living link with the last Valois duke. Her involvement with every single baptism and wedding of the dynasty bears this out, and will be examined in Part Two. Around the dowager there grew a group of likeminded nobles and merchants, whose common interest lay in England, and who inclined towards supporting Maximilian. They were unwilling to sacrifice the Burgundian character of the ruling house, but, like Maximilian, they opposed peaceful relations with France. Just before the duchess died, the power of this group was briefly eclipsed, but they remained a formidable grouping in the Low Countries until the uprising against Philip II in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Margaret's death and burial were in keeping with her life. She had been visited a few days before by the reigning duke of Burgundy, Philip the Fair. He had only just returned from Spain, and went on to Brussels. When he heard of Margaret's death, he

⁸³ "Lettre de Maximilien à Marguerite d'York", *BCRH*, II, (1851), and the dedication in Madrid, Biblioteca del Escorial, Ms. c.III.22, f. 1-98, *In Trogi Pompei historias libri xlv*, where in her own hand she wrote "Votre lealle mere Margarete". See also Appendix Three, no. 30.

ordered the court to mourn the woman who had effectively raised him. The dower towns, which had been the mainstay of Margaret's power, all went into protracted periods of mourning, too. Until the end, she remained a potent symbol of the dynasty's power. Her religious vision was equally evident after she died. Her heart and intestines were buried at the charterhouses which she had patronised during her life; her body was interred in the friary of the Observant Franciscans in Mechelen. The most effusive praise came from the various humanists whom she had patronised. They were unanimous in their verdict: Margaret of York had been a keen patron of learning, a consummate politician, and had lived a life of piety and active good deeds.

A few words on the nomenclature employed here may be useful. To most English-speakers, names of places in the Low Countries are often the ones applied to them by French-speakers. Bruges for Brugge and Aix-la-Chapelle for Aachen are but two examples of this. However, names can and do have serious political connotations, and, therefore, a choice has been made here to opt for the names used in local nomenclature, unless there exists an English alternative. Thus Brussels has been preferred to Brussel or Bruxelles. The only exception is Ghent, which is merely the pre-twentieth-century Dutch spelling for Gent. It seems rather odd to maintain this in English when it is disused locally. For the same reason, personal names have not been standardised, again with the exception of particularly well-known figures, such as Charles V or Charles the Bold, where replacement with another name would be both confusing and lead to a different set of problems: does Charles become Charles le Téméraire or Karel de Stoute?

The local use of aristocratic titles has also been maintained, but for a different reason. Titles often mean subtly different things in different settings. Translating 'heer' with 'lord', for example, fails to show that these titles held different legal connotations in the regions where they were used. It was, therefore, felt to be more appropriate to maintain them.

Finally, a brief word on the various currencies and coins mentioned in the text. This is a hugely complex issue, not in the least as Margaret's life covered more than half a century, during which several of the currencies in question were subject to

severe changes and heavy fluctuations in value. In England, the situation was simple. The country deployed a currency in which 12 pence made up one shilling; and 20 shillings one pound. In addition, the country employed an accounting measure of one mark, which was worth 13 shilling and 4 pence. In the Burgundian dominions, the currency of Flanders was the standard currency. This consisted of pounds made up of 40 *groten* of 24 *mitten* each. In the Rhineland, and over much of the Low Countries, there was another standard currency, the *Rheingulden*. In addition, the French *écu d'or* was used, its value usually calculated against that of the *Sous Tournai*.

Many of the principalities continued to use their old, at times pre-Burgundian, currency as accounting measures, such as the *Ridder* in Flanders and Brabant, or the *Kroon* in Holland. To calculate exchange rates between these is very difficult, indeed. Occasionally, their nominal value in Flemish *groten* is given in the sources. This is fairly meaningless. The *Rheingulden*, for example, was always valued at 40 *groten Vlaamsch*, but in reality was worth about 90. The coinage was subject to devaluations, and even contemporary printed sheets with exchange rates were often out of date before they managed to get into circulation. For anyone wishing to work out these rates, or who wishes to find out more about the monetary background to the currencies mentioned below, the standard work is P. Spufford et al, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*.

Illustration I.



Paris, musée du Louvre, inv. R.F. 38-17. Unknown Flemish-French Master, Portrait of a woman, probably Margaret of York, mid-fifteenth century. Oil on wood; 20,5 x 12,4 cm. With the kind permission of the musée du Louvre.

Illustration II.



London, Society of Antiquaries, inv. Scharf XIX. Unknown artist. Portrait of a woman, probably Margaret of York, late-sixteenth century copy after an original. Oil on oak panel; 43,0 x 32,0 cm. On the frame, along the top: MARGAR' DE ORC 3 VXOR, and along the bottom: CAROLI DVCIS BVRGON With the kind permission of the librarian of the Society of Antiquaries.

Illustration III.



Arras, Médiathèque municipale, département des manuscrits, ms. 266, f. 64. Portrait of Margaret of York. With the kind permission of the Médiathèque municipale.

1. Part One: Structures Of Power and Authority.

Female Role Models.

Powerful Women in England and Burgundy.

On Saturday 29 June 1468, according to *die excellente cronike van Vlaenderen*,

“tесе etele bruyt Margriet van Ioorck quam in tswyn ter Sluys ... te vi hueren vanden avende ... daer si met grooter blijfchap ontfanghen was”.¹

She had left Margate on Friday, on board the *New Ellen* from London, accompanied by thirteen more vessels, including the warships *St John* and *Mary*.² It had been an unpleasant crossing. On the English Channel the flotilla had met six French privateers, which had been deterred by some aggressive posturing and the capture of one of their number.³ Louis XI, the king of France, had opposed the new Anglo-Burgundian alliance, but his ships, like his diplomacy, had failed to prevent the marriage, as had his scandal-mongering on Margaret’s sexual appetite.⁴ The country of her husband-to-be, Charles the Bold, was not that different from the England she had left behind. Šaček, a squire of the Bohemian ambassador, Lev z Rožmitálu, travelling in 1466, related that the countryside “lacked wood or other fuel for cooking”, and that their journey between Gent and Brugge took them through “marsh and sand”.⁵ Having spent much of her youth in East Anglia,⁶ the bride must have recognised much of what she saw, from the abundant marshlands to the familiar river transport that took her inland from the port of Damme to Brugge.⁷

¹ “This noble bride Margaret of York arrived on the Zwin at Sluis ... at six o’clock in the evening ... where she was received with great joy”. *Excellente cronike*, f. 136. The date is frequently given as 25 June, but Waurin confirms the date in *die excellente cronike*. Waurin, V, 559. Q.v. illustration IV, p. 131.

² *Hearne’s Fragment*. In J. Bohn (ed), *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York*, 296. The name of the ship was given as the *New Olive* in B.L. Cotton Ms. Nero CIX, f. 9.

³ *Haynin*, II, 18-9; Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 50.

⁴ *Milanese Calendar*, 124; Mandrot, J. (ed), *Journal de Jean de Roye*, I, 241. She was even supposed to have had an illegitimate son. *Lettres de Louis XI*, III, 143-5. C.f. Millar, A., *Olivier de la Marche and the Court of Burgundy*, 92; *Weightman*, 44-5.

⁵ Letts, M. (ed and transl.), *The Travels of Leo of Rozmital*, 40.

⁶ Schnitker, H., “Margaretha van York en Cecily Neville”, *HKKOM*, CV, (2001), 82-3.

⁷ Her mother’s favourite residence of Fotheringhay was likewise reached from Lynn on the Wash via the river Nene. See Serjeantson, R.M. and Adkins, W.R.D., *The Victoria History of the County of Northampton*, II, 569; Vinton Mattich, J.L.W., *Friars and Society in Late Medieval East Anglia*, 80.

Nor was it the case that Margaret would have been overawed by the cities of her husband's domains. Contrary to what previous biographers have stated, she did not come from some backwater, but, after her brother, Edward, had captured the English crown, had resided mainly in London.⁸ The English capital, although somewhat smaller than Brugge or Gent, matched them in appearance. Šaček could refer to Brugge as a "large and beautiful city, rich in merchandise",⁹ whereas in London he saw "a large and magnificent city. It has two castles ... [the river] is crossed by a long stone bridge."¹⁰ Šaček had seen most of Europe's great cities by the time he recorded his travels, and knew Prague: his opinion was, therefore, informed.¹¹ Even in their appearance, the towns of East Anglia and the Low Countries were not that different. Since the late fourteenth century, brick had become the building material of preference in that part of England, as it had been for some considerable time in the Low Countries.¹² These physical similarities were matched by a similar social structure: both king of England and duke of Burgundy ignored the wishes of their urban subjects at their peril,¹³ and both had to take account of a powerful aristocracy.

So much for the similarities. To an aristocratic woman like Margaret of York, the main difference between the land of her birth and the lands in which she found herself in 1468 lay not so much in their social structures, cities, or even landscape, but in their acceptance of female authority. In the Low Countries there existed a long tradition of direct female governance. Since the personal rule of Richilde, countess of Flanders, and Petronilla, countess of Holland, during the eleventh century, female government in the various principalities, unlike in England, had been an accepted

Baynards Castle, the house of Richard, duke of York, in London, was also reached by barge. Dyson, T., *The Medieval London Waterfront*, 9.

⁸ Hommel, 42-3.

⁹ Letts, M. (ed and transl.), *op. cit.*, 41. Italics mine.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 51. Italics mine. Compare also Dominic Mancini's description, from a Roman viewpoint. Mancini, 101-5.

¹¹ For a comparison between Gent, London and Prague, c.f. Russell, J.C., *Medieval Regions and their Cities*, chapters 4, 5, and 6. All three cities covered a comparable acreage and had roughly similar populations. For estimates see Nicholas, D., *The Later Medieval City 1300-1500*, 39 and 51-70.

¹² Vinton Mattich, J.L.W., *op. cit.*, 79 and 81.

¹³ The sometimes volatile relationship between the dukes and the towns is well-known. See amongst others, Blockmans, W. and Prevenier, W., *De Bourgondiërs*, 120-4; Vaughan, R., *Valois Burgundy, passim*. The influence of particularly London on English politics is, by comparison, less familiar, but was equally profound. Ross, Ch., *Edward IV*, 26, 35, 111, 166, 223, 353-4 and *passim*; Crowland, 530; Worcester, 484-5; Waurin, V, 586-7; Palliser, D.M., "Urban Society". In R. Horrox (ed), *Fifteenth-century attitudes*, 132.

alternative to male rule.¹⁴ In Flanders, to give just one example, no fewer than three countesses had ruled in their own right.¹⁵

In the previous century, the Hainaut chronicler, Jean Froissart, had described how the virtuous countess of Flanders, Jeanne de Constantinople, had donned a suit of armour and had held her infant son in her arms to encourage the knights of Flanders to do battle. She was, according to Froissart, a woman with the heart of a lion. High praise from the arbiter of chivalric virtue.¹⁶ An earlier Hainaut chronicler, Gislebert of Mons, extolled the courage of the countess Margaret, when she defended her husband's castles against his rebellious vassals.¹⁷ Not all chroniclers applauded female authority, but in the Low Countries the worst treatment that was meted out to women with authority was silence. Chroniclers could, and *did*, ignore powerful women, but rarely blackened their name.¹⁸

The view of powerful women in the Low Countries, then, compared favourably with that held in England. Writing when a woman was, finally, governing in her own right, Shakespeare was only continuing a long-standing tradition when he blackened the names of powerful females like Margaret of Anjou.¹⁹ In England, dim memories of the 'nefarious' role of queen Matilda,²⁰ and, more recently, of the roles played by the queens of Edward II and Henry VI, had all been used to discredit the notion that female government was desirable.²¹ There clearly were powerful women in England, but they were more hemmed in by stricter notions of female authority.²² A powerful or influential queen was not necessarily disapproved of, as Philippa of Hainault's

¹⁴ Nicholas, K.S., "Countesses as Rulers of Flanders". In Th. Evergates (ed), *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, 111-37; Cordfunke, E.H.P. and Hugenholtz, E.W.N., *Gravin Petronilla van Holland*.

¹⁵ Nicholas, K.S., *op.cit.*, 111. See also Cant, G. de, *Jeanne et Marguerite de Constantinople*.

¹⁶ Quoted in Bot, P., *Tussen verering en verachting*, 16.

¹⁷ Vanderkindere, L. (ed), *La chronique de Gislebert de Mons*, 113-4.

¹⁸ No female ruler in the Low Countries ever had to undergo the level of denial experienced by queen Maria of Hungary, who was referred to as *rex foeminus*! Bak, J.M., "Roles and Functions of Queens in Árpádián and Angevin Hungary (1000-1386 AD)". In J.C. Parsons (ed), *Medieval Queenship*, 21.

¹⁹ See for example Shakespeare, W., *Henry VI*, part III.

²⁰ For the treatment of Matilda by English chroniclers, see Stafford, P., "Female Succession and the Language of Power in the Writings of Twelfth-Century Churchmen". In J.C. Parsons (ed), *Medieval Queenship*, 19-201.

²¹ Chamberlayne, J., *Cecily Neville, Duchess of York, King's Mother*, 39. I am grateful to Joanna Chamberlayne for a copy of her dissertation and valuable ideas on the personality of Cicely Neville. C.f. Given-Wilson, Ch., *Chronicles*, 200.

²² Maurer, H.E., *Margaret of Anjou*, 5. I am indebted to Helen Maurer for her advice and comments. For the differentiation between 'power' and 'authority', see further Erler, M. and Kowalski, M. (eds), *Gendering the Master Narrative*, 2.

case shows, but she should not manifest her authority too openly. This had long been the case, and the England of Margaret's youth proved no exception. Margaret of Anjou was just one queen of England who was believed by some to have transgressed these notional boundaries, particularly after her husband's mental health had collapsed.

Of course, these boundaries were not confined to England alone. Froissart had approved of Philippa of Hainaut's action when she interceded on behalf of the citizens of besieged Calais with her husband, Edward III, because interceding was what queens were supposed to do.²³ The chronicler, Molinet, made a list of 'queenly' attributes, all of which Mary of Burgundy fulfilled, at least in his eyes. These were "gratieuseté, honnesteté, humilité, chasteté, affabilité, prudence et constance".²⁴ In an age when the Bible formed the basis for most social conventions, it was the Biblical queen, Esther, who was held up as a role model for correct queenly behaviour,²⁵ and this was as true in the Low Countries as it was in England. Yet, in the Low Countries, the long tradition of direct female authority had served to blur the lines. This allowed assertive women openly to use channels of influence and instruments of power to establish their authority. Margaret of York, first as duchess and then as *Madame la Grande*, was to make full use of these opportunities.²⁶

Perhaps Froissart had been caught between this 'native' tradition of government by women and the code of queenship in wider Christendom in his description of Philippa of Hainault. His ambivalence was later shared by Philippe de Commines. He, too, felt the need to comment adversely on women who failed to halt at the invisible lines imposed by their gender. His judgement of Margaret of Anjou effectively mirrored his condemnation of Margaret of York, if for different reasons.²⁷ In the case of Margaret of Anjou he was clearly influenced by the English tradition

²³ *Froissart*, III, 198 and 205-15.

²⁴ "grace, honesty, humility, chastity, affability, prudence and fortitude". *Molinet*, I, 227.

²⁵ Parsons, J.C., "Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power". In J.C. Parsons (ed), *Medieval Queenship*, 65-6. For the Burgundian context of the Esther story, c.f. Franke, B., *Assuerus und Esther am Burgunderhof*.

²⁶ *Madame la Grande* was the unofficial title bestowed upon the widows of the dukes of Burgundy. Although it did not entail any institutionalised authority, it did confer an immediately recognisable status.

²⁷ *Commines*, II, 333 and *ff.* for Margaret of Anjou's perceived shortcomings; and II, 194 and 198 for those of Margaret of York.

surrounding the queen.²⁸ His attitude towards Margaret of York was shaped by her effective resistance to French aggression after her husband's death in January 1477, when the chronicler had deserted the Burgundian camp. Other commentators in the Low Countries were less ambivalent. They either failed to comment upon Margaret's increasing political authority and massive indirect power and influence, or applauded it.²⁹ Her friend and ally, Olivier de la Marche,³⁰ and the religious chronicler, Adriaan de But, are clear examples of Burgundian writers who were not caught on the horns of the dilemma faced by Froissart and Commynes.

Direct female authority, then, was certainly much more readily accepted in the Low Countries than in England, the result possibly of positive experiences in the past. The exercise of indirect power, either in the name of a male ruler, or by the use of influence, was also more acceptable. This was especially so when queens tried to exercise their power in a fractious political climate. Yorkist commentators denounced Margaret of Anjou, even though she could shelter behind some very powerful allies and behind the authority of her husband. The Burgundians, on the other hand, as heirs to the traditions of the Low Countries, were far more ready to accept women exercising a wide degree of power. Richard Vaughan summarised this neatly,

“In a world where the plight of most women was more or less servile, the authority and activity of the wives of the Valois dukes of Burgundy is striking”.³¹

This had been the case from the moment when the Valois dukes made their first appearance in the Low Countries. After all, Philip the Bold had governed Flanders in his wife's name and always co-operated with her.³²

²⁸ Maurer, H.E., *op.cit.*, 6.

²⁹ Attitudes are slow to change. In the early nineteenth century, the historian Lingard could still write about Isabella of Portugal, “Isabella (with her husband Henry seems to have refused to treat) concluded a suspension of hostilities with the duke of York”. Obviously he could not contemplate the fact that Philip the Good voluntarily gave up the privilege of negotiating with the English. Lingard, J., *A History of England*, III, 429.

³⁰ C.f. *Galesloot*, 272, “ce fidèle serviteur”.

³¹ Vaughan, R., *Valois Burgundy*, 82.

³² E.g. Vaughan, R., *Philip the Bold*, 186.

Isabella of Portugal.

The active participation of women in the political process was an ongoing reality in the Burgundy of 1468. Margaret of York was welcomed to the Low Countries by the latest incarnation of female political power and authority, Isabella of Portugal.³³ As the widow of Philip the Good, *Madame la Grande* possessed genuine, and widely accepted, authority.³⁴ Even as duchess, Isabella had actively taken part in government and even in military conflict. In 1438, for example, she had initiated the construction of a fleet of Burgundian vessels destined for a crusade against the Turks.³⁵ In this, as in so much else, Margaret of York would follow her lead. On a tour of her dower towns in 1479 to raise men and procure ordinance, she actually fired a cannon. The town accounts of Brielle laconically mention the payment of a glassmaker for the repair of damage done when “myn gehard vrouwe ... die cleyn scherpentyn an gillis huus scoet”.³⁶ Much later, in 1491, when Charles VIII of France had invaded the southern Low Countries, she provided “ung gros enghien à pouldre à fachon de mortier”, to assault a castle held by the rebel, Pierre de la Gavre.³⁷

The later years of Philip the Good's reign had shown the limitations of female power, for even in this region aristocratic women had to be circumspect when flexing their political muscles. In the dispute between Philip and Charles the Bold, Isabella of Portugal had withdrawn from court. The description by Olivier de la Marche of the subsequent meeting between Philip's marshal, Thibaut de Neuchâtel, and the duchess, illustrates the relative authority of man and woman in Philip the Good's Burgundy,

“Et je fuz present où le mareschal de Bourgogne dist à madicte dame le regret que mondit seigneur le duc avoit en ceste partie. A quoy elle respondi qu'elle cognoissoit monseigneur son mary pour ung à redoubter chevalier, et en ceste fureur doubta qu'il ne courust sus à son filz; parquoy elle le mist hors de l'oratoire et s'en alla après [subsequent to a bitter quarrel between father and son], priant à mondit

³³ *Olivier de la Marche*, IV, 95-144.

³⁴ Isabella's own Portuguese background had provided her with the necessary tools to hold her own in Burgundy. I would like to thank Dr. Iona McCleery for her input here.

³⁵ Vaughan, R., *Philip the Good*, 270.

³⁶ “my redoubtable lady ... fired the serpentine before gillis's house”. A.V.P., *Stadsrekeningen 1478-1479*, f. 202^r.

³⁷ “a large gunpowder machine like a mortar”. *Molinet*, II, 230.

seigneur qu'il luy voulsist pardonner, *et qu'elle estoit une estrangiere par-deçà et n'avoit point de soubstenue que de sondit filz*".³⁸

Isabella inadvertently (or deliberately?) revealed the weakness of her power base to the marshal: her authority, like that of Margaret of Anjou's in England, was dependent on that of her husband and her son. This did not curtail her actions in quite the same way as in England, but Isabella, nevertheless, decided it was better to be safe than sorry.³⁹ Isabella's lack of an independent power base directly affected Margaret of York. In 1454, Philip had thwarted Isabella's wish for a marriage between Charles the Bold and "la fille aînée de duc d'York qui depuis fut duchesse d'Exestre", Anne of York, Margaret's sister.⁴⁰ Yet, at the same time, he had given her *carte blanche* to negotiate with England for peace.⁴¹ Interestingly, Sommé names Margaret's mother, Cicely Neville, as Isabella's partner in these negotiations.⁴² Clearly, even during the reign of Henry VI, the latter could exercise indirect political influence, managing to cross the boundaries between the family sphere and politics.

The reality of female power and authority in England may appear not to have been as fundamentally different from Burgundy after all. In Burgundy, however, Isabella played a much more active role than any English queen.⁴³ As Philip the Good's health declined in 1466, and even more so after his death the following year, Isabella of Portugal's power waxed.⁴⁴ Charles held his mother in the highest regard and entrusted her with the negotiations for his third marriage, occasioned by the death of his wife, Isabella de Bourbon. These were not just negotiations for a new wife. Isabella also led the mission that worked out the wider, political, commercial and fisheries treaty between England and Burgundy.⁴⁵ Actions speak louder than words:

³⁸ "And I was present when the marshal expressed to my lady the regret which the duke felt in this respect. To which she replied that she knew my lord her husband was a redoubtable knight, and she feared that, in his fury, he might attack her son. It was because of this that she got him out of the oratory and left after him. And she prayed that my lord would forgive her, for she was a stranger in these parts and had none to support her save her son". *Olivier de la Marche*, II, 418-9. Italics mine.

³⁹ For a survey of Isabella's direct political activities, c.f. Sommé, M., *Isabella de Portugal*, 377-447.

⁴⁰ "The oldest daughter of the duke of York, who later became the duchess of Exeter". *Olivier de la Marche*, II, 396.

⁴¹ Lemaire, C., *Isabella van Portugal*, 39-42.

⁴² Sommé, M., *op.cit.*, 44.

⁴³ *Olivier de la Marche*, II, 179.

⁴⁴ Armstrong, C.A.J., "La politique matrimoniale", *AdB*, XL, (1968), 44-6; Calmette, J., "Le mariage de Charles le Téméraire avec Marguerite d'York", *AdB*, I, (1929), 205-12; Sommé, M., *op.cit.*, 61-3.

⁴⁵ *Foedera*, XI, 599-601 and 605-15; Bonefant, P., "Actes concernant les rapports entre les Pays-Bas et la Grande Bretagne", *BCRH*, CIX, (1944), 110-9.

Philippe Wielant's slight that Charles did not wish to be bothered by women is flatly contradicted by his reliance on his mother during these pivotal negotiations and by his subsequent closeness to her.⁴⁶ He certainly did not keep her at arm's length.⁴⁷ Secure in her son's admiration, Isabella managed to achieve in 1467 what she had failed to in 1454: an English marriage for her son. It should be emphasised, however, that Isabella's authority depended on her son and that her influence was at its strongest when presiding over his wedding negotiations. This was one area in which aristocratic women all over Europe could legitimately and openly cross the boundaries between the private and political.

Dependence of aristocratic sons on their mother's council was a widespread phenomenon in fifteenth-century Europe anyhow, expected by noble ladies and their husbands. Here again, there was little difference between England and Burgundy, as the last letter written by William de la Pole, duke of Suffolk, to his heir in 1450 makes crystal clear, "... worshepe youre lady and moder ... and to beleve hyr councelles and advise".⁴⁸ Nor was this advice adhered to only amongst the nobility. The squirearchy also appreciated female advice. "The counceill of a woman y woll not dipis", wrote Peter Idley, adding "I sey womans counceill is good and reasonable".⁴⁹

Margaret of York also bore this in mind with regard to her mother-in-law. Isabella of Portugal was to become her mentor during her first years as duchess of Burgundy. In the first year, the two women were frequently in each other's company, and subsequent history shows that Margaret learned from Isabella's strengths, and, arguably more importantly, from her weaknesses.⁵⁰ Although the extensive records which survive for Isabella's household are not matched by what remains of those of Margaret of York, it is clear that there were strong parallels between the power structures utilised by both women.⁵¹ The same is true for the use of income and

⁴⁶ *Wielant*, IV, 56. For Charles empowering Isabella to conduct the negotiations, see Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 46.

⁴⁷ For their closeness, c.f. Linden, H. vander, *Itinéraires de Charles, Duc de Bourgogne, Marguerite d'York et Marie de Bourgogne*, *passim*.

⁴⁸ Gairdner, J. (ed), *The Paston Letters*, II, 142-3.

⁴⁹ D'Evelyn, Ch. (ed), *Peter Idley's Instructions to his Son*, 42.

⁵⁰ For example from December 1468 to March 1469; and, most importantly, during the visit of Edward IV, in Aire and Hesdin, from November 1470 to January 1471. Linden, H. vander, *op.cit.*, 14-7 and 27-8; Sommé, M., *op.cit.*, 63.

⁵¹ Q.v. Appendix Two.

prestige from the dower lands, and the careful cultivation of the relationship with the Church.

Cicely Neville.

Although the English rarely countenanced direct female authority, they were rather more receptive to indirect interventions by women in the political process and in daily affairs.⁵² Few were more adept at playing that peculiar game of power without direct authority than Margaret's mother, Cicely Neville.⁵³ Her role in the negotiations to wed her daughters has already been noted, but her political influence extended well beyond the family sphere. Upon Edward IV's conquest of the English crown, Cicely became "the King's Modre", and as such exercised the role of queen at Edward's court, at least until his marriage to Elizabeth Woodville.⁵⁴ Her son's marriage changed Cicely's position of authority, but in reality did little to diminish her influence and power. Cicely's experiences during this period surely shaped Margaret of York's own actions after Charles the Bold's death. On the surface, Cicely had retreated a little into the background, but she figured prominently at major family occasions, such as the wedding of her grandson, Richard.⁵⁵ Similarly, Margaret would play a major role in the rituals of the Burgundian dynasty like baptisms, weddings, and *Blijde Inkomsten*.⁵⁶ This was, after all, what was expected from a lady such as Margaret, in Burgundy just as in England.

Cicely's continued influence on her sons was noted by more than one observer. The bishop of Elphin, for example, believed that "the duchess ... can rule the king as

⁵² Jones, M.K. and Underwood, M.G., *The King's Mother*; Leyser, H., *Medieval Women*, 165-7. This discrepancy between misogynist theories and daily realities was not confined to politics. It seems to have typified the late medieval attitude towards women in general. Michalove, S.D. "The Education of Aristocratic Women in 15th-Century England". In S.D. Michalove and C. Reeves (eds), *Estrangement, Enterprise and Education in 15th-Century England*, 121-3; Haskell, A.S., "The Portrayal of Women by Chaucer and His Age". In M. Springer (ed), *What Manner of Woman*, 4 and *passim*.

⁵³ But c.f. in this respect the report by Sanchez de Londoño to Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic Monarchs, on Margaret Beaufort, and by Don Pedro de Ayala to the same on the mother of James IV of Scotland. *Spanish Calendar*, I, 163 and 178.

⁵⁴ Black, W.H., *Illustrations of the Ancient State and Chivalry*, 29. Was this loss of status behind Cicely's furious response to Edward's marriage? Mancini seemed to think so: *Mancini*, 74-5.

⁵⁵ Chamberlayne, J., *Cecily Neville*, 32-3.

⁵⁶ For this c.f. Part Two.

she pleases".⁵⁷ During the crisis of 1469, when Edward's brother, George, duke of Clarence, and the earl of Warwick rose in rebellion, Cicely played a very active role.⁵⁸ Clearly wishing to refute the rumours of Edward's illegitimacy, she entertained the king and his brother at her home at Baynards Castle.⁵⁹ Her attempt at mediation failed, but her subsequent role as heading the "good mediators and mediatrixes" casts another light upon Cicely's continuing role at the centre of political affairs.⁶⁰ Of course, encouraging reconciliation was yet another of those 'approved' female roles. Margaret of York's efforts to bring the conflict between Edward IV and Clarence to an end in 1471, is only another example of this.⁶¹

Margaret was fortunate to have had two excellent role models in Cicely Neville and Isabella of Portugal.⁶² They taught her that women, and widowed women in particular, could play an important political role. They also taught her that land and trade were two of the keys to maintaining one's influence. Cicely had received a large landholding from Edward IV in 1461.⁶³ What is more, she managed to retain her lands, and some of her influence, after the fall of her own dynasty: Henry VII made several grants of land and money to his wife's grandmother.⁶⁴ Land meant wealth and was, therefore, a vital tool for the maintenance of political alliances.⁶⁵ Until her dying day the duchess of York ensured that she had the material wherewithal to retain at least some influence in this way.

⁵⁷ *Milanese Calendar*, 72. There may be some suspicion about these reports. Were they merely reflecting diplomatic convention? If these texts were all the evidence we had for the influence of mothers of kings, this would be a problem. The effectiveness of Cicely Neville's and Margaret Tudor's influence upon their respective royal sons is, however, well attested from other sources.

⁵⁸ Chamberlayne, J., *Cecily Neville*, 41-3.

⁵⁹ Fabyan, R., *The Great Chronicle of London*, Thomas, A.H. and Thornley, I.D. (eds), 210.

⁶⁰ *Arrivall*, 50.

⁶¹ *Crowland*, 124.

⁶² For the role of women as "receptacles and transmitters of ... values", see Herlihy, D., *Women, Family and Society in Medieval Europe*, 123.

⁶³ Chamberlayne, J., *Cecily Neville*, 35.

⁶⁴ Campbell, W. (ed), *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, I, 288.

⁶⁵ Ward, J.C., "English Noblewomen and the Local Community in the Later Middle Ages". In D. Watt (ed), *Medieval Women in their Communities*.

The Basis of Power.

Margaret of York as Landholder.

Upon her wedding to Philip the Good, Isabella of Portugal had received an extensive dower.⁶⁶ This had provided her with a substantial income and a level of financial independence of which most contemporary women could only dream. Yet Isabella handed control over her dower lands to her son in 1462, and retired to her castle at La Motte-au-Bois.⁶⁷ Religious considerations, as well as the perpetual tensions between her husband and son, caused Isabella to withdraw from public life. As we have seen, she knew she could take her son's support for granted and exercised influence through him, which mitigated the need for independent financial means. She appears to have decided that this was not good enough for her future daughter-in-law, and when she came to negotiate the terms of the wedding contract with Edward IV, she ensured that Margaret of York's financial future was safeguarded. Her dower was to be as large as Isabella's had been; indeed, she received exactly the same lands over which Isabella had been lady.⁶⁸

Margaret was confirmed in her dower in 1477, but income rapidly proved insufficient.⁶⁹ In a sign of the centrality of the new dowager to the Burgundian dynasty, Mary of Burgundy, and subsequently Maximilian I, provided her with additional lands.⁷⁰ These took her annual income from her dower from 16,000 *écus d'or* to 22,000.⁷¹ In English money, Margaret's income hovered around £ 4,250 sterling, a princely income.⁷² By comparison, the richest landowner in England, the duke of Buckingham, had an income of £ 5,000,⁷³ whilst her brother Clarence could

⁶⁶ Sommé, M., *op.cit.*, chapter 5.

⁶⁷ Lemaire, C., *op.cit.*, 68.

⁶⁸ Sousa, A.C. de, *Provas da história genealógica da Casa Real Portuguesa*, Lopes de Almeida, M. and Pegado, C. (eds), I, 162-76. This safeguard had one, important, caveat: it was slanted in favour of Charles the Bold. Sommé, M., *op.cit.*, 62-3.

⁶⁹ A.D.N., *Chambre des Comptes, Trésor des Chartes*, B430.

⁷⁰ *Ibid* B429.

⁷¹ Robins, P., "Le veuvage et le douaire de Marguerite d'York", *HKKOM*, XCV, (1991), 125. For the complexities of medieval currencies, c.f. Spufford, P. et al, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*.

⁷² For the conversion to sterling, see Brady, T.A. et al, *Handbook of European History 1400-1600*, I, 674-5.

⁷³ Woolgar, C.M., *The Great Household in Late Medieval England*, 12.

count on circa £ 4,500.⁷⁴ Margaret was also the recipient of large grants, which supplemented the income from her dower.⁷⁵ In 1482, for example, Maximilian granted her the income from all the lands forfeited from the Gent rebels.⁷⁶ When she had married Charles the Bold, the Estates of Flanders had voted to grant her 40,000 *ridders* per annum,⁷⁷ whilst those of Brabant had agreed to pay her 12,000 *ridders*.⁷⁸ The Estates of Holland also helped to increase Margaret's income: from them she received 5,000 *kronen*,⁷⁹ and from Hainaut came 28,000 *livres*.⁸⁰

Additional grants were often very significant. Charles the Bold's lieutenant-general of Liège, Guy de Brimeu, had a landed income of 4,000 *livres*, whereas his total annual income was closer to 23,000 *livres*.⁸¹ De Brimeu's income was, incidentally, similar to the return from Margaret's dower and he was one of the richest men in pre-1477 Burgundy! Post 1477, her income resembled that of Engelbrecht II of Nassau, *heer* of Breda, whom the Venetian ambassador described as the richest man in Burgundy.⁸² Margaret's financial independence mattered in 1477 and beyond,⁸³ and underpinned her political independence, an independence which she desperately needed. From her funds, she managed to find 100,000 *Rheingulden* to subsidise the journey of the penniless Maximilian through Germany, a move which undoubtedly rescued the Burgundian dynasty from oblivion.⁸⁴

In the words of Rowena Archer, "the lady as landholder was just as important as her male counterpart" and Margaret was a larger landholder than most contemporary men.⁸⁵ She also kept an eye on her income through a *conseiller-receveur* who kept

⁷⁴ Hicks, M., *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence*, 178-9; Hicks, M., *Richard III*, 58.

⁷⁵ Between 1468 and 1476, for example, she received another 4,000 *livres* as extraordinary expenses, amounting to an additional 18 % income. Ballard, M., *Anglo-Burgundian Relations 1464-72*, 272.

⁷⁶ Gachard, L.-P., "Notice historique et descriptive des archives de la ville de Gand", *MARB*, XXVII, (1853), 108.

⁷⁷ Blockmans, W. (ed), *Handelingen van de Leden van de Staten van Vlaanderen (1467-1477)*, 46-50.

⁷⁸ Kwikkelberghe, J. van, *Margaretha van York*, 43.

⁷⁹ Kokken, H., *Steden en Staaten*, 217.

⁸⁰ *Weightman*, 85.

⁸¹ Paravicini, W., *Guy de Brimeu*, 298.

⁸² Gachard, L.-P. (ed), "Les monuments de la diplomatie Vénétienne", *MARB*, XXVII, (1853), 61.

⁸³ And prior to 1477 as well, of course. Her annual income was 22,000 *livres*, with an additional 4,000 for extraordinary expenses. *Galesloot*, 198.

⁸⁴ Größing, S.-M., *Maximilian I*, 62-3; Tamussino, U., *Margarete von Österreich*, 20.

⁸⁵ Archer, R.E., "Women as Landholders and Administrators in the Later Middle Ages". In P.J.P. Goldberg (ed), *Women in Medieval English Society*, 150; Armstrong, C.A.J., *England, France and Burgundy*, 314.

her informed on a regular basis.⁸⁶ Not content with second-hand information, she insisted on access to the accounts of her dower towns. This frequently led to trouble. The magistrates of Mechelen, for example, refused point-blank to grant her any access.⁸⁷ Undaunted, the dowager turned to Philip the Fair for help, but not even the intervention by the archduke could sway the magistrates. Margaret then took them to the *Grand Conseil*, which, finally in 1489, ordered the magistrate to open their accounts to the dowager.⁸⁸

It is clear, though, that Margaret of York was a 'hands-on' landowner. She also looked after her money. She employed as her *argentier* Hippolyte de Berthoz,⁸⁹ who came from the duchy of Burgundy, and who had had an impressive career in the service of the Valois dukes. In 1473, he had become the *greffier des généraux des aides et trésoriers des finances*, effectively Charles the Bold's finance minister. Berthoz managed to survive in that most challenging of posts, and Margaret could not have picked a more suitable man to help her manage her income. Again this recalls the example set by Cicely Neville, who had appointed as her steward none other than that most capable of English merchants-turned-aristocrat, John Howard, later duke of Norfolk.⁹⁰ Such was the trust Margaret placed in Berthoz, that it was he whom she sent to Lille in 1477 to collect the paperwork concerning her dower lands.⁹¹ Lille was threatened by the French, and Margaret's dower had not been paid in full by Edward. Mary of Burgundy wanted to reward her step-mother's loyalty by providing her with the full income negotiated in 1468. Berthoz duly came back from the frontline, with the paperwork, and Margaret received her dower.

The Family Network.

To the importance of land should be added the influence which successful female politicians of the fifteenth century could exercise through their family network. Here, too, the lessons of Cicely and Isabella served Margaret of York well. In contrast to

⁸⁶ *Galesloot*, 226, n. 1.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-9, 216-17, and n. 25.

⁸⁸ Robins, P., *Le veuvage et le douaire de Marguerite d'York*, 291.

⁸⁹ C.f. Bartier, J., *Légistes et gens de finances au XV^e siècle*, 299-301. See illustration V, p. 132.

⁹⁰ Crawford, A., *The Household Books of John Howard*, xx.

⁹¹ *Weightman*, 130.

her mother and mother-in-law, however, Margaret of York had no offspring, and had to play a more careful political game.⁹² Not producing any children was Margaret's greatest problem. It is, in many respects, irrelevant whether or not this was due to infertility on her part or Charles's. She had failed in the single most important contribution by women to the dynastically-orientated political world of the fifteenth century, and this should have undermined her position after January 1477. That this was not the case was, in part, attributable to the powerful affinity which she had patiently constructed in the years between 1468 and 1477.

Margaret managed to off-set the lack of a son by positioning herself very shrewdly at the heart of the Burgundian family. Not only was she involved in all the dynastic pageantry, as will be examined in Part Two, but she also retained control over the children of the house of Burgundy. Her deep friendship with the duchess, Mary, formed the foundation on which she built her power base within the Burgundian dynasty. When Margaret came to the Low Countries she was aged twenty-two, Mary, eleven. Historians are unanimously agreed that the two young women struck up a close friendship from their meeting in Sluis.⁹³ The young heiress of Burgundy, who had so recently lost her mother, and the young duchess of Burgundy, bereft of a family in a foreign land, quickly bonded. This process was encouraged by Charles the Bold. As was the norm for the children of the dynasty,⁹⁴ Mary's *hôtel* was tiny, composed mainly of people who were also in the service of Margaret of York.⁹⁵ Nor did Mary really need many household servants. For most of the years between 1468 and 1477, the two women were inseparable.⁹⁶ Much time was spent at Mons, but mostly the two lived in the *Hof Ten Walle* in Gent.

The accounts of the palace reflect their intimacy. On 20 July 1468, only weeks after her wedding, Mary took her step-mother to inspect the palace, which clearly required some upgrading.⁹⁷ A 'sanitation drive' took place, with a complete overhaul of the latrines and washing facilities. With motherly care, Margaret ensured these

⁹² For queenship and motherhood, see Chamberlayne, J., *English Queenship*, 22.

⁹³ *Weightman*, 51; Hommel, L., *Marie de Bourgogne*, 105-6; *Galesloot*, 196.

⁹⁴ Sommé, M., *op.cit.*, 53-4.

⁹⁵ A.D.N. B3376, n. 113546. C.f. Appendix Two.

⁹⁶ Linden, H. vander, *op.cit.*

⁹⁷ Laporte, D. et al, *Het prinselijk hof Ten Walle*, 195.

were also carried out in Mary's quarters.⁹⁸ They also used the same tailors, a fact which could explain why they are often depicted wearing very similar clothes.⁹⁹ From the household ordinance of 1468, we know that they inherited one of their tailors from Isabella of Portugal.¹⁰⁰ Mary not only followed Margaret's lead in couture, she also imitated her interior design: when the duchess had fittings put into her rooms to hang tapestries, Mary followed suit.¹⁰¹ Theirs was a very intimate relationship, and it is little wonder Mary favoured her loving step-mother as the guardian of her own children. When Mary died, Margaret, according to Olivier de la Marche, was heartbroken,

“Noble duchesse douairière,
Qui avez la dame nourrie,
Et aimée d’amour entière ...
Par amère mélancolie,
La mort, décevante ennemye,
A mis vostre fille en outrance
Et nous tous en désespérance”.¹⁰²

Margaret's love for Mary was augmented by a close understanding with the heiress' husband, Maximilian I. Margaret was the natural, and at times the only choice as governess for the children of the dynasty. The crèche at her court served several generations. Philip the Fair and Margaret of Austria grew up in her palace in Mechelen; and it was here, too, that the future Charles V and his siblings spent the first few years of their lives.¹⁰³ Margaret made sure that the children were safe. Filips Keerman, *heer* of Gestel and a native of Mechelen, who had gained renown as a soldier in the wars against the French under Engelbrecht II van Nassau in 1479, was

⁹⁸ Ibid, 185.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 188.

¹⁰⁰ Severin de la Passage was clearly very good at his job. A.D.N. B3376, n. 113546, f. 11^r; Appendix Two, p. 401; Sommé, M., *op.cit*, 228.

¹⁰¹ Laporte, D. et al, *op.cit*, 189.

¹⁰² Noble dowager duchess, who raised madam and loved with all your love ... in its sad bitterness death, that treacherous enemy, has killed your daughter and thrown us into despair. Marche, O. de la, “Dialogue de l’âme et de l’œil”. In *Recueil de chansons, poèmes et pièces en vers français relatifs aux Pays-Bas*, III, 28. One has to allow for the conventional element of this, of course. Again, however, George Duby's assertion, that he would tend to trust the text, springs to mind. Duby, G. *Women in the Twelfth Century*, 3.

¹⁰³ Cauchies, J.-M., *Philippe le Beau*, 12, for Philip the Fair, and 135, for Charles V; Azevedo, entry for 24 April 1470; Autenboer, E. van, *Volksfeesten en rederijkers te Mechelen*, 30.

appointed to command a significant force to ward off any dangers.¹⁰⁴ He had been knighted by the Emperor Frederick III in 1488.¹⁰⁵ He belonged to Margaret of York's affinity, for Keerman served for a while as Margaret's governor in Mechelen, Rupelmonde and Dendermonde. Just how essential the control over the children of the dynasty was to Margaret is clear from an episode from 1491. That year, no less a figure than Engelbrecht II of Nassau, Maximilian I's loyal commander in the Low Countries, attempted to gain control over Mary of Burgundy's children.¹⁰⁶ Mechelen took Margaret's side and Engelbrecht had to beat a retreat.¹⁰⁷ *Madame la Grande* would not let go of the cornerstone of her authority that easily. Some years after Margaret's death, Polydore Vergil would remark that she

“cherished sedulously and with the tenderness of a mother the children of Mary ... as a result of these services she acquired great authority among the people of Flanders”.¹⁰⁸

The Children of the Nobility.

The function of the court as a ‘school’ for the children of the aristocracy was also used to great effect by Margaret. From when she arrived in Burgundy, she effectively presided over, and could exercise influence on, the scions of some of the most powerful families in the Low Countries. In 1473, for example, the children of the duke of Gelre had been placed at her court.¹⁰⁹ Later, the children of such luminaries as Humbercourt and Brimeu came to Mechelen around the time of the execution of their fathers. Antoine de Lalaing, the second son of that most loyal of Burgundian knights, Josse, ended up in Mechelen after his father had been killed in the assault on Utrecht in 1483.¹¹⁰ There, he met his future wife, Elizabeth van Culemborg, the

¹⁰⁴ Munck, J.J. de, *Provincie, Stad ende District van Mechelen*, II, 216.

¹⁰⁵ *Galesloot*, 276, n. 1.

¹⁰⁶ Q.v. Part Two, pp. 182-3.

¹⁰⁷ *Valerius*, 173-4. It does not appear to have affected their relationship too much. In 1499, Margaret was to raise 1,200 *florins* to contribute to Engelbrecht's ransom to the French, and, three years later, Engelbrecht fought for her honour in the great tournament held in Mechelen during the convocation of the Estates General by Maximilian. *Galesloot*, 218 and 278.

¹⁰⁸ *Vergil*, 15.

¹⁰⁹ Münch, E., *Maria von Burgund nebst dem leben ihrer Stiefmutter Margarethe von York*, 43; Nijsten, G., *In the Shadow of Burgundy*, 422, calls the children prisoners.

¹¹⁰ Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 246; Smedt, R. de et al, *Les Chevaliers de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or*, 162-3.

heiress of Hoogstraten and Culemborg.¹¹¹ Antoine had reason to feel at home in Mechelen. His father had accompanied Margaret to Leuven to take the oath of fealty to Mary of Burgundy on her behalf: women, after all, could not swear feudal oaths.¹¹² Margaret's welcome to Antoine would also have been warm, and not just out of political calculation: Josse had been Mary's *chevalier d'honneur*, and the young duchess had thought him the epitome of chivalry.¹¹³

Margaret thus used the court to tie the families of her affinity to her and to place herself at the core of the Burgundian dynasty. She ensured that she became the embodiment of the house of Burgundy, careful to emphasise her link with the last male duke. With a measure of institutionalised authority assured as *Madame la Grande*, Margaret went on to cultivate the two most important tools of power in the Low Countries: a personal affinity and a set of alliances with some of its towns. It was on these solid foundations of familial influence, economic independence, and a close and loyal affinity, that Margaret of York's edifice of power and authority was built.¹¹⁴

The Duchess' Affinity.

When, in January 1477, the frozen and half-eaten body of Charles the Bold was recovered from the battlefield at Nancy, Burgundy was left without a male ruler. Now, as Bertrand Schnerb put it

“Le gouvernement bourguignon était alors incarné par Marie de Bourgogne ... et par Marguerite d'York”.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek*, I, 1964 ed, S.v. “Culemborg, Elisabeth van”. C.f. Jong, J.D. de, “Elisabeth van Culemborg. 1475-1555”, *Culemborgse Historiebladen*, III, (1955). Q.v. Illustration VI, p. 133.

¹¹² A.G.R., *La cour féodale de Brabant*, n. 344, f. 169.

¹¹³ *Voyage de Philippe le Beau*, I, xi.

¹¹⁴ It is of interest to note that Margaret never became the regentess of the Low Countries. The closest she came was in 1477, when she was named as one of the main advisors to Mary of Burgundy, together with Adolf van Kleef, Hugonet and Humbercourt. *Commynes*, II, 194.

¹¹⁵ “The Burgundian government thus became incarnated in Mary of Burgundy ... and Margaret of York”. Schnerb, B., *L'État bourguignon*, 429.



As seen from the perspective of the political tradition in the Low Countries, this was not unusual. What was unusual were the circumstances in which the accession of a female ruler took place. The armies of Louis XI had quickly overrun the *Pays par-deçà*, and were penetrating the southern principalities of the Low Countries. The invasions were accompanied by large-scale violence against the local population. In June 1479, for example, the wholesale deportation of the population of Arras occurred.¹¹⁶ The French threat made Mary's hold on Burgundy precarious. The combined effect of uprisings and civil dissatisfaction in the Low Countries made her position potentially irrelevant. Eager to reclaim power lost to Charles's centralisation drive, and determined to end what they perceived to be crippling taxation, the Estates General managed to force Mary to accept a thorough decentralisation of the Burgundian lands, encapsulated in the *Groot Privilegie*.¹¹⁷

Prior to her husband's death, Margaret had played a conventional role, quietly exercising control on Charles the Bold's behalf, her power inviolable through the duke's support. Thus she represented Charles for his *Joyeuse Entrée* in Douai in 1470.¹¹⁸ In 1475 she welcomed her brother, Edward IV, in Calais, on her husband's behalf.¹¹⁹ A year later, Margaret chaired the Estates of Flanders.¹²⁰ After Charles's death, and now sheltering behind the authority of Mary, Margaret's actual power increased manifold. In February, it was she who convoked the meeting of the Estates General, where she vainly tried to steer the debate.¹²¹

She was still careful to play the weak female, hiding her real powers with great care, if with little result. With Mary she wrote a letter to King Louis XI of France shortly after the news of Charles's death had reached the Low Countries. In it, they appealed to the king's mercy, emphasising their weakness as women.¹²² If Comynnes is to be trusted, the king was not fooled by Margaret's claims of weakness.¹²³ He certainly underestimated Mary. In 1482, when he was told of her

¹¹⁶ Pfaffenbinder, M., "Maximilian und Burgund". In M. Pfaffenbinder et al, *Maximilian I*, 52.

¹¹⁷ Koenigsberger, H.G., *Fürst und Generalstaaten*, 8 and forward; Blockmans, W. and Prevenier, W., *De Bourgondiërs*, 217-9.

¹¹⁸ Q.v. Part Two, pp. 228-30.

¹¹⁹ Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 348-9.

¹²⁰ Blockmans, W. (ed), *Handeling van de Leden van de Staten van Vlaanderen (1467-1477)*, 284.

¹²¹ Cuvelier, J. (ed), *Actes des États Généraux des Anciens Pays-Bas*, I, 274.

¹²² Kervyn de Lettenhove, J.B.M.C., "Une lettre inédite de Marie de Bourgogne et de Marguerite d'York à Louis XI", *BARSLB*, XXI, (1854), 104-10.

¹²³ *Comynnes*, II, 194-8.

hunting accident, he reportedly replied that he did not care whether she would live or die. She was only a woman, who could neither help nor harm him.¹²⁴ Mary's reputation as a gentle woman, like Margaret's, hid a fist of iron, as the chronicler and *hoogbaljuw* of Flanders, Jan van Dadizeele, found out to his cost. Rumour has it, that Mary ordered his assassination in Antwerp, where, after a vicious attack, he lingered for thirteen days before he expired from his wounds.¹²⁵

It may, however, be clear, that nobody, least of all Louis XI, would have had anything to fear from the two women trying to maintain the dynasty's control over the Low Countries in 1477, had they stood alone. That was not the case. Between 1468 and January 1477, Margaret had managed to surround herself with a close group of like-minded allies. This affinity, whose children have already been mentioned, and the absolute loyalty of her dower towns, would shore up dowager and dynasty in the worst of crises.

With a little care, one may piece together at least part of Margaret of York's affinity in the Low Countries. Defined by Chris Given-Wilson as "the servants, retainers and other followers of a lord", they were, again in his words, "the most important political grouping in medieval society".¹²⁶ Around all rulers, whether in England, Burgundy or elsewhere, there grouped a circle of men or women, who, whilst not in direct employment, were bound to them through ties of mutual interest, shared objectives, and ties of blood.

In English historiography at least, the concept of affinity has been applied rather loosely. This is the case here, too. With very few exceptions, one cannot establish more than rudimentary horizontal links between the various elements of Margaret's affinity, which is a real impediment. However, we can be convinced that the group around the duchess was more than a collection of individuals held together by their common links to Margaret. Perhaps one could refer to Margaret's allies as a 'party', which it mutated into during the regency of Margaret of Austria.¹²⁷ That has one unfortunate disadvantage: the political connotations that the term takes us rather far

¹²⁴ *Wonderlijke oorloghen*, 157.

¹²⁵ *Dagboek*, I, 225. The reliable Adrian de But also reports the story, and has his own suspicions. *Chroniques des Dunes*, 569. See further *Excellente cronike*, f. 222. Molinet blamed the *heer* van Gaasbeek, one of Maximilian's councillors. *Molinet*, I, 368-70.

¹²⁶ Given-Wilson, Ch., *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity*, 203. See also Morgan, D.A.L., "The King's Affinity in the Polity of Yorkist England", *TRHS*, Fifth Series, XXIII, (1973).

¹²⁷ See further below.

away from the social and cultural links that bound Margaret and her supporters together. What is beyond doubt is that the duchess, by virtue of her elevated status as *Madame la Grande*, played the dominant role in this socio-political grouping.

Reconstructing an Affinity.

The most valiant attempt at evaluating the role played by Margaret of York in post-Valois Burgundy is gathering dust in Leuven. Jean Laporte's unpublished 1941 *licentiaatsverhandeling*, *Marguerite d'York, Duchesse de Bourgogne*, is one of the Second World War's minor victims.¹²⁸ Laporte did attempt to trace Margaret's political influence, and, at times, did so with verve. Yet the duchess was very obviously his heroine and he frequently overstated his case. Margaret of York was not solely responsible for rescuing Burgundy in 1477, and neither was she the sole reason why Edward IV decided to send aid to the Burgundians in 1480.¹²⁹ Laporte did inadvertently hint at the reason for his heroine's success in the political arena, without exploring his hunches in detail, however. Time and again, he emphasised the networks through which the duchess operated. These networks, which constituted Margaret's affinity, deserve far more detailed attention, not least as they shed light on the story the chroniclers failed to tell.

There is, for example, the close co-operation between Margaret and Charles the Bold's favourite, the Chancellor Hugonet, in the period immediately after the duke's death.¹³⁰ Hugonet famously paid the ultimate price for his loyalty on the scaffold at Gent,¹³¹ a loyalty all the more valiant as the Chancellor apparently foresaw his own end. In Mechelen, on 5 December the previous year, he had written his last will "im angesichts der sich verdüsternden Szene nach den Niederlagen von Grandson und Murten".¹³² Hugonet's oldest daughter, Estiennete, was, according to her father's

¹²⁸ Laporte, J., *Marguerite d'York, Duchesse de Bourgogne*.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 51 and *ff*; and 89.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 54 and 60.

¹³¹ *Dagboek*, I, 25.

¹³² "In full view of the rapidly deteriorating situation after the defeats of Grandson and Murten". Paravicini, W., "Zur Biographie von Guillaume Hugonet, Kanzler Herzog Karls des Kühnen". In Mitarbeiter des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte (eds), *Festschrift für Herman Heimpel*, II, 451.

will, “a present residant avec ma treschierredoubtee dame et princesse madame la duchesse de Bourgogne”.¹³³

As seen, the presence of Estiennete Hugonet at Margaret’s court was part of a wider phenomenon, which saw Margaret’s court function almost as a refuge for the women and children of the loyal nobility. Adrienne, the eldest daughter of Hugenet’s colleague, Humbercourt, is another example. She, too, stayed at Margaret’s court,¹³⁴ as did their respective wives.¹³⁵ Such was the closeness of Hugonet and Margaret that they not only co-operated politically, but also shared religious and economic interests. Like Margaret, the Chancellor believed in the particular efficacy of the prayers of the friars. In his will he left money for three hundred masses for his soul to be said by the Dominicans, and two hundred by the Franciscans in his home town of Mâcon.¹³⁶

Margaret bought two of Hugonet’s houses after he died, in the type of property transactions which, as we shall see, tended to underpin her political alliances.¹³⁷ Again, like so many of Margaret’s female protégées, like Louise Baervoet, the illegitimate daughter of Louis, *heer* of Gruuthuse,¹³⁸ or like Johanna, the second daughter of Reinoud II van Brederode, Estiennete Hugonet joined the Poor Clares.¹³⁹ The Order was favoured by a succession of Burgundian duchesses from Margaret of Flanders to Isabella of Portugal, and became a veritable bastion of Margaret of York’s affinity. Estiennete was to rise through the ranks to become the abbess of the important house at Lille in 1490.¹⁴⁰

At times, Margaret’s political network operated directly through women, and power was concentrated in female hands. This was particularly clear in the period

¹³³ “At present living with my very redoubted lady and princess the duchess of Burgundy”. Quoted in *Ibid*, 476.

¹³⁴ Paravicini, W., *Guy de Brimeu*, 513–4. She was later to marry Jan III de Glymes, a move widely regarded as the work of *Madame la Grande*. *Galesloot*, 271.

¹³⁵ Hommel, L., “Marguerite d’York diplomate”, *revue générale belge*, XCV, (1959), 397.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 452.

¹³⁷ Houses *De Rode Poort* in Brugge, and *De Rivier* in Brussels. A.D.N. B1610 f. 162^v and 163^f. See also *Galesloot*, 265 and 267–8.

¹³⁸ There has been some debate about who the father of Louise was. See Abeele, A. van den, “De bastaarddochter van Lodewijk van Gruuthuse”, *Biekorf*, CXI, (2001), 152–7; see further A.V.P.K., *Archief Arme Klaren Coletienen van Brugge*, *Memoriaalboek*, f. 22^s; www.users.skynet.be/sb176943/AndriesVandenAbeele.AVDA303.htm.

¹³⁹ home.wanadoo.nl/rob/hubert/ Brederode died in 1473, after having been tortured by bishop David of Utrecht. Smedt, R. de et al, *op.cit*, 99–100.

¹⁴⁰ Paravicini, W., “Zur Biographie”, 468.

immediately after the Battle of Nancy. Just after 10 March, she had been exiled from Gent, where, amidst scenes of grief, she and Mary parted with “gran pleurs”.¹⁴¹ *Madame la Grande* refused to go quietly and resign herself to the situation. According to Haynin, she warned the rebels that “si elle estoit étrangierre de nasion, se ne l’estoit-elle en ceur ne en corrage”.¹⁴² They should have listened. Margaret used her equally courageous *grande damme d’honneur*, Jeanne de la Clyte, *dame* of Halewijn-Komen, as messenger between her home in Mechelen and the virtually captive duchess Mary in Gent.¹⁴³ During this crucial episode, when the survival of the dynasty was hanging by a thread, De la Clyte ensured that the two women coordinated their actions. This, in turn, secured the Habsburg wedding on which Charles the Bold had decided.¹⁴⁴

The Role of the Household.¹⁴⁵

For Isabella of Portugal, the outlines of an affinity may be traced through the records of her household.¹⁴⁶ This is not possible in the case of Margaret of York. Only one document from 1468 relating to her household has survived.¹⁴⁷ That she maintained a large household is attested by a letter she wrote to the bishop of Tournai in 1501, where she mentioned 122 individuals.¹⁴⁸ Somewhat earlier, she had employed no fewer than 160.¹⁴⁹ Considering that her household was comprised mostly of servants, she clearly kept a state worthy of royalty: English kings had households of around 500, but these included political retainers, officers of state and others which we would now call civil servants.¹⁵⁰ Although the Mechelen household

¹⁴¹ Haynin, II, 310.

¹⁴² “she may have been a stranger by birth, but she did not lack courage in her heart”. Ibid.

¹⁴³ *Comynnes*, II, 251; Rausch, K., *Die burgundische Heirat Maximilians I*, 164; Robinson, W.C., “Margaret of York”, *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, XXXCLVIII, 587-8; Münch, E., *op.cit.*, 47.

¹⁴⁴ Ussel, P. van, *De regeering van Maria van Bourgondië*, 124. She opposed the candidature of the Dauphin.

¹⁴⁵ For the household, c.f. Appendix Two.

¹⁴⁶ Sommé, M., *op.cit.*

¹⁴⁷ Q.v. Appendix Two.

¹⁴⁸ Robinson, W.C., *op.cit.*, 579. The duke of Buckingham, by comparison, had an average of 157 individuals in his household in 1507-8. Woolgar, C.M., *op.cit.*, 15-6.

¹⁴⁹ Robinson, W.C., *op.cit.*, 579.

¹⁵⁰ Given-Wilson, Ch., *op.cit.*, 203. To compare c.f. Ross, C., *Edward IV*, chapter 14.

contained a few of these important players, they were greatly outnumbered by more modest servants.¹⁵¹

From our limited sources it is clear that Margaret of York adhered to the advice of Chastellain, to whom a well-arranged and orderly household was second only in importance to the proper implementation of the rules of chivalry.¹⁵² That does not, however, bring us any closer to understanding the interplay between Margaret's household and the wider political establishment in Burgundy. As mentioned, there are a few exceptional cases of individuals employed by Margaret of York whose wider role in the Burgundian world was significant, and whose careers do throw some light on the importance of her household. One of these was Jan van Wassenaar. A leading nobleman from Holland, Wassenaar was an arch-loyalist to the Habsburg-Burgundian house, partly inspired by his antipathy and rivalry with Wolfert van Borssele.¹⁵³ During the 1480s and 1490s, he played a major role in the administration of Margaret's dower lands in Holland, centred on Brielle.¹⁵⁴ He was married to the aforementioned Jeanne de la Clyte.

Also in her household, for a short time at least, was the man who was to become pivotal in Margaret's affinity, who would help cement the alliance between dowager and Maximilian I, and between dowager and Church: Henri de Glymes.¹⁵⁵ By concentrating on the ties between Henri and Margaret, and by examining their political co-operation, many of the gaps in the records can be bridged. The triangular alliance between Margaret, Maximilian and Henri provides much evidence which helps to contextualise the silences of the chroniclers and the lack of information concerning the duchess' household post-1468.

¹⁵¹ Perhaps most famous of those was Olivier de la Marche, originally a refugee from the rebellion in Gent with Margaret, and later in her household as tutor to Mary of Burgundy's children after 1482. *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 242.

¹⁵² *Chastellain*, V, 364.

¹⁵³ Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 258.

¹⁵⁴ Damen, M., *Vorstelijke vensters*, 14.

¹⁵⁵ For a succinct summary of his career see Koller, F., *Au service de la Toison d'Or*, 17-9.

Margaret of York's Affinity: Continuity and Change.

Most of the families represented in Margaret of York's affinity after 1477 had been amongst the staunchest supporters of her late husband.¹⁵⁶ Graeme Small has remarked that,

“in the Habsburg Low Countries, as in the Valois Burgundian dominions, family ties, patronage bonds, and personal friendships ensured ... the handing down ... of selected elements of ... culture.”¹⁵⁷

Cultural continuity from the reign of Charles the Bold into that of Maximilian and Philip the Fair is matched by a continuity of the power structures, and was also highly dependent on similar ties of family, friendship and patronage.¹⁵⁸ This is neatly illustrated by the career of Fernando de Lisbonne.¹⁵⁹ As his name suggests, Fernando was a native of Portugal and had been amongst the relatively large number of Portuguese to travel to Burgundy in the hope of finding employment at the court of Isabella of Portugal. This he achieved, for by 1466 he is mentioned amongst the duchess' personnel. He went on to serve Charles the Bold, in whose service we encounter Fernando around 1470. In Margaret of York's household ordinance of 1468, he is mentioned as her replacement secretary.¹⁶⁰ She donated 100 *livres* to him in 1473, for services rendered. Then, in April 1477, he entered the employ of Mary of Burgundy, and subsequently of Maximilian I. By the 1490s, we find him in Margaret's service again. In 1493, his name appears twice in the accounts of Gent, as the receiver on Margaret of York's behalf of large sums of compensation that the city was forced to pay at the conclusion of the civil war in Flanders.¹⁶¹

This tale of continuity does not stand on its own, nor was it restricted to lowly clerks. In the household an important position was taken by Guillaume de la Baume,

¹⁵⁶ It is also useful to note in this respect that Charles had taken over most of the personnel of his mother's household, many of whom re-appear in the household of Margaret of York and Mary of Burgundy. Sommé, M., *op.cit.*, 54.

¹⁵⁷ Small, G., *George Chastelain and the Shaping of Valois Burgundy*, 209.

¹⁵⁸ This is not to argue that no change took place. The examples of figures such as Commynes, the Great Bastard, and later Louis, *heer* of Gruuthuse tell their own stories.

¹⁵⁹ C.f. Paviot, J., *Portugal et Bourgogne au XV^e siècle*, 101.

¹⁶⁰ A.D.N. B3376, n. 113546, f. 12^v; c.f. Appendix Two, p. 379.

¹⁶¹ *Dagboek*, I, 272.

seigneur d'Illeins.¹⁶² De la Baume, a nobleman from the duchy of Burgundy,¹⁶³ was Margaret's *chevalier d'honneur*, but already had a distinguished career of service to the Valois dynasty behind him.¹⁶⁴ He had led the important embassy of 1446 to Naples on behalf of Philip the Good and Isabella of Portugal to discuss a crusade.¹⁶⁵ During the funeral of Philip the Good he had carried the flag with the cross of St Andrew at the head of the cortege, which had brought the duke's mortal remains to his ancestors at the charterhouse of Champmol in Dijon, in 1473.¹⁶⁶ He had also been the governor of the duchy of Burgundy for the late duke. On the occasion of Margaret's wedding, he had fought in the famous Brugge tournament.¹⁶⁷ Later, he greatly assisted Margaret in securing the marriage between Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian of Habsburg and thus helped usher in the new era.¹⁶⁸ He personally handed over the 100,000 *florins* that Margaret had sent Maximilian to help him leave Cologne, accompanied by none other than Olivier de la Marche.¹⁶⁹ Some things did not change: in 1480, he accompanied Margaret to England in yet another bout of Anglo-Burgundian diplomacy.¹⁷⁰ After 1477, De la Baume was another loyalist who wished to be near Margaret of York. It was only in 1483, after peace with France had made it clear that his ancestral lands would not return to Burgundian control, that he left Margaret's service.

A similar story can be told of Jacob Donche, who, around 1468, was appointed as her *meester van de camere van penninghen*.¹⁷¹ He made his career in Margaret's service. On 30 April 1476, Donche was appointed as Margaret's personal representative in Dendermonde and the rest of Flanders.¹⁷² In this somewhat ambiguous post, Donche became Margaret's strong-man, used to coerce recalcitrant vassals and to intimidate her opponents. This becomes clear from an episode from

¹⁶² *Dictionnaire de la Noblesse*, II, 1771 ed. S.v. "Baume, de la, Guillaume".

¹⁶³ Caron, M.-T., *La Noblesse dans le duché de Bourgogne*, 291-2 and 499.

¹⁶⁴ Kwikkelberghe, J. van, *op.cit.*, 60.

¹⁶⁵ Smedt, R. de et al, *op.cit.*, 177-8.

¹⁶⁶ K.B.B., Ms. 4976, f. 7^v to 13^v; *Weightman*, 125. Strangely, the detailed account of Jean de Haynin fails to mention De la Baume. *Haynin*, II, 156-160. De la Marche, on the other hand, does. *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 59, and n. 5.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹⁶⁸ Armstrong, C.A.J., *England, France and Burgundy*, 284.

¹⁶⁹ *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 224; Bruin, S. de, *De feestelijke intocht te Brugge*, 23.

¹⁷⁰ Scofield, C., *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth*, II, 284.

¹⁷¹ www.uia.ac.be/u/pavp/genea/eerste7.g.html. See illustration VII, p. 134.

¹⁷² Acker, K.G. van, "Jacob Donche, raadsheer bij de raad van Vlaanderen, baljuw van Dendermonde", *HMGOG*, XXXVI, (1982), 98; Bartier, J., *Légistes*, 299-301.

Brielle in the summer of 1480.¹⁷³ The town had remained staunchly loyal during the troubles of 1477, but internal divisions erupted during the shooting competition of the bowmen of the St. George Guild in the summer of 1480. The newly crowned guild 'king' and his associates attacked the convent of St. Catherine and vandalised its interior.

Jacob Donche and Jan III de Glymes were sent to quell the troubles. What followed provides an excellent example of the power of the towns in the Low Countries at the end of the Middle Ages: threatened by the mob, Donche and De Glymes chose to save their skins and fled Brielle. It is also a perfect illustration of the status and reputation of Margaret of York amongst the Netherlandish bourgeoisie. The town council was clearly more worried about Madame la Grande than they had been about her two male envoys. Just before Easter of 1481, it sent a deputation to Margaret's court, where they begged her for forgiveness, which they duly received.

Donche's position as the *de facto* administrator of the vital dower town of Dendermonde in Flanders, to where Margaret had initially fled after her expulsion from Gent in the rebellion of 1477, was only slightly more sedate.¹⁷⁴ Finally, the multifaceted Donche was also the Master of her *Chambre des Comptes*.¹⁷⁵ His was a strange story of discontinuity and loyalty. He started life as a Flemish rebel, exiled by Philip the Good for his part in the Gent uprising of 1453,

“Item Jacop Donche ... waren doen afgheroupen ende verlaten ende geseyt nemmermeer officie ‘t hebbene binnen Ghendt”.¹⁷⁶

Yet twenty-four years later, the tables were turned. The man who was barred from ever holding office again in Gent by the duke, was now banned from the city by its rebels.¹⁷⁷ His brother-in-law, Pieter Boudes, was amongst those who, like Hugonet, suffered death for their loyalty to the dynasty.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ Dierick, “Rellen in den Briel in 1480”, *Brielse Mare*, XI, (2002), 29-39.

¹⁷⁴ *Inventaire des archives du département du Nord*, IV, 262.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ “Item, Jacob Donche ... who was called to leave Gent and never to hold office there again”.

Dagboek, I, 141.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 251.

¹⁷⁸ Bartier, J., *Légistes*, 55. Donche was later compensated for the losses he had suffered. *Molinet*, II, 167.

Donche's role as Margaret's envoy to England will be examined in more detail below, but what is of importance here is his continued service to the Valois dynasty. He first served Philip the Good as *conseiller*, then Charles the Bold, and then Margaret of York before and after Charles's demise, including in the important function of *maître de la chambre*.¹⁷⁹ The career of Henri de Hamericourt is further testimony to this continuity. He was Margaret's *maître d'hôtel* and *écuyer*, and her representative in her dower town of Binche from 1492 onwards.¹⁸⁰ He subsequently served as *prévôt* in the town under Philip the Fair and Charles V, and was present at the latter's *Joyeuse Entrée* in Mons in 1515.¹⁸¹ Three years later, he accompanied Charles's sister, Eléonora, on her journey to Portugal, where she was to marry king Manuel the Great.¹⁸² A grateful Charles V would confer the title of *seigneur de Villerzies* on Hamericourt in 1525.¹⁸³

Service aristocracy like De la Baume and non-noble counsellors such as Donche and Hamericourt continued to serve *Madame la Grande*, as they had Philip the Good and Charles the Bold. They were also highly valued by, and greatly loyal to, Maximilian I and Philip the Fair. The conclusion that 1477 did not rupture the idea of the Burgundian state is amply illustrated by these men.¹⁸⁴ Donche, for example, would again fall foul of rebellious Gent in 1488,¹⁸⁵ whilst De La Marche received 900 *livres* for his services as a *pensionnaire* of Philip the Fair in 1496.¹⁸⁶ One may even wonder whether Margaret had not learned the usefulness of an affinity from her husband. Charles had consolidated his own power during his father's last years by means of an affinity, one that would continue to serve him after he became duke.¹⁸⁷ Then again, she had had almost seven years to witness her brother, Edward, construct a similar, if perhaps slightly less dependable, affinity.¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁹ *Dagboek*, I, 361.

¹⁸⁰ Lejeune, Th., *Histoire de la ville de Binche*, 336. He was the *prévôt*. Jean Bonneau was Margaret's *bailli*. Robins, P., "Le veuvage et le douaire", 130.

¹⁸¹ Devillers, L., *Inventaire des archives des états de Hainaut*, 42.

¹⁸² A.D.N. B40, f. 149. I owe this reference to Dr. Edgar de Blicq.

¹⁸³ A.G.R. Chambre des Comptes, 8853-8900.

¹⁸⁴ Small, G., *op. cit.*, 218.

¹⁸⁵ *Molinet*, II, 167.

¹⁸⁶ Reiffenberg, F.A.F. (ed), "État de l'hôtel de Philippe-le-Bel". In M.O. Delepierre (ed), *Chroniques, traditions et legends de l'ancienne histoire des Flamands*, 6.

¹⁸⁷ Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 4-5.

¹⁸⁸ Morgan, D.A.L., *op. cit.*

Continuous loyalty to the dynasty, whether Valois or Habsburg, was not confined to men alone. Jeanne de la Clyte, heiress of Komen, whom we met before as messenger between Margaret of York and Mary of Burgundy in the fraught first months of 1477, stands as a rare model for continuity of service amongst women. Her first husband, Jehan II de Halewijn, had been a councillor and chamberlain of Charles the Bold and lieutenant-general of his forces.¹⁸⁹ When he died in 1473, he was *sovereign-baljuw* of Flanders and *baljuw* of Lille.¹⁹⁰ His centrality amongst the Anglophile party in Burgundy, of which more later, is attested by his attendance on Louis, *heer* of Gruuthuse, when the latter met Edward IV in Holland, after the king had been driven from England in 1470.¹⁹¹ A kinsman and predecessor as *sovereign-baljuw*, Josse de Hallewijn, took part in the 1466 embassy of Louis, *heer* of Gruuthuse, to England to negotiate Margaret's marriage to Charles.¹⁹²

Jeanne had developed a close friendship with Margaret of York upon the latter's arrival in Burgundy and had become her first lady of the bedchamber.¹⁹³ This was almost a relationship of equals, and certainly one of shared values. Both women were highly cultured, with a deep interest in religion. Jeanne, like Margaret after 1477, was a substantial landowner in her own right, enjoying an income of 1,832 *pond Vlaamsch* per annum, from lands scattered all over southern Flanders.¹⁹⁴ The duchess had ensured that Jeanne's family regained control over their patrimony, after Charles the Bold had confiscated the lands upon the death of Jeanne's husband.¹⁹⁵ From serving Margaret of York, she went on to become the governess of Philip the Fair, helping to ensure, with Margaret and Olivier de la Marche, that the young archduke was raised in a thoroughly Burgundian environment.¹⁹⁶ This role mutated once more when she joined the *hôtel* of Juana of Castile after her marriage to Philip.¹⁹⁷

¹⁸⁹ Cools, H., *Met raad en daad?*, 174.

¹⁹⁰ Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 223.

¹⁹¹ Ballard, M., *op.cit.*, 236.

¹⁹² *Foedera*, XI, 574. "Pro Ambassiatoris Ducis Burgundiae ... Jocosum de Haelwyn Dominum de Pesnes Suppreum Ballium Flandriae".

¹⁹³ Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 354, n. 78.

¹⁹⁴ Cools, H., *Met raad en daad?*, 151.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ Millar, A., *Olivier de la Marche and the Court of Burgundy*, x.

¹⁹⁷ Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 354.

Jeanne de la Clyte's life is mirrored by that of Olivier de la Marche, who, like De la Baume, was born in Burgundy.¹⁹⁸ He had organised the *Banquet du Faisan* as far back as 1454, had served as Charles the Bold's *maître d'hôtel* in 1461, and had fought in the War of Public Weal with his master. He was also active in Burgundian diplomacy. In 1467, and again in 1468, he travelled to England to help bring about the marriage of Charles and Margaret, thus making him one of the earliest of the loyalists that the duchess ever met. He was to remain close to her from then on. Famously, he organised the events surrounding her wedding in Brugge, and, after the death of Charles, lived in close proximity to *Madame la Grande*, whom he praised: "qui me traicta humainement".¹⁹⁹ Until 1488, he was Margaret's *maître d'hôtel*.²⁰⁰ That year he bought a house in Mechelen and, as *premier maître d'hôtel* of Philip the Fair, saw Margaret on a regular basis. Like Jeanne de la Clyte, he represents continuity in a period of profound upheaval, serving during the reigns of Philip the Good, Charles the Bold, Maximilian I and Mary of Burgundy, and Philip the Fair. As in the case of Jeanne de la Clyte, it was Margaret of York who formed a significant reason why De la Marche remained attached to the Burgundian-Habsburg dynasty.

Cementing the Affinity: the Role of Real Estate.

As already noted in relation to the two houses which Margaret of York bought from the heirs of Chancellor Hugonet, real-estate formed part of the foundation of her affinity. At the same time, it also helped to cement her political alliances with the cities and towns of the Low Countries.²⁰¹ As early as 1473, she experienced the vital importance of real-estate in the political constellation of the Burgundian lands. As part of what Marc Boone has described as a wider policy of *engagement* with Gent, leading men such as Guy de Brimeu and Guillaume de Clugny acquired homes in the town.²⁰² Margaret of York did the same, receiving no fewer than 125 *pond Vlaamsch*

¹⁹⁸ C.f. Millar, A., *op.cit.*, 18 and *ff*; Fontaine, M.M., "Olivier de la Marche en Jean Marie de Belges. Schrijven in dienst van een prinses". In *Dames met klasse*, 221-4.

¹⁹⁹ *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 243.

²⁰⁰ Hommel, L., "Marguerite d'York, la douairière malinoise", *revue générale belge*, XC, (1954), 398.

²⁰¹ Q.v. Part Two, p. 230 *ff*.

²⁰² Boone, M., Laleman, M.C. and Lievois, D., "Van Simon sRijkensteen tot Hof van Rijkhove", *HMGOG*, XLIV, (1990), 68-74.

from the magistrates of Gent to spend on “eenen huise ende stede staende binnen dezer stede”.²⁰³

The duchess was hardly homeless when she came to Gent: the opulent *Hof Ten Walle* or *Prinsenhof* offered all even Margaret of York could have wished for. She also showed plenty of interest and enthusiasm for her official residence.²⁰⁴ Yet the following year she received a further 100 *pond Vlaamsch* towards the costs of purchasing a house in Gent. This generosity was extended to her then steward, Guillaume Poupet, who also received an important donation.²⁰⁵ Poupet, *sire de la Chaulx*, was born in the Franche-Comté, and, in 1477, became the steward of Mary of Burgundy.²⁰⁶ The Poupet family provides yet another example of the continuity embodied by Margaret of York’s affinity. Guillaume had been Philip the Good’s *receveur général des finances* between 1447 and 1456,²⁰⁷ and served as Margaret’s *maître d’hôtel* upon her arrival in Burgundy in 1468.²⁰⁸ Prior to this, he had occupied the same post in the household of Isabella of Portugal. In that function he had been present in Sluis in 1468, when Margaret disembarked. As a mark of her esteem, Margaret ordered a private room for him to be constructed above the laundry in the *Hof Ten Walle* in Gent in the following year.²⁰⁹ Further real-estate deals, involving the De Glymes and the town of Mechelen will be examined below. What matters is the principle: Margaret of York’s affinity rested in part on the foundation of property.

The Alliance with the House of De Glymes.

On 18 June 1479, Margaret of York sent a letter to the *heer* of Bergen op Zoom, Jan II de Glymes ‘Metten Lippen’, in which she expressed her desire to appoint his

²⁰³ “A house and home within this town”. Quoted in *Ibid*, 74.

²⁰⁴ Laporte, D. et al, *op.cit*, 195-8.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 74. n. 86.

²⁰⁶ Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 281-2.

²⁰⁷ Bartier, J., *Légistes*, 401-6.

²⁰⁸ Ballard, M. *op.cit*, 271. Indeed, was amongst the first to receive her at Sluis. *Haynin*, 106.

²⁰⁹ Laporte, D. et al, *op.cit*, 132. Guillaume’s son, Charles, would serve as *premier sommelier* of Philip the Fair, take a seat in Margaret of Austria’s regency council in 1510, and would be closely associated with the education of the young Charles V and his brother Ferdinand.

eldest son, Henri, as her court chaplain.²¹⁰ This was not a sinecure: the court chaplain of *Madame la Grande* enjoyed extraordinary influence. He frequently controlled her considerable charitable donations, organised her association with the wider Church, and was responsible for the daily functioning of the court chapel. The timing of the appointment is of some significance. This was the summer when the Burgundian dynasty began to restore its grip on power. Margaret had successfully managed the wedding of Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian I, in accordance with her late husband's wishes.²¹¹ This had imposed an almost immediate check on the pretensions of the cities of the Low Countries, and, as importantly, on the pretensions of some of its nobility. Within two months of Henri de Glymes's appointment, Maximilian was to inflict a severe defeat on the French invaders at Guinegate in the south, which heralded the end of French occupation.²¹²

Henri's appointment should, consequently, be seen as part of a consolidation process. It was also a reward for the loyalty of the town of Bergen op Zoom, one of the few not to have faltered in its support for the dynasty during the recent crisis, and for the loyalty of the De Glymes family. Loyalty had been the hallmark of the relationship between the houses of Burgundy and De Glymes. Jan II had been an important nobleman who was fortunate enough to own lands which were undergoing phenomenal economic growth. A page at the court of Philip the Good, he had been chamberlain to Philip and Charles, and later also to Maximilian. He had attended the famous *Banquet du Faisan* in Lille in 1454,²¹³ and had been present during the wedding festivities of Charles and Margaret in 1468.²¹⁴ For his second son, Henri, he had managed to gain a prebend in the cathedral of Utrecht in 1459,²¹⁵ to which Charles the Bold had added the post of archdeacon in Cambrai.²¹⁶ The father had created the foundations on which the sons – and the daughters – could build. When Jan II died, Jean Molinet shrewdly identified the two cornerstones of the emergence of the De Glymes: chivalry and commerce,

²¹⁰ B.R.H.C., Archief van de Raad en Rekenkamer van de Markiezen van Bergen op Zoom, n. 110.

²¹¹ Pfaffenbinder, M., *op.cit.*, 49-52.

²¹² See amongst others *Dagboek*, I, 255; *Weisskunig*, 250-1.

²¹³ Caron, M.-T. and Clauzel, D., *Le Banquet du Faisan*, 238 and 240.

²¹⁴ Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 218.

²¹⁵ Post, R.R., *Kerkgeschiedenis van Nederland in de Middeleeuwen*, II, 61-2; Jongkees, A.G., *Staat en Kerk in Holland en Zeeland*, 297.

²¹⁶ Carpentier, J. le, *Histoire genealogique des Païs-Bas ou histoire de Cambray et du Cambresis*, 474.

“le seigneur de Berghes, vertueux chevalier, très elegant personnage, homme bien entendu, fort plaint et regretté des estrangiers marchans qui se trouvoient à la foire de Berghes ...”²¹⁷

His children would continue to deploy this extremely useful combination.²¹⁸ Their combined efforts and sacrifices were to elevate the family into the upper echelons of the Burgundian body politic.

The leading role in this climb up the social ladder was played by Henri de Glymes, and could not have taken place without the support of the dowager duchess. It is no coincidence that Henri’s rise to prominence began within her affinity.²¹⁹ His family’s loyalty to the Valois had brought them in contact with some of the other members of Margaret’s affinity. Henri’s older brother, Filips, for example, had served at the siege of Neuss under Olivier de la Marche.²²⁰ His kindness to his brother, possibly helped by the glowing description of Filips in the *Mémoires*, was reciprocated by Henri in 1482, when he gave De la Marche the lordship of Rieux in the Cambrésis, a classic example of the multiple ties that bound Margaret of York’s affinity together.²²¹

Filips de Glymes’s death before the walls of Neuss had left Henri as the oldest of the De Glymes brothers.²²² Henri had, in the meantime, taken clerical vows. It typifies the man that in an age when such vows were often disregarded, he refused to renounce them, thereby effectively disinheriting himself. In his stead, his younger brother, Jan III, became the heir of Bergen op Zoom.²²³ Jan had shared Filips’s service record. He had been chamberlain to Charles the Bold, had served before Neuss, and was captured at the battle of Nancy.²²⁴ It took some considerable time for

²¹⁷ “the lord of Bergen, a virtuous knight, a very generous person, a very competent man [whose death] is much mourned and regretted by the foreign merchants attending the fairs at Bergen”. *Molinet*, II, 392. The English merchants had reason to mourn him, for in 1480 he had given them very extensive trading privileges. Smit, H., *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van de handel*, I, 1166-8.

²¹⁸ And not only his legitimate children. “Anthuenis bastairt van Glymes” and a certain Thomas Somer invested in several merchant vessels together. Smit, H., *op.cit*, I, 228.

²¹⁹ He had served the Burgundian dynasty in Italy, but in relatively low positions.

²²⁰ *Olivier de la Marche*, II, 92-5.

²²¹ *Ibid*, II, 93-4; Millar, A., *op.cit*, 45.

²²² Sloomans, C.F.J., *Jan Metten Lippen*, 41-5; Vegiano d’Hovel, M. de and Herckenrode, J. de, *Nobiliare des Pays-Bas et du Comté de Bourgogne*, I, 150.

²²³ A picture of Henri and his brother Jan III hangs in the *Markiezenhof* in Bergen op Zoom, on which all the aspirations and the status of the two brothers come to the fore. See illustration VIII, p. 135.

²²⁴ C.f. Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 219-20.

Jan to be ransomed, which explains his absence during the crisis days of 1477. This absence in no way impeded his rise to prominence. He soon joined the household of Maximilian, later transferring to that of Philip the Fair. After a temporary fall from grace in 1502, he made a glittering come-back in the service of both Margaret of Austria and Charles V.

Hans Cools has recently drawn our attention to the importance of the co-operation between the De Glymes brothers.²²⁵ In this mutual support society, the role of Henri de Glymes, and that of his patroness, Margaret of York, deserves more attention. As long ago as 1945, Cornelis Sloomans pointed out the centrality of Margaret's relationship with the De Glymes,

“Margaretha van York, weduwe van Karel den Stouten, bij wie ... de Bergsche Glymes zeer in aanzien staan ...”²²⁶

Central to this relationship was the alliance between *Madame la Grande* and Henri. It was Henri's closeness to the dowager which gave Jan and the other brothers access to Maximilian and through him to career advancement. What is, perhaps, most revealing in the letter of appointment is the emphasis which Margaret placed on Henri's reputation for piety: she clearly wished for a conscientious chaplain.²²⁷ Henri was, in addition, Margaret's own choice. A papal letter from Sixtus IV had granted her the right to choose her own chaplain.²²⁸ He succeeded Sir Jehan Molines, who is named as Margaret's confessor in a book she gave to the Poor Clares in Gent, and who was also known for his piety.²²⁹

The De Glymes Women.

Were there other reasons why the dowager chose Henri de Glymes? He was known for his piety and his family was influential, but so were several others. Once more,

²²⁵ Cools, H., “Les frères Henri, Jean, Antoine et Corneille de Glymes-Bergen”, *CEEB*, XLI, (2001), 125.

²²⁶ “Margaret of York, widow of Charles the Bold, who held the Bergse Glymes in high regard”. Sloomans, C.F.J., *Jan Metten Lippen*, 40.

²²⁷ B.R.H.C., Archief van de Raad en Rekenkamer van de Markiezen van Bergen op Zoom, n. 110.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, n. 82-85. The letter is dated 1478.

²²⁹ Gent, Klooster der Klarissen-Koletienen, Ms. 8.

Margaret's affinity comes into play, in the form of the 'forgotten' members of the De Glymes family. The brothers, and Jan II with his twenty-eight bastards, have tended to steal the lime-light. Initially, however, Margaret of York got to know the women of the family better than the men. Amongst the only surviving ordinance for her household, the names of two of Jan II's daughters appear: "marye de glimes" and "jehenne de glimes" are amongst those who were to receive pensions from her purse.²³⁰ Clearly, Jan 'Metten Lippen' was able to place his children in advantageous positions. Maria had already spent some time at Charles the Bold's court in Gorinchem during the early 1460s.²³¹ Of Maria, we shall hear more later.

Johanna, the other De Glymes sister at Margaret's court, was destined for a rather divergent life from that of the rest of her family. After her stint at Margaret's court, she married a leading Picard nobleman, Jean de Mailly.²³² De Mailly was closely related to Charles's henchman, Guy de Brimeu, and the wedding has every appearance of being yet another stitch in the fabric of the duke's, and by implication of the duchess', affinity.²³³ Appearances can be deceptive, for the stitching came undone in 1477. In spite of the loyalty of his wife's family and in spite of the fact that he had been a chamberlain of Charles the Bold, De Mailly joined the service of Louis XI of France after Charles's death.²³⁴ Family ties often weighed more heavily than political allegiances. Just as Charles the Bold's half-brother Anthony could join Louis XI in 1477, and be in receipt of a substantial sum as a pensioner of Philip the Fair in 1496,²³⁵ so Johanna, notwithstanding her husband's service to the French, was to receive 200 *franken* per annum from her brother, Jan III, in 1495.²³⁶

Margaret's main dower town of Mechelen was the place where the De Glymes maintained their close contact with *Madame la Grande*. Just outside the town walls stood the *Bethanië* priory, home to a group of Augustinian Canonesses Regular.²³⁷ It had been founded around 1421 by Maria de Boutersem, daughter of Henri VIII, one

²³⁰ A.D.N. B3376, n. 113546, f. 2^r.

²³¹ Sloomans, C.F.J., *Jan Metten Lippen*, 40.

²³² And not, as Sloomans would have had it, Adrian de Mailly. *Ibid.*, 48.

²³³ Paravicini, W., *Guy de Brimeu*, 37, n. 11, and 73, n. 189.

²³⁴ Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 261.

²³⁵ Reiffenberg, F.A.F. (ed), *op.cit.*, 6. "Le Grand Bastart" received no fewer than three thousand *livres*, and ranked, with the exception of Albrecht, duke of Saxony, top of the list of pensionaries.

²³⁶ A.G.R., *Chambre des Comptes*, n. 17150.

²³⁷ Persoons, E., "Prieuré de Béthanie à Malines". In *M.B.*, VIII, 2, 521-33.

of Jan II's predecessors as *heer* of Bergen op Zoom.²³⁸ As a member of the strict *Windesheimer Congregation*, impregnated with the spirit of the *Devotio Moderna*, there can be little doubt about the religiosity of the canonesses.²³⁹ On 13 June 1462, Isabella de Glymes, sister of Henri and oldest of the siblings, had joined the priory as a nun.²⁴⁰ The fact that Isabella had been brought to the priory as early as 1455, when she was but ten years old, had prevented her from having a career at the Burgundian court like her two sisters. There is no evidence of contact between Isabella and Margaret of York before 1482, but it would stretch credulity to suggest that none took place.²⁴¹ Margaret knew two of her sisters intimately, and the well-informed Mechelen chronicler, Azevedo, who reports a visit by the dowager to *Bethanië* in 1482, suggests that by then the two women were close friends.²⁴²

Bethanië's walls also sheltered yet another sister of Henri de Glymes, his youngest, Helena. Her birth in 1465 had caused her mother's death, and by 1470 she, too, had joined her sister's community.²⁴³ Always a sickly child, Helena may have played a role in the affection felt by *Madame la Grande* for the De Glymes family. Towards the end of 1479, she became seriously ill. Her father paid,

“voer de costen van den appoticaris ende anders binnen der cloester gedaen in haer sieckbedde”.²⁴⁴

The *appoticaris* for such an important nun was not just any quack. He had also attended on the court of the dowager,²⁴⁵ and was the “*médécin malinois réputé*”, Nicolas van Valkenisse.²⁴⁶ He would later attend Maximilian during an illness in 's-Gravenhage, as well as Laurent Muschelede, the prior of the Charterhouse at Hérinnes.²⁴⁷ Margaret, incidentally, had a string of doctors in her service,²⁴⁸ and

²³⁸ Installé, H., *Historische Stedenatlas van België*, 83-6; Sloomans, C.F.J., *Jan Metten Lippen*, 39-40 and 66.

²³⁹ Engelbrecht II of Nassau's father, Jan, for example, had asked his daughter Odilia to come and guide the Breda convent of St Catharinadal, which he had reformed. Placidus, O.F.M.Cap., “Geschiedenis van de Katholieke kerk te Breda”. In F.F.X. Cerutti et al, *Geschiedenis van Breda*, vol. I, *De Middeleeuwen*, 153.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁴¹ Later, she was to take Emperor Frederick III to hear mass at the convent in 1486.

²⁴² *Azevedo*, 45.

²⁴³ A.R.A., *Domeinrekeningen van het land van Bergen*, 1471/72.

²⁴⁴ “For the expense of the apothecary and other help given in the priory at her sickbed”. *Ibid.*, 1480/81.

²⁴⁵ *Azevedo*, 61; Robinson, W.C., *op.cit.*, 579.

²⁴⁶ Hommel, L., “Marguerite d'York diplomate”, 85.

some of her letters reveal her recurring bouts of illness.²⁴⁹ In the end, the care of Margaret's doctor made little difference; Helena died the next year.

The final De Glymes girl with whom Margaret of York entertained a friendship was the aforementioned Maria. This was started at her court and continued after Maria had entered the Poor Clares convent in Gent.²⁵⁰ The reformed Franciscan Tertiaries were renowned for their austerity. Such was the convent's strict adherence to the original rule of St Francis, that the Bergen op Zoom magistrates, when asked for a financial contribution, reported "groter noot ende armoeden" there, which was, of course, the intention.²⁵¹ Margaret visited the convent on several occasions. It was, in many respects, the 'showpiece' convent of the Low Countries. St Colette had received the backing of several duchesses of Burgundy for her reforms, and was buried in the Gent convent.²⁵² For Margaret of York, conscious of the importance of dynastic piety, it was an obvious focal point of her devotional life.²⁵³ As Maria was the *portierster*,²⁵⁴ and later prioress, of the convent, Margaret would naturally have come into contact with her former lady-in-waiting.²⁵⁵ Both Margaret's and Henri de Glymes's visits to the convent are noted by a chronicle compiled there between 1509 and 1530. Henri had come specifically,

"omme uut jongsten te visenterene zuster Maria van Berghen ziin zustere, dewelke daer religieuse was en vicarise vanden conventen".²⁵⁶

²⁴⁷ Robinson, W.C., *op.cit.*, 581. For Muschelede, c.f. Part Three, pp. 304-5.

²⁴⁸ For example, maître Dominique de Baxadour, who had been made a canon of Sainte-Waudru in Mons at the same time as her almoner, Nicholas Finet. Moreau, É. de, S.J., *Histoire de l'Église en Belgique*, IV, 71-2. Finet had also been in her household since 1468. A.D.N. B3376, n. 113546, f. 12'.

²⁴⁹ Quoted in *Galesloot*, 220. We do not have any information on Cornille, but maistre Lambercht was Lambert de Poorter, who appears frequently in the sources as her "chirurgien".

²⁵⁰ Sloomans's assertion that Maria had joined the Poor Clares in 1462 is clearly incorrect, but we do not have any information when this did take place. Sloomans, C.F.J., *Jan Metten Lippen*, 25.

²⁵¹ "much need and poverty". B.R.H.C., *Stadsrekeningen 1490-1*, f. 86^v.

²⁵² The first abbess had been Odette, bastard daughter of Philip the Good. Douillet, R.P., *Sainte Colette*, 358.

²⁵³ For Margaret's sense of dynastic piety, c.f. Part Two, pp. 190 and *ff.*

²⁵⁴ *Kroniek Gent*, 81.

²⁵⁵ Moorman J.R.H., *Medieval Franciscan Houses*, II, 593.

²⁵⁶ "to visit sister Maria van Bergen his sister, who was a religious there and vicaress of the convent". *Kroniek Gent*, 94.

The Importance of University Education.

Henri was, at the time of his appointment, resident in Mechelen, where he had arrived in May 1477. He was already in the possession of an impressive *curriculum vitae*. Like his brothers, Henri had attended university, first in Leuven in 1465, and subsequently in Orléans. There he graduated with a doctorate in civil and canon law.²⁵⁷ Before receiving the tonsure he had managed to procure the post of protonotary at the papal court in 1472. Still as a layman, he became a canon in the cathedral of Liège the year after. By 1477 he was also in the service of the house of Burgundy. In September of that year, he formed part of a troika of *commisarisen* sent to Holland by Mary and Maximilian to negotiate with its nobility about their feudal services, and with the towns about financial aid to fight the French.²⁵⁸

It was a delicate task, in which Henri had to convince both parties to forego some of the privileges which the duchess had only recently granted in the *Groot Privilegie*. The reaction in Holland was anything but polite, and Henri's party left more or less empty-handed. Nevertheless, the journey had been worth it, if not for Maximilian, then for Henri: it had confirmed his loyalty to the reigning family. In the same period one can detect Henri's interest in religious observance increase. It is possible, indeed likely, that this interest was a family affair. After all, three of his sisters entered convents, quite a track-record, even in the later fifteenth century. In addition, his father, although not ostensibly devout, had founded a house of Observant Franciscans in Bergen op Zoom in 1464.²⁵⁹

If Henri's and his family's religiosity attracted Margaret's attention, the same must have been true of their erudition.²⁶⁰ She displayed a continuous interest in recruiting well-educated men to her court,²⁶¹ prefiguring her step-granddaughter, Margaret of

²⁵⁷ Bietenholz, P.G. and Deutscher, T.B., *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, I, 132; Wils, J., Reusens, E.-H.-J. and Schillings, A., *Matricule de Louvain*, II-1, 152.

²⁵⁸ Gent, M.J. van, 'Pertijelike Saken', 182-4.

²⁵⁹ Moorman, J.R.H., *op. cit.*, 63; Post, R.R., *op. cit.*, II, 156; Ham, W.A. van, *Macht en gezag in het Markiezaat*, 395; Schoengen, M., "Monasticon Batavum, deel I, de Franciscaansche Orden", *Verhandlingen der Nederlandsche Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde*, XLV, (1941), 38. Two of Jan II's bastard daughters also entered convents, and were renowned for their austerity and piety. Sloomans, C.F.J., *Jan Metten Lippen*, 67.

²⁶⁰ Cools, H., "Les frères", 127, who concluded that there was not a single noble family in Burgundy as well educated as the De Glymes.

²⁶¹ She also left a bequest of 30 *livres* per annum as a bursary for a student of theology at the University of Leuven. B.458, 17.919.

Austria. This early concern for learning is made all the more striking by the fact that in England she had not been used to aristocrats taking an interest in university education.²⁶² Amongst those who benefited from this interest were two of the leading lights of early Humanism in the Low Countries, Jan Briart van Ath and Adriaan Florenszoon, the latter better known as pope Adrian VI. In both cases Margaret provided funding for their doctoral studies in theology at the University of Leuven, but not, it would seem, without expecting something in return.²⁶³ Jan Briart van Ath became her court chaplain in 1490. *Madame la Grande* clearly wished her chaplains to be well-educated. Jan Briart remained in her service until she died in 1503.²⁶⁴ It is reasonable to assume that it was he who administered the last rites to the dying dowager.

Her investment in Adriaan Florenszoon did not really profit Margaret personally, but the dynasty received a tremendous return for her money.²⁶⁵ First as Charles V's educator, then as his representative in Spain, and finally as pope, Adriaan Florenszoon was a steadfast and crucial supporter of the dynasty. Moreover, and this would have pleased the reform-minded duchess in particular, he turned out to be the first of the reforming popes. To Adriaan's bursary was added a prebend in the collegiate church of St Katherina, on Margaret's dower of Goedereede, which she was entitled to confer upon candidates of her own choice.²⁶⁶

Margaret of York's councillor for her dower lands in Voorne, Filips Ruychrocks, furnishes yet more evidence of the duchess' admiration for erudition. Filips came from a family of career civil servants, whose "rijkdom, aanzien en levensstijl aansluiting vonden bij de adel".²⁶⁷ This wealth and status were the result of astute political manoeuvring, first by his father, Jan, and subsequently by Filips and his elder brother, Willem.²⁶⁸ Jan had risen in the service of Jacoba of Bavaria, and her

²⁶² Hughes, J., "True Ornaments to Know a Holy Man". In A.J. Pollard (ed), *The North of England in the Age of Richard III*, 152.

²⁶³ Münch, E., *op.cit.*, 60.

²⁶⁴ Bietenholz, P.G. and Deutscher, T.B., *op.cit.*, I, 195-6. He was also one of the executors of her will and wrote a suitably Humanistic Latin panegyric after she died. *Galesloot*, 322-3 and n. 1.

²⁶⁵ C.f. *Ibid.*, I, 5-9; Bijloos, J. et al, *Herdenkingstentoonstelling Paus Adrianus VI*, 34, 98 and *passim*. See illustration IX, p. 136.

²⁶⁶ Don, P., *Voorne-Putten*, 42; for the control over prebends, see Jongkees, A.G., *op.cit.*, 270-1.

²⁶⁷ "whose wealth, stature and lifestyle allowed them to join the aristocracy". Janse, A., "Ridderslag en ridderlijkheid in laatmiddeleeuws Holland", *BMGN*, CXII, (1997), 321; Damen, M., *De staat van dienst*, 293-7. C.f. Janse, A., *Ridderschap in Holland*, 132-3, 245

²⁶⁸ Willem became a knight in the *Ridderschap* of Holland in 1470. *Ibid.*, 311.

husband, Frank van Borselle.²⁶⁹ On the latter's behalf he had, since 1453, held a seat in the *Ridderschap*, the council which governed Holland and Zeeland after Philip the Good's *coup d'état* against Jacoba in 1428. Subsequently, he became bailiff for Jacoba, and, after her death, for Frank van Borselle. One would expect such a close association with potential enemies of the Burgundian dynasty to have harmed Ruychrocks' career, but the opposite is true.

Jan astutely realised the importance of knowledge. With his extensive experience in the managing of Frank van Borselle's large estates, he must have hoped that his younger son's future would be assured through superior education. Whatever the reason, Filips was sent to university. His academic path was not dissimilar to that of Henri de Glymes. He attended Leuven, Paris and Orléans. Although he became the procurator of the German Nation in the latter university, it is unclear whether Filips ever attained a degree. However, all this academic experience was sufficient to allow him to follow in his father's footsteps in the service of Frank van Borselle, and take a seat in the Council of Zeeland. It comes as no surprise that he attracted Margaret of York's attention. In 1488 he was named councillor of the dowager in Brielle and Voorne.²⁷⁰

Loyal service was also provided by two lawyers, Jacob Willemszoon and Jan Boudinszoon.²⁷¹ Willemszoon was the *advocaat* for the *ridderschap* and for the *kleine steden* in the Estates of Holland, but this did not stop him from accepting a lucrative appointment as Margaret's lawyer in the *Hof van Holland*. This poaching of legal talent was something of a speciality of Margaret's. When Willemszoon left her service in 1490, she managed to procure the even more eminent Boudinszoon. The latter was a graduate from Leuven and occupied the most senior legal post in Holland, that of *landsadvocaat*. However, he had served the dynasty well, as Charles the Bold's *advocaat-fiscaal*, in which post he safeguarded the dynasty's financial interests in Holland. He had also represented Maximilian in 1490, the year he entered Margaret's service. He was to remain in her employment until her death in 1503. The

²⁶⁹ Smedt, R. de et al., *op.cit.*, 97-8.

²⁷⁰ Damen, M., *De staat van dienst*, 297. This did not preclude Margaret and Filips falling out over taxation. She took him and several other landowners in Voorne to the *Grote Raad* in 1503, but died before sentence was pronounced. This happened in 1507, when the late dowager's claim against Filips was rejected. Houben, F. et al, *500 jaar grote raad 1473-1973*, 115.

²⁷¹ C.f. Kokken, H., *op.cit.*, 81-4.

cases of the Ruychrocks, Willemszoon and Boudinszoon show continuity at the local level in Margaret's dower towns. They are also indicative of what shaped her affinity: loyalty, merit, piety and a link with the past. Henri de Glymes, like Filips Ruychrocks, like Olivier de la Marche, and like Jeanne de la Clyte, held all these cards.

Henri de Glymes, Cambrai and the Cambrésis.

Henri's appointment as Margaret's court chaplain in 1479 was the break-through to a truly spectacular career. As Margaret's chaplain he was to become one of the lynchpins of her affinity. A first promotion followed close on the heels of his appointment. In the same year, he became the coadjutor to Jean de Bourgogne, the dissolute bishop of Cambrai.²⁷² Without wishing to cast aspersions on Henri's devoutness, it is clear that this was primarily a political appointment. As the *de facto* ruler of the bishopric, Henri was required to maintain Burgundian control over Cambrai. So successful was this experiment, that it was to be repeated in 1496 in Utrecht, where Maximilian I appointed Frederick von Baden as coadjutor, to succeed another of Philip the Good's bastard children, David.²⁷³

In Cambrai, Henri faced a difficult situation. The principality and the diocese were the scene of continuous friction, with a running battle between officials of the bishop and the count in Hainaut, and between the bishop and the Cambrésis elite.²⁷⁴ This was not helped by Jean's permanent absence from his lands. Nevertheless, ducal control during Charles the Bold's reign had been tight enough to secure contributions to the 1473 *aide* from at least part of the Cambrésis. This suggests that after Charles's accession the episcopal territory became a *de facto* part of the Burgundian lands.²⁷⁵

The absentee bishop could do little to prevent his lands from being lost to his dynasty after Charles's death. "Le prince dissolu" was lounging in Mechelen as

²⁷² When he died, Jean left a string of bastard children. Not even in that tolerant century was this 'proper' behaviour for a bishop. Moreau, É. de, S.J., *op.cit*, IV, 68.

²⁷³ Post, R.R., *op.cit*, II, 32.

²⁷⁴ Vaughan's notion that the troubles between bishop and count in Hainaut signified a lack of control by the bishop over the Cambrésis is, surely, misplaced. Vaughan, R., *Philip the Good*, 233. For this, c.f. Dubrulle, Dom. H., *Cambrai à la fin du Moyen Age*, chapters 3 and 4.

²⁷⁵ Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 190; Dubrulle, H., *Cambrai à la fin du moyen âge*, 183.

Louis XI's army invaded the Cambrésis.²⁷⁶ The Cambrai Estates had desperately tried to restore their land's traditional neutrality as the French approached. They had sent a large deputation to Mary of Burgundy in Gent to persuade the duchess of the justice of their case.²⁷⁷ Just how desperate the Estates were can be surmised from the composition of the delegation. Each social order had a representative in the deputation, whereas normally the clergy of the chapter and the merchants of Cambrai disagreed on everything.²⁷⁸ After conferring with the *heer* of Ravenstein and Margaret of York, Mary declined the Cambrai request. Shortly after, a French army overran the episcopal principality, notwithstanding the brilliantly courageous defence by Filips van Kleef.²⁷⁹

To the Burgundians the loss of the Cambrésis was a serious blow, made worse by the fact that the French king turned the town into a vast armed camp.²⁸⁰ From there, the French ravaged the southern Low Countries. Louis XI, with casual disregard for human suffering, ordered the fields of southern Flanders, Hainaut and the Cambrésis to be stripped of their crops. To this purpose he had ordered thousands of mowers to the southern Low Countries.²⁸¹ These devastated the countryside. Edmond Bedyngfeld, writing to Sir John II Paston, in August 1477, told him that

“the French keng hath brenned Cassell, that ys myn hoold lady of Burgeynys Joynttour, and all the countré there-about, thereby she hath lost a gret part of her lvelod ... ntendyth to distroye her”.²⁸²

In his *Mémoires*, Jan van Dadizeele reports that, by February 1478, most of the south had been laid waste. The peasantry had been subjected to murder, rape, and, above all, the loss of all their food.²⁸³ The richer bourgeois had been kidnapped for ransom.²⁸⁴ Molinet reports that the French armies had cut a swathe of burned and looted villages, adding that Artois, Hainaut and the Cambrésis were hit hardest of

²⁷⁶ Trenard, L. et al, *Histoire de Cambrai*, 93.

²⁷⁷ Bouly, E., *Histoire de Cambrai et du Cambrésis*, 235.

²⁷⁸ Dupont, M., *Histoire Ecclésiastique et Civile de la Ville de Cambrai et du Cambrésis*, III, 100.

²⁷⁹ Molinet, I, 324-6; Paviot, J., *Philippe de Clèves*, 30.

²⁸⁰ *Lettres de Maximilien*, 270-1.

²⁸¹ *Lettres de Louis XI*, VI, 194.

²⁸² Davis, N. (ed), *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, II, 419.

²⁸³ Dadizeele, J. van, *Mémoires de/Gedenkschriften van*, 79.

²⁸⁴ Castelain, R., “Het gebeurde 500 jaar geleden in het Oudenaardse”, *HGOKO*, XIX, (1978), 172.

all.²⁸⁵ As late as 1495, the traveller, Monterius, reported that “le terre est bonne, mais la population est pauvre et décimée par les guerres”.²⁸⁶

When, on 25 May 1480, Jean died in Mechelen,²⁸⁷ Maximilian supported the automatic succession of the coadjutor bishop.²⁸⁸ During a reign of forty years, Jean had visited his seat only once, in 1472, for the consecration of the newly-built cathedral.²⁸⁹ The city would come to see a good deal more of Henri de Glymes. For now, though, Cambrai’s citizens would have to wait. Henri would not, after all, be the bishop of choice for Louis XI. The latter, notwithstanding his defeat at Guinegate, still appeared to hold most of the cards. His army controlled Cambrai, which was also the suffragan of a French archbishopric, namely Reims. However, Maximilian’s father, as he had reminded Louis XI in a letter, was the feudal superior of Cambrai.²⁹⁰ He also held the trump card. The canons of the cathedral chapter had fled to Burgundian protection in Valenciennes after a brief respite from French occupation in April 1479.²⁹¹ There, the clergy met, closely watched by Cornelis de Glymes and a Burgundian force of 700 soldiers.²⁹² This armed ‘protection’ ensured that only one man would become the new bishop: Henri de Glymes.²⁹³

What of Margaret of York’s role in all this? As usual with political women during the period, it is difficult to trace her direct involvement. The only ‘evidence’ is their close proximity during this period. In October, Henri de Glymes wrote a letter to the chapter of his new cathedral, confirming his acceptance of his election and subsequent appointment. It is the place where this letter was written that may hint at the role of the dowager: “in hospitio nostro retru atrium ecclesie collegiate Beate

²⁸⁵ *Molinet*, I, 211-5.

²⁸⁶ “The land is good, but the people are poor and decimated by wars”. Ciselet, P. and Delcourt, M. (eds and transl.), *Monetarius, Voyage aux Pays-Bas (1495)*, 38.

²⁸⁷ *Molinet*, I, 326.

²⁸⁸ Lancelin, Chanoine H., *Histoire du diocèse de Cambrai*, 156.

²⁸⁹ Blockmans, W. and Prevenier, W., *De Bourgondiërs*, 135.

²⁹⁰ Chmel, J., *Aktenstücke und Briefe zur Geschichte des Hauser Habsburg im Zeitalter Maximilians I*, II, 317-9.

²⁹¹ Fouw, A. de, *Philips van Kleef*, 34.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 49. Cornelis had been active as a captain on the southern frontier since 1477, when he had helped Philips van Kleef defend Valenciennes against the French. *Ibid.*, 25-6.

²⁹³ Dupont, M., *op.cit.*, 111; Thelliez, C., “Joyeuses Entrées à Cambrai”, *Standen en landen*, XIX, (1960), 159, gives 31 May; Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 217.

Gudule”.²⁹⁴ It would seem that Henri was in Margaret of York’s vicinity. Not only did they live near to each other in Mechelen, in Brussels they were neighbours as well. Henri was not the only one to have a view of the choir of the collegiate church of St Gudule. Margaret owned a house adjacent to his, which she would sell to the De Glymes family in 1483.²⁹⁵

War, Trade and Money and Margaret of York’s Affinity.

In October 1480, when Henri was writing to the chapter of Cambrai, Margaret of York was also resident in Brussels. She had hastened back from her diplomatic offensive at her brother Edward IV’s court in England to attend the enthronement of her protégée.²⁹⁶ Margaret had a direct interest in Henri’s appointment. Finding a trusted loyalist to guard the approaches to France was inevitably going to attract the dowager’s attention. Binche and Le Quesnoy, the fourth and fifth most important in terms of income of her dower towns, were situated in the southern county of Hainaut.²⁹⁷ These were threatened by the French, and, as Louis XI identified Margaret as a main source of opposition to his designs, he deliberately targeted these towns.²⁹⁸

As she had complained to her brother, Edward, in April 1478, Louis’s army had occupied her dower in the duchy of Burgundy, consisting of the town and *châtellenie*

²⁹⁴ “in our residence behind the choir of the collegiate church of St Gudule”. Quoted in Thelliez, C., *op.cit.*, 159. Of course, one would expect the well-healed to congregate together in the more desirable parts of town.

²⁹⁵ Ham, W.A. van, *Het Markiezenhof te Bergen op Zoom*, 46. The De Glymes probably lived to regret this purchase, which was to cause them financial headaches for some considerable time to come. Ham, W.A. van, *Macht en gezag*, 73.

²⁹⁶ Scofield, C., *op.cit.*, II, 297; Laporte, J., *op.cit.*, 83-92.

²⁹⁷ 1,619 *écus d’or* from Le Quesnoy and 1,086 *écus d’or* from Binche. Robins, P., “Le veuvage et le douaire”, 137. Le Quesnoy was later exchanged for Rupelmonde. *Galesloot*, 200, n. 2.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 142.

of Chaussin and La Perrière.²⁹⁹ In spite of Maximilian's successful appeal to Mechelen to come to their lady's aid and supply money and men to defend Le Quesnoy, the French could not be stopped.³⁰⁰ The town was taken by French troops in February 1477, and Binche ravaged.³⁰¹ These were followed soon after by incursions into the *kasselrijen* of Dendermonde and Oudenaarde.³⁰² The damage, if we are to believe Margaret's claims, was woeful. The lands around Binche had been torched, Oudenaarde, town and land, destroyed, as was Le Quesnoy and its lands.³⁰³ She claimed to have lost 3,500 English marks in income, and to have suffered a staggering 400,000 *écus d'or* in damages.³⁰⁴

Edward IV made some, unconvincing, diplomatic efforts to help his sister regain her lands. The subsequent correspondence between Edward and Louis makes it clear that the latter was indeed targeting her lands, and that in Paris she was seen as the real enemy; she was "manifestement déclarée contre le Roy".³⁰⁵ On 10 July 1478, Maximilian opened negotiations with Louis, and, in a sign of the French king's appreciation of the former's position of strength, he agreed to withdraw from southern Flanders and Hainaut, including from Margaret's dower lands there.³⁰⁶ In 1479, Louis, increasingly worried about the possibility of English participation in the conflict between France and Burgundy, decided to accept Edward's arbitration in the conflict over Margaret's dower.³⁰⁷ Then, at the expiry of the truce which had followed Louis's surrender of much of his conquests in the Low Countries, Maximilian renewed his attack. He took to the field at Guinegate, on 7 August 1479, "cum capitaneis suis tam Burgundiam".³⁰⁸ There the French were comprehensively defeated "demoura le camp et l'honneur à mondit seigneur d'Autrice".³⁰⁹

²⁹⁹ Plancher, U., *Histoire générale et particulière de Bourgogne*, IV, text CCXCL, cols. CDIII to CDIV; Robins, P., "Le veuvage et le douaire", 144-5; Richard, J., "La douaire de Marguerite d'York", *CEEB*, XLIV, (2004), 46-7.

³⁰⁰ *Lettres de Maximilien*, 271-2.

³⁰¹ *Commynes*, II, 176.

³⁰² *Olivier de la Marche*, I, 166.

³⁰³ Plancher, U., *op. cit.*, IV, text CCXCL, cols. CDIII to CDIV.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ "Openly declared against the King". *Ibid.*, text CCLXXXIII, cols. CCCXC to CCCXCII.

³⁰⁶ *Païs-Bas*, 695.

³⁰⁷ Robins, P., "Le veuvage et le douaire", 150.

³⁰⁸ *Chroniques des Dunes*, 517.

³⁰⁹ "leaving the field and the honour to my lord of Austria". *Païs-Bas*, 696.

Although the war was far from over, Maximilian had managed to evict the French from the rest of the south, and, as a consequence, made the area safe to visit. Margaret of York spent some considerable time in Hainaut following the battle of Guinegate, trying to repair some of the damage which the French had inflicted.³¹⁰ Then, in 1480, the year of Henri's elevation to the see of Cambrai, she bought the *maison de Jean Aubert* in Mons, where she established an *hôtel*.³¹¹ Naturally, she received a little help with the reconstruction works. The town gave her 150,000 bricks and 100 measures of slacked lime, which allowed her to build a fashionable brick edifice, gleaming with whitewash.³¹² With this, Margaret sent an unmistakable signal about the importance she attached to the southern county. This attachment was a long-standing one: during the years of her marriage to Charles, the duchess had spent considerable time in Mons. Later, she was to have a profitable relationship with its bourgeoisie, one of whom, the fur-trader Matthieu le Roy, was enfeoffed with the *seigneurie* of Villereille-le-Sec, in her dower of Binche.³¹³ The town magistrate also appreciated their relationship with the powerful *Madame la Grande*. In 1484 they voted to grant her 800 *livres*.³¹⁴

Trade, Aristocracy, and the 'English Party'.

There was more to underpin the power of the Burgundian aristocracy and bishops than feudal status and the number of inhabitants on their lands. In the words of Jean-Marie Cauchies, as bishop Henri may have been amongst "le plus prestigieux de tous", but this prestige and his influence were maintained and increased by money.³¹⁵ In England, a merchant had climbed the social ladder to become the duke of Norfolk, and John Howard was not the only one.³¹⁶ In the Yorkshire port of Hull, the De la Pole family also managed to ascend into the aristocracy.³¹⁷ The De Glymes were, perhaps, more aware than most nobles in the Low Countries just how vital trade was

³¹⁰ Devillers, L., "Les Sejours des Ducs de Bourgogne en Hainaut". In *Chronique de la Maison de Bourgogne*, I, 58.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² *Galesloot*, 217.

³¹³ Robins, P., "Le veuvage et le douaire", 153.

³¹⁴ *Galesloot*, 216.

³¹⁵ Cauchies, J.-M., *op.cit.*, 67.

³¹⁶ Tucker, M.J., *The Life of Thomas Howard*; Crawford, A., *op.cit.*, xi.

³¹⁷ Horrox, R., *The de la Poles from Hull*; Fryde, E.B., *William de la Pole*.

to their own welfare. Bergen op Zoom was one of the most important trading towns in the Low Countries.³¹⁸ Twice a year, its fairs, the *Paasmarkt* and *Koudemarkt*, were the meeting place for merchants from all over Europe. They proved particularly popular with the Hanzeatics, or *Oosterlingen* as they were called, and for Englishmen.³¹⁹ To attract English merchants, Jan II had granted them extensive privileges,³²⁰ and several of the town's merchants had joint ventures with Englishmen.³²¹ The centrality of these fairs cannot be overstated: Jan II and Jan III spent much of their time in court, both in the Low Countries and further afield, to defend the privileges of their fairs and the immunity of the merchants who attended them. They even went as far as creating a separate jurisdiction just outside the walls of Bergen op Zoom for “kooplieden van de neringhen ende hanteringhen van den soute”.³²² To attract the lucrative salt trade, crucial in the processing of herring, Jan III was prepared to grant the merchants their own *baljuw*.

The centrality of the English to Bergen op Zoom and the De Glymes is attested by a permanent English presence in the town, where, since 1469, the Merchant Adventurers had their own trading post.³²³ Trade influenced politics, for necessity forced the De Glymes to use their political clout to ensure peaceful relations with England. As such, they were pivotal to Margaret of York, whose own authority in Burgundy was enhanced by her English royal status, and, more importantly, by the influence she could exert in the land of her birth. The De Glymes formed the core of an Anglophile ‘party’ within the Burgundian aristocracy.³²⁴

Amongst these may be included important figures like Henri III van Wittem, who married Jacoba, Jan II de Glymes's sister,³²⁵ and who served as Margaret's lord-lieutenant in Mechelen.³²⁶ Henri was another arch-loyalist. Almost alone amongst the

³¹⁸ Sloomans, C.F.J., *Paas- en Koudemarkten te Bergen op Zoom*.

³¹⁹ Huijbrechts, G.A., “De Engelse Natie te Bergen op Zoom”, *De Waterschans*, IV, (1998); Thielemans, M.-R., *Bourgogne et Angleterre*, 250-1.

³²⁰ B.R.H.C, Archief van de Raad en Rekenkamer van de Markiezen van Bergen op Zoom, n. 307-8.

³²¹ Sloomans, C.F.J., “Bergsche schippers vóór 1540”, *De Ghulden Roos*, XXXV, (1975), 139;

Horrox, R., and Hammond, P.W., *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433*, I, 270.

³²² “merchants who made their living by making and selling salt”. Quoted in Ham, W. van, “Verkenningen in middeleeuws Bergen op Zoom – 7”, *De Waterschans*, III, (1986), 73.

³²³ *Ibid*, 137.

³²⁴ Cauchies, J.-M., *op.cit*, 140. The attachment of the lords of Bergen op Zoom had long antecedents. The Boutersem lords had fought for Edward III in Scotland, and had rendered him valuable services. *Froissart*, III, 372, and V, 338.

³²⁵ Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 305-6; Smedt, R. de et al, *op.cit*, 192-4.

³²⁶ Robins, P., *Le veuvage et le douaire, memoire de licence*, 246.

leading men from Francophone Brabant, he stood by Maximilian after Mary of Burgundy's death in 1482. As a reward, the rebels, with French aid, bombarded his castle of Beersel and flattened it.³²⁷ The English party also encompassed the premier noble family in Zeeland, that of Philippe de Bourgogne, son of Anthony, the Great Bastard.³²⁸ He had married Anna, heiress of Borselle, and would cement his alliance with the De Glymes by marrying his daughter, Anna, to Jan III. Margaret of York stood at the core of this powerful interest group.

Henri's new lands in the Cambrésis were somewhat removed from this English-centred alliance. In addition to the ravages of the French occupation, they were also experiencing a structural economic shift. This had commenced in the middle of the century, when Cambrai's main product, cloth, began to lose its markets.³²⁹ Smaller centres around the Cambrésis were simply out-competing the traditional producers. Hondschoote and Le Quesnoy, in particular, were undergoing a textile boom, and the phenomenal growth of the new centres in Holland was making things even worse.³³⁰ To some extent, commerce had shifted to linen production, which was flourishing both here and in Margaret's dower town of Binche.³³¹ Dependent on locally grown flax, the industry was less susceptible to the fluctuating supply of wool.

Other industries were also growing in importance, in particular the production of high-quality tapestry and of the so-called *batistes*. The centre of the former's production lay in Arras, but Cambrai, nevertheless, produced its own share of the luxury product.³³² *Batistes* production also ensured that Cambrai became more orientated towards the English market, and, therefore, came to share the interests of its new bishop. Such was its popularity in England, and such the monopoly that Cambrai had in the trade, that here it came to be known as cambric. What is more, many of the cambric merchants of Cambrai traded with England through Bergen op Zoom.³³³ If the economy of the Cambrésis was not what it had once been, it was still providing Henri with a substantial income. If Erasmus is to be believed, the bishop

³²⁷ *Molinet*, II, 74-8.

³²⁸ Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 160-2 and 168-9.

³²⁹ Trenard, L. et al, *op.cit.*, 98.

³³⁰ For the wider cloth-based economy, see Boone, M. and Prevenier, W. (eds), *La draperie ancienne des Pays-Bas*.

³³¹ Thielemans, M.-R., *op.cit.*, 252-4.

³³² For an overview, see D'Hulst, R.-A., *Vlaamse wandtapijten*.

³³³ Smit, H., *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van de handel*, II, 6.

was very careful with his money.³³⁴ Nevertheless, the wealth of the Cambrésis still allowed him to draw substantial sums from his lands, enough to lend large sums to Maximilian I.³³⁵

Margaret of York, Trade and the Dower Towns.

For Margaret of York, trade was also a major concern. Cicely Neville's central role in her family's East Anglian landholdings ensured that the young Margaret grew up in a region permeated by mercantile interests.³³⁶ This was all the more important as money from the crown due to her father, Richard, duke of York, was frequently in arrears.³³⁷ Her father's wealth may have been proverbial, but it was highly dependent on Cicely's ability as an estate manager. Once Edward IV had captured the crown, Margaret was given a personal allowance by the king. At first this consisted of £40,³³⁸ augmented in 1465 by 400 marks,³³⁹ but payments were still frequently in arrears.³⁴⁰

After her marriage, Edward had granted Margaret the right to trade 50 sacks of English wool to the Mediterranean in 1472,³⁴¹ tax-free, of course, probably as the result of her assistance during his 1470-1 exile in Burgundy.³⁴² This was a not inconsiderable privilege, but the one Margaret managed to negotiate during her stay in England in 1480 was even more generous. She received licence to annually export 2,000 oxen, 5,000 sheep, and another 630 wool sacks.³⁴³ Such was the importance of these English trading privileges that in 1472 Margaret appointed a certain George

³³⁴ Reedijk, C., "Erasmus' verzen op het overlijden van Hendrik van Bergen, Bisschop van Kamerijk", *Het Boek*, XXX, (n.d.), poems 74 and 77.

³³⁵ Laporte, J. *op.cit.*, 122.

³³⁶ Johnson, P.A., *Duke Richard of York*, 13-5; for East Anglia, see Goodman, A., *Margery Kempe and her World*, 16-34.

³³⁷ Griffiths, R., *The Reign of Henry VI*, 487 and *passim*; Johnson, P.A., *op.cit.*, 61-2; Pugh, T.B., "The Estates, Finances and Regal Aspirations of Richard Plantagenet". In M. Hicks (ed), *Revolution and Consumption in Late Medieval England*, 71-4.

³³⁸ *CPR 1461-67*, 93.

³³⁹ *CCR 1461-68*, 286.

³⁴⁰ *CPR 1467-77*, 39.

³⁴¹ A sack of wool was worth approximately five pounds and seventeen shillings. Bolton, J.L., *The Medieval English Economy*, 293. The tax exemption was worth one shilling in the pound. *Ibid.*, 317.

³⁴² *CPR 1467-77*, 306; *Foedera*, V, 3. For Edward in Burgundy, see *Waurin*, V, 611-12 and 640-55.

³⁴³ *CPR 1476-85*, 236; *Foedera*, V, 113; Visser-Fuchs, L., "Edward IV's grants of privileges to peoples and places in the Low Countries, 1472-1478", *CEEB*, XCIV, (2004), 166.

Hawthorn as her attorney in England.³⁴⁴ It is clear, then, that Margaret of York, although first and foremost a princess and aristocratic lady, was very much interested in trade.³⁴⁵

Most of the towns in Margaret of York's dower shared Bergen op Zoom's pre-occupation with English trade. This served to strengthen the ties both between lady and dower, and between *Madame la Grande* and the English party in Burgundy. English trade was vital for the largest and economically the most important of her dower lands, Voorne. Centred on the trading town of Brielle, it was strategically situated on the river delta facing London, East Anglia, Hull and Newcastle. The town, like most of Holland, went through a period of economic difficulties during the last quarter of the century, but was still a crucial source of income to the dowager.³⁴⁶ Economic slow-down was compounded by the political difficulties of the period. Worse still, the town of Dordrecht decided that the removal of Charles the Bold's forceful control gave them *carte blanche* to eliminate their rival at the mouth of the river Maas. From 1477 onwards, they began to insist on Brielle's compliance with their staple rights.³⁴⁷ Brielle's correct legal arguments that it was not subject to Dordrecht's staple did little to stop the conflict, which saw regular acts of piracy. Not even Maximilian's direct interference on Brielle's behalf in 1486 managed to quell the problem.

The various economic troubles of her dower in Holland allow us to trace Margaret's personal involvement in promoting and protecting trade. As early as 1477, she had gained a full tax exemption for all its citizens from Mary of Burgundy.³⁴⁸ Seven years later, she compelled all the landowners and large tenants in the land of Voorne to resume their contributions to the upkeep of the harbour in Brielle, which was subject to silting.³⁴⁹ Six years later again, she received a delegation from her dower on Voorne,

³⁴⁴ B.L. Add. Ms. 48031 A., f. 187b.

³⁴⁵ She even had a stake in the coal production in her dower land of Binche. Robins, P., *Le veuvage et le douaire de Marguerite d'York*, 268.

³⁴⁶ Haak, S.P., "Brielle als vrije en bloeiende handelsstad in de 15^{de} eeuw", *BVGGO*, VI, (1907), 58-9.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 17-26.

³⁴⁸ Münch, E. *op.cit*, 517.

³⁴⁹ Klok, J., *Brielle*, 33.

“Item, van dat master Gheene mitten lantluden te Machelen was om ons vrouwe te kennen te geven die lasten dien wy hadden van die zeerovers, die Denen ende anders”.³⁵⁰

After Margaret had provided financial assistance, vessels from Brielle and Goedereede managed to capture a Danish ship. The dowager did not hesitate to set an example,

“[in 1490 werd] een der roofschepen opgebracht; en, met goedvinden van Vrouwe Margaretha van Engeland, Vrouwe van Voorn, deze Roovers ter dood verwezen”.³⁵¹

The sight of their compatriots swinging from the gallows on the quay-side of Goedereede would have deterred the Danes from venturing too close to Voorne. This was vital, as trade with the Baltic formed one of the three pillars of Voorne’s economy. The others consisted of trade in English and Scottish cloth, and the trade in herring. The latter was actually adversely affected by Margaret of York’s role as lady of Voorne. In 1479, the Brielle herring fleet was specifically targeted by the French off the coast of Cherbourg, and impounded.³⁵²

The cloth trade, on the other hand, did benefit from being under the protection of the English-born lady. Brielle’s share of this trade is not particularly well-known, but was considerable. It is in Brielle’s cloth market that one can best detect the importance of trade to Margaret of York. As lady of Voorne she was entitled to one-tenth of the total value of all English and Scottish cloth traded in Brielle.³⁵³ It is little wonder that she spent some of her precious time during the 1480 diplomatic visit to England to gain trading privileges for Brielle.³⁵⁴ The English cloth trade provided Margaret of York with a substantial additional income and tied several members of her affinity together.

³⁵⁰ “Item, that master Gheene and some men of the land visited Mechelen to inform our lady of the troubles we had had with pirates, the Danes and others”. Quoted in Kokken, H., *op.cit.*, 118, n. 99.

³⁵¹ “[In 1490] one of the privateers was captured, and, with the approval of Lady Margaret of England, lady of Voorne, the pirates were condemned to death”. Quoted in Alkemade, K. van and Schelling, P. van der, *Beschrijving van de stad Brielle en de Landen van Voorn*, I, 120.

³⁵² Plokker, W., *Geschied- en aardrijkskundige beschrijving van het eiland Voorne en Putten*, 74.

³⁵³ Alkemade, K. van and Schelling, P. van der, *op.cit.*, I, 368. In 1520 the two editors transcribed this information from a source since lost.

³⁵⁴ Smit, H., *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van de handel met Engeland, Schotland en Ierland*, II, 1165, n. 1883.

It also throws light upon how Margaret's affinity promoted the dynasty's control over the Low Countries. In 1476, she appointed Andries vander Meulne as *buitengewoon clerk* in Oudenaarde.³⁵⁵ In troubled times, it paid to have a trusted employee in place. Vander Meulne proved to be an inspired choice. In 1482, he assisted Margaret's *procureur-général*, Baude de Gropé, with an investigation into English cloth confiscated by the *baljuw* of Oudenaarde. Margaret was not amused, as the *baljuw*'s actions had threatened the vital trade with England. Her man in Oudenaarde would do much more than just safeguarding his mistress' commercial interests, though. In 1485, during the Flemish rebellion against Maximilian, he was instrumental in handing over the rebellious town and its castle to the archduke,³⁵⁶ assisted by Margaret's later *maître d'hôtel*, Jean de Douvrin.³⁵⁷ As a leading member of the *rederijkerskamer*, *Pax Vobis*, he then ensured that the people of Oudenaarde remained loyal. Ironically, in the light of the chamber's name, he wrote dozens of virulently anti-Gent pamphlets, which helped to create the climate that brought several men from Gent to the Oudenaardse gallows.

The dower towns also offered Margaret opportunities to operate in a market that she understood well: real estate. Across her various dower towns she consistently managed to purchase houses with financial support from the magistrates. In June 1479, her *maître d'hôtel*, Cornil van der Bare, received 1,200 *livre gros* from the magistrates of Oudenaarde, "pour l'aider à acquérir deux maisons".³⁵⁸ With this money, she bought a number of houses on the central square, which became her residence.³⁵⁹ The town's magistrates must have hoped that their generous contribution would persuade *Madame la Grande* to spend at least some time in their midst. Unfortunately for them, the French thwarted these plans, at least in the short term. However, to show that Margaret did not just profit from her lands, she

³⁵⁵ C.f. Meersch, D.J. vanden, "Kronijk der Rederijkkamers van Audenaerde", *Belgisch Museum*, VI, 397 and ff.

³⁵⁶ *Molinet*, II, 438-41; *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 270. The attackers, who included Jan II de Glymes, entered the town disguised as clergy.

³⁵⁷ Meersch, D.J. van der, *Esquisses Historiques sur la Ville d'Audenarde*, 13.

³⁵⁸ "To help her acquire two houses". Quoted in "Sur une lettre de Madame Marguerite d'York, veuve de Charles le Téméraire", *MSHB*, V, (1843), 827.

³⁵⁹ Meersch, D.J. van der, *Esquisses Historiques sur la Ville d'Audenarde*, 13.

immediately handed over part of the 2,500 *écus d'or* subvention which the Estates of Flanders had offered her, to pay for German handgunners to protect Oudenaarde.³⁶⁰

In Mechelen, the opportunities provided by smart investment in housing are even more striking. The magistrates there, motivated by the same hope as their colleagues in Oudenaarde, donated 3,000 *florins* to the dowager, to spend on renovating properties in their town.³⁶¹ Later, they loaned her another 200 *florins* to help pay for conversion costs. This generosity must have made it much easier for Margaret to spend 4,000 *florins* on a whole block of houses, which Guillaume de la Baume bought in her name, and which were added to the *Hof van Cambrai* and converted into a palace.³⁶² Nine years later, the complex was sold back to the town, for the handsome price of 12,000 *florins*.³⁶³ What is more, she was also allowed to retain the use of the palace! In Mechelen, as in Oudenaarde, though, the relationship between town and dowager was one of mutual benefit, and this was recognised by the magistrate. In 1502, for example, it granted the dowager 2,000 *florins* “voer zeckere diensten die zy der stad gedaen heeft”.³⁶⁴ The town had also received an extensive trading privilege from Edward IV, in gratitude for his sister’s support during his exile of 1470-71.³⁶⁵ This had been followed in 1479 by an exemption of arrest for debt of any citizen of Mechelen in England.³⁶⁶

The Affinity: Failures against the Trend.

To Edward IV, the granting of trading privileges was a relatively economical way to repay political favours. Those who had stood by him during his exile in 1470 were all accorded similar freedoms from tolls as Mechelen had. All of the men whom Edward rewarded may be counted amongst the ‘English party’ in Burgundy. Louis, *heer van Gruuthuse*, received a charter with trading privileges for his town of

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ *Galesloot*, 208.

³⁶² *Azevedo*, entry for 29.11.1477; A.M., Schepenboeken, S.1 Reg. N. 96, f. 142.

³⁶³ A.M., Privilegiën der Stad, boek III, f. 101. She had employed one of the finest architects in the Low Countries, Antoine Keldermans, to design and build her palace. Janse, H (ed), *Keldermans*, 142.

³⁶⁴ “For certain services that she had done for the town”. A.M., Stadsrekeningen, S 1, n. 113, (1502-1503), f. 113.

³⁶⁵ A.M., Charter 321-22.

³⁶⁶ Valerius, R. *op.cit*, 70.

Westenschouwe.³⁶⁷ Similar privileges were extended to Veere, the main port of the Borselle family, and included freedom from tolls, and extra-territorial status for their merchants.³⁶⁸ Finally, the town of Middelburg near Aardenburg, the creation of Peter Bladelin, also gained significant trading concessions. Gruuthuse, Bladelin, and Hendrik II van Borselle all had extensive lands in the river delta facing the North Sea, and all had incomes sensitive to fluctuations in the trade with England.³⁶⁹ Peter Bladelin died in 1472, too early to feature much in Margaret's later life, but both Gruuthuse,³⁷⁰ and the extended Borselle family were to play leading roles.³⁷¹ Both were instinctively loyal to the Burgundians, both would be swayed by local circumstances to desert their cause,³⁷² and both would be restored to at least a modicum of favour afterwards.

Whilst not dyed-in-the-wool loyalists of the type De Glymes or Nassau, they were, nevertheless, a significant component of the Anglophile camp. They were also allied by marriage: Hendrik II's daughter, Margaret, had married Louis, *heer* of Gruuthuse, in 1455.³⁷³ As stated, both families were to lose their close contact with the dynasty. Gruuthuse became caught up in the war between the Estates of Flanders and Maximilian over the regency on behalf of Philip the Fair. His son, Jean, would eventually end up in French service. To Margaret, this must have been a bitter pill. She knew Gruuthuse well, and his previous services to the house of York made his loss particularly hard, whilst Jean had served as her *eschanson* during 1468.³⁷⁴ It is significant that when Maximilian released Louis from prison in Brugge, he was sent to Margaret's court in Mechelen under the watchful eye of Olivier de la Marche.³⁷⁵ It would seem *Madame la Grande* was reluctant to desert her erstwhile ally and friend, even after his betrayal.

In the case of Hendrik II and his son, Wolfert VI, the situation is less clear-cut. Mary of Burgundy had appointed Wolfert *Stadhouder* of Holland and Zeeland in succession to Gruuthuse in 1477, because he had been a neutral figure in Holland's

³⁶⁷ Visser-Fuchs, L., *op.cit*, 154-5.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 162. For the contributions by Veere to Edward IV's invasion, see *Commynes*, III, 6.

³⁶⁹ Visser-Fuchs, L., *op.cit*, 151-67.

³⁷⁰ Martens, M.P.J. et al, *Lodewijk van Gruuthuse, passim*.

³⁷¹ Verbrugge, M., *Ridder Wolfert van Borselen van ter Veere*.

³⁷² *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 564.

³⁷³ Dek, A.W.E., *Genealogie der Heren van Borselen*, 26.

³⁷⁴ A.D.N. B3376, 113546, f. 4^v.

³⁷⁵ *Despars*, IV, 268.

seemingly endless conflict between *Hoeken* and *Kabeljouwen*.³⁷⁶ However, he was dragged into the troubles soon after.³⁷⁷ Wolfert tried but failed to maintain his neutrality, moves which did not please Maximilian, who seems to have disliked him, anyhow.³⁷⁸ An additional incentive for the Borssele family to maintain their distance from the warring parties in Burgundy must have been their trade interest with Scotland. Veere was Scotland's most important continental trading port by far,³⁷⁹ and it could not survive without Scottish trade.³⁸⁰

Maximilian's overture to England in 1480 coincided with a conflict between merchants from England and Veere, which came before the parliament in Mechelen. This escalated after 1481, around the same time as England and Scotland had resumed their centuries-old conflict. Edward IV captured Scotland's important port of Berwick-upon-Tweed the next year.³⁸¹ With his main trading-partner a French ally, Wolfert, whose mother was the Scottish princess, Mary Stewart,³⁸² was caught between a rock and a hard place, and opted for a neutrality that pleased no one. Ultimately, this mattered little. Even the worst traitors managed, somehow, to survive in late fifteenth-century Burgundy. It mattered even less with regards to Margaret of York's affinity. Wolfert had only a daughter, Anna, for an heir. She married Philippe, son of Anthony, the Great Bastard, who had always maintained his friendship with *Madame la Grande*.³⁸³ Later, the marriages between the De Glymes and the new Bourgogne-Borselle's showed that they had never really been outside the 'English Party'.

³⁷⁶ Gent, M.J. van, *op.cit.*, 456.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 457-8.

³⁷⁸ Kooperberg, L.M.G., *Anna van Borssele*, 58. This was strange, as Wolfert's mother was the sister of his aunt, another Stewart princess, who had been a close friend of Maximilian's own mother. C.f. Walsh, K., "Deutschsprachige Korrespondenz der Kaiserin Leonora von Portugal". In P.-J. Heinig (ed), *Kaiser Friedrich III.*

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 59-60; Ditchburn, D., *Scotland and Europe*, 145, 163 and 188.

³⁸⁰ Smit, H., *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van de handel*, I, 1214-6.

³⁸¹ Ross, C., *Edward IV*, 282-90; MacDougall, N., *James IV*, 4-6.

³⁸² Kooperberg, L.M.G., *op.cit.*, 59. James IV was to remind the Borselle's of their ties to his house in a letter of 1509, which almost inevitably focused on trade. *Letters and Papers*, II, 267.

³⁸³ The complex relationship of Anthony with the Habsburg regime saw him in and out of favour with great regularity. Nevertheless, his relationship with his sister-in-law always remained cordial. She frequently dined with him, and occasionally the two were joined by Maximilian. Gachard, L.-P., "Itinéraire de Maximilien. Archiduc d'Autriche", I, 3. He was also trusted enough by her, to head the embassy to Spain to solicit the help of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1488. *Spanish Calendar*, 18.

Manifesting the Affinity.

It would be an exaggeration to claim that a genuine political party evolved around Margaret of York. There was never any structured entity through which her affinity could proclaim its unity, never any common symbols or obvious statements of intent. Yet there were several, more subtle means through which political alliances could be manifested. The problem lies in finding these expressions, for they tended to be overlooked by contemporary chroniclers. Arguably, the single most potent manner in which Margaret of York and her affinity managed to express their unity was in their joint effort at reforming and founding religious houses. In this seemingly innocuous fashion, the dowager and her allies could show their unity of purpose and their friendships. For this to work, Margaret required the backing of the episcopate, and it was here that Henri de Glymes was at his most useful to *Madame la Grande*.

Before he could ever be of any use to his patroness, however, Henri had to travel to Rome to pay for his elevation. We find him in the Eternal City in August 1483, exactly one year after his *Joyeuse Entrée* into Cambrai.³⁸⁴ His predecessor had had to pay 12,000 *ducats* for the privilege of becoming bishop, and although we do not know what Henri's payment was, we may be certain that he had to dig deep. The town of Bergen op Zoom offered two contributions, one in 1479 and one in 1480, to help him pay for his elevation in Rome. The total amount was 2,800 *florins*, which, if Henri's fee was the same as that of Jean de Bourgogne's, came to twenty-two percent of his entire costs.³⁸⁵ The De Glymes could always count on the loyal support of their town.

Once back in the Low Countries, Henri kept very close to *Madame la Grande*. He spent much of his time at Margaret's court, to the extent that he can almost be regarded as her *Episcopus Palatii*. The papacy had granted the dukes of Burgundy the privilege of maintaining a house-bishop, with the aim of reducing their dependence on bishops who frequently resided outside the sphere of their political control.³⁸⁶ It was a right restricted to the dukes: their wives had to do without such a powerful political tool. Margaret, with characteristic ingenuity, found a way around

³⁸⁴ Ibid, 117.

³⁸⁵ B.R.H.C., Resolutien Breeden Raad 1476-1518, 10-11.

³⁸⁶ Arts, J., O.P., *De Predikheren te Gent*, 126.

this obstacle. Even before the arrival of Henri de Glymes, she had been able to draw upon the support of the high clergy. In 1472, for example, Guillaume of Osoris, a Dominican auxiliary bishop of Tournai, consecrated the new church of the Canonesses Regular in Gent, for which Margaret had paid.³⁸⁷ Osoris had been the confessor of Philip the Good, but, more to the point, had also functioned as the latter's *Episcopus Palatii*.

The clearest example of Henri in the role of *Episcopus Palatii* is to be found in his visit with Margaret to the *Bethlehem* convent in St Remigius-Leis at Hannut in 1493.³⁸⁸ Margaret of York had long-standing ties with the convent. In 1484, for example, *Bethlehem* had provided a number of nuns for a new foundation in Zoutleeuw, which had been erected with the support of the dowager.³⁸⁹ *Bethlehem*'s own position had become very precarious as the civil war in the prince-bishopric of Liège had raged around its walls.³⁹⁰ Not only had this caused a serious decline in vocations, but it had also instigated a noticeable slackening of monastic discipline. The superior had appealed to the dowager, who was renowned throughout the Low Countries for her interest in matters conventual. In March 1493, she appeared in St Remigius-Leis, accompanied by "Episcopus Cameracensis D. Cornellii de Bergis".³⁹¹ We may suspect that the chronicler made an error here, and that Margaret was accompanied by Henri. It is, of course, possible that Cornelis travelled with his brother. Liège was, after all, potentially dangerous territory for the bishop and *Madame la Grande*.³⁹²

The involvement of a lay person in the restoration of religious observance and the enforcement of the *claustrum* need come as no surprise.³⁹³ In this, as with so many other elements of government in Burgundy, Margaret of York was following in the footsteps of Isabella of Portugal. In addition, no less a figure than Jan Uytenhove,³⁹⁴ first vicar-general of the Observant Dominican province the *Congregatio*

³⁸⁷ Ibid, 129.

³⁸⁸ Barlière, Dom U., "Prieuré de Bethléem, à Herent. *M.B.* IV, 1018.

³⁸⁹ A.G.R., Archives Ecclésiastiques du Brabant, n. 14707; Bets, P. van, *Zout-Leeuw*, II, 203-43.

³⁹⁰ Moreau, É. de, S.J., *op.cit.*, IV, 300-1.

³⁹¹ Timmermans, F. (ed), *Bethleem sive coenobii Bethleemitici Canoniorum regularium ordinis Sancti augustini*, 17-8 and 205.

³⁹² See in this respect Cornelis's escorting of his brother Antoon during his election as abbot of Sint Truiden, also in the prince-bishopric, in 1483. Bietenholz, P.G. and Deutscher, T.B., *op.cit.*, I, 130.

³⁹³ Prims, F., "De kloosterslot-beweging in Brabant in de XVde eeuw, *MKVA*, VI, (1944).

³⁹⁴ Q.v. Part Three, p. 304.

Hollandica, had approved lay involvement in his *Pro Reformatione*.³⁹⁵ What was unusual about this particular case was that the convent fell outside Henri's jurisdiction as bishop of Cambrai. It is not clear why the Liègeois bishop, Jean de Hornes, could not impose his own control, but, whatever the reason, it was Henri de Glymes who finally restored order in *Bethlehem*.³⁹⁶

Dowager and bishop of Cambrai shared deeply-held religious convictions. These manifested themselves in various forms, amongst which pilgrimages featured prominently.³⁹⁷ Margaret and Henri were far from exceptional amongst their contemporaries where pilgrimages are concerned, yet it must have been an animated conversation, the day that Henri returned from his adventurous journey to the Holy Land in 1488.³⁹⁸ He also took a fashionable interest in the reform of the Poor Clares. The involvement of the Burgundian dynasty and several of the aristocratic families in the Low Countries has already been alluded to. Patronage of this reform movement was *de rigueur*, and it was perhaps inevitable that Henri invited them to Cambrai.³⁹⁹ In 1496, the first nuns arrived in "Tcoventen ... ghefundert bijden bischop van Camrike, here Heindric van Berghen".⁴⁰⁰

Henri's interest in reform extended to other religious groups. In Cambrai he reformed the *Beguinage*, by introducing the Rule of St Augustine, for which purpose he summoned the help of some Augustinians from the convents in Mons, Lessines and Maubeuge, who were renowned for their austerity.⁴⁰¹ These also took charge of the hospital of Saint-Jacques, which the bishop had founded. Such pious activity chimed with Margaret of York's perception of her own role as dowager. It facilitated the exercise of this role by giving it a seal of episcopal approval.

³⁹⁵ Post, R.R., *op.cit.*, II, 164.

³⁹⁶ Of course, *Madame la Grande* did not always make use of Henri de Glymes when imposing monastic reform: the example of the *Groot Gasthuis* in Leuven, where she was assisted by the bishop of Liège, is only one of many. A.L., *Stadsrekeningen*, n. 1528, f. 162-64.

³⁹⁷ Schnitker, H., "Margaret of York on Pilgrimage". In S.D. Michalove (ed), *Proceedings of the Third Fifteenth-Century Conference*.

³⁹⁸ *Molinet*, II, 518. See also the travel journal by a bourgeois of Valenciennes, who accompanied the bishop. V.B.M., Ms. 453. Henri's father, Jan II, had also undertaken this journey in 1450. Sloomans, C.F.J., *Jan Metten Lippen*, 20; Cools, H., "Les frères", 126.

³⁹⁹ *Molinet*, II, 427.

⁴⁰⁰ "the convent ... founded by the bishop of Cambrai, lord Henri of Bergen". *Kroniek Gent*, 44.

⁴⁰¹ Detrez, L., *Les Augustinès de Cambrai*, 38-9.

Religious Reform and Margaret of York's Affinity.

It is no coincidence that dowager and bishop chose the imposition of the *claustrum* as the most public display of their political partnership.⁴⁰² Not only was this generally considered to be an act of good governance, but also it was a very public statement. Frequently convents and monasteries objected, which gave maximum publicity to the involvement of members of a particular affinity. Piety was, furthermore, one of the acceptable means through which the dowager could express her power. This was one field in which she could openly work with powerful men. This enabled her to demonstrate her own influence on them, and, at times, even gave her the opportunity to show her own superior rank.

In Mechelen, for example, the reform movement had hit an almost intractable obstacle in the *Blijdenberg* priory.⁴⁰³ As early as 1429, the priory had accepted the rules of the Order of Saint Victor, but, by the middle of the century, *Blijdenberg* had become synonymous with monastic decadence. A first attempt at reform, by that famous scourge of loose-living monks and nuns, Jan Pupper van Goch, in 1459, had utterly failed. The reform-minded prioress, Margareta Ymbrechts, fared little better; she was even forced to resign. Unfortunately for the pleasure-seeking nuns, Margaret of York became lady of Mechelen in the next year. Instead of complying with *Madame la Grande's* wish that order be restored, however, they ignored her. Not even the intercession of Baudouin de Lannoy, the feared chamberlain of Mary of Burgundy, could change their minds. Where the combination of Margaret of York and Baudouin de Lannoy failed, that of Margaret and Henri de Glymes succeeded: in 1482 the nuns capitulated. Margaret could muster the support of Henri de Glymes, as well as that of the purposeful prior of Groenendaal, Thomas Moninx.⁴⁰⁴ Such was the impact of Moninx, that the following year the convent joined that strictest of monastic federations, the Windesheimer Congregation.

As noted, religious reform often enabled Margaret's affinity to express its political solidarity. Although the dowager was a major landowner in Holland, she had been less concerned with the northern principality than with Brabant, Flanders and

⁴⁰² Makowski, E., *Canon Law and Cloistered Women*, 9-11, 19-20, 28-35 and *passim*.

⁴⁰³ C.f. Vanhoof, F., "Prieuré de Blijdenberg à Malines", *M.B.*, VIII, 548.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 519.

Hainaut. This is not to say that the north did not attract her attention; she certainly spent some time in Brielle and Voorne and expended rather large amounts of money on the restoration of her palace and castle there.⁴⁰⁵ Voorne was also, as seen, her most important dower land in financial terms. Margaret's strategic interest in Holland was shared by her most important political ally, Maximilian I. As *Dit sijn die wonderlycke oorloghen* makes abundantly clear, he simply could not ignore Holland. Drawn into the deep-seated political chasm that divided the county, Maximilian had to fight several wars to subdue the factions. In this, he was greatly assisted by the junior branch of the Egmond family, cadets of the house of Gelre.⁴⁰⁶ Jan van Egmond, in particular, had gained Maximilian's favour. His leadership of the *Kabeljauw* faction and his loyal service in the armies of Charles the Bold, had earned him an appointment as *Stadhouder* of Holland and Zeeland upon the death of Josse de Lalaing in 1483. Such was his closeness to Maximilian, that the latter even engineered a marriage between Jan and his cousin, Magdalena von Werdenburg.

Jan had been interested in monastic reform, and had been instrumental in forcing the Benedictines of the abbey of Egmond to join the Bursfeld Congregation.⁴⁰⁷ In his endeavour to extend the reform, he had called upon the dowager to help with reforming the nuns at Rijnsburg. She travelled north to force the recalcitrant nuns to accept the *claustrum*, significantly succeeding where the *Stadhouder*, the most important representative of the Burgundian state in Holland, had failed.⁴⁰⁸ Towards the end of her life, Margaret again took the road north, this time to assist Jan van Egmond in a task particularly close to her heart. They managed to persuade the Dominicans in Dordrecht to join the Observant *Congregatio Hollandica*, in what was virtually the final act of the Dominican reform in the Low Countries.⁴⁰⁹

That *Madame la Grande*, now rather infirm, went to Holland is significant for a number of reasons. Again, she was using religious reform to emphasise her own status: she could get obstinate friars to bow their heads. There was also an important political statement being made here. By appearing side-by-side with Jan van

⁴⁰⁵ Q.v. Part Two, pp. 153 and ff. C.f. Damen, M., *Vorstelijke vensters*, 28, n. 149.

⁴⁰⁶ For this and what follows, c.f. Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 204-8.

⁴⁰⁷ Dessing, E.S., "Bescheiden aangaande de hervorming der tucht in de abdij van Egmond in de 15^{de} eeuw", *KHGU*, XV, (1930).

⁴⁰⁸ Post, R.R., *op.cit*, II, 141.

⁴⁰⁹ Jongkees, A.G., *op.cit*, 17.

Egmond, Margaret confirmed, in a very public fashion, that the old dynasty had survived the troubles of the last decades. She also indicated her support for Maximilian's policies towards Gelre, against the wishes of Philip the Fair and the Francophone party. Even at this late stage in her life, when her power and influence were seemingly less relevant than before, Margaret of York managed to make some impact on the political scene. As so often, it was done through her affinity and religious reform.

Affinity, Observancy and Monastic Foundations.

As the affair of the Dominicans in Dordrecht indicates, observancy was a major political and religious factor in the fifteenth-century Low Countries.⁴¹⁰ It always attracted the attention of the dukes of Burgundy and their wives, and, therefore, provided the ideal platform to make political statements. Never was this more the case than when reform attempts caused friction, as has already been seen with regard to the *Blijdenberg* priory. However, the conflict there pales into insignificance when set against the national and international commotion caused by the attempts at introducing the Observant Franciscans in Namur.⁴¹¹ A small group of Observant friars entered the town in October 1481, with the intent of taking over the existing friary. The Conventuals there were breaking just about every injunction of the Rule of St Francis, including renting out land and property.⁴¹² Maximilian threw his weight behind the Observants, at the express wish of "Madame Marguerite d'Angleterre".⁴¹³ Not unnaturally, the Observant friars expected to gain possession in no time, which they did, but they had not counted on the determination of their Conventual compeers. With the backing of the French provincial-minister, they appealed to the Holy See, and, in March 1484, managed to gain papal approval of

⁴¹⁰ With reference to the Dominican reform, it has been argued that the formation of the *Congregatio Hollandica* was effectively an attempt by the Burgundian dukes and their successors to create religious provinces that coincided with their own dominions. C.f. Meyer, R.P.A. de, O.P., *La Congregation de Hollande*, particularly the introduction. But see also Wolfs, S.P., O.P., "Bij een nieuw werk over de Congregatio Hollandica", *OGE*, vol. XLVII, (1921), for an alternative view.

⁴¹¹ What follows is based upon Lippens, H., "De Translatione conventus Namurcensis", *AFH*, XXXVIII, (1945); and Moreau, É. de, S.J., *op.cit*, IV, 317-324.

⁴¹² Moorman, J.R.H., *A History of the Franciscan Order*, 490-1.

⁴¹³ According to two letters by Jean de Chalon, prince d'Orange. N.A.E., *Frères Mineurs Récollets*, Laisse I.

their ownership of the house. The town resisted a little, but by September of the next year, the Conventuals were back in their old home.

Two years later, certain of his rights in this case, Maximilian wrote to Namur's magistrates, ordering them to act, adding to his notice the support his actions had from *Madame la Grande*, with

“la très redoutée dame de Bourgogne [Margaret, as Mary had already died by this time] presentement estant en ceste dite ville de Namur se emploiera à y metre son bon appointement que chacun devra ester content”.⁴¹⁴

Still the Conventuals refused to leave. Maximilian then ordered the prince-bishop of Liège, the abbot of Saint-Jacques in Liège, and Antoon de Glymes, abbot of Sint-Truiden and brother of Henry, to Rome, to ‘convince’ the pope. When they returned, Antoon carried a papal mandate to adjudicate on the question. Yet again the Conventuals appealed to Rome, and yet again the Holy See overruled local decisions.⁴¹⁵ By now time had moved on, and we are writing of the year 1493: it had been twelve years since the Observant friars had first entered Namur!

Margaret of York had had enough. She decided to use Burgundy's influence in Rome and the papacy sent an envoy that April, who ordered the Conventuals to leave the friary. When they still refused, Margaret took more drastic measures. To ensure that the Conventuals listened this time, *Madame la Grande* had put another one of the De Glymes members of her affinity in place. Jan III, the governor of the county of Namur, moved his soldiers into town. The grateful Observants could finally move into the friary. Margaret ensured that she was not forgotten. She donated a stained-glass window with her own portrait, now lost, on which the following was inscribed,

“A l’ayde de Jesus Christ
Qui veut le déformé réformer
L’an 1494, le 10 septembre

⁴¹⁴ “the very redoubted lady of Burgundy, presently being in this said town of Namur, will devote herself there to regulate this affair to everyone's satisfaction”. Quoted in Moreau, É. de, S.J., *op.cit.*, IV, 322.

⁴¹⁵ The machinations at the Papal court need not detain us here. Sufficient to say that the Conventuals had ample French backing.

Avec mes bons amis”.⁴¹⁶

In the reform of this convent, one may see Margaret’s ‘amis’ co-operating, her affinity manifesting itself, as well as the depth of the support she received from Maximilian. Although Henri de Glymes played no discernable role in the saga of the Franciscans of Namur, his brothers certainly did.

Sometimes, this type of reform allowed Margaret to manifest her authority even outside the Low Countries. In 1471, several sisters of the Third Order of St Francis had taken over the decrepit Beguinage in Paris, once founded by St Louis IX.⁴¹⁷ After 1477, these were joined by large numbers of refugees from the southern Low Countries. Anxious to prevent the Observants from gaining a foothold in Paris, the Conventuals persuaded the sisters to become Poor Clare-Colettines, whose confessors, unlike those of the sisters of the Third Order, were provided by Conventuals. This led to a long dispute, which turned political when Louis XI gave his backing to the Conventuals. The death of Margaret’s nemesis in August that year opened up new opportunities. She appealed to Rome on behalf of the Observants, and managed to get papal backing. Thus *Madame la Grande* even achieved the reform of a French religious house, against the wishes of a French monarch.

Margaret of York’s affinity manifested itself not only through monastic reform, but, as seen in relation to the Poor Clares, through monastic foundations as well. The same mixture of nobility, service personnel and bourgeoisie that characterised Margaret’s political alliances becomes apparent when her involvement in the foundation of monasteries is examined. In her dower town of Dendermonde, for example, Margaret patronised the establishment of a convent for the *Zwarte Zusters* or *sorores nigrae*.⁴¹⁸ Here we have another ‘fashionable’ religious Order like the Poor Clares, but this time specific to the Low Countries and the Rhineland.⁴¹⁹ As

⁴¹⁶ “With the help of Jesus Christ, who wants to reform the deformed. In the year 1494, 10 September, with my good friends”. The transcription may be found in Galliot, M., *Histoire Générale, ecclésiastique et civile de la ville et province de Namur*, II, 234.

⁴¹⁷ For this and what follows, c.f. Moorman, J.R.H., *Medieval Franciscan Houses*, II, 642; Gratien, P., “La Fondation des Clarisses de l’Ave Maria et l’Etablissement des Frères Mineurs de l’Observance à Paris”, *Etudes*, XXVII-XXVIII (1912).

⁴¹⁸ Grootaers, W., O.S.A., “Oorsprong en spiritualiteit van de Zwartzusters in België”, *OGE*, LXVII, (1993).

⁴¹⁹ Isabella of Portugal had similarly supported the tertiary Grey Sisters. Blondel, S., “La première et joyeuse entrée de Marguerite d’York à Douai”, *CEEB*, XLIV, (2004), 35.

religious Orders go, this one was rather new. It had grown from communal establishments of women, who had dedicated themselves to the exercise of *caritas*.⁴²⁰ It was only in 1459 that a papal bull by Pius II had transformed these communities into a religious Order. Those women who adopted the Rule of St Augustine rapidly became known as *Zwarte Zusters*, after the colour of their habit.

In two of Margaret's dower towns, communities had already been transformed into convents: in Mechelen in 1463 (the community dated from ca. 1350),⁴²¹ and in Le Quesnoy, where the community was founded in 1449 with the Rule of St Augustine being adopted soon after.⁴²² In Oudenaarde, finally, there was yet another convent, but its history is obscure.⁴²³ The Order appealed to Margaret for several reasons. She had a personal interest in *caritas*, attested by both her library and the accounts of her dower towns.⁴²⁴ The pious women also provided essential services to 'her' people, particularly useful in a time of great want caused by war and climactic extremes, such as in later fifteenth-century Burgundy.⁴²⁵ In addition, the sisters were famed for their effectiveness, and it is, therefore, hardly surprising that the dowager tried to establish their houses in other dower towns.

She erected new convents in Binche and in Brielle, but from the perspective of Margaret's affinity, the foundation of the house in Dendermonde is particularly interesting. She approached the sisters in Pamele in 1490, with the hope of attracting them to Dendermonde.⁴²⁶ They proved keen, and in 1491 came to the town to find a property. This was provided by Margaret's almoner, Jan van Pepermont.⁴²⁷ Van Pepermont came from a well-to-do bourgeois family in Mechelen, and knew the reputation of the Order in his home town. He was also well aware of his employer's sentiments, being responsible for the financial side of her *caritas*, and sold his house in the town to the sisters. For Margaret, this killed two birds with one stone: her

⁴²⁰ Bosch, G. vanden, *Monasticon Zwartzusters*, 9.

⁴²¹ Schoeffer, J., *Historische Aanteekeningen rakende de kerken, de kloosters, de ambachten en andere stichten in de stad Mechelen*, I, 150-1.

⁴²² Bosch, G. vanden, *op.cit.*, 15.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 15-6.

⁴²⁴ Armstrong noted that Margaret actually ordered her almoner to assist the needy financially. The duchess was at times personally involved in the distribution. Armstrong, C.A.J., *England, France and Burgundy*, 138, n. 5.

⁴²⁵ For the various tasks of the Order, see Leupen, S.M.C., "De kloosters van de cellebroeders en -zusters in het graafschap Holland en Zeeland tot aan de Reformatie", *HRT*, XXX, (1998), 15-24.

⁴²⁶ C.f. Pée, L. and Stroobants, A., *500 Jaar Zwarte Zusters te Dendermonde*.

⁴²⁷ Beuyninx, L., *Dendermonde, Geschiedenis-Gebouwen-Folklore*, 257.

dower town was provided with hospital care, and her almoner had made a profit. Within the year, the magistrate, also eager to help the dowager, provided larger accommodation. A year later still, pressurised by Henri de Glymes, the chapter of the collegiate church officially approved the “convent deser Ghodshuse vanden zwaerte susteren der ordenen van Sinte Augustijn”.⁴²⁸

The Carthusian Order: Crucible of an Affinity.

The single most important religious Order through which one may detect Margaret of York’s affinity in action is that of the Carthusians. Her admiration for the strictest monastic Order of the Church was deep-seated, and, at the same time, conventional. Such was their reputation for sanctity at a time when many of the traditional Orders were convulsed by reform movements, that the Carthusians attracted the patronage of monarchs, nobility, patricians and merchants alike.⁴²⁹ There was a veritable tradition of royal patronage of the Carthusians in England, a tradition Margaret of York had grown up in. Her mother’s ancestor, John de Neville, baron of Raby, had helped found the Kingston-upon-Hull charterhouse in 1377.⁴³⁰ Edward, duke of York, had aided the foundation of the charterhouse at Axholme, and had left money to that of London.⁴³¹ Margaret’s own mother and her father had also both been donors to the Carthusians.⁴³² Cicely was even described as having a singular devotion to the charterhouse in London.⁴³³

Following in the footsteps of his grandfather, John of Gaunt,⁴³⁴ Henry V had made the patronage and foundation of a charterhouse fashionable in royal circles.⁴³⁵ His association with the Sheen charterhouse reveals something of the interaction between donors and monks. According to the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, the monks were paid to

⁴²⁸ “The convent of this house of God of the Zwarte Zusters of the Order of St Augustine”. Quoted in Pée, L. and Stroobants, A., *op.cit*, 172.

⁴²⁹ Rowntree, C.B., *Studies in Carthusian History in Later Medieval England*, 327.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid*, 70.

⁴³¹ *Ibid*, 298.

⁴³² *Ibid*, 290.

⁴³³ Wires, A.R., *The London Charterhouse in the Later Middle Ages*, 154-5.

⁴³⁴ Goodman, A., *John of Gaunt*, 262.

⁴³⁵ Beckett, N., “Henry V and Sheen Charterhouse”, Hogg, J. (ed), *Die Ausbreitung kartäusischen Lebens und Geistes im Mittelalter, Vol. I, A.Cart*, 54 and following.

pray for the success of English arms; with some success it may be added.⁴³⁶ The author of *The Brut* adds to this, that they “spent at least a quarter of [their] time interceding with God on its founder’s behalf”.⁴³⁷

Edward IV was, therefore, merely continuing a tradition, when he insisted on intercessory prayers when he made donations to the Carthusians.⁴³⁸ Such was the trust which the English royal dynasty placed in the Order, that Elizabeth Woodville made the prior of Sheen, John Ingleby, the executor of her will.⁴³⁹ This interest was paralleled in the Low Countries, with which the English charterhouses had various links. Henry V’s foundation at Sheen, for example, had been peopled with monks from amongst others Antwerp, Arnhem, and Liège.⁴⁴⁰ The founder of the London charterhouse, Sir Walter Manny, had come from Hainaut in the train of Philippa of Hainaut, Edward III’s queen.⁴⁴¹

The Burgundian dynasty had also proven itself to be a generous benefactor of the Carthusians. Charles the Bold had founded several cells in the house in Vught, in 1461, whilst his half-brother David, bishop of Utrecht, paid for the house in Kampen.⁴⁴² Isabella of Portugal, in the meantime, had helped found the charterhouse of Scheut, near Brussels, in 1456.⁴⁴³ As seen, both Philip the Good and Isabella were, ultimately, buried in a charterhouse, that of Dijon. In the light of this history, it would have been strange if Margaret of York had shown no interest in the Carthusians: it was expected of her. Yet her affection for the Order took on extraordinary proportions, and the effect the monks had on her was equally profound, as a study of her library reveals.⁴⁴⁴

Arguably the best example of the particularly intense attraction of the Carthusians on Margaret of York comes from the charterhouse at Hérinnes. The chronicle from the house is littered with references to the dowager’s involvement with the

⁴³⁶ This was just before Agincourt! Taylor, F. and Roskell, J.S. (eds), *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, 146-8.

⁴³⁷ Brie, F.W.D. (ed), *The Brut*, II, 496.

⁴³⁸ *CPR 1467-77*, 160-1.

⁴³⁹ Nichols, J. (ed), *A Collection of All the Wills Now Known to be Extant of the Kings and Queens of England*, 332.

⁴⁴⁰ Rowntree, C.B., *op.cit.*, 121-2.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 48-9. C.f. Series nova, 12779, Adriaen Dullaert, *Origo sive exordium monasterii Nostrae Domininae de Gratia, ordinis Carthusiensium, juxta Bruxellam*, in Schute.

⁴⁴² Post, R.R., *op.cit.*, II, 28 and 65.

⁴⁴³ Uytven, R. van, *Studies over Brabantse Kloostergeschiedenis*, 56.

⁴⁴⁴ Schnitker, H., “Een bibliotheek onstsloten.”, *HKKOM*, CVI, (2002).

community.⁴⁴⁵ A great attraction was the presence of the wise prior, Laurent Muschelede, whom she came to consult on a frequent basis. The duchess rarely came empty-handed: she gave the monks fish, Spanish and Rhine wine, the usual chasubles and altar decorations, and annual gifts of money of around 100 *pond Vlaamsch*.⁴⁴⁶ Her concern for the community manifested itself in many ways, including frequent loans of her physicians to care for the prior and the monks.⁴⁴⁷ Her love for the Hérinnes charterhouse was revealed by a plaque which has since disappeared,

“Chy gist le coeur de très-haulte, très-exellante et très-puissante princesse, madame Marguerite d’Angleterre, duchesse de Bourgogne, de Brabant, etc., qui trèspassa en l’an de Nostre Seigneur MDIII”.⁴⁴⁸

If Hérinnes held a special place in Margaret of York’s affection, it was not unique in the patronage it received. Nor is it the best place to witness her affinity in action. For that, one has to turn to the charterhouses of Scheut, near Brussels, and that of Leuven. The former was the house to which Isabella of Portugal had donated money for the construction of five cells.⁴⁴⁹ Margaret was attracted to the house for yet another reason. The first prior, Hendrik van Loen, had been a monk in Hérinnes, and had been recommended to the duchess by Laurent Muschelede.⁴⁵⁰ The *Liber foundationis* tells us that Margaret was a major patron. She was commemorated by the occupants of two of its cells as a benefactress.⁴⁵¹ The same source also shows Henri de Glymes’s ties to the house. It relates his donation in 1501 of 600 *pond Vlaamsch* to help construct a library there, and reveals that the bishop was contemplating retirement in the charterhouse.⁴⁵² As Henri’s family had never shown any interest in the Carthusians, we may wonder what or whom inspired him; the duchess, perhaps?

⁴⁴⁵ *Chronique de la Chartreuse*, 73-4, 197-8, 231-2 and *passim*.

⁴⁴⁶ Delvaux, H., “begravingen in de kartuize van herne”. In H. Delvaux et al, *De Kartuziers te Herne*, 42.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

⁴⁴⁸ “Here rests the heart of the highly exalted, very excellent and very powerful princess, madam Margaret of England, duchess of Burgundy, of Brabant etc, who passed away in the year of Our Lord 1503”. Quoted in *Galesloot*, 231.

⁴⁴⁹ Soenen, M., “Chartreuse de Scheut à Anderlecht”, *M.B.*, IV, 1466-7.

⁴⁵⁰ Grauwe, J. de, *Prosopographia Carthusiana Belgica*, 140-1.

⁴⁵¹ K.B.B., Ms. 5764, f. 46. She had donated the funds to construct these cells. Soenen, M., *op.cit*, IV, 1400-01.

⁴⁵² K.B.B., Ms. 5764, f. 74-5.

His donation towards the construction of a library, furthermore, calls to mind a similar gift by Margaret to the Dominican friary in Gent.⁴⁵³

This shared interest in a charterhouse was even more pronounced in the case of the newly-founded house in Leuven.⁴⁵⁴ The chaplain of her late husband, Woutier Henry, approached *Madame la Grande* in 1486 to solicit her support to help overcome those who obstructed the construction of the charterhouse. Henry had purchased the land, but the magistrates of Leuven did their utmost to prevent his project from being realised.⁴⁵⁵ Margaret took little time in convincing Leuven's magistrates. The opposition by the magistrates was then replaced by that of the clergy of the Sint Jacob parish, none-too-pleased with the prospect of having these exemplary monks in their parish. They managed to delay matters until 1491.⁴⁵⁶

When construction could finally commence, *Madame la Grande* played a significant role in bringing together the necessary financiers. She paid for the first two cells, which were completed in 1500,⁴⁵⁷ supported by François de Busleyden, archbishop of Besançon.⁴⁵⁸ Busleyden may at first appear to be a strange choice of partner. He was, after all, the leading light of the pro-French group in Burgundy, and, therefore, the antithesis of all Margaret had stood for in the last three decades.⁴⁵⁹ From Busleyden's point of view, there was much to be gained from co-operating with the dowager in such a politically neutral project; it allowed him to show willingness, without compromising his political position. Margaret, too, knew that the inclusion of those who did not necessarily share her outlook was beneficial. She had ample experience of how to manipulate a situation to make it appear as if the body politic was in perfect unison.

The other participants in the funding of the Leuven charterhouse came from a more familiar circuit. On the eve of the eclipse of his power in 1502 at the hands of

⁴⁵³ Jonghe, B. de, O.P., *Belgium dominicanum*, 29.

⁴⁵⁴ See one of the chronicles of the house. K.B.B. Ms. 15043, *Chronique de la Chartreuse de Louvain depuis sa foundation, en 1498, jusqu'a l'année 1525*.

⁴⁵⁵ A.L., n. 1239, f. 13.

⁴⁵⁶ Persoons, E., "Chartreuse de Louvain", *M.B.*, IV, 1466; Hendrickx, F., *De Kartuziers en hun klooster te Zelem*, 33.

⁴⁵⁷ K.B.B., Ms. 3857, f. 63, reveals that the cells had a depiction of the crucifixion on their walls, with Margaret of York depicted as the donor. F. 46 reveals that she paid £206 *Brabants* towards the building costs.

⁴⁵⁸ Persoons, E., "Chartreuse de Louvain", *M.B.*, IV, 1469.

⁴⁵⁹ Bietenholz, P.G. and Deutscher, T.B., *op.cit*, I, 234-5. For his position vis-à-vis France, see Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 182-3; and Cauchies, J.-M., *op.cit*, 140 and *ff.*

Busleyden,⁴⁶⁰ Jan III de Glymes sent money from Spain to pay for a third cell.⁴⁶¹ The fourth cell was paid for by yet another of those Mechelen bourgeois with whom Margaret of York surrounded herself; Simon de Slusa, provost of Mechelen, who was clearly a wealthy man, for cells in charterhouses did not come cheap. He was in good company, as the sixth cell came courtesy of Wouter Gillis.⁴⁶² Gillis was one of the richest merchants in late fifteenth-century Bergen op Zoom, who carried on a flourishing trade in madder with England. This had made him rich enough to lend cash, on a fairly substantial scale.

One rarely gets as vivid a glimpse of Margaret of York's affinity manifesting itself, as in the case of the Leuven charterhouse. Here, almost all the ingredients of her affinity are present: the De Glymes, the important bourgeoisie of her dower towns, and the essential element that bound her affinity together: England and its trade. As an English princess, she became the natural focus for all those in the Low Countries for whom trade with England was vital to their prosperity and standing. Post 1477, another consideration entered the equation. As the widow of the last duke, Margaret was also the self-evident rallying point for those loyal to the dynasty. In both capacities, she and her affinity were invaluable to Charles the Bold's *de facto* successor, Maximilian I von Habsburg.

Margaret of York and the Alliance with Maximilian I von Habsburg.

In 1473, Charles the Bold and the Emperor Frederick III met in the episcopal city of Trier in the Rhineland.⁴⁶³ Charles wished for a royal crown, but the emperor bailed ship before *le grand duc d'occident* had managed to wrench a crown from his hands. Charles must have been furious with the Habsburger, but had unwittingly saved at least part of his Burgundian dream. In 1473, the two men agreed to a

⁴⁶⁰ For the events which led to the dismissal of Jan III and Henri de Glymes from the entourage of Philip the Fair in Spain, see *Voyage de Philippe le Beau*, I, 190-1.

⁴⁶¹ C.f. Persoons, E., "Chartreuse de Louvain", *M.B.*, IV, 1468-9.

⁴⁶² For Gillis, see Sloomans, C.F.J., *Paas- en Koudemarkten*, I, 397.

⁴⁶³ Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 146-51, 185 and 317.

betrothal of the Emperor's son, Maximilian, with Charles's heiress, Mary. This resurrected a plan dating back to March 1469, when Sigismund of Tyrol, Frederick III's kinsman, had contacted Charles and Margaret in Hesdin with similar proposals.⁴⁶⁴ Such agreements were frequently not followed up. Margaret of York's own betrothal to Dom Pedro of Portugal had been blatantly ignored when Edward IV and Isabella of Portugal negotiated her marriage to Charles.⁴⁶⁵

The projected marriage between Mary and Maximilian disappeared from view during the conflict between Frederick and Charles in the Rhineland in 1475, only to resurface in the wake of a peace deal. In April and May 1476, Lausanne, already the scene of frantic diplomatic efforts by the ill Charles the Bold to restore his anti-Swiss alliance, also witnessed renewed marriage negotiations.⁴⁶⁶ Leading the Burgundian team were two familiars from Margaret's affinity, Olivier de la Marche, and the protonotary, Henri de Glymes.⁴⁶⁷ Henri's presence is revealing. Was his appointment as Margaret's court chaplain in 1479 partly a reward for his insider information about these negotiations? This cannot be discounted. By the end of May, both sides agreed that the wedding was on again.⁴⁶⁸ Later that year, in November, Mary wrote to Maximilian to thank him for his gift of jewellery, thereby confirming she consented to the deal.⁴⁶⁹ Yet Maximilian's gift could barely conceal the fact that all was not well. At the time when Mary wrote to thank him, the wedding should have been taking place in either Cologne or Aachen. The disastrous campaign against the Swiss had put a stop to this plan.⁴⁷⁰

Within two months of the agreement between Charles and Maximilian, on 24 January 1477, Margaret and Mary wrote to their favourite town of Mons, to announce,

⁴⁶⁴ *Waurin*, V, 574; *Hommel*, 62.

⁴⁶⁵ The background to Margaret's betrothal to Dom Pedro may be found in Scofield, C., *op.cit.*, I, 387.

⁴⁶⁶ Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 382-5.

⁴⁶⁷ Sestan, E. (ed), *Carteggi Diplomatici Fra Milano Sforzesca e la Borgogna*, II, 460-77, 484-5 and 529.

⁴⁶⁸ Auer L., "Testament Marias von Burgund". In M. Pfaffenbinder et al, *Maximilian I*, 191-2; Kraus, T.R., "Aachen und Kaiser Friedrich II". In Heinig, P.-J. (ed), *Kaiser Friedrich III*, 227, gives the date as the 4th.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁰ Ussel, P. van, *op.cit.*, 113.

“ce jour’uy nous avons oy et entendu que mondit seigneur, en ladite dure fortune, a esté par sesdis ennemis piteusement occiz et mis à mort”.⁴⁷¹

They had known of Charles’s death for a week now, but the shock had been great.⁴⁷²

Decades later, Maximilian recalled the effect the news had had on the two women,

“Sölcher potschaft die zwo kunigin [Mary and Margaret] mit grossem smerzen erschraken und fuerten ain erparmkliche klag, nit unpillichen, als ain jedes selbs gedenken mag”.⁴⁷³

It was not the case that the two just descended into depression, however, and this, too, Maximilian recorded in a passage, in which his admiration shines through,

“Wiewol die baid kunigin mit grosser betreubnus und kumernus umgeben waren, so erfordert doch die merklich nottruft, zu bedenken und furzukumen weiter einzug, die inen in ire kunigreich und land in disem unfal und unsig beschehen möchten”.⁴⁷⁴

Overnight, Mary had become the single most eligible bride in Christendom, and the two women had to ensure that she married the man most likely to save at least some of her father’s dream. Several suitors emerged, though some of the men were chanceless from the beginning. In the latter category belonged the duke of Cleves, who was easily outmanoeuvred by Margaret and Mary through the good offices of Jeanne de la Clyte.⁴⁷⁵ Much more difficult to resist were the overtures of Louis XI on behalf of the Dauphin, a match that would have netted Louis all of Charles the Bold’s lands. To stop the French king, Margaret played the most accomplished game of diplomatic chess of her life. So accomplished was she, that confusion still abounds as to her intentions. It would, after all, have been impossible for her to have desperately wished for her step-daughter to be married to George, duke of Clarence,

⁴⁷¹ “This day we have heard and understood that our said lord, by cruel misfortune, has been piteously killed and put to death by his aforementioned enemies”. “Lettre de Marguerite d’York, duchesse douairière de Bourgogne et de la duchesse Marie, aux prévôt, échevins et habitants de Mons, leur annonçant la mort du duc Charles etc.”, *BCRH*, VII, (1855), 64.

⁴⁷² Molinet wrote that the two women were “les plus desolées”. *Molinet*, I, 208.

⁴⁷³ “such message caused the two queens much grief, and [they] let out a pitiful wail, not unreasonably, as one may imagine”. *Weisskunig*, 241.

⁴⁷⁴ “Although both queens were surrounded by great sadness and fear, they were forced by their perilous circumstances to think how to prevent further incursions into their kingdom and lands during this calamity”. *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁵ Münch, E. *op.cit.*, 49.

as some historians believe,⁴⁷⁶ whilst at the same time being the driving force behind Mary's wedding to Maximilian, an argument put forward by others.⁴⁷⁷ Was she merely riding the currents, reacting to male initiatives? Margaret's correspondence with Frederick III, discussed below, suggests otherwise.

The English Factor.

Margaret approached Edward IV for help soon after learning of her husband's death. An embassy arrived in England around 30 January, and put a heavy emphasis on the king's chivalric duty to damsels in distress.⁴⁷⁸ Margaret cannot have been under much illusion, yet the appeal to the ideals of chivalry could still stir the emotions in the fifteenth-century political arena. Not with the English king, however. As Commynes noted, Edward IV was more concerned with his French pension of 50,000 *écus d'or*, and the French promise of a wedding between his daughter, Elizabeth, and the Dauphin.⁴⁷⁹ Although he politely asked Louis to have some consideration for his sister, the issue was not pushed. Instead, he sent Sir John Donne to France to ensure the king kept his word, both in relation to his pension and to the wedding.⁴⁸⁰ Louis managed to pull the wool over Edward's eyes, leaving him with the illusion that the wedding was still on, whilst at the same time pressing the Estates of Flanders to recognise the Dauphin as Mary's betrothed.

Margaret knew of these negotiations. It is in this light that the report that she wished for a marriage between Mary and her brother Clarence should be viewed. Bearing in mind the immanent threat of a Franco-English alliance, and with the knowledge that she was corresponding with Frederick III to speed up the marriage between Mary and Maximilian, one cannot but come to the conclusion that Margaret

⁴⁷⁶ Ross, C., *Edward IV*, 250, who even states erroneously that Mary would have welcomed an English husband; Scofield, C., *op.cit.*, II, 182 and following.

⁴⁷⁷ For example, *Galesloot*, 300, "ce fut surtout Marguerite d'York qui arranger le mariage de l'héritière de Charles le Téméraire avec Maximilian"; or Münch, E., *op.cit.*, 48. Note that the division of opinion is influenced by the English Channel: those who believe in the Clarence proposal are all British, although Weightman wrote that "there is little to show that she was eager to arrange a marriage". *Weightman*, 128.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁴⁷⁹ *Commynes*, II, 245-8; *Mancini*, 67; Ross, C., *Edward IV*, 250.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 251.

had a hand in concocting this story deliberately. Such was its success that the Crowland Continuator could write that

“Domina Margareta, ducissa, ejus relicta cujus animus fratri suo Clarentiae supra omnem alium parentelam afficiebatur omnes vires et omnia studia sua interponit ut Maria ... duci Clarentiae ...”⁴⁸¹

Whether Margaret was fonder of Clarence than the rest of her family is impossible to say.⁴⁸² What is certain is that she knew that Edward would simply not countenance such a marriage. Clarence had been suspect in the king’s eyes since his involvement in the rebellion of 1470, which had temporarily cost him his crown. It should be remembered that it was Margaret who had helped Edward to get back to England.⁴⁸³ She would also have recalled the unrealistic proposals of 1473, when a marriage between Mary and Clarence had also been mooted.⁴⁸⁴ Finally, Margaret would have realised that marrying Clarence to Mary would leave Edward very exposed: the Burgundian dynasty had, after all, inherited Isabella of Portugal’s Lancastrian claim to the English throne.⁴⁸⁵ Little wonder the Crowland Continuator reported that Edward initially supported a Habsburg wedding for Mary of Burgundy.⁴⁸⁶

The story had great success. Louis XI took it seriously enough; in a letter to Gent, he warned that lord Hastings’s garrison in Calais would come to kidnap Mary, with the connivance of Margaret of York.⁴⁸⁷ Margaret had successfully resurrected the spectre of an Anglo-Burgundian alliance, which Louis thought he had laid to rest with the Peace of Picquigny of 1475. In England, the story gave ammunition to those whose sense of chivalry had been aroused by Margaret’s appeal. During the council meeting of February, Clarence and Richard, duke of Gloucester, had urged their

⁴⁸¹ “The duchess, lady Margaret, who was more fond of her brother Clarence than of anyone else in the family, devoted all her effort and all her attention to uniting in marriage Mary, the only daughter and heiress of the deceased Duke Charles, and the duke of Clarence”. *Crowland*, 142. A similar rumour circulated in Flanders, where *Dits die excellente cronike van Vlaenderen* is the only local source to mention the story. Münch, E., *op. cit.*, 61-4. The silence by amongst others Molinet is deafening.

⁴⁸² For the closeness or otherwise of the Crowland author to the English royals, see *Crowland*, 78-95.

⁴⁸³ Huizinga, J., “Koning Eduard IV van Engeland in Ballingschap”. In H. vander Linden et al, *Mélanges d’Histoire offerts à Henri Pirenne*, I.

⁴⁸⁴ Unrealistic in the light of the deteriorating relationship between the king and his brother.

⁴⁸⁵ Charles the Bold had accepted England as a gift from Isabella in November 1471. B.L., Add.Ms. 38510, f. 114; *Weightman*, 128.

⁴⁸⁶ *Crowland*, 143.

⁴⁸⁷ *Lettres de Louis XI*, VI, 138.

brother to send an expedition to Flanders, which Sir John Paston believed would sail imminently.⁴⁸⁸ Commynes, too, possibly reflecting the conviction of his new French friends, thought that England wanted to come to Margaret's aid.⁴⁸⁹ The pressure put on Edward was considerable, but the king did not budge.

Lord Hastings was amongst those who wanted to fight the French and was the only Englishman who got the opportunity. As captain of Calais, he headed the reinforcements which Edward sent to the garrison that March, as the French armies began to overrun Burgundian lands surrounding the English enclave.⁴⁹⁰ There he found himself amongst men whom knew Margaret well, and who, like Hastings, sympathised with her plight. These included John, lord Howard,⁴⁹¹ who had been Cicely Neville's steward in East Anglia, Thomas Montgomery, and Sir John Donne.⁴⁹² All three had accompanied Margaret to Burgundy in 1468.⁴⁹³ To make sure that they knew what the dowager wanted, she sent her trusted Jacob Donche to Calais shortly after Hastings's arrival.⁴⁹⁴ The latter, swayed by Donche, offered to come to the aid of the beleaguered town of Boulogne, and gave Margaret artillery to protect her dower at La Motte-au-Bois. Although this failed to rescue Boulogne,⁴⁹⁵ his intervention did give Louis a fright and bought Margaret some precious time. Edward, informed by Louis, ordered Hastings back to England in June, but by that time Maximilian was already on his way to the Low Countries.

⁴⁸⁸ Gairdner, J. (ed), *The Paston Letters*, V, 270. Hicks's claim that the council discussed Margaret's 'offer' is purely speculative. Hicks, M., *Clarence*, 132.

⁴⁸⁹ *Commynes*, II, 245-8.

⁴⁹⁰ Grummitt, D., "William, Lord Hastings, the Calais Garrison and the Politics of Yorkist England", *The Ricardian*, XII, (2001), 266.

⁴⁹¹ It must be noted, though, that Howard was the recipient of a French pension. Ross, C., *Edward IV*, 255, n. 3. This was almost commonplace though. Hastings, too, was a recipient of French money. I would like to thank Prof. Goodman for drawing my attention to this.

⁴⁹² *Ibid*, 263-4.

⁴⁹³ Ballard, M., *op.cit*, 153 and 159.

⁴⁹⁴ This passage is deeply indebted to Jones, M.K., "1477 - The Expedition that Never Was", *The Ricardian*, XII, (2001), 279-83. C.f. Ballard, M., *op.cit*, 121, for Donche's extensive contacts with Calais.

⁴⁹⁵ For Boulogne during the late Burgundian period, see Clauzel-Delanoy, I., "Marguerite d'York et la pays boulonnais au temps du Téméraire", *CEEB*, XLIV, (2004).

High Politics: Margaret of York and the Habsburg Wedding.

As the English were manoeuvring in and around Calais, Edward, Louis and Margaret indulged in a most dangerous game of smoke and mirrors. The two men easily underestimated *Madame la Grande*. Louis sent a proposal to Edward in April, offering Holland and Zeeland to the English king in a partition of the Burgundian lands.⁴⁹⁶ Instead of refusing, Edward asked for Brabant as well, a demand Louis acceded to. Whilst the two kings were dividing what was not yet theirs to divide, Margaret once more played the aggrieved *damoiselle* in distress. In a letter to Edward in April, she complains of being deserted by all, including her brother.⁴⁹⁷ Yet, in the previous month, Emperor Frederick III wrote to Bartholomeus von Starhemberg, to order him to accompany Maximilian “der weilent Kharls Herzogs von Burgund gelassen Tochter geheirat hat”.⁴⁹⁸

The Emperor was being premature. Maximilian had not wedded Mary yet, but his confidence was not misplaced.⁴⁹⁹ From Mechelen, Margaret was working hard to ensure that the Habsburg wedding which her husband had planned would take place. We have the word of an eyewitness, that of Olivier de la Marche, as proof,

“et, à la verité, madame la grande tint fort la main au filz de l’Empereur et au mariaige d’eulx deux”.⁵⁰⁰

To ensure that there can be no mistake, he repeats this when he described the wedding festivities,

“Et auquel mariage madame Margherite, seur du Roy d’Angleterre, douagiere de Bourgoigne, tint fort la main”.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁶ Ross, C., *Edward IV*, 252.

⁴⁹⁷ Plancher, U., *op.cit.*, IV, preuve CCLXXXVIII.

⁴⁹⁸ “Who had married the daughter of the late Charles, duke of Burgundy”. Chmel, J., *Regesta chronologico-diplomatica Frederici III*, 684.

⁴⁹⁹ The wedding by proxy only took place on 21 April. Dericum, C., *Maximiliaan I*, 164.

⁵⁰⁰ “and, in truth, *Madame la Grande* offered [Mary’s] hand to the son of the Emperor and worked for the marriage of both”. *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 244.

⁵⁰¹ “And for this marriage, madam Margaret, sister of the king of England, dowager of Burgundy, offered [Mary’s] hand”. *Ibid*, I, 155.

La Marche knew what he was talking about, as he was in Margaret's proximity at this time.⁵⁰² He had also been present at Lausanne in 1476, and it is likely that he helped keep the links with Frederick III open.⁵⁰³ The role of Georg Hezzler, who had been the counterpart of Henri de Glymes and Olivier de la Marche in the Lausanne negotiations of 1476, should also be noted, for he continued to work for the marriage on Frederick III's behalf. The diplomats of Lausanne, who had been working for Charles the Bold, were now working for Margaret.

Maximilian was also convinced that Margaret had wanted only him as a son-in-law, and Mary wanted him as her husband,

“und dise zwo kunigin, die mueter und tochter, beschlossen also mitainander, das die tochter kainen andern man nemen sol dann den jungen weisen kunig”.⁵⁰⁴

He was, naturally enough, correct, as the letter Margaret wrote to Frederick III late in March 1477 attests.⁵⁰⁵ At the same time as writing her letter of complaint to Edward, she had replied to Frederick III, assuring him that his embassy under the duke of Bavaria had arrived, and that she and Mary consented to the wedding with Maximilian.⁵⁰⁶ In the letter, she also expressed her fear of Louis XI's intrigues with the Estates of Flanders to marry Mary to the Dauphin, and urged Frederick to send Maximilian on his way.⁵⁰⁷ Unfortunately for Margaret, the pecuniary state of Habsburg finances precluded Maximilian from hurrying anywhere.

When he was still nowhere to be seen in May, she played a final clever move, which caused Edward to make a fatal error, and which bought more time from Louis's pressure. On 5 May, Edward gave letters of protection to Jacob Donche to enter England.⁵⁰⁸ He was on a mission from Margaret, asking Edward to send an embassy to Flanders to meet with the duke of Baden and his fellow imperial

⁵⁰² And therefore although this judgement was retrospective, it still holds great authority, all the more so as it is one of the few statements on Margaret's political role by De la Marche.

⁵⁰³ Sestan, E. (ed), *op. cit.*, 499, 529 and 547.

⁵⁰⁴ “And these two queens, the mother and the daughter, decided together that the daughter should take no other man than the young white king”. *Weisskunig*, 241. Maximilian was using his own literary alter ego here.

⁵⁰⁵ Chmel, J., *Regesta chronologico-diplomatic Frederici III*, 140.

⁵⁰⁶ Chmel, J., *Urkunden, Briefe und Actenstücke zur Geschichte Maximilians I*, 684. De la Marche reports on this embassy, and again confirms the centrality of Margaret's role. *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 242-3.

⁵⁰⁷ Chmel, J., *Urkunden*, 684.

⁵⁰⁸ Scofield, C., *op. cit.*, II, 183, n. 1.

envoys.⁵⁰⁹ Clearly, Margaret wished to signal to her brother that the Habsburg wedding was now likely. In addition, Donche told the king that Louis XI was trying to marry his son to Mary, with the help of the city of Gent. The king was furious. Louis clearly had no intention of keeping his promises to marry the Dauphin to his daughter, Elizabeth.

When Edward dispatched his ambassadors he played his final hand. They met Mary in Gent, and told her not to marry the Dauphin, but rather take Earl Rivers, the king's brother-in-law.⁵¹⁰ Edward could not possibly have come up with a worse candidate. Rivers was despised in Burgundy for his cowardice before the battle of Morat, where he had run away before the fighting even began.⁵¹¹ Commynes was at his most vitriolic when he heard of the proposal,

“Il est vray que si madamoyselle de Bourgogne eust voule entendre au mariage de monsr Rivières, frère de la royne d’Angleterre, il l’eust secourue avec bon nombre de gens; mais c’estoit mariaige mal sortable, car c’estoit ung petit conte et elle la plus grand heritière qui fut de son temps”.⁵¹²

Edward had played his hand and there was now no acceptable candidate but Maximilian. In addition, Donche's information had ended the chance that England and France were to combine to dismember Burgundy.⁵¹³ Edward's anger caused Louis to make a military *sur place* for fear of provoking English retaliation. Mary and Margaret moved to consolidate their hold on the situation. Before the Estates in Gent, Mary declared her decision to accept Maximilian's offer, “car monseigneur le duc Charles, en son vivant, desira que icelluy mariaige ce fist”.⁵¹⁴ There was now little anyone could do, especially as Maximilian was, finally, *en route*.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid, 183-5.

⁵¹⁰ *Haynin*, II, 312-3.

⁵¹¹ Charles dismissed Rivers with the put down that he was simply afraid. *Milanese Calendar*, I, 227.

⁵¹² “It is true that if mademoiselle of Burgundy had intended [to consent to] the marriage with my lord Rivers, brother of the king of England, he would have assisted her with a great number of people; but it would have been an impossible marriage, because he is a little earl and she the greatest heiress of the time”. *Commynes*, II, 247-8. Commynes clearly did not share Weightman's notion that Rivers would not have brought many men. *Weightman*, 128.

⁵¹³ Although it was to survive as an illusionary plan until 1480.

⁵¹⁴ “because the duke Charles when he was alive had desired this marriage to take place”. *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 243.

Cementing the Alliance.

The Habsburg archduke was deeply indebted to *Madame la Grande*. Against the opposition of the princes of the blood and of the *Grand Conseil*, she had been an important player in enabling his marriage to Mary.⁵¹⁵ This indebtedness increased when Margaret swore loyalty to Maximilian in September, for herself, and on behalf of her affinity.⁵¹⁶ In one stroke, Maximilian had secured the assistance of what was to become known as the 'English Party' in the Low Countries. Guillaume de la Baume, who had taken Margaret's money to Maximilian in Cologne,⁵¹⁷ signed on the dowager's behalf, Georg Hezzler on Maximilian's. A few days later, a reciprocal document was drawn up, in which Maximilian promised to fight Margaret's enemies and to protect her friends.⁵¹⁸ Margaret of York's affinity, and her power-base, had been immeasurably strengthened. In the nine months that had elapsed since the death of her husband, Margaret had carved out a position of power and influence, against overwhelming odds. This achievement becomes all the greater when her lack of children is taken into account. The foreign princess now stood at the heart of Burgundy.

Maximilian was to profit much from *Madame la Grande's* support during his period in the Low Countries. Their friendship is attested by his recollections in his autobiographical *Weißkunig*, where he describes the practical aid Margaret gave him, such as language lessons in Dutch.⁵¹⁹ On the political front, Margaret stood shoulder-to-shoulder with her Habsburg ally during the crisis that followed the death of Mary.⁵²⁰ When he was imprisoned in Brugge in 1488, she even summoned the Estates General to Mechelen, "omwille van gevangenschap van onsen coeninc".⁵²¹ Yet the greatest co-operation between the two took place in the field of relations with England. Margaret's first return to the country of her birth after her wedding, took place in 1480, and has already been alluded to several times. Margaret had been

⁵¹⁵ Ussel, P. van, *op.cit*, 124.

⁵¹⁶ Chmel, J., *Urkunden*, 165-6.

⁵¹⁷ Rausch, K., *Die burgundische Heirat Maximilian I*, 175.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.* See also Armstrong, C.A.J., *England, France and Burgundy*, 289.

⁵¹⁹ *Weisskunig*, 246.

⁵²⁰ *Chronique des Dunes*, 89.

⁵²¹ "Because of the imprisonment of our king". A.M. S I, n. 163, f. 155 (1488-1489); c.f. *Molinet*, II, 70.

dispatched to her brother's court by Maximilian, who, in yet another expression of his trust in the dowager, had given her

“plein pouvoir, autorité et mandement especial pour communiquer, traiter totalement et finalement”.⁵²²

Margaret travelled to London via Calais, calling at the *Ter Duinen* abbey, residence of the chronicler, Adriaan de But.⁵²³ Her arrival in England was a spectacular affair, with Edward trying his best to impress the Burgundians.⁵²⁴ Whether this worked is open to question. Margaret was a level-headed diplomat and showed persistence in achieving her goals. There are no signs that Edward's pageantry impressed her much. Even English observers were laconic,

“Tys yere the Kynges syster, duches of Burgogne, came into Ynglond to see hare brother”,⁵²⁵

was all the Franciscan chronicler could bring himself to write. A strong contrast with the rapturous report by John Paston on the festivities surrounding Margaret's wedding in 1468.⁵²⁶

Perhaps the business at hand was too important to give much attention to frivolities. Margaret had come to woo her brother away from his attachment to Louis XI, or rather to Louis's *écus d'or*. In addition, she wanted him to supply the Burgundians with archers, and – although after the fiasco of 1475 one wonders why – to invade France.⁵²⁷ Edward dangled the prospect of an English invasion before the Burgundians' eyes, which caused Maximilian to send Michael de Glymes to England

⁵²² “complete power, authority and a special mandate to communicate and negotiate a final treaty”. Quoted in Hommel, L., “Marguerite d'York diplomate”, 87.

⁵²³ *Chronique des Dunes*, 558.

⁵²⁴ Harris, N., *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York: Wardrobe Accounts of Edward IV*, 126, 141-5, 163-5 and 241.

⁵²⁵ Howlett, R. (ed), “Chronican ab anno 1189 AD 1556 ex registro Fratrum Minorum Londiniae”, *Monumenta Franciscana*, II, 178.

⁵²⁶ Davis, N. (ed), *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, I, 538-540. Although Robert Withington, writing in the early twentieth century, quite correctly stated that there is nothing in the Brugge pageant that one cannot encounter in England at the same time. Perhaps the Paston correspondent was not the best man to offer comparisons. Withington, R., *English Pageantry*, 152.

⁵²⁷ Scofield, C., *op.cit*, II, 286-7 and following.

with further concessions.⁵²⁸ Michael was an obvious choice as additional ambassador. As Henri's brother, he formed part of Margaret's affinity. He was also experienced in English affairs. In 1475 he had commanded a flotilla from the Low Countries hired by Edward IV.⁵²⁹

Together they made some headway, notwithstanding the constant stream of French diplomats bringing Edward money.⁵³⁰ Edward delivered 1,500 archers, and some thirty men-at-arms, but refused to commit any further. The king had acted wisely, for as she was about to embark from Rochester, Margaret discovered that Maximilian had also begun negotiations with Louis XI.⁵³¹ With the other members of her embassy, the abbot of Saint Bertin, Guillaume de la Baume and Jean le Gros,⁵³² all part of her affinity, she wrote a sharp rebuke to Maximilian. The latter was sufficiently influenced for Louis XI not to turn up for negotiations. As long as the dowager was around, he wrote, there was little point anyway.⁵³³ Louis proved correct. Although Margaret's embassy to England had failed to deliver the goods, and although Louis skilfully manipulated Anglo-Scottish hostilities to detach Edward from any continental alliances,⁵³⁴ she had managed to keep Maximilian on the straight-and-narrow. Only when Mary died from the fall from her horse did Louis manage to gain ground. Ever realistic, Margaret knew that peace with France was essential if Maximilian was to maintain control over Flanders and southern Brabant. To achieve this, she was even prepared to agree for her grand-daughter and namesake, Margaret of Austria, to be married off to the Dauphin.

England and the Alliance: Richard III and Henry VII.

The relationship between England and Burgundy altered dramatically in 1485. Effectively, it ought to have been subject to significant change after 1483 and the usurpation of the English crown by Richard III. Burgundy's peace treaty with

⁵²⁸ Ibid, 288; Hommel, L., "Marguerite d'York diplomate", 89.

⁵²⁹ Sloomans, C.F.J., *Jan Metten Lippen*, 60.

⁵³⁰ Scofield, C., *op.cit*, II, 251 and *ff*. Another, rather unusual outcome of the visit was the decision by Margaret and Edward to pay for the new roof for the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Edward paid for the materials, Margaret for the wages of the craftsmen. www.pef.org.uk/Bethlehem

⁵³¹ Ibid, 296.

⁵³² For Gros and the embassy, c.f. Ballard, M., *Anglo-Burgundian Relations 1464-72*, 86.

⁵³³ *Lettres de Louis XI*, VIII, 259-7, 301 and 308.

⁵³⁴ Ross, C., *Edward IV*, 284-91.

France, signed at Arras in 1482, had been an enormous blow to Edward IV.

Commynes's famous passage on the king is well worth repeating,

“Edouard, il estoit fort jeune et beau prince entre les beaulx du monde, à l'heure qu'il fut de tous pointz au dessus de ses affaires; et aussi oncques homme ne compleüt tant à sons plaisir, speciallement aux dames, festes et banquetz et aux chasses”.⁵³⁵

To this Mancini added that Edward's demise, already inevitable in the light of the previously described indulgences, was hastened by the Peace of Arras.⁵³⁶ Well may Edward have rued the day he turned down his sister's offer of an Anglo-Burgundian alliance in 1480. When Burgundy and France concluded peace, Edward was left empty-handed.⁵³⁷

Edward's death and Richard III's subsequent usurpation did not change Anglo-Burgundian relations too dramatically. In fact, from a Burgundian point of view, the new king held out some promise. No sooner had Richard disposed of his rivals for the crown and become king of England, then Maximilian made overtures to include him in a triple alliance with Burgundy and Brittany.⁵³⁸ The fact that Richard chose to ignore an approach by Louis XI made this even more poignant.⁵³⁹ He then sent 6,000 archers to support the Habsburg archduke.⁵⁴⁰

It would appear that Maximilian shed few tears over the 'princes in the tower'. What about Margaret's attitude? There simply is no way of knowing: she has left no indicator behind of how she viewed her brother's *coup d'état*. All we know is that during Richard's brief reign, Margaret did not alter her attitude to the English crown. Much has been made of the similarities between Margaret and Richard.⁵⁴¹ If these are to include piety and ruthlessness, one can concur; but if these are taken as indicators of how she viewed either Richard's usurpation, or Richard as a person, all sorts of difficulties arise. There simply is no way of knowing what Margaret thought

⁵³⁵ “Edward, he was a very young and handsome prince amongst the handsome people of the world, at the time that he was in full control of all his affairs; and never had a man taken as much pleasure from especially women, feasts, banquets and hunting”. *Commynes*, II, 334.

⁵³⁶ *Mancini*, 58.

⁵³⁷ *Crowland*, 149-51; Ross, C., *Edward IV*, 249 and 291-5.

⁵³⁸ *Molinet*, I, 432; Ross, C., *Richard III*, 199-200. Richard sent Maximilian archers who fought at Utrecht.

⁵³⁹ *Letters and Papers*, I, 25.

⁵⁴⁰ Gairdner, J. (ed), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII*, II, 3-51.

⁵⁴¹ For example Ross, C., *Edward IV*, 128 and 131.

of events in England. It should be remembered that the one person whom she incontestably loved, her step-daughter, Mary of Burgundy, had died only recently, and that in the wake of that particular tragedy the political framework of Burgundy was threatening to collapse. In addition, Edward IV, for all his duplicity, had served his sister well, and there is no reason to believe that Margaret would have been gullible enough to swallow Clarence's old propaganda about their brother's illegitimacy.⁵⁴²

There are some scraps of evidence that Richard did have some contacts with Margaret's inner circle. We know of a payment of 10,000 *écus d'or*, a remarkably large sum, to Engelbrecht II of Nassau shortly after Richard's usurpation.⁵⁴³ The new king was soliciting his aid, a not unusual move in those days, although the contract between the two men fails to make clear why. Margaret was bound to have known about this. Engelbrecht was her honorary cupbearer, and for all their differences, they both shared an uncompromising loyalty to Maximilian. Engelbrecht's neighbour, Jan III de Glymes, went one better. He actually attended Richard III in York in May 1484, where his presence was recorded by the Breslau knight, Niclas von Popplau.⁵⁴⁴ Jan took the knight, a favoured retainer of Emperor Frederick III, into Richard's tent for a banquet.⁵⁴⁵

What Jan was doing in York remains a mystery. Only a throw-away comment by Popplau may cast some light on this. He claimed to Richard III that he had letters of commendation from Frederick III and from "der Hertzogin von Burgundien".⁵⁴⁶ Popplau had visited Mechelen twice before coming to England, in March and again

⁵⁴² Another 'issue' that has raised its head once more. Michael K. Jones put great emphasis on the date of conception versus the date of birth, asserting that "of course, we know that dates of conception and expected birth can be calculated with great accuracy". A provisional date of birth can, indeed, be worked out, but consultants will advise that any pregnancy will fluctuate between 35 and 42 weeks. There is, in addition, the fact that the menstrual cycle differs considerable between women, from twenty days, to about thirty. Based on this, Jones' argument carries little weight, and we have to agree with that early historian, Lingard, that "Clarence had invented the story of Edward IV's bastardy, a story resurrected by Richard III in 1483". Jones, M.K., *Psychology of a Battle. Bosworth 1485*, 73-85; Lingard, J., *op.cit.*, III, 575. I would like to thank the midwives of Stirling Infirmary for their advice.

⁵⁴³ K.H.A., *Archief van de Oude Dillenburgse Linie*, n. 468. I would like to thank Dr. Ubels of the archive for drawing my attention to this piece.

⁵⁴⁴ I would like to thank Dr. Livia Visser-Fuchs for drawing my attention to this, as well as for her efforts at procuring a copy of Popplau's book.

⁵⁴⁵ Radzikowski, R. (ed), *Reisebeschreibung Niclas von Popplau*, 55-6.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 53. Radzikowski believed this to be a scribal error, as Mary had been dead two years. However, Margaret of York, also entitled to be called duchess, was still very much alive. *Ibid.*, 53, n. 160.

on 15 May 1484.⁵⁴⁷ There he had met Maximilian, and presumably Margaret as well.⁵⁴⁸ Was his meeting with Jan de Glymes less of a coincidence than appears from the pages of his book? Popplau had been in contact with Frederick III and Margaret, and with Maximilian, who took time off from his Flemish wars to travel to Mechelen and meet him. Were the Habsburgs testing the water in England, curious how to relate to its new king? This is far from unlikely.

This idea is further supported by the presence of “Sir Philip Goguet Chapelyn to the duchesse of Burgoyne” in England in April 1484.⁵⁴⁹ We are not told why Goguet was in England, but the simple fact of the presence of one of her chaplains suggests Margaret and Richard did communicate. This is reinforced by a letter of passage issued in December for Clement Goguet, probably a relation of the chaplain, to “passe & repasse to my Lady Burgoyne with a servaunt with him/ & ij horses without any serche”.⁵⁵⁰ This suggests a diplomatic mission. Contacts were fairly frequent and intense, and Richard’s usurpation had done little to damage Burgundian interests. If anything, it had actually enhanced their prospects.

By contrast, the conquest of the English crown by Henry VII was greeted with some alarm in Burgundy. The chronicler, Jean Molinet, reflects this when he ascribed Henry’s victory, “par le confort et puissant subside du roy de France”.⁵⁵¹ The new king fuelled Burgundian suspicion, when, on 12 October 1485, he signed a truce with France, which in the end ran until 1489.⁵⁵² Henry VII then proceeded by attacking one of the key elements in Margaret’s affinity, the De Glymes. Soon after he gained the crown, he issued a blanket embargo on any trade with Bergen op Zoom by English merchants at home and in Calais.⁵⁵³ That this was deliberate targeting is beyond question. The previous year Richard III had written to Jan II de Glymes, asking him for his co-operation in protecting English merchants attending the fair in Antwerp. He had addressed him as “amico nostro carissimo”, and placed the De Glymes in the same category as their Nassau neighbours: these were his friends.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid, 40.

⁵⁴⁸ It would be difficult to explain the letter of commendation otherwise.

⁵⁴⁹ Horrox, R., and Hammond, P.W., *op.cit.*, II, 129.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid, II, 178.

⁵⁵¹ “to the comfort and mighty subsidy of the king of France”. *Molinet*, I, 562.

⁵⁵² Chrimes, S.B., *Henry VII*, 279.

⁵⁵³ Smit, H., *op.cit.*, II, n. 4, 1485, n. 1 and 2; Horrox, R., and Hammond, P.W., *op.cit.*, III, 171-2.

⁵⁵⁴ Horrox, R., and Hammond, P.W., *op.cit.*, III, 101-3.

Little wonder Henry VII targeted Bergen op Zoom. At the same time, Margaret of York also had reason to fear for her lucrative English business deals. Her trade connections with England have already been noted, and during Richard's reign these had intensified. In 1483, during Richard's protectorate, we find her factor and attorney, Costuy Wittenzoene, receiving licence to buy "200 quarters of otes" on Margaret's behalf in Hull.⁵⁵⁵ These types of lucrative operations were threatened by Henry's usurpation. In spite of these developments, it would appear that Maximilian and Margaret initially favoured a cautious approach. The treaty with Edward IV of 1475, was extended by one year soon after Henry had come to power.⁵⁵⁶

Their stance was overtaken by events. Francis, viscount Lovell, Richard III's chamberlain, owed much to the old dynasty. Knighted by Richard, and later elevated into the Order of the Garter by the king, he had never really accepted Henry VII's *coup d'état*.⁵⁵⁷ From the old Neville and Ricardian stronghold of Middleham, he rose in rebellion at Easter in 1486, with some support from locals. It fizzled out as the aldermen of York refused to take Lovell's side,⁵⁵⁸ and because the earl of Northumberland cracked down swiftly on local support.⁵⁵⁹ The north would not cause Henry any more serious challenges. Lovell, in the meanwhile, managed to make good his escape, and landed up in Mechelen, at Margaret's court.⁵⁶⁰ This could suggest Margaret's involvement in the Easter rising, but that is unlikely. Indeed, it would have been rather rash in the light of the recently renewed treaty obligations.

Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck.

It did not take long for the Burgundians to appreciate the fact that king Henry was not going to be of much benefit to them. In addition, the ease with which the Tudor had conquered England had wetted Maximilian's appetite. Surely if the relatively obscure Henry could achieve this, then *der Letzte Ritter* would also have a chance. In

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid, III, 6.

⁵⁵⁶ *Foedera*, XII, 318-21.

⁵⁵⁷ Jacob, E.F., *The Fifteenth Century*, 632; Bennett, M., *Lambert Simnel and the Battle of Stoke*, 37; Chrimes, S.B., *op.cit.*, 71.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid, 37-8.

⁵⁵⁹ Pollard, A.J., *Late Medieval England*, 354; see also Northumberland's instructions to Sir John Plumpton. *Plumpton*, 71-2.

⁵⁶⁰ Bacon, F., *The History of the Reign of Henry VII*, 11.

this context, an entry in the town accounts of Mechelen from 1487, takes on great significance,

“Item Ghegeven onser genadiger vrouwen van bourgoingen by overdragene // vanden gemeinen rade te hulpen haerer reyse die sy in engelant dede // comt op ... VII^C I Lb”.⁵⁶¹

Why did the town pay Margaret 750 *pond Mechels*? At first glance, it would seem obvious: she went on a ‘reyse in engelant’. Galesloot took this to mean that Margaret actually journeyed to England, but English sources are unanimously silent.⁵⁶² This led Christine Weightman to conclude that the ‘reyse’ in question should be interpreted as a “venture”.⁵⁶³ Both could be correct: a ‘reyse doen’ can refer to a journey, or to a military expedition.⁵⁶⁴ Wim Hüsken suggested that the latter interpretation is unlikely, as it tends to refer to active participation in conflict.⁵⁶⁵ Against this one has to consider what occurred in England the year when the clerk in Mechelen entered the account.

The fugitive Lovell was joined in Mechelen by John, earl of Lincoln, in February 1487.⁵⁶⁶ This meant that Henry VII now faced some serious potential opposition. Lincoln, a son of Elizabeth, sister to Margaret of York and widow of John de la Pole, duke of Suffolk, had initially supported the new regime.⁵⁶⁷ He had also been Richard III’s heir designate, though, and “was the natural leader of the Yorkist cause”.⁵⁶⁸ In Mechelen, this ‘natural leader’ met with real leaders. He discovered that Margaret of York and Maximilian had been waiting for men who had enough charisma to appeal to supporters of the House of York, and had been in contact with Margaret’s sister,

⁵⁶¹ “Item, given to our merciful lady of burgundy at the expense of the common council to help her with her war in England, a total of 750 *pond Mechels*”. A.M., Stadsrekeningen, S I, n. 162 (1486 – 1487), f° 164^v. I am extremely grateful to Mr Installé of the archive for his co-operation in procuring these documents. For my descision to use ‘war’ instead of ‘journey’ to translate ‘reyse’, see the argument below.

⁵⁶² *Galesloot*, 300.

⁵⁶³ *Weightman*, 159.

⁵⁶⁴ Verwijs, E. and Verdam, J., *Middelnederlandsch Woordenboek*, VI, “Reise”, columns 1234-1236.

⁵⁶⁵ In a private communication. Mr Installé concurred, seeing little contextual evidence for the military connotation in the archive.

⁵⁶⁶ A good survey may be found in Morel-Fatio, A., “Marguerite D’York et Perkin Warbeck”, *Mélanges D’Histoire offert à M. Charles Bémont*.

⁵⁶⁷ Chrimes, S.B., *op.cit*, 72.

⁵⁶⁸ Bennett, M., *op.cit*, 51.

Elizabeth.⁵⁶⁹ Such a man would enhance the chances of the scheme that they had launched against Henry.⁵⁷⁰ They had chosen to attack the Tudor in Ireland, the weak underbelly of England, where they could count on the support of the earl of Kildare and the strong memories of Richard, duke of York.

The *de jure* leadership of the invasion of Ireland had been placed in the hands of a straw man. The pair had opted for an impostor, and not a very convincing one at that. Lambert Simnel,⁵⁷¹ whose real identity is immaterial to the story,⁵⁷² was chosen to 'become' the Earl of Warwick, son of the late George, duke of Clarence. On 1 July 1486, he had already been present in Mechelen, and Margaret's involvement can, therefore, not be doubted.⁵⁷³ Having arrived in Ireland, he had been crowned in Dublin at the same time as Lincoln arrived in Mechelen, but there was a fly in the ointment: the real Warwick was in the Tower of London, Henry's prisoner.⁵⁷⁴ Lincoln's support would go some way to overcome this annoying detail, but, usefully, as 'son' of Clarence, Simnel had a better claim to the throne than Lincoln. The latter might prove to be as troublesome to the Burgundian cause as Henry was, or as Margaret's brothers had been. To make certain that they remained in charge, *de facto* control over the expedition lay with one of Maximilian's trusted captains, Martin Schwarz.⁵⁷⁵ He had already done sterling, if brutal, service in subduing rebellions in Flanders. With him went 2,000 German mercenaries, paid for by the dowager.⁵⁷⁶ It seems likely that it was to this 'reyse' that the loyal dower town of Mechelen contributed the money.⁵⁷⁷

It was to no avail. Having landed at Furness, the 'Yorkists' moved through England, only to be annihilated by Henry during the battle of Stoke, 16 June 1487.

⁵⁶⁹ Elizabeth played a significant political role during this period. She had travelled with Margaret to Burgundy in 1468, had assisted Margaret in reconciling Edward and Clarence in 1471, and now was deeply involved in the plot to unseat Henry VII. *Crowland*, 124; *Vergil*, 19.

⁵⁷⁰ C.f. Pollard, A.J., *op.cit.*, 355 and following.

⁵⁷¹ Notwithstanding the loyal Molinet, Margaret knew that Simnel was an impostor; she could not have failed to, with the real Warwick in the Tower. *Molinet*, I, 562-5.

⁵⁷² See the excellent debate in Bennett, M., *op.cit.*, 42-54. Bennett is a little quick to dismiss Polydore Vergil's account, as the latter actually met Simnel, who was by then a scullery boy in Henry VII's kitchen. *Vergil*, 24.

⁵⁷³ A.M., *Stadsrekeningen*, 1486-7, S 1, n. 162, (1486-87), f. 151.

⁵⁷⁴ Henry duly showed him to the public. *Vergil*, 17-8.

⁵⁷⁵ Schwarz's participation undermines Michael Bennett's assertion that Maximilian played little or no part in the affair: he would have been loath to see his German captain go. Margaret of York could not have raised the German mercenaries without his permission. Bennett, M., *op.cit.*, 112.

⁵⁷⁶ *Molinet*, I, 562-3; *Vergil*, 21.

⁵⁷⁷ Molinet notes Margaret's leading role. *Molinet*, I, 462-3.

The uprising in favour of the house of York had refused to materialise. Lovell either died or disappeared, Lincoln and Schwarz were killed, and Simnel ended up working in Henry VII's kitchen.⁵⁷⁸ From the start, Margaret and Maximilian mistakenly assumed that there was a large residue of support for the old dynasty in England, which, in spite of all the rumours, there was not.⁵⁷⁹ Margaret's stance cannot be understood from a Yorkist dynastic angle, although this is how it has traditionally been interpreted. Henry had married her niece, Elizabeth, and was reasonably considerate towards her mother, Cicely.⁵⁸⁰ The latter seems to have disapproved of her daughter's stance, at any rate, for Margaret is the only one of her direct family not to appear in her will.⁵⁸¹ Rather than dynastic pride, what motivated *Madame la Grande's* wish to remove Henry VII were the political requirements of Burgundy.⁵⁸²

Strangely, the affair had few repercussions, which also points to an awareness on the part of Henry VII that the attack against him had not been motivated by hurt dynastic pride. He clearly felt that there was a possibility of negotiation, something that would have been pointless if Margaret had been implacably opposed to his rule. Anglo-Burgundian relations did deteriorate significantly for some time, but were soon back to normal. The wish to restore amicable relations was mutual. Thus, Henry VII wrote to Philip the Fair to signal his willingness to end hostilities and treat Philip's subjects with consideration.⁵⁸³ Until the following year, the English king certainly tried to intimidate Margaret. The magistrates of Middelburg informed their colleagues in Brielle that they had information that Henry VII was planning to attack them. He had "xvi kloeke schepen" in readiness for an attack on "het Goereese gat".⁵⁸⁴ Henry had fitted out ships, but nothing came from the threat.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁷⁸ He was later promoted to falconer, and Henry VII had such respect for the unction he had received at his coronation in Dublin, that the king even considered him for the priesthood. *Milanese Calendar*, 325.

⁵⁷⁹ Chrimes, S.B., *op. cit.*, 68-9. For the rumours, see *Plumpton*, 67.

⁵⁸⁰ *CCR 1485-1500*, 39.

⁵⁸¹ Nichols, J.G. and Bruce, J. (eds), "Wills from Doctor's Commons", *Camden Society, Old Series*, LXXXIII, (1863).

⁵⁸² Q.v. her letter to Isabella of Castile of 1493 on this, which one can safely catalogue as 'spin'. B.N. Fonds Espagnol, 318, f. 83. Ann Wroe's fantastic argument that Margaret's lack of children caused her to imagine Warbeck into being can also be safely dismissed. Wroe, A., *Perkin*, 78. See also Arthurson, I., *The Perkin Warbeck Conspiracy*, 56.

⁵⁸³ *Letters and Papers*, II, 58-9.

⁵⁸⁴ "sixteen powerful ships" Alkemade, K. van and Schelling, P. van der, *op. cit.*, I, 120-1.

⁵⁸⁵ I am very grateful to both Drs Steven Gunn and John Currin for their information from the English side of this story.

The episode shows that the English king wanted to make sure the dowager got the message. Later that year, he sent a herald to Mechelen, who was handsomely rewarded for his message,

“Item Gegheven den yraut van ingelant vanden payse die hij inder stat van mechelen brachte. Comt op ... IIII Lb II s”.⁵⁸⁶

‘Payse’ was clearly what both sides wished for. England and Burgundy were being driven together by a shared concern over the fate of Brittany, where Charles VIII of France was establishing full royal control.⁵⁸⁷ This caused Maximilian and Henry to renew their alliance, and the greater need for co-operation over Brittany swamped lingering resentment over the Lambert Simnel affair. There is no evidence that between 1488 and the arrival of Warbeck in Burgundy, either Maximilian or Margaret was actively plotting against the Tudor king.⁵⁸⁸ A common concern over Brittany, the all-important English trade, and the civil war in Flanders all took precedence over previous hostilities. Maximilian was given membership of the Order of the Garter,⁵⁸⁹ and Henry of the Order of the Golden Fleece, the latter at the chapter meeting in Mechelen, which hardly suggests any lasting animosity on the part of Margaret of York.⁵⁹⁰

However, animosity did resurface in the early 1490s, as renewed concerns over Henry’s foreign policy caused Maximilian and Margaret to reconsider regime change in London. The man they were to use to achieve this, was, at that moment, in Ireland, sheltering under the patronage of the earls of Kildare and Desmond. Perkin Warbeck – by which name he is best known – had arrived there in 1491, in all probability as a pawn in France’s plan to encircle England, whose troops she was confronting in Brittany. It should be recalled that at this point England and Burgundy had joined forces against France. Warbeck was clearly already useful as a pawn before Margaret

⁵⁸⁶ “Item, given to the herald of England for the peace which he brought in the town of Mechelen, total four *pond 2 shelling Mechels*”. A.M. Stadsrekening, 163 (1488-1489), f. 173.

⁵⁸⁷ See Chrimes, S.B., *op.cit.*, 280-2.

⁵⁸⁸ John Egremont’s escape to Mechelen after his failed insurrection of 1489 is no evidence of Margaret’s involvement, merely for her careful tactical insight: Egremont could come in handy one day. Halle, E., *The union of the two noble families of Lancaster and York*, 16.

⁵⁸⁹ Mackie, J.P., *The Earlier Tudors*, 103-4.

⁵⁹⁰ At the same meeting, Margaret of York’s confidante, Henri de Wittem, was also elected a member. Anon, *Het vijftiende kapittel van de Orde van het Gulden Vlies*, 10.

and Maximilian ever got hold of him. He was brought back to France the following year, where he was kept for as long as Charles VIII had use for him. Warbeck's stay in France was terminated by the Anglo-French peace of November 1492, the same peace which had revived Burgundian suspicion of Henry VII.⁵⁹¹

Even before he came to the Low Countries, the history of the deception of Perkin Warbeck was already one of the more bizarre passages in the history of late fifteenth-century Europe. Who was this man? As he would later admit to Henry VII, he was a native of Tournai, whose remarkable resemblance to the younger of the two 'princes in the Tower' caused him to be mistaken for English royalty. In his youth he had spent considerable time with English merchants in Antwerp and Bergen op Zoom, and then, in Portugal, with individuals who had known the murdered duke of York.⁵⁹² A later age came to believe he was a creation of Margaret of York, but this could not be further from the truth, as the brief reference to his career in French service has shown.⁵⁹³ Nor was it Margaret who invited him to her court. Before he ever came to Mechelen, in December 1492, Maximilian was already taking an active interest in Warbeck.⁵⁹⁴ It is not difficult to detect the hand of the *Weißkunig* behind the appearance of 'Richard of York' in the Low Countries from the start. He would have known of the letter sent to Margaret by the earls of Kildare and Desmond the previous year, in which they informed her about the appearance of her 'nephew'.⁵⁹⁵

In her letter to Isabella of Castile, Margaret describes her feelings as Kildare and Desmond's news arrived. She felt "deliramenta et sompnio similia".⁵⁹⁶ There is no reason to doubt this, but, if the news had made her happy, then she must have been devastated when Warbeck came knocking on her door. How could she have been fooled? It is true that she had seen the real Richard only once, during her visit to England in 1480, and then only for a short while. There is, nevertheless, the insurmountable obstacle of Warbeck's poor English, which would immediately have

⁵⁹¹ Chrimes, S.B., *op. cit.*, 282.

⁵⁹² Fabyan, R., *op. cit.*, 284-6.

⁵⁹³ *Vergil*, 63, probably based on André, B., "Les Douze Triomphes". In J. Gairdner (ed), *Historia Regis Henrici Septimi*, 68.

⁵⁹⁴ *Milanese Calendar*, 291.

⁵⁹⁵ B.N. Fonds Espagnol, 318, f. 83.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.* The rest of the letter is less truthful. Her joy at meeting the last male of her dynasty is the clearest indication of her spin. Clarence's son was still alive, although locked-up in the Tower, as were the younger sons of her sister Elizabeth.

given him away to the fluent Margaret of York.⁵⁹⁷ Indeed, one may question whether anyone was taken in by the impostor. Isabella of Castile certainly was not,⁵⁹⁸ nor was Henry VII.⁵⁹⁹ John, Cardinal Morton, wrote to Margaret to tell her that Warbeck was not reputed to be Richard in England.⁶⁰⁰ The best Maximilian could do in his *Weisskunig* was to argue that nobody had seen the corpse of the real Richard.⁶⁰¹ Finally, there is Warbeck's own testimony, which he gave in the presence of Henri de Glymes, that Margaret had known he was a fake.⁶⁰² The political masters all knew this was Perkin and not Richard, but that did not make him less useful, or less dangerous.

From the Burgundian point of view, he was certainly useful. If the plotters had so wished, they could have launched Warbeck on England at any time. 1493 was an auspicious year for the Habsburg-Burgundian House. With the conquest of Sluis they were in complete control of the Low Countries for the first time since 1482. For now, though, Warbeck was more useful as a threat. Henry appreciated this. He sent several embassies to Mechelen, to persuade Philip the Fair, now duke of Burgundy and the ruler of the Low Countries, to expel Warbeck, but to no avail.⁶⁰³ Attempts to drive a wedge between Philip the Fair and Margaret also floundered badly. Even the trade boycotts which he inaugurated made little impact, probably since English merchants frequently ignored their king.⁶⁰⁴

The arrangements made for Warbeck reveal the extent to which Margaret and Maximilian were co-operating. He was set up in Antwerp, and received a bodyguard, led by Hugo van Melun, *heer van Heusden*.⁶⁰⁵ Hugo had become a knight of the

⁵⁹⁷ A fluency attested to by William Caxton. Crotch, W.J.B., "The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton", *EETS*, CLXXVI, (1928), 5.

⁵⁹⁸ She did not even bother to reply to his letter and told Margaret that Warbeck was an impostor. *Spanish Calendar*, 60.

⁵⁹⁹ Arthurson, I., *op.cit*, 68.

⁶⁰⁰ *Milanese Calendar*, 328. The possible man behind the 'Crowland Continuator' would certainly have been able to recognise the real Richard.

⁶⁰¹ *Weisskunig*, 218. There is little evidence that Maximilian actually believed Warbeck, as Arthurson would have. Arthurson, I., *op.cit*, 71.

⁶⁰² *Spanish Calendar*, 185-6.

⁶⁰³ Arthurson, I., *op.cit*, 65-8.

⁶⁰⁴ *Foedera*, XII, 544; Bolton, J.L., *op.cit*, 294. It is useful to recall that this cut both ways. In December 1492 Margaret had issued letters of marque to capture English shipping, possibly to alert Henry VII to the new threat across the Channel. The lord mayor of London approached Maximilian, who overturned *Madame la Grande's* letters: trade was too important. Bisson, D.R., *The Merchant Adventurers*, 73.

⁶⁰⁵ Wroe, A., *op.cit*, 127. For Melun, see Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 264-5.

Golden Fleece in Mechelen in 1491, and was a member of the household of Philip the Fair. He had earned the trust of the dynasty whilst serving in the campaign against Oudenaarde and in Artois during the 1480s. In 1486, he had accompanied Maximilian to Aachen for the latter's coronation as king of the Romans, and he was to travel to Vienna in 1494 for the funeral of Frederick III.⁶⁰⁶ Yet Hugo was not just a Habsburg loyalist. He also served as *baljuw* of Margaret's dower town of Dendermonde, and, as such, was very much part of her affinity too. That it was this close member of the alliance Margaret of York-Maximilian I who was chosen to protect Warbeck is particularly revealing.

Warbeck met his master in Vienna, and was present when Maximilian married Bianca Sforza.⁶⁰⁷ There he also managed to gain some financial support, amongst others from the Fuggers.⁶⁰⁸ He then travelled back to Burgundy in the train of Maximilian and his new wife. In a sign that Henry VII knew who was calling the shots, the English king issued an alert to his troops as the Habsburger entered the Low Countries.⁶⁰⁹ Margaret and Maximilian were not investing in Warbeck without expecting a return. Margaret ensured that she was to profit from supporting the impostor.⁶¹⁰ As soon as he was king, Warbeck would repay her the 8,000 *écus d'or* she had invested in his mercenary band, and hand over the manors of Hunsdon and Scarborough to her. The latter is particularly interesting. Besides its extensive trade across the North Sea, Scarborough had benefited from Richard III's generosity.⁶¹¹ Its harbour could accommodate the largest vessels of the time, and the approach to the town across land was difficult.⁶¹² It was an ideal toehold on the English coast.

To add to all these promises, Warbeck also pledged the outstanding 81,666 *écus d'or* of Margaret's dower. The latter will not have concerned Margaret much: Mary and Maximilian had given her her full dower and more anyhow, but it would have pleased Philip the Fair. Shortly after the signing of this contract, Warbeck was also

⁶⁰⁶ Warbeck travelled in the retinue. Arthurson, I., *op. cit.*, 70.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 70-9.

⁶⁰⁸ Roover, R. de, *Money, Banking and Credit in Medieval Bruges*, 21-3, 87-8.

⁶⁰⁹ Historical Manuscripts Commission (eds), *Fourteenth Report*, 245-6. See also the letter he sent to Sir Gilbert Talbot, in which he put the blame for the whole affair on Margaret. Moriarty, C. (ed), *The Voice of the Middle Ages*, 261-2.

⁶¹⁰ C.f. Génard, P., "Marguerite d'York, Duchesse de Bourgogne et la Rose Blanche (1495)", *BCRH*, II (1875). See also *Weightman*, 175.

⁶¹¹ C.f. W.R. Childs, "Mercantile Scarborough". In D. Crouch and T. Pearson (eds), *Medieval Scarborough*, 15-26. I would like to thank Prof. Ormrod for his help in this question.

⁶¹² Writes, B., "Scarborough 1366-1566". In M. Edwards (ed), *Scarborough 966-1966*, 42, 45-8.

‘urged’ to sign ‘his’ will. If anything was to happen to him, Maximilian was to inherit England.⁶¹³ Margaret signed the document on Maximilian’s behalf. One wonders what Warbeck’s chances would have been, had he managed to oust Henry VII. Judging from Maximilian’s comments to Contarini, the Venetian ambassador at Worms: none. Upon hearing from Philip the Fair that Warbeck had landed in Kent, he told Contarini that “he could dispose of this Duke of York *ad libitum suum*”.⁶¹⁴

In the end, Maximilian’s and Margaret’s venture went off with a whimper. In Vlissingen, a fleet of around fourteen vessels gathered in June 1495. On board were the mercenaries paid for by Margaret and other members of Maximilian’s affinity,⁶¹⁵ under the command of Roderigue de Lalaing. Roderigue was the bastard son of Anthoine, *seigneur* of Montigny, who, as seen, had spent his youth at Margaret’s court.⁶¹⁶ Once more, one can see the interwoven affinity of Margaret and of Maximilian participating in this venture. Roderigue’s father was a Habsburg loyalist, who would have a long career serving the dynasty. His natural son had fought in Maximilian’s army at Utrecht in 1483, where he had distinguished himself.⁶¹⁷ He would go on to serve Maximilian’s ally and father-in-law, the duke of Milan.⁶¹⁸ The fleet sailed and attempted a landing at Kent, which failed miserably.⁶¹⁹ Philip the Fair, pressurised by his merchants, then signed the *Intercursus Magnus*, the new trade agreement with England, which bound him to end his support for Warbeck.

The Burgundian stuck to his agreement. For the next two years, the Warbeck story played itself out at the court of James IV of Scotland, where Warbeck had arrived following the failed invasion of Kent. Not that Maximilian stopped hoping. During the negotiations for his entry into the Holy League, he reportedly said that he was still waiting for Warbeck to conquer England rather than enter into negotiations with Henry VII.⁶²⁰ This was not a secret: the duke of Milan even asked Maximilian if he

⁶¹³ W.O.A. Haus-, Hof, und Staatsarchiv, RR Bu KK, f. 31; and repeated in Archief George-Joseph Gérard (1734-1814), KB: 71 G 10. Gairdner, J., *History of the Life and Reign of Richard III*, 393-9.

⁶¹⁴ *Venetian Calendar*, 221. One can only repeat the conclusion reached by Kervyn de Lettenhove as long ago as 1859, “Peterkin Werbecque n’était donc que l’instrument de Maximilien”. Quoted in *Galeslout*, 317. This stratagem surely deserves more praise than Chrimes’ dismissive “grandiose agreement”. Chrimes, S.B., *op.cit*, 85.

⁶¹⁵ Including Albrecht von Sachsen. Arthurson, I., *op.cit*, 103.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid*, 108.

⁶¹⁷ *Molinet*, I, 419.

⁶¹⁸ *Weightman*, 175.

⁶¹⁹ *Spanish Calendar*, 58-9; *Molinet*, I, 421-2.

⁶²⁰ *Venetian Calendar*, 221-2 and 232.

required any help in the venture.⁶²¹ Margaret sent some support to Warbeck in Scotland.⁶²² Little wonder Henry reacted with fury when told in September 1497 that Warbeck had landed on the Cornish coast. Expelled from Scotland, he had returned to Ireland, and, more in desperation than in hope, invaded England. He was soon captured.⁶²³

For Maximilian, under Spanish pressure to finalise the Holy League, this meant negotiations with England were now inevitable. The same was true for Henry VII, under equally strong Spanish pressure. This became even more urgent as Warbeck escaped from the Tower and took refuge in the charterhouse in Sheen. Maximilian chose none other than Henri de Glymes as his ambassador to England, certain he would safeguard both his and Margaret's interests.⁶²⁴ Henri assisted the prior in the negotiations to return Warbeck to captivity, thereby condemning Margaret's and Maximilian's pawn to death.⁶²⁵ Henry first tried to have Margaret deprived of her dower. One doubts if *Madame la Grande* lost a single night's sleep over the threat. Within the power structures of the Low Countries, Henry was asking the impossible.⁶²⁶ Ably assisted by the Spanish ambassador, De Puebla, Henri de Glymes managed to extract a letter of support for Margaret from Isabella of Castile,⁶²⁷ and a veto from Juana of Castile, the wife of Philip the Fair.⁶²⁸

Margaret had to write a letter of apology to Henry VII, which he clearly accepted, for when Henri de Glymes returned to Burgundy, he was, in the words of De Puebla, "very well satisfied".⁶²⁹ We do not know whether Margaret felt any regret at the story which Henri must have told her upon his return to Burgundy.⁶³⁰ The bishop had been confronted with Warbeck, who had spent two days "sett on a skaff[old] in

⁶²¹ *Spanish Calendar*, 130.

⁶²² Conway, A., *Henry VII's Relations with Scotland and Ireland*, 103-8.

⁶²³ Arthurson, I., *op.cit.*, 181-9.

⁶²⁴ *Spanish Calendar*, 150, notes his arrival on 5 June 1498.

⁶²⁵ C.f. *Molinet*, II, 466-7.

⁶²⁶ Arthurson, I., *op.cit.*, 200.

⁶²⁷ *Spanish Calendar*, 74. "she is a woman, and it would be mean to ask ... her banishment".

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁰ The suggestion that the *Deposition* by a follower of Rogier van der Weyden (J. Paul Getty Museum) is an allusion to Margaret's sadness over the affair is highly tenuous. The mourning Magdalena with the white rose could well be Margaret, but does this suggest that Christ represents Warbeck? And if so, then surely resurrection follows deposition, certainly for the theologically well-developed Margaret of York. *Weightman*, 186.

Chepe”.⁶³¹ The appallingly tortured man had confessed his crimes in Henri’s presence, in what must have been the least comfortable moment of the bishop’s life.⁶³² Yet he had served Margaret well. This closeness between the two had already given rise to a rumour about a possible relationship, even that Warbeck had been their child!⁶³³ For Perkin, however, the adventure was over: in the laconic words of Polydore Vergil, “Hunc exitum uitae habuit Petrus Warbek”.⁶³⁴

Power in the Twilight, Margaret of York’s Final Years.

The alliance between Maximilian and *Madame la Grande*, thrown into sharp relief by the Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck episodes, did not dissipate in the wake of the dismal failure to place ‘Richard IV’ on the English throne. The pair would turn their attention to England once more in 1501, when Edmund de la Pole arrived in Mechelen, fleeing an increasingly dangerous Henry VII.⁶³⁵ Maximilian was soon involved. In a private instruction, he wrote,

“that if his majestie mighte have oon of king Edwardis blode in his handis, he wold helpe him recover the coroune of England”.⁶³⁶

Possibly as a sign that he realised Margaret’s influence in the Low Countries would not last in the light of her recurring ill health, Maximilian took Edmund to Aachen in 1503, where he would pay for his upkeep.⁶³⁷ Margaret was still Maximilian’s ally, but his own power over the Low Countries was waning fast. Philip the Fair was strengthening his personal grip on power. This had manifested itself in the signing of the *Intercursus Magnus* at a time when his father was trying hard to unseat Henry VII, and in his refusal to aid Maximilian in his war against Gelre.⁶³⁸ Philip may have

⁶³¹ Howlett, R. (ed), *op.cit*, 182.

⁶³² *Ibid*, 163.

⁶³³ *Milanese Calendar*, 292.

⁶³⁴ *Vergil*, 118.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid*, 123.

⁶³⁶ *Letters and Papers*, I, 134.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid*, 229-30.

⁶³⁸ He kept, in Jean-Marie Cauchies’ words, a “bonne distance des entreprises de Maximilien”. Cauchies, J.-M., *op.cit*, 242.

offered hospitality to Edmund de la Pole, but the influence of the 'English party' was definitely on the wane.⁶³⁹ This did not damage Margaret's direct authority too much. Her position within the dynasty was now such that no foreign adventure would be able to do harm to her authority. She continued to express her status at the various familial festivities, such as the wedding of Philip the Fair and the baptism of Charles V.⁶⁴⁰ Her authority was, as of old, given voice through religious foundations. Her request to Rome for permission to construct a Poor Clare convent in Lille in 1490, is just one example of many.⁶⁴¹ In a similar vein, she presided over the general meeting of the Observant Franciscans in Mechelen in 1499.⁶⁴²

As of old, she managed to extend her protection to the people of her dower. In 1502, for example, she confirmed the rights of the citizens of the town of Fontaine-Lévêque, near Binche, to use the aldermen of Liège as the court of last resort, a right which had been denied by the prince-bishop.⁶⁴³ Margaret also showed she had a forgiving side. The woman who had condemned the Danish pirates in Brielle to the gallows may have mellowed towards the end of her life. On 23 April 1503, just after Easter and exactly seven months before her death, she wrote to Dendermonde from Mechelen, that the *baljuw* should show clemency to a servant girl who had stolen goods from her employee, Jehan du Bruecq, a *conseiller* of Philip the Fair.⁶⁴⁴

In the final years of the century, she also had a serious altercation with Henri de Glymes, his services in England not considered important enough for her to give way to the bishop where her dower towns were concerned.⁶⁴⁵ Her *baljuw* in Dendermonde, Siger Spot, arrested a Frenchman, who managed to escape and who claimed sanctuary in the church there.⁶⁴⁶ On Maximilian's orders, he was dragged out and incarcerated. Henri was furious, and his relative, Jan de Glymes, vicar of the chapter of Cambrai, put the interdict on Dendermonde. The town pleaded for Margaret's intervention. She got Maximilian to impound all the worldly goods of Henri and Jan, which was enough to make them change their minds. All of this does

⁶³⁹ Ibid, 184.

⁶⁴⁰ Q.v. Part Two, pp. 216-8 and 220.

⁶⁴¹ Moorman, J.R.H., *Medieval Franciscan Houses*, II, 607.

⁶⁴² Gouverneur, E., *De Minderbroeders te Mechelen, 1231-1981*, 19.

⁶⁴³ www.Fontaine-Leveque.be.

⁶⁴⁴ *Galesloot*, 246-8.

⁶⁴⁵ C.f. Proost, M., "Histoire du droit d'asile religieux en Belgique", *MSHB*, XXXI, (1870).

⁶⁴⁶ Spot succeeded Jacob Donche in 1480. Maesterius, J., *Beschryvinge vande stadt ende landt van Dendermonde*, 42.

not indicate that Margaret spent the last years of her life in peaceful contemplation, as has previously been suggested.⁶⁴⁷

Her affinity, too, still seemed to be powerful. Henri III van Wittem stood at the head of the household of the three children of Philip the Fair and Juana, including the future Charles V.⁶⁴⁸ Henri de Glymes was the Chancellor of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and his brothers all occupied important positions, either at court or in the Church. Whilst most of the members of her affinity were away with Philip the Fair as he visited his new kingdom of Castile for the first time, Maximilian came to the Low Countries. On 26 January 1502, he came to Mechelen, accompanied by Engelbrecht II of Nassau, the regent for Philip during his absence.⁶⁴⁹ There the three veterans of the crises of the 1470s and 1480s joined in the fun during the *koningschieten* of the *voetbooggilde*.⁶⁵⁰

And yet the 'English party' was certainly no longer safe, even though its opponents dared to move against it only when the Burgundian elite was in Spain, safely removed from *Madame la Grande*'s influence. She could not have anticipated the fate that was about to befall the two pivotal members of her affinity in that distant country. Over the years she had ensured that she and her affinity associated with those aristocratic families who were not necessarily in the 'English party'. The involvement of François de Busleyden, archbishop of Besançon and a major proponent of rapprochement with France, in the foundation of the Leuven charterhouse has already been noted. That same year, 1500, Margaret had stood as godmother to a son of Charles de Croÿ, prince of Chimay. The baptism was carried out by Henri de Glymes.⁶⁵¹ Margaret was holding a scion of the implacable enemies of the De Glymes in her arms.⁶⁵² Of the loyalty of the house of Croÿ towards the house of Burgundy there cannot be any doubt, at least not in the latter half of the fifteenth century.⁶⁵³ Molinet recalled with admiration the role played by Charles as

⁶⁴⁷ *Weightman*, 213.

⁶⁴⁸ *Hommel*, 298.

⁶⁴⁹ Philip the Fair had preferred Engelbrecht II of Nassau over Margaret. Cauchies, J.-M., *op.cit.*, 184.

⁶⁵⁰ Melckebeke, G.-J.-J. van, *Geschiedkundige aantekeningen rakende de kruis- of voetboog gilde te Mechelen*.

⁶⁵¹ *Molinet*, II, 472; *Galesloot*, 293-4.

⁶⁵² Conflicts centred on the bishopric of Cambrai and the *stadhouderschap* of Namur, as well as on a cardinal's hat. Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 182, 194, 200.

⁶⁵³ Did Margaret recall her late husband's hatred of the family? Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 231.

companion of Albrecht of Sachsen in the wars against Flanders.⁶⁵⁴ Guillaume, *seigneur* of Chièvres, was also praised for his efforts in Liège.⁶⁵⁵ With François de Busleyden, however, the Croÿ's espoused a more independent policy for Burgundy, without regard for the plans of the Habsburg dynasty, to the fury of Maximilian.

Whilst in Spain, Busleyden struck. After a carefully plotted row, he persuaded Philip the Fair to send Henri and his brother, Jan, back to the Low Countries, stripped of all their functions.⁶⁵⁶ It would seem he did not have too much persuading to do: Philip resented the pro-Habsburg stance of the bishop. Henri died on 7 October, almost immediately upon his return, ensconced in his palace at Câteau, in the Cambrésis.⁶⁵⁷ Margaret must have been shocked by these events, but she was by now very ill herself, with only a year to live. On 21 October, a fortnight after Henri had died, she signed her own will.⁶⁵⁸

When Philip the Fair returned from Spain in November, there was just enough time to have one final conversation with his grandmother.⁶⁵⁹ Under the circumstances, one doubts if they debated Burgundian foreign policy, or the archduke's treatment of the key members of her affinity. It is perhaps symptomatic that Philip did not stay at Margaret's side during her last days: he went on to Brussels, where a splendid tournament was held, although it was reported that he was "fort déplaisant" when he heard the news.⁶⁶⁰ It was during this, on 23 November 1503, that Margaret of York died. The 'English party' would bounce back. It had to wait for only three years and the death of Philip the Fair to reassert itself. Significantly, it found a new patron in Margaret of Austria, *Madame la Grande's* political and cultural heiress.⁶⁶¹

⁶⁵⁴ *Molinet*, II, 114.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 85.

⁶⁵⁶ C.f. eyewitness account of *Voyage de Philippe le Beau*, 340.

⁶⁵⁷ Dupont, M., *op.cit*, III, 26.

⁶⁵⁸ A.D.N. B458, 17.919.

⁶⁵⁹ *Voyage de Philippe le Beau*, 337.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 338.

⁶⁶¹ For the two women, c.f. *Dames met klasse*, *passim*. Margaret of Austria had learned her step-grandmother's lessons well. She was to refer to herself as a Burgundian throughout her life. Willems, J.F., "Gedichten op Margaretha van Oostenryk en Philips den Schoonen (1493-1497)", *Belgisch Museum*, IX, (1845), 143-4.

Illustration IV.

Die Coronijcke van Vlaendren.

Hoe dye Hertoghe

Kaerle vā Chaerlois Graue vā Vlaendie
Trauwede binne den Dāne sijn bruydt/
die weerdege Princesse Dian Marguete
Hertoghe dochter vā York. 22.

In daer naer vp den drcden
dach van hoopmacne qua die
Suydt binne der stede vande
Danne ende daer so traude
Kaerle vā Chaerlois de Graue vā Vlaen-
dren. en. viij. huere vande moighenstondt
En dye Sijshop vā Halbray trauwede
beede. Ende hi dede die messe in S. balius
hups vande Danne inde eertamere die
daer toe weerdelich berecdt was inde pe-
ghenwoondicheyt vā eenē legact vā kroo-

me en vande Sijshop vā Doorniche alst
bljct bi tuncarnacie dat hier naer volcht.

CrachfchCarle

Margfeten traWede

Die capitael letteren seg ghe naer van
der hulocht.

Dye clepne letteren segghen dye houde
vander huyp.

Die menichte vā alle die letteren int ghe-
meene segge die houde vande brudegom.

Dit naerbolgende

es den ontfanch die te Sugghe ghedaen
was die hooghe en moghende Princesse
Dian Marguete Hertoghen dochtere
van York des coninc Edero acris suster
van Jngelant.



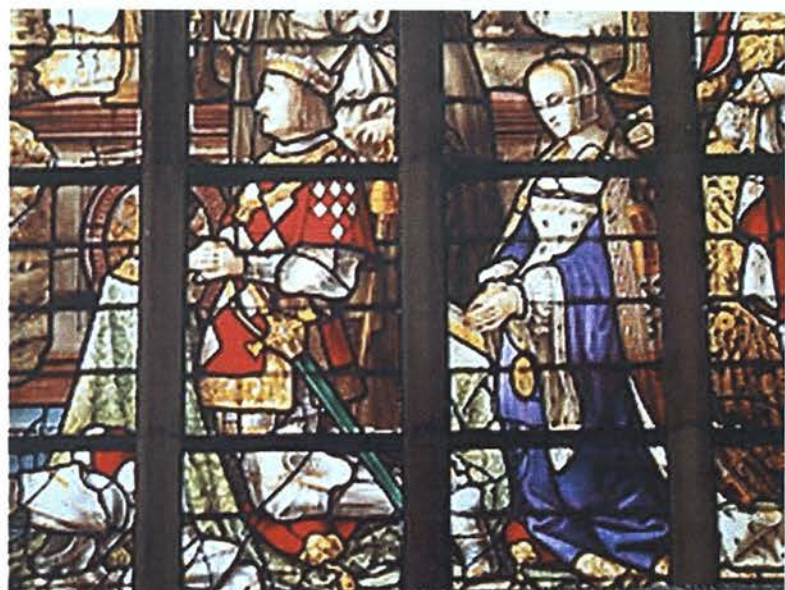
Vosterman, W. (ed.), *Dits die excellente cronike van Vlaenderen*, f. 309. Woodcut.
The entry of Margaret of York in Brugge during the wedding festivities.

Illustration V.



Brugge, Sint-Salvator Kerk, Dirk Bouts and Hugo van der Goes, *Triptych with the Martyrdom of St. Hippolytus*, ca. 1470-9. Hippolytus Berthoz and his wife Elizabeth van Keuverwijck, left panel. Oil on wood.

Illustration VI.



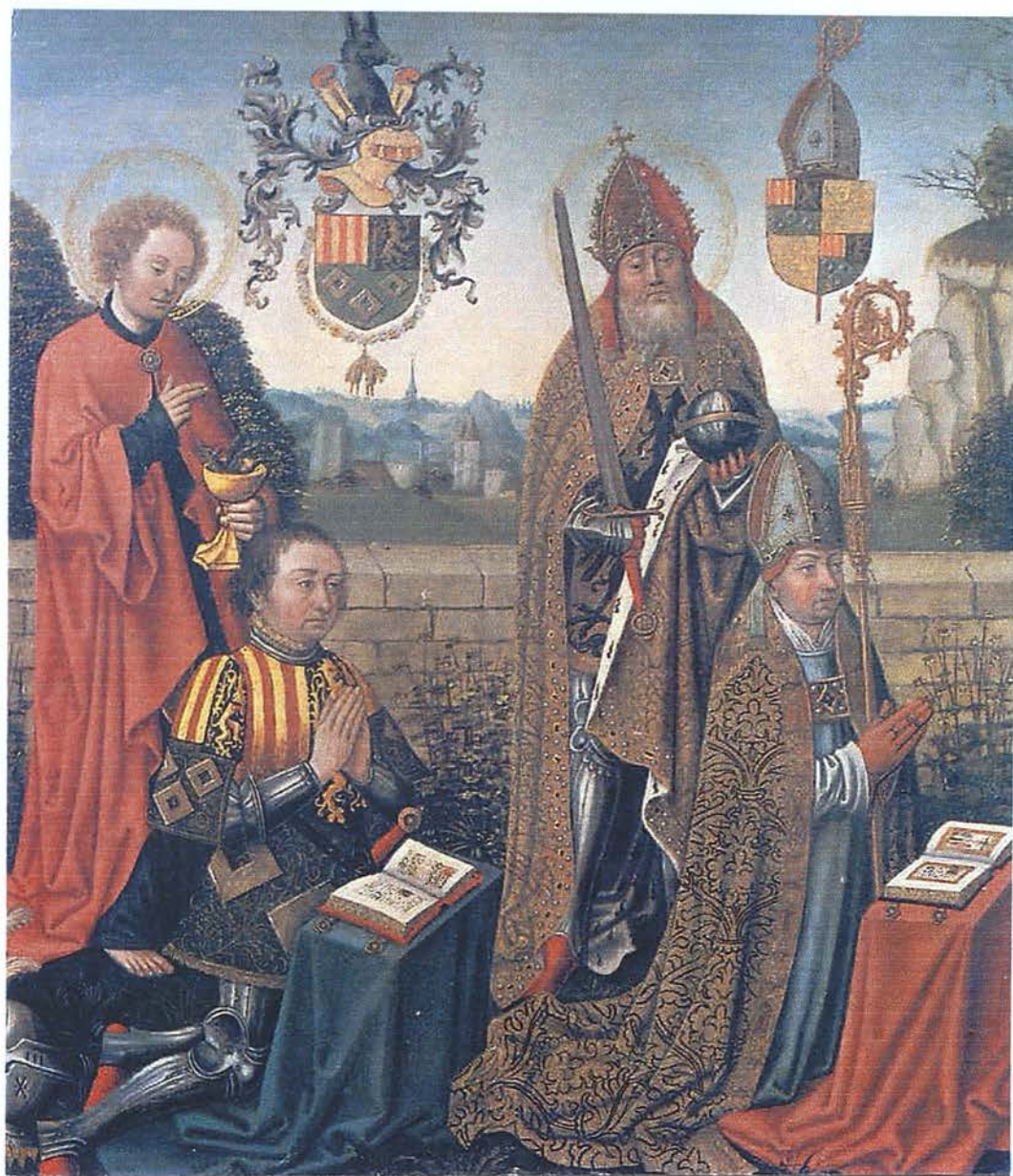
Hoogstraten, St Katherina Kerk. Stained-glass window with Antoine de Lalaing and his wife, Elizabeth van Culemborg. Photo courtesy Kerkfabriek Hoogstraten.

Illustration VII.



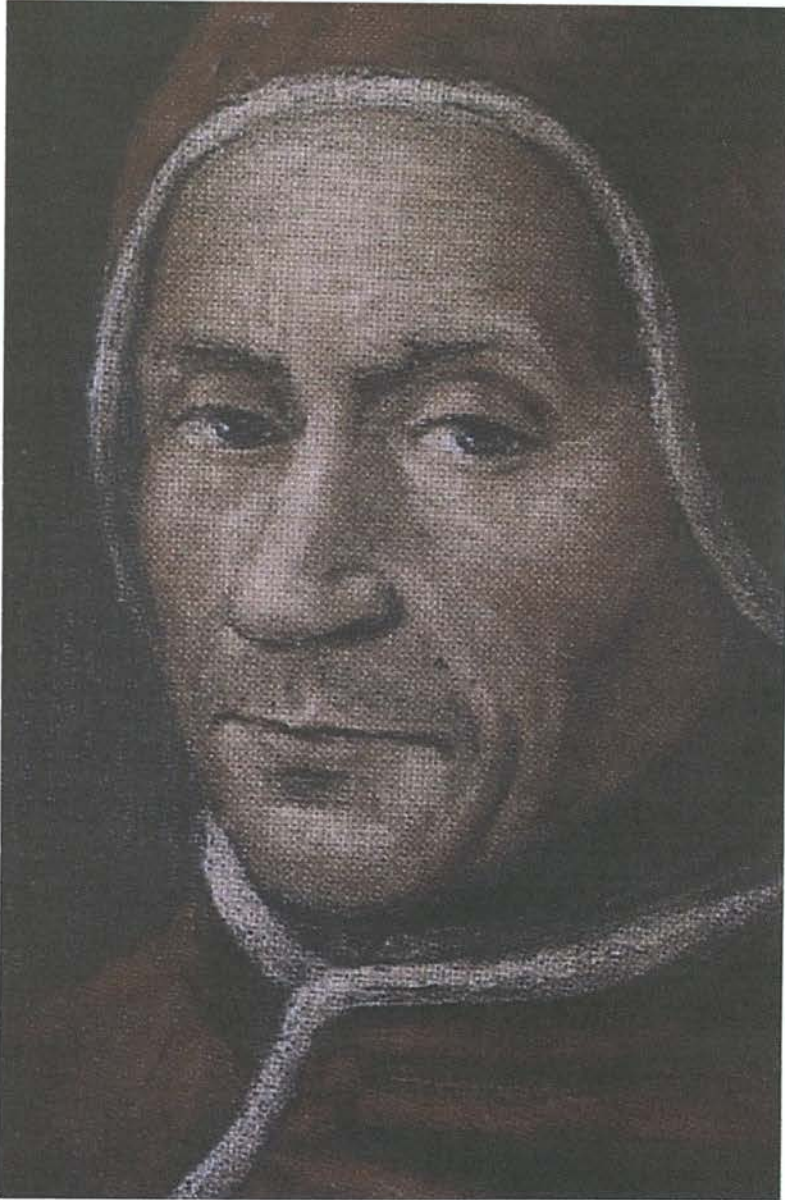
Claremont, California, Scripps College, Claremont Colleges Libraries, ms. Kirby I, Book of Hours of Jacob Donche and Philippa van Uytenhove, f. 1. Jacob Donche, a key member of Margaret of York's affinity, and his second wife. With kind permission from the trustees of the Claremont Colleges Libraries.

Illustration VIII.



Bergen op Zoom, Stedelijk Museum Het Markiezenhof. Unknown Master, Jan III and Henri de Glymes with their patron saints. Left wing of a triptych, circa 1480. Oil on oak panel. With kind permission from the Stedelijk Museum Het Markiezenhof.

Illustration IX.



Leuven, Ambtswoning Rector Magnificus Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Pope Adrian VI. Copy after Jan van Scorel, sixteenth century. Oil on panel, 89.5 x 69.5 cm. Adrian Florenszoon studied in Leuven at the expense of Margaret of York, and was typical of the humanists and reformers of the Church to whom she gave her patronage. With kind permission from the Senate of The Catholic University of Leuven.

Illustration X.



Vienna, Kunsthistorisch Museum, GG Inv. No. 880. German painter from the circle of Albrecht Dürer, The Emperor Maximilian I, ca. 1530, Oil on wood; 40 x 31 cm.
<http://www.khm.at/home>

Illustration XI.



Vienna, Kunsthistorisch Museum, GG Inv. No. 4403. Nicolas Reiser (?), Mary of Burgundy, ca. 1500, oil on wood, 75.5 x 49 cm. <http://www.khm.at/home>

2. Part Two: Expressions of Power and Authority.

The Burgundian 'Theatre State' and the Language of Power.

Modern historiography on Burgundy has revived the core element of the Huizinga thesis on later medieval Burgundian culture: the notion of ritualised life and the centrality of the arts as a tool to express power and authority. Huizinga's rather divergent interests, education, and friendships had provided him with new insights into the past. Important to remember is the fact that he was not by training a historian. Indeed, at university he had studied comparative linguistics, and had graduated with a specialism in Sanskrit.¹ His own interest in the culture of India was supplemented by the passion for the Islamic world of his close friend, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje.² Huizinga was, therefore, used to examining culture almost as an anthropologist would. This led him to believe that an understanding of the meaning or lack of meaning of ritual would allow the historian to unlock the *mentalité* of the past. His analysis of the ritualised essence of both the Burgundian court and life in the Low Countries culminated in a vivid, neo-gothic tapestry, a sparkling, intense, but ultimately empty and, therefore, doomed-to-failure culture.³ Those interested in the rituals and culture of late medieval Burgundy have abandoned this conclusion. Few would now be prepared to argue that this was an autumn of a culture.

Most have also abandoned Huizinga's holistic approach. The emphasis of modern historiography has come to rest on ritual activity as opposed to a wider cultural remit. One could be forgiven for thinking that ritual has become, if not the only, then the major theme of contemporary Burgundian studies. Leading historians like Wim Blockmans have applied the 'key of ritual' to traditional subjects such as the *Joyeuse Entrée*.⁴ Through this, they have reconstructed what they believed to be the conversations between the dukes of Burgundy and the peoples of the Low Countries as expressed in public ritual activity.⁵ Reminiscent of Huizinga's first chapter on "'s levens felheid", Walter Prevenier reconstructed the vivid social life of Mechelen and

¹ Lem, A. van der, "Nawoord". Huizinga, J. *Herfsttij de Middeleeuwen*, 387.

² Valkenburg, C.T. van, *J. Huizinga*, 31.

³ Huizinga, J., *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen*.

⁴ Prevenier, W. and Blockmans, W., *The Burgundian Netherlands*, 223, where the term is elaborated.

⁵ Blockmans, W., "Le dialogue imaginaire entre princes et sujets". In J.-M. Cauchies (ed), *A La Cour de Bourgogne*.

its ritualised expressions, whilst Strøm-Olsen reinterpreted the meaning of the baptism of Charles V by examining its ritual language.⁶

Borrowing heavily from anthropology in a similar fashion to Huizinga, modern historians have reconstructed our view of the end of the Middle Ages through “explanations of meaning in cultural phenomena”.⁷ Such has been the impact of this, that the fifteenth century is now largely viewed through anthropological spectacles.⁸ Understandably so, as many of the propositions made by social anthropology with regards to ritual and symbol seem, at first sight, to provide an eminently useable tool to examine the elaborate public life of late medieval Burgundy. Within the ‘sterile’ confines of the social anthropological domain, the study of ritual appears to offer access to the inaccessible. Here is the chance to gain an insight into the lost mental world of the fifteenth century, its reliability proven by the argument that ritual has no independent existence, but could spring from only deeply held beliefs.⁹ Not only could this explain the activities and motivations of societies, it could even, at least according to some, gain an insight into the reasons for the action and behaviour of individuals.¹⁰

It was, therefore, almost inevitable that once historians had embraced the tenets of social anthropology, the Huizinga thesis would undergo a resurrection. On a less intuitive basis than their illustrious predecessor, historians again believed in the possibilities of accessing the beliefs and convictions that produced the ritualised activities and art that inspired Johan Huizinga. Ironically, as Burgundian historiography was embracing this analytical tool, social anthropologists began sounding warning bells about the reliability of some of the earlier theories. Geertz, for example, drew attention to the fact that ritual to outsiders can never be more than a “mere representation of a perspective, which they may appreciate aesthetically or analyse; but ... cannot penetrate [the] real meaning”.¹¹ According to Geertz, such penetration, such ‘real’ understanding, is reserved for the participants. For students

⁶ Prevenier, W., “Mechelen: Lieu de Mémoire van de Bourgondische Nederlanden”, *Academiae Analecta*, IX, (2001). I would like to thank Prof. Prevenier for bringing his publication to my attention. Strøm-Olsen, R., “Dynastic Ritual and Politics in Early Modern Burgundy”, *Past & Present*, CLXXV, (2002).

⁷ Geertz, C., *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 89.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Shils, E., “Ritual and Crisis”. In D.R. Cutler (ed), *The Religious Situation*, 736.

¹⁰ Durkheim, E., *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 51, and 463 and *ff.*

¹¹ Geertz, C., *op.cit.*, 114.

of history this presents a serious obstacle: one is necessarily an outsider. Geertz's warning fatally undermines any attempted definitive reconstruction of ritualised meaning, leave alone of an unspoken dialogue.

Several historians have added their own warnings. As Andrew Brown, Teofilo Ruiz and many others have shown, contemporary observers were frequently baffled as to the meaning of what they were witnesses to.¹² Brown has pointed to the glaringly obvious differences in perceptions of ritual between court writers and urban *rederijkers*, reflected in significant differences in accounts of the same events by the two. Without even trying to differentiate between observers and participants, this sounded a definite warning about the notion of a dialogue between ruler and ruled: the two possibly did not even speak the same language! Taking this a step further was Ruiz, who introduced the problem of the culture-gap between observers and participants.¹³ What, he asked, about the many illiterate onlookers? They may not even have shared an understanding of some of the symbolism deployed. Worse still, we have no way of knowing, or so Ruiz argues. This only deepens the challenge to the use of ritual and culture as a key to understanding the past.

An example from just before Margaret of York's arrival in Burgundy illustrates this problem neatly. The ritual in question is the one favoured by historians, a *Blijde Inkomst* made by Charles the Bold in Mechelen, 1 July 1467.¹⁴ At first, all went well. Charles arrived at the outskirts of the town with his armed escort, to be greeted by an opulently-dressed party from the town. Soon, however, Charles received an unpleasant surprise: outside the town gate, he thought he could see 900 soldiers in shining armour. He need not have been alarmed. The soldiers were nothing more than the town's beguines, dressed in white, each holding a candle! Besides offering an amusing anecdote, the story reveals the hidden dangers of using ritual at face value. Ritual meant different things to educated and uneducated onlookers; it also

¹² Brown, A. "Ritual and State-Building: Ceremonies in Late Medieval Bruges". In J. Leeuwen (ed), *Communication in the Late Medieval Town*, forthcoming publication. Ruiz, T., "Elite and Popular Culture in Late Fifteenth-Century Castilian Festivals". In B.A. Hanawalt and K.L. Reyerson (eds), *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*.

¹³ *Ibid*, 309.

¹⁴ The following comes from a handwritten transcription from a manuscript found in Gent in the early eighteenth century, and dating to circa 1590, now in the K.B. in Den Haag, K.B.D.H., 71 G 32. Anon. "Extract van eenen ouden geschreven boeck van de geschiedenissen der stadt van Mechelen", included in Gestel, C. van, *De Chronijcke van Mechelen; 989-1665, Vervolgen van den Mechelse Chronycke; 1500-1717*.

managed to scare the prince, whom, on this occasion at least, it was meant to flatter. After all, Beguines normally participated in the *Blijde Inkomsten*, and this was not Charles the Bold's first entry either.

On other occasions, we can but guess at the reactions that ceremonial caused amongst onlookers and participants alike. Sources are at best laconic, and elaborate interpretations unwarranted. What to do, for example, with the brief mention of twenty-nine tar barrels for which a certain Henrick Smed was paid by the town of Mechelen in 1480, when Margaret returned from her diplomatic trip to England?¹⁵ There has been an in-depth study of the role of pageants in the dark in Burgundy,¹⁶ but that does not help in accessing the experience of Margaret of York the day she first entered Mechelen in 1470. On 24 April of that year, she came to the town from Brussels. The record tells that she entered by the *Overste* gate, that this was decorated with three of her crests, that torchbearers surrounded her, and that there was even a poet reciting especially composed verse.¹⁷ However, what Margaret thought she saw must remain a mystery.

Some historians, and more particularly literary historians, have taken Geertz's remarks a step further. Heavily influenced by the current vogue for post-modern theory, they have emphasised the inherent unreliability of textual evidence as a marker of the past. One may understand what the text says, but whether that resembles reality or not cannot be determined. This was given eloquent voice by Buc, who sees the potential of ritual to explain being tainted by the polar forces of textuality and social sciences.¹⁸ Ritual and cultural expressions of power thus shrivel to empty manifestations. Historians are left clutching texts which can be analysed, but which inform one only about the text, not about what they describe. This brings us full circle to Huizinga, with a return to an externalised ritual culture, with the difference that this time the externalised are the historians.

Perhaps. Huizinga's theory was prematurely relegated to historiographical purgatory, and it is almost certainly unwise to send ritual and other cultural expressions of power and identity to the same destination. As with much of post-

¹⁵ A.M. Van Menegherande dinghen 1479-1480, f. 160.

¹⁶ Decuppre-Desjardin, E. "Les lumières de la ville", *Revue historique*, XDIX, (1999).

¹⁷ A.M. S.R. 1469-70, f. 156-7 and 172.

¹⁸ Buc, Ph., *The Dangers of Ritual*, in particular chapters 1 to 5.

modernism, the approach advocated by Buc is, at best, rather insular. History relies on more than just (literary) texts, or at least, should do.¹⁹ In this respect, the tradition of the *medioneerlandici* of contextualising literary works in their historical framework forms a refreshing counterblast.²⁰ They have shown that our vision and understanding of the past can be expanded significantly by other disciplines. One can find late medieval ritual and other cultural expressions of power in more than just texts: there are the remains of buildings, vestments, paintings, and even triumphal arches. Occasionally, textuality and material evidence fortuitously overlap. Perhaps most strikingly, with regard to Margaret of York, is the depiction of the duchess involved in the seven corporal acts of mercy, in *Benois seront les miséricordieux*.²¹ We have additional archival evidence of the duchess actually carrying out these acts, and there is the architectural evidence of her charity in, amongst others, the former Dominican convent in Gent.²² The textual limitations on which the post-modern argument is largely based, is flawed in this respect.

Perhaps one should call to mind the poststructuralists' suggestion that one's insights are limited by what we can observe: and in the case of Margaret of York, there is much that we can see.²³ This fact allows us to come to some hard conclusions about the purpose of the cultural expressions of power and authority on the part of the duchess, not least as there was a shared language in late medieval Europe, one that made no distinction between the 'elite' and the 'populus'. The language in question was, of course, the language of Christianity.²⁴ Fortunately, this is also the language underpinning what is still observable about Margaret of York's expressions of her power and status.

It is this that Huizinga, his thinking still formed by the discourse of the Reformation, so singularly failed to see. One may think of his characterisation of Margaret's friend, Olivier de la Marche, whom he described as a man of sorrows and sadness. Huizinga forgot to observe the inner dynamism contained within this state

¹⁹ One thinks in this respect of financial accounts or legal transactions.

²⁰ C.f. Ramakers, B.A.M., *Spelen en Figuren*, 12-13.

²¹ K.B.B. Ms. 9296, f. 1. See illustration XII, p. 233.

²² Armstrong noted that the archives of Binche, Mechelen, and Lille all reflected Margaret's active involvement with charity. Armstrong, C.A.J., *England, France and Burgundy*, 138, n. 5. Jonghe, B. de, O.P., *Belgium dominicanum*, 29. For a closer interdisciplinary exploration of Margaret's charity c.f. Bousmar, E., "Marguerite d'York et les putains de Mons", *CEEB*, XLIV, (2004).

²³ Green, A. and Troup, K. (eds), *The houses of history*, 297-306.

²⁴ See in this respect the arguments in Ramakers, B.A.M., *op.cit.*, 8-12.

of mind.²⁵ De la Marche, and Margaret of York, for that matter, displayed a sober, even sad religiosity, which underpinned political and cultural expressions understood by all. Rather than a mindset characterised by a stale, externalised piety, this signified a balanced, conscientious attitude, which contemporaries liked to see in their rulers.

Translated into the practical sphere of politics, this meant that Margaret of York's piety, her interest in the *Imitatio Christi*, underpinned her sense of authority, and informed her actions. It also informed the way in which she engaged with the wider Burgundian world. Hers was an exchange not between rulers and ruled, nor between princess and town, but an exchange that caught the essence of this Christianised authority, and expressed it in a symbolic language that all could understand. Margaret of York could use it to express solidarity, power, and humility; indeed, a whole range of emotive and political ideas. For an example of this, one need look no further than the mass event surrounding the public exhibition of the relics of St Rombout in Mechelen in 1479 and 1480, and the central role the duchess played in its organisation.²⁶

This language of power and authority was not just confined to the ritual beloved of the historians of the theatre-state. It also found its expression in ritualised activities such as pilgrimages, in communally celebrated cults of saints, in the very fabric of the palaces and castles of the dowager. This one could regard as a culture of power, arguably the only real 'Burgundian' as opposed to Low Countries' culture.²⁷

Margaret of York's expressions of power and authority certainly fit Peter Burke's definition of culture, as they were a system of commonly-shared meanings, attitudes, and values, expressed in symbolic form, whether through performances or artefacts.²⁸

This culture of power forms the counterpart to the picture that emerged from the first chapter. If this showed Margaret of York's channels of power and authority and the

²⁵ Huizinga, J., *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen*, 1997 ed., 36-7.

²⁶ Margaret obtained the indulgence attached to the exhibition. A.M. Van Menegherande dinghen, 1479-1480, f. 162. I am grateful to Henri Installé, the archivist in Mechelen, for pointing this out to me.

²⁷ Arguably. One should not lose sight of the secular aspect of Burgundian court culture, although again, and perhaps inevitably so in the fifteenth century, this was closely linked to the language of religion. One immediately recalls the centrality of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, which a recent study has shown to have been firmly rooted in the court. The strong jousting tradition may also be called to mind. E. de Blicq, *The Cent nouvelles nouvelles, text and context: literature and history at the court of Burgundy in the fifteenth century*.

²⁸ Burke, P., *Volkscultuur in Europa*, 15.

means through which she could influence the political process, then what follows illustrates the tools through which she could give expression to this power, authority and influence.

The Language of Architecture.

Burgundian architecture is a rather understudied subject. Caught between Gothic and Renaissance, it has somehow failed to coalesce into an architectural ‘school’. Of course, individual buildings have received much attention, but piecemeal rather than in a coherent fashion.²⁹ The same can be said about the role of architecture within the wider Burgundian cultural world, and its position within the self-promotion of the Burgundian dynasty. Again, individual statements of power have received plenty of attention, for example the Charterhouse in Dijon, which became the mausoleum of the house of Burgundy.³⁰ The anatomy of Burgundian palaces has been examined in a case study of the palace at Gent.³¹ The rural residence of Male, outside Brugge, has also been the subject of an investigation, albeit with little to say about the Burgundian period.³² However, so far an inclusive study in the mode of John Dunbar’s *Scottish Royal Palaces* is still lacking.³³

Although Margaret of York had a connection with both the Gent palace and Male, indeed had to flee Male in the middle of the night in 1472 to escape a fire, her recorded involvement with the architectural fabric of both buildings is slight.³⁴ It would not be an exaggeration to state that, to date, there has been even less interest in the duchess’ architectural involvement than in the wider Burgundian architectural

²⁹ C.f. Jonge, K. de, “L’architecture de cour à l’époque de Marguerite d’York”, *CEEB*, XLIV, (2004), 103-4.

³⁰ Monget, C., *La Chartreuse de Dijon*, II.

³¹ Laporte, D. et al, *Het prinselijk hof Ten Walle, Gent*.

³² Cafmeyer, S., “De bouwgeschiedenis van het kasteel van Male tot 1953”. In S. Cafmeyer, *Male, Burcht en Abdij*.

³³ Dunbar, J.G., *Scottish Royal Palaces*.

³⁴ Cafmeyer, S., *op.cit*, 158. Repairs to the castle in 1481, for example, were carried out on behalf of “myn geduchte here van tcasteel van Male”, in other words Maximilian. A.G.R. rekeningen n. 14623, anno 1481, f. 11.

scene.³⁵ This is not surprising. Today, very little is left standing of the palaces and houses once owned by the duchess. Nothing at all remains of her passion for gardens, that Siamese twin of architecture. In Mechelen, a single wall is all that remains of her sumptuous home in the Keizerstraat.³⁶ Of the house she bought in 1497, next to the St Peter's Church, not a trace remains.³⁷

The same is true of her residence in Brielle, where we know from the archive that she invested considerable sums of money in renovating the palace she inherited from Frank van Borsssele. She even tried to breathe new life into the ancient keep at Voorne, yet another architectural project of the duchess of which much has disappeared. A similar situation may be found in Binche, where her palace went under the hammer during the reign of Charles V, and only foundation stones remain.³⁸ Only on the market square in Oudenaarde can one see the façade of the house she had constructed, but here it is mutilated by a nineteenth-century 'restoration'.³⁹ Finally, of the houses she had built or altered, the complex adjacent to the St. Gudule Church in Brussels has, as so many monuments in that city, also vanished.⁴⁰

At first, it would seem somewhat difficult, then, to try to reconstruct Margaret of York's use of architecture to express her own power and authority. Contemporaries in England and Burgundy agreed that building was a princely occupation, a means to express prestige and authority. Sir John Fortescue could write that "it shall nede that the kyng haue such tresour as he mey make new bildynges whan he woll, ffor his pleasure and magnificence".⁴¹ In Burgundy, Guillaume Fillastre, the Chancellor of the Order of the Golden Fleece, concurred, adding that the chief virtue of a prince was magnificence, best expressed in buildings.⁴² Fifteenth-century princes and rulers heeded such advice, aware that "the illusion of wealth and status was as important as

³⁵ With the one exception of the palace in Binche. C.f. Wellens, R., "Les travaux de restauration au Château de La Salle à Binche sous Philippe le Bon et Marguerite d'York", *ACAM*, LXIII, (1954-7).

³⁶ The Jesuits took over Margaret's old palace, and demolished most of it in 1611. Installé, H. et al, *Historische Stedenatlas van België*, 57.

³⁷ The house disappeared when Margaret of Austria had her palace constructed in Mechelen in 1507. Installé, H. et al, *op.cit.*, 223.

³⁸ Wellens, R., *op.cit.*

³⁹ *Galesloot*, 208.

⁴⁰ Ham, W.A. van, *Het Markiezenhof te Bergen op Zoom*, 46. Q.v. Part One, p. 75.

⁴¹ Plummer, C. (ed), *Sir John Fortescue, The Governance of England*, 125.

⁴² Quoted in Kipling, G., *The Triumph of Honour*, 163.

the real thing".⁴³ Clearly, it is imperative that at least something should be salvaged from the vanished glories of Margaret's palaces and houses. Using John Steane's concepts of the purpose of the palace and the importance of its location, as well as his ideas on the anatomy of the lordly residence, there is much that can be done to indulge in what he termed the archaeology of power.⁴⁴ For enough survives of Margaret's residences in terms of archival materials to at least in part reconstruct their anatomy, and enough of the context in which they stood to reveal their purpose.

The Palace in Mechelen.

Perhaps the most striking element in Margaret of York's architectural patronage is her preferred choice of architects: Anthonis I Keldermans and his brother, Mathijs II.⁴⁵ The Keldermans family, which originated in Mechelen, ranks amongst the aristocracy of Low Countries' architects. For seven generations, they worked on every conceivable important architectural project in Brabant, Zeeland, Holland and Flanders. It will not do to overstate the importance of this choice. In the fifteenth century the term architect did not carry quite the same cachet as it has done since the nineteenth. The Keldermans family are perhaps better described as gifted builders; they designed, constructed, and delivered the materials. However, they did gain a reputation, and one of which the Mechelen-based Margaret of York was certainly aware. From the scraps of information that remain on the building activities on her palace in Mechelen, we know that Anthonis I delivered most of the materials.⁴⁶ In his function as town architect and builder, Anthonis and his stonemason, Jan de Vleeshouwere, worked on the palace between November 1481 and April 1482. Characteristic for the incredible organisation at the disposal of the Keldermans family, they were onsite for only fifteen of the thirty-seven weeks of the project. This was industrial construction.⁴⁷ As Anthonis I usually designed the buildings with

⁴³ Thurley, S., *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England*, 12.

⁴⁴ Steane, J.M., *The Archaeology of Power*.

⁴⁵ C.f. Janse, H (ed), *Keldermans*, 16-9. Anthonis I ended his career as the official court builder under Philip the Fair.

⁴⁶ Janse, H (ed), *op.cit*, 16 and 132. See illustration XIII, p. 234.

⁴⁷ A.M., Van Menegherande dinghen, 1480-1481, f. 128. Anthonis received £83, 4 s, 8 d. C.f. Roo, R. de, "De Keldermansen", *HKKOM*, LVI, (1952).

which his builders were involved, it is safe to conclude that the same was true for Margaret's palace.

This linkage to other projects provides some useful comparative materials. From it, evidence as to Anthonis's architectural style emerge, as well as yet another hint as to the extent to which the duchess formed part of the Burgundian high aristocracy.⁴⁸ The Keldermans family constructed the still extant town palace of the De Glymes *heren* of Bergen op Zoom, as well as that of the De Lalaings in Hoogstraten. In addition, they were, at a slightly later date, responsible for the ducal palace in Brussels. All these palaces share similar attributes. They are characterised by multiple courtyards, surrounded by almost Italianate arcades,⁴⁹ and large staircases. The succession of courtyards created private areas within the palaces, a subject explored more fully below. All the urban palaces were characterised by a so-called *speklaag* stone or brickwork, with bands of light sandstone breaking the monotony of the red brickwork walls.⁵⁰ What is striking about all these buildings is their intentional functionality, which at first appears to contradict the above quoted statements on architecture as an expression of power and authority. They present relatively plain façades to the world, with fairly modest gates, not unlike the palaces of the dukes in Gent and Brugge, if Sanderus's seventeenth-century illustrations of these reflect reality.⁵¹

It is true that their brick-and-stone construction would have been very noticeable in an urban environment where most houses still had wooden façades. In addition, the palaces showed the owner's status through the display of gold ornamentation, and by carrying elaborate gables. However, these buildings were not quite of the scale one may encounter in France, Italy, and even England. They also share an architectural language with other, non-aristocratic, urban buildings, such as those belonging to guilds,⁵² town halls,⁵³ and even the houses of the English Merchant Adventurers.⁵⁴ If not quite characterised by understatement, then the architectural language of the

⁴⁸ For the shared architectural taste of the "nouvelle elite", c.f. Jonge, K. de, *op.cit.*, 104.

⁴⁹ See in this respect the arcades on illustration XIV, p. 235.

⁵⁰ Jonge, K. de, *op.cit.*, 111-2.

⁵¹ They probably do. Louis Gruuthuse's palace in Brugge, still extant, shows the same architectural design. The depictions may be found in Sanderus, A., *Flandria Illustrata*, II, 19 and 22.

⁵² One thinks of the hall of the butcher's guild in Antwerp, for example.

⁵³ As in the spectacular buildings in Gent, Leuven, and Brussels, or the more modest ones in for example Lier or Middelburg.

⁵⁴ Such as the one in Bergen op Zoom, now the town hall.

urban palaces of the Low Countries certainly did not intend to elevate their occupants too far above that of the mercantile and patrician elites. This relative modesty of the architectural language of noble palaces seems to have been the key in the architectural expression of power and authority in the Low Countries.

In Mechelen, at least, Margaret's palace seems to have concurred with this fashion, again if we can trust Sanderus's illustration.⁵⁵ This shows a rather simple façade, with a somewhat grander-looking hall, and rather finely-carved raised steps, reminiscent of those in the *Markiezenhof* in Bergen op Zoom, but facing the street rather than enclosed in a courtyard. As the town accounts of Mechelen make clear, Margaret's palace had similar windows with cast iron trellises,

Item betaelt Jordaen de sloetmakere van allerhande yserwerc ... metten beslaghe van den ghetrailliede vensteren voer aent pallays".⁵⁶

This is about as much as can be surmised from the remaining evidence, except for the flourishes added to the building, which even by Sanderus's time had been lost. The most extravagant statement on all Low Countries' palaces were the turrets. These refer onlookers to the origins of the noble home, the castle. They also formed a link with the rural châteaux used by Margaret of York and the Burgundian nobility. Male, for example, was crowned by two fine towers, one of which, a donjon from the High Middle Ages.⁵⁷ The hunting palace of Ter Elst at Duffel, where she spent some time during the last summer of her life,⁵⁸ resembled the urban palaces in its brick and sandstone façade, and was topped by a particularly tall and graceful tower.⁵⁹ The same is true of another hunting palace frequented by the duchess, the much larger residence at Turnhout.⁶⁰ It need not come as too great a surprise, then, that Margaret's palace in Mechelen was crowned with similarly imposing towers and

⁵⁵ Ibid, 41. C.f. Steurs, F., *Het Keizershof en het Hof van Margareta van Oostenrijk te Mechelen*.

⁵⁶ A.M, Van Menegherande dinghen, 1480-1481, f. 128. "Item paid Jordaen the lockmaker for all types of ironwork ... and the casting of the trellised windows for the front of the palace".

⁵⁷ Cafmeyer, S., *op.cit.*, 159, illustration 54.

⁵⁸ *Hommel*, 333. He gives the letter Margaret wrote to the abbot of Tongerlo, who owned the palace.

⁵⁹ Although the palace did not belong to Margaret of York, she did frequently use it as a basis for the hunt. www.duffel.be See also illustration XV, p. 236.

⁶⁰ The castle at Turnhout was another Keldermans construction, and is one of the finest still standing. Autenboer, E. van, "Cultuur als element van de public relations", *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis*, LXVIII, (1985), 195. C.f. goetelen.be/turnhout.htm Q.v. illustration XVI, p. 237.

turrets. Again, the town accounts reveal a little of what the palace may have looked like,

Item betaelt Peteren Du Parc van xxv^e gouts ghebesicht aen de vanen van de torren metten appelen.⁶¹

Despite the almost complete disappearance of the palace in Mechelen there is still much that can be said about Margaret's residence there. Perhaps most significantly, Margaret chose to have a palace built in the local fashion. She may well have come across this style in East Anglia, where Caister in Norfolk, which Margaret's mother had wished to purchase, was also constructed of brick, in a similarly understated fashion.⁶² The fact that Margaret chose this type of building for her home is, nevertheless, indicative of her wish to express her authority in a fashion understandable to the local population. This understanding stood her in good stead. If she were to retain her position at the heart of Burgundy after Charles's death in 1477, she had to be able to deploy a language of power that was understood in the Low Countries. Through her architectural patronage, at least in Mechelen, she managed to do this with aplomb. Like the *Markiezenhof* of the De Glymes in Bergen op Zoom, and like the ducal palace in Brugge, her palace showed a long façade to the outside world, indicating that behind it lived a person of substance. The protected windows and the rather grand steps enhanced this sense.⁶³ To maintain a sense of aristocratic superiority, towers, topped with gold-clad vanes and balls, hovered above the Keizerstraat.

The palace may not provide many answers to Steane's questions on anatomy, but it provides plenty in the way of location and function. The Keizerstraat is a wide thoroughfare, which sits rather discreetly away from the main market square. There is a sense of aloofness, and yet of being connected with the wider urban community. Having a palace here was a statement of belonging, as well as of authority. Margaret decided upon the location: she may have been helped by Mechelen's generosity, but

⁶¹ A.M., Van Menegherande dinghen, 1481-1482, f. 150. "Item paid Peteren Du Parc for twenty-five [weights?] of gold used for the vanes on the tower with the apple".

⁶² It became a bone of contention between the Pastons and the Mowbray dukes of Norfolk. Lander, J.R., *Government and Community*, 231 and 253. It was, of course, influenced by the Low Countries' style of brick building.

⁶³ For depictions of the palace, see illustrations XVII and XVIII, pp. 238-9.

in the end had to purchase a large number of adjacent properties to extend her residence, and could easily have moved elsewhere.⁶⁴ For the peripatetic Margaret of York, it also provided a home. This allowed her a safe haven to raise the children of Mary of Burgundy, and, in the final years of her life, those of Philip the Fair.⁶⁵

It also gave her a base to interact with the townspeople of her main dower. This was of crucial importance to the maintenance of Margaret's power base. As part one explored, the support from the dower towns formed the bedrock of the dowager's political position. It was, therefore, of the greatest importance to show her support for the magistrates of these towns, and, symbolically, to illustrate her involvement with their wider population. Arguably, the most effective way to achieve this was to indicate her attachment to the locality. The importance of public festivals to local identity in the late Middle Ages has long been recognised,⁶⁶ and, in Mechelen, the *Peisprocessie* lay at the heart of the town's identity. During her first entry into the town, in 1470, Margaret had ensured she was able to observe this crucial communal festival.⁶⁷ She had to do this from the window of the house of a certain Jan Schoeffs, very obviously a guest and onlooker.

An awareness of the need to be perceived as one of the community contributed to her building activities in the Keizerstraat. In the very last year of her life, she once more observed the *Peisprocessie*. This time, however, accompanied by the future Charles V and his siblings, she could watch from the comfort of the palace on the Keizerstraat.⁶⁸ The accommodating organisers had even diverted the course of the procession to allow *Madame la Grande* to stay at home!⁶⁹ Thus, the dowager had been able to acknowledge local tradition, yet at the same time had subtly intruded upon it. This type of compromise allowed both urban organisers and aristocratic onlooker to retain their own sense of dignity and authority.

⁶⁴ Steurs, F., *op.cit.*, 8-9, n. 1. Mechelen's contributions to Margaret's building plans were far from unique. The city of Brussels, for example, contributed generously to the costs of Engelbrecht II of Nassau's palace in the town. Martiny, V. and Dierkens-Aubry, F., *Bruxelles. L'architecture des origines à 1900*, 60.

⁶⁵ For this, q.v. Part One, p. 48.

⁶⁶ A.o. Davis, N.Z., "From 'popular religion' to religious cultures". In S. Ozment (ed), *Reformation Europe*, 324; Ramakers, B.A.M., *op.cit.*, 8-9.

⁶⁷ A.M. S.R. 1469-1470, f. 156-7 and 172.

⁶⁸ No longer officially hers, of course, but that was just in name.

⁶⁹ A.M. S.R. 1502-03, f. 184. C.f. Autenboer, E. van, *Volksfeesten en rederijkers te Mechelen (1400-1600)*, 30.

In 1497, the ageing dowager decided she needed smaller accommodation. Surprisingly, even the completely disappeared house that Margaret moved into yields a little information about the location and function of her Mechelen residences. Separated from the St Peter's church by a narrow street, Margaret's house was linked to it by means of a small, covered wooden bridge, culminating in an oratory, protruding into the chancel of the church.⁷⁰ This was not an unusual construction. In Brugge, Louis Gruuthuse's palace still shows his, rather grand, oratory protruding into the church of Our Lady, linked to his palace by a stone bridge. In England, Edward IV, possibly influenced by Gruuthuse, had a similar oratory constructed in the St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle.⁷¹

Although Margaret's oratory in Mechelen has long since disappeared, one may still catch a glimpse thereof. Just such an oratory is depicted on folio 14^v of a book of hours that once belonged to Mary of Burgundy, looking down into the nave of a church. In the window is seated a richly-attired woman, watching a man and woman at prayer in the church.⁷² There has been much debate whether the woman is Margaret of York or Mary of Burgundy, but the composition leaves little doubt.⁷³ The man and woman depicted in the church are duplicated in a woodcut in the 1531 Vosterman imprint of *Dit sijn die wonderlycke oorloghen*, where they unequivocally depict Mary and Maximilian.⁷⁴ This is not to argue that the oratory depicted is that in Mechelen, only that its function is reflected and its potential shown in the miniature. What is striking is just how much it mirrors the functionality of Margaret's palace across the road: the same emphasis on a finely-tuned balance between private and public, between participation and aloofness. The smaller scale of the new house was also an important statement.⁷⁵ Widows were expected to show some modesty and a

⁷⁰ Carster, W. van, *Namen der straten van Mechelen*, 216; Installé, H. et al, *op.cit*, 223. When the construction of Margaret of Austria's demanded the demolition of Margaret of York's house, the bridge and oratory were kept, and were used by her step-granddaughter. Eichberger, D., *Leben mit Kunst, Wirken durch Kunst*, 116-9.

⁷¹ Thurley, S., *op.cit*, 17, figures 20 and 21. C.f. Vale, M., "An Anglo-Burgundian Nobleman and Art Patron: Louis de Bruges, Lord of la Gruuthuyse and Earl of Winchester". In Barron, C. and Saul, N. (eds), *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages*.

⁷² O.N.B. Codex Vindobonensis 1857, *The Hours of Mary of Burgundy*, f. 14^v. C.f. Inglis, E., *The Hours of Mary of Burgundy*, 43; Madou, M., "Marie et l'héritage de Bourgogne". In M. Madou, *Bruges à Beaune*, 92-4. See illustration, XIX, p. 240.

⁷³ Madou, M., *op.cit*, 92.

⁷⁴ K.B.B. VB 9042C, f. 22^v.

⁷⁵ As the first chapter showed, Margaret was hardly forced into the decision through lack of money.

good deal of humble devotion. By moving into smaller premises, Margaret of York answered to expectation.

Margaret's involvement in 1477 with the erection of stained glass windows in the collegiate St Rombout's church marks a significant contribution by the duchess to the built environment of her dower town.⁷⁶ It also represents her attempt at creating a new mausoleum for her husband's dynasty after the loss of Dijon to the French crown.⁷⁷ She paid for a window near the central aisle, which depicted the duchess and her late husband, accompanied by scrolls with their respective devices: 'Bien en avienne', and 'Je lai empris'. Under the cross, which hung from the ceiling of the central tower, windows depicting Philip the Good and Isabella of Portugal, as well as yet another one of Charles the Bold, were installed, followed somewhat later by windows with Maximilian and Mary, and another one with their children.

Here, in the heart of the ecclesiastical world of the town, where the relics of its patron saint were housed, the dowager showed both her love and loyalty for her husband's dynasty, and her adherence and appreciation for the town that had sheltered her in the fraught days following Charles the Bold's death in 1477. In this space constructed for worship, the barriers between *Madame la Grande* and the population of her dower town, so meticulously maintained in the architecture of her own palace and house, dissolved to form a new unity. A new unity, but not one that allowed the Mechelenaars to forget the authority of Margaret of York.

The Castle and Hof van de Heren van Voorne.

If Margaret of York's palace and house in Mechelen reflect her relationship with that particular town, then the building works in Brielle show yet another side of the duchess and her use of architecture to express her power and authority. Perhaps the most curious architectural project of the duchess in her northern dowerland was with

⁷⁶ For these now lost windows, c.f. Munck, J.J. de, *Provincie, Stad ende District van Mechelen*, II, 141-5. Margaret was in the habit of donating glass windows, as was recently explored in an article by Mario Damen. In her dower lands, convents and churches, and religious houses under the patronage of members of her affinity were all given windows. Damen, M., "Vorstelijke vensters", forthcoming publication. C.f. the lost windows depicting Margaret and Charles in Dendermonde. Dhanens, E., *Inventaris van het Kunstpatrimonium van Oostvlaanderen. vol. IV, Dendermonde*, 114.

⁷⁷ Similar windows were installed in the church in Dendermonde. Maesterius, J., *Beschryvinge vande stad ende landt van Dendermonde*, 78.

the ancient keep in Voorne.⁷⁸ Situated on a seven metre high motte stood a keep with its roots in the twelfth century, which was demolished during the sixteenth. Around it was a curtain wall entrance through which access was gained by two seven-metre high gate towers, beyond which lay the great hall. This whole structure was severely damaged in a terrible gale in 1474, which also inflicted significant damage on the dykes protecting the island of Voorne.⁷⁹

That Margaret of York decided to invest in a restoration of this decrepit and, above all, old-fashioned residence is, at best, strange. Could this careful approach to existing residences reflect an English tradition? Edward IV certainly constructed new palaces, but also invested substantial sums in restorations, including at Fotheringhay. In addition, Margaret could have considered the defensive value of the castle: Voorne was believed to be under threat from England during the mid-1480s.⁸⁰ Whatever the reason, she really wanted the old castle to be completely revamped. Thatched roofs gave way to slate, and new buildings were erected for her tailors and wardrobe, as well as a room to keep her spices.⁸¹ The old donjon was relegated to a prison, and a new, more extensive tower rose in the courtyard, in which there was a reception hall and private quarters. From the little information that has remained, archaeological and archival, a surprising amount of information may be teased out.

Quite clearly, Margaret of York wished for a non-urban residence of some quality in her northern dower, which could also withstand potential threats.⁸² The functionality of this building was, therefore, quite different from the palace in Mechelen. The need to impress was there, as this was a tall building, but above all the anatomy of the castle makes it clear that this was a base for Margaret's court. Here there was enough space to hold her numerous courtiers, and here she could live in the style to which she was accustomed. On a smaller scale than in the ducal palace in Gent, where she spent much of her life as wife of Charles the Bold, the castle in Voorne had a modern kitchen, a brewery, a larder, and, for a specifically 'Hollands'

⁷⁸ www.kastelenteam.nl/030/oostvoorne.htm

⁷⁹ Don, P., *Voorne-Putten*, 44.

⁸⁰ Alkemade, K. van and Schelling, P. van der, *Beschrijving van de stad Brielle*, I, 120-1. See also Part One, 119.

⁸¹ C.f. Appendix Two, p. 385.

⁸² This was a house built to protect, but not a traditional fortification. Steane, J.M., *op.cit.*, 109.

touch, a milk parlour. Perhaps most important of all, back passages were built which alleviated the need for servants to walk through Margaret's own chambers.

What the castle provided above all was privacy, although not quite in the modern meaning of the word, for Margaret would still have had to share the building with a substantial staff. That this was important to her becomes clear from an episode in Brielle itself. There she owned an urban complex, known as the *Hof van de Heren van Voorne*.⁸³ As *dame* of Voorne, she inherited most of the building, except for the *raetkamer*, a house within the complex that had been the private property of the previous lord. This she bought off the incumbent, a certain Jan Michielszoon, for no fewer than 142 *pond Vlaamsch* in 1479.⁸⁴ That it was privacy that moved her to spend this exorbitant amount is made clear by the town account of Brielle. The house

“staende an mijnen genadige vrouwe vertreck welcke husinge men an t hoff niet ontberen en mach noch van den hove niet scheidten en mochte ... daer men uiter groter camer dair mijne voirscreven genadige vrouwe logiert ende es hoir slaepkamer gaet in de selve husinge”.⁸⁵

Quite clearly, her bedroom, that place of intrigue at the English court, was Margaret's and hers alone!

The *Hof* in Brielle offered Margaret one great pleasure: Royal or Real Tennis.⁸⁶ The game was “the game of the wealthy and privileged” of late medieval Europe.⁸⁷ It had originated in northern France, from where it had taken high society by storm. In England, the aristocracy had played it since the reign of Henry V. During the festivities surrounding Margaret's wedding, it had been played in the palace in Brugge.⁸⁸ Baldassar Castiglione confirmed its status as a sport of the wealthy by giving it an appearance in his *Book of the Courtier*.⁸⁹ Although secondary sources

⁸³ A monograph was dedicated to this building: Arkenbout, A.A., “Het hof van de heren van Voorne te Brielle in de jaren 1373-1564”, *HRT*, II, (1971).

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 55.

⁸⁵ “adjacent to the quarters of my merciful lady, [the use of] which house should not be denied to the court, nor should it be separated from it ... as from the large room used by my aforementioned lady and from her bedroom there is a passage in the same house”. A.V.P. 1280-1572, inv.nr. 1404, f. 126.

⁸⁶ Triercim, M.C. van, *Het hof van de Heren van Voorne te Brielle. Een klein archeologisch onderzoek aan de Kaatsbaan te Brielle*.

⁸⁷ Butler, L. St.J., and Wordie, P.J. (eds), *The Royal Game*, 124.

⁸⁸ Thurley, S., *op.cit*, 185.

⁸⁹ Castiglione, B, *Het boek van de Hoveling*, 63.

have mentioned a tennis court in Mechelen, this cannot be confirmed.⁹⁰ In Gent, the duchess could use the court in the palace of Ten Walle, and she probably determined to have a good court of her own when her residency in Gent became infrequent after 1477.⁹¹ There was a pre-existing court in Brielle, where,

“Bij bevele van mijnen genadige vrouwe voirscreven gemaect een nyue caetspel want ouwe caetspel al vergaen was. Dat selve caetspel gestylt, geplanct, ende gehaelt”.⁹²

The roofs of tennis courts were usually made from wood, but here, appropriately for the region, the roof of the court was covered in pan tiles.

This type of architectural feature introduces us to a new aspect of the role of architecture in the portrayal of power. Tennis courts were large, conspicuous structures. In many towns in the Low Countries, there were communal buildings, but few could afford the luxury of a private court.⁹³ In addition, the *courte paume*, requiring a racket unlike the *jeu de bonde*, was, initially at least, the preserve of a small elite.⁹⁴ This highly visible building unmistakably displayed the status of the woman who owned it, and proved how modern, how fashionable *Madame la Grande* was.⁹⁵ Such an ostentatious show of status must have impressed. One may even wonder whether for the redoubtable Margaret of York there was a further motive. The game originated in the *Pas d'Armes*, a form of tournament naturally closed to female participants.⁹⁶ Was tennis, open to male and female players, a way for the duchess to step across the gender boundary without causing affront? Seen within the light of her career in Burgundy, both before and after her husband's death, such thoughts may not be as fanciful as they seem at first. Tennis also kept her physically

⁹⁰ Kleyn, D.M., *Richard of England*, 67.

⁹¹ Sanderus' engraving of the palace in Brugge also shows a tennis court. I would like to thank Dr. Malcolm Vale for drawing my attention to this fact.

⁹² “At the command of my merciful lady aforementioned, made a tennis court as the old tennis court was ruined. The same tennis court designed, carpentry and fetching coming to”. A.V.P. 1280-1572, inv.nr. 1404, f. 35.

⁹³ Geerts, K., *De spelende mens in de Boergondische Nederlanden*, 25.

⁹⁴ Desees, J., *Les jeux sportifs de pelote-paume en Belgique du XIVe au XIXe siècle*, 19-20.

⁹⁵ For an early example of this, see the ducal palace at Arras. Deruelle, N., “Ouvrages et reparations ordonnés par le duc de Bourgogne dans ses résidences à Arras entre 1401 et 1417”. In M.-M. Castellani and J.-P. Martin (eds), *Arras au Moyen Âge*, 53.

⁹⁶ Butler, L. St.J., and Wordie, P.J. (eds), *op.cit*, 9.

fit, and was not without its challenges: it caused several fatalities, amongst those the ten-year-old heir of Lord Stanley.⁹⁷

Besides the tennis court, the *Hof* in Brielle could boast most of the modern facilities that were also evident at the nearby castle in Voorne. In particular, Margaret ensured that the heating and plumbing facilities were updated. This seems to have been a preoccupation, which she brought with her from England. There, successive monarchs had been concerned with the sanitary provisions in their residences. Henry III had toilets with water conduits installed as long ago as 1234, and, at Westminster and Sheen, Edward III had access to baths with taps.⁹⁸ Her brother, Edward IV, was also keen on bathing, and one of the treats available to Louis, *heer van Gruuthuse*, during his visit to Edward in Windsor in 1472, was a bath with taps.⁹⁹ Early on in his reign, around 1461, Edward had new, external toilets built at his new palace at Eltham.¹⁰⁰ This concern extended to Fotheringhay, where he renewed the latrines in 1463, when Margaret was still in residence.¹⁰¹

In the damp climate of Holland, Margaret's first concern was with the heating system.¹⁰² Upon becoming *dame* of Voorne, she had a new fireplace and chimney installed in the great hall, as the old one was "seer nat ende vochtig".¹⁰³ The roof was retiled with slates, and tiles were laid on the floor. To cap the renovation, the walls were hidden behind insulating wood panelling. At the back of the hall, which was the dowager's main quarter in the *Hof*, toilets were constructed, sitting above a drain with running water. These were also accessible from her bedroom, which was separated from the hall by a fashionably large, external stairs.

Yet this modern and luxurious residence served a double, arguably even a triple function. Besides providing Margaret of York with a comfortable home when visiting Brielle, it also showed her status and wealth. Once more, *Madame la Grande* opted for a brick façade with white sandstone bands, and, once more, the complex

⁹⁷ Ibid, 77.

⁹⁸ Thurley, S., *op.cit*, 163, 167.

⁹⁹ B.L. Add.MS 6113, f. 106-7.

¹⁰⁰ Thurley, S., *op.cit*, 179.

¹⁰¹ Colvin, M. (ed), *The History of the King's Works*, II, 650.

¹⁰² Water was a major problem. The courtyard was impassable in the winter due to flooding, a problem solved by Margaret in 1481. Even then, there are frequent reports of water rising above the floorboards of the house. Arkenbout, A.A., *Brielle en het Voornse Land*, 8-11.

¹⁰³ "very wet and damp". Quoted in Ibid, 8. This made a pleasant change from the rather dirty braziers that stood in her room in Gent in 1468. Laporte, D. et al, *op.cit*, 167.

was topped by a tower.¹⁰⁴ This was twenty metres high and would have been highly conspicuous in the flat landscape of Voorne. It was crowned with a gilded cockerel, carrying the arms of the duchess. Here one had an easily recognisable noble residence, calling to mind her palace in Mechelen. Perhaps as importantly, it was also a useful political tool. Several aristocratic families were given the use of the *Hof* by Margaret, presumably as a gesture of goodwill. Rooms were named after the De Glymes, Wassenaar, and the Culemborg families, all, as part one showed, important allies of the duchess.¹⁰⁵

Modernity, Toilets and Gardens.

The extant information on the *Hof* in Brielle allows for a more detailed analysis than is possible for the palace in Mechelen. Here the anatomy of the building can be reconstructed to some extent. This throws additional light upon the use of architecture by *Madame la Grande* as a tool to express her status and authority. In England, she would have become aware of the centrality of architecture in the expression of power and authority from a young age. Her father's palace on the Thames in London, Baynards Castle, was one of the grandest in the city.¹⁰⁶ Once more, this building has been lost, but enough information remains to allow a reasonable reconstruction as to location and function. It had been in the possession of that early humanist and great art lover, Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, who completely reconstructed the building in 1428, topping it with tall towers. When Margaret came to reside here in the 1460s, this was still a new building, and still a statement of aristocratic wealth and power.¹⁰⁷

The castle at Fotheringhay, where she grew up, was another fine structure. Her Belgian biographer, Luc Hommel, could not have been further from the truth by describing it as "austere".¹⁰⁸ The castle was somewhat dated, having last been

¹⁰⁴ It is uncertain whether a member of the Keldermans family worked on the *Hof*, but this cannot be dismissed as Matthijs II delivered stones for the St Catherine Church in Brielle in 1502. Janse, H (ed), *op.cit.*, 178.

¹⁰⁵ Arkenbout, A.A., *Brielle en het Voornse Land*, 11; and Damen, M., *op.cit.*, 14, for Wassenaar.

¹⁰⁶ Dyson, T., *The Medieval London Waterfront*, 9-10. See illustration XX, p. 241.

¹⁰⁷ For the history of Baynards c.f. Johnson, P.A., *Duke Richard of York*, 66 and Griffiths, R., *The Reign of Henry VI*, 299.

¹⁰⁸ *Hommel*, 7. See Illustration XXI, p. 242.

restored by Edmund of Langley in the early part of the century.¹⁰⁹ However, as soon as Edward IV gained the crown, he commenced an extensive reconstruction programme, aimed at modernising the building for his mother, Cecily Neville, living there at the time. This reconstruction commenced in 1463, and ended in 1466, only months after Margaret had left Fotheringhay to take up residence with Edward's queen in Greenwich. Amongst the new facilities were toilets, a kitchen and a bath, all elements by which Margaret was to set great store whilst living in the Low Countries. The same was true for the construction of back passages for the servants, which ended their continuous procession through the family's quarters. Similar reconstruction programmes were under way in Greenwich for Elizabeth Woodville, whilst Margaret was living with the queen.

The use of stained glass windows as a means of portraying power or identity were another tool Margaret first learned to use in England. From her mother, Margaret would have known about the art for religio-political purposes, whilst her father made her aware of its dynastic power.¹¹⁰ In the parish church of St Laurence in Ludlow, the seat of his vast lands in Wales and the Welsh Marches, Richard, duke of York, had installed some of the finest stained glass windows of fifteenth-century England.¹¹¹ Here, the saints Margaret's father venerated are interspersed with depictions of members and crests of the house of York and of the house of Mortimer, which preceded it as lords in the Marches. The glass is placed in central, conspicuous positions in the church, calling to mind Margaret's own experiment with the use of stained glass in Mechelen three decades later. Of course, there were plenty of Burgundian examples as well. As recently explored by Mario Damen, there was a veritable tradition of donating glass windows to churches and convents in the Low Countries.¹¹² Art as a means to propagate political and dynastic power was no novelty in Burgundy either. Drawing from these two rich sources, the duchess had ample tools to express her own status and power.

¹⁰⁹ C.f. Colvin, M. (ed), *The History of the King's Works*, II, 650; Bonney, H.K., *Historic Notices in Reference to Fotheringhay*, 23.

¹¹⁰ This distinction should not be taken too literally. Cecily Neville also made use of stained glass to make dynastic statements. C.f. Bonney, H.K., *op.cit.*, 43-4.

¹¹¹ Ganderton, E.W., and Lafond, J., *Ludlow Stained and Painted Glass*, *passim*.

¹¹² Damen, M., *op.cit.*, *passim*.

Naturally, Margaret of York did not have to wait until her husband's death to exercise some architectural control, although initially her role was restricted to minor interior design statements. This has been traced in some detail for the ducal residence in Gent, the *Hof Ten Walle*.¹¹³ The wall outside the duchess' chambers in the palace had been whitewashed just before her arrival in the Low Countries in 1468. In 1475, Margaret of York ordered the whole to be turned into a black-and-white creation.¹¹⁴ Does this imply a sgraffiti wall? If it does, and the possibility is a strong one, then this shows Margaret displaying an awareness of the developments of Italian architecture.¹¹⁵ Such a striking and very public display of fashionable awareness carried its own statement. At a more private level, Margaret had running water installed in her rooms in the palace, which may suggest the presence of a bath, whilst in 1468 she insisted on the lid on her toilet being locked. Even this was insufficient to placate the hygiene-conscious duchess. In 1473, she left the palace because of the insufferable smell of excrement pervading all its rooms, whilst workmen modernised the latrine system.¹¹⁶

It would take things too far to suggest that Margaret of York's architectural and interior design sensibilities were all imported from England. Burgundy had a well-established architectural vocabulary of its own, and some elements of architecture displayed international features. The aforementioned sgraffiti could be found wherever Italianate design was implemented, from Buda to Istanbul. The same is true of the inclusion of grand gardens in the wider architectural framework. According to the sixteenth-century Ottoman historian, Mustafa Âli, a palace should show the Sultan's power and prestige. It should, therefore, be

“vast as a desert, so that he can show off and boast, but unlike the desert be surrounded by flowers, water and trees, in gardens filled with animals”.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Laporte, D. et al, *op.cit.*, *passim*. See illustration XXII, p. 243.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 156.

¹¹⁵ Moos, S. von, *Turm und Bollwerk*, 126-7.

¹¹⁶ Laporte, D. et al, *op.cit.*, 183-5.

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Necipoğlu, G., *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, xii. There is a significant echo of Christian commentators in Mustafa Âli's writings, as he, too, affirmed the crucial role of architecture in the display of power.

This emphasis on gardens emanated from Italy, where the *giardino pensile* of pope Pius II in Pienza stood as a model.¹¹⁸ In many respects, these gardens formed a natural development of the *warande*, the hunting parks that surrounded many a noble residence in late medieval Europe. According to an Italian visitor to the Ottoman palace, the gardens had

“many kinds of animals, such as deer, does, roe deer, fox, hares ... in that place the Grand Turk derives pleasure in shooting with his gun”.¹¹⁹

Two such *warandes* or parks existed at Fotheringhay, where the boundary banks have been excavated.¹²⁰ These were well stocked with deer, which were occasionally hunted. At the *Hof Ten Walle*, Margaret created a garden to her own liking.¹²¹ Here, the garden was primarily private.¹²² Margaret could access a covered arcade via a private entrance, and the gardens were lit at night. She had them completely reconstructed in 1475, and grew herbs in a proto-*orangerie*, took care of vines, and grew roses. In this, she reflected what she had first seen in England, and, undoubtedly, met again in the Low Countries. At Sheen and Eltham during the fifteenth century, successive queens had put their own stamp on large formal gardens, all with herbs, vines, and roses.¹²³

The garden at Ten Walle, and possibly those at Margaret's later palaces and houses, too, recalls the *hortus conclusus*, with a strong reference to Eden.¹²⁴ Enclosed behind these walls, they were suggestive of leisure, a rare commodity in the fifteenth century, and hinted at elevated seclusion. Combined with the palace, this made a particularly effective statement of wealth, and, by extension, of power. These hidden palace gardens enhanced the sense of mystery which rulers were beginning to cultivate around their person. Hunting was, needless to say, out of the question in these earthly Edens. For this, Margaret could turn to the hunting *warandes* utilised by

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 184.

¹¹⁹ Quoted in Ibid, 208.

¹²⁰ Steane, J.M., “The Medieval Parks of Northamptonshire”, *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, (1975), 224.

¹²¹ Laporte, D. et al, *op.cit*, 122.

¹²² There is a possible hint at these gardening activities on a miniature depicting Margaret. K.B.B. Ms. 9296, *Benois seront les miséricordieux*, f. 17^r. See illustration, XXIII, p. 244.

¹²³ McLean, T., *Medieval English Gardens*, 114-5

¹²⁴ Ibid, 122-4. For an art-historical perspective, see Vandebroek, P. et al, *Le jardin. Clos de l'âme*.

the Burgundian dynasty. Turnhout in particular displayed the kind of formal hunting garden that the Ottoman sultan would have recognised. There is very little information on Margaret of York's hunting activities. Unlike her stepdaughter, she is not well known for her love of the falcon, but this does not mean she did not hunt.¹²⁵ In these parks the women could display the traditional aristocratic pastime of hunting, and at the same time, be observed by a wider audience. This turned the hunt from a private pleasure into a public statement of status.

The two women shared a passion for birds other than falcons. In Ten Walle, Mary had a large *voliere* made for her songbirds, and she had a cage on a pulley for her parrot.¹²⁶ Margaret's birds accompanied her on her travels, as in 1482 when several carts were required to transport her "avarie" from Binche to Mechelen.¹²⁷ Amongst these would have been her green parrot, or more specifically, her ringneck parakeet, possibly an import from Portugal.¹²⁸ Amongst the other exotic animals in Margaret's care was a monkey. The only evidence for its existence comes from the frontispiece to William Caxton's *Recueil of Troy*.¹²⁹ The woodcut dates from 1473, and the animal must have come from Africa rather than the Americas. It is depicted seated next to the duchess as she receives the book from Caxton and presents the printer to her. This may be allegorical, but the presence of such animals was normal.¹³⁰

The same is true for the dogs, which find their way into several miniatures depicting Margaret of York. A rather large white dog is lying at the feet of the Risen Christ in the miniature on the first folio of *La dyalogue de la ducesse de bourgogne a Ihesu Crist*.¹³¹ Asleep, he appears to ignore both his mistress and Jesus. Another, much smaller dog can just be made out in the corridor leading off a chapel in a miniature of the *Traités de Morale*.¹³² The largish dog is a realistic depiction of a

¹²⁵ Indeed, she is portrayed watching Charles the Bold hunting with falcons, on a piece of tapestry now in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. *Marguerite d'York et son temps*, 41; *Weightman*, 71.

¹²⁶ Laporte, D. et al, *op.cit*, 117.

¹²⁷ Lejeune, Th., *Histoire de la ville de Binche*, 92.

¹²⁸ The bird is mentioned by Mary in a letter to Maximilian. A.B. CdC 103. For the species, c.f. Uytven, R. van, *De papagaai van de paus*, 108.

¹²⁹ London, Royal College of Physicians, SR 1d D139-11. See illustration, XXIV, p. 245.

¹³⁰ Uytven, R. van, *op.cit*, 109-10, who notes that there are many depictions of monkeys in Mary of Burgundy's book of hours.

¹³¹ B.L. Add. Ms. 7970, *La dyalogue de la ducesse de bourgogne a Ihesu Crist*, f. 1^v. See illustration, XXV, p. 246.

¹³² K.B.B. Ms. 9272-76, *Traités de Morale*, f. 187. See illustration, XXVI, p. 247.

white greyhound, a type of dog typically associated with the aristocracy.¹³³ Mary of Burgundy had a similar animal, which slept in her bedroom.¹³⁴

Traditionally, this type of dog stood as the symbol of loyalty.¹³⁵ The illuminator may have had this in mind to emphasise the duchess' loyalty to Christ. It is, however, far from unlikely that Margaret did have such animals in her vicinity, if only as a public statement of her loyalty. A medal struck during the reign of Charles the Bold depicts Charles in the image of a Roman emperor on one side, with his and Margaret's device on the other; in the middle is a small dog.¹³⁶ This recalls the small dog in the miniature of the *Traité de Morale*, and seems to refer to marital fidelity.¹³⁷ Once more, it is not unlikely that this type of animal was owned by Margaret, nor that one of her reasons for possessing it lay in its symbolic value. Together with the lions and bears present in the Gent palace, the dogs and the smaller exotic creatures will have presented quite a spectacle. In all likelihood, the allegorical implications would have been subsumed in the minds of onlookers by the sheer wonder at their presence. In their sumptuous cages, they formed a living part of the portrayal of power by Margaret of York in late fifteenth-century Burgundy.

Vellum Architecture: the Interior Design of Devotion.

If the gardens of Margaret of York question the boundaries between public and private, and, therefore, between public display and solitary activity, then this is even more true for the architectural setting of her devotional activities within her palaces. Jones and Underwood noticed, with regard to Margaret Beaufort in England, that "privacy in devotion ... seems to have been expected in the fifteenth century".¹³⁸ The oratories of the wealthy that they point to as "patently designed to assist this

¹³³ Several were given to Philip the Good in 1430 by the aristocracy. Uytven, R. van, *op.cit.*, 143.

¹³⁴ Kraus, V. von, *Maximilians I. Vertraulicher Briefwechsel mit Sigmund Prüschenk*, 28. I would like to thank Dr Dagmar Eichberger for procuring this reference for me.

¹³⁵ Uytven, R. van, *op.cit.*, 143.

¹³⁶ *Medaille van Karel de Stoute*, K.B.B. Munt- en Penningkabinet, D. 0,038. For a different interpretation of the animal, see Smolderen, L., "Médailles et jetons". In P. Cockshaw (ed.), *L'ordre de la Toison d'or*, 168.

¹³⁷ Uytven, R. van, *op.cit.*, 143.

¹³⁸ Jones, M.K. and Underwood, M.G., *The King's Mother*, 175. C.f. the instructions in the Throckmorton muniments, which appear to suggest a private chapel or room for private devotions. Pantin, W.A., "Instructions for a Devout and Literate Layman". In J.J.G. Alexander and M.T. Gibson, *Medieval Learning and Literature*, 399.

seclusion” have already been encountered.¹³⁹ So, however, has the ambiguity of the design, with seclusion possibly promoting a cult of government mystique. There are further questions as to the extent of this privacy.

In the case of both Margaret Beaufort and Margaret of York’s mother, Cicely Neville, it is known that they rose early to hear several masses; Margaret around 5 a.m., Cicely around 7.¹⁴⁰ The first evidence for this behaviour comes from after they were widowed, and outside periods of real crisis, one may assume Margaret of York formed no exception to this rule. How a noble lady in a large household managed to evade the gaze of courtiers and visitors as she went about her religious duties is a moot question, however. With publicists like John Fisher, who assisted Margaret Beaufort at her devotions, giving additional publicity to these practices, their private aspect diminishes even further.

The settings for these devotions were also used to advertise the piety of these ladies. In Margaret Beaufort’s case, this may be seen in the painting by Roland Lockey, showing her at prayer, “shielded by a canopy” in a smallish room.¹⁴¹ For Margaret of York, the architecture of piety may be rediscovered in the miniatures of her books.¹⁴² Almost without exception, these show the small rooms that Jones and Underwood also pinpointed for Margaret of Beaufort, in which the duchess is involved in quiet, apparently introvert acts of devotion. With regard to this particular architecture, does the privacy argument stand up to scrutiny?

Perhaps the most famous miniature depiction of the duchess at her devotion comes from a book she donated to the Poor Clare-Colettines in Gent.¹⁴³ It shows a small room, richly-decorated with tapestries, divided into two sections by a wooden pillar. On the left is the late St Colette Boëlle, foundress of the reformed tertiaries of St Clare, and St Francis of Assisi. The two saints are facing an altarpiece depicting St Anna, the Virgin Mary, the Christ Child, and a host of children. On the other side of

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Fisher, St. J., *A Mornyng Remembraunce*, 18; Armstrong, C.A.J. “The Piety of Cicely, Duchess of York”. In D. Woodruff (ed), *For Hilaire Belloc*, 135-56.

¹⁴¹ Jones, M.K., and Underwood, M.G., *op.cit*, 175. One has to accept the possibility that the depictions are standardised and do not reflect any reality. However, where cross-referencing with written sources is possible, there is a surprising amount of convergence.

¹⁴² For the problems and possibilities surrounding the use of this material, see Smith, L. and Taylor, J.H.M. (eds), *Women and the Book*.

¹⁴³ Gent, Klooster der Klarissen-Kolettien: Ms. 8, *Vie de Sainte Colette*, f. 40^v. See illustration XXVII, p. 248.

the pillar, on their knees and holding their rosaries, are Charles the Bold and Margaret of York. The duchess has an illuminated prayer book open on the ground in front of her.

The miniature is rich in meaning: St Colette is venerated as the patron saint of women wishing to conceive, and the link to the barren duchess is easily made. She had also been a firm favourite of Isabella of Portugal, who had supported her attempts at reform.¹⁴⁴ Charles's presence is, therefore, additionally poignant. Clearly, the duchess, who had ordered the manuscript, wished to be seen in association with St Colette. In an art form where coincidence is almost absent, the similarity in the colour of the habit of the saint and the dress of the duchess was purposeful. The fact that Margaret is wearing a modest veil, as opposed to her customary *hennin*, is further testimony to how she wished to be portrayed. A fascinating illumination, but what about the architectural setting? The miniature's architectural setting is adapted to the requirements of what the illuminator wished to depict, and, therefore, useless as a guide to the interior of Margaret's spiritual abodes.

Does this mean that all the illuminations showing the interior of Margaret's devotional spaces are useless as a guide to their reality? Not all are as obviously fictional as that in the *Vie de Saint Colette*. Particularly realistic is one of the miniatures in the *Traité de Morale*.¹⁴⁵ The picture almost recalls Dutch church interiors of the seventeenth century: Margaret is kneeling in front of an altar to the Trinity, in a large stone space. Leading off from that rather sparse space is a corridor in which, as noted above, a small dog is walking. The sartorial modesty of the duchess of the previous miniature is gone, making the picture more truthful. Contextually the miniature forms part of a Pater Noster, and may hint at one of those devotional practices noticed with regard to Cicely Neville and Margaret Beaufort.

Interestingly, the space of the chapel is far from private: it is open to the corridor, albeit somewhat shielded by a curtain. Anyone in the large household of the duchess, any visitor to her palace, could at least catch a glimpse of Margaret practising her religious duties. An illumination in *Traité Morale et religieux* seems to confirm this.

¹⁴⁴ Sommé, M., *Isabelle de Portugal*, 468-9.

¹⁴⁵ K.B.B. Ms. 9272-76, *Traité de Morale*, f. 187. See illustration, XXVI, p. 247.

¹⁴⁶ Here the duchess is portrayed kneeling under a canopy, whilst immersed in her devotions. Behind her, slightly separated, are two of her ladies-in-waiting, also praying. A rather dashing young man, who seems to have wandered into the church as if by accident, watches them from a short distance.

A more private element is introduced in *La dyalogue de la ducesse de bourgogne a Ihesu Crist*.¹⁴⁷ Here the Paschal Christ stands in the duchess' bedroom, involved in an intimate conversation with Margaret, who is once again sumptuously dressed.¹⁴⁸ There has been an attempt to link the duchess with the penitent Mary Magdalene, but this is highly problematic, particularly in the context of the text of the manuscript.¹⁴⁹ Its origins in a Carthusian environment ought to be recalled, and that particular religious Order placed little emphasis on the penitential aspect of mysticism. Rather, Nicholas Finet, its author, is concerned with the practicalities of living the devotional life in the wider world. This was a common preoccupation of the more devout laywoman of the final decades before the Reformation, and for this, the real private world of Margaret of York's bedroom was the appropriate setting. As seen with regards to Brielle, the dowager valued the private aspect of this space, and it is here that the intimate dialogue with her Saviour should take place. This type of devotion was definitely not for public consumption. It may have been shared by a few intimates, such as Johanna van der Clyte, to whom Margaret would donate the manuscript.¹⁵⁰ Overall, though, the setting is highly suggestive of genuine privacy. Significantly, its architectural setting is the bedroom, and not a chapel.

The Château de La Salle in Binche.

Before this examination of the role played by architecture in the projection of Margaret of York's power and authority can be brought to a close, the palace at

¹⁴⁶ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 365, *Traité Moral et religieux*, f. 115. Q.v. illustration XXVIII, p. 249.

¹⁴⁷ B.L. Add. Ms. 7970, *La dyalogue de la ducesse de bourgogne a Ihesu Crist*, f. 1^v. See illustration, XXV, p. 246.

¹⁴⁸ Here one has to take into account the possibility that the bed is actually situated in a reception room. However, as the space leading off the room seems to be a closet, this is unlikely. Margaret's rather large expense on securing the privacy of her bedroom in Briel, mentioned above, may also be called to mind.

¹⁴⁹ Pearson, A.G., "Gendered Subject, gendered spectator", *CEEB*, XLIV, (2004).

¹⁵⁰ C.f. Appendix Three, no. 33.

Binche requires attention. For this palace, much information survives on the extensive refurbishments that the dowager had carried out, in the form of the accounts by Cornille Le Cordier, Margaret's *conseiller* in Binche.¹⁵¹ At Binche, Margaret found a palace in better condition than any of the other properties she had been given. Philip the Good had expended considerable sums in restoring the building, and, as a result, the general fabric of the palace was in good condition. However, Margaret wished to improve on the quality of what she inherited. In 1491, for example, she had a tower constructed, new accommodation, and a gallery that overlooked the steep ramparts of the town. A grand staircase swept up into this from the great hall, and large windows were installed.¹⁵² The workmen came from Mons, and finished the work within six years, at the expense of 4,780 *pond Vlaamsch*. The whole was made out of bricks, 96,400 of them, and was topped with slates.

This provided Margaret with what was her most opulent, and most modern living quarters, dwarfing Philip the Good's older structure. Most interesting from the perspective of architecture and its use in the projection of power, is the statement the building made. This extension cost Margaret the equivalent of an English duke's annual income,¹⁵³ and shows just how much store she set by architectural statements. The end-result almost floated above the town of Binche, literally raising the dowager above the commoners. Yet it still sat within the ramparts of the town, and as such, was still part thereof. This tallies with Margaret's other architectural projects: like the dukes of Burgundy before her, she was aware of the strength and importance of the towns of the Low Countries. She could show herself to be elevated, but not distant.

It worked. When she died, the town of Binche draped its buildings in black satin and velvet cloth, the citizens showing as acute an awareness of theatricality as the dowager had during her lifetime.¹⁵⁴ There followed no fewer than ten years of mourning. In Brielle, the town burned tar barrels for several nights,¹⁵⁵ and in Mechelen, the bell of the St Rombout's church pealed for ten days.¹⁵⁶ This was, of course, what a polite and careful urban government was supposed to do, but there

¹⁵¹ This borrows heavily from Wellens, R., *op.cit.*

¹⁵² A.D.N. B 852, f. 45^v, 47^v, 51^v.

¹⁵³ Q.v. Part One, pp. 44-5.

¹⁵⁴ Lejeune, Th., *op.cit.*, 94-5; *Weightman*, 215.

¹⁵⁵ A.V.P. 1280-1572, inv.nr. 195.

¹⁵⁶ I owe this reference to Henri Installé.

may be little doubt that the dower towns mourned their benefactress. The architectural gems that Margaret of York had constructed made statements about more than her own power and authority; it also made clear for all to see that she associated closely with her dower towns. In the unmistakable language of bricks and mortar, *Madame la Grande* had been able to proclaim her own status, and in the process, she enhanced the status of the towns in which these edifices were constructed. Her houses, tennis courts, gardens, aviaries, and palaces were crucial elements in the way Margaret of York played her role of *Grande Dame* in the Burgundian Low Countries.

Patron Saints and Dower Towns.

Margaret of York did not cement her alliance with her dower towns through architecture alone. One particularly effective way of expressing her loyalty to the towns was through the adoption of the cults of local saints.¹⁵⁷ The duchess was devoted to many of the usual saints of the fifteenth century, and these, on the whole, tell us little about the way she used these cults to suggest her own status and authority. However, some cults reveal a great deal about the languages of religion and politics used by Margaret of York. In addition, her devotion to specific saints also provides some of the strongest evidence that cultural exchange in north-western Europe during her life was a highly complex affair. By examining the familial precedence for some of her devotions, the very strong English impulse in Margaret's life may be detected. This impulse was not just important for her as an individual. Through her application of her English heritage to the Burgundian situation, she contributed hugely to the survival of Charles the Bold's Low Countries inheritance post-1477.

That the house of York was particularly adept at working with the commoners was noted as long ago as 1936 by A.F. Pollard, who wrote, with regard to Edward IV, that "perhaps for the first time here was a king more at ease with the Lower than the

¹⁵⁷ For this, see Schnitker, H., "Margaretha van York en Cecily Neville". In R. de Smedt and H. Schnitker (eds), *HKKOM, Identiteit en status ten tijde van de Bourgondische hertogen*, CV, (2001).

Upper House of parliament".¹⁵⁸ This interaction between king and commoners did not just play itself out on the floors of the House of Commons, where many members did not belong to the so-called third estate anyhow. Although the evidence is rather less plentiful than for the Low Countries, English kings had their own spectacular ways of entering loyal towns, of communicating with their subjects through ceremony.¹⁵⁹ In 1461, for example, Edward IV entered Bristol, one of the more important towns in the kingdom.¹⁶⁰ There, the subjects welcomed him with giant statues of William the Conqueror and St George. The same year also saw the splendid procession for the knights of the order of the Bath in London.¹⁶¹ In a similar vein, Margaret's other royal brother, Richard III, held his entry in York in 1483.

Both receptions provide enough evidence that Margaret did not need to learn about the importance of communicating with the commoners. They also provide three classic examples of the artistry of government: choosing the correct symbols which were understood by all, stage management, and respect for local traditions. The implications of both Bristol giants were easy to grasp. Edward, like the Conqueror before him, had just won the crown of England through violence, whilst St George was England's patron saint and a warrior himself. In York, Richard had ensured that the town knew they ought to excel themselves when he arrived. He even sent instructions as to what he would like to see.¹⁶² In addition, the wardrobe provided 13,000 livery badges with Richard's emblem, the White Boar.¹⁶³ Finally, he dutifully observed a special performance of the city's Creed Play, a major feature of its civic identity. None of these elements was unique to England, but they do show the finely tuned skills of the kings from the house of York. Little wonder Margaret was so adept at working with the towns of the Low Countries: she had known how to since childhood.

¹⁵⁸ Pollard, A.F., "Parliament in the Wars of the Roses", *Glasgow University Publications*, XLII, (1936), 18-9.

¹⁵⁹ Indeed, this was a European phenomenon. See in this respect also the situation in France, and even in Hungary.

¹⁶⁰ C.f. Gairdner, J. (ed), "Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles with historical memoranda by John Stowe, the antiquary", *Camden Society*, New Series, XXVIII, (1880), 85-6.

¹⁶¹ "Hearne's Fragment". In J. Bohn (ed), *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York*, 10-4.

¹⁶² Ross, C., *Richard III*, 150-1.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

Cicely Neville and East Anglia.

Inevitably, these expressions of statecraft were closely intertwined with religion. Guy Thompson has highlighted the enormous importance of 'typically' English or French saints to the combatants of the Hundred Years' War: the use of these saints to make statements about one's loyalties, one's intentions, and one's status.¹⁶⁴ On a less elevated level, this is exactly what Margaret of York managed to do in the Low Countries. Here, the influence of her mother, Cicely Neville, is unmistakable. The religious sentiment of all of her numerous children had been shaped by the duchess of York. Although Cicely's religious reputation rests rather precariously on the judgement of C.A.J. Armstrong, there can be little doubt that she moulded her daughter's religious sensibilities, an issue quite separate from the question of the intensity of the two women's piety.¹⁶⁵ A comparison between Cicely's and Margaret's use of the language of religion is, therefore, most fruitful.

The transmission of ideas from Cicely to Margaret most likely occurred during the period they were living together in East Anglia. There is no actual evidence to prove Margaret did spend her youth at Cicely's court,¹⁶⁶ but we know she was not at Ludlow with her older brothers.¹⁶⁷ It was, furthermore, not unusual for aristocratic daughters to be brought up in their mother's household.¹⁶⁸ One would have to concur with D.A.L. Morgan's resigned remark that 'The meagreness of household records ... is a problem we must learn to live with. But it would seem sensible to make a virtue of necessity and follow the life-line of what evidence there is'.¹⁶⁹ Since both

¹⁶⁴ Thomson, G., *Paris and its people under English rule, passim*.

¹⁶⁵ Armstrong, C.A.J., "The Piety of Cicely", 73-94. The inclusion of the essay in a bundle intended to celebrate the life of Belloc should have alerted observers to its tendentious nature. However, Cicely is now firmly placed under the "spiritual aristocracy". Carey, H.M., "Devout Literate Laypeople and the Pursuit of the Mixed Life in Later Medieval England", *JRH*, XIV, (1986), n. 4, 381.

¹⁶⁶ There is a remarkable unanimity amongst historians on the upbringing of Margaret, George and Richard at Fotheringhay, despite a complete lack of evidence. *Weightman*, 8 and 13; Hammond, P.W. and Sutton, A.F., *Richard III, the Road to Bosworth Field*, 24. *Hommel*, 15, at least admits to the lack of information about a presumed residence at Fotheringhay.

¹⁶⁷ I would like to thank Claire Collins, the archivist of the Shropshire Records & Research Centre, for checking her records as to Margaret's presence in Ludlow.

¹⁶⁸ Orme, N., *Medieval Children*, 55.

¹⁶⁹ Morgan, D.A.L., "The King's Affinity in the Polity of Yorkist England", *TRHS*, Fifth Series, XXIII, (1973).

her brothers, Richard and George, definitely grew up in Cicely's household, it is not too fanciful to place Margaret amongst them.¹⁷⁰ This becomes all the more likely as Margaret, like Richard, was born at Cicely's main residence, Fotheringhay.¹⁷¹

Technically speaking, Fotheringhay is not in East Anglia, but in Northamptonshire. However, its main link to the wider world was via the river Nene, which entered the Wash near Lynn.¹⁷² Such was its importance, that it was frequently dredged to maintain Fotheringhay's accessibility from the sea.¹⁷³ Peter of Blois described Edward boarding a ship at Crowland and "setting sail, [making] a prosperous voyage to his castle of Foderyngey".¹⁷⁴ Cicely's wider interest in East Anglia is revealed by several sources, which show Fotheringhay was the *de facto* centre of the great receivership of Clare, the house of York's richest landholding, with manors in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Lincolnshire.¹⁷⁵ During the 1450s and 1460s, Cicely was effectively the manager of these lands.¹⁷⁶ Her active participation in running the affairs of the Clare receivership was witnessed by her husband's ally, Sir John Fastolf,¹⁷⁷ who wrote in 1456 to John Paston I,

"Item, cosyn, I pray you in as moche as here hathe ben my lady of York, and soore mevid me fot ye purchas of Castre".¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁰ Ross, C., *Richard III*, 4.

¹⁷¹ In the *Annales*, formerly attributed to William of Worcester, Margaret's place of birth is the conventional one. "1446. Nata est Margareta, filia tertia Ricardi ducis Eboraci, iij. die Maii in die Martis apud Fodryngay". In contrast, the antiquary Hearne, quoting and significantly translating from the *Annales*, wrote, "The lady Margaret, the third daughter of the said most noble prince was born at *Waltham Abbey*, on (Tuesday) the 3rd of May in the year 1446". There is a good chance Hearne just mistook the day of Margaret's birth, Holy Cross day, with the name of Waltham, Holy Cross Abbey. Worcester, 764; "Hearne's Fragment". In J. Bohn, *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York*, 214. C.f. *Weightman*, 9 ff. Nicholas Orme noted the general difficulties of pinning down a medieval birthday. Orme, N., *op. cit.*, 43-50.

¹⁷² Serjeantson, R.M. and Adkins, W.R.D., *The Victoria History of the County of Northampton*, II, 569.

¹⁷³ "Fotheringhay", *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, XVII, (1987), 102. Bishop Morton had a canal constructed from Wisbech to Peterborough due to the heavy silting. Simpson, J., "Notes on Croyland", *FN&Q*, I, (1889-1891), 65-73.

¹⁷⁴ Riley, T. (ed), *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland*, 445.

¹⁷⁵ Rosenthal, J.T., "Richard, Duke of York: A Fifteenth Century Layman and the Church", *The Catholic History Review*, L, (1964), n. 2, 177-80.

¹⁷⁶ As late as 1490, she still controlled the religious appointments at Clare itself. Campbell, W. (ed), *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, II, 504.

¹⁷⁷ Margaret lived for a while with her mother and two youngest brothers in Fastolf's Place in London, which was owned by John Paston as Fastolf's executor. Davis, N. (ed), *Paston Letters and Papers*, II, 216-7. Fastolf had himself been amongst Richard of York's most loyal supporters. Griffiths, R., *op. cit.*, 459.

¹⁷⁸ Davis, N. (ed), *op. cit.*, I, 165.

In the more mundane jobs, she employed a steward and chose wisely, for he was none other than John Howard, future duke of Norfolk.¹⁷⁹ In addition to managing her husband's lands, Cicely also owned large tracts in person, a gift from Richard, duke of York in 1441.¹⁸⁰

Clearly, East Anglia was crucial to the prosperity of the house of York. Cicely employed many of the tools to express her own devotion to the region that one can also see with Margaret of York. As will be explored, pilgrimage could be particularly useful in this respect, and East Anglia was home to one of the premier pilgrimage destinations in the kingdom, Our Lady of Walsingham.¹⁸¹ However, such was the national, and international, importance of the shrine, that it can hardly be employed to show how Cicely used devotional cults to cement a relationship with East Anglian localities. Perhaps her journey there during the complicated pregnancy of Richard III may have aroused some sympathy, but that hardly constitutes solid political gain.¹⁸²

St Guthlac at Crowland and Peterborough Abbey.

Besides Walsingham, East Anglia possessed many shrines of a far more local importance. It is to these that one needs to turn to examine the role model with which Cicely provided her daughter. The evidence for Cicely's devotions to the local saints of East Anglia is, however, rather limited. It is more-or-less confined to a number of stained glass windows associated with the duchess, all of which have disappeared since the fifteenth century. Neither her books nor any other indicator survives to supplement the information from these.¹⁸³ Fortunately, the importance of stained glass windows to the reconstruction of the devotional life of medieval individuals has long been recognised, and the windows associated with Cecily have been the subject of a detailed study.¹⁸⁴ Richard Marks made a convincing case for Cicely's

¹⁷⁹ "my lady the Kenges moder to wome I hame steward as ye wl kwoe". Crawford, A., *The Household Books of John Howard, Duke of Norfolk*, 171.

¹⁸⁰ Johnson, P.A., *Duke Richard of York 1411-1460*, 13.

¹⁸¹ C.f. Gillet, H.M., *Walsingham*.

¹⁸² Rawcliffe, C., *Medicine & Society in Later Medieval England*, 179.

¹⁸³ Sutton, A.F. and Visser-Fuchs, L., *Richard III's Books*, 58.

¹⁸⁴ Marks, R., "The Glazing of Fotheringhay Church and College", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, CXXXI, (1978).

responsibility in the choice of iconography.¹⁸⁵ There is, furthermore, a good description and some drawings from the late eighteenth century, when many of the windows were still intact.¹⁸⁶

The windows contained many of the 'usual suspects', saints one would expect to find anywhere in fifteenth-century England, such as George, Augustine, and Blaise. They also depicted some less usual and definitely local saints.¹⁸⁷ Most noticeable amongst these are saints Guthlac, Etheldreda and Edmund, saints venerated within the immediate vicinity of Fotheringhay,¹⁸⁸ and whose veneration by Cicely are telling for her association with the locality.¹⁸⁹ By far the most noticeable of the local saints on the stained glass windows is Guthlac. His relics were kept in the Benedictine abbey at Crowland, which was re-founded on Guthlac's original foundation from the eighth century.¹⁹⁰ Crowland was situated on a small rise in the Fens, that wide region of marsh bordering the Wash, where the saint had retreated to fight temptation, in imitation of St Anthony.¹⁹¹ For the fifteenth century, the fame of the abbey rests on the chronicle which bears its name, and which forms one of the most important sources for Yorkist England.¹⁹² This is not the place to enter the debate on its author and political bias; sufficient to say that its laconic statements on the events in the abbey are a convenient source for the devotion to St Guthlac by the York family and others.

A devotion to the saint on the part of the English royal family was nothing new. Perhaps Henry VI's love for St Guthlac was primarily motivated by piety, although the often-inept monarch could occasionally surprise with his use of symbolic gestures. He came to Crowland as a pilgrim in 1460, and stayed for three days. He was, we are assured,

¹⁸⁵ The presence of a window with St Brigitte of Sweden, to whom the duchess was particularly devoted, is very significant in this respect.

¹⁸⁶ Nichols, J., "The History and Antiquities of Fotheringay". In J. Nichols, *Antiquities in Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire, Being the Fourth Volume of the Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*, 31 ff.

¹⁸⁷ Marks, R., "The Glazing of Fotheringhay Church", 83-9.

¹⁸⁸ For the saints of East Anglia c.f. Jones, T., *The English Saints. East Anglia*.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 94. Marks pointed to the importance of the portrayal of these saints, and in particular of St Guthlac.

¹⁹⁰ Perry, G.G., *Croyland Abbey: An Historical Sketch*, 9.

¹⁹¹ *Book of Saints*, 258. Like St Anthony, Guthlac had a pig as his emblem, most appropriate in a pig-rearing region.

¹⁹² C.f. *Crowland*, introduction; Riley, H.T. (ed), *op.cit.*

“inspired by feelings of devotion ... taking the greatest pleasure in the observance of his religious duties.”¹⁹³

The monks clearly wished to cash in on the publicity of a royal visit, for within a few years of Henry’s stay, the chronicle mentions two miracles, one of someone mentally-handicapped being cured, the second of a man being saved from falling church bells.¹⁹⁴

Edward IV’s visits have already been alluded to, but that of 1470 deserves a special mention. That year Edward did not come as king but as fugitive. He was on the run from the earl of Warwick and the Lancastrians, *en route* to his sister in Burgundy. Just as he was to visit Our Lady of Aardenburg once safely across the North Sea, so he now paid his reverences to St Guthlac.¹⁹⁵ Was he desperately hoping for a miracle, or did he hope to persuade the local population to come to his aid? Neither was forthcoming, an indicator that these gestures had their limitations. Richard III’s devotion to the saint is also mentioned, although the author made sure he covered himself against charges of treason from the new Tudor regime when he wrote that Richard

“albeit that he was a Monster and the cruelty of Mankind, yet he shewed himself beneficial to this abbey.”¹⁹⁶

In the case of Cicely, we are unsure whether she visited the abbey, although this is highly likely. Her association with Crowland can be deduced from yet another stained glass window, this time from the abbey church.¹⁹⁷ Rather than a religious motif, the window showed the arms of England, quartered by those of the Neville family. This donation was, quite clearly, not a religious gesture. It calls to mind the window portraying Margaret of York in the new Observant Franciscan Friary in Namur, where the political context of the donation is known.¹⁹⁸ This, unfortunately,

¹⁹³ Ibid, 434-9 and 442.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 445. C.f. Perry, G.G., *op.cit*, 125-6.

¹⁹⁵ Spalding, Norfolk, ‘Library of the Spalding Gentleman’s Society’: Harrington, Sir Th., *Chronicle*, 102; Warkworth, J., “A Chronicle of the First Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward the Fourth”, *Camden Society*, Old Series X, (1839), 10.

¹⁹⁶ Spalding, Norfolk, ‘Library of the Spalding Gentleman’s Society’: Harrington, Sir Th., *Chronicle*, 102.

¹⁹⁷ Simpson, J., *op.cit*, 112.

¹⁹⁸ See Part One, p. 94.

is not the case with the gift by Cicely to Crowland. However, the linkage between duchess and saint and between ruler and locality is crystal clear: the arms of England and the Neville family in such close proximity to the local saint proclaimed to all visitors the friendly ties between Cicely and the abbey.

If the relations between Fotheringhay and Crowland were generally good, those between the house of York and the most powerful abbey in the region, that of Peterborough, were rather strained.¹⁹⁹ Although the abbey was only twelve miles from Fotheringhay, its patron saints did not feature amongst those whose feasts were celebrated in the college there, nor were they depicted on its windows. The abbey had enjoyed the protection of King Henry VI, who, in 1440, gave abbot Richard Ashton the right to hold a three-day fair in September each year, and confirmed all his rights. The favours were reciprocated, for abbot and abbey stayed loyal to Henry when the problems between the king and Richard, duke of York, erupted into conflict in 1459.

For as long as abbot Richard Ashton remained at the head of the abbey, Cicely, who clearly could not forgive his support for the attainders of the Coventry Parliament of 1459, stayed well clear of the abbey.²⁰⁰ His resignation in 1471 warmed relations,²⁰¹ but more important was the abbey's gesture during the re-interment of Cicely's husband, Richard, duke of York, in 1476.²⁰² When Edward had his father's body transferred to Fotheringhay, the churchwarden entered the following under the 'Reparacyons and expenses' of the year 1475-6,

"Item payd to the ryngers to the wurschypp of God and for the Duke of York Sowle and bonys comynge to Fodringhey iiij d."²⁰³

It was not just the aristocracy who knew how to make appropriate gestures expressed in the language of religion. This, too, was a lesson not lost on Margaret of York, for although the Peterborough incident occurred well after she had left England, the

¹⁹⁹ Mellows, W.T., "Peterborough Local Administration", *Northamptonshire Record Society*, IX, (1939), xxxii.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 20.

²⁰¹ Gunton, S., *The History of the Church of Peterborough*, 52-3.

²⁰² C.f. Sutton, A.F. and Visser-Fuchs, L., *The Reburial of Richard Duke of York 21-30 July 1476*.

²⁰³ Mellows, W.T., *op.cit*, 76.

abbey worked according to a recognisable pattern. Reciprocal gestures between ruler and ruled were to become one of her specialities as duchess of Burgundy.

St Etheldreda and Ely.

The East Anglian orientation of Fotheringhay and its mistress is confirmed by the central place given to its pre-eminent female saint, Etheldreda. She ranks amongst the most venerated of Anglo-Saxon saints, and her relics were kept in the cathedral of Ely, itself an important ecclesiastical and political centre. Cicely's devotion to St Etheldreda is confirmed by her appearance on a stained glass window at Fotheringhay.²⁰⁴ The depiction at Fotheringhay mirrors that of a contemporary window in St Dunstan's chapel in Ely cathedral, a fact that is not without significance.²⁰⁵ In addition, we know that the Saint had a double feast at the college at Fotheringhay.²⁰⁶ As there is no evidence that Cicely ever visited the Cathedral, these are significant indicators of her interest in the patron saint of Ely. It is also highly unlikely that she never went to pray at Etheldreda's shrine. Ely formed part of what Diana Webb has termed the 'East Anglian circuit' or the 'royal pilgrimage tour', which took in, besides Ely, Walsingham, Norwich, and Bury.²⁰⁷ What is more, her daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Woodville, went on pilgrimage to Ely in 1477, possibly not for the first time.²⁰⁸

That the royal family went on the time-honoured East Anglian pilgrimage circuit is hardly surprising. However, Cicely's devotions predate the time when her family ascended to the English throne, and cannot simply be explained in terms of tradition. The cult of St Etheldreda was particularly vibrant during the fifteenth century, and, indeed, during the sixteenth century.²⁰⁹ As the representative of the largest landowner in the region, Cicely had a need to associate with other local powerhouses, including the bishopric at Ely, whose incumbents included, from 1478, the immensely

²⁰⁴ Marks, R., *The Medieval Stained Glass of Northamptonshire*, 93.

²⁰⁵ Salzman, L.F. (ed), *The Victoria History of the County of Cambridge and The Isle of Ely*, II, 152.

²⁰⁶ Serjeantson, R.M. and Adkins, W.R.D., *op.cit.*, 173-4.

²⁰⁷ Webb, D., *Pilgrimage in Medieval England*, 137 and 308.

²⁰⁸ Baldwin, D., *Elizabeth Woodville*, 47.

²⁰⁹ Webb, D., *op.cit.*, 107.

influential John Morton. By showing her appreciation for the patron saint of Ely cathedral, Cicely could send some none too subtle signs of where her support lay.

All these political gestures do not imply that there was no religious element to these devotions, that these were cynical gestures devoid of meaning. The East Anglian saints continued to interest Margaret of York well after she had moved to the Low Countries, where the political statement made by these devotions was irrelevant.²¹⁰ Etheldreda makes an appearance in one of her breviaries,²¹¹ as does that other prominent East Anglian saint, Botolph of Boston on the Wash.²¹² The breviary, in the Use of Sarum, that quintessential rite of the Church in England,²¹³ shows that the devotion to the East Anglian saints definitely had another aspect besides politics. It also shows the extent to which Margaret was influenced by her mother and the environment of her youth.

The Saints of Margaret of York's Dower.

Once she had arrived in the Low Countries, Margaret was not expected to become personally involved with the administration of her future dower for a considerable time. There was, therefore, little need to play a role similar to her mother's in East Anglia. For the moment, the most important symbolic gestures she had to make were during her ceremonial entries in the towns of the Low Countries and with regard to social groups within these towns. The former will be examined again in this chapter. Her 'dialogue' with the social groups of the cities of her husband's domains was mainly through the medium of religious guilds. Naturally, she would have chosen guilds whose patron saint was meaningful to her. This, however, did not exclude the political motivations: the new duchess joined the guilds of only the well-to-do. This she did with aplomb, but in a piecemeal fashion. There is, for example, no evidence

²¹⁰ See in this respect the titular saint of Isabella of Portugal's foundation, the new Dominican house in Brussels. It was dedicated to St Vincent Ferrer, appropriately a Dominican, but from the Iberian peninsula and of English descent. Arts, J., O.P., *L'ancien Couvent des Dominicains à Bruxelles*, 110.

²¹¹ St John's College Library, Cambridge, MS. H. 13. f. 156^r. I would like to thank the librarian of the College, Jonathan Harrison, for his enthusiastic support.

²¹² *Ibid.*, f. 102^r, left column.

²¹³ Catto, J., "Religious Change under Henry V". In G.L. Harriss (ed), *Henry V*, 108.

for her involvement in the most important of the Brugge guilds, that of the Confraternity of the Holy Blood.²¹⁴

In Gent, on the other hand, where she did spend most of her time as duchess of Burgundy, she became involved with no fewer than two guilds. With Mary of Burgundy, Margaret joined the corporation of St Barbara in 1471.²¹⁵ This was a significant move: the guild was a predominantly male club. What is more, it contained a disproportionate number of clergy.²¹⁶ Of course, this could well have been the reason why Margaret wished to join in the first place. As Part One has shown, she was acutely aware of the importance of cultivating allies amongst the Burgundian clergy, and her membership of this guild may well have been an early manifestation of this. Some of the priests were hardly members of the religious upper class; the parish priest of St James's in Gent or the *pastuer* of Zwijnaarde can hardly be regarded as such. The coadjutor bishop of Tournai who joined with Margaret and Mary, on the other hand, was clearly a major figure. The presence of the abbot of Boudelo, of the provost of the St Baafs, Gent's main religious institute, and of the abbess of Rozenberg, all gave the guild further cachet.

The other Gent guild joined by both Margaret and Mary, that of St Anna, was prestigious in a more worldly fashion. Weightman suggested that both women joined in 1473,²¹⁷ but one is inclined to follow Paul Trio's suggestion of 1476.²¹⁸ Again, a rather large number of priests were members, but this time the emphasis is clearly on the court. Amongst the members were Anna of Burgundy, a bastard daughter of Philip the Good, Guillaume de Lalaing, the main court chaplain,²¹⁹ and more local aristocratic loyalists, such as Adrian Vilain, *heer* of Reesseghem, who was captain of Maximilian's guard in Gent, for which he was executed by rebels in 1490.²²⁰ There is plenty of evidence for the very real devotional aspect of these guilds. This may be the donation of twenty-four *livres*, which she made to the guild of St George: the association with the patron saint of England is too much of a coincidence.²²¹ Yet

²¹⁴ I owe this information to Dr Andrew Brown.

²¹⁵ Trio, P., *Volksreligie als spiegel van een stedelijke samenleving*, 220.

²¹⁶ For this and what follows, c.f. *ibid*, 218-20.

²¹⁷ *Weightman*, 207.

²¹⁸ Trio, P., *op.cit*, 214-5. See illustration XXIX, p. 250.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, 215, n. 278.

²²⁰ *Dagboek*, II, 375.

²²¹ *Galesloot*, 237. However, Charles the Bold's devotion to the saint should also be noted.

there is equally little doubt that these 'clubs' functioned on a different level, too. The gathering of the 'great and the good' on festive occasions would certainly have been a political as well as a devotional statement.

Mechelen and St Rombout.

For the role played by the saints' cults in Margaret of York's relations with her dower towns, the cases of St Rombout in Mechelen and St Ursmer in Binche are the most instructive. Both towns had prominent saints, whose cults were very much localised, and whose rituals were central to urban identity. This was not the case in her other dower lands. In Dendermonde, the cult of St Hilduardis of Flanders did not commence until after Margaret's death.²²² In Brielle, there were no local civic saints.²²³ Naturally, the towns of *Madame la Grande's* dower were no isolated units. This is reflected in the devotional activity of their lady. To her devotion to saints Rombout and Ursmer may be added some of the saints of towns close to her dower. The strongly regionalised pattern of Margaret's devotions to Low Countries' saints is particularly noticeable. These may be found on an axis between Breda and Cambrai, well within the bishopric of Cambrai. It may not be coincidental that Margaret's powerbase lay in the same region during the crisis years of 1477 to 1479, and 1482 to 1490. It was of paramount importance to Margaret to associate closely with this region, most of which was extremely loyal to the Burgundian dynasty,²²⁴ and the local saints' cults offered one such possibility.

That Margaret astutely cultivated a very public devotion to these cults indicates both the level to which she had assimilated the traditions of the Low Countries, as well as showing the same astute symbolic gesturing, which has been observed on the part of the house of York. She is unlikely to have known much about the local saints whose cults she adopted until her arrival in Burgundy: they do not appear on the

²²² The relics had been in place since the eleventh century, but only after the construction of a new silver reliquary in 1519 did a real cult take off. Wimons, G., "De Heilige Christiana van Vlaanderen" In *Miscellanea K.C. Peeters*, 641-51.

²²³ C.f. Graas, D., "Abbenbroek". In P.J. Margyr & C.M.A. Caspers, *Bedevoartplaatsen in Nederland*, I, 88-93

²²⁴ Cambrai was, of course, not a Burgundian town.

calendar of the Sarum Rite, nor in the *Legenda aurea*,²²⁵ and devotions to them were rather localised in nature. In this respect, her actions recall those of her brother, Richard III. In the statutes drawn up for his foundation of a collegiate church at Middleham in Yorkshire, for example, Richard had dedicated the church to the “Blessed mother our lady St Mary and ... the holy virgin St Alkild”.²²⁶

Saint Alkild was the patroness of the locality where the college was to be based, which makes the choice interesting. Once more, it is extremely unlikely that Richard would have been familiar with her story. St Alkild did not feature in Jacobus de Voragine’s Golden Legend, nor was her feast mentioned in the *Missale Romanum* or the calendar of the Sarum Rite.²²⁷ The exclusion from the Golden Legend is particularly important. For both Richard and Margaret this would have been one of the most formative sources for their devotion to saints. The book was frequently read aloud in the household of their mother, Cicely Neville, where, as seen, both spent much time during their youth.²²⁸ When either Richard or Margaret opted to revere a local saint, then, they showed that they had learned their mother’s lessons well.

As befits Mechelen’s status as Margaret of York’s main dower, she showed a greater devotion to its patron saint, St Rombout, than to any other local cult. According to his *vita*, Rombout was a native of Ireland and had been a bishop in Dublin. This possibly created some additional interest on Margaret’s part, as she may have spent a short time in the Irish city during her youth.²²⁹ Once Rombout had moved to Mechelen, he cured a local countess from her barrenness, again increasing his interest to the dowager, although after her husband’s death this factor would have been less relevant. As the town’s patron saint, he was credited with having offered its citizens protection against the Vikings, and, more recently, against an attack by Brabanders in 1303.

From the town on the Dijle, his cult had radiated to Mons, Antwerp, Liège, and Tongeren. His saint’s day was also included on the calendar of the bishopric of

²²⁵ C.f. Voragine, J. de, *The Golden Legend*.

²²⁶ Ross, C., *Richard III*, 131-2.

²²⁷ C.f. Voragine, J. de, *op.cit.*

²²⁸ Armstrong, C.A.J., “The Piety of Cicely Neville, Duchess of York”. In Armstrong, C.A.J., *England, France and Burgundy*, 141. Q.v. Part Three, p. 277, for Margaret of York in Ireland.

²²⁹ Hillegeer, J., S.J., *België en zijne Heiligen*, II, 105-7. Weightman did not believe Margaret accompanied her parents to Ireland, but one fails to see why not. *Weightman*, 13.

Cambrai, which spread his name across Brabant and Hainault.²³⁰ As such, Rombout was invoked throughout the heartland of Margaret of York's political base. Nowhere, however, was his cult as strongly interwoven with local identity as in Mechelen.²³¹ It was, therefore, inevitable that the cult of St Rombout was to play a central role in Margaret's relationship with the largest town of her dower lands.²³² The highlight of its civic calendar was the annual procession with the relics of the patron saint, the *Peisprocessie*. In the words of canon Van Caster,

“la procession de la Paix, tout en étant une cérémonie religieuse, était pour le peuple une réjouissance publique”²³³

The public joy was obviously patriotic: it was the magistracy and not the Church that organised this ostensibly religious procession.²³⁴

Astutely, Margaret ensured that her first entry into her future dower town took place the day before the *Peisprocessie*, which she duly watched the following day, giving additional lustre to the spectacle by having a large number of the Burgundian nobility in her train.²³⁵ On several more occasions, she was to attend the procession, amongst others in 1480 in the company of Mary of Burgundy,²³⁶ and in 1503 in that of the future Charles V and his sister, Eléonora. This association of the wider dynasty with the loyal town through its *Peisprocessie* shows the lessons Margaret was teaching the children she had received in her care: she was the political mother and grandmother of the house of Burgundy.

The dowager's interest in the cult of St Rombout was not always restricted to passive observation. Occasionally, she involved herself actively in its promotion, and never more so than in the years 1479 and 1480. These were hardly quiet years, with war with France still threatening the very survival of the Burgundian inheritance. Yet Margaret judged the cult of St Rombout of such importance, that she spent some

²³⁰ Laenen, J., *Histoire de l'Eglise Métropolitaine de Saint-Rombout à Malines*, I, 48-9.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

²³² Its population stood at between 12,000 to 15,000, making it a significant urban centre. Kocken, M., “De Bevolkingcijfers van Mechelen”, *HKKOM*, LXXVII, (1973), 175.

²³³ “the *Peisprocessie* whilst being a religious ceremony, was also a public festival”. Caster, G. van, “Festivités en l'honneur de Saint Rumold, Evêque, Martyr, Apôtre de Malines”. In *Trois Conférences données au Cercle Archéologique de Malines*, 12.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

²³⁵ A.M. S 1, 162. (1469-70), f. 156-7 and 172; *Azevedo*, 24 April 1470.

²³⁶ A.M. Inv., 291, III, Letter by Margaret of York to the town magistrate.

considerable time on enhancing its appeal. In 1479, the idea was mooted to examine the state of the relics and to display them outside their shrine. The authorities of the St Rombout's church and the magistracy, who initiated the event, received Margaret's backing. This left bishop Henry de Glymes of Cambrai with no choice but to attach his seal of approval.²³⁷ She next turned her attention to Rome, writing to the pope to ask for extra-ordinarily generous indulgences for those attending the exhibition.²³⁸ In this, she was successful, too, and the town's secretary was paid to copy the papal approval.²³⁹ Naturally, the wider public had to be made aware of the duchess' involvement, and in 1480, she attended the second opening of the reliquary. In her train were Mary of Burgundy, no fewer than eight of the abbots of the largest abbeys in Brabant, as well as such luminaries as Louis, *heer* of Gruuthuse, Philippe de Croÿ, *comte* de Chimay, and Baudouin de Lalaing.²⁴⁰

Naturally, such exemplary co-operation between Church, town, and lady impressed onlookers by its closeness and its success. The intimate association between all layers of government was symbolised by the festivities, as well as Mechelen's continued adherence to the Burgundian cause. There was, however, another dimension at play. In 1477, the dowager had attempted to gain control over appointments to the town's magistrate, but had failed. She was to try again, and once more to no avail in 1495.²⁴¹ This poses the question whether she tried to reach out to the population of Mechelen over the heads of the magistrate. Unfortunately, there is no way of establishing this either way: the voices of the citizens of Mechelen are markedly mute during all these festivities. One may observe the statements made by the Church, by the magistrate, and by the dowager, and from these one may infer their relationships. The reaction of the citizens may only be guessed at.

One incident may provide some insight into the question of the duchess' relations with the ordinary citizens of Mechelen. In 1491, Philip the Fair, the son of Mary of Burgundy, was being cared for by *Madame la Grande* in her palace in Mechelen. Clearly, there was some resentment amongst certain of the Burgundian high nobility

²³⁷ Valerius, R., *Chronycke van Mechelen*, 25-6. He reports the bishop's initial reluctance.

²³⁸ Inv., 291, III, Letter by Margaret of York to the pope.

²³⁹ A.M. Van Menegherande dinghen, 1479-1480, f. 155-162.

²⁴⁰ The abbots came from St Bernaard's op de Schelde, Villers, Baudeloo, Afflighem, St Michiel's in Antwerp, Grimbergen, Tongerlo and Averbode; c.f. Wachtendonck, J. van and Gramaye, J.B., *Het leven, 't lyden, ende Mirakelen, van den H. Romboudt*, 74.

²⁴¹ C.f. Uytven, R. van, *De Geschiedenis van Mechelen*, 95.

as to this arrangement. Strikingly in the light of the close relationship between Margaret and Maximilian, the latter seems to have shared their frustration. That year, in November, this frustration boiled over, when Maximilian's close friend, Engelbrecht II of Nassau, turned up in Mechelen. He tried a ruse to get hold of the young prince,

“den Grave van Nassou, van meyninge synde den Hertogh Philips uyt te voeren met een subtiliteyt”.²⁴²

The dowager saw through his ploy and, in the words of the chronicler, “wilde dat niet gedoogen”.²⁴³ Engelbrecht, possibly believing he could overawe her, told her to mind her own business, that he was acting on orders. The magistrate took their lady's part, with mayor Keerman warning Engelbrecht he would have the alarm bells rung.²⁴⁴ The count ignored him, at which point the irate citizens set upon him. Engelbrecht was

“van boosheyt sieck en is van de Borgers van Mechelen gebrocht op een eezelen spot-gewys tot Semps, seggende wy dragen onsen Afgodt en die van Brussel quamen hem daer haelen”.²⁴⁵

This inverted procession, a parody of the *Joyeuse Entrée*, serves to show the devotion of the citizens of Mechelen to their lady and prince. Olivier de la Marche for one was impressed, for he wrote “Malines garda le prince soigneusement et bien”.²⁴⁶ It also shows that Margaret's judicious attempts at cultivating their goodwill had worked. They were prepared to thwart the most powerful nobleman in the Low Countries, even though Engelbrecht had been given instructions by Maximilian.

²⁴² “the count of Nassou was planning to kidnap duke Phillip with a ruse”. Valerius, R., *op.cit*, 173-4.

²⁴³ “would not countenance it”. *Ibid*.

²⁴⁴ Keerman had actually fought as captain under Engelbrecht in 1479. Munck, J.J. de, *Gedenck-Schriften dienende tot ophelderinge*, 216. Q.v. Part One, p. 48. Just how tangled loyalties could become is clear from the fact that Maximilian had recommended Keerman for his services to Margaret in 1483. A.M. Brieven, CCCLXXX.

²⁴⁵ “mad with anger and was mockingly carried by the citizens of Mechelen on a donkey to Semps, chanting we are carrying our idol, and those of Brussels came to fetch him there”. Valerius, R., *op.cit*, 173-4. The humiliation does not seem to have impaired Margaret's and Engelbrecht's relations. As late as 1500, she managed to persuade the magistrates of Mechelen to contribute Fl 1,200 towards his ransom in France.

²⁴⁶ “Mechelen guarded the prince with care and well”. *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 298.

This, incidentally, might also explain why Engelbrecht and not Margaret was elected as the lieutenant-general of the Low Countries in 1496 and 1501-1503.²⁴⁷

Binche and St Ursmer.

At Binche, the relics of the local patron saint, St Ursmer, had had a rather controversial career by the time Margaret of York became lady. Ursmer had been abbot in Lobbes, a Benedictine abbey in the Ardennes forest, which had been a cultural and political centre during the early and central Middle Ages. By the early fifteenth century, the abbey had suffered serious decline, and nearby Binche had gained the ascendancy. In 1412, the town had managed to cultivate the support of Willem IV of Bavaria, count of Hainault, in their attempt to persuade the chapter of the abbey to move to Binche.²⁴⁸ This they succeeded in doing, but they also managed to instigate a long-running feud between the prince-bishops of Liège and the lords of Binche.

The cult of St Ursmer was taken up with verve by Philip the Good, who cemented his relationship with his new town of Binche by a strong show of devotion towards their new relics, and by donating several valuable chasubles to the church.²⁴⁹ Philip's illegitimate son, Jean, the bishop of Cambrai, made his own contribution to binding Binche to the new dynasty, by sending his vicar-general to the festivities of the translation in 1459, and by encouraging participation in the events.²⁵⁰ Charles the Bold had also shown an interest in Binche. Two years prior to Margaret of York's arrival in Burgundy, for example, Charles had taken the chapter under his protection, when the prince-bishop demanded the return of both chapter and relics.²⁵¹

When Louis de Bourbon, the prince-bishop, judged the time right to renew his demands in 1479, Margaret had inherited a well-developed defensive system. Louis's timing, however, was accurate: the war between Burgundy and France was still in full swing, and there had been regular French military incursions into Hainault.

²⁴⁷ Cauchies, J.-M., *Philippe le Beau*, 59-60.

²⁴⁸ Vos, J., O.S.B., *Lobbes, son abbaye et son chapitre*, I, 246-7; Devillers, L., *Notice sur l'église de Saint-Ursmer a Binche*, 114-5.

²⁴⁹ *Lobbes*, 456-7; Lejeune, Th., *op.cit.*, 477-80.

²⁵⁰ Vaughan, R., *Philip the Good*, 233.

²⁵¹ These events suggest a closer involvement of Charles in the government of the Burgundian lands than Vaughan suggested. Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 3-4.

French armies had laid siege to Binche on one occasion,²⁵² and Margaret was continuously supplying the town with troops and money from her other dower lands.²⁵³ She even managed to deploy English soldiers there, for whom the town of Mechelen paid their wages.²⁵⁴ With all these efforts being made, a hostile Liège was the last thing Margaret wanted.

When a delegation from Liège arrived to petition her in Binche, she was in no position to ignore them, particularly as they were armed with a written papal backing.²⁵⁵ The latter fact weighed particularly heavily with *Madame la Grande*, for whose political position the support of the Church was crucial.²⁵⁶ However, after promising the Liègeois that the relics would be returned, she also insisted that the chapter stayed where it was, and placated local opposition with a very expensive gift to compensate for the loss of St Ursmer's relics: she donated a reliquary in the shape of a Calvary,

“emailée & ornée de beaux saphirs, d'esmeraudes & perles tres precieuses dans laquelle il y a de la sainte Croix de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ”²⁵⁷

This was a precious gift, and a piece of the Holy Cross would certainly have compensated for the loss of the relics of a local saint. The object was ordered in the workshop of Gerard Loyet, also responsible for the stunning silver-and-gold reliquary which Charles the Bold donated to Liège after he sacked the city.²⁵⁸

With the reliquary came

²⁵² C.f. Part One, p. 76.

²⁵³ “betaalt voor de soldeniers die op verzoek van de *duwagiere* te Bijns waren gelegerd”. A.M. Vaerden: 1479-1480, f. 155-162.

²⁵⁴ “Dezelfde naar Bijns gezonden aan de kapitein van het Engels krijgsvolk om te weten hoeveel plaats zij nodig hadden voor hun logement” A.M. 1480-1481, *Vaerden* f. 141-144.

²⁵⁵ C.f. Lejeune, Th., *op.cit*, 480, Vos, J., OSB, *op.cit*, 255; Devillers, L., *Les Sejours des Ducs de Bourgogne en Hainault*, 58; and Devillers, L., *Notice sur l'église*, 119.

²⁵⁶ Devillers put it down to her “égard aux dernières volontés de son époux et au mandement papal”. “respect for the last wishes of her husband and for the papal mandate”. Devillers, L., *Notice sur l'église*, 119. Weightman's assertion that Margaret supported Binche's attempt to prevent the relics from leaving, is clearly baseless. *Weightman*, 203.

²⁵⁷ “emailé and decorated with beautiful sapphires, emeralds and very precious pearls and in this the holy Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”. *Lobbés*, 472-3. C.f. Schnitker, H., “Reliekschrijn in de vorm van een Calvarieberg”. In *Dames met klasse*, 317-8. There is some doubt as to whether Margaret ordered this or not. Van der Velden suggested on stylistic grounds that it was earlier, and not from either Loyet or his workshop. However, this does not alter the gist of the argument. Velden, H. van der, *The Donor's Image*, 2. See also illustration XXX, p. 251.

²⁵⁸ Velden, H. van der, *op.cit*, 22.

“vne chasuble, deux tuniques, & la chappe debrocard d’or cramoisi pour la plus grande gloire de Dieu & des Saints. Elle auoit donné encore le tresbeauc liures pour chanter le diuin office, sur l’vn desquels son nom est escrit de sa propre main”.²⁵⁹

Binche’s lady clearly wished to smooth some very ruffled feathers. There was an element of piety behind all these gifts, as there was behind her involvement with the cult of St Rombout.²⁶⁰ However, the commonplace statement that piety was all that there was to these gestures, repeated once again recently in an overview of powerful women in the Low Countries, is surely too one-sided.²⁶¹ Subsequent events encouraged Margaret to make another grand symbolic gesture. In August, the French were badly defeated by Maximilian at Guinegate, and the duchess refused to let the relics go. With the French threat subsiding, the need to placate the Liègeois was gone and St Ursmer stayed in Binche. Shortly after, Henri de Glymes came to reassure the chapter that their saint was not going anywhere. In 1480, he came on pilgrimage to the shrine, confirming Church support for his ally.²⁶²

The relationship between Margaret of York and Binche, as expressed through the affair around the relics of St Ursmer, was, in many ways, typical of the complex strands in the duchess’ mindset. Simultaneously devout and cynical, political and compassionate, Margaret of York could be pragmatic and at the same time deeply imbued with the values of the Church on which she leaned both psychologically and politically. St Ursmer, like that other great Hainault saint, St Waudru, does not appear amongst the surviving calendars in the duchess’ library, nor is there a trace of any personal devotion towards them; this, of course, in stark contrast with the saints of East Anglia. Her pilgrimage to Mons of 1472, in the company of Mary of Burgundy, once again illustrates this political pre-occupation.²⁶³ She went to donate an altarpiece to the church, but at the same time came to pray rather publicly for her

²⁵⁹ “a chasuble, two tunics and a brocade cope in crimson and gold to the greater glory of God and the Saints. She had also given some very beautiful books for chanting the divine office, in one of which she inscribed her name with her own hand”. *Lobbès*, 472-3.

²⁶⁰ As has been suggested by amongst others Cheyns-Condé, M., “Expression de la piété des duchesses de Bourgogne”, *CEEB*, XXIX, (1989), 54-5; *Galesloot*, 249; *Weightman*, 201.

²⁶¹ Triest, M., *Macht, vrouwen en politiek 1477-1558*, 29-33.

²⁶² Lejeune, Th., *op.cit*, 481-2; Vos, J. OSB, *op.cit*, 256.

²⁶³ For this and what follows, c.f. Devillers, L., *Les Sejours des Ducs*, 53.

husband's well-being. All that, needless to say, during the main religious procession of Mons.

St Gummarus in Lier.

The devotion to St Gummarus in the small Brabantine town of Lier furnishes a final complication for any assessment of Margaret of York's participation in the public ritual of the veneration of saints. The cult of this saint underwent a significant revival in popularity during Margaret's rule as lady of neighbouring Mechelen. In many respects, this was a very modern cult. The revival was manufactured, a fairly common occurrence in the Low Countries during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, common enough for satirical plays to be written with invented saints as heroes.²⁶⁴ The propagators also made maximum use of the communications revolution enveloping Europe: by 1500, there were several printed versions of the story in circulation.²⁶⁵ Finally, the cult received a more traditional propagation through the efforts of the famous Rodeklooster, where St Gummarus's *vita* was included in the influential *Hagiologium Brabantinorum*.²⁶⁶

Yet the St Gummarus cult was still confined to a very specific, and very small, area. It was concentrated in Lier and nearby Emblem, in Duffel and Herenthout, both close to Lier, and in Mechelen. A second cluster was to be found in Steenberg and Wagenberg in the lands of Engelbrecht II of Nassau, and, strangely, in Enkhuizen, in the north of Holland.²⁶⁷ The saint's story was an old one, dating back to Carolingian times, but had been mothballed by the fifteenth century. This was rather disappointing to the college of the church in Lier, whose ambitious construction project had run into serious financial trouble by 1474.²⁶⁸ The saint's decision that year to renew his miracle working was rather fortuitous. He managed no fewer than 65, both in Lier and at a well in Emblem, where, according to legend, he was born. The pilgrims flooded in as soon as the chapter published his activities. By 1475,

²⁶⁴ Harris, A.J., "Sinte Lorts beware u. Sinte Lorts gespaer u!". In J. Fenoulhet and L. Gilbert (eds), *Presenting the Past*.

²⁶⁵ In, J. van, "De H. Gummarus, Patroon van Lier", *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis en Folklore*, I, (1938), 9 and 135-7.

²⁶⁶ Paaps, T., *De heilige Gummarus in de literatuur*, 42-63.

²⁶⁷ Hasenbroekx, A., *Sint Gummarus in Geschiedenis en Legende*, map on 461.

²⁶⁸ Avontroodt, J.G.J., *De Collegiale Kerk te Lier*, 12; Janse, H (ed), *op.cit.*, 63.

pilgrims were reported from places as diverse as Alkmaar and Valenciennes, Ieper and Cologne.²⁶⁹

Although she passed through Lier *en route* to her *Joyeuse Entrée* in Mechelen in 1470, Margaret did not visit the town until the miracles began to be reported.²⁷⁰ The *Kroniek van de Stad Lier* leaves no doubt as to the reason for the duchess' visit.

Reporting for the year 1475, it states that that year

“quam tot Lier de hertoginne van Brabant om S: Gummaer te besoecken en dede tot Emblem aen de fonteyn misse doen die sij met groote devotie horde”.²⁷¹

A few months later, she returned, this time to view the exposition of the saint's relics.²⁷² The chapter was delighted with the interest shown by the powerful duchess, whose presence gave an enormous boost to their publicity campaign. They showed their appreciation by giving her a *vita* of St Gummarus.²⁷³ Margaret's devotion to St Gummarus seems, at first, to be a case of straightforward religious sentiment. This sits uneasily with the image of the duchess as it has emerged from the above evidence. In addition, her mother, Cicely, from whom she had learned so much about the cults of saints, never showed any interest in newly emerging devotions.²⁷⁴

As ever, her motives were diverse. In October 1477, she returned, in the company of Mary of Burgundy, who was making her *Joyeuse Entrée* as duchess of Burgundy. She was ostentatiously dressed in widow's black, and attended the procession of the saint “met groote devotie”.²⁷⁵ The presence of the old and the new duchess for the traditional ceremonial entry at the same time as the procession of the town's patron

²⁶⁹ Meerbergen, J., *Sint Gummarus' Leven*, 244.

²⁷⁰ Except when passing through when travelling to Holland in 1476. Linden, H. vander, *Itinéraires de Charles, Duc de Bourgogne*, 77. The relationship between town and duchess started well. Although she was only passing through, Lier gave Margaret a large jewel and “een vat wijns costen 8 guldens”. “a vat of wine worth 8 guilders”. A.S.L. *Kroniek van de stad Lier*, f. 70. I would like to thank Luc Coenen, archivist of Lier's beautiful archive, for his support.

²⁷¹ “came to Lier the duchess of Brabant to visit St Gummarus, and she went to mass at the fountain at Emblem, which she heard with great devotion”. Q.v. A.S.L. *Kroniek van de stad Lier*, f. 29; A.S.L. *Stadsrekeningen* no. 450, f. 31^r and f. 33^v. For the chapel at Emblem, c.f. Goedleven, E. et al, *Bouwen door de eeuwen heen*, 787-91. For the wider context, Blockmans, W., “Overheid en cultuur in de Brabantse smalle steden tijdens de Bourgondisch-Habsburgse periode”, *Lira Elegans*, VI, (1996), 65.

²⁷² Hasenbroekx, A., *op.cit.*, I, 70.

²⁷³ A.S.L. *Kroniek van de stad Lier*, f. 29. C.f. Appendix Three, no. 23.

²⁷⁴ C.f. her lack of interest in St Walstan. Halliday, R., “St. Walstan of Bawburgh”, *Journal of the Norfolk Archaeological & Historical Research Group*, XIII, (1994); Twinch, C., *St. Walstan. Patron Saint of Agriculture*.

²⁷⁵ “with great devotion”. A.S.L. no. 450, f. 41^r.

saint is, by now, a familiar theme. Yet, with every recorded visit of the duchess in the chronicle, there is a reference to her great devotion, from when she first came in 1475, to her last recorded visit in 1478.²⁷⁶ This emphasis is absent when other visitors are noted, for example in the case of Philip the Fair in 1486, or of Frederick III and Maximilian in 1488.²⁷⁷

Margaret's absence from Lier after 1478 did not mean the end of her devotion: there was an altar to the saint in the Franciscan friary in Mechelen, close to where she was eventually buried.²⁷⁸ For all Margaret's undoubted piety, the fact that Lier occupied a crucially strategic position between the loyal towns of Mechelen and Antwerp, and the fact that it was the home of the important regional family of Van Immerseel, who were amongst Margaret's close associates, should not be lost sight of.²⁷⁹ In Lier, as in Mechelen and Binche, the very public show of interest by the duchess in the local saint's cult was a clear indication of her wish to emphasise her appreciation of the town's loyalty, and that of its leading citizens.

Local Saints and the Burgundian State: 1468-1477.

Margaret's role in cementing the relationship between rulers and ruled through a shared devotion to local saints and shrines was as important prior to 1477 as afterwards. Margaret's interest in Our Lady of Boulogne has recently been highlighted by Clauzel-Delannoy, an interest which ended after Louis XI occupied the region after Charles's death.²⁸⁰ Here, Margaret followed in the footsteps of Isabella of Portugal, who mixed politics and piety with equal grace and perfection.

²⁷⁶ A.S.L. *Kroniek van de stad Lier*, f. 76.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 71.

²⁷⁸ Laenen, J., *op.cit.*, II, 122-3; Steenackers, E., "Autels et Institutions dans les Eglises de Malines", *HKKOM*, XXXV, (1930), 98. The altar was founded in 1484, but the donor is unfortunately not known, Autenboer, E. van, "Sint Gummarus en de Mechelaars", *t Land van Ryen*, I, (1955), 4.

²⁷⁹ Margaret of York was associated with religious reform, both in Lier and in Mechelen, carried out by Elizabeth van Immerseel and her husband, Godfrey de Vilain, heer van Huis, Borcht and Zwijndrecht. The latter had been the captain of the Lier contingent in Charles the Bold's army from Neuss to Nancy. C.f. Munck, L.L. de, *Gedenck-Schriften dienende tot ophelderinge*, 16-7; Mast, E., "Testament van de Edele vrouw Elisabeth Van Immerseel", *Geschiedkundig Liersch Dagbericht*, 16-8.

²⁸⁰ Clauzel-Delannoy, I., "Marguerite d'York et le pays boulonnais au temps du Téméraire", *CEEB*, XLIV, (2004).

She journeyed to the Somme region of the Burgundian lands to venerate the particularly obscure, seventh-century St Wulfram, more particularly to Rue in the county of Ponthieu, where a piece of the True Cross was kept.²⁸¹ Like the statue of Our Lady of Boulogne, the Crucifix had arrived on the shores of northern France in an abandoned boat.

Margaret of York visited the Miraculous Crucifix in Rue on a special pilgrimage from the Burgundian castle at Le Crotoy, accompanied by Charles the Bold.²⁸² Margaret was born on the feast of the Holy Cross,²⁸³ and, like the Black Prince, seems to have had a particular interest in the feast of her birthday.²⁸⁴ She, furthermore, shared her mother's devotion to the Holy Cross, evident from her choice of relic to donate to Binche.²⁸⁵ The fact that Charles accompanied his wife, a rare occurrence, is indicative of the wider context in which this particular pilgrimage took place. Ponthieu was the most exposed part of the Burgundian lands, and the support of its population was of singular importance to the maintenance of the dynasty's hold on the Somme frontier. The duchess' experiences of this type of pilgrimage activity, and of similar very public displays of piety and devotion, would have stood her in good stead on this occasion. The joint jaunt around the vulnerable frontier would also have taught Margaret that, in this respect, there was little difference in the approach in England or Burgundy. She applied the lesson with much greater effect in her own dower lands than Charles had in Ponthieu.

²⁸¹ Sommé, M., *op.cit.*, 454. Such was the popularity of this devotion, that a special chapel, dedicated to the Holy Spirit, was built onto the existing church. Construction commenced around 1480, when Rue had fallen into French hands. Labrecque, C., "A Case Study of the Relationship Between Painting and Flamboyant Architecture: The St.-Esprit Chapel at Rue, in Picardy". In S. Blick and R. Tekippe (eds), *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles*. Texts, 78, 82.

²⁸² Linden, H. vander, *op.cit.*, 32. Van Herwaarden wrongly attributed the aim of the pilgrimages to Rue to the Holy Spirit, confusing the titular of the church with the object of veneration. Herwaarden, J. van, *Opgelegde Bedevaarten*, 696.

²⁸³ "Nata est Margareta, filia tertia Ricardi ducis Eboraci, iij. die Maii in die Martis apud Fodryngay." "The birth of Margaret, third daughter of Richard duke of York, 3rd day of May in Fotheringhay". *Worcester*, 101.

²⁸⁴ The Black Prince was born on Holy Trinity day. Vale, J. and M., "Knightly Codes and Piety". In N. Saul (ed), *The Age of Chivalry*, 24-26.

²⁸⁵ A piece of the Holy Cross was Cicely's most precious relic. Armstrong, C.A.J., "The Piety of Cicely, Duchess of York", 153.

Pilgrimage and Politics.

The religious behaviour of Margaret of York has been given ample attention by historians over the last decade and more. Although her intensive pilgrimage activities rank amongst the most important expressions of her piety, they have remained curiously little studied.²⁸⁶ Making almost no distinction between pilgrimages and attending various processions, Myriam Cheyns-Condé placed Margaret's pilgrimage activity and that of her predecessors in a more general devotional context.²⁸⁷ The duchess' pilgrimages, particularly when set in their political context, reveal much of the way she combined piety and politics. Cheyns-Condé's article is, therefore, important in creating a developmental framework, but more is needed if a more thorough assessment is to be reached.²⁸⁸

That Margaret's pilgrimage activities have been all but ignored is a little odd. Over the last few decades, pilgrimage has become a serious object of academic discourse, with as many interpretations as there were pilgrimage destinations in the Middle Ages. Some were imposed as penances and have been seen as evidence of an externalised show of religion, clouded by worldly practices and considerations.²⁸⁹ Two 'extremes' of pilgrimage may be found in the figures of Margery Kempe and Jacques de Lalaing. Margery has been held up as the classical devout traveller, impelled by her religious impulses.²⁹⁰ De Lalaing almost certainly did not primarily travel to worship. For him, visiting the famous shrines was part of a wider curiosity about Christendom. Somewhere in between sat the company of Lev z Rožmitálu, the

²⁸⁶ This part of the chapter leans heavily on my article on Margaret's pilgrimage activity, but whereas this explored the religiosity of her actions, this passage intends to focus on its role in the way in which the Burgundians used culture and public piety to express their power and authority. Schnitker, H., "Margaret of York on Pilgrimage". In S.D. Michalove (ed.), *Proceedings of the Third Fifteenth-Century Conference*.

²⁸⁷ Cheyns-Condé, M., *op.cit.*

²⁸⁸ Not all of Margaret's pilgrimage activity is dealt with here. Much her pilgrimages only duplicate each other in their meaning and information they provide. Her devotion to St Adrian at Geraardsbergen, for example, has been left out.

²⁸⁹ For the various interpretations of pilgrimage, see Swanson, R.N., *Religion and Devotion in Europe*, pp. 167-168; R.C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, pp. 194-195.

²⁹⁰ Windeatt, B. (trans.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*. C.f. Goodman, A., *Margery Kempe and her World*, particularly chapter 6.

Bohemian ambassador, whose primary purpose was obviously diplomatic, but who could not pass a shrine without visiting and praying.²⁹¹

As Margaret of York's pilgrimage activity will show, fifteenth-century pilgrims did not experience these seemingly contradictory motives as paradoxical. For Margaret, pilgrimage was a spiritual experience: some of her destinations cannot be understood in anything but religious terms. However, most of her visits to places of pilgrimage can be interpreted in a wide variety of ways. Within the context of the pageantry of the Burgundian state, Margaret's pilgrimage activities take on an especially significant meaning. Pilgrimage was a legitimate occupation for women, and enabled them to indulge in politics in a conspicuous way. An ostentatious group of pilgrims can be quite an efficient way to show the colours.

Tracking down the duchess' pilgrimage destinations is not an easy task. The Low Countries had hundreds of pilgrimage centres, as had East Anglia where she probably spent her youth. In the latter case, it is particularly difficult to reconstruct where Margaret may have gone on pilgrimage, as nothing is known of her life there. For the period she lived in the Low Countries as wife of Charles the Bold, an attempt has been made to reconstruct her itinerary by Herman vander Linden. This provides the best tool with which to approach her pilgrimage activities.²⁹² Vander Linden mentions only three specific pilgrimages: to Halle in Brabant, Aachen in the Rhineland, and to St Thomas Becket in Canterbury.²⁹³ This does not mean, of course, that none of Margaret's other journeys had a pilgrimage character, just that this is difficult to determine. Diane Webb's statement that "the pilgrim's journey might be short not only in distance but also in duration" highlights this problem.²⁹⁴ The issue is further complicated by the disappearance of many of the shrines during the Reformation, and the subsequent loss of their archives.

For all these problems, it is, nevertheless, occasionally possible to surmise that Margaret's visit to a given place was, indeed, a pilgrimage. Aardenburg illustrates this well. Its archives were lost and its pilgrimage church destroyed during the

²⁹¹ Letts, M. (ed and transl.), *The Travels of Leo of Rozmital*, *passim*.

²⁹² C.f. Linden, H. vander, *op.cit.* Robins, P., *Le veuvage et le douaire de Marguerite d'York* attempted a reconstruction for the post-1477 period, but is very scanty.

²⁹³ Linden, H. vander, *op.cit.*, 26, 51 and 55.

²⁹⁴ Webb, D., *op.cit.*, xiii.

sixteenth century.²⁹⁵ Yet the main reason for a ruler to visit the town during the fifteenth century was for the purpose of pilgrimage. When Margaret travelled to Aardenburg, therefore, it is safe to assume that the church of Our Lady was her destination. Two of Margaret's visits to Halle were recorded as having been pilgrimages, and as a corollary it can safely be assumed that her other visits to Halle were also undertaken with the intent of visiting Our Lady.²⁹⁶ Clearly, from the slender leads and with some carefully reasoned links, at least part of Margaret of York's pilgrimage activities may be reconstructed.

The Black Madonnas of Halle, Vilvoorde and 's-Gravezande.

The most noticeable aspect of Margaret's pilgrimages was that they were primarily aimed at statues of the Virgin Mary. She shows herself to be a child of her time in this respect. Her devotion to Our Lady was part of a trend which had witnessed a veritable explosion in Marian devotions.²⁹⁷ As noticed by Christine Weightman, the statue of Our Lady at Halle was the duchess' preferred pilgrimage destination.²⁹⁸ Between 1468 and 1477 she visited Halle no fewer than five times, to which may be added the visit of 1501.²⁹⁹ Between 1477 and 1479, and again between 1482 and 1490, warfare would have made travelling to Halle too dangerous. Rebels besieged the town, once in 1488 and twice in 1489.³⁰⁰ Margaret's pilgrimages to Halle show all the complexity of the motivations for pilgrimages mentioned above. For example, why did the duchess' visits never coincide with the first Sunday in September, when the Halle Virgin was honoured with a procession?³⁰¹ She hardly avoided these public spectacles. Quite the opposite, she actively sought them out. What is not surprising is that she decided to go to Halle in the first place. The statue of the Virgin there was of

²⁹⁵ C.f. Jansen, H.Q. and Dale, J.H. van, "Aardenburgs Stadsarchief", *Bijdragen tot de Oudheidkunde en Geschiedenis inzonderheid van Zeeuwsch-Vlaanderen*, I. For the church see Heeringen, R.M. en Hendrikse, H., "Nieuw licht op de Maria vereering te Aardenburg", *Zeeuws Tijdschrift*, XLI, (1991).

²⁹⁶ "Halle overvallen in 1488 en in 1489", *Gedenkschriften Geschied- en Oudheidkundige Kring van Halle*, IX, (1933), 164-8.

²⁹⁷ Sumption, J., *Pilgrimage*, 275 ff.

²⁹⁸ Weightman, 65. See illustration XXXI, p. 251.

²⁹⁹ The last year in the company of Margaret of Austria. *Molinet*, II, 489.

³⁰⁰ "Halle overvallen in 1488 en in 1489", 71.

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, 59.

international renown and attracted large numbers of pilgrims and pious donations.³⁰² Such luminaries as Popes Martin V and Eugenius IV, as well as King Henry VIII of England all gave costly gifts to Our Lady of Halle.³⁰³ The house of Burgundy favoured the Virgin at Halle, too: Charles the Bold, Margaret of Austria, and the Emperor Charles V all donated rich gifts. Louis XI's baby son was born and died in Halle, and is buried at the foot of the statue.³⁰⁴

The primary attraction of the *Virgo lactans* of Halle was the large number of, mostly well attested, miracles attributed to her.³⁰⁵ No fewer than 55 interventions by the Madonna were recorded, and these varied from curing people who had swallowed needles, to rescuing those wrongly convicted. The Virgin's interventions in Halle were also of an ongoing nature: in 1443, and 1461, she had miraculously cured sick children, whilst in 1489 she was to catch the cannon balls of the besieging army under Filips van Kleef in her cloak.³⁰⁶ Increasing this already highly-charged religious atmosphere, and adding significantly to the statue's popularity, were the 1,740 days of indulgences to be earned there. A full set of indulgences was granted to all who

“in dese kerke ... met devocien voer alle zielen segghen een pater noster en enen ave maria op haer knien”.³⁰⁷

This was hardly a stringent requirement, and Halle's relative proximity to many of the urban centres of the Low Countries ensured a large influx of pilgrims, intent on reducing their time in purgatory.

To the powerful, the statue's guild formed an additional incentive. Its membership was a veritable roll call of the great of medieval Europe, and included the Emperor Louis IV of Bavaria, Edward III of England, various counts of Hainault, Holland and

³⁰² I would like to express my gratitude to Mevr. Renault of the *Kerkfabriek* at Halle for her kind cooperation and her generous supply of information.

³⁰³ For this and what follows c.f. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1911 ed. S.v. “Hal”.

³⁰⁴ *Lettres de Louis XI*, I, 104-5; Mandrot, J. (ed), *Journal de Jean de Roye connu sous le nom de Chronique Scandaleuse 1460-1483*, I, 215-6.

³⁰⁵ An example of the importance attached by the compilers of the book to a proper witnessing of the miracles is illustrated by the frequent inclusion of a witness list to the stories. The story of “Een kind van Binche, door zijnen wiegband verstikt, wordt levend” illustrates this perfectly, being concluded by “Dit sijn die namen van den lieden diet saghen”. *Privilegien*, I, 28.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 59. C.f. Clement, R. and Decretton, J., *Halle*, 131.

³⁰⁷ “in this church on their knees to say with devotion an Our Father and a Hail Mary for all souls”. *Privilegien*, I, 5.

Flanders, dukes of Brabant and of Gelre, and even a bishop of Lincoln.³⁰⁸ Although there is evidence that the guild was losing some of its appeal during the fifteenth century, this did not diminish the attraction of Halle as a pilgrimage destination.³⁰⁹ From Margaret of York's point of view, the main non-religious attraction of Our Lady of Halle must have been its strong association with the English royal family. Arguably the most powerful weapon in her armoury concerning her personal prestige was her royal descent. Although the house of Burgundy descended from the kings of France, political circumstances made this less of a boast, and none of the nobility in the Low Countries ranked as highly as the new duchess. Margaret was acutely aware of this, and for all her immersion in the cultural world of the Low Countries, she never ceased to emphasise her English, and, above all, her royal birth.³¹⁰

The origins of the English royal family's interest in Our Lady of Halle go back to Edward III, and illustrate the circular aspect of cultural exchange in medieval Europe. The statue was closely identified with the family of his wife, Philippa of Hainault, but almost a century later, a duchess of Burgundy could regard the statue as an affirmation of her Englishness.³¹¹ To Margaret's brother, Edward IV, and her father, Richard, duke of York, before him, the connection between Edward III and the house of York had been of enormous importance, for it underlay the claim of their family to the English crown.³¹²

Enhancing the political gesture of travelling to Halle was the fact that the church contained the entrails of the founder of the Burgundian dynasty, Philip the Bold. He had died in the *Hostellerie du Cerf* opposite the church, in 1404.³¹³ Anthony, the Great Bastard, had travelled to Halle after he swore a vow to do so on the battlefield of Monthlhéry in 1465, and donated his banner.³¹⁴ From Isabella of Portugal

³⁰⁸ Ibid, I, 1.

³⁰⁹ From amongst the Burgundian high nobility, only Louis, *heer* of Gruuthuse, and his family were enrolled. Ibid, 56.

³¹⁰ Even on her tombstone this was maintained. Its inscription began with the words 'Domina Margareta de Anglia'. Munck, J.J. de, *Provincie, Stad ende District van Mechelen*, I, 2-3. Official English documents reflect its importance, too. The Patent Rolls of 1471 and 1480 record her as the "King's sister Margaret, duchess of Burgundy". *CPR 1467-1477*, 306; *CPR 1476-1485*, 236. Here the fact that her English status precedes her Burgundian title is surely significant.

³¹¹ The English formed the second largest group in the membership list of the guild of Our Lady in Halle. *Privilegien*, I, 5.

³¹² C.f. Ross, C., *Edward IV*, 28-9 and 33; Scofield, C., *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth*, I, 3-5; Johnson, P.A., *op.cit.*, 27 and 98.

³¹³ Vaughan, R., *Philip the Bold*, 101 and 240; Begg, E., *The Cult of the Black Virgin*, 157.

³¹⁴ *Haynin*, I, 150.

Margaret could have learned that Philip the Good set some store by this, having visited the church in Halle on a religious as well as a familial pilgrimage on two occasions.³¹⁵ Isabella followed her husband in his devotion to Our Lady of Halle, and this formed yet another powerful strand in Margaret of York's motivation.³¹⁶ As duchess of Burgundy, she wisely followed in the footsteps of her mother-in-law, whose own political influence she attempted to emulate. That Margaret regarded the church, at least in part, as a dynastic pilgrimage centre is also substantiated by her last recorded visit, when, in October 1501, she brought Margaret of Austria there before the latter left for Savoy to get married.³¹⁷

Clearly, then, Margaret's frequent pilgrimages to Our Lady of Halle fit perfectly into the wider political theatre in which the Burgundian dynasty indulged. With her prominent train of followers,³¹⁸ the duchess was exercising a particularly public act of devotion, heavily clad in dynastic accoutrements. However, the purely religious and private element of Margaret's pilgrimages to the Virgin in Halle is not that easily obscured. In a similar context, it has been argued that her brother, Richard III, had to walk the well-trodden religious path: any other action would have been deviant.³¹⁹ Well-trodden paths, nevertheless, can have a deeper significance for those who walk them, and the pilgrimage route to the Virgin in Halle reveals that more private element for Margaret of York.

The Halle statue was one of four served by a special sisterhood, with the other three located in Vilvoorde, 's-Gravezande and Haarlem.³²⁰ With the exception of Haarlem, which was too far removed from her normal itineraries, the duchess visited all of these. Margaret came through Vilvoorde on numerous occasions, which is to be expected as the town lay on the road between Brussels and Mechelen. Margaret's

³¹⁵ Clement, R. and Decretton, J., *op.cit.*, 131.

³¹⁶ Sommé, M., *op.cit.*, 453 ff.

³¹⁷ Cheyns-Condé, M., *op.cit.*, 50.

³¹⁸ Margaret tended to travel in some style. In July 1478, for example, she asked the town of Mechelen to send an escort for her to Binche. This consisted of captain Willem van der Aa, forty men on horseback, and four pieces of artillery. They accompanied no fewer than twelve carts. *Azevedo*, July 1478. Such an escort was no luxury. In 1495, Montarius reported that the road between Mechelen and Diest was "infestées de brigands et de soldats pillard". Ciselet, P. and Delcourt, M. (eds and transl.), *Monetarius, Voyage aux Pays-Bas*, 60.

³¹⁹ Sutton, A.F. and Visser-Fuchs, L., *The Hours of Richard III*, 79.

³²⁰ Begg, E., *op.cit.*, 248. The sisterhood, which took care of the statues, ought to be distinguished from the brotherhoods associated with the Guild of the Brothers and Sisters of the Virgin at Halle, which were unrelated. "Halle overvallen in 1488 en in 1489", 59.

third visit to the town, in May 1476, can definitely be regarded as a pilgrimage. This time the visit was part of a much larger pilgrimage that significantly also went to Halle.³²¹ Her visit to 's-Gravezande took place during what was, otherwise, a wholly political journey into Holland in October 1476.³²² Its inclusion during this journey is all the more striking as all the other ports of call were the county's major towns. Why this devotion to these Madonna statues? Although both the Holland statues have disappeared, it is clear that all shared a common element, besides a link with St Elisabeth of Hungary: they were all black.³²³

Several reasons have been put forward for the blackness of the statues of the Virgin, which occur all over Europe,³²⁴ but whatever the reason, they have been at the centre of a particularly strong devotion.³²⁵ Throughout the continent and beyond, black Madonnas have been for centuries by women facing the main challenges of their lives: marriage, conception, childbirth, and death.³²⁶ Dom Jacques de Bascher argued for a Byzantine origin of the black Virgins, tracing them to icons of black Madonnas. According to Bascher, the reason for their popularity is their ability to confer fertility on their venerated.³²⁷

Although the curing of barren women is not mentioned at Halle, there was a noticeably close connection with children: of the 55 recorded miracles, 25 involve children.³²⁸ The likelihood that these black statues, indeed, were invoked for fertility is furthered by a donation of a silver Calvary to Our Lady of 's-Gravezande by Charles the Bold in 1457, on the occasion of Mary of Burgundy's birth.³²⁹ Charles visited again in September 1469, probably with an eye on praying for a successor born of Margaret of York.³³⁰ Margaret was no stranger to this aspect of the devotions

³²¹ Linden, H. vander, *op.cit.*, 74.

³²² *Ibid.*, 77.

³²³ According to legend, St Elisabeth had brought them from the Holy Land and had donated them to the ducal House of Brabant. Begg, E., *op.cit.*, 156.

³²⁴ For alternatives to the traditional external influences c.f. Begg, E., *op.cit.*, 6-8 and Davidson, B., *Afrika*, 45-46.

³²⁵ *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1967 ed., S.v. "Mary, Blessed Virgin I and II".

³²⁶ Warner, M., *Alone of all Her Sex*, p. 274.

³²⁷ He cited the statue of *Notre-Dame de Bonne Délivrance* or *La Vierge Noire de Paris* as his main evidence. Bascher, Dom J. de, *La Vierge Noire de Paris*, 23.

³²⁸ *Privilegien*, I, 6-59.

³²⁹ Velden, H. van der, *op.cit.*, 16.

³³⁰ "Le Duc va à Notre-Dame de 's Gravezand et revient le soir à La Haye". Linden, H. vander, *op.cit.*, 19. For the pilgrimage c.f. Herwaarden, J. van, "'s-Gravenzande". In P.J. Magry and C.M.A. Caspers, (eds), *Bedevoertplaatsen in Nederland*, I, 378-83.

to the Mother of God. As previously noted, her mother, Cecily Neville, travelled to the Virgin at Walsingham when pregnant with the future Richard III, at a time when Margaret was living with her.³³¹ In addition, her father's chaplain, Roger Crosse, had been archdeacon of Dublin.³³² From his residence in Dublin, Crosse would have known about the statue of the black Virgin there, and its miraculous powers.³³³ After the dynastic element, the main aspect of the devotion to the Virgin at Halle is very much its Christendom-wide hallmark.

Much has been made of the psychological impact of Margaret of York's barrenness. It has become something of a catch-all to interpret Margaret's actions and any art associated with her.³³⁴ Her pilgrimages to the black Madonnas certainly present evidence that at least in the early years of her marriage, the thought occupied her. However, Weightman's suggestion that Margaret's devotion to the Virgin of Halle stemmed from her inability to conceive is far too sweeping a statement: why would she have continued visiting after 1477?³³⁵ The duchess' devotion to the black Virgin at Halle encapsulates the Gordian knot of religion, dynasty, identity, and their projection to a wider audience. There was certainly a private element here, but this is almost impossible to disentangle.

Our Lady of Aardenburg.

Margaret's pilgrimages were not all as complicated as those to the black Madonnas. Those to Aardenburg and Aachen, for example, are much easier to categorise. Without wishing to diminish their religious aspect, they were clearly attempts either to impress and cajole, or to make dynastic and political statements. In the case of the Aardenburg pilgrimages, Margaret wished to emphasise her English

³³¹ Rawcliffe, C., *op.cit.*, 179. The Virgin there was not black though.

³³² Johnson, P.A., *op.cit.*, 230.

³³³ Cosgrove, A. (ed), *A New History of Ireland*, II, 560-1.

³³⁴ Amongst others Blockmans, W.P., "The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess". In T. Kren (ed.), *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and The Vision of Tondal*; Pearson, A.G., *op.cit.*; and, of course, Weightman, *passim*.

³³⁵ Weightman, 65.

royal descent.³³⁶ This played a role in Halle, but here it takes clear precedence over all other aspects, with the possible and untraceable exception of religious sentiment.

In all, she paid three visits to Aardenburg, which may be classed, therefore, as one of her main pilgrimage destinations.³³⁷ Her first visit to Aardenburg took place in March 1470, and it is possible that she had hoped to visit church and statue from the moment she first saw the towers of Aardenburg on her journey from Margate to Sluis in 1468.³³⁸ According to the chronicler, Jehan de Haynin, the duchess had knelt down and prayed to Our Lady when she saw the church appearing on the horizon.³³⁹ These visits must have been spectacular affairs: the duchess travelled from Brugge, accompanied by Mary of Burgundy, and their entire household.³⁴⁰ These journeys were both for internal and external consumption, as well as for the spiritual benefits both women hoped to accrue. Internally, they recalled the pilgrimages of Philip the Good in 1425, who had said of the town that

“notre dite ville est principalement fondée sur le prouffit qui en icelle peut venir le fait et cause de pelerrage de la glorieuse et benite vierge Marie”.³⁴¹

Four years previously, he had extended his protection to all pilgrims travelling to Aardenburg throughout his lands.³⁴² The visits by Margaret and Mary served to restate the interest of the ducal family in Aardenburg.

Once more, Margaret travelled in the footsteps of Isabella of Portugal.³⁴³ This time, however, the Plantagenet ancestry of Isabella has to be kept in mind. She had shown an acute awareness of her own English royal descent on a number of occasions, and Aardenburg was just the place to emphasise this, for it had long attracted the interests

³³⁶ For Aardenburg as a centre for pilgrimage see Herwaarden, J. van., “Aardenburg”. In P.J. Magry and C.M.A. Caspers (eds), *Bedevaartplaatsen in Nederland*, I, 81-8.

³³⁷ Linden, H. vander, *op.cit.*, 22, 23 and 59.

³³⁸ Charles the Bold had already been there in 1469 with the specific aim of going on pilgrimage to Our Lady. Linden, H. vander, *op.cit.*, 18.

³³⁹ Quoted in Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 50.

³⁴⁰ Linden, H. vander, *op.cit.*, 22 and 59. In all thirty horse and carriages are mentioned. Q.v. Appendix Two, for the size of the household.

³⁴¹ “our said town was founded principally for the profit which one can gain here by going on pilgrimage to the glorious and blessed Virgin Mary”. Quoted in Jansen, H.Q. and Van Dale, J.H., *op.cit.*, 321.

³⁴² Reepmaker, K.L., *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de Aardenburgsche Onze Lieve Vrouwe-of Maria Kerk*, 16.

³⁴³ In November 1450, for example, she paid her respects to the statue of the Madonna, accompanied by her Portuguese relatives in exile in Burgundy. Sommé, M., *op.cit.*, 78-9.

of the English royal family.³⁴⁴ Edward I had extended wide privileges to the burghers of Aardenburg, giving as the reason his devotion to the Virgin there.³⁴⁵ It was Edward III, though, who really placed Aardenburg on the map of English royal devotion. Despite being wounded, he travelled to Our Lady to give thanks for one of his most famous victories, that over the French fleet at the battle of Sluis on 24 June 1340.³⁴⁶

This royal connection was enhanced by a national one. The cult of Our Lady of Aardenburg had travelled across the North Sea, and had a following in Yarmouth.³⁴⁷ Again, Margaret of York's East Anglian youth has to be recalled, and the possibility that she had known of this Flemish cult in her youth cannot be discounted. In addition, there is the curious merger of a cult of St Cuthbert with that of Our Lady at Aardenburg. Hardly a well-known saint in the Low Countries, his cult had reached the town in the twelfth century, when Flemish traders brought it from Northumberland.³⁴⁸ Two candles associated with his cult were depicted on fifteenth-century pilgrim badges from Aardenburg, flanking the seated Virgin and Child.³⁴⁹ The association with the familiar St Cuthbert must have enhanced Aardenburg's attraction to Margaret of York. Her brother Richard held the saint in particular veneration, and had his feast day celebrated in his college at Middleham as a principal feast.³⁵⁰ Cuthbert also makes an appearance in Margaret's breviary, where he is rubricated.³⁵¹ There clearly existed a family tradition of a cult of St Cuthbert, which is not surprising given the northern English descent of Margaret and Richard's mother, Cecily Neville.

This combination of Plantagenet and Yorkist significance must have been plain to all, when, in early 1470, Margaret of York first came to Aardenburg. The visit followed close on the heels of her brother, Edward IV's victory in the battle of

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 395-408; Ross, C., *Edward IV*, 240, n. 1.

³⁴⁵ Reepmaker, K.L., *op.cit.*, 11.

³⁴⁶ Edward III went "anderdachs t onser Lieve Vrouwen t Aerdenburch in pelgrimagie". Quoted in *ibid.*, 13.

³⁴⁷ Duffy, E., *The Stripping of the Altars*, 166.

³⁴⁸ Craster, E., "The Miracles of St. Cuthbert at Farne", *Analecta Bollandiana*, LXX, (1952), 5-19.

³⁴⁹ The badges are depicted in Heeringen, R.M. and Hendrikse, H., *op.cit.*, 97.

³⁵⁰ Sutton, A. and Visser-Fuchs, L., *The Hours of Richard III*, 44.

³⁵¹ St John's College Cambridge MS. H.13, f.132^v.

Losecote Field five days earlier.³⁵² There was an element of thanksgiving, as well as a statement of defiance in this journey. With Warwick's threat increasing, Margaret returned in April of that year, less sanguine than before. She had reason to be worried. According to the sixteenth-century chronicler, Jacobus Meyerus, the now deposed Edward IV came to Aardenburg in the company of Louis, *heer van Gruuthuse*.³⁵³ The reason may be clear: the statue at Aardenburg, which had been venerated by Edward III after his famous naval victory, was the perfect place for a number of symbolic gestures on the part of the deposed dynasty's two most prominent members. In an age sensitive to symbolism, it also could not be misunderstood. This was undoubtedly also Louis XI's appreciation, and his actions with regard to Aardenburg serve as an ironic note to Margaret's pilgrimages there. In January 1477, when it had become clear to the French king that Charles the Bold had been killed, he sent an envoy to Our Lady at Aardenburg, with a donation of 1,200 *écus d'or*.³⁵⁴

Our Lady of Aachen.

If Margaret's pilgrimages to Aardenburg were primarily intended to display her royal blood and status to the citizens of the Low Countries, then the journey to Aachen was intended to show the power of the Burgundian state abroad. The Aachen pilgrimage was the largest devotional journey ever undertaken by the duchess. It lasted for eight days in all, and was her finest contribution to her husband's insatiable hunger for a royal title.³⁵⁵ The whole affair took place against the backdrop of Charles the Bold's Rhineland campaign, which had culminated in his failed siege of Neuss.³⁵⁶ Neuss marked the first major setback to Charles's impossibly ambitious

³⁵² C.f. Goodman, A., *The Wars of the Roses*, 66-85; Haigh, P.A., *The Military Campaigns of the Wars of the Roses*, 104-138.

³⁵³ Jacobus Meyerus, *Commentarii, sive: Annales rerum Flandricarum*, 141. Edward's pilgrimage is also remarked upon by Despars. *Despars*, II, 418, and in the *Excellente cronike*, f. cliii.

³⁵⁴ Mandrot, J. (ed), *Journal de Jean de Roye connu sous le nom de Chronique Scandaleuse 1460-1483*, II, 23.

³⁵⁵ Linden, H. vander, *op.cit*, 62.

³⁵⁶ For the campaign, c.f. Bartier, J., *Karel de Stoute*, 194-8; Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 317-319. Vaughan dated the start to the middle of 1473; Bartier sees the conflict dating back to March of 1474, with the Burgundian attempt to impose a protectorate on the Prince-Bishopric of Cologne. The tension over this move did indeed precipitate the siege of Neuss, and when Margaret travelled to Maastricht and Aachen actual warfare had only just ended.

plans, and, at the time, the Burgundian quest for a royal crown must have appeared dead in the water.³⁵⁷

The arrival of the magnificent train of the glamorous duchess on what had so recently been the scene of her husband's humiliation, would, therefore, have caused considerable waves. All knew she came on pilgrimage, all knew she was devout, but the subliminal messages were there for all to see. The display of wealth, that traditional tool through which the Burgundians projected their power and authority, showed that their strength was still formidable, despite the failed siege. The lavish display of her gifts to the *Dom* at Aachen, valued at 100,000 Rhineland Guilders, would certainly have enforced that message.³⁵⁸ Copying a lost fifteenth-century Rhineland chronicle, the seventeenth-century author, Joanne Noppio, argued that the Germans believed it went beyond this, that Margaret's role was that of a peacemaker. They regarded Margaret's visit as a religious counterpart to Charles's military campaign against the archbishop of Cologne, as atonement by the wife for the husband's actions,

“Aber Gott hat das Gegenspiel verheuet, also daß der Herzogen Ehegemahl ihre Pilgerfahrt gegen Aach gethan, und die Mutter Gottes allhier in ihren Tempel mit viel angenehlichen Fürstlichen Gaben verehrt”.³⁵⁹

This would certainly correspond to the traditionally expected function of queenship, but even that becomes a propaganda point when seen against the Burgundian quest for a royal crown.

The year in which Margaret undertook her pilgrimage to Aachen is something of a problem. The only contemporary German source, the *Aachener Chronik*, is unequivocal: under the entry for the year 1475 it states that “In vielgemelter Zeit kam desz hertzen frawe von Burgund ihr gebede zu Aichen thuen”.³⁶⁰ However,

³⁵⁷ For the quest for a royal title, c.f. Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 317-8; Daly, K., “French Pretensions to Valois Burgundy”, *CEEB*, XLIV, (2004).

³⁵⁸ Beissel, S., *Die Aachenfahrt*, 94.

³⁵⁹ “But God blessed the opposite, namely that the duke's wife held her pilgrimage to Aachen, and honoured the Mother of God in the temple here by donating many princely gifts”. Noppio, J., *Aacher Chronik*, 145.

³⁶⁰ “In the aforementioned time the duke of Burgundy's wife came to say her prayers at Aachen”. Loersch, A., (ed), “Aachener Chronik”, *Historischer Verein für die Niederrhein*, XVII, (1866), 142.

Herman vander Linden places the events in 1474.³⁶¹ None of the German sources supports this though. The thorough Grimme, when examining the records of the treasury in the *Dom*, gives 1475,³⁶² as did Noppio in the seventeenth century.³⁶³ It is possible that Vander Linden copied K. F. Meyer,³⁶⁴ but there is still the problem that Margaret was in Calais with her brother, Edward IV, early in July of 1475, and with Clarence and Gloucester at Saint-Omer between 14 and 18 July.³⁶⁵ Yet that July she ought to have been in Aachen.

The solution lies in one of the major spiritual reasons for Margaret's pilgrimage. In the thirteenth century, Aachen had successfully claimed the privilege of *Römerfahrt*, and, since then, a pilgrimage to Aachen had been equated with one to the capital of Christendom.³⁶⁶ Around 1349, every seventh year became a jubilee year, and at this time, the showing of the cloak of the Virgin began to take precedence over that of the swaddling cloth of Christ.³⁶⁷ During these seven yearly jubilees, the pilgrim could earn a full indulgence when visiting the relics.¹⁰⁷ Normally, the jubilee began on 10 July, but in 1475 the conflict with Charles the Bold caused its postponement until 10 September.³⁶⁸

The indulgence attached to the jubilee pilgrimage to Aachen was conditional upon the pilgrims visiting a number of stations. For pilgrims coming from the Low Countries these were Tongeren, Susteren, Sint-Truiden, Rolduc, Roermond, Maastricht, and Maaseik.³⁶⁹ Margaret journeyed to Aachen via Leuven, Tienen, Sint-Truiden, Tongeren, Maastricht, and Gulpen.³⁷⁰ She, therefore, clearly missed out four of the stations, but these were all to the north of the most direct route, and more importantly, outside the reach of the Burgundian state. In the aftermath of the war, Margaret clearly thought the better of straying there. Whether this affected her indulgence we do not know.

³⁶¹ Linden, H. vander, *op.cit.*, 62-3.

³⁶² Grimme, E.G., "Das Aachener Domschatz", *Aachener Kunst-blatter*, XLII, (1972), 111-2.

³⁶³ Noppio, J., *op.cit.*, 145.

³⁶⁴ Meyer, K.F., *Aachensche Geschichten*, 399.

³⁶⁵ *Despars*, IV, 103; *Molinet*, I, 106.

³⁶⁶ Boeren, P.C., *Heiligdomsvaart Maastricht*, 9.

³⁶⁷ For this and what follows c.f. *Ibid*, 72.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 10-11.

³⁶⁸ Beissel, S., *op.cit.*, 94; Poll, B. (ed), *Geschichte Aachens in Daten*, 66.

³⁶⁹ Boeren, P.C., *op.cit.*, 109.

³⁷⁰ Linden, H. vander, *op.cit.*, 62-3.

The most significant stop on this route was at Maastricht. Co-ruled by Charles the Bold and his cousin, Louis de Bourbon, prince-bishop of Liège, this was a major pilgrimage destination in its own right. Its main attraction were the relics of St Servatius. He had been bishop of Tongeren, but had removed his seat to Maastricht, apparently at the command of an angel. He died in circa 384. As the earliest saint in the Low Countries, he had a widespread popular cult in the region during the Middle Ages.³⁷¹ According to an eyewitness account by a fifteenth-century pilgrim, his relics included three pieces of heavenly cloth associated with the saint, the crosier that had been given to him by an angel, and his pilgrim's staff, as well as his skull and skeleton.³⁷² The account found its way into the Burgundian library around 1433, and may have come to Margaret's notice. She did develop a devotion to the saint, adopting him as the titular of her new chapel in the palace in Binche.³⁷³

If Margaret's devotion to St Servatius is evidence of the religious impact which her pilgrimage to Aachen made, then her gifts to Our Lady in the German city is evidence for the political nature of her journey.³⁷⁴ The most important of these gifts was the small crown that bears her name.³⁷⁵ There is some debate on the origins of the crown,³⁷⁶ and on whether Margaret actually wore it during her wedding to Charles the Bold, but that it belonged to the duchess is beyond doubt.³⁷⁷ The question as to whether she wore the coronet at her wedding is actually an important one. Compton Reeves has proposed a most elegant solution for its diminutive size, held by many to be an obstacle to Margaret wearing it at all.³⁷⁸ He suggested that it was

³⁷¹ Weiler, A.G. et al, *Geschiedenis van de Kerk in Nederland*, 15.

³⁷² Willems, J. F., "Aenteekeningen van eenen pelgrim der XV^e eeuw", *Belgisch Museum*, III, (1839), 408.

³⁷³ Lejeune, Th., *op.cit.*, 277.

³⁷⁴ Although Wim Blockmans and Walter Prevenier argued for the devotional nature of the gift. Blockmans, W. and Prevenier, W., *De Bourgondische Nederlanden*, 360.

³⁷⁵ Domschatzkammer Aachen, Crown of Margaret of York, circa 1461, with a leather case (contemporary). H. 13.2 cm, diam. 12.5 cm. gold, diamond cross and circles, enamelled letters in green, red and white forming the words MARGARIT DE OK. Precious stones in the form of red and white roses. Margaret's devise, *Bien en avienie*, is on the crown. C.f. "Die Kronenkapsel Margaretas von York", *Der deutsche Herold*, XVI, (1890). Q.v. illustration XXXII, p. 253.

³⁷⁶ Van der Velden suggests that it is not English at all, based on the size of the crown. That this is not a convincing argument is proposed below. Velden, H. van der, *op.cit.*, 216.

³⁷⁷ *Weightman*, 44; Hammond, P.W. and Sutton, A.F., *Richard III*, 32; Squilbeck, J., "Couronne votive de l'image miraculeuse d'Aix-la-Chapelle". In *Marguerite d'York et son temps*, 47; Eichberger, D., "Kroon van Margareta van York", *Dames met klasse*, 69-70.

³⁷⁸ Bock, F., *Die kleinodien des Heiligen Romischen Reiches Deutscher Nation*, 51.

“probably worn high on Margaret’s head to enhance her flowing blond hair”.³⁷⁹ Less prosaically, the crown was almost certainly made smaller to fit the head of the statue of the Virgin at Aachen.³⁸⁰

The donation of her crown to the Virgin Mary was a highly significant gesture. Popular and widely understood throughout Europe, the Burgundian court was frequently involved in such donations.³⁸¹ The coronation and accompanying queenship of the Virgin Mary had played an important role in the mysticism of writers such as Bernard of Clairvaux,³⁸² and Paschasius Radbert, and was popularised by Jacobus de Voragine, who brought the cult to a wider audience, including to Cecily Neville. Until 1570, St Bernard’s sermon on the issue was included in the Sarum breviary, from where Margaret would first have learned about it.³⁸³

Although the concept of the Queen of Heaven appealed to many, it had a specific and obvious significance for female rulers or the wives of rulers.³⁸⁴ An attraction to the Queen of Heaven, therefore, would have been a natural and even highly symbolic public act of devotion for the duchess. This tradition lends credence to Weightman’s suggestion that Margaret’s donation of her crown to the Virgin in the imperial capital could well have been a symbolic gesture in support of Charles the Bold’s quest for a royal crown.³⁸⁵ It is also evidence for the political partnership between duke and duchess. Charles knew about the value of having a ‘queen’ by his side, and was aware of the significance of the Marian queenship cult. For the music of his marriage to Margaret, Antoine Busnois’s *Regina coeli* was played.³⁸⁶ Yet it may well have been Margaret who first suggested the pilgrimage to Aachen. She was to repeat the gesture much later in 1487, when the crown used in the coronation of Lambert

³⁷⁹ Reeves, C., *Pleasures and Pastimes in Medieval England*, 60-1.

³⁸⁰ This would also explain the corrupted text on the crown.

³⁸¹ Sommé, M., *op.cit.*, 32.

³⁸² It should be recalled that Margaret read more than a few of St Bernard’s articles. Q.v. Appendix Three, nos. 1, 8, 9, and 18.

³⁸³ Graef, H., *Mary. A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, 178-9.

³⁸⁴ Fradenburg, L., *City, Marriage, Tournament*, 85 ff.

³⁸⁵ *Weightman*, 88.

³⁸⁶ K.B.B. Ms. 5557. Q.v Appendix Three, no. 40.

Simmel, the Yorkist pretender to the English throne, was donated to the statue of the black Madonna in Dublin.³⁸⁷

To some extent, this leads straight back to Huizinga's interpretation of late medieval religion as 'totally exteriorised', whilst contradicting his notion that the symbolism of Burgundian culture had become hollow.³⁸⁸ If the donation as such is conventional, even traditional, then what is being donated is far less so. It was the coronet that the duchess had worn at her wedding, the very symbol of her own majesty. Made in England, and worn by Margaret for her brother's coronation which had turned her house into a royal family, it confirmed her own royal status. Wearing it made her a woman of power, and it was this that Margaret left behind in the church at Aachen. The message to the Germans in the Rhineland, and to Emperor Frederick III, could not have been less hollow.

St Thomas Becket.

Considerable emphasis has already been placed on the English angle of Margaret of York's pilgrimage activities. Whilst duchess of Burgundy, she had easy access to some of the relics of the most famous of England's medieval saints, Thomas Becket. At Saint-Omer, his relics included his tunic, hair shirt, hairs, blood, and his staff, to which should be added his crosier, still at Saint-Omer.³⁸⁹ The chapel of the castle of Male was dedicated to the saint. Becket was, of course, not just England's most famous saint, his cult was also obligatory to Margaret's royal family. Perversely, the man who had been killed by the anger of an English king had become his successors' talisman. Henry IV was buried in Canterbury cathedral next to Becket's shrine, Henry V had visited the shrine when returning from the battle of Agincourt,³⁹⁰ and Henry VI had been anointed king of France with St Thomas's sacred oil.³⁹¹ St Thomas also appears in the Book of Hours of Richard III.³⁹²

³⁸⁷ Begg, E., *op.cit.*, 240. For the coronation, see Otway-Ruthven, A.J., *A History of Medieval Ireland*, 403. The man who crowned Simmel was John Payne, O.P. For his connections with the house of York see Gumbley, W., O.P., "The Blackfriars at Oxford", *Blackfriars*, II, (1921), 313 ff.

³⁸⁸ Huizinga, J., *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen*, 183 ff.

³⁸⁹ Derville, A. et al, *Histoire de St-Omer*, 94.

³⁹⁰ Nilson, B., *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England*, 118.

³⁹¹ Griffiths, R., *op.cit.*, 222.

³⁹² Sutton, A.F. and Visser-Fuchs, L., *The Hours of Richard III*, 47.

The devotion to St Thomas loomed large on the devotional horizon of the house of York, quite possibly for the same reason as the proximity of burial to the shrine was important to Henry IV: it somehow justified or atoned for their coup d'état. Edward IV's devotion to St Thomas predated his usurpation, for he visited Canterbury in the company of Salisbury and Warwick on 16 June 1460.³⁹³ At the time, though, he was invading England to capture its crown. He returned frequently, amongst others in 1461, 1463 and in July 1465, this time accompanied by queen Elizabeth Woodville and in order to gain indulgences, for they were in Canterbury on the feast of the Translation of St Thomas.³⁹⁴ On the occasion of the wedding of George, duke of Clarence, to Anne Neville, in June 1469, both the newlyweds and Cecily Neville paid a visit to the shrine.³⁹⁵

Margaret of York took full part in this devotion, both whilst in England en route to Burgundy in 1468,³⁹⁶ and later, as *Madame la Grande*, when visiting England as the chief negotiator for Maximilian I in 1480.³⁹⁷ The Canterbury monk, John Stone, who diligently noted all royal and important visitors to Becket's shrine until his death in 1471, has left us with a vivid description of the pilgrimage, incidentally leaving no doubt as to the reason for the visit, calling it "causa peregrinationis".³⁹⁸ He noted that

"This year there came to Canterbury our lord Edward IV, King of England and France on the day of St Alban [22 June] ... and with him was the lord George, duke of Clarence, and the lord William [Richard], duke of Gloucester and the lady Margaret, sister of the said King, with a great many counts and barons and knights. And the next day, on the vigil of St John the Baptist there was a minor mass for St John, and a major mass for the octave of Corpus Christi".³⁹⁹

The treasurer of Canterbury was possibly a little less convinced of the motives behind the royal visit. The cost for the food and drink which the city provided for the

³⁹³ Searle, W. G., *The Chronicle of John Stone*, 79. For Edward's other visits c.f. Page, W. (ed), *The Victoria History of the County of Kent*, II, 118.

³⁹⁴ Searle, W. G., *op.cit*, 82 ff.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 86.

³⁹⁶ St Thomas was also rather popular in the Low Countries: amongst the pilgrim badges found in Mechelen when the Dijle was dredged, those of St Thomas form the majority. Vandenberghe, St., "Pelgrimstekens uit Mechelse baggerwerken", *HKKOM*, LXXIX, (1975), 87.

³⁹⁷ Linden, H., vander, *op.cit*, 9; Ross, C., *Edward IV*, 271, 273 and 283; *Weightman*, 134-6; Scofield, C., *op.cit*, II, 283-95.

³⁹⁸ Searle, W. G., *op.cit*, ii and viii.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 103.

party, encamped in large tents just outside the walls, was prohibitive.⁴⁰⁰ Once more one witnesses this element of theatre. The party was particularly large as was the amount of food and drink consumed. Fashionably colourful tents kept the aristocrats dry, as they maintained their distance from the commoners.

The questions raised by Philip Buc in *The Dangers of Ritual* as to the extent to which modern onlookers can interpret these events ring out loud in these situations. Margaret's party understood the symbolism of the two masses they attended. Did that mean they followed them devoutly, or were they just enraptured by the physical pleasure of the music and spectacle? After all, visitors like Wenceslas Šaček commented upon the beauty of English music, not on the piety of Englishmen.⁴⁰¹ Or did he, an outsider, fail to notice this? Did the commoners of Canterbury marvel at what they saw, or did they grumble about the cost, or both? What remains beyond doubt, however, is the theatrical element of these pilgrim journeys; they were a very public show of one's piety, status, and power.

By the time of Margaret's next pilgrimage to Canterbury in 1480, John Stone had died, but the archive at Canterbury Cathedral provides another glimpse of Margaret of York on pilgrimage.⁴⁰² Once more, she and her party stayed outside the town in a large tent, a form of accommodation that she also chose when on pilgrimage to Aachen.⁴⁰³ Again Canterbury faced the intrusion of a large company and again the costs were high. The bill for the wine, claret, punch, malmsey, and meats that the town provided for Margaret and her entourage came to £10. The dowager, as Burgundy's ambassador, had to impress another foreign audience. It must have been an unsettling experience. The woman who so frequently emphasised her Englishness here represented the house of Burgundy in England.

On a more personal level, Margaret's pilgrimages to St Thomas throw up the question of the modernity or otherwise of her religious outlook. Christine Weightman, Wim Blockmans and Walter Prevenier all seem to agree that Margaret's piety was 'old fashioned'.⁴⁰⁴ The shrine of St Thomas, although still drawing rather

⁴⁰⁰ The total came to more than £20. Archives of the City and County of Canterbury, CC/FA 5. f. 61^v. My gratitude goes to Michael Stansfield, archivist at the archives for his kind assistance.

⁴⁰¹ Letts, M., *op.cit.*, 44 ff.

⁴⁰² Archives of the City and County of Canterbury, CC/FA 6. f.7^v.

⁴⁰³ Loersch, A. (ed), *op.cit.*, 143.

⁴⁰⁴ *Weightman*, 203; *Blockmans, W. and Prevenier, W., De Bourgondische Nederlanden*, 247.

large numbers of visitors, seems to have been suffering a gradual decline during the duchess' lifetime. The jubilee of 1420 drew circa 100,000 pilgrims, but after this, the numbers definitely shrunk.⁴⁰⁵ Sumption, who seems to be rather contemptuous of pilgrimage anyhow, dismisses the cult as being 'unimportant'.⁴⁰⁶ Duffy's statement that the shrine was drawing fewer visitors but that it is hard to quantify, is probably closer to the mark.⁴⁰⁷ To use the pilgrims of the jubilee year as a benchmark is dubious at the best of times. Traditional pilgrimage centres like Canterbury may have been suffering from newer competition, but could still attract plenty of interest.⁴⁰⁸ It was still an almost obligatory stop for continentals travelling in England, and was described in tones of awe by Gabriel Tetzl and Wenceslas Šaček,⁴⁰⁹ and by Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, the future pope Pius II.⁴¹⁰ For more ordinary people, too, the pull of St Thomas was far from over; Caxton had to print two runs of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. When crisis struck, commoners and kings alike came running to St Thomas. In 1471, after Edward IV had managed to regain his crown, plague broke out, and huge multitudes followed the king to Canterbury. According to John Paston, never had so many people been on a pilgrimage!⁴¹¹

The numerous commoners who kept enrolling in the guild in Halle also deserve a mention in this respect. Clearly, Margaret of York did know how to communicate, how to act the role of powerful woman in such a way that all understood. The sister to two English kings, wife to the most powerful duke in Europe, and stepmother of the Emperor happily participated in pilgrimages that drew hundreds of thousands of people, as in Aachen, Halle, and Canterbury.⁴¹² Unlike Erasmus, the secretary of her friend Henri de Glymes, she did not have the luxury to sit back and carp at the practice, anyhow. If she had not participated in pilgrimages more than just eyebrows would have been raised. It should also be recalled that for every Erasmus there was a

⁴⁰⁵ Page, W. (ed), *The Victoria History of the County of Kent*, II, 58, n. 178. In Aachen, during the jubilee of 1496 there were 142,000 pilgrims. Poll, B. (ed), *op.cit.*, 68.

⁴⁰⁶ Sumption, J., *op.cit.*, 273.

⁴⁰⁷ Duffy, E., *op.cit.*, 195.

⁴⁰⁸ Williams, C.H., "The Becket Cult and After". In M. Ramsey et al, *Christian Canterbury*, 20.

⁴⁰⁹ Letts, M., *op.cit.*, 44 ff.

⁴¹⁰ Gragg, F.A. and Gabel, L.C. (eds), *The Commentaries of Pius II*, 108.

⁴¹¹ Gairdner, J. (ed), *The Paston Letters*, V, 112. C.f. Webb, D., *op.cit.*, 231.

⁴¹² Highlighting the unsuitability of the distinction between 'aristocratic' and 'popular' pilgrimages. Finucane, R.C.F., *op.cit.*, 195-6.

Thomas More, ready to defend what they saw as an essential element of Christianity.⁴¹³ Margaret of York would have concurred with the latter.

The Pageantry of Family and State.

Even within the more female-friendly climate of the Low Countries, Margaret of York's public role had to take account of the limitations imposed by her gender. If she wished to portray her own power and authority, or contribute to the portrayal of that of her family, she was relatively restricted as to how she could do so. Devotional activities were one such outlet, whether on pilgrimage or through participation in the public celebration of a saint's cult. The family sphere, that traditional realm of female power, was another. Through the family, and more particularly, through the rituals associated with family life, the duchess was given many opportunities to make her presence felt.⁴¹⁴ She exploited these chances with her customary shrewdness, and to some effect: her position within the wider Burgundian family was never once questioned, not even after her husband's death. That this was the case must be a tribute to the importance of Margaret to the family. And this importance did not rest on the traditional female role. After all, she had failed to provide an heir: Margaret's success has to be sought elsewhere.

Fortunately, the realm of familial ritual is the one female activity noticed by the chroniclers, who were otherwise indifferent to female political activity. Jean Molinet, for example, has almost nothing to say about Margaret of York, except when she appears in such a setting. Olivier de la Marche, who could have told us so much more, is even worse. He appears to have been interested only in his patroness and friend when she was performing her female duties within the family sphere.⁴¹⁵ This explains in part his obsession with Margaret's wedding.⁴¹⁶ The festivities are the only

⁴¹³ *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1967 ed., S.v. "Pilgrimages".

⁴¹⁴ This, as Nijsten remarked, was particularly true with regard to weddings and funerals, very public manifestations, at once familial and political. Nijsten, G., "The Duke and His Towns". In B.A. Hanawalt and K.L. Reyerson (eds), *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, 253-7.

⁴¹⁵ Q.v. the case of Margaret's involvement with the Habsburg wedding, an occasion when familial activity and high politics overlapped. Part One, pp. 106-9.

⁴¹⁶ The other reason is that he organised the event!

time in his chronicle when she appears more than just briefly, and even then she takes second place to the greater excitement of the tournaments. However, Margaret does make several appearances, and these, for all their brevity, are very illuminating. They form yet more evidence for the way in which she expressed her authority and influence. In an age when state and family were often synonymous, the public ceremony of the dynasty offered a perfect field in which the duchess could make statements about her own power.

The Private in Public: England.

As the sister of king Edward IV, Margaret of York had become used to living a public life from 1461 onwards. As England lacked a De la Marche or Molinet, there are very few detailed descriptions of the English court during this period. Once more, the ubiquitous Bohemian embassy under Lev z Rožmitálu provides a glimpse of Margaret's situation. Highly impressed by the English court, the travellers were also struck by its formality. They happened to arrive in London just after the birth of princess Elizabeth, future wife of Henry VII, and witnessed the banquet of celebration.⁴¹⁷ The passage is worth quoting in full, as it is the earliest image of Margaret participating in the public display of her private life.

“The Queen sat alone at table on a costly golden chair. The Queen's mother and the King's sister [Margaret of York ed.] had to stand some distance away. When the Queen spoke with her mother or the King's sister, they knelt down before her until she had drunk water. Not until the first dish was set before the Queen could the Queen's mother and the King's sister be seated ... The food which was served to the Queen, the Queen's mother, the King's sister and the others was most costly. Much might be written of it. ... The King's sister danced a stately dance with two dukes, and this, and the courtly reverence paid to the Queen, was such as I have never seen elsewhere, nor have I ever seen such exceedingly beautiful maidens”.⁴¹⁸

In many respects, this description contains much of the essence of the display of ostentatious ritual on the part of ruling families in late medieval Europe. What is of

⁴¹⁷ Elizabeth was born on 11 February 1465.

⁴¹⁸ Letts, M. (ed and transl.), *op. cit.*, 47.

particular interest with regard to the position Margaret of York was to take up in Burgundy is the centrality of the queen. The striking picture of Elizabeth Woodville, seated on a golden chair, very much in the centre of the events, epitomises the female function during these ‘performances’. Margaret was to use the example set by her sister-in-law to great effect once married to Charles the Bold. In addition, a charming image of Margaret also emerges from these pages: a young woman of twenty, clearly a good dancer, and, perhaps for the first time, the emphasis on her great beauty.

Within two years of this vignette being written, Margaret would be embarking at Margate to travel to her new life. This, too, was yet another singular performance of English political theatre. In a remarkable, if fleeting, show of unity, she rode with the earl of Warwick, the same man who had done everything in his considerable power to prevent the wedding from happening at all.⁴¹⁹ Behind them came the representatives of the English ruling class: the duchess of Norfolk, Sir John Woodville, brother to the queen, lord and lady Scales and many others.⁴²⁰ They included St Thomas’s shrine at Canterbury in their itinerary, displaying to all the piety, continuity, and power of the English crown.⁴²¹ Margaret’s seven years at the English court had helped to prepare her for playing Elizabeth Woodville’s role herself.

The Private in Public: The Weddings of the Century.

Rarely can a wedding have given rise to so much literature during the Middle Ages than that of Margaret and Charles.⁴²² It caused the major chroniclers and local

⁴¹⁹ “the erle of Warrewyke riding before her on hur hors”. Quoted in Kervyn de Lettenhove, J.B.M.C., “Relation du mariage du duc Charles de Bourgogne et de Marguerite d’York”, *BCRH*, XXXII, (1867), 10.

⁴²⁰ *Haynin*, II, 18-9.

⁴²¹ And its wealth. The total for Margaret’s belongings for the journey came to £920. PRO Warrants for Issues E 404 74/1/35 and 74/1/69.

⁴²² It is still causing waves. One can be a VIP guest at the wedding every year, when it is enacted for tourists in Brugge. This is not the place for a serious analysis of the wedding’s proceedings or its symbolism. Both have long been studied, and very good publications are extant. See amongst many Kervyn de Lettenhove, J.B.M.C., “Relation du mariage”, *BCRH*, XXXII, (1867); Calmette, J., “Le mariage de Charles le Téméraire avec Marguerite d’York”, *AdB*, I, (1929); Wegman, R., “New Data Concerning the Origins and Chronology of Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Manuscript 5557”, *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, XXXVI, (1986); Millar, A., *Olivier de la Marche and the Court of Burgundy, c. 1425-1502*, and the various biographical studies

scribblers from London to Milan to sharpen their quills and invest in vellum.⁴²³ One of the effects of all this attention has been a reduction of Margaret's life to almost one episode: her wedding.⁴²⁴ Although this is clearly unjustified, the wedding was, nevertheless, of supreme importance as her first act in the public life of the Low Countries. Curiously, the chroniclers seem to have almost overlooked the bride. She appears almost like Christ in contemporary paintings of the Last Supper: central but almost not there. An exception was the anonymous English chronicler who stated that Charles "loked and regarded the beaute of hur, ... he rejoysed".⁴²⁵ The bride only had to be visible to all attending the festivities, and had to show she knew how to behave. Trained at the English court, Margaret duly delivered. The following describes their meeting in Sluis,

"Ende doe, Margriete den voirss. Chaerle versmeckede, viel zoe van verren vp hare knyen, ende Chaerle hiefse vppe ende custese vriendelicken. Ende telken woorde dat Chaerle sprack, viel zy vp hair kneyen ... Ende Chaerle voirss. ghinc zitten byder voirss. Margriete vpten voetbanc vanden bedde; dair zy zaten ... tote en vre nader middelnacht".⁴²⁶

The humble and demure kneeling, the courtly insistence of Charles that his bride should not kneel, their kiss, and finally the public display of bride and groom seated for hours on a bench for all to see: this was very much the public face of what had, in fact, been a marriage negotiated on the back of a political alliance and economic treaty.⁴²⁷

on the duchess. For its political context, c.f. Stark, L., *Anglo-Burgundian Diplomacy, 1467-1485*; Ballard, M., *Anglo-Burgundian Relations 1464-72*.

⁴²³ Amongst others *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 101-201 and IV, 95-144; *Haynin*, I, 106-82 and II, 17-63; *Chronique des Dunes*, 489-90; *Waurin*, V, 559-62; *Dagboek*, II, 211-3; *Excellente cronike*, f. cxxxvi; *Roovere*, 17-71; *Despars*, IV, 21-35. More locally it was noted in locations such as 's-Hertogenbosch, Sanders, J. et al, *Kroniek van Pieter van Os*, 198, and, of course, in London. Gairdner, J. (ed), "William Gregory's Chronicle". In "The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London", *Camden Society*, New Series, XXVII, (1876), 237-8. In Lübeck, finally, mayor Castorp had a report especially commissioned. Paravicini, W., "De Hanze als Europees verschijnsel". In A. Vandewalle et al, *Hanzekooplui en Medicibankiers*, 23.

⁴²⁴ Both her previous biographers have spent a full and rather large chapter on the wedding. *Weightman*, 30-61; *Hommel*, chapter three.

⁴²⁵ Quoted in Kervyn de Lettenhove, J.B.M.C. "Relation du mariage", 12.

⁴²⁶ "and then Margaret, pleading with the aforesaid Charles, fell abruptly from a distance on her knees, and Charles lifted her up and kissed her lovingly. And at each word Charles spoke she fell on her knees ... And the aforementioned Charles sat with the aforementioned Margaret on a stool near the bed; there they sat ... until long after midnight". *Roovere*, 19.

⁴²⁷ C.f. *Foedera*, XI, 590-617; *Waurin*, V, 559.

A flavour of the extravagance of the affair, can be gleaned from the pages of the memoirs of Jean de Haynin.

“Madicte dame Margriet attendant estre duchesse de Bourgoigne, entra en Bruges le troisieme jour de juillet; et furent les nopces tenues ledict jour. Et du matin monseigneur le duc alla à l’encontre d’elle au Dam, et l’espousa illecq; auquel espousement l’on fit plusieurs nobles ceremonies ... Monseigneur avoit fait faire droict dessus la porte de son hostel ung très-riche blazon de ses armes, et des armes de toute ses seigneuries ... deux fontaines de vin, qui couroyent le dimanche des nopces et le lundy ensuivant tout le jour”.⁴²⁸

It is also worth recalling that Charles repaid no fewer than 31,344 *livres* to Thomas Portinari at the Medici Bank in Brugge, which he had borrowed to pay for clothes for the wedding.⁴²⁹

There was something for all onlookers here, both discerning and pleasure seeker. The numerous tournaments, the buildings covered with the crests of the aristocracy, and the sheer overwhelming colours caused the famous remark by John Paston the Younger, “I heard never of none like to it save King Arthur’s court”.⁴³⁰ The *Maasland* poet Simon Mulart also thought of Arthur’s court, but was more impressed by the sheer quantities of everything, listing the thousands of roast pigs, meat pies, baskets of sugared fruit and rivers of wine.⁴³¹ This was not so much the court of Arthur as the dreamland of Cocagne of medieval Dutch literature.⁴³² The *stadsrederijker*, Anthonis de Roovere, like Olivier de la Marche deeply involved in organising the festivities,⁴³³ also emphasised the avalanche of food.

“Item, was ten banckette xxiiij scotlen roost, zeere costelicken ghestoffeirt, ende dairtoe ghedient omtrent xxxvj boomen ghemaict meesterlic van wasse van alle manieren van frute als appelen, peeren, prumen, keersen ende andre diversche fruten;

⁴²⁸ “The said lady Margaret, accompanied by the duchess of Burgundy, entered Brugge on the third day of July; and the wedding took place on that day. And in the afternoon the duke went to meet her in Damme, and married her there; at which wedding there were many noble ceremonies ... My lord had the gate of his house draped in a very grand crest with his arms and the arms of all his lands ... two fountains with wine flowed on the Monday of the wedding and the Tuesday after, for the whole day”. *Haynin*, I, 109. To Haynin’s credit, he did describe Margaret, emphasising her height, like her brother, Edward. *Ibid*, II, 22.

⁴²⁹ A.D.N. B2068, f. 382-5.

⁴³⁰ Gairdner, J. (ed), *The Paston Letters*, II, 317-9.

⁴³¹ Boeren, P.C., *Twee Maaslandse Dichters in Dienst van Karel de Stoute*, 234-41.

⁴³² Pleij, H. *Dromen van Cocagne*, 121.

⁴³³ Although only in the entry festivities.

ende tot elker scotle waren twee mannekens ande twee vroukins met coorven ... dair zy in gheladen hadden van den fruten van alle den dyverschen boomen, ende waren alle de fruten voirss. Ghemaict van sukere ende edelic gheconfit".⁴³⁴

There can be no doubt that all enjoyed this particular extravaganza. Nor can anyone have failed to understand what went on here: it was the Burgundian 'theatre-state' at its best. The circular influence of life on literature and literature on life was displayed in all its magnificence. With all the Arthurian references, De la Marche and De Roovere were attempting, and succeeding, in emulating the fictive ideal of the Arthurian court. In the process, they also managed to gratify every glutton and hungry pauper in Brugge, thereby satisfying all the ideals of late medieval society, except that of serenity. This lack of this certainly struck Huizinga, who contrasted the "barbaarse vorstenweelde" with the "stille wijding" of the altarpieces.⁴³⁵ Introvert piety was not what these festivities were all about, however. They were intended to impress and overawe, and all the accounts show that this is exactly what they achieved.

From being a pawn in the Burgundian game in 1468, Margaret became its queen by 1477. During the wedding festivities of Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy, she played a very active and prominent role. The entry of Maximilian into Gent that year was the very public manifestation of the success of *Madame la Grande's* foreign policy, and she ensured that her victory could not be misunderstood. Maximilian had come in the first place to provide security and to overawe rebellious Gent. His military capacity was prominently displayed during the entry.⁴³⁶ First came 250 bowmen and handgun men, followed by 32 wagons with artillery, another 250 bowmen preceding no fewer than 600 men-at-arms on horseback. To heighten their effect, they were all clothed in black, carrying black pennons.

In front of Maximilian rode five heralds, carrying the arms of Habsburg and of the late Charles the Bold, as well as of all the Burgundian lands, a statement of intent

⁴³⁴ "Item the banquet had 24 dishes of roast meat, expensively prepared, and served with 36 wax trees on which hung fruit, such as apples, pears, plums, cherries and diverse other fruits; and with every dish there were two men and two women with baskets ... in which they had put fruit of all these trees, and all the aforesaid fruit was made of sugar and nobly covered in jam". *Roovere*, 53. As to the authorship of the text, q.v. Lievens, "De Blijde Inkomst", *Vlaanderen*, vol. CLXXXVIII, (1982).

⁴³⁵ "the barbarian princely riches". "quiet devotion". Huizinga, J., *Herfsttij der middeleeuwen*, 270.

⁴³⁶ C.f. Bruin, S. de, *De feestelijke intocht te Brugge (28 Augustus 1477) van Maximiliaan van Oostenrijk*, 27.

unlikely to have been misunderstood. Maximilian was accompanied by a large train of nobles and clergy, but rode side-by-side with Margaret of York. Later that day, Maximilian,

“vercleet in een schoon gouden abijt, dat stijf stond van den goude ... ghingen met toortsen ten hove waerts daser vrou Marie ... sijns verwachten. Terstont als hertoghe Maximiliaen bi vrou Marie quam, omhelsde hy haer ...”.⁴³⁷

The chivalrous kiss and the sumptuous clothes, as well as the extra effect of the nightly procession all recall the festivities of 1468, albeit on a smaller scale. To underline her own role, Margaret, too, kissed the Habsburg archduke, saying, according to *die excellente cronike van Vlaenderen*, “wi hebben so naer u verlangt”.⁴³⁸ In Brugge the festivities continued, and, again as in 1468, the merchant nations paraded in front of the newly-weds.⁴³⁹

Although the scale was smaller in 1477 than it had been in 1468, this was in many respects a more important wedding. Whereas in 1468 Burgundy had celebrated the apogee of its power, in 1477 it quietly proclaimed its hope for the future. In both cases, this was a display shared by nobility, Church, and commoners. And in both Margaret of York played a major role: in 1468 as passive central character, in 1477 as the orchestrator. Having Olivier de la Marche at hand in 1477 ensured a continuity of the pageantry of the Burgundian state after the demise of the house of Valois, but, as *De feestelijke intocht te Brugge* and the *Wonderlijke oorloghen* show, it was *Madame la Grande* who had ensured that there was a future for the play. Naturally, this fact was acted out during the festivities of the 1477 wedding.

The final ‘wedding of the century’ in which Margaret of York played a major role was that of Philip the Fair with Juana de Castile, which took place in Lier in 1496. It has caused the necessary historical debate.⁴⁴⁰ The choice of location, the role of the De Glymes and of Margaret of York, and the apparently aloof behaviour of Philip

⁴³⁷ “dressed in a beautiful gold habit, which was heavy with gold ... went with torches to the palace where the lady Mary expected him. As soon as duke Maximilian came to lady Mary, he embraced her”. *Wonderlijke oorloghen*, 26.

⁴³⁸ “we have longed for you so much”. *Excellente cronike*, f. 81.

⁴³⁹ Bruin, S. de, *op.cit.*, 37.

⁴⁴⁰ C.f. D’Hulst, H., *Le Mariage de Philippe le Beau avec Jeanne de Castille à Lierre le 20 octobre 1496*; Neefs, H., *Lier 1496: een huwelijk in Europees perspectief*; Blockmans, W., “Overheid en cultuur”; Cauchies, J.-M., “Filips de Schone en Johanna van Castilië in de kering van de wereldgeschiedenis”, *Lira Elegans*, VI, (1996).

and Margaret of Austria have all been given various interpretations. That both Margaret of York and the De Glymes did play a significant role in the choice of location is beyond debate. The Bergen op Zoom clan featured too prominently to be unimportant. Margaret's love for St Gummarus, offered by Wim Blockmans as an important reason to assign most of the credit of the festivities to the dowager, is also too well attested for her role to be ignored.⁴⁴¹ The choice of Lier, that loyal hinge between Mechelen and Antwerp, for the venue is crucial to any understanding of the development of the Low Countries in the decades after the death of Charles the Bold. It confirmed that the heartland of Burgundy had moved away from Flanders and the south to Brabant, and, in particular, to the axis Brussels to Bergen op Zoom.⁴⁴²

The bride's itinerary is highly suggestive of the hold *Madame la Grande* had on the affair. The very large Spanish fleet docked in Arnemuiden, a satellite port of Middelburg. There she was met by a Burgundian delegation, which included Henri de Glymes and his brother Anthony, abbot of Sint-Truiden.⁴⁴³ They escorted Juana to their brother's palace in Bergen op Zoom, where the rather exhausted princess was allowed to catch her breath, before being launched into her first major entry, in Antwerp. The customary procession with music and torches was further enlivened when Margaret of York, Johanna de la Clyte and Margaret of Austria arrived at the head of the knights of the Golden Fleece.⁴⁴⁴

If this was impressive, the cavalcade that travelled the short distance between Antwerp and Lier was positively breathtaking: it was a parade of the great and the good of the Burgundian Netherlands, interspersed with the grandees of Spain. In Lier, the wedding was solemnised by Henri de Glymes in the church of St Gummarus. Margaret was the major witness for the groom, and amongst the other witnesses were many of the leading lights of her affinity: Jan III de Glymes, Henri III van Wittem and the sons of the Great Bastard.⁴⁴⁵ The rehabilitated Filips van Kleef,

⁴⁴¹ Blockmans, W., "Overheid en cultuur", 22.

⁴⁴² Contemporaries realised this, c.f. Olivier de la Marche on the loyalty of Antwerp and its environs. *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 298.

⁴⁴³ *Molinet*, II, 429.

⁴⁴⁴ D'Hulst, H., *op.cit.*, 30-1. For the possible meaning behind the torch-lit processions, c.f. Decuppre-Desjardin, E., "Les lumières de la ville", *Revue historique*, CDIX, (1999).

⁴⁴⁵ Neefs, H., *op.cit.*, 104.

and the margrave of Baden, representing Maximilian, joined the loyalists of the dynasty, the Croÿ, Melun, Lannoy, Nassau, Busleyden, and the Fresnoy.⁴⁴⁶ In the town, more torches were lit, and the *rederijkers* held a competition. Of the banquet which followed little is known, but that was essentially a superfluous exercise. The most important statements had already been made. Where Mary of Burgundy's wedding in 1477 had been an expression of hope and defiance, the wedding of her son was a statement of victory. The house of Burgundy had survived, and was rewarding its loyal followers as well as the region which had shown it most support.⁴⁴⁷ That Margaret of York was placed at the heart of these celebrations was most appropriate.

The Private in Public: Birth and Baptism.

Baptism is rarely viewed as one of the great spectacles of the Burgundian Low Countries. With the exception of the festivities surrounding the baptism of Charles V,⁴⁴⁸ it has not been studied in any detail, and yet throws extra perspective on the ritual activities of Margaret of York.⁴⁴⁹ Strøm-Olsen has argued for the inventiveness of the festivities around the baptism of Charles V, emphasising the separation of the political aspects from the original liturgical meaning to prove his point.⁴⁵⁰ This new political statement was then used to enter into a dialogue with the commoners, or more specifically, the urban element of the Low Countries. He went even further, arguing that it fitted into a new departure in this dialogue, where the prince received the city instead of the traditional reception of the prince into the city.⁴⁵¹ All of this is, however, highly problematic. It does not recognise the limitations of our own

⁴⁴⁶ D'Hulst, H., *op.cit.*, 21.

⁴⁴⁷ The economic imperatives, which drove the region and the house of Burgundy together, were particularly strong. However, one cannot but wonder at their continued loyalty: in 1467, they had rebelled against Charles the Bold. Cautiously one may speculate whether the diplomatic Margaret of York had helped to mend fences. Bergmann, A., *Geschiedenis der stad Lier*, 121-2.

⁴⁴⁸ Strøm-Olsen, R., *op.cit.*

⁴⁴⁹ For an examination of the birth of Burgundian children, c.f. Sommé, M., "Le Cérémonial de la naissance". In J.-M. Cauchies (ed), *A la cour de Bourgogne*.

⁴⁵⁰ Strøm-Olsen, R., *op.cit.*, 36.

⁴⁵¹ Placing baptismal ritual in the wider debate of changing dialogue. C.f. Soly, H., "Plechtige intochten", *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, XCVII, (1984); Blockmans, W., "La Dialogue imaginaire".

understanding of the ritual in place, as argued above.⁴⁵² Nor does the argument of a changing dialogue hold too much water: of course, there was a development within the pageantry, but on the whole, as Kipling has shown convincingly with respect to Antwerp and Philip II, it changed little in its focus.⁴⁵³

Finally, there is the issue of a divorce of the ritual's political from its religious element. If anything, this is even more difficult to maintain. As the above has attempted to explore, the ritual of politics and the ritual of religion were inexorably interwoven, to the point where it is frequently impossible to distinguish between the two. This is not to say that the baptismal festivities of Charles V were not important: on the contrary. However, they were part of a long line of similar events, liturgical and at the same time political, trans-regional as well as intensely local.⁴⁵⁴ The novelty of this baptism lay in its scale, not in its implications or in what it tried to achieve. Whether it changed the perception of the onlookers must remain a mute question.

The events on 30 March 1469 in Brugge illustrate this particularly well. Margaret of York and the *heer* of Ravenstein stood as godparents to James, son of "sconincx Jacobs zustere van Schotlant".⁴⁵⁵ The sister in question was Mary, wife of Thomas Boyd, earl of Arran. The Boyds had been the effective power in Scotland since 1466, and had strong links with the Low Countries.⁴⁵⁶ Nothing indicated hinted at their possible demise when Mary gave birth to a son, James.⁴⁵⁷ The choice of name was significant: at the time, James III was not married, and the son of Mary and Thomas was the heir presumptive of Scotland. Charles the Bold, aware of the increasingly fraught political situation in England, must have wished to secure at least the neutrality of the northern kingdom.⁴⁵⁸ It was a prestigious affair for the new duchess to be involved in, and one that allowed her to develop an awareness of the centrality of baptisms in the political language of Burgundian pageantry. How far the crowd in

⁴⁵² Not to mention its reception. C.f. the laconic description of the entry of Frederick III and Maximilian into Gent in *Dagboek*, II, 263. This was one spectacle that left some stone cold!

⁴⁵³ I would like to thank Gordon Kipling for providing me with this information at the LAMPS conference at The University of Edinburgh in 2002.

⁴⁵⁴ Strøm-Olsen does trace the origins of the events of 1500, and highlights the similarities with the baptism of Eleonora in Brussels, where Margaret also stood as godmother. He forgot the almost as important precedence of the baptism of Philip the Fair. Strøm-Olsen, R., *op.cit*, 41-2.

⁴⁵⁵ "King James sister of Scotland". *Despars*, IV, 52-3.

⁴⁵⁶ C.f. Bingham, C., *The Stewart Kingdom*, 93-6.

⁴⁵⁷ Gibbs, V. (ed), *The Complete Peerage*, II, 260.

⁴⁵⁸ Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 60 ff.

Brugge grasped this gesture, however, is a very moot point. It also illustrates the difficulty of making the right gesture at the right time: James III will not have appreciated the pageantry when he toppled the Boyds from power in July that year.

Although Margaret of York lacked children of her own, she, nonetheless, managed to turn baptisms into one of the main ways to express her own position within the wider Burgundian dynasty and state. She stood as godmother to most of the children of the dynasty.⁴⁵⁹ Frequently, these baptismal ceremonies were used by the dowager to express the unity of her affinity and its centrality within the body politic. During the baptism of Philip the Fair in Brugge, for example, she was accompanied by her *chevalier d'honneur*, Guillaume de la Baume, and by Josse de Lalaing, two of the central figures of her affinity.⁴⁶⁰ The unity of the dynasty was another important element to emphasise, certainly in one of the frequently disloyal Flemish cities. Margaret carried the young duke to the font: the baby “fut porté à Sainct Donas ... à grant nombre de torches et lumiere”, accompanied by Charlotte de Bourbon, Anna de Bourgogne, and the *heer* of Ravenstein.⁴⁶¹ Famously, she also took a major part in the subsequent showing of the newborn to the crowds on the market square,

“aldaer die voorzeide vrou Margriete van York ... onsen nieuwen geboren prince naect voor alle die weereit, niet dan in een fijn kerspin cleckin, vertoochde, zo dat men bescheeghelick alle zijn edele lekens deure zien mochte”.⁴⁶²

The birth of a son to Mary, named Philip after his grandfather, was widely celebrated. That of his sister was a more muted affair, dynastic rather than public. Yet it was probably even more poignant from Margaret of York's personal point of view. The baby girl was named Margaret after her godmother.⁴⁶³ The princess of England was now definitely a member of the house of Burgundy.

⁴⁵⁹ For her role with regard to Philip the Fair and Margaret of Austria, c.f. *Excellente cronike*, f. ccvii and ccxviii. Her absence at the baptism of François, third child of Mary and Maximilian, is curious. Did De la Marche just fail to mention Margaret, or was she really not there? *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 261-2.

⁴⁶⁰ *Molinet*, I, 275.

⁴⁶¹ “was carried to St Donaas ... lit by a large number of torches and lights”. *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 252-3; *Despars*, IV, 172-3.

⁴⁶² “and there the aforementioned lady Margaret of York ... [showed] our newborn prince naked to all the world, covered in nothing but a small cloth, shown in such a way that one could see all his noble bits through it”. *Despars*, IV, 174.

⁴⁶³ *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 257.

Her role in the baptism of Charles V was effectively the culmination of many years of participating in these events. As with the wedding of Maximilian and Mary twenty-three years earlier, the festivities occurred in the city of Gent.⁴⁶⁴ In light of the long history of conflict between the dynasty and the city, this will have given Margaret a good deal of optimism for the future.⁴⁶⁵ She will also have reflected on the changed circumstances of her house: she knew that the baptism of the new Charles heralded the survival of her late husband's inheritance, albeit in reduced form. The centrality of *Madame la Grande* to the house of Burgundy-Habsburg is illustrated by the role she was given in the procession. She held the young heir of Habsburg, Spain and Burgundy as she was carried through the streets of Gent in a richly-decorated chair.⁴⁶⁶ Walking behind her were the other godparents, including Jan III de Glymes, *heer* of Bergen, the head of the 'English Party' in Burgundy, and Margaret of Austria, *Madame la Grande's* de facto political and cultural heiress.

That the future duke of Burgundy was named after Margaret's late husband is no coincidence. Ignoring the sensitivities of the rebellious Gentenaren, the dynasty was showing its security and strength. The towns of the Low Countries may have been happier with Philip the Fair and his son as their lord than with Maximilian, but this mattered little to the practical power of the dynasty. Maximilian had crushed the opposition with such effectiveness, that rebellions were impossible. It is true that Philip the Fair had followed a political course liked by the towns of his domains, but that does not change the *Realpolitik* on the ground.⁴⁶⁷

A similar *Realpolitik* may be found in another baptism of the same year, that of Philip, son of Charles de Croÿ, prince of Chimay.⁴⁶⁸ Again, Margaret of York stood as godmother, and this time Henri de Glymes carried out the baptismal act. Naturally, this was not a ritual celebration on the scale of that in Gent, yet many of the same ingredients were present. The public walk to the church, the involvement of the high nobility of Burgundy, and the association of the dynasty with another important political family within the Low Countries, are all elements found on both

⁴⁶⁴ The particulars of the procession need not detain us here, but may be found in Blommaert, Ph. (ed), "Vreugdebedryven by de geboorte van keizer Karel den Vyfden binnen Gent", *Belgisch Museum*, II, (1838).

⁴⁶⁵ The city paid for the major part of the costs. *Ibid*, 47.

⁴⁶⁶ *Molinet*, II, 468-71.

⁴⁶⁷ C.f. Cauchies, J.-M., "L'Archiduc Philippe d'Autriche, dit le Beau", *HKKOM*, XCV, (1992).

⁴⁶⁸ *Molinet*, II, 472; *Galesloot*, 293-4.

occasions. The duchess showed her support for the Croÿ, and by involving the De Glymes acted as a neutralising element in the volatile relationship between both noble houses.⁴⁶⁹ The Croÿ baptism was one of many occasions when Margaret stood as godmother to members of the aristocracy. This was a crucial chance for the childless duchess to become part of a family network, and helped assimilate the English princess into Low Countries society.⁴⁷⁰ Occasionally, the duchess opted to stand as godmother to those not necessarily of the same political persuasion, like the Croÿ. Most often, though, she opted to strengthen her ties with those she counted amongst her affinity.

Nowhere is this better illustrated than in relation to the De Glymes. With Margaret's help, Jan III had married Adriana de Brimeu, daughter of Charles the Bold's main supporter. The first fruit of the marriage became a showcase for the alliance between Madame la Grande and the De Glymes. The baptism of Adriana and Jan's son, Jan, took place at the De Glymes's country castle at Wouw.⁴⁷¹ Presiding was the bishop of Cambrai, with Margaret of York as the godmother.⁴⁷² When the couple's second son was born in 1498, she repeated the role. Margaret's close friend, Johanna van Halewijn, finally, stood as godmother to Jan III's eldest daughter, Anna. It may be thought that these ceremonies, performed in the privacy of the De Glymes's rural hideaway, were of a different nature from those public affairs such as Charles V's baptism in Gent. The only difference may be found in their scale, however. The ritual effectively communicated the same message. The dynasty, and more particularly *Madame la Grande*, showed its relationship with other powerbrokers in the Low Countries, expressed its own strengths, and kept the scale of the 'show' in line with the size of those they were communicating with.

Dynastic Ritual: The Order of the Golden Fleece.

⁴⁶⁹ Conflicts centred on the bishopric of Cambrai and the *stadhouderschap* of Namur, as well as on a cardinal's hat. Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 182, 194, and 200. See also the involvement of Busleyden in the Leuven charterhouse, Part One, p. 99.

⁴⁷⁰ For the importance of godparents, c.f. Hanawalt, B., *Growing up in Medieval London*, 45-6.

⁴⁷¹ C.f. Sloomans, C.F.J., *Jan Metten Lippen*, 188.

⁴⁷² This is not to argue that such practice was unusual, merely that one may detect a pattern in the choice of people who stood as godparents. It is also an example of the horizontal integration of Margaret's affinity.

In his description of the wedding of 1468, Jean de Haynin shows the prominence of the knights of the Golden Fleece in the proceedings. It would not be an exaggeration to call their involvement intimate. The leading men of the Order, including Charles's half-brother, Anthony, the Great Bastard, Simon de Lalaing, Philippe de Crèvecoeur, and Jean de Luxembourg, attended the first meeting between Charles and Margaret.⁴⁷³ The great hall in the ducal palace in Brugge, the main venue for the festivities, was also dedicated to the Order: the walls were hung with tapestries, depicting the history of Jason and the Golden Fleece.⁴⁷⁴ In the light of the prominence of the Order within the Burgundian body politic, this need not come as a surprise. The wedding gave Charles the Bold an opportunity to involve all his disparate lands in one festivity, and the Order was the premier trans-regional body of the Burgundian Low Countries.⁴⁷⁵

Being a chivalric institution, one would expect little involvement from Margaret of York; there were, after all, gender boundaries.⁴⁷⁶ Before Charles's death there is certainly little to indicate that Margaret had more than a passing involvement with the knights. She enjoyed a banquet with knights of the Order in Middelburg in 1470, for example, where they were meeting to discuss the organisation for the chapter meeting in Valenciennes, which took place in 1473.⁴⁷⁷ After the debacle of Nancy, this changed radically. Margaret was fully aware of the Order's crucial role in providing a centralised framework for the Burgundian nobility, and this meant she had to ignore traditional roles. She managed this by using her influence on Maximilian, and by ensuring the election of men of her affinity. This meant in the first place a concern for the promotion of the De Glymes men.

A few weeks prior to the convocation of the fourteenth chapter of the Order in 's-Hertogenbosch in 1481, Margaret travelled to Holland to meet Maximilian. They discussed the highly volatile political situation in the county, and, in an interesting display of 'correct' female behaviour, Margaret publicly pleaded for clemency for

⁴⁷³ *Haynin*, II, 107.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 108.

⁴⁷⁵ Richard, J., "Histoire de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or". In P. Cockshaw (ed), *L'Ordre de la Toison d'Or*.

⁴⁷⁶ However, see in this respect the involvement of Margaret Beaufort with the Order of the Garter in early Tudor England. Jones, M.K. and Underwood, M.G., *op.cit*, 148.

⁴⁷⁷ Münch, E., *Maria von Burgund nebst dem leben ihrer Stiefmutter Margarethe von York*, I, 40.

several rebels.⁴⁷⁸ In this, she was successful. Whether she also managed to persuade Maximilian to elevate Jan III de Glymes to the Order is not exactly clear, but this was discussed.⁴⁷⁹ She left very little to chance: *Madame la Grande* travelled to the chapter meeting in 's-Hertogenbosch, which she attended in person. Margaret accompanied the infant Philip the Fair for his investiture, which was a useful screen for her presence. At the meeting, she witnessed the elevation not only of Jan III, but also of her *chevalier d'honneur*, Guillaume de la Baume.⁴⁸⁰ The Order did not meet for some time as the result of the civil wars, but Margaret was once more deeply involved in the meeting of 1490. A preliminary gathering took place in Hoogstraten, the centre of the estates of her protégée, Elizabeth van Culemborg. This was followed in June by another gathering, this time in Bergen op Zoom.⁴⁸¹ Some of the most powerful men in Burgundy assembled there, including Albrecht von Sachsen, Henri van Nassau, and archduke Philip the Fair. The host, Cornelis de Glymes, who chaired the meeting in the name of his elderly father, also welcomed *Madame la Grande*. She may have recalled the Middelburg meeting of 1470, and would have learned there the value of some preliminary lobbying.

Margaret's first success at the meeting of 1490 was the decision to have the chapter meeting take place in her dower town of Mechelen.⁴⁸² For her second success, she had a little help. Also present was an envoy of Henri de Glymes, Jan de Glymes, vicar of the chapter of Cambrai.⁴⁸³ Jan was a bastard son of the *seigneur* de Wastines, distantly related to the De Glymes of Bergen op Zoom.⁴⁸⁴ His father had served under Guy de Brimeu, and, like their relatives, the De Glymes of Wastines were strongly committed to the dynasty. Although relations between Jan and Henri were not always cordial, the two did co-operate closely in the diocese. Jan represented Henri in Brussels, and was canon-treasurer.⁴⁸⁵ It surely cannot be a coincidence that the gathered knights decided that Henri de Glymes should become the next Chancellor of the Order.

⁴⁷⁸ Aurelius, C., *Die cronycke van Hollandt, Zeelandt ende Vrieslant*, f. 382.

⁴⁷⁹ Reiffenberg, F.A.F., *Histoire de la Toison d'Or*, 107-25; *Molinet*, I, 360-6.

⁴⁸⁰ Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 156; Gent, M.J. van, 'Pertijelike Saken', 310.

⁴⁸¹ Reiffenberg, F.A.F., *op.cit.*, 174; Sloomans, C.F.J., *Jan Metten Lippen*, 97-8.

⁴⁸² *Het vijftiende kapittel van de Orde van het Gulden Vlies in de Sint-Romboutskathedraal te Mechelen in 1491*.

⁴⁸³ Sloomans, C.F.J., *Jan Metten Lippen*, 98.

⁴⁸⁴ Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 218.

⁴⁸⁵ Lefèvre, P.F., O.Praem., *L'organisation ecclésiastique de la ville de Bruxelles au Moyen Age*, 140.

The chapter meeting in Mechelen in 1491 served to confirm to a wider public than just the aristocracy that *Madame la Grande* was, indeed, at the heart of the dynasty. As the living link with Charles the Bold, she embodied the traditions of the Valois dukes, a fact enhanced by her proximity to such figures as Olivier de la Marche. The meeting of the most august knights of the realm in her dower town, and in the place which her late husband had selected for the parliament of Burgundy, affirmed that Burgundy had survived, and acknowledged the dowager's role in this survival. This was repeated once more in 1500, at the chapter meeting in Brussels.⁴⁸⁶ The capital of Brabant was becoming the capital of the Low Countries around this time, and the meeting of the Golden Fleece was used as an opportunity to introduce the newly born Charles V to its population. Just as Margaret had carried the heir of Burgundy to his baptismal font, so she carried him through the streets of Brussels to attend his first chapter meeting. As nearly twenty years earlier at 's-Hertogenbosch, she attended the chapter meeting as the chaperone of the young prince.⁴⁸⁷

Dynastic Ritual: The *Joyeuse Entrée*.

Within the historiography of the 'theatre-state', the *Joyeuse Entrée* occupies a special position. Widely regarded as the premier repository of the 'dialogue' between the Burgundian dynasty and the people of the Low Countries, it has been extensively studied.⁴⁸⁸ There is no doubt that the nature of the entries does make them a crucial element within the study of the 'theatre-state'. Intended to symbolise the 'contract' between ruler and ruled, their pageantry may be regarded as the quintessential civic and political ritual of the fifteenth-century Low Countries. Before one can even begin to analyse the symbolic significance of this ritual with respect to Margaret of York, one has to face the problem of a distinct lack of any information. Most of the accounts relating to the duchess' entries have simply vanished, if they ever existed at

⁴⁸⁶ See also above, for Margaret leading the knights of the Golden Fleece to Antwerp in 1496.

⁴⁸⁷ *Molinet*, II, 450-2.

⁴⁸⁸ C.f. amongst the many Thelliez, C., "Joyeuses Entrées à Cambrai (1482-1529)", *Standen en landen*, XIX, (1960); Blockmans, W., "Le dialogue imaginaire"; Bragt, R. van, *De Blijde Inkomst van de hertogen van Brabant Johanna en Wenceslas (3 januari 1356)*; Lousse, E. et al, *De Blijde Inkomste van keizer Karel op 23 januari 1515, te Leuven*; Seara, L.G., *Binche 1549: la joyeuse entrée du sérénissime prince Philippe*; Lousse, E., "La Joyeuse entrée de Brabant", *Bulletin du service de recherches historiques et folkloriques du Brabant*, CXXXVI, (1957); Lievens, "De Blijde Inkomst", *Vlaanderen*, CLXXXVIII, (1982).

all.⁴⁸⁹ It has to be admitted that welcome as a visit by the new duchess of Burgundy must have been, it hardly ranked as a major constitutional event. The town's relationship was with the duke, not with his wife. Two surviving reports are both from the Francophone part of the Low Countries, from Mons⁴⁹⁰ and from Douai,⁴⁹¹ and these are detailed enough to serve as the basis for a case study of Margaret's *Joyeuse Entrées*.

'Royal' entries were, of course, not confined to the Low Countries, and once more one may detect the English background of the duchess' solid grounding in the niceties of royal pageantry. For inspiration, Margaret and her brothers could look back to the greatest English king of the fifteenth century, Henry V.⁴⁹² Although it is unclear whether the text on Henry's triumphant entry into London after the battle of Agincourt was circulating by the time the house of York had captured the English crown, subsequent English pageantry leaned heavily on this proto-type.⁴⁹³ There was a similar emphasis on dynasty as in Burgundy, a similar interplay between procession and crowd, and a similar importance of the civic functionaries. Both in England, primarily in London, and in the large cities of the Low Countries, one may observe what Peter Arnade called the "complicated ritual geometry [linking] cities and ... authorities together in a complex set of interactions".⁴⁹⁴

Women, too, had their place in this ritual in England. Margaret of Anjou, consort of Henry VI, for example, entered London in 1445.⁴⁹⁵ There the city magistrate put on all the plays that Margaret of York was to encounter in Burgundy. In Coventry in 1456, an event Margaret of York, then aged ten, would have recalled, Margaret of Anjou made another royal entry. As noted by Helen Mauer, this was yet another gender-specific entry, although with some hints as to the power and influence of the

⁴⁸⁹ Archival references are as difficult to come by. They mostly relate to entries of Margaret of York as dowager, which cannot be ranked as *Joyeuse Entrées*. C.f. A.M. Stadsrekening, S 1, 162. (1469-70), f. 156-7 and 172.

⁴⁹⁰ For a full description, q.v. *Joyeuse Entrée*.

⁴⁹¹ "Relation officielle de la Joyeuse Entrée de Marguerite d'Yorck, duchesse de Bourgogne et de sa belle-fille Marie de Bourgogne, le 19 novembre 1470", *Souvenirs de la Flandre Wallonne*, VI, (1886). C.f. Blondel, S., "La première et joyeuse entrée de Marguerite d'York à Douai, *CEEB*, XLIV, (2004).

⁴⁹² Henry V's influence on subsequent English kingship is attested by o.a. Kingsford, C.L. (ed), *The First English Life of King Henry the Fifth*, ix; Harriss, G.L. (ed), *Henry V. The Practice of Kingship*, passim.

⁴⁹³ Taylor, F., and Roskell, J.S. (eds), *Gesta Henrici Quinti. The Deeds of Henry the Fifth*; Withington, R., *English Pageantry*, I, chapter one.

⁴⁹⁴ Arnade, P., *Realms of Ritual*, 6.

⁴⁹⁵ Withington, R., *op.cit*, I, 148.

queen, who was seeking to broaden her authority.⁴⁹⁶ The emphasis on the female aspect of governance, with its plays featuring female role models, was as much part of the repertoire in England as it was in Burgundy.

When Margaret made her entry into Mons, she knew what to expect, in principle if not in detail.⁴⁹⁷ The entry in question took place on 15 November 1470, and Mary, who had visited previously, accompanied the duchess.⁴⁹⁸ The account of the visit is of interest, as it provides an insight into the intentions of the town.⁴⁹⁹ What Margaret made of it remains guesswork. However, Margaret's household was involved in the event, for the *comte De Charny*, her *chevalier d'honneur* at the time, corresponded with the magistrate at Mons.⁵⁰⁰ Some of the tribulations surrounding these events emerge from this correspondence. The magistrate had expected Margaret to arrive "à lendemain du jour des âmes".⁵⁰¹ However, they received a letter from De Charny on 10 November, explaining that her husband had summoned the duchess to Hesdin, and that she would come the following week.⁵⁰² One may imagine the upset this caused the magistrate, who had been discussing how to receive Margaret honourably since October.

When Margaret did come, the town put on a suitably lavish display. The duchess was met by the usual amalgam of local worthies, some of the duke's councillors in Hainaut, and a few of Mons' bourgeoisie.⁵⁰³ As Margaret was later to buy a house in the town with the magistrate's support, this must have been a meeting of minds. At the very least, the duchess managed to impress the assembled worthies. The account also contains an interesting, if slightly opaque reference to the reaction of the local population. Just outside the gate, an armed guard, consisting of members of the two bowmen guilds and several gunners, met the duchess. These carried batons "pour garder l'oppression du peuple".⁵⁰⁴ Were these needed to quell over-enthusiastic adulation, or did the magistrate fear a riot? There certainly must have been a large

⁴⁹⁶ Mauer, H., *Margaret of Anjou*, 140-2.

⁴⁹⁷ C.f. *Galesloot*, 213-5.

⁴⁹⁸ *Joyeuse Entrée*, 12.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 9.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 10.

⁵⁰¹ The day after All Souls Day. *Ibid*, 9.

⁵⁰² *Ibid*, 10.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid*, 12.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 13.

crowd, for the magistrate had ordered all labour to cease for the procession, thus ensuring both a festive atmosphere and a large turnout.⁵⁰⁵

Whatever the answer, the procession started well, with Margaret and Mary preceded by torchbearers.⁵⁰⁶ The streets through which the cortege travelled were hung with tapestries and decorations, as was the market square, with the arms of the duke and duchess in a prominent location. Other crests displayed the arms of Hainaut and Mons. All of this was easy to understand. The festive atmosphere, the widely recognised heraldic imagery, the pomp of the cortege: these belonged to the common language of the time. The five plays that the magistrate put on are a different matter. Much has been made of plays such as those in Mons in 1470, but the level of understanding of the onlookers, and of Margaret and Mary, can only be guessed at.

Does this make them useless as guides to the political constellation of the period? Not quite, perhaps, but less useful than has sometimes been claimed. Plays or depictions of biblical women are frequently seen as exemplars for female rulers. If that was the case, then what were they doing in the entries of male rulers such as that of Philip the Good in Gent in 1458? Yet the fact that all the plays put on for this entry featured women is surely significant. It must also be remembered that the account tells of what the magistrate of Mons wished to convey to the duchess. Three of the five plays are, and must have been at the time, easy to interpret. The stories of Abigail, Esther,⁵⁰⁷ and the queen of Sheba, with their emphasis on the power of female intercessors and wisdom, were common currency in the period.

It is interesting to see that these, and more particularly the Esther story, have received much attention from historians. Yet the magistrate of Mons evidently did not share the prevailing idea in contemporary historiography that this was the gender boundary within which aristocratic women could operate. Juxtaposing these stories of influential but essentially passive women was the play of Judith. Here was a woman of power, who took the initiative to fight when men were found wanting, and in the process saved her people. Finally, there was the play of Saul's daughter, Michol, that paragon of wifely loyalty. In combination, these reveal how the

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ "fame de grande prudence" according to the text. *Joyeuse Entrée*, 20.

magistrate of Mons viewed the role of the duchess: loyal to her husband, wise, an intercessor, *and*, if needs be, prepared to take up arms for her people.

This sits rather uneasily with the latest interpretation of the duchess' role, by Wim Blockmans. He assigned to Margaret a good deal of influence, and saw her as occasionally carrying out the wishes of her male counterparts, but lacking any initiative.⁵⁰⁸ That was not what the town fathers of Mons had in mind for Margaret, neither what the duchess conformed to. The Mons entry perfectly encapsulates her role: using quiet channels of influence under normal circumstances, she never hesitated to take the lead when required. It is the element of partnership, as portrayed in the play on Michol, which undermines the notion that she was merely her husband's, or later Maximilian's, pawn. As such, the ideals of the magistrate of Mons in 1470 neatly encapsulated the reality, and Margaret's *Joyeuse Entrée* there forms a good example of when and how such symbolism can be used to good effect to interpret the past.

Once Margaret had been initiated into the Burgundian way of doing things, she could take an additional step. Although in 1470 she had been married to Charles for only two years, they seem to have struck up a trusting political partnership. Charles had been too preoccupied to make a *Joyeuse Entrée* in the capital of Francophone Flanders, Douai.⁵⁰⁹ This is somewhat surprising, as both the town and the region were economically and strategically of the greatest importance.⁵¹⁰ However, by delegating the task to the duchess, Charles knew that he was making an appropriate gesture. The timing of the entry is of particular importance here: Charles was preparing for conflict with France, and the visit of his wife to Douai was a blatant attempt at winning hearts and minds.⁵¹¹ For Margaret, there must have been a sense of *déjà vu*, for this particular entry took place within days of that in Mons, on 19 November.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁸ *Dames met klasse*, 43-7.

⁵⁰⁹ For this c.f. the article by Sylvie Blondel. Blondel, S., *op.cit.*

⁵¹⁰ Louis XI knew this all too well, and targeted the region in his war against Burgundy in 1477-8. Blondel's description of Douai as of secondary importance in the fifteenth-century cannot be substantiated. *Ibid*, 32.

⁵¹¹ For the conflict, c.f. Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 58-61 and 65-71.

⁵¹² "Relation officielle de la Joyeuse Entrée de Marguerite d'Yorck", *Souvenirs de la Flandre Wallonne*, VI, (1886), 156.

If we wish to see Margaret of York's use of the *Joyeuse Entrée* to express her own authority, the Douai entry presents some serious obstacles. The town seems to have been expecting Charles, in fact had been waiting for some years for him to turn up.⁵¹³ When Margaret arrived instead of her husband, they put on the performance intended for the duke. It seems the reception was a rather cagey affair: the town feared the erosion of their privileges and was unsure whether the duchess' participation in the *Joyeuse Entrée* offered the same guarantees as if Charles had come in person. The presence of the *heer* of Ravenstein, Adolf of Kleef, will not have put them at ease. His role in the suppression of the 1451-3 rising of Gent and the subsequent termination of the city's privileges in 1469, and his role in the destruction of Liège were well known; the magistrates knew not to make any rash statements. In effect, the same *Realpolitik* that was noticeable in Gent in 1500 also played a substantial role here.⁵¹⁴

However, for all these caveats, there are some elements in the actual symbolism of this entry which do reveal aspects of the role of the duchess within her husband's government. Most striking is the function of Margaret as conciliator, a role which was also noticeable in her pilgrimage to Aachen. This is followed closely by Margaret being used as a veiled threat or statement of Burgundian power, exemplified by the presence of Ravenstein. There was a further element at play.⁵¹⁵ The town tried to appeal to Margaret to exercise the female role of mediator by playing on the traditional characteristics of women in a position of power, hoping she would be "juste, charitable et miséricordieuse".⁵¹⁶

To Margaret, the language of the entry was nothing new, but the experience must have taught her some valuable lessons about the symbolic way in which town and ruler expressed their relationship in the Low Countries. This was clearly a hastily improvised reception, and all the more interesting for it. The episode also highlights another facet of Margaret's successful political career in the Low Countries. From

⁵¹³ Blondel, S., *op.cit.*, 34.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵¹⁵ And once more, that note of caution struck by Buc in *The Dangers of Ritual* has to be emphasised: historians can only observe the text, not the event. Thus to suggest that an image of the Annunciation would have alerted Margaret to the desirability of her producing an heir is taking things a little too far. The presence of queen Esther, on the other hand, that biblical prototype of the supplicant queen, was less ambiguous. *Ibid.*, 36-7.

⁵¹⁶ "just, charitable and compassionate". *Ibid.*, 36.

early on, unlike her husband, she knew how to deal with its towns. This has already been made clear with regard to her pilgrimages and her adoption of local devotions, and can also be illustrated by the sensitive way in which she integrated into the *Peisprocessie* and other civic festivities in her dower towns. Little wonder Charles asked her to go fund-raising in Holland in 1476.

Like her brother Edward in relation to London, Margaret of York was sensitive to the pride and traditions of the urban centres of the Low Countries. Much of her political success must be attributed to this sensitivity. Naturally, her affinity was central to her influence, and her authority derived from Charles the Bold, Mary of Burgundy, Maximilian, and Philip the Fair respectively. Her power, however, rested firmly on the shoulders of the loyal dower towns and other urban centres in the Low Countries. This loyalty was maintained by Margaret's own unswerving dedication to their welfare,⁵¹⁷ and by the effective way she communicated with them. Margaret's rapport with the towns may have induced Philip the Fair to make the grand statement of trust and love for his grandmother, when he made his own *Blijde Inkomst* in Brussels, in 1495.⁵¹⁸ Along the route of his entry, his crest was prominently displayed on every other house. Alongside hung that of *Madame la Grande*, who had held him aloft to the baying commoners just after his birth, to show he was a boy.

Philip knew his debt of honour, but he also knew that the commoners valued the dowager's unstinting kindness towards them during the past thirty years. The common reaction on hearing the news of Margaret's death speaks volumes in this respect. Philip, who had visited Margaret in Mechelen upon his return from Spain only a few weeks earlier, was "fort desplaisant".⁵¹⁹ According to Molinet,

"Elle fut fort regrettée, plainte et plorée des religions ... et de plusieurs personnes devotes ... et fut mere des orphelins, nourrice des povres et refuge et soulas des tristes coeurs dolens".⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁷ In this, she could be ruthless. In 1481, Mons complained to Maximilian I that Margaret was amongst a group of Hainaut landowners hoarding grain on their lands, contrary to the common good. One doubts that in that year of famine Binche and Le Quesnoy would have regarded her actions as contrary to their well-being. Cauchies, J.-M., *La législation principière pour le comté de Hainaut*, 374-5.

⁵¹⁸ *Galesloot*, 295.

⁵¹⁹ "much agrieved [by her health]". *Voyage de Philippe le Beau*, 338.

⁵²⁰ "She was much mourned, the religious cried and bemoaned her ... and by many devout people ... she was the mother of orphans, nourisher of the poor and refuge and solace of sad pained hearts". *Molinet*, II, 526.

To which François Vinchant added, “Elle fut fort regrettée, car ce fut une vraie mère de ... pauvres et orphelins”,⁵²¹ and the chronicle of the Leuven Charterhouse, “honeste et religiosa valde matrona”.⁵²² Standard phrases? Perhaps, but it is known that Margaret did care for the poor, did help the religious. Clearly, this was not a secret: the great festivities of dynasty and state were not needed to communicate this. Instead, Margaret of York’s presence inspired the hopes and aspirations of the urban communities, comforted their poor, and showed the tenacity of the house of Burgundy in the face of overwhelming odds.

⁵²¹ “She was much mourned because she was a true mother ... to the poor and to orphans”. Vinchant, Fr., *Annales de la Provence et Comté d’Hainaut*, 138.

⁵²² K.B.B. Ms. 3857, f. 218.

Illustration XII.



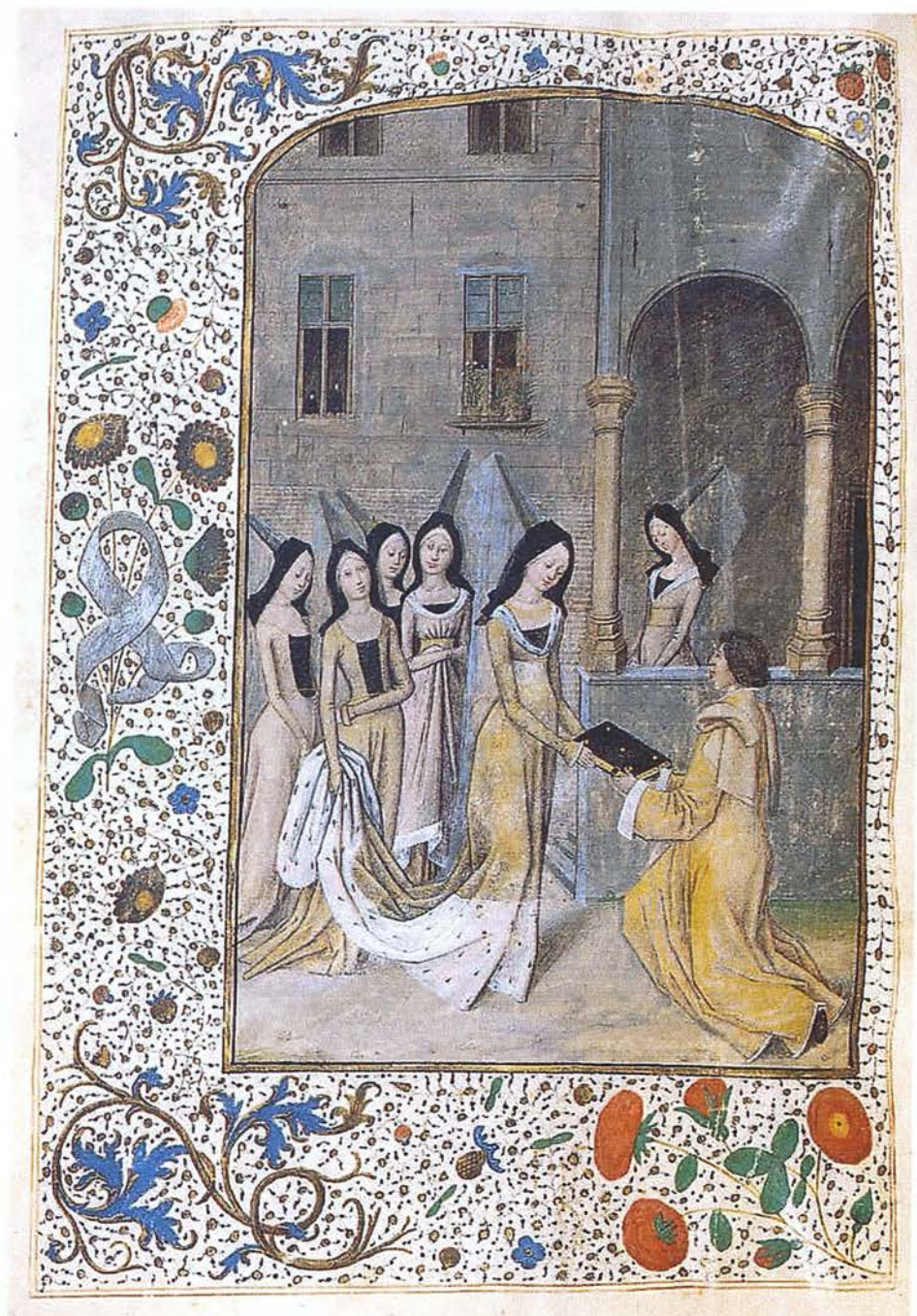
Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I, Brussels. Ms. 9296, *Benois seront les misericordieux*, f.1, Margaret of York involved in the Seven Acts of Mercy. With the kind permission of Dr Raphael de Smedt, hoofdconservator.

Illustration XIII.



Palace of Margaret of York in Mechelen as it may have appeared in the seventeenth century according to De Nooter. Picture courtesy of the Stadsarchief Mechelen.

Illustration XIV.



Jena, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. El. F. 85. Boethius, *De la consolation de philosophie*, f. 13. David Aubert offers his creation to Margaret of York. www.uni-jena.de

Illustration XV.



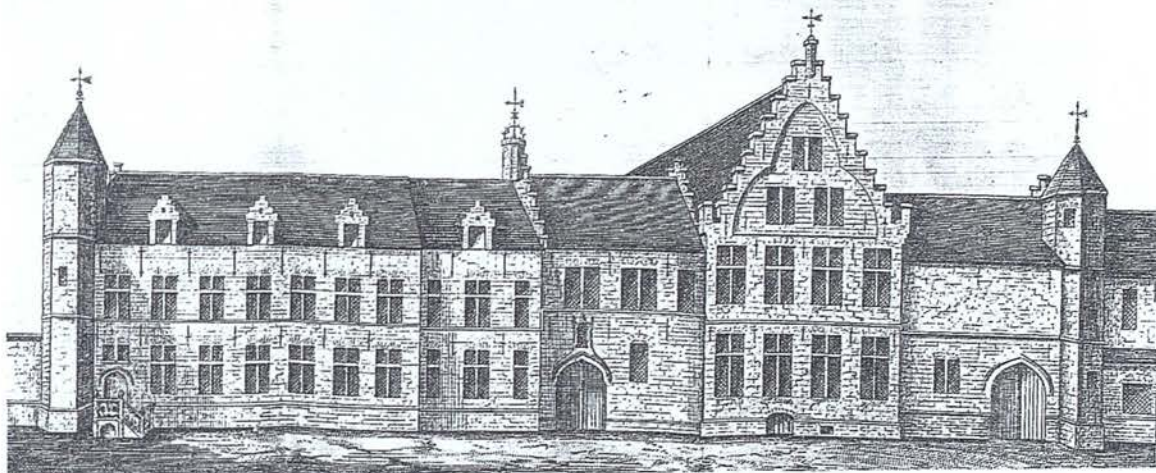
Hunting palace of Ter Elst, Duffel. Photo courtesy of the Tourist Information in Duffel.

Illustration XVI.



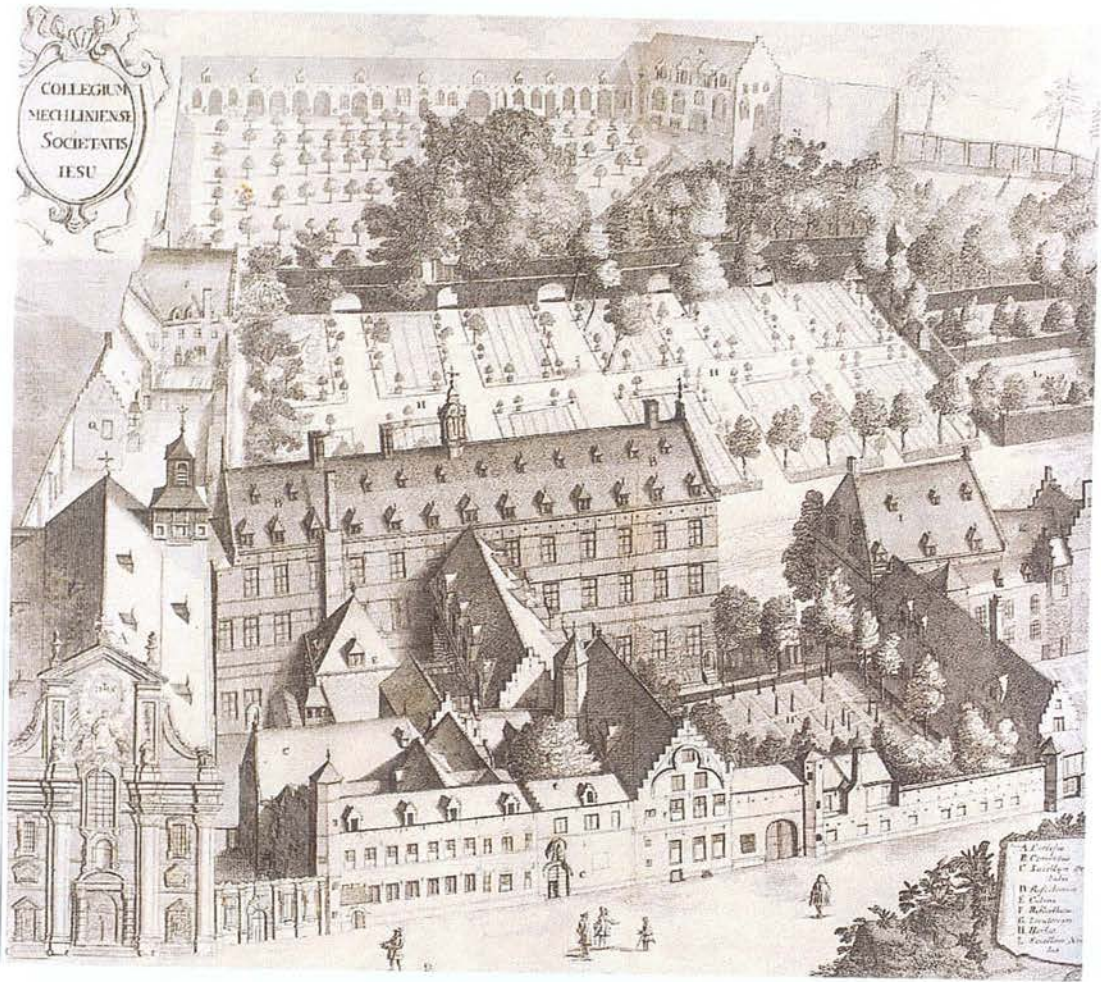
Hunting castle Turnhout. Photo courtesy of the Tourist Information in Turnhout.

Illustration XVII.



Renier Blokhuisen, the residence of Margaret of York in Mechelen, 1727. In, Sanderus, A., *Chorographia sacra Brabantiae*, III, 's-Gravenhage, 1727, 31. The remains of Margaret's palace in the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

Illustration XVIII.



Renier Blokhuisen, the residence of Margaret of York in Mechelen, 1727. In, Sanderus, A., *Chorographia sacra Brabantiae*, III, 's-Gravenhage, 1727, 30. The church and the tall buildings at the back, as well as the gardens, were added by the Jesuits. Picture courtesy of the Stadsarchief Mechelen.

Illustration XIX.



Wien, Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. Codex Vindobonensis 1857, *The Hours of Mary of Burgundy*, f. 14^v, A lady, probably Margaret of York, at prayer in an oratory. <http://www.khm.at/home>

Illustration XX.



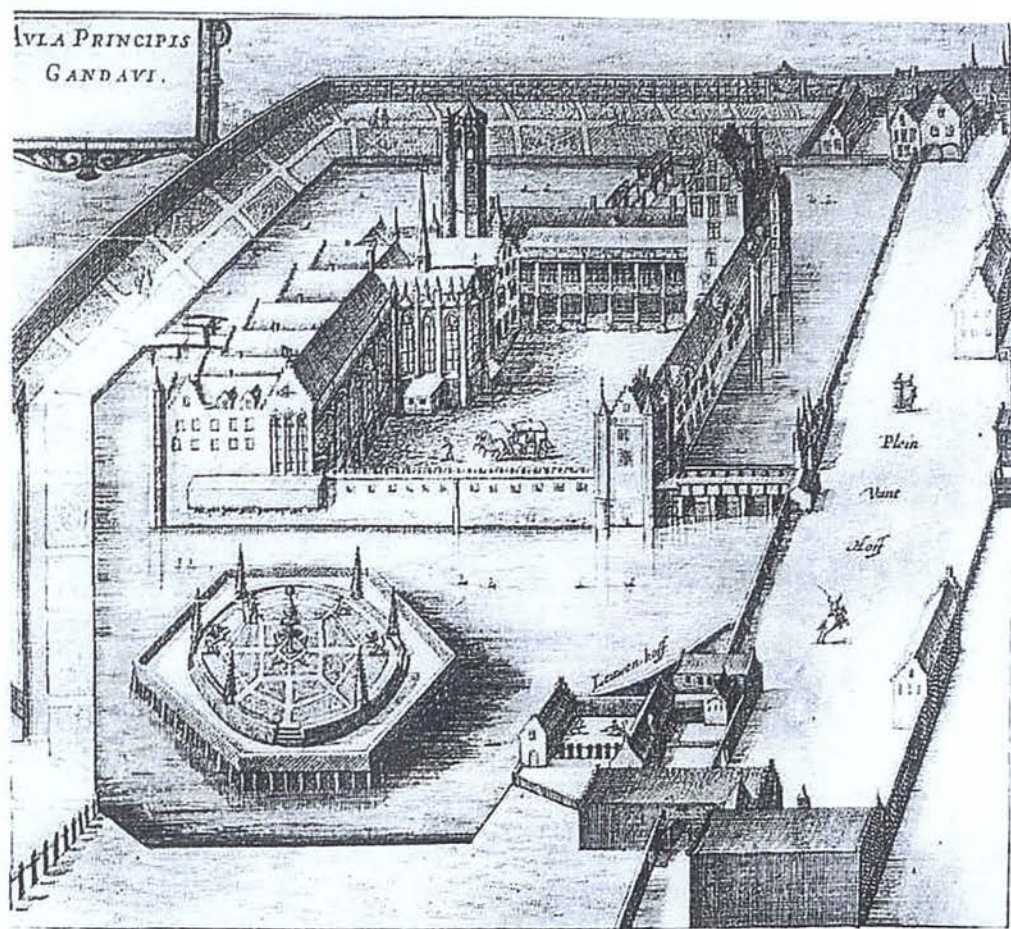
Baynards Castle from the river Thames, a reconstruction. Picture courtesy of the Museum of London.

Illustration XXI.



Part of Fotheringhay collegiate church, all that remains of the large Yorkist castle.
Photo courtesy of www.mike-stevens.co.uk/.../cruise1979b/55a16.htm

Illustration XXII.



Ducal Palace Ten Walle, Gent. Sanderus, A., *Flandria illustrata*, II, 1644, 19. Picture courtesy of the Stadsarchief Mechelen.

Illustration XXIII.



Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I, Brussels. Ms. 9296, *Benois seront les miséricordieux*, f. 17^r, Margaret of York at prayer before the St Gudule church in Brussels. With the kind permission of Dr Raphael de Smedt, hoofdconservator.

Illustration XXIV.



London, Royal College of Physicians. SR 1d D139-11. Frontispiece of the *Recueil of Troy* by William Caxton. Caxton presenting a copy of the book to Margaret of York. With the kind permission of the Royal College of Physicians.

Illustration XXV.



London, British Library. Add. Ms. 7970, *La dyalogue de la duchesse de bourgogne a Ihesu Crist*, f. 1^v, Margaret of York at prayer before Christ. www.bl.uk

Illustration XXVI.



Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I, Brussels. Ms. 9272-76, *Traité de Morale*, f. 182, Margaret of York at prayer. With the kind permission of Dr Raphael de Smedt, hoofdconservator.

Illustration XXVII.



Gent, Klooster der Klarissen-Koletiënen. Ms. 8, *Vie de Sainte Colette*, f. 40^v. Margaret of York and Charles the Bold at prayer, clasping rosaries, behind St Colette. With the kind permission of the mother-abbess.

Illustration XXVIII.

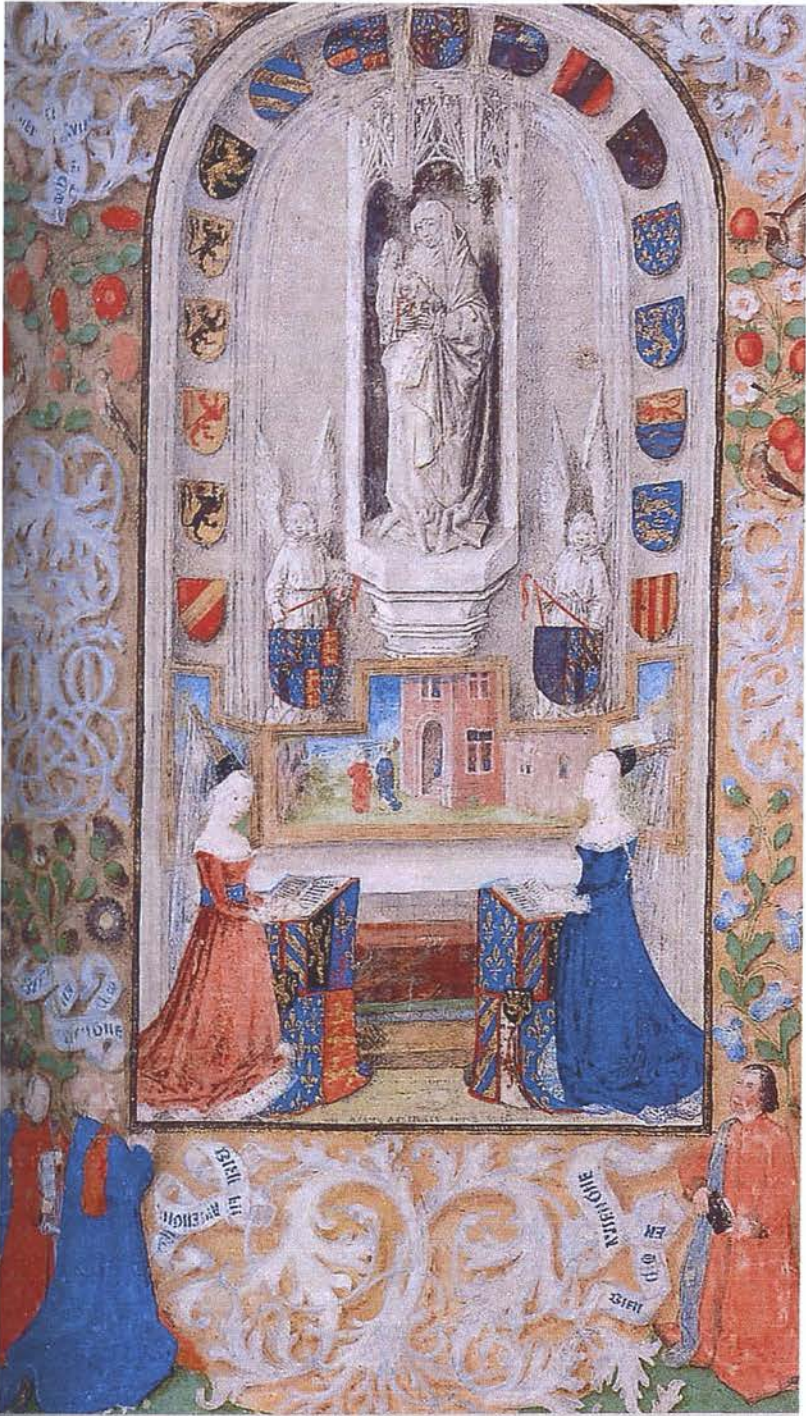


*Le commencement vng moult notable et deuot traitie
Intitule. Les douze fleurs de tribulation. prologue*

A Sa chiere ame en ihesu crist ses loiaulz
ame en nre seigneur salut et confort En
celluy qui tous les desconfortz reconforte
Sicomme dit la sainte escripture. Et nulz ne
peult loialement amer en lamour de charite cest
de ihesu crist se il na iore de tous les biens qui a la
sainte ame peuent aidier de venir a nre seigneur
Et se il nest doulent de cuer par compassion de
tous les maulz corporelz et espirituelz q la desfoibet
de paruenir a la iore du chiel Sicome saint pol le
tesmognie quant il dit. Gaudeat cum gaudentibz
et flet cum flentibus. Mais ils sont aulcuns deus

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 365, *Traité Morale et religieux*, f. 115. With kind permission of the librarian.

Illustration XXIX.



Windsor, The Royal Collection, inv. RCIN 1047371, f. 2. Page showing Margaret of York and Mary of Burgundy as members of the Gent-based guild of St Anna. With kind permission of the librarian.

Illustration XXX.



Binche, Fabrique d'Eglise de Saint-Ursmer, Reliquary of the Holy Cross in the form of a Calvary. Lille, (?) late fifteenth century, gold and silver. Photo courtesy of Fabrique d'Eglise de Saint-Ursmer.

Illustration XXXI.



Halle, Sint Martinus Basiliek, Statue of Our Lady. Black wood, traditionally 12th century. The Black Madonna of Halle was the principal pilgrimage destination of Margaret of York. Photo courtesy of the Kerkfabriek Halle.

Illustration XXXII.



Aachen, Domschatzkammer, crown and contemporary leather case of Margaret of York. Gold, pearls and precious stones. England, circa 1461 (?), restored 1865 by Vogeno. Inscription: MARGART DE OK, C & M. Photo courtesy of the provost of the Domkirche, Aachen.

3. Part Three: The Intellectual and Religious Foundations of Power and Authority.

Modernity and *Renovatio*.

Margaret of York was a woman living at the end of an era, or at the beginning of a new one, depending on one's view. She was, of course, not aware of this; hinges in time are always imposed retrospectively. This does not mean that time in its epochal sense was an unknown to the duchess.¹ Several books in her library attest to her curiosity about the idea of time: in particular *La Fleurs des Histoires*² and *Les chroniques des comtes de Flandres*.³ Nor did she conform to the notion that late medieval people were somehow uninterested in progress. One look at her espousal of the printing press confirms the opposite.⁴ Although she realised there was such a thing as an Italian style, she clearly did not make the distinction between this and the art of the north.⁵ When she ordered the Italian 'Renaissance' manuscript, *In Trogi Pompei historias*,⁶ as a present for Maximilian on the occasion of his marriage to the Italian Bianca Sforza, she did so because she felt it to be an appropriate gesture.⁷

The question of Margaret's mindset is of the greatest significance when assessing the intellectual and religious foundations of the duchess' power and authority. A reference has already been made in the previous chapter to the supposition that she was 'old-fashioned' in her religious outlook.⁸ This also has a distinct bearing upon her wider intellectual development. Consciously or otherwise, the suggestion that a late fifteenth-century person was 'old-fashioned' in the religious field, conjures up the idea that she was also 'medieval' as opposed to 'modern'. The fact that Margaret has left no evidence that she had a command of Latin beyond the standard phrases of the Church enhances this sentiment.⁹ In an age when the Humanist notion that 'correct' Latin defined the modern, Margaret of York does seem to have been old-

¹ For late medieval people and their sense of time, c.f. Breisach, E., *Historiography. Ancient, Medieval, & Modern*.

² K.B.B. Ms. 9233, q.v. Appendix Three, no. 19.

³ Holkham Hall, Library of the Earl of Leicester, Ms. 659. q.v. Appendix Three, no. 22.

⁴ Q.v. Appendix Three, nos. 41 and 42.

⁵ See also the possibility of a sgraffiti wall at the palace in Gent. Part Two, p. 159.

⁶ Madrid, Biblioteca del Escorial. Ms. c.III.22, f. 1-98 *In Trogi Pompei historias libri xlv*.

Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 30.

⁷ Derolez, A., "A Renaissance Manuscript in the Hands of Margaret of York". In T. Kren (ed), *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and The Vision of Tondal*, 101 and ff.

⁸ *Weightman*, 203; Blockmans, W. and Prevenier, W., *De Bourgondische Nederlanden*, 247.

⁹ Although Luc Hommel seems to have believed she did understand the language perfectly. *Hommel*, 15.

fashioned.¹⁰ In addition, she actively sought out pilgrimage centres, venerated the saints, and collected indulgences. All these *bête noires* of humanists like Henri de Glymes's secretary, Erasmus, or Protestants, like Martin Luther, surely show that this was a woman with a 'medieval' rather than a 'modern' mindset?¹¹

Thus, the duchess falls prey to several persistent historiographical trends. She succumbs to the notion that Protestantism was somehow forward looking, and that what went before was, therefore, old-fashioned. She falls prey to the idea of the Humanists, that all who did not share their appreciation of Antiquity were old-fashioned. And finally, the long shadow of Huizinga falls over her, as she becomes the representative of a flourishing culture, but one that is doomed to disappear. These types of strict boundaries collapse when tested against the evidence, however. Margaret may not have been fluent in Latin, but that did not prevent her from sponsoring the academic careers of those whose command of the language was famous. Her support for Jan Briart van Ath and Adriaan Florenszoon, and her employment of university graduates has already been noted in part one.¹²

Jacob Burckhardt warned against this type of simplification in his classic portrayal of Renaissance Italy. Even there, he noted, the Observant mendicant friars were

“criticised and ridiculed by scornful humanism; but when they raised their voices, no one gave heed to the humanists. Savonarola came forward ... [and] all their beloved art and culture melted away”.¹³

In other words, modernity did not exclude strong support for observancy, a fact of the greatest interest with regard to Margaret of York's intellectual development. The strong support that she lent to the introduction of observancy suddenly becomes evidence for a forward-looking mindset. Her patronage of the reformed and austere religious orders may seem to have been rather wasted from the moment that Luther decided that monastic life was no longer 'modern', a way of thinking which came

¹⁰ There are many works on the notion of modernity amongst the Humanists, see amongst many Nauert, C.G., *Humanism and the culture of Renaissance Europe*; Tilmans, K., *Aurelius en de Divisiekroniek van 1517: historiografie en humanisme in Holland in de tijd van Erasmus*; and Bejczy, I., *Erasmus and the Middle Ages: the historical consciousness of a christian humanist*.

¹¹ For an evaluation, c.f. Herwaarden, J. van, *Between Saint James and Erasmus*.

¹² Q.v. Part One, pp. 69 and ff.

¹³ Burckhardt, J., *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, 297.

into vogue only thirteen years after Margaret's death. However, she saw this patronage as part of a wider religious revival or *renovatio*, as will be explored below.

And if many of the convents and monasteries that she helped to reform failed to survive the sixteenth century, some did. Their contribution to the consolidation of the Catholic Church was profound: Pierre Beauregard, Dominican confessor of Charles V, came from the Brussels friary, which Isabella of Portugal and Margaret of York had championed. He had been ordained there under the auspices of Margaret's confessor and prior of the Brussels friary, Jehan de Brayna.¹⁴ Crucially, Beauregard represented the papacy at the Council of Trent in 1547, where he was instrumental in steering the debates about discipline amongst the religious. In a less institutionalised fashion, the observant friars also made an enormous impact on the devotional life of ordinary Catholic Christians of the next few centuries. As the following will show, they stood at the cradle of some of its most potent new devotions, and Margaret of York was standing beside them.

This is not to argue that Margaret of York was a 'Renaissance woman' in the same mould as her granddaughter, Margaret of Austria: she lacks some of the crucial characteristics. However, as a patron of the arts, and in her use of the arts to project her own power and authority, there was a remarkable overlap between the two.¹⁵ This is particularly clear from the content of their respective libraries, with their emphasis on Christian *renovatio*.¹⁶ The same is true for their interest in architecture,¹⁷ and for the way they both flexed their political muscles. In turn, Margaret owed much of her own intellectual foundations to Cicely Neville and Isabella of Portugal. This transmission of ideas from powerful woman to powerful woman forms the *longue durée* behind the more superficial cultural changes.¹⁸ For, ultimately, the means to exercise power, authority, and influence altered little for women for centuries. The use of male proxies, the manipulation of existing power structures, and the cultivation of allies amongst members of the Church, coupled

¹⁴ Meyer, R.P.A. de, O.P., *La Congregation de Hollande ou la Réforme Dominicaine en Territoire Bourguignon*, 370.

¹⁵ *Dames met klasse*, passim. Margaret of Austria's diverse career and her use of the arts has recently been investigated by Eichberger, D., *Leben mit Kunst, Wirken durch Kunst*.

¹⁶ For Margaret of York's library, q.v. Appendix Three. For that of Margaret of Austria, c.f. Debae, M., *De librije van Margareta van Oostenrijk*.

¹⁷ Steurs, F., *Het Keizershof en het Hof van Margareta van Oostenrijk te Mechelen*.

¹⁸ I would like to thank Dr Helen Maurer for debating this point with me at the third conference on fifteenth-century studies in Urbana-Champaign in 2001.

with the shrewd use of effective cultural tools to communicate their status, were the common tools of powerful women over the centuries.

The central intellectual idea underpinning Margaret of York's role as woman of power and authority is universal. The notion of Christian *renovatio* was not peculiar to the fifteenth century, nor was it confined to women.¹⁹ As a concept, it is invariably tied up with Christianity: renewal sweeps what is, after all, a movement, at almost regular periods. However, the fifteenth century, and even more strongly the sixteenth, was marked by a particularly deep interest in renewal.²⁰ In the Low Countries, this had given rise to the writings of Ruysbroek and to the *Devotio Moderna*.²¹ Arguably, the most important source of energy for the renewal came from the quiet worlds of the charterhouses,²² hugely influential through the distribution of their writings.²³ Margaret of York's own association with the Order has already been alluded to on several occasions, and their profound influence on her library shall be explored below.

This 'reform before the Reformation', as Blockmans and Prevenier termed it, shared deep roots with Humanism, and was not necessarily incompatible with it.²⁴ The deeply felt need to recreate the perceived perfection of a previous age impelled both, formed their common intellectual impulse.²⁵ It was also the main focus of Margaret of York's intellectual curiosity.²⁶ *Renovatio* is what tied her various activities together. This has already been encountered with regards to her pilgrimages, which occasionally took her to new or reviving cults, such as that of St Gummarus. One may detect the need for *renovatio* in her association with the observant Dominicans and Franciscans, and with the Bursfelder Congregation of the

¹⁹ For a penetrating study of Christian *renovatio*, see Dickson, G., "Revivalism as a Medieval Genre", *JEH*, LXI, (2000). Gary Dickson's input on this idea was considerable, and I am grateful for his comments. C.f. Goodman, A., "Henry VII and Christian Renewal",

²⁰ Oakley, F., *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages*, chapter 5.

²¹ Ruysbroeck, J. van, *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*; Engen, J. van, *Devotio Moderna*. for its influence on the Burgundian dynasty, c.f. Sommé, M., "Le testament d'Isabelle de Portugal et la Devotion Moderne", *CEEB*, XXIX, (1989).

²² Amongst others Rowntree, C.B., *Studies in Carthusian History in Later Medieval England*; Grauwe, J. de, "Historia Carthusiana Belgica", *A. Cart*, (1985), particularly chapter three.

²³ Gumbert, J.P., "Over Kartuizerbibliotheken in de Nederlanden". In R. de Keyser et al, *Studies over het Boekbezit en Boekengebruik in de Nederlanden vóór 1600*

²⁴ Blockmans, W., and Prevenier, W., *De Bourgondiërs*, 245 and ff. C.f. Cameron, E., "The Late Renaissance and the Unfolding Reformation in Europe". In J. Kirk (ed), *Humanism and reform*.

²⁵ Neatly personified in the figure of St John Fisher, but also in Erasmus.

²⁶ And this should not come as a surprise: the Christian character of her world-view is amply attested by her reading.

Benedictines. This had its practical social applications as well, as was observed in the case of the *Zwarte Zusters*, whose medical and care skills made them valued additions to any urban community.²⁷ *Renovatio* may even be glimpsed behind her affinity: this was a legitimate female pre-occupation, and allowed Margaret of York to take charge of political affairs behind the cloak of religion.

The importance of Margaret's intellectual foundations cannot be overestimated. Of course, Margaret was not the only one to espouse these ideals, but she did adopt them as her own. This extended itself into a more secular context. *Renovatio* may also be called the driving force behind her decades-long struggle to revive her late husband's political dreams. That in the end she only managed to help preserve a part of Charles the Bold's political construct had more to do with the impossible scale of his ambitions and Margaret's pragmatism, than with any intellectual inconsistency on the part of *Madame la Grande*. Finally, these same ideas underpinned her social convictions. After all, that paradigm of Carthusian intellect, Dionysius of Roermond, had set the standards for a Christian social order, and Margaret knew his work.²⁸ The intellectual ideals which Margaret of York supported were to flourish like no others during the century following her death in 1503. Once we can take a step back from the pre-occupations of northern Europe, we can see them thriving in the culture of the Habsburg's Hispanic and central European lands, too.

In his book, *Zwarte Renaissance*, Chris van der Heijden has argued powerfully for the pre-eminence of Spain as *the* cultural force in sixteenth-century Europe and beyond.²⁹ Breaking out of the anti-thesis between Huizinga and Burckhardt, he manages to show that in Spain the Renaissance was one of "kruistochten en ridderromans, extase en vroomheid, gotiek en betovering".³⁰ This, he argues, was the future of Europe: not Italian humanism, but dogmatic religion, not the frivolities of Castiglione's Italy, but the sombre lines of Philip II's Escorial. Van der Heijden's is a somewhat stark opposition. As mentioned, religious reformers could easily be

²⁷ Q.v. Part One, pp. 95-6.

²⁸ Ewig, E., *Die Anschauung des Kartäuser Dionysius von Roermond über den Christlichen Ordo in Staat und Kirche*.

²⁹ Heijden, C. van der, *Zwarte Renaissance*, especially part two and the introduction.

³⁰ "crusades and chivalric novels, ecstasy and devotion, gothic and enchantment". *Ibid*, 11.

heavily influenced by Humanism, indeed, Erasmus and John Fisher both were.³¹

However, Van der Heijden offers a clear opposite to Huizinga: it can no longer be acceptable to treat late medieval piety as “veruiterlijkte godsdienst”, its culture as moribund.³² Margaret of York’s interest in the questions of spirituality and its role in the world were as profound as Charles V’s, notwithstanding Huizinga’s belief that this was a ‘Protestant’ concept.³³

The impact of Burgundy on Spain’s cultural and political make-up in the sixteenth century was immense. Van der Heijden acknowledges this and points to the central roles of two men close to Margaret of York. The first was her long-standing ally, Maximilian I, who was not known as the *Letzte Ritter* for nothing, the second the man he calls Charles of Gent, the Emperor Charles V, whom the duchess held above the baptismal font.³⁴ Of course, they were sowing in a well-ploughed field. Spain under the Catholic Monarchs had been the scene of a reform movement as vigorous as that of the Low Countries,³⁵ whilst its literatures, both Catalan and Castilian, attest to the continued vigour of the chivalric model.³⁶ It is equally clear that it will not do to ascribe all this to the person of Margaret of York. On the other hand, it is clear that the duchess played a role in this Burgundian-Spanish fusion, if only in the way she helped preserve Charles the Bold’s inheritance, both culturally and politically. The previous pages have traced many of the instances where she played a vital role in the education of the children of the dynasty. Rather than old-fashioned, the intellectual inspirations for Margaret of York’s actions were also the bedrock on which the Catholic Reformation, and the century of Habsburg dominance were built.

It would be impossible to trace all the elements of this intellectual foundation, if only because not enough evidence survives. What follows will, therefore, concentrate on the content of Margaret’s book collection, and on her role in the development and growth of two new devotional cults in the Low Countries, that of the Rosary and of

³¹ C.f. Lindeboom, J., *Het bijbels humanisme in Nederland: Erasmus en de vroege reformatie*; Bradshaw, B. and Duffy, E. (eds), *Humanism, reform and the Reformation. The career of Bishop John Fisher*.

³² “externalised religion”. Huizinga, J., *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen*, 183.

³³ *Ibid*.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 15.

³⁵ Hinnebusch, W.A., O.P., *The History of the Dominican Order*, 236.

³⁶ Brenan, G., *The Literature of the Spanish People*, 118-45; or, more specifically, Hatzfeld, H.A., “The Influence of Ramon Lull and Jan van Ruysbroeck on the language of the Spanish Mystics”, *Traditio*, IV, (1946).

the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Oberman suggested that the fifteenth century ought not to be regarded as an autumnal period, but as one of harvest.³⁷ The idea has a good deal going for it, but the following shows that Margaret of York was more concerned with sowing the seeds for the harvest of the next century, ploughing the field with a medieval plough.

Reconstructing a Library.

Margaret of York's books are a unique resource.³⁸ They are not just the only material evidence for her life which is relatively plentiful, they provide, as argued above, an insight into the intellectual foundations of female power and authority in the later fifteenth century.³⁹ This is enhanced by the fact that the various manuscripts complement each other in tone, style, utility and high intellect. Even in the almost certain knowledge that many of her manuscripts have been lost, this still leaves wonderful evidence for the intellectual development of Margaret of York. Such has been the attention paid to Margaret's books, that it would not be an exaggeration to say that the books have slowly 'consumed' the collector. During the nineteenth century, biographers such as Münch saw her primarily as the powerful step-mother of Mary of Burgundy,⁴⁰ or, like, Galesloot, as the beautiful English princess which she was.⁴¹ By the end of the twentieth, she had become Margaret of York, devout bibliophile. In a particularly ill-suited way, the duchess of Burgundy has become textualised.⁴²

³⁷ Oberman, H., *The Dawn of the Reformation*, 20.

³⁸ No aspect of Margaret of York has been studied in such detail as her book collection. This chapter is based upon a previous assessment I made on the topic. Schnitker, H., "'Een bibliotheek ontsloten.' Nieuw licht op de boekerij van Margaretha van York", *HKKOM, Wijsheid in Bescheidenheid. Miscellanea Mechliniensia in honorem Aloysii Jans*, CVI, (2002). C.f. Barstow; Dogaer; Hughes and Kren, T. (ed), *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and The Vision of Tondal*.

³⁹ For the wider context, c.f. Bell, S.G., "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture". In M. Erler and M. Kowalski (eds), *Gendering the Master Narrative*.

⁴⁰ Münch, E., *Maria von Burgund nebst dem Leben ihrer Stiefmutter Margarethe von York, Gemahlin Karls des Kühnen*.

⁴¹ Q.v. Galesloot, *passim*.

⁴² This is particularly apparent than in the characterisation of Margaret as 'the lonely duchess', based primarily, if not solely, on her library. Blockmans, W.P., "The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess". In T. Kren (ed), *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and The Vision of Tondal*, 29-46.

Her book-collection is one of the largest female libraries to have come down to us from the later Middle Ages. In all, some twenty-five to thirty manuscripts can be associated with her, twenty-six as having belonged to her own collection.⁴³ All are, and were in their day, valuable volumes.⁴⁴ Some are lavishly illustrated, with two manuscripts having more than fifty illuminations,⁴⁵ many of which are full-page. Most, however, are rather more sober. Nevertheless, they certainly rank amongst the most artistic products of the Burgundian Netherlands and beyond. The duchess turned to some of the leading scriptoria and illuminators and their ateliers to execute her commissions. Amongst the scriptoria that may be mentioned in particular, is that of David Aubert.⁴⁶ Aubert was the writer and translator to two of the other great bibliophiles of the Burgundian Netherlands: Philip the Good, and Margaret's brother-in-law, Anthony, the Great Bastard of Burgundy.⁴⁷ She also employed leading illuminators such as Simon Marmion, the Master of Mary of Burgundy, Lieven van Lathem, and the Scot, Alexander Bening.⁴⁸ This patronage was not something new to the duchess. During the winter of 1459-1460, she had spent some time at the court of her aunt, Anne Neville, duchess of Buckingham. Both she and her daughter, Anne Stafford, were collectors of books, and Anne Stafford was the patron of Osborn Bokenham and Stephen Scrope.⁴⁹ Margaret's sister, Elizabeth, had married the son of Alice Chaucer, the bookish descendant of the poet, and another great patron of the written word.⁵⁰

Margaret's book collection never existed in a vacuum. Books are never self-contained objects: they interact with the world around them in what they

⁴³ For this see the new list in Appendix Three. Care has been taken to disentangle the various gifts, manuscripts associated with the duchess, and those ascribed to her, from those which were definitely in her possession.

⁴⁴ R.A. Lee purchased no. 21 on the Appendix list for the enormous sum of £28,000 in 1965. It was the most expensive item of that sale. Christie's, *Northwick Park Collection*, addenda of June 7th, 2: Price List, May 26th 1965, Lot 194.

⁴⁵ These are New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 484, *Apocalypse* and *La Vie de Saint Edmonde le Martyr*, q.v. Appendix Three, no. 13; and, formerly at Metz, Bibliothèque Municipale. Formerly Ms. 1255 (Salis 104), *Book of Hours*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 16.

⁴⁶ C.f. Quérueil, D. (ed), *Les manuscrits de David Aubert <<escripvain>> bourguignon; Illuminating*, 518. Q.v. Illustration XIV, p. 235, where Aubert is shown presenting Margaret with a finished book.

⁴⁷ C.f. Paviot, J., "David Aubert et la cour de Bourgogne". In D. Quérueil (ed), *Les manuscrits de David Aubert*.

⁴⁸ For the illuminators, see amongst others Alexander, J.J.G., *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work*; Brown, M.P. and McKendrick, S., *Illuminating the Book*.

⁴⁹ Jambeck, K.K., "Patterns of Women's Literary Patronage: England, 1200- ca. 1475". In J. McCash Hall (ed), *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, 240-2.

⁵⁰ Metcalf, C.A., *Alice Chaucer, Duchess of Suffolk*, 50-8.

communicate and comment upon. They are also objects, valuable objects, and, as such, formed part of a wider culture. Some were intended to communicate the authority of their owner; others underpinned her intellectual development and helped shape Margaret of York's actions. They also managed to turn the duchess of Burgundy into literature. In a rather striking post-modern fashion, Margaret appears in several of her own books, both as a persona and in the illuminations.

It is very well possible that the only real privacy Margaret of York ever experienced was contained between the covers of her manuscripts. Yet her books were also part of the dialogue between the duchess and her courtiers: they throw light upon the function of her confessors and chaplains, show her as patron of the arts, and furnish further evidence for her affinity. At the same time, this collection is marked by a curious absence. It is true that Margaret of York was an important patron of illuminators and scribes, even of the early printing press.⁵¹ There is, however, not a single original work in this collection, with the exception of *La dyalogue de la ducesse de bourgogne a Ihesu Crist*.⁵² This contrasts sharply with her mother-in-law, Isabella of Portugal, but sits comfortably with the habits of her mother, Cicely Neville.⁵³ Yet in England female patronage was not unusual, and one is left to wonder about this strange fact.⁵⁴ Perhaps Margaret, blessed with an intense intellectual curiosity, cared little for contemporary letters. There are, after all, no tales of chivalry in her collection, at least none that have survived, and her history books are all of the instructive kind.⁵⁵

Perhaps the greatest problem with an attempt to analyse the library of Margaret of York is, that in contrast to so many aristocratic collections in the fifteenth-century Low Countries, we do not have an inventory. This fact notwithstanding, there have been no fewer than three attempts at reconstructing Margaret's collection from other sources. The first one was at the hand of Dogaer in 1975, a rather basic list which

⁵¹ For Margaret's involvement with the printing press, q.v. Appendix Three nos. 41 and 42.

⁵² B.L. Add. Ms. 7970, *La dyalogue de la ducesse de bourgogne a Ihesu Crist*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 4.

⁵³ Willard, C.C., "The Patronage of Isabella of Portugal". In J. Hall McCash (ed), *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, 306-20.

⁵⁴ Jambeck, K.K., "Patterns of Women's Literary Patronage: England, 1200 – c. 1475". In J. Hall McCash (ed), *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*,

⁵⁵ Although the possibility that she owned a copy of Caxton's *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* does add one, at least partly chivalric tome to her collection. C.f. Schnitker, H., "The Recuyll of the Historyes of Troye". In *Dames met Klasse*, 242-3.

was extended by Muriel Hughes in 1984, which in turn was improved upon in 1992 by Barstow.⁵⁶ This last list also formed the base for the inventory of illuminations in Margaret of York's collection by Smeyers in 1998.⁵⁷

Since Barstow's list appeared, other manuscripts have been added to the collection, some based on firm evidence, others less so. The *Hours of Catherine of Aragon* from the Royal Library in The Hague has been amongst the most striking suggested additions.⁵⁸ Foncke argued that the presence of a mixture of English and what she termed 'Low Countries Saints' in the book showed that the owner was an English man or woman living in Burgundy. Somehow this had to be Margaret of York.⁵⁹ However, the argument ignores two facts; firstly that the saints in the *Hours* are the standard ones from the Sarum Use, secondly that the manuscript was produced around 1460, no fewer than eight years prior to Margaret of York's arrival in the Low Countries.

Other suggestions have more to recommend them. Wim Blockmans's idea that a copy of the *Romuleon*⁶⁰ should be seen as a present by Margaret to her brother, Edward IV, has much merit.⁶¹ The same is true for the suggestion that it was Margaret of York who donated the prayer book now in the Gent university library to the Brigittines of Dendermonde.⁶² Set against this, is the fact that some of the manuscripts included in the three previous lists were clearly never in Margaret of York's own collection. The most obvious of these is the *Registre de la guild de Sainte Anna à Gand*, now in the Royal Library Windsor Castle, which has been included in her collection simply because she is depicted on the first folio, and her crest on the second.⁶³ Why would the duchess have possessed this manuscript? It conveyed nothing but her membership of the guild, a fact surely more important to the guild than to the duchess. In the guild's meeting room or on their altar they could

⁵⁶ Dogaer; Hughes; Barstow.

⁵⁷ Smeyers, M., *L'Art de la Miniature flamande du VIII^e au XVI^e*, 374-91.

⁵⁸ K.B.D.H. Ms. 76 F 7, *Hours of Catherine of Aragon*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 38.

⁵⁹ Foncke, M., "Een getijdenboek van Margaretha van York?", *Millennium*, XI, (1997).

⁶⁰ B.L. Ms. Royal 19.E.V, *Romuleon*. Appendix Three, no. 31.

⁶¹ Blockmans, W., "The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess", 22. C.f. *Weightman*, 138.

⁶² Gent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Hs. 205, *Prayer Book*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 27. C.f. Reynaert, J., "Het Middelnederlandse gebedenboek van de Birgittinessen te Dendermonde", *Jaarboek van de Koninklijke Soevereine Hoofdkamer van Retorica <<De Fontaine>> te Gent*, II, (1981), 35.

⁶³ Windsor Castle, Royal Library, no inventory number, *Registre de la guild de Sainte Anne à Gand*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 35. See illustration XXIX, p. 250.

have displayed the folio with the miniature to show off the high status of their membership.⁶⁴

To add to the complications of new books being added and others removed from the list of Margaret's collection, we may be certain that not a few of her books have been lost. Livia Visser-Fuchs and Anne Sutton suggested that her English books were burned during the fire in the castle of Male near Bruges in 1472, which is not unlikely.⁶⁵ We also know at least one book that is no longer extant, a *vita* of Saint Gummarus, which the duchess received from the canons of the church in Lier.⁶⁶ There have, furthermore, been a few contemporary losses, most regrettably a very lavishly-illuminated *Book of Hours*, which was destroyed in Metz in 1944.⁶⁷ Despite all these reservations, enough remains of Margaret's collection to allow us 'een betrouwbaar beeld van haar verzameling ... op te roepen'.⁶⁸

With the idea of Margaret of York possessing a library well established, the question as to whether there was a library of Margaret of York might seem a little superfluous. Yet this is far from the case: does the handful of books, which Margaret definitely possessed, constitute a library? The aptly named Dutch bibliophile, Boudewijn Büch, in his *homage* to the library, also wrestled with this question.⁶⁹ At what point does a collection of books become a library? Büch remains vague, but is certain that the numbers involved do not matter. He does suggest that a library is the place where books are kept and this throws up the necessary problems for Margaret of York's collection.

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that Margaret's books were never in one location. Galesloot postulated two libraries, both in her dower lands: one in Mechelen and one in Binche.⁷⁰ In Binche she had new large windows made, which would allow more light to come into her private quarters, possibly with an eye on reading.⁷¹ The notion that there was a 'library' at the palace in Mechelen was

⁶⁴ Trio, P., *Volksreligie als spiegel van een stedelijke samenleving*, 214-5.

⁶⁵ Sutton, A.F. and Visser-Fuchs, L., *Richard III's Books*, 38.

⁶⁶ C.f. Appendix Three, no. 23.

⁶⁷ Metz, Bibliothèque Municipale, Formerly Ms. 1255 (Salis 104), *Book of Hours*. Appendix Three, no. 16.

⁶⁸ "to reconstruct an accurate picture of her collection". Korteweg, A.S., *Boeken van Oranje-Nassau*, 4.

⁶⁹ Büch, B., *Bibliotheken*, 23-5.

⁷⁰ *Galesloot*, 255.

⁷¹ A.D.N. 852, f. 45^v, 47^v and 51^v.

suggested by Dogaer, but archival evidence is scant.⁷² Most evidence for Margaret's concern for her books, and for the fact that her books were kept at different locations, comes from the period when Charles the Bold was still alive. The possibility of a library in the castle of Male has already been alluded to, but it must be said that there is no evidence for the rebuilding of a library there after the fire of 1472.⁷³

There is particularly good evidence for the space allotted to Margaret's books in the palace *Ten Walle* in Gent.⁷⁴ There, in 1475, she had a tiny room of three square metres constructed within the room where the tapestries were kept, above the small chapel of the oratory. It was made entirely of wood, "par manière dun contoir pour y mettre les livres de corronecques et autres livres".⁷⁵ There, the duchess could access current knowledge on politics, history and theology, or escape the day-to-day harsh realities, and read about far away places. However, this small space was almost certainly not where she read her books. Again, there is nothing here to suggest a library in the modern sense of the word.

Margaret's collection also has some internal evidence that she did have more than one place to store her reading materials. Both her *Livre de l'ame contemplative* and *Traités de Morale* contain the same texts by Jean Gerson.⁷⁶ The latter manuscript has a copy of Thomas à Kempis' *Imitatio Christi*, which also appeared in her *Le miroir d'humilité*.⁷⁷ These duplicates certainly suggest that Margaret kept her books in separate locations. As will be seen, these texts were amongst the most important in her collection, and she clearly wanted to be able to access them in the places she frequented most. For the period before 1477, this would have been Gent and Mons, whilst after Charles's death, Mechelen and Binche. Finally, it is certain that some of her books travelled with her. A few of the manuscripts show travel-wear, in particular *La dyalogue de la ducesse de bourgogne a Ihesu Crist*.

A 'library' in the Boudewijn Büch sense of the word is not particularly applicable to Margaret's collection. Perhaps the German *Bücherei* may be suggested as an

⁷² Dogaer, 99-111.

⁷³ C.f. Huisman, P. et al, *Male, burcht en abdij, passim*.

⁷⁴ Laporte, D. et al, *Het prinselijk hof Ten Walle*, 189.

⁷⁵ "in the manner of an office for storing books of chronicles and other books". Quoted in *ibid*.

⁷⁶ K.B.B. Ms. 9305-6, *Le livre de l'ame contemplative*, f. 7-76; K.B.B. Ms. 9272-76, *Traités de Morale*, f. 165-8. Q.v. Appendix Three, nos. 2 and 9.

⁷⁷ K.B.B. Ms. 9272-76, *Traités de Morale*, f. 55-164; Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 240, *Le miroir d'humilité*, f. 345-444. Appendix Three, nos. 9 and 20.

alternative. This hints at a less structured and certainly less institutionalised collection, but also one in which the books have been collected for their usefulness. For in spite of the doubts whether Margaret of York's collection was a library, it is possible to conclude that it was a particularly carefully compiled selection of books. There is not a single manuscript that does not fit into this collection as far as themes and ideas are concerned: indeed, together they open a window onto the intellectual preoccupations of the duchess of Burgundy.

A New Analytical Model.

Margaret of York's library has, to date, been mainly mined for a single reason, namely to delve into her psychological make-up. The content of her manuscripts was compared with the duchess' actions, and from this, conclusions were drawn about her feelings and motivations. There are some rather obvious problems with such an approach. Just as it is impossible to gauge the actual impact of the pageantry of a *Joyeuse Entrée* on onlookers and participants, so it is impossible to know the feelings of a reader, whether now or in the fifteenth century, when confronted with a particular text. This problem is exacerbated by the tendency to concentrate on Margaret's barrenness, starting from the assumption that this dominated her entire existence, followed by an attempt to rediscover this assumed obsession amongst the contents of her books.

Another, older, example of this *a priori* approach is found in the treatment given to the most famous manuscript of the collection, her *Benois seront les miséricordieux*.⁷⁸ That this manuscript has been singled out comes as no surprise. The exquisite comic-book style miniature, which shows Margaret carrying out the Seven Acts of Mercy, as usual dressed in sumptuous attire and wearing a *hennin*, is too noticeable to be ignored.⁷⁹ For Blockmans, Armstrong and Galesloot, the images in the manuscript served to enhance what they believed the duchess stood for: a pious lady, imbued with the Church's teachings on charity.⁸⁰ At first, the comparisons are striking: we do

⁷⁸ K.B.B. Ms. 9296, *Benois seront les miséricordieux*. See illustration XII, p. 233.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 1.

⁸⁰ Armstrong, C.A.J., "The Piety of Cicely Duchess of York". In C.A.J. Armstrong, *England, France and Burgundy*, 138, n. 5; Blockmans, W., "The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess", 34-5; Galesloot, 257-64.

find Margaret clothing the 'naked' and feeding the poor. She even insisted on keeping her actions quiet, totally in agreement with Scripture. In addition, it has to be noticed that it was her almoner, Nicholas Finet, who wrote *Benois* for her.

Against this interpretation may be placed some quite serious obstacles. Religion was one of the most acceptable ways in which a fifteenth-century powerful woman could express her authority. It was expected of Margaret that she display her wealth through largesse, that she show compassion for the poor and the destitute. The Church was arguably the most important component of her affinity, the primary pillar shoring up her power. Inevitably, she would try and act in accordance with its teachings. Directly relevant to this, is the author. Finet was first and foremost a servant of the Church, and, therefore, likely to have pushed its agenda. And *Benois* was in the first place a manual of how to behave. It consists primarily of sermons and hagiographies, many of which teach how to carry out the acts of mercy.⁸¹ Rather than being a reflection of the duchess' behaviour, the manuscript shows the inspiration behind her actions: it provided the intellectual foundation for her deeds.

This is further confirmed by the prominent inclusion of a *vita* of St Gertrude of Nivelles.⁸² Here the emphasis is on the importance of patronage towards the religious orders, and its result. She was a "deuote Vierge", who "fonda pluseurs eglises et edifices" in which grow up "pluseurs saintz".⁸³ This re-enforced the lessons on the patronage of religious reform which Margaret had learned both in England and from Isabella of Portugal.⁸⁴ There was a greater dynamic behind the relationship collector-collection than the model hitherto used allows us to discover. Rather than simply viewing the collection as a reflection of Margaret's activities, a new, cyclical model is being suggested here. This is based on three different elements: collector, collection, and external events. Seen in this light, the collection thus becomes the intellectual repository for Margaret's deeds, with new books added as new needs arose.

⁸¹ K.B.B. Ms. 9296, *Benois seront les miséricordieux*, f. 125^r to 150^r.

⁸² Not unusual as such, but it should be recalled that the book was written specifically for Margaret.

⁸³ "devout virgin", "founded many churches and [religious] buildings", "many saints". Ibid, f. 198^r.

⁸⁴ Particularly by the great royal example set by Henry V. Beckett, N., "Henry V and Sheen Charterhouse: the Expansion of Royal and Carthusian Ideals", *A.Cart*, 1990. For Isabella, see Sommé, M., *Isabelle de Portugal*, 461-84.

Margaret's *Les chroniques des comtes de Flandres* can serve as an example.⁸⁵ It was written by David Aubert at the request of Mary of Burgundy, who intended the book to be a present for her father.⁸⁶ However, as Charles was killed in the battle of Nancy before the book was even finished, it never reached its intended recipient. Instead, Mary gave it to Margaret of York shortly after her *Joyeuse Entrées* in Brabant in May 1477. Content-wise, there is little one may derive from the manuscript. Histories of Flanders were commonplace in the Low Countries and Mary may just have wished to present her step-mother with a fashionable present.⁸⁷ This notion is further strengthened by the book's appearance. It is particularly lavishly illustrated,⁸⁸ and Margaret had other manuscripts which show her to have been sensitive to trends in this field.

Placed within the political context in which the present was made, and set against her husband's interest in the chronicle, the manuscript's contents become rather more meaningful. Charles the Bold owned several copies of the *Chronique*, one of them with an equestrian portrait of the duke, and another illumination showing both Charles and Margaret.⁸⁹ The manuscript which Mary gave to Margaret was rather dated, ending as it did with the death of Louis of Male, and, therefore, pre-dating the Burgundian take-over in the Low Countries.⁹⁰ This seemingly strange end-date of the chronicle reveals much about this manuscript's purpose, however. When Mary gave the book, Margaret had effectively taken the reins of power of both the Burgundian dynasty and, more briefly, of the Low Countries. To achieve the unity that a successful resistance to French aggression required, Margaret had to co-opt the cities

⁸⁵ Holkham Hall, Library of the Earl of Leicester, Ms. 659, *Les chroniques des comtes de Flandres*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 22.

⁸⁶ The colophon states that this book was given after "le trespass de feu monseigneur le duc Charles". "the cruel death of my lord the duke Charles". Ibid, f. 3.

⁸⁷ All the important collections of the period possessed a copy, including the dukes of Burgundy, and Louis, *heer* of Gruuthuse. Doutrepoint, G., *La Littérature Française*, 408-9, for copies in the libraries of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless; Dogaer, J., and Debae, M. (eds), *La librairie de Philippe le Bon*, 122-3, showed that Charles the Bold had two copies, one in Dutch. For Gruuthuse's copy, c.f. Martens, M.P.J. et al, *Lodewijk van Gruuthuse*, 199.

⁸⁸ It has twenty large-scale miniatures which have been ascribed to the Maximilian Master and to the Master of Mary of Burgundy, two leading schools of illumination in the later fifteenth-century Low Countries.

⁸⁹ New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 435, *Chronique de Flandres*. C.f. Webber, P.E. and Prins, J.C., *Medieval Netherlandic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library*.

⁹⁰ Louis de Male died in 1384.

and towns into the fate of the dynasty.⁹¹ This she had achieved in part by assenting to Mary's granting of the *Groot Privilege*, on which the Estates General had insisted.⁹² This returned much autonomy to the localities and had guaranteed their co-operation against the French. The *Chronique*, which Mary gave Margaret that year, is full of examples of how to work with the cities and towns. Its main lesson is that a successful count is he whose interests coincide with those of the towns, or who had the necessary muscle to coerce them.⁹³

Thus, the circumstances of the time required Margaret to know about the history of the Low Countries; the manuscript provided her with that information; and subsequent events prove just how successfully she implemented its lessons. The cyclical model allows us to investigate all Margaret's surviving books, and to highlight the complexities which surround them. Applied to all books, a number of themes emerge which run through the collection. Taken together these create a picture of one late-medieval library, its owner, her intellectual foundations, and the north-west European world in which it came into existence.

Cultural Exchange in Margaret of York's Manuscripts.

Although Margaret moved from England to the Low Countries she would not have found a radically different cultural environment. Rarely is this as obvious as when examining the contents of her library. This reveals the strong links between the two 'countries' she lived in. Over the last few decades the contrasts between both have received more attention than their similarities.⁹⁴ The emphasis has been firmly on the cultural superiority of the Low Countries: Burgundy has become the cultural pollinator of its neighbours, particularly in the wake of Gordon Kipling's

⁹¹ C.f. Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 40. See also Part Two, p. 230.

⁹² Koenigsberger, H.G., *Fürst und Generalstaaten*, 8 ff; Blockmans, W. and Prevenier, W., *De Bourgondiërs*, 217-9.

⁹³ Holkham Hall, Library of the Earl of Leicester, Ms. 659, *Les chroniques des comtes de Flandres*, amongst others on f. 19, 22, 41 and *passim*.

⁹⁴ Amongst others Rogers, N.J., *Books of Hours Produced in the Low Countries for the English Market in the Fifteenth Century*; Barron, C. and Saul, N. (eds), *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages*; Vale, M., *The Princely Court*; Backhouse, J., "Founders of the Royal Library". In D. Williams (ed), *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 23-42. Burgundian origins have even been suggested for the ubiquitous tournament. Barber, R. and Barker, J., *Tournaments*, 132.

investigation into the Elizabethan Renaissance.⁹⁵ The content of Margaret of York's *Bücherei*, and, in particular, the context in which this came into existence, challenges that assumption.

Perhaps no other manuscript does this with as much conviction as Brussels Royal Library MS 5557.⁹⁶ Amongst musicologists, this has become one of the most famous books of the fifteenth-century Low Countries.⁹⁷ It is the only source for many of the motets by Giles Busnois, one of the leading exponents of Netherlandic polyphony, who lived at Margaret's court during Charles the Bold's Alsace campaign, and in the wake of the disaster of January 1477.⁹⁸ More importantly from the perspective of Anglo-Burgundian cultural interactions and Margaret of York's role therein, is the fact that it contains the music that was, in all likelihood, played during the wedding festivities in Brugge in 1468.⁹⁹ Such was the status of English music in the supposedly musically far superior Low Countries, that Charles the Bold decided to include some of his favourite settings of the mass by English composers such as Walter Frye. Charles admired English composers, and employed several in his chapel, amongst others, Robert Morton.¹⁰⁰ The strong representation of English composers and music at the Burgundian court predated Margaret's arrival, but she clearly boosted its prestige even further.

The strong mixture of English and Low Countries music is not reflected in Margaret's *Bücherei*, which did not contain any English books. One of the most noticeable aspects of Margaret of York's *Bücherei* is its mono-lingual character: all her manuscripts are in French, with the exception of a little Latin in her church

⁹⁵ Kipling, G., *The Triumph of Honour*.

⁹⁶ K.B.B. Ms. 5557. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 40.

⁹⁷ C.f. Wegman, R.C., "New Data Concerning the Origins and Chronology of Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Manuscript 5557", *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, XXXVI, (1986); Kenny, S.W., "Origins and Chronology of the Brussels Manuscript 5557 in the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique", *Revue Belge de musicology*, VI, (1952); Curtis, G.R.K., *The English Masses of Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 5557*.

⁹⁸ Higgins, P.M., *Antoine Busnois and Musical Culture in Late Fifteenth-Century France and Burgundy*.

⁹⁹ Andrew Kirkman and the Binchois Consort, *A Marriage of England and Burgundy*, Hypernion Records, CDA67129.

¹⁰⁰ Kenny, S.W., *op.cit.*, 94-5. For the continental admiration for English music during the second half of the fifteenth century, c.f. Letts, M. (ed and transl.), *The Travels of Leo of Rozmital*, 46, 48, 54 and 58. The musical establishment at the English court was also more substantial than in Burgundy. Bowers, R., "Aristocratic and Popular Piety in the Patronage of Music", *Studies in Church History*, XXVIII, (1992), 201.

books.¹⁰¹ The possibility that her English books were lost in the fire at Male has already been hinted at, and it would, indeed, be very odd if Margaret had possessed no English texts at all. Her proficiency in the language is beyond doubt. One may question much of what Caxton wrote in the prologue to his *The Recuyell of the History of Troye*, most of which can be dismissed as clichés.¹⁰² The passage in which he talks of how Margaret found “defaute in myn Englissh” and “comanded me to amende” is unusual enough to pay it some attention, however.¹⁰³ Did he want to flatter his patron? This is of course possible, but Margaret’s command of English is further confirmed by other sources. In 1477, for example, she wrote a dedication in English to Sir John Donne in a copy of *Les faits d’Alexandre le Grand*, which she gave him as a present.¹⁰⁴ When Maximilian sent her to England as his ambassador in 1480, one of the reasons would surely have been her fluency in English.

Strangely enough, Maximilian learnt his English from his English longbow men and not from Margaret. She did teach him Dutch, however, as he testified in his semi-autobiographical *Weisskunig*, in which he wrote that he learned it from “ain alte furstin”, a direct reference to *Madame la Grande*.¹⁰⁵ As is the case with English manuscripts, all traces of books in Middle Dutch in her collection are lacking. Yet one of her presents was written in that language. The prayer book she gave to the Brigittines in Dendermonde even contained an original Middle Dutch poem, *Christus’ schouderwonde*, which indirectly makes the duchess a patron of Middle Dutch poetry.¹⁰⁶ It does not prove that she also read the language, although it would be rather odd if she could not. The aforementioned *Groot Privilege* stipulated the use of Dutch where this was customary. Given that Margaret was always careful to pander to the sensibilities of the towns of the Low Countries, one may safely assume she

¹⁰¹ Latin appears in the following manuscripts: Cambridge, St John’s College Library, Ms.H.13, *Breviary*; Metz, Bibliothèque Municipale, Formerly Ms. 1255 (Salis 104), *Book of Hours*; Switzerland, unknown location, *Book of Hours or horarium*. Q.v. Appendix Three, nos. 14, 16 and 21.

¹⁰² Caxton drew upon a strong Burgundian tradition when he compiled his imprint. C.f. Cheyens-Condé, M., “L’Épopée troyenne dans la <<librairie>> ducale bourguignonne au Xve siècle”. In J.-M. Cauchies (ed), *A la cour de Bourgogne*.

¹⁰³ Crotch, W.J.B., “The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton”, *EETS*, CLXXVI, (1928), 5. C.f. Hellinga, L., *Caxton in Focus*, 95, for three other possible Caxton imprints in Margaret of York’s collection: *Méditations sur les psaumes pénitentiels*, *Cordiale* and a *Breviary* in the Sarum Rite. Q.v. Appendix Three, nos. 41 and 42.

¹⁰⁴ B.L. Royal Ms. 15 D IV, *Les faits d’Alexandre le Grand*, f. 219. See Appendix Three, no. 29.

¹⁰⁵ *Weisskunig*, 19.

¹⁰⁶ Gent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Hs. 205, *Brigitine Prayer book*, II, f. 44^r to 45^r. See Appendix Three, no. 27.

was not illiterate in Dutch.¹⁰⁷ Charles the Bold and Mary both were not, although it has to be said in this respect that Margaret's surviving letters, including those to Dutch-speaking Mechelen and Brielle, are all in French.¹⁰⁸

Several of the books in Margaret of York's collection further support the notion that most of Europe was still a single cultural unit during the fifteenth-century, that Christendom may have died politically, but not culturally.¹⁰⁹ Her books may be divided into several distinct themes. Both music and history have been mentioned, and there was a strong theological element. No other theme in her *Bücherei* underlines the cultural unity of fifteenth-century (northern) Europe with such clarity as that of eschatology.¹¹⁰ Her books dealing with the end of the world and with the fate of the soul all draw strongly on the traditions of the British Isles, and would have been familiar to the duchess before she set foot in the Low Countries. It is, therefore, not too fanciful to suggest that this familiarity contributed significantly to their presence in Margaret's collection. The most splendid of Margaret's eschatological books, *Les visions du chevalier Tondal*, is also her most famous.¹¹¹ Compiled in the scriptorium of David Aubert, the leading copyist in the Low Countries,¹¹² and

¹⁰⁷ C.f. Armstrong, C.A.J., "The Language Question in the Low Countries: the Use of French and Dutch by the Dukes of Burgundy and Their Administration". In J.R. Hale et al, *Europe in the Late Middle Ages*.

¹⁰⁸ The monolingual character of a library of a multi-lingual collector may also be seen in the case of Engelbrecht II van Nassau. Those of both Edward IV and Louis Gruuthuse are, however, marked by their multiplicity of languages. Korteweg, A.S., *Boeken van Oranje-Nassau*, 11; Lemaire, C., "Lijst van Handschriften". In Mertens, M.P.J. et al, *Lodewijk van Gruuthuse*, 198-9. For the collection of Edward IV, c.f. Sutton, A.F. and Visser-Fuchs, L., "Choosing a Book in Late Fifteenth-Century England and Burgundy". In C. Barron and N. Saul, *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages*, 84-6.

¹⁰⁹ Gordon Kipling, making amends for his earlier single-direction theory, pointed to the common themes in the entry ceremonials in England, France and the Low Countries. Kipling, G., *Enter the King*, 11-2. In the field of literature Alexandra Johnston pointed to the "common horde of source material". Johnston, A.F., "The Continental Connection: A Reconsideration". In A.E. Knight (ed), *The Stage as Mirror*, 7. Recently, the exhibition *De eeuw van Van Eyck. De Vlaamse Primitieven en het Zuiden 1430-1530*, part of Brugge, Culturele Hoofdstad van Europa 2002, showed once more how themes and concepts were common currency throughout later medieval Europe.

¹¹⁰ C.f. Goff, J. le, *The Birth of Purgatory*; Owen, D.D.R., *The Vision of Hell*; Emmerson, R.K. and McGinn, B. (eds), *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*.

¹¹¹ Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 30, *Les visions du chevalier Tondal*. It has given rise to no fewer than two publications and a colloquium. Kren, T. and Wieck, R.S. (eds), *The Visions of Tondal from the Library of Margaret of York*; Kren, T. (ed), *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and The Vision of Tondal*.

¹¹² He may also have translated the text into French from Latin. Wieck, R.S., "Margaret of York's Visions of Tondal". In T. Kren (ed), *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and The Vision of Tondal*, 119.

illuminated by the incomparable Simon Marmion,¹¹³ the whole is an exercise in beauty. Aesthetics clearly played a major role when Margaret ordered this book in the Gent scriptorium.

Yet it is the content which is of greater interest. The manuscript contains the morality tale written in Regensburg by an Irish monk named Marcus around 1149, entitled *Visio Tnugdali*.¹¹⁴ It relates the adventures of an Irish knight, known variously as Tnugdale, Tungdale or Tondal, whose extremely sinful life was condemning him to hell. However, unlike most, the knight was given a taste of what was to come, and what his options were. Whilst committing yet a further sin when trying to squeeze money from bankrupt debtors, Tondal suffers a seizure as he sits at their dining table. In a coma for four days, he travels to the otherworld, where he witnesses the horrors of hell, and, more briefly, the delights of heaven. Such was the popularity of these tales in medieval Europe that its inclusion amongst the books of any late fifteenth-century collector need not cause surprise. In the case of Margaret of York, however, there are simply no precedents as to how she discovered the story in the first place. There is no evidence for any interest in this story, neither amongst the avid book collectors of the Burgundian dynasty,¹¹⁵ nor amongst her English family.¹¹⁶

The source for Margaret's interest, then, needs to be looked for elsewhere. The libraries of several Low Countries' aristocratic families held copies of the Tondal story.¹¹⁷ In addition, it was exceptionally popular in the cities of the Netherlands.¹¹⁸ This once more illustrates the close cultural as well as political links between the cities and the aristocracy of the area. Other material in her collection shows Margaret of York to have been more than usually in touch with the culture of the cities and towns of the Low Countries. This cannot merely have been the result of residing in

¹¹³ It is the only known Tondal manuscript with illuminations. Charron, P. and Gil, M., "Les enlumineurs des manuscrits de David Aubert". In D. Quérueil (ed), *Les manuscrits de David Aubert*, 95.

¹¹⁴ For a discussion of the original text, c.f. Owen, D.D.R., *op.cit.*, 27-37.

¹¹⁵ Doutrepoint, G., *Inventaire de la Librairie de Philippe le Bon*.

¹¹⁶ Bennet, H.S., *English Books and Readers 1475 to 1557*, 97.

¹¹⁷ Kren, T., "Introduction". In T. Kren (ed), *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and The Vision of Tondal*, 18. See for example in the library of Jan II of Nassau and Maria van Loon, the parents of Engelbrecht II. Brinkman, H., "The Composition of a fifteenth-century aristocratic library in Breda", *Quaerendo*, XXIII, (1993), 180.

¹¹⁸ Bellemans, A.T.W., *Tondalus' Visioen. Naar het Gentsche Handschrift*, 8-10. C.f. www.literatuurgeschiedenis.nl/teksten.asp?ID=11

them: her predecessors and other members of the ducal family also tended to live in towns. Margaret's close ties with the urban religious institutes of the Low Countries are a more probable conduit. Her links with the convents and churches of Gent were particularly close in the mid-1470s, the period when she commissioned her *Tondal* at Aubert's Gent atelier. In this respect, it must also be observed that in Gent the story had a greater currency than almost anywhere else in Europe.¹¹⁹ Calling to mind David Aubert's linguistic skills, it is not beyond the bounds of reason to assume a Middle Dutch prototype.

The illuminator, Simon Marmion, personalised Margaret's copy of the *Tondal* story to a striking extent. Both the duchess and Charles the Bold appear on the first miniature, flanking *Tondal* as he has his fit at the dinner table.¹²⁰ Clever touches have brought the story up to date, for example the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece which *Tondal* is wearing around his neck. On the following miniature *Tondal* is stretched out on the floor surrounded by the duke and his courtiers who are looking on in horror.¹²¹ Margaret is kneeling on the floor beside him, her hands clasped in prayer. The closeness of the metaphysical and the real world in late medieval Netherlandic art finds its expression in the multitude of devils hovering over the collapsed *Tondal*, ready to repay him for his sins on earth. All this takes place within a recognisable architectural setting, possibly hinting at what such dining halls looked like in Margaret's own palaces.¹²²

The illuminations and text are not just an indicator of the physical world of the duchess. Jacques le Goff called *Tondal* an excellent guide to the mental geography of medieval man.¹²³ It offered a glimpse behind the unknown, showing just what the afterlife looked like. In Margaret's copy this did not make for happy reading. Of the twenty miniatures and accompanying chapters, only three deal with heaven, whilst fifteen dwell with almost sadistic precision on the pains and torments of hell. The text made clear what most medieval, and, indeed, later Christians, thought: heaven is

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹²⁰ Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 30, *Les visions du chevalier Tondal*, f. 7. Hughes was the first to identify the woman at the banquet table as Margaret of York, an identification which is beyond doubt. *Hughes*, 66. See illustration XXXII, p. 321.

¹²¹ Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 30, *Les visions du chevalier Tondal*, f. 11. See illustration XXXIII, p. 322.

¹²² Adding to our picture of Margaret's architectural world as portrayed in Part Two.

¹²³ Goff, J. le, *op.cit.*, 112.

more difficult to get into than hell. The Tondal story was heavily influenced by yet another text in Margaret's *Bücherei*, Honorius of Autun's *Elucidarium*.¹²⁴ His sombre vision on the world has been aptly described by Gurevich as 'gloomy and joyless'.¹²⁵ It offered little in the way of comfort to the duchess, who, especially through her avid collecting of indulgences, showed herself very concerned with the fate of her soul. According to the *Elucidarium*, however, neither indulgences nor anything else would help her much. In its predestinistic mode, it allowed access to heaven only to good priests, religious and peasants. If the *Elucidarium* was taken at face value, the reader was tied to "einen vorherbestimmten Weltablauf", with no chance of escape.¹²⁶

This fear of death and the fate of the soul was, of course, not something specific to the Low Countries. Although the *Tondal* story was particularly popular in the Netherlands, it also circulated widely in the rest of Europe. As Palmer has shown, it occurred from Iceland to Spain and from Ireland to Belarus.¹²⁷ In England, too, it is found frequently, often in combination with other, similar, material in one cover.¹²⁸ This is also the case with Margaret of York's copy. Bound in with *Tondal* was a copy of a less well-known text, *La vision de l'ame de Guy de Thurno*.¹²⁹ This is another visionary text, telling the tale of the Veronese merchant, Guy, whose soul comes back from purgatory to visit his wife. He discusses with her and a number of clergy how he can reduce the time he has to spend waiting to go to heaven. In what must have made for happy reading for Margaret, Guy manages to fulfil a number of tasks set for him, and thus significantly reduces his time in purgatory.

The inclusion of the *Thurno* story in the same volume as her *Tondal* was no accident.¹³⁰ After the almost relentless predestinistic gloom of the *Tondal*, hope

¹²⁴ K.B.B. Ms 9030-37, *Bible moralisée*, or *Traité ascétique*, or *Recueil ascétique*, f. 161-222. The *Elucidarium* is one of the key texts in the collection, at the root of many of the ideas current within other manuscripts. Its influence on medieval Europe was considerable, and it is likely that this knowledge propelled Margaret to acquire the text.

¹²⁵ Gurevich, A., *Medieval Popular Culture*, 154.

¹²⁶ "a predestined end of the world". Sick, M., *Der "Lucidarius" und das "Buch Sidrach"*, 230.

¹²⁷ Palmer, N.F., >>*Visio Tnugdali*<<. *The German and Dutch Translations and Their circulation in the Later Middle Ages*, 1.

¹²⁸ E.g. B.L. Ms. Royal 17 B xlili. This combines a *Vision of Tundale* with a copy of *Mandeville's Travels* and a *Vision of William Stranton*, a travelogue to St Patrick's Purgatory.

¹²⁹ Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 31, *La vision de l'âme de Guy de Thurno*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 7.

¹³⁰ The folios start at 45, where those of *Les visions du chevalier Tondal* end with 44. Both manuscripts are the same size, were illuminated by Simon Marmion, and came from the scriptorium

required to be restored, and one cannot think of a better story to do so than *Thurno*. Here Margaret could read that it was not just the prayers of the living that helped souls in Purgatory, but that these souls could actively help themselves.¹³¹ It is the very opposite of the predestination of the *Tondal* or *Elucidarium*. In these two stories, we witness the mental dialogue of the duchess of Burgundy, reflecting the literary dialogue in many of her books.¹³² A substantial number of her texts can be placed either under the heading ‘Augustinian predestination’, or under ‘Free Will’. This juxtaposition is evidence for her intellectual curiosity, and one that was to be shared by several generations of Christians to come.

It is important, in this respect, to recall that the duchess personally ordered both the *Tondal* and *Thurno* texts together, and also had the *Elucidarium* copy specially made. It is frequently argued that behind this type of reading hovers the spirit of austere clergy. That is far from easy to determine with respect to the collection of Margaret of York. As will be seen, there was a strong Carthusian imprint on her reading, combined with a particularly vibrant interest in the Observant Dominicans and Franciscans on her part. Here one is faced by a chicken-and-egg situation: which came first, Margaret’s interest in this rather stern brand of Christianity, or the influence of its clerical adherents on her? It is often said that this type of spirituality was the realm of widows, with Cicely Neville and Margaret Beaufort frequently cited as examples. However, at the time when Margaret of York ordered these books, Charles the Bold was still very much alive. Piety, even austere piety, was a requirement of powerful late medieval women, but not all were remembered as pious: Margaret was.

Guy de Thurno is not the best known of medieval stories. In the Low Countries it had very little currency, but this was not the case in England. There it was rather popular and even appeared in a cheap printed edition as *The Gast of Gy*.¹³³ This is usually seen as an indicator of its continued popularity, but begs the question why.

of David Aubert shortly after one another in 1474. I would like to thank Susan L’Engle, Assistant Curator of the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, for all her assistance.

¹³¹ This was most unusual. C.f. Goff, J. le, *op. cit.*, 306.

¹³² One may also think of the two books compiled for Margaret by Nicholas Finet, *Benois* and the *Dyalogue*, in which he confirms the promise of the New Testament that men shall be judged for their actions on earth.

¹³³ Duffy, E., *The Stripping of the Altars*, 79. C.f. Logarbo, M.L., “The Gast of Gy”. In A.C. Bartlett, and T.H. Bestul (eds), *Cultures of Piety*.

This is, after all, a very Italian story. However, in manuscript form one frequently encounters it together with the stories centred on the Irish pilgrimage location of St Patrick's Purgatory.¹³⁴ The pilgrimage was still very popular, particularly in the British Isles, and the stories around it appear in Margaret of York's *Bücherei* as well.¹³⁵

The fact that St Patrick's Purgatory was popular across Europe makes it difficult to point to England as the likely place where Margaret first heard of the pilgrimage. However, there are several contextual elements within Margaret's manuscript which do point to an English origin for her interest in the story. In the first place, Margaret's *Purgatoire de Sainte Patrice* is accompanied by a treatise by Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, not an author with a wide currency on the Continent.¹³⁶ The association of the story with the diocese of Lincoln may have been accidental, but the original version of the Patrick's Purgatory was written in Latin by Henri, a Cistercian monk of the abbey of Saltrey, who claimed to have heard it from a certain Gilbert, monk of Louth.¹³⁷ The former abbey was in the diocese of Lincoln, whereas Saltrey was in the vicinity of Fotheringhay, where Margaret spent most of her childhood.

The Irish location of the story, Lough Derg in Ulster, provides further ties with Margaret's English youth, with her residence in Ireland noticed previously.¹³⁸ Lough Derg, to many a distant, slightly unreal place, may, therefore, have been recognisable to the duchess of Burgundy. This interest in St Patrick's Purgatory must have been enhanced by her general interest in pilgrimages, as well as by its wider popularity in the Low Countries. In fact, its popularity in both places mirrors the situation of the Tondal story, and makes it much more difficult to ascribe Margaret's interest to one single influence. The aforementioned pan-European cultural continuum is illustrated particularly well by the Patrick's Purgatory tradition.

William Caxton, next to Margaret of York *the* example of an Anglo-Burgundian, relates how he discussed the site in Lough Derg with the mayor of Brugge, Jan van

¹³⁴ Ibid, 67. C.f. B.L. Cotton Ms. Vesp. A. vi, or B.L. Add.Ms. 34,193.

¹³⁵ K.B.B. Ms 9030-37, *Bible moralisée* or *Traité ascétique* or *Recueil ascétique*, f. 223-242.

¹³⁶ Ibid, f. 255-269. C.f. McEvoy, J., *Robert Grosseteste*, *passim*.

¹³⁷ Picard, J.-M. and Pontfarcy, Y. de, *Saint Patrick's Purgatory*, 14.

¹³⁸ Griffiths, A.F., *The Reign of King Henry VI*, 419-22; Johnson, P.A., *Duke Richard of York 1411-1460*, 146.

Banste, in whose house Margaret stayed upon her arrival in the Low Countries in 1468.¹³⁹ Neither the printer nor the mayor was much impressed by the entrance to Purgatory: Caxton thought that its miracles were of “auncyent tyme”, and Van Banste saw “none other thyng but as afore is sayd”. Margaret may well have shared their opinion. A monk from the reformist Windesheimer Congregation in the Low Countries which Margaret supported, visited the place and went to Rome to complain that it was a sham. The pope duly shut it down, although this did not last too long.¹⁴⁰

The inclusion of the story of St Patrick’s Purgatory shows the complexity of Margaret’s collection, as well as of its influences. There was definitely a strong English input in her collection, but this was enhanced by similarly strong trends from the Low Countries. It is simply impossible to assess how she read this material. Her collection of eschatological texts may safely be assumed to have been informed by an interest in the afterlife, but they have a ‘popular’ as well as a theological element. On a less elevated level, there is a clear interest on the duchess’ part in the miraculous. Yet this does not prove that she also believed this material. If she did not actually believe the stories, if they were read as entertainment, then the assumed influence of the ‘stern clergy’ certainly becomes a moot point.

Margaret of York’s Book Collection and the Mixed Life.

When Margaret of York landed in Sluis in 1468 to begin her life in the Low Countries, she found not only a recognisable literary tradition, but also a familiar mystical and religious world. The spiritual aspirations of many of Burgundy’s aristocratic women were no different from those in England, or, indeed, anywhere else in Europe. Just as her own sister, Ursula, joined the Brigantine Order, so the daughters of Jan II de Glymes, or the bastard daughter of Louis, *heer* of Gruuthuse, joined religious houses in the Low Countries.¹⁴¹ At court, whether in England or in

¹³⁹ *Hommel*, 38, who calls him Guy de Baenst.

¹⁴⁰ Haren, M., “The Close of the Medieval Pilgrimage: the Papal Suppression and its Aftermath”. In M. Haren and Y. de Pontfarcy (eds), *The Medieval Pilgrimage to St Patrick’s Purgatory. Lough Derg and the European Tradition*.

¹⁴¹ See Part One, p. 54 and n. 137.

Burgundy, Margaret was surrounded by Dominican confessors.¹⁴² The tradition of pious widows was also a strong one on both sides of the North Sea: both Cicely Neville and Margaret Beaufort in England, and Isabella of Portugal in Burgundy, spent their final years in semi-monastic retirement.¹⁴³

Naturally, one may expect a strong intimation of Margaret's own devotional interests in her book collection, although one must immediately point to the discrepancies in behaviour between Margaret and the women just mentioned. Both Luc Hommel, and, more recently, Myriam Cheyns-Condé, have suggested that Margaret also lived the life of a nun, or even that she became a Beguine.¹⁴⁴ This was certainly not the case. Her political involvement in the affairs of both state and dynasty remained strong until her death in 1503, and there is no hint that she followed the path of her mother or her mother-in-law. Her life was punctuated by a daily regime of devotional practices, but in this she was no exception. The same has been reported of Philip the Good, whose posthumous reputation is anything but characterised by piety.¹⁴⁵

The example of Margaret Beaufort is arguably a more useful one. Like Henry VII's mother, Margaret of York retained an enormous amount of influence after she had been widowed. *Madame la Grande* resembled the *King's Mother* in that she combined an interest in the affairs of the world with an interest in the affairs of the soul.¹⁴⁶ Her book collection reflects this interest, and shows the intellectual foundation thereof. Her manuscripts contain a large number of texts with instructions on how to live the mixed life, on how to engage with the world whilst maintaining a high level of devotional practice. There is a possibility that Margaret's interest in this

¹⁴² Averkorn, R., "Landesherren und Mendikanten in den burgundischen Territorien". In D. Berg (ed), *Könige, Landesherren und Bettelorden*.

¹⁴³ For Isabella see Sommé, M., *Isabelle de Portugal*, 456-60; for the household of Cicely Neville when widowed see *A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household*, , 37-9; for Margaret Beaufort see the fine biography by Jones, M.K. and Underwood M.G., *The King's Mother*, *passim*.

¹⁴⁴ The idea that Margaret became a Beguine stems possibly from the fact that between 1578 and 1595 the Beguines of Mechelen lived in her former palace in the Keizerstraat. The notion that her house in the Voochtstraat had belonged to the Beguines when she bought it, is also wrong. She bought it from Hieronymus Lauweryn, a knight in the service of Philip the Fair. *Hommel*, 302; Cheyns-Condé, M., "Expression de la piété", *CEEB*, XXIX, (1989), 49. For the houses in Mechelen c.f. Installé, H. et al, *Historische Stedenatlas van België*, 116 and 222-3.

¹⁴⁵ Vaughan, R., *Philip the Good*, 127-9.

¹⁴⁶ C.f. Underwood, M.G., "Politics and Piety in the Household of Lady Margaret Beaufort", *JEH*, XXXVIII, (1987).

type of literature was nurtured at her mother's court. Cicely certainly read a substantial amount of books dealing with the mixed life. Unfortunately, the evidence for this comes from when she was rather old, and Margaret no longer in England.¹⁴⁷

Cicely's source for the mixed life was the easily accessible *Ladder of Perfection* by Walter Hilton,¹⁴⁸ but Margaret tended to go for the theological heavyweights. Her own sources were mainly from the Low Countries and France. The most important of these were from the pen of Jean Gerson, bishop of Cambrai, and chancellor of the University of Paris.¹⁴⁹ Gerson's view of mysticism has

“its own peculiar and original character; it is that of an eminent and almost impeccable master. His mysticism in its essence is an experimental knowledge of God which, by love, one perceives in himself”.¹⁵⁰

Gerson had been an outspoken enemy of the house of Burgundy and of England, and the duchess' interest in him was, therefore, purely on a theological basis. His mystical theology, and his insistence that one may find God through knowledge, greatly appealed to Margaret. In addition, even towards the end of the fifteenth century, he was still the main guarantor of orthodoxy,¹⁵¹ his works being published in Cologne in 1483.¹⁵² The duchess may have learned about him from her confidant and political ally, Henri de Glymes, a successor to Gerson as bishop at Cambrai, or perhaps from books in the library of her late father-in-law, Philip the Good. Gerson's *Traicte de mendicite spirituelle* and *La montaigne de contemplacion* appeared twice in Margaret's *Bücherei*, indicative of the importance she attached to them.¹⁵³

The duchess' need for Gerson's stamp of orthodoxy becomes clear from some of the other material on the mixed life in her collection, written by men of less solid theological reputations. These works are far less subtle than Gerson in their elaboration on the mixed life. Her almoner, Nicholas Finet, for example, has her ask

¹⁴⁷ *A Collection of Ordinances*, 38.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ For Gerson's works, see Gerson, J., *Oeuvres Complètes*, Glorieux, P. (ed), VII, l'oeuvre française.

¹⁵⁰ *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1911 ed. S.v. “Jean de Charlier de Gerson”.

¹⁵¹ Prof. Miri Rubin confirmed the use of Gerson as a guarantor of orthodoxy by fifteenth-century women, in a conversation during her presentation of the Denys Hay Memorial Lecture at the University of Edinburgh.

¹⁵² *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1911 ed. S.v. “Jean de Charlier de Gerson”.

¹⁵³ K.B.B. Ms. 9272-76, *Traité de Morale*, and in K.B.B. Ms. 9305-6, *Le livre de l'ame contemplative* which is also known, significantly, as *Jean Gerson, Opera*.

Christ in his *La dyalogue de la ducesse de bourgogne a Ihesu Crist* how she can live such a life “au millieu du monde et maison des princes en la compaignie dez noblez”.¹⁵⁴ The unknown scribe of the *Traités de Morale* was equally explicit. This work was intended, he wrote directly above Margaret’s crest on the first folio, “premierement pour les simples curez et prestres”, but also for those striving for the religious life “dans la monde”.¹⁵⁵ Is this Margaret speaking, or her spiritual advisors? This question, broached before, is not brought any nearer an answer by the mystical material in her book collection. This is highlighted by the inclusion of Thomas à Kempis’s *Imitation de Jesus Christ*.¹⁵⁶ Thomas’s work was already a classic of the mixed life before he died in 1471, and he was still living in his Zwolle convent when his work was included in Margaret’s *Traités de Morale*. The *Imitation* was everybody’s favourite, not just the instructional material of clerics.

Was Margaret of York trying to live the mixed life, as her *Bücherei* would suggest? This is another difficult question to answer. Her English counterpart, Margaret Beaufort, had the good fortune that her spiritual advisor, St John Fisher, left an account of her actually carrying out the advice she read.¹⁵⁷ This does not exist for Margaret of York. There are some other indications that she found the advice at least challenging.¹⁵⁸ Margaret Beaufort wished to be remembered as a pious widow, and was depicted as such on the painting commemorating her patronage of St John’s College, Cambridge, where she is wearing sombre widow’s black, and a white headscarf. Depictions of Margaret of York never display such sobriety, although it must be noted that they almost invariably show her before she was widowed. They always show her in the extravagant dress of the Burgundian court, including the *hennin*, the long pointy hat which so annoyed the religious commentators of the period. This is even the case in the same books which emphasise the need for humility and restraint for those striving to live the mixed life, as in her *Traités*

¹⁵⁴ “in a worldly environment and in the house of princes and the company of nobles”. B.L. Add.Ms.7970, *La dyalogue de la ducesse de bourgogne a Ihesu Crist*, f. 24^v.

¹⁵⁵ “firstly for simple curates and priests”, “in the world”. K.B.B. Ms. 9272-76, *Traités de Morale*, f. 9^v.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, f. 55-164.

¹⁵⁷ Fisher, St. J., *A Mornyng Remembraunce*.

¹⁵⁸ For the difficulties around the implementation of the mixed life, c.f. Swanson, R.N., *Religion and Devotion in Europe*, 125-6.

Morales, now in the Bodleian.¹⁵⁹ Not that this is necessarily an indicator of piety. The saintly Henry VI was always depicted in his royal robes. Earl Rivers and St Thomas More both wore hair shirts under their attire, but this is never visible where they are portrayed.¹⁶⁰ Once more, there is simply no way of telling whether this was the case with Margaret of York.

Chivalric demands, and the demands of Burgundian pageantry, also occasionally clashed with the precepts of the mixed life. Rather than withdrawing from worldly activities such as tournaments, Margaret actively sought them out. In 1470, for example, she attended one of the famous *Pas d'Armes de la Dame Sauvage*, which had been organised by Charles the Bold's chamberlain, Claude de Vauldray.¹⁶¹ De Vauldray had based his tournament on the Arthurian cycle, and, to a lesser extent, on René d'Anjou's *Livre du Cuers d'Amours Espris*, hardly the introspective atmosphere prescribed by the mixed life. Incidentally, confirming Margaret's interest in the ideals of chivalry in spite of their absence amongst her surviving books, her participation contrasts sharply with the attitude of Isabella of Portugal, of whom Olivier de la Marche wrote with astonishment that he never saw her at any tournament.¹⁶² Does this mean the texts on the mixed life were merely entertainment? Highly unlikely, just that the duchess occasionally judged the demands of the world to be more pressing than those of the soul.¹⁶³

The Dominican and Carthusian Influence on Margaret of York's Intellectual Development.

Margaret of York's involvement with tournaments would certainly not have carried the approval of her Dominican confessors. The Order's main theologian, St Thomas Aquinas, had argued that,

¹⁵⁹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 365, f. 115. C.f. Chesney, K., "Notes on Some Treaties of Devotion Intended for Margaret of York (MS. Douce 365)", *Medium Aevum*, XX, (1951).

¹⁶⁰ I would like to thank Prof. Goodman for these examples.

¹⁶¹ Cartellieri, O., "Der pas de la Dame Sauvage", *Historische Blätter*, I, (1921), 47-54.

¹⁶² Olivier de la Marche, II, 124-6.

¹⁶³ This giving of precedence to the worldly rather than the metaphysical is rather different from the divergence between reading the contemplative and living it, which Raue thought she could distinguish, and which I argued for in a previous publication. Clearly, the evidence suggests otherwise. Raue, S., "De bibliophile belangstelling van drie Bourgondische hertoginnen", *Millennium*, II, (1994), 118; Schnitker, H., "Een bibliotheek ontsloten", 11.

“Further, the exercise of a lawful thing is itself lawful, as is evident in scientific exercises. But warlike exercises which take place in tournaments are forbidden by the Church, since those who are slain in these trials are deprived of ecclesiastical burial. Therefore it seems that war is a sin in itself”.¹⁶⁴

Thomas based his judgement on the ban on tournaments of the Third Lateran Council, more observed in its breach than its observance.¹⁶⁵ This must have led to the occasional penance after confession, for which Margaret possessed a fine manual. These were the occasions when Margaret of York would have turned to her copy of *La somme de perfection*, a manuscript constructed around the text of the Dominican friar Laurent du Bois’s *La somme le roi*.¹⁶⁶ Du Bois wrote this manual for confession for the French king Philip III. *La somme de perfection* is more than a manual on how to confess, however. When he copied the manuscript, David Aubert ensured that Margaret could use it as a catechism, complete with the Ten Commandments, the Pater Noster, the order of the mass, and several instructions for the good of the soul.¹⁶⁷ *La somme* was the book to which Margaret could turn to recall the basic skills required by a member of the universal Church. As such, it bears the imprint of the Dominican Order, not just through its content, but also through its intentions.

Despite the loss of the household accounts, two of Margaret’s Dominican confessors are known by name. In 1475, the year in which she acquired *La somme de perfection*, Guillaume le Vasseur died.¹⁶⁸ He had been her confessor since her wedding in 1468, although he is not mentioned by Olivier de la Marche. It is probable that Vasseur took over from whoever had accompanied Margaret from England shortly afterwards. After a gap of three years, we encounter Jehan de Brayna, the prior of the house in Brussels, as Margaret’s next confessor, a post he would keep until his death in 1490.¹⁶⁹ The strong influence of Isabella of Portugal on her daughter-in-law is once more noticeable here. She had founded the Brussels friary, and de Brayna was possibly Portuguese himself. Margaret inherited other

¹⁶⁴ Fathers of the English Dominican Province (eds and transl.) *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas, Prima Secundae Partis, Whether it is always sinful to wage war? Objection four.*

¹⁶⁵ Canon 20 of the Council. *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1911 ed. S.v. “Third Lateran Council (1179)”.

¹⁶⁶ K.B.B. Ms. 9106, *La somme de perfection*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 3.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 208-12, 201^v, 232-3 and *passim*. C.f. Tentler, T.N., *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation*, chapter two.

¹⁶⁸ Meyer, R.P.A. de O.P., *op.cit.*, lxvi.

¹⁶⁹ De name ‘Brayna’ also appears as ‘Braezna’ and as ‘Van Braliën’. *Ibid.*, 370.

Portuguese personnel from her predecessor. Vasco de Lucena, a famous humanist and translator, would serve Margaret until her death, and her secretary, Fernando de Lisbonne, had also previously worked for Isabella.¹⁷⁰

Following her mother-in-law's example, Margaret became an important patron of the Observant Dominicans. In 1473, two years before she ordered the *La somme de perfection* from David Aubert, she had given a very large donation to the famous friary in Gent.¹⁷¹ Most of this went to the construction of a completely new library at the convent, a large building that, uniquely amongst Margaret's building projects, still stands.¹⁷² Did she also donate books? Unfortunately, protestants who destroyed the library in the sixteenth-century, threw the books into the river in front of the friary.¹⁷³ She did give vestments, and it may be recalled that these were frequently accompanied by books.¹⁷⁴

Overshadowing the Dominican presence in Margaret's library is the material inspired by the Carthusians. The enormous prestige of the Order allowed it to have a profound influence on the development of female spirituality during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth centuries. This has been explored within the wider context of female spirituality and textual practices in late medieval England and Margaret of York's books show her to have been a child of her time.¹⁷⁵ The impact of the Carthusians on Margaret's reading was at its most direct via the previously encountered *Benois seront les miséricordieux*, which was copied by her almoner, the secular cleric Nicholas Finet, but which was written by the Carthusian monk, Gerard Haghen of Breda.¹⁷⁶ He occupied a cell in the Charterhouse at Hérinnes in Hainault, without a shadow of doubt the duchess' favourite monastery.

¹⁷⁰ Q.v. Appendix Two, p. 379.

¹⁷¹ Jonghe, B. de, O.P., *Belgium dominicanum*, 29; Leboucq, C., *l'ancien couvent des Dominicains à Gand*, 17, n. 1; Arts, J., O.P., *De Predikheren te Gent*, 27. The inscription is given in Blommaert, P. et al, *Graf- en Gedenkschriften der Provincie Oost-Vlaenderen, Tweede Reeks, Kloosterkerken*, I, 9.

¹⁷² She laid the foundation stone on the Feast of the Magi, 1474. Simons, W. et al, *Het Pand*, 86.

¹⁷³ For the destruction of the library, c.f. Vaernewijck, M. van, *Van die beroerlicke tijden in de Nederlanden en voornamelijck in Ghendt*, I, 113-4 and 116-7. C.f. Thomas, A.H., O.P., "Boekenbezit en boekengebruik bij de Dominikanen in de Nederlanden vóór ca. 1550". In R. de Keyser et al, *Studies over het Boekbezit en Boekengebruik in de Nederlanden vóór 1600*, 417-75.

¹⁷⁴ Blommaert, P. et al, *op.cit.*, 9; for the donation of books and vestments, see Waulde, G., *La Chronique de Lobbes*, 472-3.

¹⁷⁵ Renevey, D. and Whitehead, C. (eds), *Writing Religious Women*, part two.

¹⁷⁶ Hendrickx, F. (ed), *De Kartuziers en hun klooster te Zelem*, 101.

After a first visit in 1472, the duchess returned as frequently as she could. Her generosity to the house knew no bounds and she paid for at least two of its cells to be maintained.¹⁷⁷ The monk, Ammonius, who lived in one of the cells Margaret financed, wrote a chronicle in which he praises her generosity. When she died in 1503, he wrote her name in the necrology, adding wistfully that she and her charity were going to be sorely missed. Her heart was placed in a lead casket and was buried in the Charterhouse, and was lost like the rest of her remains during the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁸ She also brought distinguished relatives to Hérinnes. Mary of Burgundy accompanied her several times, and in the early stages of his rather mercenary campaign against France in 1475, Edward IV visited with his sister.

This shared interest in the Carthusians, and possibly even in their spirituality, is reflected in one of the books which Margaret presented to Edward in 1480.¹⁷⁹ The copy she gave was by the Carthusian monk, Ludolph of Saxony, his *Vita Christi*, described as being amongst the most popular ascetic works of the late middle ages.¹⁸⁰ Although Christocentric devotions were not the specific domain of the Carthusians, they were instrumental in moving the devotional activities of the faithful towards Our Lord, and away from the saints during this period. From the Carthusians it seeped through into amongst many others the Brethren of the Common Life, helping Thomas à Kempis to write his *Imitatio Christi*, which we already encountered amongst Margaret's texts. Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi* was an especially appropriate present to give to an English king. The English royal family had long been involved with the Carthusian Order, culminating in the foundation of Sheen by Henry V in 1415.¹⁸¹

Besides *Benois*, there are several other manuscripts in Margaret of York's collection in which Carthusian texts may be found. Perhaps the most important of these is by another contemporary author, Jacob van Gruitrode's *Speculum*

¹⁷⁷ Beelstens, A. and Ammonius, J., *Chronique de la Chartreuse de la Chapelle à Herne-lez-Enghien*, 42; C.f. Grauwe, J. de, *Historia Carthusiana Belgica*, 73-4.

¹⁷⁸ Delvaux, H., "begravingen in de kartuize van herne". In H. Delvaux et al, *De Kartuziers te Herne*, 35-48; Robinson, W.C., "Margaret of York", *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, XXXVIII, (1913), 580. See also Drouot, H., "Les restes de Marguerite d'York et de Charles le Téméraire", *ADB*, IX, (1937).

¹⁷⁹ For the context of the gift, q.v. Scofield, C.L., *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth*, II, 283-9.

¹⁸⁰ B.L. Ms. Royal 16. G. III, *Vita Christi* and *La vengeance de la mort Jésus-Christ*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 12.

¹⁸¹ Allmand, C.T., *Henry V*, 274-5, 238 and 276.

saecularium, book four of his *Speculae omnis status humanae vitae*.¹⁸² The Latin was too much for the duchess, for her copy was the French translation by Jean Miélot of 1451. The Liègeois prior was not one for pulling his punches, and his ‘mirror’, a genre that was becoming very popular amongst the well-to-do in the Netherlands, at times must have made uncomfortable reading for the duchess, or for any layperson.¹⁸³ He began his work with a quote from Ecclesiastes, to make sure his readers knew what he thought of the world outside the Charterhouse: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity”. This he followed up with seven chapters, one for each day of the week, allowing the reader to look at himself in the mirror which Gruitrode had created for him. In book four, he deals with three main themes: the *contemptus sui*, sin and penance, and *contemptus mundi*.¹⁸⁴

As is to be expected from a prior of a Charterhouse, and then particularly of one who had seen as much bloodshed as he had, Gruitrode had a firm distaste of body and world.¹⁸⁵ In this he could be most graphic. Using the well-trodden *topos* of the monastic moralist, he taught that the body was a corrupt and vile entity, born out of foul semen, thrown into the world covered in slime, where it will have to spend the rest of its time in exile in a region of sadness and fear. Was there a positive message to be found in this work? Naturally this was not all gloom and doom; Gruitrode was no copy of Honorius of Autun. In Gruitrode’s scheme of things, God’s grace was freely given to all who did good. This was clearly the message of the Carthusians in the Low Countries: do good and you will be rewarded in heaven, if not the results will be the horrors of hell, which the Carthusian authors, including Gruitrode in this tract, could describe so well. That this injunction influenced Margaret’s charitable activities may be taken as read. Yes, she conformed to a model of a powerful woman when feeding the poor or clothing the naked, but she also lived out the injunctions of the spiritual teachers whom she consulted in her books. Their impact on her intellectual mindset, and on her actions, is beyond doubt.

¹⁸² Bibliothèque Municipale, Valenciennes, Ms. 240, f. 211-227. This is part four of his *Specula omnis status humanae vitae*. C.f. Bange, P., “De Specula omnis status humanae vitae van Jacobus van Gruitrode: vijftiende eeuwse standenspiegels”, *OGE*, LVII, (1983), 134-79. For Gruitrode, c.f. Verdant, P.M., O.F.M., “Jacobus van Gruitrode, Kartuizer (d. 1475)”, *OGE*, V, (1931).

¹⁸³ It is useful in this respect to recall the popularity of his writings in the Low Countries, appearing in print as early as 1483. Hendrickx, F. (ed), *op.cit.*, 226-8.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁸⁵ Grauwe, J. de, *Prospographia Carthusiana Belgica*, 162.

The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess?

A view of the world as full of fear and sadness was one with which Margaret of York could concur. Her life was lived against an almost perpetual background of war and loss. In her youth, both her father and one of her brothers were killed in battle,¹⁸⁶ and she witnessed the brutal pillaging of Ludlow Castle by her father's enemies.¹⁸⁷ Her husband was also killed in battle, as was her brother, Richard III. The person she loved most in her life, Mary of Burgundy, died after falling from her horse during a falcon hunt, aged only 25, leaving behind two small children. In this light, perhaps, we should not regard her reading Gruitrode as an act of morbidity at all. His message about God's grace, and his notion that the world is only a temporary exile, must have provided comfort, indeed, hope for the future.

This is not to argue that her life was lived in a Huizinga-esque world of doom-laden sentimentality. On the contrary: her pleasure in life seems almost to have increased with every loss suffered. The other great survivor of the pre-1477 Burgundian Netherlands and fellow book-lover, Anthony, the Great Bastard, visited his sister-in-law with almost religious frequency right until her death in 1503, mostly to sit in at her lavish banquets. At times, he was accompanied by Margaret's greatest political ally and close friend, Maximilian I.¹⁸⁸ Their friendship is attested by the already mentioned *Weisskunig*, and survived even Maximilian's growing detachment from the affairs of the Netherlands after his coronation as Roman King, and his second marriage to Bianca Sforza. He continued to regard Margaret as his 'mother', she him as her son, as may be seen from the inscription she wrote in the book she gave him as her wedding present.¹⁸⁹ In addition, Mary had given her what she had been unable to provide Charles with: children.

¹⁸⁶ Riley, H.T. (ed), *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland*, 456.

¹⁸⁷ That is if she was raised by Cecily. "the toune of Ludlow, longyng thane to the duk of York, was robbed to the bare walles, and the noble duches of York vnmanly and cruelly was entreted and spoyled". Davies, J.S., "An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI", *Camden Society, Old Series, LXIV*, (1855); *Documents connected with the History of Ludlow and the Lords Marchers*, 41.

¹⁸⁸ Gachard, L.-P., "Itinéraire de Maximilien. Archiduc d'Autriche", *Collection des voyages des souverains de Pays-Bas*, I, 3.

¹⁸⁹ Madrid, Biblioteca del Escorial, Ms. c.III.22, f. 1-98, *In Trogi Pompei historias libri xlv*.

Margaret's affection speaks from this inscription in her own hand, an inscription which is mirrored by the way Maximilian signed his letters to Margaret. Compare "Voster lealle mere Margarete" with "Vostre léal filz, Maxi¹⁸⁵". "Lettre de Maximilien à Marguerite d'York", *BCRH*, II, (1851), 276-277.

This childlessness of the duchess has long provoked the interest of historians, including those who have studied her book collection. That her *Bücherei* reflects a certain sadness about her lack of success in bearing children is clear, although it must have been tinged with hope. After all, the duchess' mother had failed to bear children for around fourteen years, and when Charles died in 1477, they had been married for only eight-and-a-half years.¹⁹⁰ To use her infertility to suggest an unhappy marriage is, therefore, difficult to sustain. There can be little doubt about Margaret's and Charles's marital fidelity. The latter was so unusual in this period of openly acknowledged bastards, that it led Vaughan to speculate that Charles was homosexual.¹⁹¹ This says perhaps more about Vaughan than about Charles. There is not a shred of evidence that Charles was not heterosexual, with his supposed dislike of women being based on the far from reliable Wielant, who is the only contemporary to mention it.¹⁹² Charles was many things, but he was not a philanderer.¹⁹³

Margaret's books have a bearing on this, for they provide evidence of her and Charles's belief in the sacramental nature of marriage. One of the three miniatures devoted to heaven in her *Tondal* shows the place reserved for those 'who kept their

¹⁹⁰ Margaret's parents married circa 1424, and their first child was not born until 1438. It did not survive its first year. A poem recalls the relief felt at the time,

"Sir, aftir the tyme of longe bareynesse
 God first sent Anne, which signyfieth grace,
 In token that al her hertis hevynesse
 He, as for bareynesse, wold fro hem chace.
 Harry, Edward, and Edmonde, each in his place
 Succeedid, and aftir tweyn doughtris came,
 Elizabeth and Margarete, and aftirward William.

John aftir William nexte borne was,
 Which bothe passid to Godis grace.
 Georgè was next, and after Thomas
 Borne was, which sone aftir did pace
 By the path of dethe to the hevenly place.
 Richard liveth yit; but the last of alle
 Was Ursula, to Hym whom God list calle".

Quoted in Hammond, P.W. and Sutton, A.F., *Richard III, the Road to Bosworth Field*, 23. The first-born was actually a daughter, called Joan. Cokayne, G.E., *The Complete Peerage*, XII, 905.

¹⁹¹ Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, 159.

¹⁹² *Wielant*, IV, 108-13.

¹⁹³ There is some argument as to whether Charles had any bastards, Vaughan, following Bergé, believed he did, but in that case Charles kept their existence quiet, which was unusual. Bergé, M., "Les bâtards de la maison de Bourgogne, leur descendance", *L'intermédiaire des genealogists*, LX, (1955), 395-6.

belief and loyalty to their marriage'.¹⁹⁴ Mindful of how difficult it was to get to heaven, at least according to some of the authorities Margaret was reading, this must be significant. It should also be borne in mind that both duchess and duke were portrayed at the start of this book. Margaret's concern about Charles's soul, which she expressed in the very frequent requiem masses said for him at her own expense in churches and abbeys, both in Margaret's dower and beyond, further illustrates that this was not the cold marriage some wished to see.¹⁹⁵ Surrounded by her stepfamily, loyal friends, and the poor who mourned her so much when she died, Margaret was hardly lonely, even after Charles's death. In the end, her loneliness was nothing more than a *Sehnsucht* for children.

Political Renovatio.

The one element, which underpins most of the manuscripts in Margaret's book collection is the big medieval debate on the relative merits of predestination and Free Will. This has already been alluded to, and besides the indirect references in various manuscripts there are several books in the duchess' collection which deal directly with this question. Denys Hay, in his *Annalists and Historians*, pointed out that there were two major texts championing the two viewpoints of this debate: Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* in the Free Will corner, and St Augustine's *City of God* in that of predestination.¹⁹⁶ These two works were to influence writings on the subject for centuries, indeed well into the eighteenth century, when the Enlightenment finally put a halt to their reign.¹⁹⁷

There are some pointers to where Margaret of York placed the emphasis. Clearly, when a library omitted one of the two from its collection, there is a strong indication of where the preference of the owner lay. Louis, *heer* of Gruuthuse, had both, making it a little difficult to judge.¹⁹⁸ Although Margaret did have a copy of the *Consolation of Philosophy* and not of the *City of God*, this does not mean she was

¹⁹⁴ Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 30, *Les visions du chevalier Tondal*, f. 37. See Illustration, XXXIV, p. 323.

¹⁹⁵ Cheyns-Condé, M., "Expression de la piété", 54.

¹⁹⁶ A wider exploration of this may be found in a.o. Gibson, M. (ed), *Boethius. His Life, Thought and Influence, passim*.

¹⁹⁷ Pickering, F.P., *Augustinus oder Boethius?*

¹⁹⁸ Lemaire, C., "Lijst van Handschriften", 198.

persuaded by St Augustine. There is the possibility that the work is simply lost, enhanced by the fact that she did possess other, lesser works by Augustine.¹⁹⁹ The circumstances under which she was living when she ordered her copy of Boethius's masterpiece do shed some light on this matter. She acquired the manuscript in 1476, which was in many respects the most difficult of Margaret's life.²⁰⁰ Her husband's wars were increasingly alienating the Low Countries from Burgundian rule, an alienation further augmented by his unpopular centralisation policies. In this climate, Margaret of York had to use all her considerable diplomatic skills to steer Burgundy away from an ever-present threat of rebellion. It was the only time in all the crises that she faced as duchess and dowager of Burgundy when she had no support from at least some cities and towns.

In the midst of this she bought Boethius's *Consolation*.²⁰¹ The book's function as comforter of the sad or worried has long been acknowledged, but in this case, another, more important element was at play. Margaret ordered only volume five. Unless one is willing to view this as a coincidence, unlikely in the light of the expense, this must be significant. Book five of the *Consolation* deals in its entirety with the tension between Divine Providence and Free Will, and could be regarded as an elaborate attempt at reconciling the two. Boethius has Providence arguing that there is no such thing as chance, and leads on with his reflection on the possibilities of a Free Will within such a framework. He concluded by arguing that the course of history was predetermined by its very nature, but that at the same time most events can be shaped by man's free will. Human activity, according to the *Consolation*, is only very occasionally futile. For Margaret of York, faced within a year of this purchase with leading Burgundy out of what appeared to be an inevitable destruction, this must have seemed comforting. When the 'inevitable' did not happen, she would have additional cause to embrace Boethius's thesis: human activity could alter events.

¹⁹⁹ A.o. in *Benois*, and in the now lost Saint Petersburg, Imperial Library, Ms. fr. 0.v1.2, *Contemplation pour attirer la personne*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 18.

²⁰⁰ For the background, c.f. Vaughan, R., *Charles the Bold*, final chapter.

²⁰¹ Jena, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. El. F. 85, *De la consolation de philosophie*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 5.

Although religious in overtone, the *Consolation* cannot be called a devotional book. As such, it formed part of a substantial non-devotional element within Margaret of York's collection. These non-devotional books have in the past been rather ignored. Dogaer, Hughes, Cockshaw, Blockmans, Smeyers as well as her biographers agreed that hers was a 'library' filled with devotional tracts, even a slightly old-fashioned one. This is somewhat surprising. Of the twenty-eight books surviving from her collection, no fewer than four deal with history, geography or other, non-devotional subjects. When we consider the folios, which was, after all, what Margaret was paying for, their share is even more striking. Out of a total of 4,274 surviving folios, no fewer than 1,129 were dedicated to secular subjects, or well over 26 percent. And two of her three largest tomes were histories.

The histories in the duchess' *Bücherei* may reveal more about her interest in the role of Free Will in a providential world. The oldest history in her collection was that by Dante's contemporary, Brunetto Latini.²⁰² It was probably a good thing that Dante's *Divina Comedia* was unknown north of the Alps, for Dante had placed Latini in hell, which was not a good recommendation as far as Margaret of York would have been concerned.²⁰³ Untroubled by Dante, however, she was more than happy to purchase Latini's *Li livres dou trésor*. As with Boethius, this is a manuscript that reflects the duchess' selectivity when buying texts for her collection, for she bought only book one of the *trésor*. As this is mainly a history and geography, and as she opted not to buy the book of the *trésor* containing Aristotle's *ethics*, it is clear that she was not just interested in devotional or ethical works.²⁰⁴

Latini's book deals with the history of the world. It commences with the Creation, and describing the histories of the Old Testament, Troy, and the Romans; he follows on with the Incarnation and the foundation of the Church. The history of Christendom is given, with emphasis on the Carolingian Empire, ending with the arrival of Charles of Anjou in Naples. As this event took place some two centuries

²⁰² Saint Quentin, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 109, *Li livres dou trésor*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 11.

²⁰³ Dante did, however, recommend Latini's book. Latini, addressing Dante, is made to say the following,

"Siatì raccomandato il mio 'Tesoro,'
Nel quale io vivo ancora; e più non cheggio."

Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia*, I, Inferno, Canto XV, 190.

²⁰⁴ C.f. Carmody, F.J., *Li livres dou trésor de Brunetto Latini*.

before her own time, Margaret clearly did not want the *trésor* to provide her with a contemporary history. The most recent past was the preserve of the *Grand Rethoricien* of Burgundy, in Margaret's case Olivier de la Marche, who spent much of the period after 1477 in her vicinity. For the events up until the latter part of the previous century she took Jean Mansel's *La Fleurs des Histoires* from Philip the Good's library.²⁰⁵ Again she wanted only one particular part, book four, which, like Latini's *trésor*, deals with history and geography. Mansel's story took her up to Edward III's campaign in Brittany of 1341. Her local history questions were, in turn, answered by the already mentioned *Les chroniques des comtes de Flandres*.

Although there was an encyclopaedic element to both the *trésor* and the *Fleurs des Histoires*, they were, nevertheless, primarily histories. It is often suggested that the Christian notion of time which underpinned both works makes for linear history: after all, it starts with Creation and ends with the Last Judgement. This was certainly the case with the other history contained within Margaret's manuscripts, that by Robert Grosseteste.²⁰⁶ Grosseteste's work is known as *Chasteau d'Amour*, but this is a title that was given in the 1940s and is highly misleading.²⁰⁷ The first line of the treatise, *Carmen de creatione*, reflects its content much better. The bishop's history is less concerned with events than with their place in God's providential scheme. He also leaves no doubt as to where human history is going to end: via the birth of the Antichrist and the Apocalypse at the Last Judgement.

All medieval history was ultimately constructed upon this deterministic model. Ever since Eusebius of Caesarea, the Christian vision of time had prevailed.²⁰⁸ The Eusebian model is implicitly present in both histories in Margaret's *Bücherei*. By starting with the Creation and by punctuating their histories with the great events of Christian time, Incarnation, Redemption, the start of the Age of Grace, and by lacing them with the terminology of Scripture, both Latini and Mansel stay close to Eusebius. Their histories ended in the recent past, thereby leaving the cycle of

²⁰⁵ K.B.B. Ms. 9233, *La Fleurs des Histoires*. This copy was mentioned in the inventory of the library of Philip the Good of 1467.

²⁰⁶ K.B.B., Ms. 9030-37, *Bible moralisée or Traités ascétique or Recueil ascétique*.

²⁰⁷ Thomson, S.H., *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste*, 82.

²⁰⁸ C.f. Bartelink, G.J.M., "De kerkhistoricus Eusebius van Caesarea", *Spiegel Historiae*, XVI, (1981).

Christian history incomplete, but the eschatological base on which their time-lines are constructed is latently present anyhow.

However, there was a second, less obvious element at play in the histories Margaret read. Much space was reserved within the linear framework of Christian history for more cyclical patterns.²⁰⁹ This may be seen in the so-called 'national' histories of the period. Rome was founded by Aeneas, and was, therefore, the renewed Troy. Aeneas's great-grandson, Brutus, in turn came to Britain, where the whole *renovatio* element was played out again. Echo's of similar thinking may be found in the Third Rome theory of fifteenth- and sixteenth century Muscovy, or in the perennial attempts to revive the Empire in the west from Charlemagne to Margaret's great-grandson, Charles V. It was also at the back of Charles the Bold's quest for a crown. The title of king of Lotharingen, after the Carolingian middle kingdom, had floated before the eyes of the *Grand duc d'Occident*. This was, therefore, not just theory to Margaret of York.

Moreover, the Christian framework gave added meaning to political *renovatio*. The Incarnation provided humanity with a second chance. This imprint of the redemptive aspect of Christianity worked very powerfully upon the Middle Ages. It is in this, and the fact that Christ's death on the cross was seen as an act of free will, that the ultimate dominance of the latter over predestination has to be sought. That Margaret believed in this may be clear from her actions: anyone with a fatalistic outlook would not have played the role she did in 1477, 1484, and 1488, when the duchess was faced with the sort of crisis that could easily have proved fatal.

Christian Renovatio.

The cyclical element in the histories in Margaret of York's book collection have led us to the intellectual foundation of her *Bücherei* and, indeed, of her life. When matched with her interest in how to live a devout, ethical life, and her enormous effort in reforming convents, abbeys and complete religious orders, this becomes even clearer: Margaret of York was steeped in the spirit of Christian *renovatio*. Gary Dickson identified social peace and Church reconstruction as the tools for such a

²⁰⁹ C.f. Hay, D., *Annalists and Historians*, chapters 2 to 4.

renovatio.²¹⁰ Both are much in evidence in the duchess' life. To these aspects of *renovatio* may be added the achievement of internal peace and sobriety.²¹¹ The 'individual sense of sin' of the duchess is clear from her books, her efforts to achieve this personal peace, although not perhaps sobriety, equally so.

The inclusion of certain authors in Margaret's collection offers more evidence for her association with the *renovatio* of the fifteenth-century Low Countries. Her interest in St Bernard of Clairvaux should especially be mentioned in connection to this. St Bernard's impact on almost all Netherlandish author's concerned with internal and external *renovatio*, from Ruusbroec in the fourteenth century to Anna Bijns in the sixteenth, has long been acknowledged.²¹² He was equally a source of inspiration for Margaret of York, and a statue of the great Cistercian abbot stood guard over her tomb in the church of the Observant Franciscans in Mechelen. On it was written one of the aims of her life: she wished to be remembered as "Religionis reformationis pietat".²¹³

Besides St Bernard, other writers attest to *renovatio* being the great underlying motivation of Margaret of York's life. The French poet Rutebeuf's *Ave Maria*, from her *La somme de perfection*, with its characteristic emphasis on an harmonious society carries its own significance in this respect.²¹⁴ The role he ascribes to the Virgin Mary in solving the troubles of one driven beyond hope of redemption, may be seen to be typical of the *renovatio* concept of the later medieval Low Countries.²¹⁵ It has particularly strong echoes in the Middle Dutch *Mariken van Nieumeghen*, which was written shortly before Margaret's arrival in the Netherlands, and which, again like Rutebeuf's *Ave Maria*, in many ways epitomises the idea that renewal can be achieved, even by those who are imperilled. The latter aspect gains in importance when one recalls Margaret of York's efforts to reform prostitutes.²¹⁶ Here, too, the political aspect of *renovatio* described above may be recognised.

²¹⁰ Dickson, G., "Revivalism as a Medieval Genre", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, LXI, 147.

²¹¹ Plas, M. van der, "Inleiding". In M. van der Plas (ed), *Religieuze Poëzie der Nederlanden*, 7.

²¹² Mertens, Th. et al, *Boeken voor de eeuwigheid, passim*.

²¹³ Munck, J.J. de, *Provincie, Stad ende District van Mechelen*, II, 2-3.

²¹⁴ K.B.B., Ms. 9106, *La somme de perfection*, f. 247-8.

²¹⁵ For Rutebeuf and Latini as utopian thinkers, c.f. Smith, F.S., *Secular and Sacred Visionaries in the Late Middle Ages*, 89-91 and 140.

²¹⁶ C.f. Bousmar, E., "Marguerite d'York et les putains de Mons", *CEEB*, XLIV, (2004).

The *Bücherei* of Margaret of York, then, is a complex affair, layered with the notion of *renovatio* as its binding theme. The devout duchess, whom earlier scholars believed they could detect therein, is most certainly there, but not quite in the placid way in which they thought. Devotional behaviour could take on all sorts of forms, and this becomes clear from Margaret's collection. Blockmans identified in particular saints in the manuscripts invoked for childbirth, but other categories may be constructed: saints associated closely with *renovatio*, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, or saints who reminded her of England, such as the brief *vita* of St Edmund the Martyr, culled from the *Legenda Aurea* and attached to her *Apocalypse*.²¹⁷

As seen, Margaret's books contained more than just devotional treatises, in marked contrast to what has frequently been claimed. Even with her eschatological works, some doubt may be expressed as to how devotional these were. As seen, the end of the world was not just a religious phenomenon, but also an historical one. And in the light of the exceptionally rich illuminations in this type of manuscript in her collection, with no fewer than 78 miniatures in her *Apocalypse*, we cannot even exclude that in part these works were intended as works of art more than anything else.²¹⁸

Finally, standing on the shelves, or stored in boxes, besides the profound were the mundane. Both Mansel's and Latini's books contained extensive sections on the geography of the known world. That Margaret used these to gain some information about the known world is certain. Both volumes are paginated and indexed; both were well-used, in particular the passages on geography.²¹⁹ These works would, nonetheless, have given Margaret a rather sketchy notion of what the world looked like. Two brief examples suffice to illustrate this. Mansel describes the county of Holland, which Margaret knew well, as follows,

²¹⁷ New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 484, f. 120-4. The East Anglian location of St Edmund's tomb, as well as his royal status, make this inclusion even more striking.

²¹⁸ Gurevich pointed the cathartic element in such works: watching the horrors of hell helped the medieval viewer to conquer his or her own fears. Gurevich, A., *op. cit.*, 107-8.

²¹⁹ Particularly striking is the passage on the pilgrimage churches in Rome, which recalls New Haven, Yale University Library, Ms. 639, *A Guide to the Pilgrims Churches of Rome*. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 15.

“Ollande est une petite prouince delez la riuere du rin ou la rin entre la mer prochaine de Brabant”.²²⁰

This is followed with a short list of the county’s towns, its language, its trade and produce, all in the same matter of fact tone; all equally brief. The further away places are even less well described. Here is Latini on Libya: “De libie est une tresgrand region ssite en airffaque”.²²¹ He gives little more than that wild animals were plentiful there. That may well have interested Margaret of York, who, as seen in part two, had a rather large *menagerie*. For the animals’ sake it is to be hoped that she paid as little attention to Latini’s bestiary as she did at times to the exhortations of the moralists in her collection. Some of his notions are, to put it mildly, rather strange. Surely Margaret’s pet monkey would have objected to being placed in a baby’s cot to have some company, not to mention the reaction of the child!

All this has little to do with the earnest admonishments of Nicholas Finet, Jean Gerson’s theology, the intricate philosophy of Boethius, or the *renovatio* of *La somme de perfection*. However, such a rich mixture only reflects the varied interests of the book’s owner. Margaret of York, far from being a ‘just’ a devout woman, showed throughout her rich life that she could turn her rather formidable intellect to many different occupations. These included monastic reform and devotional activities, but also the pursuit of political power, of aesthetic beauty, and of familial happiness. Margaret’s *Bücherei* is, in the end, a mirror of the personality who collected its manuscripts. She definitely placed a high value on her books: their rich illuminations attest to this. She may well have been at her happiest reading, which would have provided some escape from the world. Quite possibly, she would have agreed with the statement written on a painting of Thomas à Kempis, preserved in Zwolle:

"In omnibus requiem quaesivi et nusquam inveni nisi in een Hoecken met een Boecken".²²²

²²⁰ “Holland is a small province across the river Rhine, where the river Rhine enters the sea next to Brabant”. K.B.B., Ms. 9233, *La Fleurs des Histoires*, f. 19^r.

²²¹ “Libya is a very large region situated in Africa”. *Ibid*, f. 17^r.

²²² “In all things have I sought rest, and found it not, except in little nooks and little books”. Gertruidenberg Parish Church, portrait, presumed to be of Thomas à Kempis. Q.v. Essex, Br. E., O.P., “The Saint of the Mont: Thomas à Kempis, *Hawkesyard Review*, V, (1913), 177. C.f. the depiction of Thomas in the library, O.N.B. Cod. 1576, f. 9^r.

***Renovatio* and the Power of Prayer.**

The Confraternity of the Rosary.

Two other elements of Margaret of York's *renovatio* drive stand out: the devotion to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows and to the Rosary. They do so because they survived, and because the Roman Catholic Church utilised them as few others in its attempt to stem the tide of dissent during and after the sixteenth century. As such, they helped to halt the flood of the Reformation, and were, in turn, deployed in Catholic missions outside Europe. They originated in the fifteenth century alongside monastic reform, and as part of a vigorous religious climate. They were also part of a wave of new devotions. Their novelty has caused some confusion. Huizinga believed that religious novelties were no problem in the fifteenth century.²²³ On the contrary. Reformers were not concerned about the multiplication of devotions, as Huizinga believed, but about introducing new, and possibly unorthodox, cults.

When the *Wunderblut* of Wilsnack became famous and began to attract large numbers of pilgrims, it could be described by an Augustinian friar as an "irrational outbreak of disorder".²²⁴ Only the approval by the episcopate and a number of recognised orthodox authorities helped overcome such criticism. This is reflected in the case of the two devotions under consideration. Their main promoters had to write long tracts against their detractors, who argued that they were introducing novelties. These apologias were sent to bishops and to Rome, to back the claim to orthodoxy of these new inventions, which, interestingly, were presented as long-standing cults that needed renewal.

It was precisely in these new cults that the greatest vitality of late medieval religion may be found. They formed part of a wave of new religious ideas, all presented as *renovatio*, which included the writings of the Carthusians, individual contributions such as that of Thomas à Kempis, the attempts to introduce observancy, and the great

²²³ Huizinga, J., *op.cit.*, 160.

²²⁴ C.f. Zika, C., "Hosts, Processions and Pilgrimages", *Past and Present*, CXVIII, (1988), 57.

proliferation of lay involvement.²²⁵ The latter aspect in particular, is reflected in the Rosary and the Seven Sorrows devotions, and, incidentally, shows Margaret of York's concern to spread *renovatio* beyond religious orders to a wider audience.

Few devotions of the Catholic Church have had such a confusing development as that of the Rosary.²²⁶ It has been attributed to St Dominic, to the Carthusians, the Brigittines, and to influences as diverse as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.²²⁷ What is less contentious is the influence and importance of the Rosary. To the Catholic Church of the sixteenth century and beyond, the string of beads, divided into five chaplets of ten, became one of the most potent symbols of its continued validity. It found its way to Ireland and Gaelic Scotland, where the challenge of Protestantism was strong.²²⁸ In France, in 1557, the young Felix Platter from Switzerland saw the Rosary being worn as a statement of denominational identity.²²⁹

Old enemies were not forgotten either. Paul V attributed the vital naval victory over the Ottomans at Lepanto to the Rosary devotion, and instituted the Feast of the Rosary in gratitude. In the internal reformation of the Church, Charles Borromeo instituted Rosary confraternities in every parish in his diocese of Milan.²³⁰ Finally, the cult bolstered the missions outside Europe. Marrying the late medieval devotion with the equally medieval pre-occupation with Prester John, the Jesuits managed to carry it to Ethiopia, where its status as a Catholic emblem was such, that all rosaries were destroyed when the Jesuit missionaries were expelled in the middle of the seventeenth century.²³¹ In Japan, converted nobles wore rosaries around their necks, again as an indication of confessional allegiance.²³²

Clearly, this devotional practice was very much a modern statement, yet it grew up in the circle of the 'old-fashioned' Margaret of York. From the beginning, the Rosary as it developed in the later fifteenth-century was very much a Dominican enterprise,

²²⁵ Baker, D., "Old Wine in New Bottles", *Studies in Church History*, XIV, (1977), xiv.

²²⁶ I would like to thank Fr Bede Bailey, O.P., librarian of the English Dominican Province, for his assistance with this. For an excellent survey, c.f. Winston-Allan, A., *Stories of the Rose*.

²²⁷ Amongst many Lescher, W., O.P., *Evidence of the Rosary Tradition*.

²²⁸ "A Phaidrín". In Watson, E. (ed), *Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore*. I owe this reference to Dr. Joseph Flahive.

²²⁹ Ladurie, E. Le Roy, *De eeuw van de familie Platter*, 314-5 and 346-7.

²³⁰ *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, 1936 edit., S.v. "Rosaire".

²³¹ Caraman, P., S.J., *The Lost Empire*, 147-8.

²³² Boxer, C.F., "Portuguese Influence on Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries", *Japan Society*, XXXIII, (1961), 51.

or, to be more precise, an Observant Dominican enterprise.²³³ The restoration of regular observance was one of the harbingers of the religious ferment that was to grip Europe in the sixteenth century, a reform *avant la lettre*. It was particularly marked amongst the mendicant orders, which, as seen, enjoyed Margaret of York's special patronage.²³⁴ As with the reformers of the next century, the fifteenth-century movement for the regular observance harked back to a golden age: regular observancy was not considered to be an invention.

The institution of the Confraternity of the Rosary was part of this drive to restore the glories of a faded past. Although there was no evidence that St Dominic had instigated the devotion of the Rosary, he was credited with its invention during the fifteenth century.²³⁵ His involvement was a figment of the imagination, invented for good reason as shall be seen, but invented, nevertheless.²³⁶ Michael Francisci, one of its main instigators, even claimed to have traced the Rosary back to St Bede!²³⁷ The publisher, Gerard Leeu, who reworked Francisci's book on the Rosary, and published it in Dutch, put it in no uncertain terms,

“uut welke men trecken mact, dat te preken of te vermanen anderen menschen om te lesen dit of dese broederscap in te gaen, en *is gheen nieuwichheit* op te brengen, mer dat out is ende wijltijts vergheten is, in sekeren steden *die devocien te verneuwen*”.²³⁸

The linkage between the introduction of observancy and the Rosary devotion was frequently made explicit in contemporary tracts. An early sixteenth-century text from the so-called Burgundian library, for example, shows two Dominican friars involved in the reform of a convent and imposing the *claustrum*, whilst, at the same time, ordering the nuns to pray the Rosary on a daily basis.²³⁹ From the earliest stirrings of

²³³ An in-depth study of the Rosary may be found in Winston-Allen, A., *op.cit.*

²³⁴ For the observancy movement amongst the Dominicans, c.f. Hinnebusch, W.A., O.P., *op.cit.*, 240-2 and 229-30.

²³⁵ Bollandists, *Acta Sanctorum Augusti*, I, 563. It may be of interest to note that amongst the hagiographies in Margaret of York's collection, was a *vita* of St Dominic. K.B.B. Ms. 9296, *Benois seront les miséricordieux*, f. 125^r to 150^r. Q.v. Appendix Three, no. 1.

²³⁶ Luther dismissed St Dominic's supposed involvement with the Rosary as fantasy. Luther, M., *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, V, 683.

²³⁷ Francisci, M., *Quodlibet de veritate fraternitatis rosarii*, f. 64.

²³⁸ “from which one may conclude, that to preach or persuade other people to enter this confraternity, is no novelty, but it is old and since forgotten, [it is correct] to renew this devotion in certain towns”. Leeu, G. (ed), *Speculum rosarium Jhesu et Mariae*, f. 65. Italics mine.

²³⁹ Willems, J.F., “Een referyn van twee pateren die reformeren woudden een nonnen clooster”, *Belgisch Museum*, IX, (1845).

the observancy movement in the Low Countries, the Burgundian dynasty had played a major role in its promotion. Philip the Good and Charles the Bold had attended the meeting of Dominican friars in the Low Countries at which the observant *Congregatio Hollandica* was erected on 9 October 1464, in Lille.²⁴⁰ This created an umbrella under which the reform-minded Dominican houses in the Low Countries and beyond could shelter from the displeasure of their less rigorous confreres, and from the envy of the secular clergy.²⁴¹ That this event should have occurred in Lille was appropriate. The house of Burgundy had long shown its patronage to the Dominicans in the town, where the friary had been founded with money donated by John the Fearless in 1403.²⁴²

The reasons for the support given by the Burgundian dukes to this reform movement were complex: it will no longer do to claim, as De Meyer did, that it was merely a political expedient.²⁴³ This is not the place to examine the interaction between religious orders and the house of Burgundy, for which the intricacies of Margaret of York's relationship with the Church, highlighted previously, may serve as an example. Her involvement with the Dominican house in Gent may be called to mind, as well as her close association with the Dominicans from Isabella of Portugal's foundation in Brussels. As with most members of the house of Burgundy, hers was far from a passive devotion to the Order of Preachers. She attended the provincial meetings of the *Congregatio Hollandica* on no fewer than four occasions: in Lille in 1475, Haarlem in 1476, Gent in 1477, and again in Gent. in 1494.²⁴⁴ Not only did she show the continued support of the dynasty for what the observant Dominicans were trying to achieve, she also impressed upon the friars her own strong desire for continued reform.

This had practical implications, political as well as religious. It brought Margaret some very powerful allies from the Church, who were obliged to her for her support to their cause. Few will have had such influence as the inquisitor, Jacob Sprenger. This Dominican is now most famous for his co-authorship of the *Malleus*

²⁴⁰ Meersseman, G., O.P., "La réforme des couvents d'Ypres et de Berghes-Saint-Winoc 1457-1515", *AFP*, VII, (1937), 193.

²⁴¹ For the hostility of the secular clergy, c.f. Arts, J., O.P., *op.cit.*, 137.

²⁴² Marseille, J., "Le couvent des Dominicains de Lille de sa Foundation au milieu du xv^e siècle", *AFP*, XL, (1970), 95.

²⁴³ Meyer, R.P.A. de, O.P., *op.cit.*, 101.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 74-75, 82 and 204.

Maleficarum, or *Hammer of Witchcraft*, but at the time was better known for being the provincial of the Dominicans in northern Germany, and one of the instigators of the Rosary devotion. Margaret had helped him to impose observancy on the recalcitrant friars of Leuven in 1495.²⁴⁵ There, on 3 February, the dowager and the provincial forced the friars to reform and integrate their house in the university, which was making a name for itself as a theological centre. Four years earlier, the vicar-general of the *Congregatio Hollandica*, Johannes Cleree, had used his links with the Benedictines of the Bursfelder Congregation to assist Margaret in the reform of the abbey of Egmond.²⁴⁶

Jacob Sprenger, then, was best known to his contemporaries for his role in the erection of the Confraternity of the Rosary. However, Sprenger, in spite of his own claims, was neither the inventor nor the original instigator of the Rosary devotion. That honour goes to another Dominican, Alanus de Rupe. De Rupe, or Alain de la Roche, was a Breton by birth, but after his studies in Paris in the late 1450s went to the Low Countries.²⁴⁷ There, in 1462, he entered the Dominican house in Lille, attracted by its strict observancy. From then on, his life was lived within the houses of the *Congregatio Hollandica*, to the success of which he became an important contributor. Alanus was by all accounts a rather intensely spiritual man, whom contemporaries regarded with a mixture of awe and derision, in a way reminiscent of Margery Kempe. Yet he was also a very learned theologian, whose academic career took in not only the famous university of Paris, but also that of Rostock, where he gained a doctorate in theology.

Alanus was not just concerned with the reform of his own Dominican Order. He also wished to offer lay Christians the possibility of leading a more devout life. To achieve this, he merged a number of existing devotional activities. The use of prayer beads was hardly new, nor was the idea that one could use them to count the number of *Ave Marias* and *Pater Nosters* that one had prayed. The Carthusians and Brigittines had both developed forms of prayer involving beads, and these Alanus merged with

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, lxxxiii.

²⁴⁶ Q.v. Part One, pp. 91-2. C.f. Wolfs, S.P., O.P., "Bij een nieuw werk over de Congregatio Hollandica", *OGE*, XLVII, (1921), 175-6.

²⁴⁷ *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1967 ed., S.v. "Alanus de Rupe"; Meyer, R.P.A. de, O.P., *op.cit*, lxxix-lxxx; Boer, B. de, O.F.M., "De souter van Alanus de Rupe", *OGE*, XXIX and XXX, (1955-6).

practices which he had found in the Beguinage in Gent.²⁴⁸ The inspiration, or so it was later claimed, came from visions he had of the Virgin Mary commanding St Dominic to spread the regular prayer of a set number of beads. This allowed Alanus to present his efforts to establish the Rosary devotion as a *renovatio*. Contemporaries agreed. Thomas à Kempis wrote in the chronicle he kept for the monastery of St Agnes in Zwolle that the Rosary was, indeed, a renewal.²⁴⁹ Incidentally, it is very likely that the author of the *Imitatio Christi* and the instigator of the Rosary met, for both lived in Zwolle, where Alanus died.

His visions occurred between 1463 and 1468. During this time, he was lector in Lille and Douai, and worked in his native Brittany on behalf of the *Congregatio Hollandica*.²⁵⁰ Yet there is no evidence that he even contemplated a structured devotion until after he had returned and settled in Gent in 1468, the same year as Margaret of York's arrival in the Low Countries. There he was briefly the confessor at the local Beguinage, as well as *lector primarius*.²⁵¹ These groups of devout women frequently had Dominican chaplains, partly to insure their orthodoxy.²⁵² The Gent Beguinage had developed its own particular form of prayer beads: ever since 1234 they prayed a 'Psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary' on a daily basis, consisting of three times five chaplets of ten beads.²⁵³ Alanus, according to his own admission, borrowed this practice to form the basis of his devotion.²⁵⁴

The real genius of Alanus de Rupe, however, did not consist of re-using a Beguine tradition, or even in its adaptation. What was genuinely revolutionary was his idea to merge these devotional practices with the concept of a religious guild. These were particularly vigorous in Gent, but were not primarily prayer confraternities.²⁵⁵ The establishment of a guild for only reciting the Rosary was nothing short of inspirational. This confused multitude of influences may explain why Alanus's Rosary was always somewhat chaotic, and never codified to any satisfactory extent.

²⁴⁸ Winston-Allen, A., *op.cit.*, 131, 266, 276-7.

²⁴⁹ Quoted in Procter, J., O.P., *The Rosary Guide*, 25.

²⁵⁰ Meyer, R.P.A. de, O.P., *op.cit.*, lxxix.

²⁵¹ Sanderus, A., *Flandria illustrate*, I, 42-3; Ollivier, M.J., "Le grand beguinage de Gand", *Année dominicaine*, CCCCXCVII and DIII, (1901-2), 28.

²⁵² C.f. Hinnebusch, W.A., O.P., *op.cit.*, 388-400. In Cologne, no fewer than 39 Beguinages were under Dominican supervision.

²⁵³ Lescher, W., O.P., *The Rosary*, 43.

²⁵⁴ Procter, J., O.P., *op.cit.*, 28-6.

²⁵⁵ Trio, P., "De Gentse Broederschappen (1182-1580)", *HMGOG*, XVI, (1990).

Yet the number of times the *Ave* and *Pater* were recited every week or day, or just what Mysteries were associated with the decades, is less significant than Alanus's erection of the Confraternity of the Rosary in Douai in 1470, when he was briefly living back at the friary there.²⁵⁶

Alanus's vision was nothing short of breath-taking: he envisaged a guild open to all, with free membership, unrestricted by wealth, status or residence. This was to be a worldwide confraternity. His new confraternity soon attracted the attention of the religious authorities. Wary of innovation, Ferry, cardinal de Clugny, the bishop of Tournai, ordered Alanus to explain his new confraternity.²⁵⁷ The Dominican obliged by writing an apologia, emphasising the 'fact' that he was reviving an old practice, and the bishop gave his approval.²⁵⁸ Of course, Clugny brings us back to Margaret of York. The bishop belonged to the duchess' inner circle in the Low Countries, and may safely be considered as one of the great allies of the Burgundian dynasty.²⁵⁹ He had accompanied Charles the Bold to Trier for the negotiations with Frederick III for a royal crown and a husband for Mary of Burgundy. He had also been amongst the delegation that travelled to England in 1465 and 1466 in the first attempt to negotiate a marriage between Charles and Margaret.²⁶⁰ De Clugny had carried out most of the active negotiations and was amongst the earliest Burgundians to come into contact with Margaret of York.²⁶¹ He was very much part of an 'English' faction within Burgundy: in January 1482, he even served as Edward IV's ambassador to pope Sixtus IV.²⁶²

Did Margaret hear of this new religious reform attempt in Douai from the bishop, or did she perhaps hear of it when she made her *Joyeuse Entrée* in Douai in the year

²⁵⁶ Klinkhammer, K.J., "Die Entstehung des Rosenkranzes". *500 Jahre Rosenkranz*, 40. The whole debate on the 'real' Rosary is a red herring anyhow. It presupposes that the format is unchangeable; a fact recently undermined by Pope John Paul II, who, in 2002, added five more mysteries to the Rosary. John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter Rosarium Virginis Mariae*.

²⁵⁷ For Ferry de Clugny, c.f. Cools, H., *Mannen met macht*, 135, 360.

²⁵⁸ For the letter, c.f. Procter, J., O.P., *op.cit.*, quoted on 25.

²⁵⁹ Caron, M.-T., *La Noblesse dans le duché de Bourgogne*, 218-20; Ballard, M., *Anglo-Burgundian Relations 1464-72*, 87-8.

²⁶⁰ The fact that Margaret's fiancé, Dom Pedro of Portugal, was still alive does not seem to have bothered anyone, least of all Edward IV. Ballard, M., *Anglo-Burgundian Relations*, 37.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 30. See also the important role of his brother, Guillaume. Paravicini, W., *Guy de Brimeu*, 478. The latter was later to enter the service of Louis XI, and was rewarded with Margaret's dower lands in Burgundy. There were clearly limits to loyalty! Kwikkelberghe, J. van, *Margaretha van York*, 145.

²⁶² *Venetian Calendar*, 478.

that Alanus inaugurated the confraternity?²⁶³ The more probable source of information was Jan Uytenhove, the vicar-general of the *Congregatio Hollandica* since 1459. Uytenhove was a scion of one of the most significant patrician families in Gent, with a long and distinguished affiliation with the Burgundian court.²⁶⁴ In Gent, Jan had been responsible for the introduction of the observance in the Dominican friary in 1455, a feat he had repeated in Lille in 1457.²⁶⁵ He had also been instrumental in realising Isabella of Portugal's dream of an observant Dominican house in Brussels.²⁶⁶ His brother, Laurentius, was a close friend of Anthony, the Great Bastard. In 1464, he had joined the latter for a crusade. The Great Bastard reached Ceuta, where he and his 3,000 men, amongst whom Laurentius, helped the Portuguese to ward off a Moorish attack.²⁶⁷ Then, the Bastard had to turn back to Marseille, his fleet ravaged by disease.²⁶⁸ His sister, Philippa, married Margaret's ally, Jacob Donche, in 1473.²⁶⁹

The Uytenhove family was close to the Burgundian dukes and duchesses, a closeness affirmed by Jan's correspondence with Charles the Bold on the subject of religious reform.²⁷⁰ Jan also knew and appreciated the mercurial Alanus de Rupe, whom he had sent to Brittany in 1466 to spread the observance amongst the Dominicans there. He quickly approved of his friar's new confraternity: on 6 April 1472, he gave his official backing to the confraternity, and imposed the Rosary as a compulsory prayer on the houses of the *Congregatio Hollandica*.²⁷¹

It is most likely that Margaret of York heard of the new devotion from Jan Uytenhove, with whom she entertained the same close contacts as the other members of the house of Burgundy. Margaret may have learned about the Rosary from two additional sources. The first is through her *conseiller spiritual*, Laurent Muschelede,

²⁶³ Possibly, but not likely, as the pious Dominicans, unlike their Franciscan counterparts, refused to join in the fun. "Relation officielle de la Joyeuse Entrée de Marguerite d'York, duchesse de Bourgogne, et de sa belle-fille Marie de Bourgogne, le 19 novembre 1470", *Souvenirs de la Flandre Wallonne*, VI, (1886), 160.

²⁶⁴ Vaughan, R., *Philip the Good*, 158-9; Meyer, R.P.A. de, O.P., *op.cit.*, xxxii.

²⁶⁵ Arts, J., O.P., *op.cit.*, 108-9.

²⁶⁶ Meyer, R.P.A. de, O.P., *op.cit.*, xxxv.

²⁶⁷ C.f. *Olivier de la Marche*, III, 35-40; Arts, J., O.P., *op.cit.*, 123-4; Housley, N., *The Later Crusades*, 108.

²⁶⁸ Vaughan, R., *Philip the Good*, 218.

²⁶⁹ Dutschke, C.W. and Rouse, R.H., *Medieval and Rare Manuscripts in the Claremont Libraries*, 88.

²⁷⁰ Arts, J., O.P., *op.cit.*, 112.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 134, n. 1.

the prior of the Charterhouse of Hérinnes.²⁷² Alanus visited Muschelede in Hérinnes in 1475, where they may have compared notes on the Carthusian and the new Dominican Rosary.²⁷³ The role of that particular Charterhouse in the religious life of Margaret of York has been explored above, and the possibility that she heard about the new devotion from the Carthusians there cannot be dismissed.

A final and more direct route may have been through the Dominican friary in Gent. There, one of Alanus de Rupe's close friends, Jacques Weyts, had inaugurated a local branch of the confraternity.²⁷⁴ We do not know the date on which this occurred, but it was definitely prior to the foundation of the Cologne confraternity by Jacob Sprenger in 1475. Margaret's contacts with the convent are well attested, her donation to construct a new wing and library in 1473 already mentioned above.²⁷⁵ Like the content of that library, protestants destroyed the register of the Gent confraternity in 1566, so there is no chance of establishing whether the duchess joined.²⁷⁶ If she did, and there is pictorial evidence to suggest she may have,²⁷⁷ she must have been rather upset at the hostility of the Gent magistrate towards the new devotion. Irked by Weyts's fierce preaching of the Rosary in which he denounced its detractors as heretics, they incarcerated the friar in 1481.²⁷⁸ At the request of Margaret of York and Maximilian I, pope Sixtus IV wrote to Gent threatening to excommunicate the town, which solved the problem.²⁷⁹ Weyts was released, and the confraternity grew very rapidly.

By this time, however, it was primarily the confraternity in Cologne that led the way. It, like so many of the earliest Rosary Confraternities, owed its existence to pupils of Alanus de Rupe.²⁸⁰ Jacob Sprenger and Michael Francisci established the most famous Rosary Confraternity of all, with some divergences in practice but not in essence from that erected by Alanus in Douai.²⁸¹ A contemporary chronicle from

²⁷² Grauwe, J. de, *Prosopographia Carthusiana Belgica*, 236.

²⁷³ Boer, B. de, O.F.M., *op.cit.*, XXXIII (1956), 364.

²⁷⁴ Meyer, R.P.A. de, O.P., *op.cit.*, lxxx.

²⁷⁵ Jonghe, B. de, O.P., *op.cit.*, 29; Leboucq, C., *op.cit.*, 17, n. 1.

²⁷⁶ Arts, J., O.P., *op.cit.*, 134.

²⁷⁷ See illustration XXVII, p. 247.

²⁷⁸ For this and what follows, c.f. *Despars*, III, 273; *Dagboek*, II, 91.

²⁷⁹ Arts, J., O.P., *op.cit.*, 143-6.

²⁸⁰ For example Nicholas Hoochstraaten in Leiden. Wolfs, S.P., O.P, *Middeleeuwse Dominicanessenkloosters in Nederland*, 48. See illustration, XXXVI, p. 325.

²⁸¹ C.f. Löhr, G.M., O.P., *Die Kölner Dominikanerschule von 14. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert*, 82-3; Winston-Allen, A., *op.cit.*, 67-8.

the city throws light upon the reasons why Sprenger and Francisci decided to emphasise the differences with the Burgundian confraternities.²⁸² It relates how the Cologne magistrate approached the two Dominicans during Charles the Bold's siege of Neuss in 1475, to ask for the most efficient prayer to the Virgin Mary for her aid against the Burgundians. Naturally, Sprenger and Francisci thought of the Rosary, but equally understandably, they wished to distance themselves from the enemy. This became all the more important after Emperor Frederick III arrived with an army to combat the Burgundians. The Emperor, his son Maximilian, and many of the nobility of the *Reich* joined the Cologne confraternity, which soon came to be regarded as the heart of the devotion.

This was in no small measure due to its association with the imperial family; soon Frederick III and Maximilian were carrying their rosaries wherever they went. A report of the Venetian ambassador, for example, states that the emperor's treasury contained several rosaries.²⁸³ The devout and the not so devout all joined. By 1479, Brabant counted some 30,500 members, Zeeland 10,500 (almost all the population!), and Rotterdam no fewer than 2,200.²⁸⁴ In Brugge, a confraternity was erected in 1484, and soon plays about the Rosary were being performed in the Dominican friary there.²⁸⁵ Nor did the spread confine itself to the Rhineland and the Low Countries. In England, too, interest was plentiful. The priest, Thomas Betanson, for example, wrote to Sir Robert Plumpton in 1486,

“Sir, I besech you recommend me vnto both my gud ladis, & I send them a pauper of the Rosary of our Lady of Coleyn, & I have recestered your name ... & ye be acopled as brethren & sisters”.²⁸⁶

This example of a priest registering members is indicative of how the confraternity grew. It also shows the religious to be the initial contact point.²⁸⁷ There is no reason

²⁸² Quoted in Löhr, G.M., O.P., *Die Dominikaner im Deutschen sprachgebiet*, 28-9.

²⁸³ *Venetian Calendar*, I, 225.

²⁸⁴ Meyer, R.P.A. de, O.P., *op.cit.*, lxxxii.

²⁸⁵ Hüsken, W.N.M., *De Spelen van Cornelis Everaert*, 74. I would like to thank Dr. Hüsken for his information on this subject.

²⁸⁶ Kirby, J. (ed), “The Plumpton Letters and Papers”, *Camden Society*, Fifth Series, VIII, (1996), 64.

²⁸⁷ See in this respect also the instructions for a layman found in the Throckmorton muniments, which urge the recital of the Little Office of Our Lady and of the Rosary as appropriate daily devotions. Pantin, W.A., “Instructions for a Devout and Literate Layman”. In J.J.G. Alexander and M.T. Gibson, *Medieval Learning and Literature*, 405.

to suggest Margaret of York's induction came about in any other way, only that she had direct contacts with those involved in its initial inauguration. Finally, as if to underline the success of the new devotion, it was also adopted by other religious orders. When, early in 1482, the Benedictine monk, Gijsbrecht van Boetselaer, of the abbey of Egmond, was robbed just outside Brussels, the thieves made off with his Rosary.²⁸⁸

When Maximilian came to the Low Countries in 1477, then, he was already enrolled as a member of the Rosary Confraternity. Whether at Gent or elsewhere, so was Margaret of York. The evidence for this comes from her manuscripts, to be precise from folio 40 verso of *La Vie de Saint Colette*, the lavishly-illuminated book she donated to the Poor Clares of Gent.²⁸⁹ Margaret of York and Charles the Bold are portrayed kneeling in adoration before an altar with Colette. Both have their hands clasped in prayer, and both are shown holding the prayer beads of the Rosary. With the manuscripts provenance and its recipients both firmly in a Gent setting, the inclusion of the Rosary is hardly surprising. The date of the manuscript, somewhere between 1473 and 1475, suggests that the duke and duchess were early members of the Gent confraternity.²⁹⁰ This, again, is what one might expect: after all, its Cologne counterpart also ensured it had a number of well-heeled members.

For all the lack of direct evidence, there can be little doubt that Margaret of York was interested and participated in the new devotional culture of the Rosary. The pictorial evidence *is* strong, whilst the large number of individuals involved in its development, who also had contacts with the duchess would have ensured her interest. The Rosary fitted Margaret of York's own desire for a Christian *renovatio* very well, and, like her own charitable activities, reached out beyond the personal and beyond the religious orders into a wider community.

The Confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows.

The Rosary devotion clearly showed the extent to which Margaret of York was interested in new devotional practices. These were directed at improving the

²⁸⁸ Hof, J., O.S.B., *De Abdij van Egmond*, 121.

²⁸⁹ Monasterium Bethlehem, Klarissen-Koletienen, Gent, Ms. 8, f. 40. See illustration XXVII, p. 248.

²⁹⁰ For the dating of the manuscript, q.v. Appendix Three, no. 25.

relationship between the individual and the Divine, and, therefore, very much part of Margaret's desire for Christian *renovatio*. At the same time, they allowed this *renovatio* to be extended to the wider community, providing a social counterpart to religious and political renewal. With the Rosary, one sees the duchess as the passive onlooker, embracing a new trend with alacrity. The total extent of her involvement, for as far as the sources allow us to gauge, was the active protection which she provided for the *Congregatio Hollandica*, in which environment the new devotion flourished. When the development of the *cultus* of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows is examined, a more pro-active Margaret of York becomes apparent.

As with the Rosary, there were several key figures in its development, who were once more closely associated with *Madame la Grande*. The most important of these, as far as the association between the new Confraternity of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows and the court is concerned, was a man whose role in the development of the Rosary devotion has already been touched upon: Michael Francisci. A fashionable humanist, like so many of those involved with this new confraternity, Michael Fransens van Rijsel had translated himself into Michael Francisci de Insulis.²⁹¹ Born near Lille, he had entered the observant Dominican friary there, studied with Alanus de Rupe in Paris, and, after a spell at the friary in Douai, was sent to study at the University of Cologne in 1469. There he rose rapidly through the ranks, and, by 1475, was appointed regent of the important friary in the city, where Jacob Sprenger was the prior. Their role in the erection of the Rosary Confraternity that year has already been noted.

His political decision to distance himself from Burgundy on the erection of the Cologne Rosary Confraternity does not seem to have impaired the admiration felt for him by the Dominicans under Burgundian rule. In 1481 he was appointed prior of the friary in Liège, then in desperate need for reform as political infighting was wrecking discipline. It took Francisci less than a year to impose order, and, in 1482, he was appointed prior of Valenciennes.²⁹² Such was his reputation, that six years later he

²⁹¹ For this and what follows, see, amongst others, Meyer, R.P.A. de, O.P., *op.cit.*, lxxvii-lxxix; Boer, D. de, O.F.M., *op.cit.*, XXX (1956), 190-7; Löhr, G.M., O.P., *Die Kölner Dominikanerschule*, 82-3; and Scheeben, H.C., "Michael Francisci ab Insulis, O.P., 'Quodlibet de veritate fraternitas Rosarii'", *Archiv der deutschen Dominikaner*, IV, (1951), 105-107. I am grateful to Fr. Simon Gaine, O.P., for procuring this article for me.

²⁹² Meyer, R.P.A. de, O.P., *op.cit.*, lxxvii.

was moved to become prior of the vitally important friary in Lille. He had also captured the attention of Henri de Glymes, who made him the inquisitor of his diocese shortly after Francisci's arrival in Valenciennes. By now, the learned Francisci had become very much part of the Burgundian establishment, and in 1490, he was appointed as Philip the Fair's confessor.

Even in an age when children became adults at a rather young age, it is unlikely that the eight-year-old Philip made the appointment in person. As Philip was living at Margaret's court at the time, and seen the close association between Henri de Glymes and Michael Francisci, it is more than likely that the dowager had a hand in his appointment.²⁹³ Subsequent to Philip the Fair's departure from Margaret's court, Francisci stayed on in Mechelen, where he died on 2 June 1502.²⁹⁴ This link between dowager and Dominican friar is important in the story of the development of the devotion to the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady. For it was Francisci, together with François of Busleyden, who were asked to investigate the orthodoxy of the new devotion by Philip the Fair, or should that be by Margaret of York, in 1493?²⁹⁵ The result was the *Quodlibeto decisio perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus christiferea virginis Mariae*, which appeared in print in Antwerp.²⁹⁶

Francisci obviously approved of the new devotion, and, although others were responsible for drawing up the statutes of the confraternity, they had clearly consulted him on what these should contain. The input of Francisci on this new confraternity was significant, and he was also responsible for the patronage of the dynasty.²⁹⁷ It reflected what he had learned from the Rosary Confraternity in that it was open to all, without regard to location or status. As he did with the Rosary, he emphasised that this was not a new invention, but rather a *renovatio*, probably as there was rather a good deal of opposition from the secular clergy.²⁹⁸

²⁹³ Azevedo, entries for 1480, 1485 and 1493.

²⁹⁴ Boer, D. de, O.F.M., *op.cit.*, XXX (1956), 197.

²⁹⁵ Michels, L.C., "De letteren in dienst van de propaganda voor Coudenberghe's Broederschap van de VII Weeën", *Miscellanea Mgr. Dr. P.J.M. van Gils*, LXXXV, (1949), 397.

²⁹⁶ Francisci, M., *Quodlibeto decisio perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus christiferea virginis Mariae*, Arch. St. Salv. D. 56. See illustration XXXVII, p. 326.

²⁹⁷ Delhahaye, R.P., "La Vierge aux Sept Glaives", *Analecta Bollandiana*, XII, (1893), 342.

²⁹⁸ Michels, L.C., *op.cit.*, 397.

That this was the case is rather odd, for it could be argued that this was a *renovatio*, with some new elements thrown in.²⁹⁹ Although the restriction to Seven Sorrows was new, the notion of reliving the suffering of the Virgin Mary, and through her of Christ, was far from new. In 1239, the Servite Order in Italy had begun a local devotion to an unspecified number of sorrows of the Virgin Mary.³⁰⁰ More recently, in 1413, a synod in Cologne had instigated a feast of the sorrows of Mary, in order to expiate the heresies of the Hussites. This feast had spread across northern Germany, and into Scandinavia and Scotland. It also had some impact on the Low Countries, although this is difficult to trace. It may not be without significance in this respect, that the new confraternity first reared its head in Zeeland and in Brugge, where contacts with Scandinavia, Scotland and the Hanzeatics were particularly intense.

Geographically, the first confraternities may have been fairly widespread, in Abbenbroek on Voorne, in Reimerwaal, and in Brugge, but they were all instigated by one person: Jan van Coudenberghe, alias Joannes de Frigidomonto.³⁰¹ At first, Coudenberghe may seem to be an unlikely source for such a prominent devotional practice. A member of one of Brussels's seven patrician families, he was the dean of the St Gilles church in Abbenbroek, and, as was the norm at the time, also held posts as curate of the SS Pieter and Paulus church in Reimerswaal, and in the St Salvator church in Brugge. Much later, he would become secretary to Charles V, but, by that time, he was the well-known instigator of the confraternity. According to Francisci, Coudenberghe began the devotion as a reaction to the traumatic death of Mary of Burgundy in 1482.³⁰²

The devotions focused on three paintings of the Virgin Mary displayed in the three churches with which Coudenberghe was connected, to which poems were attached

²⁹⁹ C.f. Delhahaye, R.P., *op.cit.*, 333-7.

³⁰⁰ For what follows, see *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1911 ed., S.v. "Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary".

³⁰¹ A.o. Steenackers, E., *La Confrérie de Notre-Dame des Sept Douleurs à Malines*, 5-6; Ridder, Pastoor E.H.F. de, "De devotie tot Onze Lieve Vrouw van de Zeven Weeën, haar ontstaan", *Handelingen van het Vlaamsch Maria-congress te Brussel*, 90; Duclos, A., "De eerste eeuw van het Broederschap der Zeven Weedommen van Maria", *SEB*, IX, (1922), 12-5; Michels, L.C., *op.cit.*, 396. I owe a debt of gratitude to Mr Jans, former archivist of the archdiocese of Mechelen-Brussel, for his enthusiastic help and generous sharing of his vast knowledge on this topic.

³⁰² Francisci, M., *Quodlibeto*, f. 53^v. KB: 71 C 25, *Stichtingsbrief van de zielemissen voor Maria van Bourgondië (1457-1482) in de O.L. Vrouwekerk te Brugge*; 1492 f. 57-62.

C.f. Ridder, Pastoor E.H.F. de, "Brief van Petrus de Manso over de VII Weeën van Maria", *Mechlinia*, II, (1922).

describing the Virgin's Seven Sorrows.³⁰³ There is some dispute as to the exact date when the paintings were first displayed, and which church can claim the honour of being the first.³⁰⁴ According to Francisci, the cult originated in Reimerswaal, then moved to Brugge, and from there to Abbenbroek.³⁰⁵ However, this has little if any bearing on the real significance of the devotion. What is clear is that there was no real pilgrimage to any of the paintings prior to Francisci's investigation into the devotion. Brugge has the best claim to being the first home of a Confraternity of the Seven Sorrows, the earliest date at which one is mentioned being 1482, much earlier than either Abbenbroek or Reimerswaal.³⁰⁶ This accords precisely with the appointments of Coudenberghe to these churches.³⁰⁷ It is the final of these appointments, which took place in the late 1480s, which brought Coudenberghe in direct contact with Margaret of York. Like Adriaan Florenszoon, Coudenberghe received his prebend from the dowager, who was entitled to nominate the candidates for her dowerland in Voorne.³⁰⁸

What made Margaret choose Coudenberghe? His membership of a Brussels' patrician family would have been an important factor, but possibly more significant, was Coudenberghe's acquaintance with Petrus de Manso, alias Pieter Verhoeven. The two had corresponded, and Verhoeven, attracted by the news of the new devotion, had travelled to Reimerswaal to meet Coudenberghe in the early 1480s.³⁰⁹ Verhoeven was the chaplain of the Mechelen convent of Thabor, long a beacon of monastic reform. It had been placed on the narrow path by that most famous of reformers, Jan Pupper van Gogh, as long ago as 1459.³¹⁰ Naturally, this brought Verhoeven in contact with Margaret of York. His reputation as a chaplain was evidently a good one, for Margaret had nominated him as dean of the church in

³⁰³ Ridder, Pastoor E.H.F. de, "De devotie tot Onze Lieve Vrouw", 96. For a description of the painting, a copy after an icon in the church of Santa Maria in Ara Coeli in Rome, see Graas, T., "Abbenbroek". In P.J. Margry and C. Caspers (eds), *Bedevoartplaatsen in Nederland*, 89. See illustration XXXVIII, p. 327.

³⁰⁴ Graas, T., "Reimerswaal". In P.J. Margry and C. Caspers (eds), *Bedevoartplaatsen in Nederland*, 89. The painting in Brugge is still extant. Q.v. Devliegheer, L., *Kunstpatrimonium van West-Vlaanderen, vol. VIII, De Sint-Salvatorskathedraal te Brugge: Inventaris*, 172-3.

³⁰⁵ Francisci, M., *Quodlibeto*, f. 53^r.

³⁰⁶ Arch.St.Salv. 81, f. 44^v.

³⁰⁷ Duclos, A., *op.cit.*, 15.

³⁰⁸ Jongkees, A.G., *Staat en Kerk in Holland en Zeeland*, 270-1 ; *Galesloot*, 222-3.

³⁰⁹ A.M. Q. Couvent de Thabor, n. I, f. 5^r; Ridder, Pastoor E.H.F. de, "De devotie tot Onze Lieve Vrouw", 93.

³¹⁰ Munck, J.J. de, *Provincie, Stad ende District van Mechelen*, II, 14.

Brielle.³¹¹ He was never resident there, but may be numbered amongst the rather large number of successful clergy enjoying this particular form of Margaret of York's patronage.³¹²

It is highly likely, that it was Verhoeven who recommended Coudenberghe to the duchess, and who brought the new devotion to her attention. It immediately appealed to Margaret. Her love for Mary is well attested, and a devotional practice set in motion to commemorate her late stepchild will have enjoyed her sympathy. In addition, Margaret set great store by devotions to the Virgin Mary, as her pilgrimages have shown. She would also have been able to identify with her in her guise as the sorrowful mother, particularly after losing Mary of Burgundy. More than Coudenberghe, it was Verhoeven who guided the fledgling confraternity to maturity. He was a close friend of Francisci, but also of Filips Keerman, Margaret's confidante and protector of Philip the Fair against the claims of Engelbrecht II of Nassau. That the devotion made an impact on Keerman is clear from a statue of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, which he had made for his chapel in Heimbeek.³¹³

Another member of Margaret's circle in Mechelen with whom Verhoeven was closely associated was the guardian of the observant Franciscan convent there, Herman de Zutphen.³¹⁴ By the early 1490s, Zutphen was an old man, but still with enormous influence. His relationship with *Madame la Grande* was a close one, as, indeed, was that of the Franciscans in Mechelen.³¹⁵ She had paid for the reconstruction of the convent by Anthonis Keldermans after a fire, and chose to be buried there. Zutphen had worked with Francisci and Busleyden to examine the orthodoxy of the new devotion.³¹⁶ Margaret, anxious as always to avoid heterodoxy, had ensured that those she trusted would give an honest assessment of the Seven Sorrows.

³¹¹ *Nieuw Nederlands Biografisch Woordenboek*, VII, S.v. "Petrus de Manso".

³¹² Michels, L.C., *op.cit.*, 398.

³¹³ Munck, J.J. de, *Provincie, Stad ende District van Mechelen*, II, 258, and following.

³¹⁴ Steenackers, E., *op.cit.*, 99.

³¹⁵ Ruyssevelt, P.S., O.F.M., "De Franciskaner Kerken. Mechelen", *Franciscana*, XXIII, (1968), *passim*; Bretens, P.J., O.F.M., "Minderbroederskloosters in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden 47. Mechelen", *Franciscana*, XLIV, (1989), *passim*. Their reputation would have attracted her. When, during the 1480s, secular clergy in Mechelen refused to administer the sacrament of the dying to those who confessed adultery without making a payment, the population turned to the Franciscan friary for sustenance. K.B.D.H., 71 G 32, Gestel, C. van, *Chronijcke van Mechelen*, 105-7.

³¹⁶ Mechelen, Archive Archiepiscopali Mechliniensi, Register Cameracensia, III, 1480-1502, f. 95-97. C.f. Puymbrouck, A. van, O.F.M., *De Franciscanen te Mechelen*, 139-40.

In response to the request, Francisci wrote the above mentioned *Quodlibeto decision perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus christiferea virginis Mariae*, whilst Verhoeven produced the first office of the confraternity.³¹⁷ Verhoeven also extended the ritual aspect of the devotion, by introducing seven stations to be placed in churches,³¹⁸ to coincide with the Seven Sorrows.³¹⁹ Zutphen, in turn, embraced the Seven Sorrows and introduced the devotion into the observant Franciscan Order.³²⁰ This allowed Philip the Fair, now aged eleven, to extend his protection. On 18 September 1493, the young archduke, definitely at the instigation of *Madame la Grande*, wrote of his affection for the new confraternity: “nous avons bien singulière devotion à la dicte confrairie”.³²¹ In Mechelen, canon Hendrik Maes of the St Rombout’s church and Coudenberghe instigated yet another confraternity of the Seven Sorrows in the wake of the approval of the three investigators.³²² It was now time to ask for episcopal approval. For the diocese of Utrecht, this was straightforward. David of Burgundy granted approval for the Zeeland confraternities without worrying too much about orthodoxy.

In the diocese of Cambrai, things were less simple, and the sequence of events once more reveals the involvement of the dowager. Naturally, the onerous task of deciding on the devotion’s orthodoxy fell to bishop Henri de Glymes. Far more scrupulous than his Utrecht confrere, Henri decided to refer the question to the theologians of the University of Leuven. There, the problem came before none other than Adriaan Florenszoon, Margaret’s protégé and another prebend holder in Voorne, who, in all likelihood, knew of the devotion before he was asked to adjudicate.³²³ Naturally, the future pope did not wish to offend the powerful supporter of the new devotion, and he approved, although not without expressing some reservations about the restriction

³¹⁷ Steenackers, E., *op.cit.*, 6.

³¹⁸ Ridder, Pastoor E.H.F. de, “Petrus de Manso en de Staties der VII Weeën”, *Mechlinia*, I (1921).

³¹⁹ Possibly influenced by the Stations of the Cross which were being erected all over the Low Countries at this time. Herwaarden, J. van, “Geloof en geloofsuitingen in de late middeleeuwen in de Nederlanden: Jerusalembedevoarten, lijdensdevotie en kruiswegverering”, *BMGN*, XCVIII, (1983). The earliest Stations of the Cross were inspired by Engelbrecht II of Nassau and his mother, Maria van Loon, who had them erected near Breda in 1484. Placidus, O.F.M.Cap., *Geschiedenis van de Katholieke kerk te Breda*. In F.F.X. Cerutti et al, *Geschiedenis van Breda, vol. I, De Middeleeuwen*, 156.

³²⁰ “we hold the said confraternity in singular devotion”. Mechelen, Archive Archieposcopali Mechliniensi, *Inventaria bonorum mobilium*, Reg. I.

³²¹ Quoted in Ridder, Pastoor E.H.F. de, “De devotie tot Onze Lieve Vrouw”, 91.

³²² *Ibid.*, 100.

³²³ Michels, L.C., *op.cit.*, 398. Q.v. Part One, pp. 70-1.

of the sorrows to seven. That was, nevertheless, enough to allow Henri de Glymes to attach his *nihil obstat* to the confraternity in 1495.³²⁴ He was followed in October of that year by pope Alexander VI, who approved the new devotion as a revival of an older *cultus*.

The Habsburg-Burgundian dynasty immediately registered in the confraternity. Curiously, they chose to enrol in that of Brussels, a move that can be understood only in the light of the growing importance of that city within the Low Countries.³²⁵ The confraternity had its altar in the church of St Goorickx and was very much part of the *rederijkers* culture of the city. The confraternity was founded by them in 1498.³²⁶ It was headed by none other than Jan Smeken and Jan Pertchevael,³²⁷ a fact which led Gilbert Degroote to conclude that the confraternity came into existence to indulge the *rederijkers*.³²⁸ That was not the case, but the membership of all the living members of the dynasty, as well as some of the deceased, does point to the confraternity as a meeting point between the house of Habsburg-Burgundy and the city patriciate. Margaret's name and armorial, as well as that of Charles the Bold, appear in the *Liber Authenticus*, the membership book of the Brussels confraternity.³²⁹

This interchange between court and the wider, Dutch-speaking world of the *rederijkers* which the confraternity provided, was noted as long ago as 1893, when R.P. Delhahaye first studied the devotion on behalf of the Bollandists.³³⁰ All the early imprints of the *Gedencknisse van de VII Weeen* appeared in Dutch: in Antwerp in 1492 and 1494, in Delft in 1494 and 1497, and in Leiden in 1500.³³¹ It need not come as a surprise, therefore, that one can detect close links between members of Margaret of York's entourage and the *rederijkers* who were involved with the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows.

³²⁴ Mechelen, Archive Archieposcopali Mechliniensi, Register Cameracensia, III, 1480-1502, f. 96-97.

³²⁵ Martens, M., "Bruxelles, Capitale". In P. Bonenfant et al, *Bruxelles au 15e siècle*.

³²⁶ Autenboer, E. van, *Volksfeesten en rederijkers te Mechelen*, 151, n. 242.

³²⁷ Michels, L.C., *op.cit*, 400.

³²⁸ Degroote, G., *Blijde Inkomst*, xi.

³²⁹ Brussels, Archief van de stad, no. 3413. *Liber authenticus sacratissimae utrisque sexus christi fidelium confraternitatis septem dolorum beata maria virginis nuncupatae*, f. 3^v and f. 51^f. There can be few people who know as much about this bewildering manuscript than Susie Speakman Sutch, and I am delighted to acknowledge her ample support.

³³⁰ Delhahaye, R.P., *op.cit*, 341.

³³¹ *Ibid*.

Most prominent amongst these was Olivier de la Marche. The provost of the Brussels confraternity, Jan Pertchevael, translated his *Chevalier délibéré*, and both Pertchevael and De la Marche were members of *rederijkerskamer De Leliebloem* in Brussels.³³² De la Marche was occasionally engaged by the city of Brussels to write on its behalf.³³³ He was clearly considered to be a valuable asset, for, in the early 1490s, the magistrate even provided him with his own house. It may be true, as Herman Pleij suggested, that this membership was customary amongst the aristocracy, but the link between Pertchevael and De la Marche suggests otherwise. Pertchevael and that other member of both the *Leliebloem* and the confraternity, Jan Smeken, co-wrote plays for each of the Seven Sorrows, which were intended to be performed on consecutive days.³³⁴

Whether these performances were ever as successful as those by canon Maes is questionable. Maes was, as mentioned, one of the co-founders of the confraternity in Mechelen. Not only was he a cleric, he also was the factor of the local *rederijkerskamer, De Peoene*.³³⁵ In that capacity, he gave full vent to his devotion to Our Lady, writing a panegyric to her, as well as a poem on the Seven Sorrows.³³⁶ More important than these in the propagation of the new devotion, was his play on the same theme, sadly since lost.³³⁷ This was performed on 25 March 1493, on the feast of the Annunciation, on the central market square. Such was the multitude that turned up to watch the five-hour performance that many had to be turned away. The play was put on again on the next day to placate the disappointed.³³⁸ In a house on the square on both days was the court. Philip the Fair had returned to Mechelen, and, in the presence of Margaret of York, watched the play on the devotion that the dowager, Philip, and those of their affinity had stimulated, protected, and fostered.³³⁹

Just like the Rosary devotion, although rather less spectacularly, the cult of Mary's Seven Sorrows was to travel the world as an emblem of Catholicism. This was in no small way due to the continued patronage of the dynasty. Margaret of Austria shared

³³² Millar, A., *Olivier de la Marche and the Court of Burgundy*, 97-9.

³³³ For what follows, c.f. Pleij, H., *De Sneeuwpoppen van 1511*, 180.

³³⁴ Michels, L.C., *op.cit.*, 154.

³³⁵ *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek*, II, 1964 ed. S.v. "Maes, Hendrik".

³³⁶ These may be found in Lyna, F. and Eeghem, W. van (eds), *Jan van Stijvevoorts Refereinenbundel anno MDXXIV/ naar het Berlijnsch handschrift*, II, 118.

³³⁷ Autenboer, E. van, *op.cit.*, 150-3; Michels, L.C., *op.cit.*, 154-6.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 155-6.

³³⁹ A.M. S.R. S 1, f. 160^v, (1493-94).

her godmother's devotion to the cult. After she had become the regent of the Low Countries, she actually installed a group of virgins of the Seven Sorrows in an abandoned Franciscan convent outside Brugge.³⁴⁰ Charles V, too, remained a devotee. Bernard van Orley painted the Emperor around 1525, wearing the Golden Fleece, a copy of which hangs in the former chapel of the confraternity in the St Salvator cathedral in Brugge.³⁴¹ On the frame was written an inscription recalling the role played by his father in the foundation of the Confraternity of the Seven Sorrows. His mother, Juana, transported the confraternity to Spain. In the wake of yet another tragic death, that of her husband, Philip the Fair, in 1506, she inaugurated the cult of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad.³⁴² It became particularly popular in Portugal, from where it spread to Brazil and Goa in India.

It is difficult to square this with the notion that Margaret of York was old-fashioned. Yes, this was very much part of the late medieval interest in Marian devotions and the imagery very much part of the cultural language of the time.³⁴³ However, it was also part of that of another, later, age. Conrad Meit and Bernard van Orley, who created various paintings on the devotion for Margaret of Austria, are hardly representative of the Middle Ages: quite the contrary.³⁴⁴ As late as the eighteenth century, the devotion was still considered potent enough to inspire the Franciscan mission into California,³⁴⁵ whilst in Caracas, Venezuela, a painting of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad is still the main pilgrimage attraction.³⁴⁶

Both the Rosary and the Seven Sorrows devotions throw a considerably different light on late medieval devotional culture. Here were devotions that would survive the onslaught of Protestantism, which were to flourish after 1500. That Margaret of York was closely associated with the birth of both need not come as a surprise. Her religious outlook, underpinned by a sound theological knowledge gleaned from the pages of the manuscripts in her library, was imbued with a deep understanding of the importance of renewal. And, in their own limited way, the Confraternities of the

³⁴⁰ Eichberger, D., *Leben mit Kunst*, 225.

³⁴¹ Devliegher, L., *op.cit.*, 175.

³⁴² *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1911 ed., S.v. "Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary".

³⁴³ Schuler, C.M., "The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin: Popular Culture and Cultic Imagery in Pre-Reformation Europe", *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, I and II, (1992), *passim*.

³⁴⁴ Eichberger, D., *op.cit.*, 224-6.

³⁴⁵ www.californiamissions.com/cahistory/soledad.html.

³⁴⁶ www.angelfire.com/ar/artereligioso/soledad.html.

Rosary and of the Seven Sorrows opened the door to a new Catholic Church. They embraced all who wished to join, and were, or became, literally worldwide organisations. The humanistic influence on those who dreamt them into existence, with their Latinised names, is clear for all to see. It should also alert us to the dynamism in parts of the late medieval Church. For the protagonists of the new confraternities, for Margaret of York, and for the Spaniards of Chris van der Heijden's *Zwarte Renaissance*, there was no autumn of the Middle Ages, just a future securely founded upon the past.

Margaret's tomb in Mechelen reflected this apparent paradox of a radical future built on the traditions of the past.³⁴⁷ In every respect, it was a statement which summed up her life and the philosophy which underpinned her actions. Her patron saint, St Margaret of Antioch, flanked the tomb. The same saint may also be seen standing on guard over the duchess in a garden facing the St Gudule church in Brussels on folio 17 recto of *Benois seront les miséricordieux*.³⁴⁸ On the tomb, she was accompanied by St Francis of Assisi. The presence of the founder of the Franciscans is hardly surprising inside a church of his order. However, the combination with St Bernard of Clairvaux, who faced Francis from the other side of the tomb, tells a more complex story.³⁴⁹ Both reforming saints referred the onlooker to the importance that the buried duchess of Burgundy had attached to Christian *renovatio* during her life. A brass plaque explained this for those unable to understand what the statues were trying to say. On it, the phrase "Religionis reformationis pietati mirum faulrix" made clear what had driven Margaret of York.³⁵⁰ The fact that this was a church belonging to the observant Franciscans completed the statement.

In death as in life, Margaret of York wished to contribute to the growth of reform in the Christian Church, and her tomb was one way in which she could still achieve this. Her contribution to the development of the Confraternities of the Rosary and the Seven Sorrows ensured that, posthumously, she was also still contributing to the

³⁴⁷ As mentioned before, the tomb was destroyed in the sixteenth century, ironically by English protestants. A description may be found in Munck, J.J. de, *Provincie, Stad, ende District van Mechelen*, II, 2-3.

³⁴⁸ See illustrations, XXIII, p. 244.

³⁴⁹ As seen, some of St. Bernard's writings found their way into her book collection. Q.v. Appendix Three, nos. 1, 8, 9 and 18.

³⁵⁰ Quoted in Munck, J.J. de, *Provincie, Stad, ende District van Mechelen*, II, 3.

renewal of faith amongst the lay community. She had helped to imbue Margaret of Austria and Charles V with an undying sense of being Burgundian, and this also provided a long-lasting testimony to the main intellectual idea underpinning Margaret of York's existence. Her husband's political dreams, and the achievements of the Valois dukes of Burgundy, survived their absorption into the house of Habsburg, at least until the death of Charles V. This was in no small measure due to the role played by *Madame la Grande*. In the field of politics as in that of religion, renewal of these dreams had guided her actions. Margaret of York's power, her authority, and her influence, manifested itself in various guises, and had been maintained through a multitude of channels. Always, however, it had been built on the soundest of intellectual foundations.

This carried the admiration of the Humanists. Twelve years after Margaret's death, a book entitled *Dialogus in que Venus et Cupido omnes adhibent vesutias* appeared from the press of Dirk Martens or Martinus Dorpius in Leuven.³⁵¹ Martens was the first publisher in the southern Low Countries, and had established himself as the premier publisher of the Humanists.³⁵² His press was responsible for works by, amongst others, Agricola, Erasmus and pope Pius II. He also published the travel journal of Christopher Columbus and Michael Francisci's defence of the Seven Sorrows. In the aforementioned book an epitaph for Margaret of York was included, in which she is generously praised.³⁵³ Besides the normal emphasis on her generosity to the poor and her reform of the monasteries, there is a passage eulogising the duchess for her support for learning.³⁵⁴ The author not only appreciated Margaret's financial support for students of theology, he also emphasised her devotion to learning *per se*, and her appreciation of the new learning.

Herwaarden has suggested that its author was Cornelis Gerard, much better known as the chronicler Aurelius.³⁵⁵ Of course, Gerard's adoption of a Latin name is significant in its own right. If it were Aurelius who wrote these lines, then at least he is a trustworthy guide to the sentiment amongst the Humanists. Remarkably, his *Divisiiekroniek* repeats the Latin phrases of the Dorpius edition line by line, this time

³⁵¹ *Tentoonstelling Dirk Martens 1473-1973*, 275.

³⁵² For this and what follows, *Ibid*, 262-80.

³⁵³ Which is to be found in *Galesloot*, 322-3.

³⁵⁴ Herwaarden, J. van, *Between Saint James and Erasmus*, 571-8.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 578.

in Dutch.³⁵⁶ Her generous bestowal of benefices on students of theology, her respect for learning, and her admiration for the new learning of the Humanists are all given an airing once again.³⁵⁷ Her intelligence was also praised by Hadrianus Barlandus, a friend of Erasmus.³⁵⁸ He could have known, for Erasmus had been secretary to Henri de Glymes. As noted, the remaining evidence does not allow us to suggest Margaret could understand Latin, leave alone Greek or Hebrew. This is not likely, anyhow. What is important is that *Madame la Grande* understood the importance of the new trends in thinking and appreciated its contributions to both a better, reformed Church, and to a reformed politics. Humanists would, in the course of the next century, not just seek to revive the culture of Antiquity, but also its empire.³⁵⁹ In this respect Margaret of York resembles her English counterpart, Margaret Beaufort, whose support for early English humanists is well-known. To Margaret of York, the re-birth of Renaissance may have been an alien concept, but the restoration proposed by Humanists such as Erasmus was something she fully understood. As such, she moves well beyond the confines of traditional interpretations of ‘medieval’ and ‘modern’.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁶ Aurelius, C., *Die cronycke van Hollandt, Zeelandt ende Vrieslant*, f. 425.

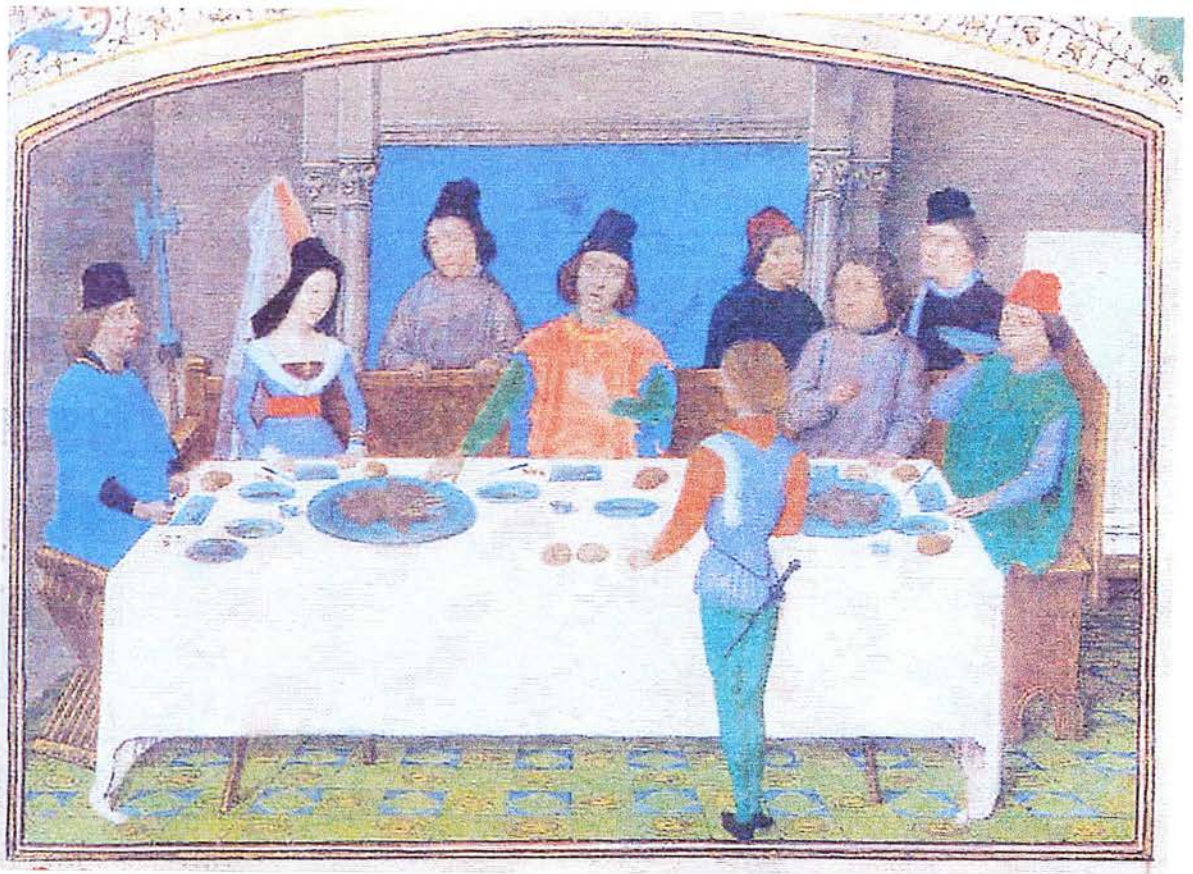
³⁵⁷ As Sharon Michalove noted, female patronage of learning is one way of assessing their interest in education and learning. Michalove, S.D., “The Education of Aristocratic Women in 15th-Century England”. In S.D. Michalove and C. Reeves (eds), *Estrangement, Enterprise and Education in 15th-Century England*, 133.

³⁵⁸ Barlandus, H., *Rerum gestarum a Brabantiae ducibus historia*, 91.

³⁵⁹ See in this respect the Roman-style commemorative medal which Philip the Fair had struck after Margaret’s death, which is depicted in *Galesloot*, 323.

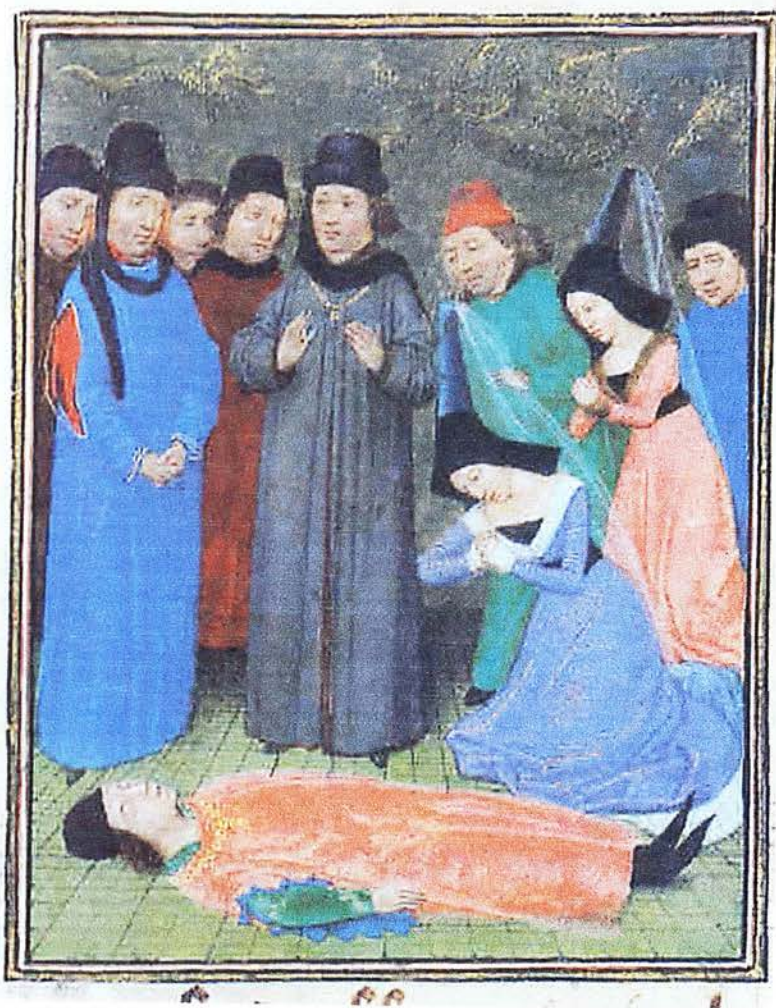
³⁶⁰ And was not the ‘relict’ which Weightman supposed her to have been. *Weightman*, 216-7.

Illustration XXXIII.



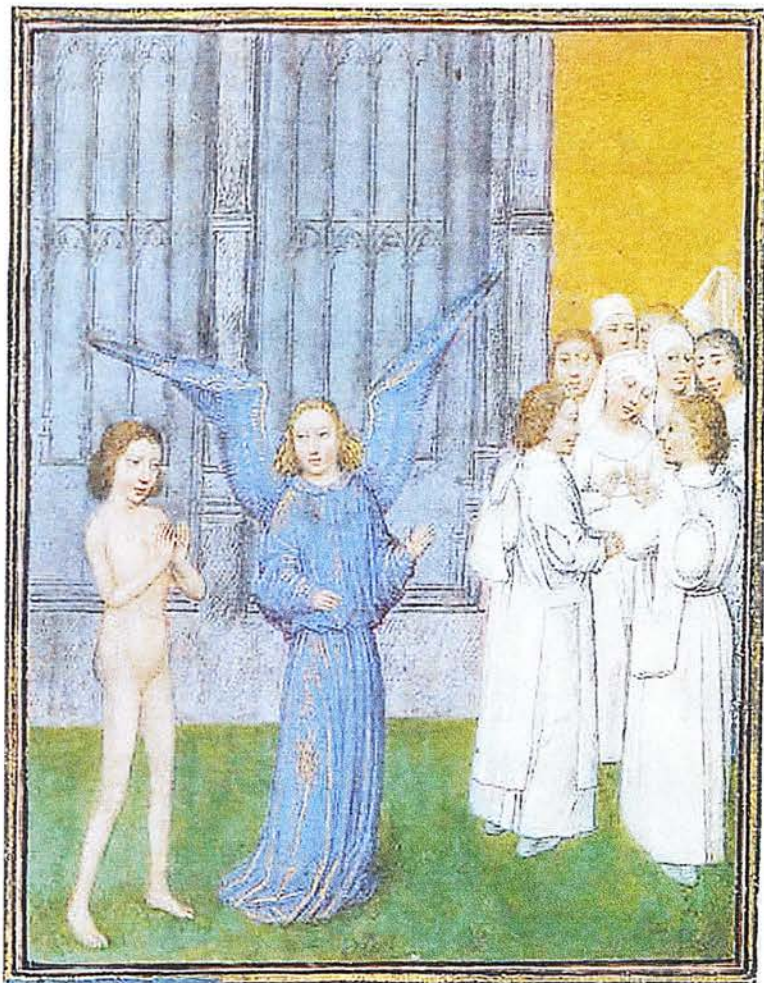
Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum. Ms. 30, *Les visions du chevalier Tondal*, f. 7.
Margaret of York and Charles the Bold look on as Tondal suffers a seizure.
www.getty.edu/museum/

Illustration XXXIV.



Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum. Ms. 30, *Les visions du chevalier Tondal*, f. 11.
Margaret of York praying over the collapsed body of Tondal.
www.getty.edu/museum/

Illustration XXXV.



Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum. Ms. 30, *Les visions du chevalier Tondal*, f. 37.
The joy of the faithfully married in heaven. www.getty.edu/museum/

Illustration XXXVI.



Cologne, Sankt Andreas Dominikanerkonvent, Virgin with Rosary, 1471. One of the oldest surviving depictions of the Rosary, it predates the founding of the Cologne Confraternity in 1475, and was made within a year of the foundation of the Douai Confraternity by Alanus de Rupe. Photo courtesy of the German Dominicans.

Illustration XXXVII.



Brugge, Archief van de Sint Salvator Kathedraal, D. 56. Francisci, M., *Quodlibeto decision perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus christiferea virginis Mariae*, Antwerp, 1494, f. 1. The woodcut for Francisci's Latin edition differs from that made for the Dutch editions. It influenced the world-wide depiction of the sorrowful Virgin. With kind permission of the Kerkfabriek Sint Salvator Kathedraal.

Illustration XXXVIII.



Leeu, G. (ed), *Dit is een seer devote salige ende profitelicke ghedencknisse van den VII. weeden oft droefheyden onser liever Vrouwen*, Antwerpen, 1492, f. 1. This is a copy of the original painting in Reimerswaal. With kind permission of the librarian of the Stadsbibliotheek, Antwerp.

Illustration XXXIX.



New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.1.128, Simon Marmion, The Lamentation. Oil and tempera (?) on oak, 51,8 x 32,7 cm.

Conclusion

When, on 9 January 1522, Adriaan Florenszoon was elected as the vicar of Rome, he fulfilled the hopes that Margaret of York had had for him, when she decided to help him with the cost of his studies. By common consent, he was the first reforming pope, a pope of intense personal piety and sobriety in an age when the opposite was the norm. It was a year of high hope: Charles V had returned to Spain, now Holy Roman Emperor, king of Spain, duke of Burgundy, and ruler over a vast collection of lands. Yet he was also essentially Burgundian. Like the new pope, Charles had a string of advisors from the Low Countries, all striving to accomplish the *renovatio* of Church and Christendom that Margaret of York had dreamt of two decades earlier. If the hopes of 1522 had materialised, one wonders what history would have made of the contribution of the late dowager of Burgundy. It is certain that she would still have been overshadowed by the more illustrious courts of the Habsburg descendants of Maximilian and Mary. Yet, as soon as the spotlight swings back onto the Burgundian elements of the courts of the house of Habsburg, from its pageantry to its piety, the memory of the English princess would have been resurrected.

It was not to be. In the land of her birth, the break with the Church occurred during the reign of Henry VIII, son of Margaret's old adversary, Henry VII. In the Low Countries, Charles V, and after him Philip II, failed to stem the tide of dissent. The same is true for that remarkable succession of women, who stepped into Margaret of York's, and Isabella of Portugal's, shoes during the sixteenth century: Margaret of Austria, Mary of Hungary, and Margaret of Parma. The sixteenth century, started with high hopes, collapsed into warfare worse than anything seen during the so-called barbarous Middle Ages. Amongst the many shards left by the conflict, were the dreams and hopes of Margaret of York. Naturally, this contributed to her gradual slip into oblivion. This most Catholic of princesses, this defender of Charles the Bold's Burgundian dream of a kingdom along the Rhine and in the Low Countries, had stood for things which had gone out of fashion.

This was aggravated by the emergence of national histories. Although there was some quiet pride in the English princess whose marriage was famed throughout Europe, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British historians had difficulties placing Margaret. Having failed to make it into Shakespeare's royal dramas, all that could be said from a national point of view was her seemingly implacable hostility towards

that favourite royal house of the Whig historians, the house of Tudor. Her memory fared little better in the Low Countries. In the Netherlands, she was just part of the hated Habsburg dynasty. The nation was the result of an uprising against them, and Margaret's closeness to Maximilian could hardly have endeared her to those men who were casting the national myth in stone. The same was true of those who mourned the loss of Low Countries' unity, such as London-based Pieter Geyl, for whom Maximilian was the man who made war on the nation.

Riding to the rescue were the Belgians, of both Flemish and Walloon imprint, who, after the creation of Belgium in 1830, were trying to construct a Belgian past. Men such as Jan Frans Willems and, a little later, Henri Pirenne, could see in the English princess who had fought so hard to preserve the unity of the Burgundian lands a precursor to those struggling for a Belgian identity. That Margaret was also pretty helped enormously in this. And so it was left to two Belgians, Galesloot, and Hommel, to revive Margaret of York's *esprit*. And revive her they did, as over the years, Margaret of York metamorphosed, Ovid-like, from a beautiful English saviour of the Belgian state, into the romantic and still beautiful champion of the house of Burgundy *and* the Belgian state; and onwards, into the bookish lost soul pining for children.

Except for the beauty, there is little of this that may be recognisable after the previous pages. There is, one feels, no need for a contemporary justification to study the life of one as remarkable as Margaret of York: it speaks for itself. In any age, for anyone, regardless of gender, to achieve what she did under the circumstances in which she found herself would be enough to warrant a study. Unfortunately, for reasons outlined above, that story can never become a full biography. Even after the previous three chapters, one has to concur with Christine Weightman that there is an elusive element to *Madame la Grande*. At times, this can lead to Margaret becoming somewhat lost amongst the many figures that crowded her astonishingly full life. That this has happened needs no apology. Margaret's achievements were frequently the result of her happy choice of allies and friends. In addition, she stood at the pinnacle of a society every bit as complex as today's. The result is that she often

operated through these people, and that they, therefore, tell Margaret's story in her stead.

It has been said of Margaret Beaufort that she exerted a commanding influence amongst the men of her time. This was indisputably also the case with Margaret of York, although the evidence for the latter is rather less strong than for the former. Influence she held over all, with the exception of her husband. Charles the Bold was not to be tamed by anyone, man or woman. The closest he came to submitting to someone's will, was in his relation with his mother, Isabella of Portugal. Of course, it was with the latter that Margaret finished her political, cultural, and religious education. It was an education that had begun under that other strong woman, Cicely Neville, her own mother.

Neither Isabella nor Cicely had sought to dominate their husbands, something that would have been inconceivable anyhow; they were not Margaret of Anjou. Nor were they presented with Margaret of Anjou's opportunity: their husbands retained their sanity, although Philip the Good's mental deterioration did allow Isabella a little more direct power towards the mid 1460s. Indirect power, or derived power, was something that Margaret of York experienced frequently, too. Supplementing her husband's authority with her own as duchess of Burgundy was nothing new. Isabella had done this before her.

Somehow, Margaret was different. This difference is rather difficult to quantify, but, in essence, Margaret was a royal princess, sister to an anointed king. And not just any anointed king, but the king of England. When his sister's wedding was announced to parliament, Edward did his utmost to convince the House of Commons that this was not a mismatch. There were murmurs that an English princess should not marry a mere duke. Charles the Bold was hardly a mere duke, of course, but still, his wife was royal, he was not. Charles's desperate campaigns in the Rhineland and the Alsace to gain a royal title, his failed diplomatic initiative at Trier in 1473, Margaret's own pilgrimage to Aachen, all underlie the fact that, in many respects, she ranked higher on the feudal scale.

This did underpin Margaret's authority: England was to remain essential to her power in the Low Countries until the day she died. The natural awe felt for anointed monarchs may not always have been in evidence during the fifteenth century. Henry

VI and Richard III were killed, Margaret's brother, George, suffered the same fate. However, as pointed out, Margaret did not share the scaffold with Hugonet and De Brimeau in 1477, and Maximilian, whilst he had to witness the decapitation of many of his followers whilst in captivity in Brugge in 1488, survived unscathed himself. If there is any truth in the accusations levelled at Margaret by Bacon, Thomas More, Bernard André and others, that she hated Henry VII, then surely she did so because he had usurped some of the basis on which her authority rested.

Margaret's authority also derived from her relationship with key members of the Burgundian dynasty. Ranking first in importance is her marriage to Charles the Bold. The duke *was* Burgundy, for it was in his person that the disparate territories under his rule were united. Margaret was important because her husband was important. Once more, this is not gender-specific: the same was true for Maximilian. He was important as the husband of Mary, and, subsequently, as the father of Philip the Fair. Margaret chaired the Estates of the diverse principalities under Burgundian rule, as well as the Estates General. She demanded tax contributions, soldiers and weapons for the wars in the Rhineland and the Alsace, compliance with the law, but always on Charles's behalf. The only change in this after his death, was that she now issued calls on behalf of Mary, and, after her death in 1482, on behalf of the regent Maximilian.

Charles's death, did, however, change two things. In the first place, she reaped the – unlooked for – rewards for her love for Mary. Her step-daughter invested Margaret with an enormous dowry, despite the fact that Edward IV had failed to pay the full sum of her dowry. This turned Margaret into one of the major landowners of the Low Countries. The legal impediment that as a woman she could not swear fealty for her new lands was hardly significant. Here was the financial basis for real power, real power, too, in the number of fighting men the extremely loyal dowry towns provided Margaret with.

The second major change to occur in the structure of Margaret of York's authority after January 1477 was that she was no longer one half of the ruling couple. Instead, Margaret became the personification of the traditions of the Valois dynasty, if only in her closeness to Mary, and her subsequent guardianship over Mary's children. As

such, she attracted men into her service who had helped shape those traditions, men such as Olivier de la Marche and Gilles Binchois. Had Charles and Isabella been around to witness this, they would have been congratulating themselves. When they constructed Margaret's household in 1468, they had done everything to ensure that the English princess would acculturate to the Burgundian way of doing things.

Margaret was not only joined by men of culture, she also came to sit at the centre of an extensive affinity of men who had previously had a track-record of loyalty to Charles the Bold. The De Glymes, Engelbrecht II of Nassau, Josse de Lalaing, Jeanne de la Clyte, the daughters and wives of Huguenot and De Brimeu, the Wittems, and the children of her brother-in-law, Anthony, the Great Bastard, combined to provide Margaret with another basis for her authority. Based in part on her links with England, and in part on the fact that she represented the continuity of the Burgundian tradition, *Madame la Grande* could count on the support of some of the most illustrious families in the Low Countries *and* their retainers.

Arguably most important of all, Margaret could count on the Church. Her own undoubted piety contributed to a very close association between the leaders of the reform party within the Church in the Low Countries and Margaret of York. This could not fail to enhance Margaret's authority. Friars of such stature as Jacob Sprenger, O.P., Michael Francisci, O.P., Jan van Uytenhove, O.P., Laurent Muschelede, O.Cart. and Herman de Zutphen, O.F.M., to name but a few, all aided, and were in turn aided by, Margaret of York. Nor did she confine her friendship to the religious. It ranged from lesser lights, such as her almoner, Nicholas Finet, to grandees of the Church like Ferry, cardinal de Clugny, and no-one was closer to the duchess than Henri de Glymes, bishop of Cambrai.

These men did more than provide tangible support to Margaret. They also helped shape her intellectual world. Religion underpinned the medieval world, as much as it did the Europe of the sixteenth century. Through religion, through her faith, Margaret was able to construct a vision which was both political and religious, social and cultural. We are very fortunate that this is one part of Margaret's life for which the documentation is more than abundant. Enough of her book collection has survived to

allow her intellectual world to be reconstructed. *Renovatio* in all areas of public life became the cornerstone of Margaret's view of the world.

The importance of this intellectual foundation cannot be overestimated. It guided Margaret through some of the most dreadful experiences known to humanity. It also gave her a compass by which to steer. Most importantly from the perspective of Margaret's authority, her interest in *renovatio* earned her the respect of her contemporaries. That implacable enemy of the house of Burgundy, Louis XI of France, who had little reason to like Margaret, nonetheless approved of her involvement with the reform of the Poor Clares in Paris. Closer to home, her need to reform not only brought her into contact with churchmen, but also with humanists, although the two categories frequently overlapped. And they were impressed by Margaret, as impressed as the men of the cloister. They poured out their affection for the deeds of the dowager after her death, in some cases a considerable time after her death.

The basis for Margaret's authority, then, was multifarious and complex. It was also subject to profound change. However, it answers only in part to some of the existing theories on female power and authority. Yes, becoming a widow changed Margaret's position, and the possession of extensive lands helped greatly, too. Her ostentatious piety and her friendship with men of the Church are also commonly acknowledged elements shaping the authority of women. However, in Margaret's case one may add several additional ingredients to this. There is her affinity, both lay and clerical. Not that it is unknown for late medieval women of power to have an affinity, but in Margaret's case we can trace it into every nook and cranny of the Low Countries, vaulting over boundaries, penetrating into almost every class of society. The function of women and men within this affinity can be explored, and frequently one may detect women to be as important as, or even more important than, men.

Different is also the deep intellectual foundation of her power, and the fact that her barrenness never caused her political disquiet. Her gender appears to have been less of a boundary to Margaret than most would expect. Instead, the real obstacles in her way were those faced by her contemporary males: the fluctuation of fortune in war, death in the family, and the ambitions of the ruling classes in the towns of Flanders.

To this may be added the chronic partisan conflict in almost all the principalities in the Low Countries. Nobody ever seems to have turned on Margaret of York in quite the same way as they turned on Margaret of Anjou, or on Elizabeth Woodville, with the exception of the coterie of Henry VII, who had reason to fear 'Juno'.

Of course, this was partly the case because Margaret knew how to behave. She ensured that expressions of her authority never exceeded the expectations of onlookers. Her pilgrimage to Aachen serves as the perfect example. The German chroniclers were convinced that they witnessed the pious wife of the aggressive duke of Burgundy coming to make amends. The statement implicit in the donation of her wedding crown cannot have been lost on them, but they either preferred to ignore the gesture, or considered it secondary to the pilgrimage. This 'blindness' allowed Margaret to express and, indeed, exercise her authority with little hindrance.

It is in the exercise of her authority where the boundary between influence and power becomes important. It is a most crucial distinction, and one for which Margaret of York may, paradoxically, not be the most applicable case-study. Officially, Margaret held no power outside her dower. She never once became the regent in the Low Countries, never once held a function that forced others to obey her commands. Only the honorific '*Madame la Grande*' entitled her to expect some power, and a little more than when she was duchess of Burgundy in the shadow of Charles the Bold. In this respect, she resembles Cicely Neville, Margaret Beaufort and Isabella of Portugal. However, these three all had sons, where Margaret had no children at all.

Margaret of York's authority, then, did not translate into direct and solidly founded power, but rather in influence. This fact enhances the importance of her authority even more. She had to supplement the slender powerbase contained within her titles of duchess and *Madame la Grande* if she were to exercise any power. This she managed by assiduously nurturing the channels through which she could exercise her influence. That this had its limitations has been shown, but, these notwithstanding, this policy allowed Margaret of York to make a strong mark upon the historical development of the Low Countries, and upon the relations between England and the Low Countries.

Within the Low Countries, her greatest legacy was the union between Mary and Maximilian. More than anyone, Margaret exerted herself to bring about the marriage that her husband had agreed upon in the months before his death. It could be argued that without Margaret's total commitment, Maximilian would never have arrived in the Low Countries. Historians are not meant to speculate, but the question 'what if' is surely pertinent here. The Habsburg wedding not only ensured that the Low Countries were brought within the wider world governed by that dynasty, but it also marked the real start of the house of Habsburg as a European power. Frederick III, for all that he was the Holy Roman Emperor, could not even defend his own capital against his Hungarian neighbours; Maximilian had his own failures and disappointments, but did manage to stem the French attacks on the Low Countries, and, most crucial of all, managed to acquire the Spanish crowns for his son and grandson. None of that would have even been conceivable if it had not been for his marriage to Mary. Maximilian knew what he owed to Margaret, and always showed his gratitude.

Madame la Grande also helped shape the new geography of the Low Countries. During Margaret's life, the heartland of the region moved, slowly but irrevocably, away from Artois and Flanders, towards Brabant, Zeeland, and Holland. Only Hainaut managed to weather the storm. It would be foolhardy to argue that this was Margaret of York's doing. Economic forces, demographic pressures, and political expediency all played their roles. However, it is more than a coincidence that the new political heartland of the Low Countries came to centre on an axis which ran from her dower town of Binche in the south, to that of Brielle in the north. Nor was it simple fate that Mechelen became the political centre: the town on the Dijle had hardly featured in Burgundy prior to it being promised to Margaret as part of her dower.

These were the regions which stayed absolutely loyal to the dynasty, first in 1477 (although they were not spared some turbulence), and, most importantly, during the civil wars which followed the death of Mary. Their loyalty had been to the new Habsburg regime, and Margaret had played a major role in delivering this loyalty. The same may be said of the noble families whose stars rose as a result of their

support for Maximilian. Most, if not all, had been prominent under the Valois, but it is very striking that almost all of those who stayed loyal to Maximilian can also be found in Margaret's affinity. This evidence is further enhanced by the spectacular rise to prominence of the De Glymes, whose father had been a small player at the courts of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold, but who occupied major posts under Mary, Maximilian, Philip the Fair and beyond.

Finally, by approaching Margaret of York's life in a thematic fashion, her strong contribution to the exchange of ideas and culture between England and the Low Countries has emerged. Most noticeable amongst these contributions was her relationship with England's first printer, William Caxton. She not only patronised Caxton, she also helped him compose his first translated publication. This is not a new discovery, but, set amongst the other evidence, is symptomatic of the wider impact of the duchess. The tantalising glimpse of her involvement in helping Edward IV's foundation of Observant Franciscans at Greenwich, contained within the one folio that has survived of a richly illuminated gradual, only serves to underline Margaret's role in cultural exchange. This exchange was not merely a one-way traffic, where the wealth of Burgundy fertilised the poverty of England. Again looking at music, we saw the use of English melodies during her wedding. There was also the commonly held culture, that of noble pageantries, which Margaret observed both in England and in Burgundy. She certainly contributed to this in the Low Countries, but, as the description by the Rožmitál embassy shows, played her role in England, too. And, although the evidence for her patronage of the great artists of the Low Countries is slight, just enough has survived to realise that this princess of England helped shape the cultural heritage of her adopted home.

The Orkney poet, George Mackay Brown, wrote that historians and poets see the same thing, but with differing eyes. Wistfully, one has to concur. And although Margaret of York never caught Shakespeare's eye, she has had her admirers. Appropriately, poems on the princess have appeared in the last two decades in English and in French, but published in Dutch. I will let these poets have the last word.

“Her white hands rest on the page she read that day
But her face outstares the future, and her eyes are far away...”¹

“Out of the fading, fadeless past, from shadows
Of these, and future deeds and thoughts; I felt,
At first, only awareness of her presence”.²

Margaret’s Belgian admirer was, appropriately, born and bred in Mechelen. Juliette Decreus wrote this in French, but it was published in Dutch in a translation by Erik Verstraete. This is appropriate, too: *Madame la Grande* would have recognised the linguistic variety.

“De Witte Roos.

Van op je muren zag de Witte Roos,
Tussen intrige en gebed,
Heel haar nobel huis bezwijken.
Dat was aan verraad of wraak te wijten.

Fluwelen weduwe, wier mouwen ooit
Twee prinsenhoofdjes wiegden,
De enige spruiten van een andere vrouw ...
Geen vrucht deed ooit je heupen zwellen.

Mechelen, jij koos haar kant,
Toen naar de steden van haar rechtsgebied
Brugge en Gent haar verbanden.

Tien dagen liet jij de doodsklok luiden
Voor Margaretha van Engeland
En je glans versomberde in haar dood”.³

¹ Smithies, A., *A flame of roses four poems for Margaret of York*, 18.

² Ibid, 19.

³ Decreus, J., *Mechelen, mijn echo*, 15.