From Agincourt (1415) to Fornovo (1495) : aspects of the writing of warfare in French and Burgundian 15th century historiographical literature

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FROM AGINCOURT (1415) TO FORNOVO (1495) : Aspects of the Writing of Warfare in French and Burgundian 15th Century Historiographical Literature

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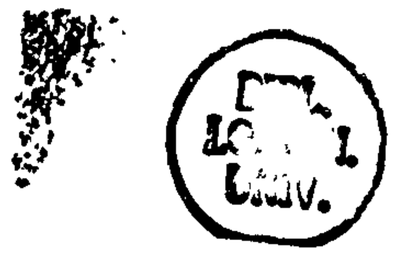

Abstract

The object of this thesis is to inquire into some major aspects of the historiographical writing of war in France and Burgundy, from Henry V's invasion of France in 1415 to the first wars of Italy. A comparative methodology is used to study the emergence and establishment, in Burgundy, then in France, of an official and semi-official writing of the prince's wars; these authoritative accounts are contrasted with independent versions. The thesis demonstrates that the writing of war promoted by the Dukes of Burgundy greatly influenced French chronicles, although the specific, national features of the early Renaissance French writing of war are also exemplified.

The evolution of the writing of war is examined through the analysis of the treatment, by contemporaries, of selected episodes of French and Burgundian history, ranging chronologically from 1415 to 1500. Two themes are considered: the ideology of the prince's wars, and the representation of the prince's soldiers. The two are connected, for the prince's interest was that his agents in his wars – mainly, the nobility – should accept, and be flattered by, their representation in accounts of the prince's deeds. The development of a propagandist discourse in the official historiography of Burgundy and France is delineated; particular attention is given to the concept of the *guerre de magnificence*, which is seen, as far as Burgundy is concerned, in the context of Philip the Good's crusading endeavours. The crisis experienced in Burgundy, with the practical failure of the Dukes' *guerres de magnificence*, contrasts with the French propagandist discourse, which appears increasingly confident as France emerged victoriously from the trauma of the Hundred Years War and became, through the wars of Italy, a fearsome conquering nation. The evolution, in French historiography, of the Joan of Arc epic demonstrates more precisely the shaping of the discourse on defensive war, while the treatment of offensive war is seen through accounts of Charles VIII's descent into Italy.

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Introduction

Per que-m plai ben dels reis auzir la bomba,
Que n'aion ops paisson, cordas e pom,
E-n sion trap tendut per fors jazer,
E-nz encontrem a milliers et a cens,
Si c'apres nos en chant hom puois de gesta.

Aussi, j'aime bien entendre le tumulte des rois, et que leur servent pieux, cordes et pommes, et que soient dressées les tentes pour permettre de coucher dehors et que nous nous rencontrions par milliers, par centaines, de sorte qu'après nous la postérité chante sur notre geste.

Bertran de Born, 'Non puosc mudar mon chantar non esparga'[1]

Our fantasy of the Middle Ages resounds with the din of trumpets, the clash of armour and the neighing of horses. However romantic or dramatic this image may be, it is quite hyperbolic: Philippe Contamine, the acknowledged French expert in medieval warfare, recently stressed that the Middles Ages were 'une période faussement militaire', concluding with the words: 'Le Moyen Âge a aussi connu les paix, la paix'[2]. But Contamine also acknowledged that, even in times of peace, war was an element of medieval man's usual horizon; the imposing presence of fortresses, for instance, was a constant reminder that war could always break out. War was seen as a predestined ingredient of life; this is expressed, for instance, in the opening lines of Jean de Bueil's *Jouvencel*, a 15th century manual for candidates for a military career, as the author explained: 'Au commencement de ce monde, après que

[1] *L'amour et la guerre: l'œuvre de Bertran de Born*, ed. and transl. G. GOUIRAN, 2 vol., Aix en Provence / Marseille, Université de Provence / Lafitte, 1985, II, 576, v. 4-8 (transl. p. 577).
[2] Cf. 'Le Moyen Âge, une période faussement militaire', interview with P. CONTAMINE, in *L'art de la guerre au Moyen Âge, Historia Spécial*, 55 (September / October 1998), 110-116 (p. 116).

Dieu eut creé l'homme et la femme et qu'il eut produit toutes choses pour servir à l'homme [...], ne fut pas longuement la terre en paix'. Envy was the source of the first ever conflict, when Cain slew his brother Abel; shooting forth from the seeds of discord, war soon spread its branches over the whole world[3].

Jean de Bueil's metaphoric comments and biblical references were, however, greatly simplifying the issue. The modern historian R. A. Brown forcefully illustrated how crucial the political aspect of conflicts was to the understanding of medieval and early modern warfare, stating: 'The origins of Europe were hammered out on the anvil of war'[4]. In the late Middle Ages, the period in which we shall interest ourselves, war was more than ever before the business of states - one can already talk of nation-states in many instances - struggling to assert their sovereignty, extend their dominions, or simply survive. At the same time, the fear or love of war was deeply rooted in contemporary society: war was mainly the instrument for the making of nation-states, but it also pre-existed the state in people's minds. This applies in particular to the aristocracy, the land-owning caste, whose very function was to fight for those who worked, or prayed, for the community. As Contamine has rightly emphasized: 'la particularité de la guerre médiévale est d'être, comme la chasse, un mode de vie en dehors des structures étatiques. Elle surgit de la base; elle échappe aux 'décideurs' - les lieutenants du roi ou le roi lui-même'[5]. In the late Middle Ages, rulers were striving to channel and exploit these warlike impulses for their own profit. The story of the exploitation, by the Dukes of Burgundy and the Kings of France, of the nobility's martial drives and ideals will be one of the main themes of this thesis.

Perhaps more than any other contemporary artistic representation of war, the late medieval writing of warfare exposes the dichotomy between war as instrument of the state, and war as a natural and human force, differently apprehended by different members of medieval society. The historiography of the times is a particularly

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[3] JEAN DE BUEIL, *Le Jouvencel*, ed. C. FAVRE and L. LECESTRE for the SHF, 2 vol., Paris, Renouard, 1887-1889, I, 13.
[4] Quotation found in M. HOWARD, *War in European History*, London / Oxford / NewYork, Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 1.
[5] Cf. 'Le Moyen Âge, une période faussement militaire', p. 112.

interesting field of study, because it is primarily concerned with wars, the latter being the most dramatic events that disrupted ordinary life; from reading medieval chronicles, we do feel as if the stuff of history was basically warfare, however exaggerated this idea may be. All chroniclers wrote mainly of wars, whether they glorified or deplored them; many explicitly devoted their works to the recording of military deeds. Thus, the writing of war in the Middle Ages coincides to a great extent with the writing of history. It happens that the 15th century is a strikingly rich period as regards historiography, at least for France and its powerful, ambitious vassal region, the Duchy of Burgundy. Educated contemporaries seem to have been seized with a feverish urge to immortalize the remarkable events of their age in writing, and rulers were quick to promote official writings of their reign, to produce definitive versions of their deeds. War naturally figured in the forefront of these histories, either by choice or by virtue of its immediacy. Moreover, the period is particularly interesting with regard to warfare: from the renewal of the Hundred Years War, to the French adventures in Italy, the century saw countless dramatic events which greatly modified contemporary geopolitics. In addition, it was a period when warfare was evolving with sensational and disturbing momentum: the slaughter of the French chivalry by the English archers at Agincourt, that of the Burgundian nobility by the Swiss pikemen at Morat, or the successes achieved by Charles VIII against the Italians, thanks notably to his impressive artillery train, demonstrate how rapidly tactics and techniques evolved during the century. Last but not least, the mid-15th century saw the birth of the French standing army, a crucial event with great consequences in the social, political and, naturally, military domains, in France and in other European states, as the latter were inspired by France's example.

In this thesis, I propose to consider the history of the writing of warfare in 15th century France and in her powerful, culturally active vassal territory, the Duchy of Burgundy. This study will further our understanding of the 'cultura della guerra' – the culture of war, the words Franco Cardini used to describe the impact of warfare on ways of thinking, art, literature, and the whole European civilization, from the

early Middle Ages to the French Revolution[6] – and provide more information on a particular stage of its evolution, during a period often described as the pre-Renaissance[7], when Northern Europe was still medieval in most respects, yet entering the Renaissance through various aspects of its civilization. The culture of war of the pre-Renaissance period is a vast field to explore; modern historians have already settled down to the task, seeking the clues that explained it in all of the constituents of contemporary European civilization: letters and edicts, artistic representations, literature and historiography. Particular attention has been paid to the concept of chivalry, because of its importance in the military, political, and social affairs of the 15th century[8]. Chivalry will of course be one of the main themes of my study: whether extolled or demystified, it was an unavoidable element of the writing of war. As regards my sources, I have chosen to concentrate exclusively on historiography, with the design of analysing the various trends of recording of wars that existed in Burgundy and France, and their evolution.

Over the last thirty years, there has been a remarkable rise of interest in the chroniclers of the 15th century, especially the *rhétoriqueurs* of Burgundy. Modern scholars have shown that the *rhétoriqueurs*' bombastic and mannered language, as well as their propagandistic stance, did not necessarily make their discourse banal or flat[9], especially in the case of works as ideologically rich as Georges Chastelain's chronicle. Most of the major *rhétoriqueurs* or other French and Burgundian chroniclers of the period now each have their recognized modern specialist. Jean Dufournet and Jean-Claude Delclos have enlightened us respectively on Philippe de Commynes' *Mémoires*[10] and Georges Chastelain's *Chronique*[11]; very recently, Jean Devaux and Mark Spencer have established themselves as the experts respectively on

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[6] Cf. F. CARDINI, *La culture de la guerre, Xe-XVIIIe siècle*, transl. A. LÉVI, Paris, Gallimard, 1992 (first published in Florence, 1982, as *Quell'Antica Festa Crudele, Guerra et cultura della guerra dall'età feudale alle Grande Rivoluzione*).

[7] See for instance C. MOSSÉ, *Les Histoires de l'Histoire*, vol. 2: *La Pré-Renaissance*, Paris, Acropole, 1982.

[8] See Chapter 1, note 7 for a list of modern sources on late medieval chivalry.

[9] The works of Paul Zumthor initiated the rehabilitation of the Burgundian *rhétoriqueurs* and of their later French homonyms. See especially his book *Le masque et la lumière. La poétique des grands rhétoriqueurs*, Paris, Seuil, 1978.

[10] See Jean Dufournet's collection of his best articles on Commynes: J. DUFOURNET, *Philippe de Commynes. Un historien à l'aube des temps modernes*, Brussels, De Boeck-Wesmael, 1994.

[11] Cf. Delclos' thesis on Chastelain: J. -C. DELCLOS, *Le témoignage de Georges Chastellain, historiographe de Philippe le Bon et de Charles le Téméraire*, Geneva, Droz, 1980.

Jean Molinet and Thomas Basin, thanks to their much needed monographs[12]. These modern scholars, and others, have naturally examined in some detail the views on war in general, or on particular wars, professed by the author they studied. Chastelain, Molinet or Commynes' thoughts on war will of course be examined and contrasted in this thesis, yet I also intend to analyse the testimony of other historiographers who have been somewhat neglected by modern critics, such as Gilles Le Bouvier, Pierre Cochon, Jean de Wavrin and Jean d'Auton.

In an illuminating article, Jean-Claude Delclos contrasted Commynes' pragmatic and realistic recording of wars with the chivalrous and exalted accounts of military deeds found in the early part of Chastelain's chronicle[13]. The critic concluded his piece by stating that his comments were only a starting-point: to understand the reason for the two authors' differing views of war, one needed to consider their writings in the broader context of the whole 15th century historiographical scene, and to seek the causes of their particular visions in their own experiences. Extending Delclos' analysis to the whole of the century's historiographical writing of warfare, I have tried to further his observations, to show the different existing traditions, the developing schools, emphasize the various trends of writing of war and the idiosyncrasies of certain authors. Also, I have tried to answer the questions that he raised, applying them not simply to Chastelain and Commynes, but to other authors, by examining each chronicler's contribution to the writing of war in the historical, political and literary context of the times - an external factor of considerable importance for us if we want to understand why authors wrote warfare the way they did, and less likely to be influenced by our subjectivity than a study of the chroniclers' psychology.

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[12] Cf. J. DEVAUX, *Jean Molinet, indiciaire bourguignon*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 1996 (*Bibliothèque du XVe siècle*, LV); M. SPENCER, *Thomas Basin (1412-1490). The History of Charles VII and Louis XI*, Nieuwkoop, De Graaf, 1997.

[13] J. -C. DELCLOS, 'Les rayons et les ombres de la guerre à la fin du Moyen Age: Georges Chastellain et Philippe de Commynes', in *La bataille, l'armée, la gloire. 1745-1871. Actes du colloque international de Clermont-Ferrand*, ed. P. VIABLANEIX and J. EHRARD, Clermont-Ferrand, Association des publications de la faculté de lettres et sciences humaines de Clermont-Ferrand, 1985, t. 1, p. 21-34.

The primary theme of my study is the shaping of an official, propagandist writing of the prince's wars, in Burgundy, then in France, following the Burgundian example. Official accounts of the princes' wars will be contrasted with other, independent versions. We shall see how the Dukes of Burgundy promoted a chivalrous, heroic and partisan recording of their wars; the genre then established itself in France - with, however, some important national peculiarities - to the detriment of an old, once well-established type of historiography, which I have termed the 'clerical' chronicle. Philippe de Commynes' *Mémoires* then introduced a new writing of war which stands out as *the* alternative genre at the end of the 15th century; its triumph, however, would only happen in the next century.

The writing of war by the French and Burgundian official, semi-official and independent historiographers will be analysed and contrasted through the study of their treatment of two main topics: the ideology of the prince's wars, and the depiction of the prince's soldiers - mainly, the knights. These are closely connected, for the princes' interest was that the historiography of their states should reflect the image of the soldier they wanted to promote, and that the *noblesse d'épée* should accept, as well as be flattered by, this representation. My second theme, which is more straightforwardly ideological, will be the cause of the princes' wars. The sheer variety of the military conflicts that took place in France and Burgundy in the 15th century, and the length of the span of time I have chosen to study - which seemed necessary, to bring out a manifest pattern of evolution - made it impossible for me to consider every different kind of conflict. Instead, I have picked out some of the most dramatic events of the century: mainly, the renewal of the Hundred Years War, and, at the other end of the century, France's spectacular offensive in Italy. I also consider one episode which, considering its poor results, may appear inconsequential, but which, ideologically, seems to me very important: the crusading actions and endeavours of Philip the Good of Burgundy, from 1444 to 1463. We shall see how France, emerging as a victor from the traumatic Hundred Years War conflict, became increasingly self-confident and triumphant in her historiographical discourse about her wars, drawing inspiration from the Burgundian chroniclers' writing of their Dukes' wars. Particular attention will be paid to a concept developed by the chroniclers of Burgundy, the *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*. When, at the

dawn of the 16th century, the Kings of France embark on their impressive wars of conquest in Italy, their official writers will exploit the theme of the *guerre de magnificence* to present, extol and excuse their patron's aggressive and ambitious Italian adventures.

The reader will soon note that I have made little use of the methodology of modern literary criticism, though I have not altogether ignored it. This is partly due to the fact that my sources, as my conclusions, are primarily of a historical nature. Naturally, the literary aspect of the sources has not been neglected: quite the contrary, since one of the concerns of the Burgundian and French official chroniclers was the development of an artistic discourse, with an emphasis on form. However, to modern criticism, I have preferred a comparative methodology, which the sheer variety of my sources seemed to favour. Arguing from analogy and contrast between French, Burgundian and, accessorily, foreign sources, I have endeavoured to define the affinities between the various 15th century testimonies on war, and their differences, as well as to bring out patterns of development both in sources and themes.

A long introductory chapter will present a panorama of the recording of the 'war of the knights' as it developed in France and Burgundy from approximately 1415 to 1460. We shall see how Philip the Good soon established in Burgundy a distinguished official writing of war which glorified the 'war of the knights', flattering the nobility by exploiting the ideals of chivalry which the Dukes of Burgundy had themselves embraced. Two different genres of recording wars existed in France, the clerical and the chivalrous; the chivalrous chronicle, more sober and pragmatic than its Burgundian homonym, and already patriotic, would become France's first official historiography. The second chapter will deal with the shaping, in France, from 1429 to the early 16th century, of a propagandist official discourse about God's support for the King of France's wars, through the study of the treatment of the episode of Joan of Arc. In the two following chapters, we shall return to Burgundy, and examine Philip the Good's crusading endeavours, from 1444 to 1463. The Burgundian accounts of Philip's crusading efforts will allow a definition of the *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*, a magnanimous action performed by the prince to acquire renown and increase his state's prestige. I shall expose, however, the

ambiguity in Burgundian accounts of Philip's *guerre de magnificence*, and contrast it with France's triumphant narratives of Charles VIII's descent into Italy, also implicitly presented by the French official chroniclers of the early Renaissance as a *guerre de magnificence*, despite the failure of Charles' crusading ambitions (Chapter 5). These boastful, chivalrous French accounts of the first war of Italy will be contrasted with the lucid and moralizing version of Philippe de Commynes, which appears as the only alternative to the partisan discourse (Chapter 6). Finally, I shall return to the issue of the representation of the soldier, this time in the official historiography of France at the dawn of the 16th century (Chapter 7); we shall see how the early Renaissance French chroniclers modelled their representation of the actors of Charles VIII and Louis XII's *guerres de magnificence* upon the heroic pattern of the Valois Dukes of Burgundy's historiography, yet presented a more modern, pragmatic and militant image of the French soldier, and of the French army, reflecting in particular the new bonds that effectively united the Kings of France to their agents in their wars.

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Enguerran de Monstrelet, Jean Lefèvre de Saint-Rémy, Jean de Wavrin, Georges Chastelain, Olivier de La Marche, Jean Molinet, Philippe de Commynes and Jean d'Auton are the primary sources in several volumes that I have used most, and will be referred to throughout this work using two numbers between brackets. The roman number will indicate the tome and the arabic number the page. The tome and page numbers refer to the following editions:

- ENGUERRAN DE MONSTRELET, *Chronique*, ed. L. DOUËT D'ARCQ for the SHF, 6 vol., Paris, Ve Renouard, 1857-1862.
- JEAN LEFÈVRE DE SAINT-RÉMY, *Chronique,* ed. F. MORAND for the SHF, 2 vol., Paris, Renouard, 1876-1881.
- JEAN DE WAVRIN, *Recueil des croniques et anchiennes istories de la Grant Bretaigne, à présent nommé Engleterre*, ed. W. HARDY and E. L. C. P. HARDY , 5

vol., London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1864-1891 (Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores).

- GEORGES CHASTELAIN, *Œuvres*, ed. J. M. B. C. KERVYN DE LETTENHOVE, 8 vol., Geneva, Slatkine Reprints, 1971 (reprint of the classic edition of Brussels, Heussner, 1863-1866).
- OLIVIER DE LA MARCHE, *Mémoires*, ed. H. BEAUNE and J. D'ARBAUMONT for the SHF, 4 vol., Paris, Renouard, 1883-1888.
- JEAN MOLINET, *Chroniques,* ed. G. DOUTREPONT and O. JODOGNE, 3 vol., Brussels, Palais des Académies, 1935-1937[14].
- PHILIPPE DE COMMYNES, *Mémoires*, ed. J. CALMETTE and G. DURVILLE, 3 vol., Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1964-1965 (2nd ed., 1st pub. Paris, Honoré Champion, 1924-1925).
- JEAN D'AUTON, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. DE MAULDE LA CLAVIÈRE for the SHF, 4 vol., Paris, Renouard, 1889-1895.

Chastelain's name is spelt by some scholars as 'Chastellain', and by others as 'Chastelain'. I will write 'Chastelain', but the name may appear as 'Chastellain' in the title of the articles or books referred to in my footnotes.

SHF stands for Société de l'Histoire de France, SATF for Société des Anciens Textes Français, and ADN for Archives départementales du Nord.

In all quotations taken from 19th and 20th century editions, I have kept the spelling and punctuation used by the editors. However, as William Hardy did not put any accents or apostrophes in his edition of Wavrin's chronicle, I have added some accents and all apostrophes to my quotations from Wavrin.

In all quotations from early printed books, I have made the distinction between i and j, u and v, a and à, ou and où. I have added apostrophes, as well as accents in some places to clarify the meaning; I have also changed the punctuation, some uses of capital letters, and expanded abbreviations.

Primary sources will be systematically referred to by Christian name -stated in full - and name in the footnotes (or by numbers between brackets in the core of the text, as indicated above), to differentiate them from modern works.

Some footnotes may appear on the page following that where they were supposed to be printed. I must apologize for this problem with my word-processing programme, which has baffled technicians consulted !

Finally, I wish to thank my supervisor Prof. Michael J. Heath for his valuable help and constant support, as well as Prof. Valerie Worth, Dr. Jan Willem Honig, Dr. Siegbert Himmelsbach, Madame la Conservatrice Nathalie Genet-Rouffiac, David Lingham, Vasiliki Kotini and Chrisi Kotsifou for the help and advice which they have kindly provided.

The thesis is dedicated to my parents.

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[14] Molinet's *Faictz et dictz* will be referred to in footnotes.

Contrasting ideals and practice of the 'war of the knights' in early 15th century iconography (Fig. 1 and 2)

Fig. 1. Knight arming for battle. From a manuscript collection of poems by Christine de Pisan, c. 1415.

Fig. 2. Soldiers looting a house. Illumination of c. 1398.

Chapter 1: When France was a battlefield (1415-c. 1430). The 'war of the knights' in French and Burgundian accounts of the English invasion

Car le sauvement de vos ames
Ferez, et sera mencion
A tousjours de voz belles armes ;
De revenchier l'extorcion
Et d'estre la deffension
De femmes vesves et pucelles ;
Si en arez salvacion
Et honneur en toutes querelles.

Christine de Pisan, *Ballade*[1]

• Introduction

Chivalry is such a central notion in the ideology of medieval and Renaissance warfare, that it seems natural to open a study of the writing of warfare in 15th century French and Burgundian historiography with an analysis of the depiction of the 'war of the knights', in the chronicles of the Kingdom of France and the Duchy of Burgundy, towards the beginning of the century. Amongst all the representatives of medieval society, the knight was a predominant figure. His familiar silhouette, complete with armour and horse, appears regularly in paintings, inside churches, and in manuscript illuminations. By the beginning of the 15th century, the knight was slowly losing his tactical importance on the battlefield; as early as 1346, Edward III had destroyed the chivalry of France by forcing his knights to dismount and fight alongside the infantry, thus offering his archers an important role, rather than an

[1] *Œuvres poétiques de Christine de Pisan,* ed. M. ROY, Paris, Firmin Didot, 1886-1896, I, 211, v. 9-16.

auxiliary one. And the English archers would again slay the nobility of France at Agincourt in 1415. However, in France and Burgundy notably, knights still considered themselves as the pre-eminent force of the army. Indeed, knighthood, service for the suzerain in his wars, on horseback and clad in armour, primarily concerned the aristocracy, the land-owning class, those who dominated their world both politically and socially. Knights were regarded as the military elite from the beginning of the feudal era, at the dawn of the 10th century, when the heavy cavalry, which would for a long time remain the most powerful tactical element of an army, started to monopolize battlefields[2]. Traditionally, the aristocracy's role was to protect the clergy and the labourers, and the obligations a land-owner owed to his lord included a regular military service. The army was mostly a business for the nobility. By the 14th and 15th centuries, however, things were beginning to evolve. Rulers were increasingly aware of the tactical worth of the infantry. The sons of rich burgesses were often attracted by the prospects of a military career. And the Hundred Years War had brought forth a swarm of *routiers*, some of these bands being led by men of low social origin, who sought fortune through the exercise of arms. As a result, there were comparatively more prospects of a military career for the people[3].

By the 15th century, an entire mythology had grown around the figure of the knight. The role of chivalry was thus greatly embellished, partly for the aristocracy's own pleasure, and partly as a result of the knights' wish to differentiate themselves from the rest of medieval society, a need more acutely felt as knights were losing their tactical importance. Throughout the Middle Ages, poets and romance authors provided knights with heroes whom they could take as models. The *Chanson de Roland*, composed during the 11th century, promoted, through the figures of Roland and Olivier, the ideal of valiant knights, loyal to their lords, fighting to protect the faith. In the 12th century, Chrétien de Troyes and the circle of Marie de France introduced, with the heroes of King Arthur's court, the figure of the courteous knight, whose deeds are inspired by the love of a lady. In the 14th century, Froissart transformed the actors of the Hundred Years War into romance heroes. In his

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[2] On the tactical importance of the heavy cavalry during the feudal era see P. CONTAMINE, *La guerre au Moyen Age*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1980, p. 132, 153-155, 316-317.
[3] On knighthood and the evolution of warfare during the Middle Ages see *ibid.*, p. 232-306, 390-405, and HOWARD, p. 1-19.

Chroniques, knights act according to a well-defined code of chivalry : they must be brave and fierce on the battlefield but also courteous with each other, respecting their enemies who belong to the same social class and acknowledge the same ideals, whilst behaving gallantly with the ladies at court. With Froissart, chivalry appears as an international brotherhood. At the same time, amongst a constantly developing literature on war and the conduct of warfare, treatises on chivalry, from Ramon Llull's *Le libre del orde de cavalleria* (end of 13th century) to Geoffroy de Charni's *Livre de chevalerie* (before 1356), were multiplying. These treatises were defining the code of chivalry which differentiated the knight from an ordinary soldier. Apart from some very innovative works such as Jean de Bueil's celebrated *Jouvencel* - which in France would herald the age of the professional soldier - most of these treatises on chivalry appear very conservative in their conception of knighthood. The *Livre de chevalerie* of Geoffroi de Charny is in this respect very typical: written in a time of crisis after the resounding defeats of Sluys (1340) and Crécy (1346), and with the intention of responding to a need for reforms, it could only offer as a solution a return to the honoured values of chivalry[4]. Chief amongst them featured 'proesce', the martial virtue par excellence, the ability and will to perform great deeds of arms. Charny explained that the 'haute honnour de proesce' was to be the object of a personal quest for all those who wanted to distinguish themselves in the practice of arms. The 'preus', those who did possess this virtue of 'proesce', started very young, by listening to the advice and tales of 'faiz d'armes' of great knights. Their dearest wish was to 'monter a cheval et [...] eulx armer'. Many of these men started their career by winning fame in tourneys, but all eventually realized that 'les bonnes gens d'armes pour les guerres sont plus prisiez et honorez que nul des autres gens d'armes qui soient'. Having entered the 'mestier d'armes de guerre', they spent their time enquiring 'ou il fait le plus honorable', and, having gone there, strove to gain renown[5].

Seductive as the ideals of chivalry may have been, the knights' behaviour was often far from being virtuous and irreproachable. Froissart himself, who insisted on

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[4] On the *Livre de chevalerie* and treatises on chivalry see Richard Kaeuper and Elspeth Kennedy's excellent introduction in GEOFFROI DE CHARNY, *The Book of Chivalry*, ed. and transl. R. W. KAEUPER and E. KENNEDY, Philadelphia, University of Pensylvania Press, 1996, p. 3-83.
[5] Cf. GEOFFROI DE CHARNY, p. 100-102.

telling the truth at all times, often had to depict the knights of his time in a light which was quite contradictory to their high ideals. The methods employed by rulers and knights for waging war were usually ugly, bloody, and devastating. During Froissart's lifetime, one method was especially popular amongst knights : the *chevauchée*. This consisted in crossing a whole territory with a group of soldiers, devastating the crops, burning and looting villages in order to weaken the enemy's economic resources, and returning home as safely as possible. During the 15th century, this particularly destructive way of waging war became less common, but it was never abandoned and war was still, in any case, a sinister business. Until the *ordonnances* of 1444-1445, the King of France could not pay his troops regularly; very often he could not pay them at all. As a result, knights and soldiers lived on the country, forcing the inhabitants of the villages surrounding a garrison to pay a levy called *appatis*. The system of the *appatis* was basically a protection racket. Sometimes the villagers had to pay the *appatis* of two or three different garrisons of *routiers*. Even chivalrous chroniclers who were earning their living from praising the ruling class, and who extolled the great deeds of the knights of the Kingdom of France or the Duchy of Burgundy, related much perfidy, cruelty and baseness, if only in order to expose the vices of a personal enemy of their patron. Quite recently, modern historians have singled out, with much cynicism, greed as a dominant vice amongst the chivalric class. Thus Nicholas Wright, for example, has shown how, in the *Demandes* of Geoffroi de Charny - a record of the questions and answers asked and given during an assembly of the Order of the Star held on 15 August 1352- most members were primarily concerned with questions of booty and ransoms[6]. As one can see, the major preoccupation of most knights was rather different from those promoted by Charny in his *Livre de chevalerie* : prowess, piety, the love of a lady in order to inspire great deeds, and courtesy[7].

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[6] N. A. R. WRIGHT, 'The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bouvet and the Laws of War', in *War, Literature and Politics in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. C. T. ALLMAND, Liverpool, University Press, 1976, p. 12-31 (p. 21).

[7] On the ideals of chivalry, as promoted notably by the literature of the times, and on the realities of the war of the knights, see amongst a whole corpus of modern studies: K. FOWLER, *The Age of Plantagenet and Valois*, London, Ferndale, 1980, p. 140-181 ('Chivalry, War and Society') ; M. H. KEEN, 'Chivalry, Nobility and the Man-at-arms', in *War, Literature...*, p. 32-45 ; C. T. ALLMAND, 'Changing Views of the Soldier in Late Medieval France ', in *Guerre et société en France, en Angleterre et en Bourgogne, 14e-15e siècle*, ed. P CONTAMINE, C. GIRY-DELOISON, M. H. KEEN, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Presses de l'Université Charles de Gaulle (Lille III), 1991, p. 171-188 ; M. VALE, *War and Chivalry: Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of*

In this first chapter, I propose to analyse the depiction of the 'war of the knights'[8] in Burgundian and French chronicles respectively, in the context of the relation, by contemporaries, of the English invasion which started with the taking of Harfleur by Henry V, and the battle of Agincourt. The period is particularly favourable for a study of the treatment, by historiographers, of the 'war of the knights', as it is, in many respects, still truly 'medieval': it was a period of anarchy in the Kingdom of France, where the power of the country's monarch was at one of its lowest points in history, Charles VI being insane, and Charles VII his disputed successor, ruling only south of the Loire, with a very weak hand. Taking advantage of the weakness of the French King's power, the princes of royal blood, and chief amongst them Philip the Good of Burgundy, increased their dominance over their vassals, their prestige and their influence. Marie-Thérèse Caron has shown how the traditional values of chivalry were deemed very profitable by the princes of royal blood, especially in Burgundy, in order to seduce, attract and control the aristocracy[9]. It was also a period of continuous warfare, where knights were still - in France and Burgundy at least - the masters of the battlefields, despite a few important phenomena heralding modern warfare, the most obvious being the defeat of the French heavy cavalry by the English infantry at Agincourt. On a different register, it was also a particularly dark and dramatic period, where one could have found immense swathes of land laid waste in the Kingdom of France: according to the Bourgeois de Paris, the Kingdom was, in these troubled days, comparable to the 'Terre Deserte' or 'Terre Gaste', the desolate land mentioned in Celtic romances[10]. Many of the authors I have used belong to this period, but I have also called upon chroniclers who were only born during this span of time and who wrote their narrations towards the middle of the century : this will enable us to discern some

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the Middle Ages, London, Gerald Duckworth, 1981 ; M. MOLLAT DU JOURDIN, *La guerre de Cent Ans vue par ceux qui l'ont vécue,* Paris, Seuil, 1992, p. 111-131.

[8] I have borrowed this expression from HOWARD, p. 1 ; an expression such as 'chivalrous warfare' would have implied that the war waged by knights was always in accordance with the ideals of chivalry.

[9] Cf. M. T. CARON, *Noblesse et pouvoir royal en France, 13e-16e siècle*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1994, p. 141-205.

[10] Cf. the *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris, 1405-1449*, ed. A. TUETEY for the Société de l'Histoire de Paris, Paris, Honoré Champion, 1881, p. 113 ; *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris de 1405 à 1449*, ed. C. BEAUNE, Paris, Librairie Générale Française (Le Livre de Poche, collection Lettres Gothiques), 1990, n. 206 p. 131.

important trends of the evolution of the discourse about warfare, in Burgundian and in French historiography, throughout the first half of the century.

A. The 'chivalrous' chronicle in Burgundy or the development of a genre

1. The heritage of Froissart

As Élisabeth Gaucher, the expert on chivalrous biography, once expressed it, the 15th century man was prompted by a strong will to achieve immortality[11]. The most effective way to achieve it was to enter History by attaining virtue. For the nobility, the pursuit of virtue was, if not exclusively, at least pre-eminently linked to the exercise of arms, for the traditional role of the aristocracy was to protect the other Estates, the labourers and those who prayed for the country. In the late 15th century, as he was writing against the establishment of a permanent army which would be paid by regularly collected taxes, Bishop Thomas Basin of Lisieux's main argument was that the King of France already had at his disposal, 'par la nature même des choses', a potential army of 50,000 men who were bound to fight for him whenever needed : the nobility of France[12]. The 'chivalrous' chronicle had developed as a genre intended to record the great actions of outstanding warriors, not only to immortalize them, but also to present them as an example be followed by young knights in search of glory. Chief amongst the virtues of a worthy knight featured prowess, bravery, the ability to perform those 'beaux faits d'armes' which would delight an aristocratic readership. In his *Livre de chevalerie*, Geoffroi de Charny showed that 'proesce' was so intrinsically splendid, that it could virtually excuse anything. Thus, Charny explained that those who were brave but too eager for plunder, or those who had

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[11] É. GAUCHER, 'Entre l'histoire et le roman: la biographie chevaleresque', in *Écrire l'histoire à la fin du Moyen Age*, *Revue des Langues Romanes*, 97 (1993), 15-29 (p. 15).
[12] See Chapter 5 (Book 4) and especially Chapter 6 of THOMAS BASIN, *Histoire de Charles VII*, ed. and transl. C. SAMARAN, 2 vol., Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1964-1965 (2nd ed., 1st ed. 1933-1944), II, 25-47.

courage and skill but were thoughtless, prizing their own honour more highly than the army's good or their friend's safety, could do better, but were still worthy of praise, for prowess was always laudable in itself[13]. Charny's *Livre de Chevalerie* was not a fictional work, but a didactic work, intended to be practical and to offer some solutions to the crisis through which the chivalry of France was passing since the defeats of Sluys and Crécy. And yet, it is easy to see that Charny could not detach himself from an ideal of chivalry which could often be detrimental to strategy.

It was the great poet Jean Froissart, writing in the second part of the 14th century, who had given the chivalrous chronicle its fully developed character. The pattern laid by Froissart was to remain a model for a great number of chroniclers well into the 15th century. Few would equal his literary skill, and those who did, like Chastelain, were to detach themselves from the model offered by Froissart and write a more personal kind of historiography. It is true that Froissart had made an extensive use of the chronicle of Jean le Bel, but this does not challenge the importance of his work. Froissart clearly saw how the magic of his writing could transform the wars of his time, the Hundred Years War, into an epic, for the delight of his noble readers. He knew how to present the great knights who had fought for Edward III or Charles V, Bertrand du Guesclin, the Black Prince, John Chandos, as heroes to be imitated. Froissart made the noble exercise of arms in the wars of his days the gateway to fame, which would be achieved thanks to the recording, by the chronicler, of outstanding feats of arms. And the traditional chivalric virtues would be the parameters against which the worth of a contemporary could be measured[14]. It should be noted that much of the flavour of Froissart's writing of warfare came from the fact

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[13] GEOFFROI DE CHARNY, p. 98, 150.

[14] On Froissart, doyen of the chivalrous chroniclers cf. F. S. SHEARS, *Froissart : Chronicler and Poet*, London, Routledge, 1930, p. 72-87, 128-157 ; P. F. AINSWORTH, *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990, p. 76-85 ; P. CONTAMINE, 'Froissart : Art militaire, pratique et conception de la guerre', in *Froissart, historian*, ed. J. J. N. PALMER, Woodbridge (Suffolk), Boydell Press, 1981, p. 132-144. In a very innovative work, George Diller has shown that Froissart was not as naive as he appears to be. According to Diller, the last version that Froissart wrote of his first book (JEAN FROISSART, *Chroniques. Dernière rédaction du premier livre. Edition du manuscrit de Rome Reg. lat. 869*, ed. G. T. DILLER , Paris / Geneva, Droz, 1972) is apparently much shrewder in its understanding of politics and warfare than the earlier texts. It is also well known that reality sometimes imposed on Froissart a revision of his ideals : thus in the second book of his *Chroniques*, Froissart had to admit that Charles V had achieved many laudable military successes, without leaving his palace. Such ambiguities make Froissart's *Chroniques* great literature. Cf. G. T. DILLER, *Attitudes chevaleresques et réalités politiques chez Froissart*, Genève, Droz, 1984.

that, unlike most earlier chroniclers who had been focusing on particular wars, such as Villehardouin, Robert de Clari, Joinville or Jean le Bel, Froissart did not have any direct experience of warfare. Thus he saw war through the eyes of an artist, with the ingenuousness of a man who had not experienced the great hardships that soldiers had to suffer during a campaign. Because of this distance between Froissart and warfare, he presented the waging of war in a very flattering light[15]. At the same time, Froissart insisted on being particularly well informed about the campaigns he related, but his intention to appear scrupulously exact concerned mainly one important issue: the behaviour of men in wars, especially knights, since they were the ones who really mattered. Like a journalist, Froissart would inquire into who had distinguished himself during a battle, an assault, or the defence of a fortress. The chronicler trusted his own purveyors of information: knights who had participated in particular actions, and, of course, heralds. The latter were a typical product of the chivalrous society; their very existence was intimately linked to the concept of chivalry. Heralds were considered as doctors of knighthood, experts in the code of chivalry, they knew all the ceremonials traditionally associated with the waging of a battle, or tournaments. And of course, heralds were the ideal witnesses for Froissart to consult: more than anyone else, they knew how to recognise particularly valiant conduct on the battlefield.

The prologue of Froissart's *Chroniques* has very often been excerpted as it has the character of a manifesto. In his prologue, Jean Froissart defines in forthright terms the role of the chronicler as a consummate dedication to the duty of recording all acts of 'proèce' for posterity. Immortalizing the memory of the deeds achieved by the 'preus' becomes a kind of religious mission:

> j'ai ce livre [Jean le Bel's chronicle] hystoriiet et augmenté à la mienne, [...] sans faire fait, ne porter partie, ne coulourer plus l'un que l'autre, fors tant que li biens fais des bons, de quel pays qu'il soient, qui par proèce l'ont acquis, y est plainnement veus et cogneus, car de l'oubliier ou esconser, ce seroit pechiés et cose mal apertenans, car esploit d'armes sont si chierement comparet et achetet, che scèvent chil qui y traveillent, que on n'en doit nullement mentir pour

[15] Cf. CONTAMINE, 'Froissart : Art militaire...', p. 134-138.

complaire à autrui, [...] et donner à chiaus qui n'en sont mies digne[16].

The 'chivalrous' chronicle imagined by Froissart, a chronicle which aimed at commemorating the great deeds performed by the chivalric class in wars of a European dimension, secular, dynastic wars between European states, such as the Hundred Years War, was to have an impressively vast progeny. In the 15th century, a large number of chroniclers were to take Froissart's *Chroniques* as a model. All of these chivalrous chroniclers would formulate, in their prologues, the same goal as that expressed by the chronicler of Valenciennes, a dedication to the recording of the 'proèces' of the great warriors of the time, mainly from the chivalric class. Enguerran de Monstrelet, who presented himself as the continuator of Froissart, referred, in his second book's prologue, to the example of the Romans, who had recorded in writing all their 'vertueuses entreprinses et hardiesses d'armes', in order to immortalize the 'grant renommée et inextimable louenge' they had achieved through these deeds. Indeed, as Vegetius had pointed out, 'vaillance et prudence de chevalerie', as well as 'l'exercite des armes et la continuacion de batailler' could be the cause of a people dominating most of the world, as the Romans had done (IV, 125-126). Monstrelet modelled his idea of Roman historiography on the concept of the chivalrous chronicle, of which Froissart was the true exponent: he presented Roman history as a series of valiant military deeds, and reduced the work of the legions and their commanders to 'vaillance et prudence de chevalerie'. As one can see, the chronicler was not truly inspired by classical historiography, and his mention of Vegetius, a Roman writer on the art of war who enjoyed great popularity in the Middle Ages, appears as mere window-dressing. Monstrelet subsequently explains that modern times did not have anything to envy ancient times with regard to the 'haultes et excellentes vaillances'. He then presents the setting of his *Chroniques*, the dramatic times of the early 15th century. The actors of his narration are the 'vaillans et prudens hommes' who fought, suffered, and often perished in all these wars of terrible intensity. Finally, the chronicler proposes to reward them for their tribulation 'en racomptant leurs vaillances, bonnes renommées et noble fais, quand pour eulx et leurs successeurs, est et doit estre dénoncé par les vivans, à durable mémoire' (IV,

[16] JEAN FROISSART, *Chroniques*, ed. S. LUCE for the SHF, 11 vol., Paris, Ve Renouard, 1869-1899, I, 2.

127-128). Similarly, Jean de Wavrin opens his work by explaining how the Kingdom of England 'a esté tousjours bien garny de noble chevalerie qui en leur temps ont entreprins et achevé maintes haultes besongnes par leurs grans proesses'. He marvels at the fact that nobody has yet recorded the 'haulx fais' of the Kings of England and their 'noble chevalerie', 'fors seulement en aulcuns petis livres de chascun roy a par soy', and proposes to fill this gap in the historiography of the great people of the world (I, 2-3). One could multiply these examples taken from the prologues of Froissart's heirs. Everywhere the same dedication to the recording of the 'proesses' and 'vaillances' of the chivalric caste appears[17].

When one enters upon the reading of the considerable corpus of 15th century historiographical literature, one soon realizes that it was in Burgundy, more than anywhere else in the Kingdom of France, that the genre of the chivalrous chronicle inaugurated by Froissart had flourished and matured. The chief exponents of the genre under Philip the Good's rule are Enguerran de Monstrelet, Jean Lefèvre de Saint-Rémy, Jean de Wavrin, and Georges Chastelain. Their chronicles have a distinctive 'chivalrous' flavour, and this character appears specifically Burgundian. One could argue that the great similarity of complexion that these four authors share between them is simply due to the fact that Saint-Rémy, Wavrin, and Chastelain all made an extensive use of Monstrelet's narration of the years 1400-1444, which he presented to Philip the Good of Burgundy in 1447. However, both Wavrin and Saint-Rémy's chronicles, begun respectively in 1455 and 1460, include some original material which, apart from offering additional information, is often typical of the chivalrous ideology, sometimes more than Monstrelet's narration. Also, because they were more experienced in war than Monstrelet, Wavrin being a soldier, and Saint-Rémy a herald, their chronicles offer interesting variations of Monstrelet's work, as they give us a valuable insight into the mentality of a knight of the first half of the 15th century. As for Chastelain, who began writing in 1455, as he became Burgundy's first official and remunerated historiographer, his chronicle expands the original work of Monstrelet to such an extent, that the two works eventually seem very different. With Chastelain's narration, the chivalrous chronicle has reached its fully-

[17] For a short repertoire of quotations from the prologues of Monstrelet, Jean Chartier, Mathieu d'Escouchy and Molinet, see the opening pages of DELCLOS, 'Les rayons et les ombres...'.

fledged form. Having introduced our authors, and the nature of the tradition of historiography that they follow, it is now possible to examine in detail their depiction of the war of the knights.

2. The war of the knights is a 'noble' war

The acute difference that the aristocracy perceived between the noble and 'vulgar' ways of fighting is best exemplified in two episodes which occurred at the very end of our period: the famous duel which, in 1455, opposed two burgesses of Valenciennes, Jacotin Plouvier and Mahuot, and the wars of Ghent of 1453, a crucial event in the understanding of the ideology of 15th century chivalrous warfare, as it saw the clash of the flower of Burgundian chivalry with the burgesses of Ghent. The great historian Johan Huizinga saw well the symbolic importance of the judicial duel between Jacotin Plouvier and Mahuot, staged in Valenciennes in 1455 on Duke Philip's order[18]. This fight was related by some of the best exponents of the chivalrous chronicle: Georges Chastelain, Olivier de la Marche, and Mathieu d'Escouchy. It reveals perfectly the huge gap which separated the knight's way of fighting from that of the 'vulgus'. Chastelain depicts Mahuot opening the fight by throwing some sand in Jacotin's eyes with his shield. He then describes the furious clash that followed, closer to a cock-fight than to a proper judicial duel. The fight ends with Jacotin sitting on Mahuot's back, jumping on it to break it, and thrusting his thumbs into Mahuot's eyes, while the latter is unsuccessfully crying out to Duke Philip and begging for mercy. Olivier de la Marche concludes his narration by explaining how mortified the Burgundian nobility felt for having watched this dreadful fight. Yet, there was a strong element of social conditioning which explained the nature of this fight, and it was clear that, from the beginning, Philip the Good did not expect, nor want, the two burgesses to fight in a 'noble' way: Jacotin and Mahuot had been armed with clubs, smeared with grease, and were carrying their shields upside down[19]. Admittedly they did not know how to fight with swords, but

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[18] Cf. J. HUIZINGA, *L'automne du Moyen Age*, transl. J. BASTIN, Paris, Payot, 1989 (3rd Payot ed.; 1st published in Harlem, 1919 as *Herfstij der Middeleeuwen*), p. 103-104.

[19] Cf. GEORGES CHASTELAIN, III, 38-49 ; OLIVIER DE LA MARCHE, II, 400 ff. ; MATHIEU D'ESCOUCHY, *Chronique*, ed. G. DU FRESNE DE BEAUCOURT for the SHF, 3 vol., Paris, Ve

surely the result could never have been a 'beautiful' combat.

Fighting was the business of the aristocracy; aesthetically and morally the sight of commoners arming themselves to engage in hostilities, without being led, as proper, by members of the chivalric caste - as occurred in the wars of Ghent - was very awkward to the chivalrous chroniclers. When wars of this kind did happen, they saw the victory of the knights as only justice. Jacques Du Clercq was not the most typical Burgundian chivalrous chronicler; very often his comments reveal a mentality similar to that of a 'Bourgeois', who does not fear to castigate the aristocracy, and even, occasionally, the princes themselves. Yet he was strongly influenced by the chivalrous chronicle; in form, at least, his *Mémoires* are quite typical of the genre, with three parts devoted to the wars which happened in France, Burgundy, and England. And, although he exposed many of the atrocities and lootings committed by Burgundian knights during the wars against Ghent, Du Clercq explicitly showed that he strongly disagreed with the concept of the common people arming themselves. As he describes the Duke's army, Du Clercq cannot conceal his admiration for this host which, unlike the forces of Ghent, is composed only of men whose trade is to wage war, and who, moreover, all come from the Kingdom of France, the cradle of chivalry:

> Pour brief dire, estoit belle chose à veoir toute l'armée du duc, car c'estoit pour la plupart touts gens de guerre et bien en poinct, et qui avoient accoustumé d'aller en guerre. Et n'y avoit nuls Hollandois, et touts les gentilshommes de Franche de l'armée estoient avec le duc[20].

Chivalrous chroniclers seemed to despise the common soldier in any case, even if he was, in fact, a tactical element of the army under the command of knights. Thus Monstrelet and Wavrin understood the decision of the Duke of Clarence, Henry V's brother, who lost a battle and his life at Beaugé in 1421: having heard that the enemy was approaching, Clarence chose his best men, 'et par espécial à peu près tous ses capitaines', that is to say knights only, and darted at the French. Monstrelet refers to

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Renouard, 1863-1864, II, 300 ff.

[20] JACQUES DU CLERCQ, *Mémoires*, 4 vol., in *Chroniques d'Enguerrand de Monstrelet*, t. 12-15, in *Collection des chroniques nationales françaises*, vol. 37-40, ed. J. A. C. BUCHON, Paris, Verdière, 1826-1827, XII, 99.

Clarence's archers who had been deliberately left behind, and were striving to follow him, as 'toute la grant tourbe de son ost', a rather derogatory expression. Wavrin tells us how, during the battle that followed, 'il ot mainte apartise d'armes faite', but as the proverb goes, 'la force vainct': Clarence 'et generalement la fleurs de escurye et chevallerie dudit duc' were annihilated[21]. On the same register, Georges Chastelain explained how, before the fight of Mons-en-Vimeu (1421), Philip the Good had consented to let the crossbowmen and *communes* of the towns of Picardy follow the mounted men-at-arms; but for himself, the Duke principally relied on his noble chivalry, of whom he took the lead (I, 255). Saint-Rémy, who had for a long time followed the English in their wars, was more aware of the worth of the infantry: he recalled how, at Agincourt, the French knights had relegated the archers to the back of their battle formation, 'pour la place qui estoit si estroicte qu'il n'y avoit place fors pour les hommes d'armes' (I, 253). The outcome of the battle is well known.

The hall of fame created by chivalrous chroniclers was not, as one might imagine from reading their lavish praises of the noble chivalry of Burgundy and France, exclusively reserved for the aristocracy. Froissart himself had announced, in his chronicle, that the saving grace of the virtue of 'proèce' was such, that it overcame 'linage'; it would bring fame and fortune to all its disciples[22]. Similarly, Monstrelet promised to record the deeds of all the valiant and prudent men of his time, 'tant nobles comme aultres' (IV, 128). Perhaps their decision arose from the fact that they were not nobles themselves. Not all chivalrous chroniclers appear so generous: Huizinga has pointed out that Chastelain, who never missed an opportunity to extol the deeds of the great knight Jacques de Lalaing during the war against Ghent, only mentioned very coldly the courage of a young insurgent, who attacked Lalaing on his own. Similarly, Chastelain did not deem it necessary to list the names of the burgesses who had died during the fight against the Burgundian forces[23]. What Huizinga, however, did not emphasize, was that Chastelain could never have praised an act of rebellion against his Duke, whether courageous or not. On the other hand, one can find the same Chastelain forever praising one Jehan Vilain, who, at the fight of Mons-en-Vimeu against the Dauphinist forces in 1421, astonished his enemies by

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[21] ENGUERRAN DE MONSTRELET, IV, 38 ; JEAN DE WAVRIN, II, 358-359.
[22] JEAN FROISSART, ed. LUCE, I, 3.

the lethal strength of his blows. Admittedly, Jehan Vilain was a noble, as the chronicler himself pointed out. Still, one cannot help wondering whether this Vilain, who had been knighted on the day of the engagement, had always been a noble, since even his name certainly does not sound aristocratic. Moreover, Jehan Vilain does not appear at all like the typical nobleman in the description that Chastelain made of him: 'gros, et avec ce, membreux', the knight's appearance was particularly frightening ; Vilain was mounting a 'haut et puissant destrier merveilleusement gros et courageux, comme il luy faisoit bien besoin, car il portoit de fais assez pour deux', and was fighting more like a lumberer than like a knight : 'ruant et ramonant devant luy' with a double-handed axe, Vilain would brain the Duke's adversaries 'comme bouchers font les bœufs' (I, 268-269). Chastelain was not reluctant to alter, or 'modernize', the stereotypical image of the knight, by portraying a member of the prestigious caste who looked more like the evil giants whom Yvain had to fight in Chrétien de Troyes' story than like Yvain himself, because in his opinion, Jehan Vilain had earned the status of knight, and his deeds only proved it. Indeed, not only was he a 'preu', but he was also loyal to his suzerain, unlike some other knights who had fled and left their Duke in danger, unlike also the burgesses of Ghent who had rebelled against their legitimate prince. Thus, in two ways at least, Vilain was fighting like a true knight. Duke Philip had recognized his worth by granting him the title of knight, and Chastelain was ready to extol his deeds, even if they did not quite match the usual 'pattern'. It is now time to describe more precisely and exhaustively the 'war of the knights', this 'noble' way of fighting, as portrayed in Burgundian chivalrous chronicles.

3. Ideals and illusions

In his *Livre de chevalerie*, Geoffroi de Charny devoted some crucial pages to the knighting ceremony, and offered the clues to understand the rich symbolism which allegedly clothed this complex event, the first in the new life of a knight[24]. On

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[23] GEORGES CHASTELAIN, II, 259, 345; HUIZINGA, p. 63, 109.

[24] According to Philippe Contamine, the elaborate ritual described by Charny became outdated by the 15th century. Cf. P. CONTAMINE, 'Points de vue sur la chevalerie en France à la fin du Moyen Age', in his work *La France au XIVe et XVe siècle. Hommes, mentalités, guerre et paix*, London, Variorum

the eve of his dubbing, the aspirant for knighting had to enter a bath and meditate there for a long time: this symbolized the need to cleanse his body from the impurity of sin. He then had to sleep in a bed with clean white sheets, before waking up the following morning, ready for his dubbing. The night spent in the clean bed stood for the need to rise from virtue, as a new man. The aspirant was then clothed in brand new linen, another symbol of the new life which awaited him. And the first piece of clothing which the intending knight had to wear was a red tunic, which signified that the knight was pledged to shed his blood in the defence of Christ and the Holy Church[25]. Thus the defence of the Church figured as a priority, if not *the* priority, in the knight's duties.

Our Burgundian chivalrous chroniclers do not forget to mention this prime necessity, which sometimes appears unexpectedly in the course of their narratives of the Hundred Years War. They show that the wish to go on a crusade with all their nobility was always in the back of the princes' minds, though it might only come to the fore in special circumstances. Thus Monstrelet, in the famous episode of the pious death of Henry V, pictured the expiring prince ordering the clergymen, who were reciting the seven penitential psalms at his death bed, to stop as they had reached the words *muri Jherusalem* in the psalm *Benigne fac, Domine*. The King then announced in a loud voice 'que, sur la mort qu'il actendoit, il avoit entencion que après qu'il avoit mis le royaume de France en paix d'aller conquerre Jherusalem, se ce eust esté le plaisir de Dieu son créateur de le laisser vivre son aage' (IV, 112). Georges Chastelain, who knew that going on a crusade was, in those times already, Duke Philip's dearest wish, makes the young prince a party to the English king's plans, and shows that Philip took his promise very seriously indeed[26]:

> [Henry V] avoit une fin dernière résolue en bien, et pour icelle accomplir s'associa au jeune duc de Bourgongne, parce que en luy véoit matière semblable à la sienne: c'estoit du voyage en la Sainte-Terre par chrestien effort, que ambedeux en firent promesse l'un à l'autre devant Melun, jà-soit-ce-que Dieu ne le souffrist point en tost mourant, et lequel toutes-voies s'en mit en grand devoir, car en fit

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reprints, 1981, item XI. Still, the ideals which the ceremony was supposed to symbolize died hard.

[25] GEOFFROI DE CHARNY, p. 166-168.

[26] On the treatment of Duke Philip's crusading endeavours in Burgundian historiography see Chapter 3 of the present work.

visiter tous les ports de Levant pour y prendre adresse (I, 334).

Defending the Church was not only the responsibility of the princes. Nigel Saul has recently emphasized that every knight could, and sometimes would, personally take the cross in order to perform his duty, out of piety, and also in order to acquire renown[27]. Monstrelet contributed to the renown of some of these knights, as he mentioned the names of three Burgundian noblemen who were assisting, with many other Occidental knights, the Christian King of Cyprus in the defence of his realm against the Mamelukes, an episode which he covered in the course of his narration of the English invasion of France. These Burgundian aristocrats had the privilege of being knighted during an action at sea, when the fleets of Rhodes and Cyprus were facing the Mameluke fleet (IV, 265-266).

When a knight was the author of a chronicle, as was Jean de Wavrin, who was mainly a compiler, but also liked to develop the histories he was using, and when this knight had taken part in a crusade, we get some very interesting comments about the way those late medieval crusades were conducted, and about the mentality of the crusaders[28]. It happens that Jean de Wavrin and Lefèvre de Saint-Rémy had participated in a crusade declared by Pope Martin V against the Hussites in 1420. This crusade was recounted by Monstrelet in his *Chronique*, and the two knights added some interesting comments and memories to Monstrelet's account. They recount with horrifying ingenuousness how Bohemia was rich and beautiful, and how they proceeded, with the other crusaders, to destroy everything 'par feu et par espée, hommes, femmes, et enfans sans en prendre quelque mercy'. After all, the Hussites were heretics, and they had to be eradicated, as their example could be dangerous: around 1340, Robert Holcot, an English Dominican, had compared crusading activities to the work of a doctor, cutting off a gangrenous foot which could not heal so that the illness would not spread, thus reviving an ancient political metaphor[29]. But the practice of crusading had changed since its heyday. Monstrelet explains that

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[27] N. SAUL, 'The Vanishing Vision : Late Medieval Crusading', in *History Today*, 47 (June 1997), 23-28.

[28] On this subject see my fourth chapter, which is devoted to Wavrin's narrative of a crusade against the Turks, in which his nephew Walleran had taken part.

[29] Cf. N. HOUSLEY, *The Later Crusades, 1274-1580. From Lyons to Alcazar*, Oxford, University Press, 1992, p. 382.

many crusaders were so disgusted by the greed of their commanders that they decided to return home. Wavrin gives us another reason, perhaps more convincing, for the disbanding of this 'belle armée': the Holy Roman emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg had informed the crusaders 'que ce n'estoit pas bien son plaisir qu'ilz estoient là ainsi venus', and had ordered them to leave. In fact, the emperor was probably greatly displeased by the ravages committed by the crusaders on his territory. Wavrin acknowledges and blames, however, the fact that the commanders were indeed greedy, and that they were moreover unable to understand one another. This made Wavrin resentful, as it made him feel that he had travelled all the way to Bohemia for nothing. Saint-Rémy recalls how an English prelate had boasted that, should he have 10,000 English archers at his disposal, he would have enjoyed destroying the whole crusading army, and concludes, with a few pithy sentences: 'Laquelle chose est véritable; car l'un n'atendoit l'autre [...]. A tant, vous lairay à parler de ceste matière, car le peu parler en est bon'[30].

Another well-known priority of the knight was the duty to defend 'femmes vesves et pucelles', in the words of Christine de Pisan, quoted at the start of this chapter, and more generally, the non-fighting part of the population: women, children, clerics, peasants and burgesses. Our Burgundian chivalrous chroniclers do not omit to extol this very noble task of knights. Thus Chastelain explains, after the engagement of Mons-en-Vimeu where Philip the Good had been knighted and fought honourably for the first time, how the people of Burgundy rejoiced greatly and exclaimed: 'Bien nous y a pourvu Dieu, que loué en soit-il! [...] Ce nous sera l'escu qui nous sera nécessaire, escu de protection et arche de salut en qui nul ne pourra mordre; mesmes se fera espouvanter en son glaive' (I, 276). Here the role of the prince, but also of the knight - for it is a significant fact that Philip had just been knighted and shown a promising courage in war - as the shield of the labourers, is very well defined. Yet, it is perhaps quite telling that praises of knights as the protectors of the people, while appearing occasionally, do not abound in our chivalrous chronicles. The extent of the ravages wrought by soldiers - and knights as much as the others - in this particularly dark period of continuous warfare, civil war,

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[30] ENGUERRAN DE MONSTRELET, III, 408 ; JEAN LEFÈVRE DE SAINT-RÉMY, II, 14 ; JEAN DE WAVRIN, II, 324-325.

invasion and relative anarchy, made it somewhat difficult for our chivalrous chroniclers to insist upon the role of the knight as the defender of widows and orphans. Sometimes the chroniclers, who were after all sincerely sorrowful over the state of the Kingdom of France, acknowledge the damage done even by their own side. This did not, however, impair for them the high standing of the office of knight. Thus Monstrelet did not see any apparent contradiction in extolling the beauty and nobility of the army of John the Fearless in battle formation before Pontoise, before admitting the havoc that they caused in the countryside: 'là prenoient et ramenoient à leur ost chevaulx, vaches, brebis, pourceaulx et tous autres biens portatifz, dont le povre peuple et le pays estoit fort traveillé' (III, 217). Obviously our Burgundian chroniclers did not dare to explicitly blame the Dukes of Burgundy for the want of discipline in their host and for neglecting to pay their soldiers on a regular basis. The chroniclers also seem to have viewed the exactions of soldiers as a trouble inherent to the conduct of war, which could never be solved and had to be patiently endured. Georges Chastelain, for example, recounts how, after the victory of Mons-en-Vimeu, the knights of Burgundy, who had not seen their lord for a long time, decided to go to Picardy to congratulate him and bring him back to Burgundy. Chastelain praises the affection that they entertained for their Duke, but also narrates how they devastated the countries that they crossed on their way, and Picardy itself for a rather long time, as they were living on the country while waiting for their Duke to accompany them. There is an element of blame in his narration, but it is very much weakened by other considerations, such as the good will of the knights who had come out of affection for Philip. Also, the chronicler explains that the Burgundians held a grudge against the Picards, for they had likewise wasted the lands of Burgundy the last time that they had crossed them. And after all, he wrote, every people had its qualities and vices: the Burgundians and the Picards were 'gens non tractables et bien doux tous deux, là où ils sont forts'; these were military virtues, and they made the two nations good soldiers. Chastelain shows that Duke Philip did not worry much about the exactions committed by his soldiers, considering them in a way as a natural necessity: the noblemen and prelates of Picardy had reported to Philip the complaints of their people, but 'sa bonté et promesse de temprement les emmener avec luy en Bourgongne, leur en fit souffrir encores un petit et cesser de plus en douloir' (I, 288-290).

Finally, there were again more particular considerations which could make the chivalrous chroniclers lenient towards the damage done by knights to the common people. Thus Monstrelet and Wavrin explain that the Earl of Salisbury was 'très renommé en armes, expert et subtil', before relating, immediately following these flattering comments, that he was responsible for an atrocious massacre of civilians at Sézanne (1424), where the unfortunate inhabitants were 'cruellement occis, [...] et les autres furent prisonniers, et avec ce tous leurs biens furent ravis et pilliés, les femmes violées et ladicte forteresse démolie'. Monstrelet and Wavrin then tell us that the lord of Chastillon had been knighted by 'le preu conte de Salsebery' before the assault, inside the very mine which had granted access to the fortress[31]. The change of register does not seem to trouble our chroniclers. There is an element of blame in their narration, but it hardly seems to challenge Salisbury's reputation: the fortress had been taken by assault, and in those days the customary laws of war did not insure the garrison and inhabitants of a town taken by assault against violent death. Moreover, Salisbury was known for being very ruthless at times, but was also admired as an excellent commander; in the eyes of many pro-English contemporaries, his efficiency at war excused his cruelty, especially because this ruthlessness was one of Salisbury's methods for obtaining good results in war. Thus many considerations - in this case a tactical consideration - contributed to undermine the ideal of the knight as defender of the weak, even though the chroniclers did not make this explicit: in his eulogy of Salisbury, Wavrin praised the English knight for being 'piteux et misericord [...] auz humbles, mais auz orguilleux fier comme lyon ou tygre' (III, 247-248). The garrison and inhabitants of Sézanne were probably included among the 'orguilleux', since they had refused to surrender immediately. In the end, the civilians killed and raped were just another casualty of war.

One old ideal of chivalry was acquiring an essential importance: that of loyal service to the suzerain. In her study of the relations between the nobility of France and the Kings from the 13th to the 16th century, Marie-Thérèse Caron has emphasized how, from the death of Charles V to the consolidation of Charles VII's power and the reign of Louis XI, the great princes of royal blood were taking advantage of the

weakness of their Kings in order to increase their own power. The most obvious method was to attract the nobility of France by using, amongst other things, the age-long institution of vassalage. The fidelity and service a vassal owed to his lord was, of course, a chivalric obligation, and the Dukes of Burgundy deemed it particularly profitable in their securing of the obedience of those who fell under their jurisdiction[32]. Chastelain defines very well this obligation of the vassal to his suzerain as he blames Jacques de Harcourt for having armed himself against his Duke in favour of the Dauphin,

> que faire ne devoit toutes-voies, attendu que nourriture de prince est occasion à tousjours de maintenir sa querelle envers tous autres quels qu'ils soient, et donne la nourriture dispense et support à tout vassal en tous autres devoirs de nature (I, 231-232).

One can see how the ideal of loyalty to the lord is made paramount over all other chivalric duties. Monstrelet and the chroniclers who used his narration show the progressive seizure by the Dukes of Burgundy of the allegiance of their subjects, the aim being exclusivity of control over their territories' nobility, to the detriment of the King of France. The efforts made by Duke John the Fearless in order to keep his knights on his side are particularly apparent in Monstrelet's narrative of the organization of France's defence in 1415. Charles VI and the Duke of Aquitaine had ordered 'que tous nobles hommes accoustumez à porter armes, voulans acquerre honneur, allassent nuit et jour devers le connestable, ou qu'il fust'. Those who would not obey would run the risk of falling from grace with the King. However, John the Fearless had already commanded 'par escript et à tous ses subgetz, qu'ilz feussent prestz pour aler avecques lui quant il les manderoit, et n'alassent à nul mandement de quelque autre seigneur, quel qu'il feust'. At the same time, he was promising the King that he would come 'en propre personne avec tous ceulx de ses pays servir le Roy'. Monstrelet shows how strongly Burgundian knights still felt their bonds to the King of France, as he explains that, though the Duke himself did not appear, 'grant partie de ses gens se mirent sus et y alèrent'. Duke John had expressly forbidden his son to answer the King's call. Yet, 'la plus grant partie des gens de son [the young

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[31] ENGUERRAN DE MONSTRELET, IV, 185 ; JEAN DE WAVRIN, II, 98.
[32] Cf. CARON, *Noblesse et pouvoir...*, p. 151-157.

Philip's] hostel, qui sentoient les besongnes approucher, se partirent secrètement sans son sceu, et s'en alèrent avec lesdiz François pour combatre lesdiz Anglois'. They did not fear to leave the young heir alone with his inflexible guardians, and all in distress, because he wanted so much to fight the English (III, 90, 93, 98-100).

When Philip succeeded his father, the loyalty of his knights was already much more secure, thanks notably to the murder of John the Fearless by the Armagnacs. This was the greatest mistake the Dauphinists could make, as it exacerbated the hatred that the Burgundians felt for them, and greatly increased their allegiance to the young Duke, which had already been reinforced by the fact that the King was now in Burgundian hands, and apparently favouring their party. It would only be strengthened with the Treaty of Troyes, which proclaimed the Dauphin as illegitimate. When Chastelain wrote his chronicle, in the 1450s, he could make loyalty to Duke Philip the paramount virtue of a Burgundian knight. Loyalty to the young Duke is extolled in the speeches with which Chastelain credits some of the characters of his *Chronique*: thus Jean de Luxembourg explains to his knights before heading towards Roye to besiege the town that they form the first army of the young Duke, and so must inaugurate a series of glorious deeds; he then urges them to make Philip's quarrel theirs: 'vengeons sa honte aujourd'huy à nos pouvoirs et entamons ceste guerre par entrée de bel exploit'. Similarly, Chastelain pictures the knight Jean de Rosimbos overwhelmed by a feeling of shame as he is fleeing the battlefield of Mons-en-Vimeu, and declaring to the knights around him: 'ça, ça, rallions-nous, au nom de Dieu ! monstrons-nous estre gentilshommes, et servons nostre prince, car mieux vaut mourir en honneur avec luy que vivre reprochés' (I, 93, 263). However, Chastelain also extols loyalty to one's lord in the speeches delivered by French knights, the best example being the superb discourse which Poton de Saintrailles addresses to the Duke's warriors from the walls of Royes, a speech supposedly attended by 'grand nombre de haute chevalerie', and which was undoubtedly far too sophisticated to have been actually pronounced by a man of action such as Saintrailles:

> Et besongne bien à nostre maistre monseigneur le dauphin d'avoir aigres et diligens champions pour défendre son droit; car vous,

> messeigneurs, estes fiers et enfellis durement, et venez à grand effort sur nous menasser ce jeusne héritier de la couronne que nous défendons à nos povoirs, comme loyaux subjets.

Poton subsequently absolves his knights from the murder of John the Fearless with a clever and diplomatic sentence: 'Si rien est advenu, c'est hors de nostre pouvoir et savoir. Nous ne sommes pas du conseil de cour; nous sommes de l'exploit des champs qui, quérans telle fois donner les horions, nous les y recevons nous mesmes' (I, 110-111). I see three main reasons why Chastelain inserted this speech praising the loyalty of the Dauphinists. Firstly, one should not forget that Chastelain, who had stayed at length at the court of Charles VII, felt strongly attached to France, and longed to see a sincere understanding between the two states, with the rulers of Burgundy remaining aware that they were the vassals of the French Kings, and the latter respecting the freedom of action of the great Dukes of Occident. Moreover, with this speech, Chastelain defines the chivalric virtue of loyalty to the suzerain, a common priority which linked the knights of all states, something which was not the self-seeking calculation of the courtier, but the affectionate zeal with which a knight should feel naturally inclined to serve his lord. Finally, by illustrating the Dauphinist knights' loyalty, Chastelain places the allegiance which bonds Burgundian knights to their Duke on a more or less equal footing with the loyalty owed by the French to their King. The knights of Burgundy would have recognized and understood the motivation of the Dauphinists as one similar to the devotion that they felt for their Duke.

These great ideals were not the only thing which differentiated the war of the knights from vulgar warfare. Indeed, knights had developed a host of 'chivalric virtues' which further embellished and distinguished their way of waging war.

4. The code of chivalry : a recognition sign amongst knights

The code of chivalry was an old-established institution, which had slowly developed throughout the centuries as a way of characterizing the chivalric way of waging war. Our chroniclers illustrate very well how the knights of France, England

and Burgundy alike respected the same chivalric virtues. This helped to present chivalry as an international brotherhood, with some specific recognition signs. Showing that the knights of Burgundy respected and praised the same chivalric virtues would place them on an equal footing with those of the older kingdoms, notably France and England.

We have already seen the importance of the concept of loyalty to the suzerain, through the study of the ideal of the knights' faithful service to their lord. Honour was another primordial element of the code of chivalry, and its importance is well exemplified in our Burgundian chivalrous chronicles. Johan Huizinga, drawing on Burckhardt, has accurately described honour as the exacerbated pride of the nobility, a sort of arrogance which still could push men who possessed it into achieving great things[33]. But honour also had to be preserved, and it could not suffer the slightest harm. Any damage received demanded reparation. The pride of the knights required that one of the conflicting parties should submit to the other, and in Chastelain's chronicle every deed of the enemies is seen as an offence to the honour of the Burgundian chivalry. As he depicted the Duke moving against the Dauphinists before the fight of Mons-en-Vimeu, Chastelain emphasized that Philip 'savoit bien que par bataille falloit estre abattu l'orgueil de l'un ou de l'autre' (I, 255). The concept of vengeance, despite being contrary to the precepts of Christ, played a vital role in the ideology of knights. Monstrelet showed well that knights were certainly not in the habit of turning the other cheek - as Christ had famously advised his disciples[34] - as he related how, during a service celebrated in Arras for the soul of the recently murdered John the Fearless, the preacher had caused a great murmur by advising the Duke not to wreak his vengeance on his father's murderers, but to let God do justice to those responsible for the deed: 'Pour lequel propos et désonortement, aucuns là estans avecques ledit duc ne furent pas bien contens dudit prescheur' (III, 361-362). It should be noted that our chroniclers make all the hostilities between France and Burgundy after Philip's accession to the throne rest solely upon a question of honour: the young Duke would not find any rest until his father's murder had been avenged. And all the knights of Burgundy accepted his shame as their own. Thus Chastelain

[33] HUIZINGA, p. 70-71.
[34] Luke, 6. 29.

depicted Jean de Luxembourg setting his knights against the Dauphinists who had just taken Roye by referring to the death of John the Fearless as an insult which still needed reparation: 'voyant peut-estre que nous dormons longuement en nostre reçue injure, et pensans que nous ayons tout oublyé, nous viennent resveiller par nouvelle hautaine, afin de nous avoir comme ils désirent devant leurs glaives tranchans' (I, 92).

'Proèce', the notion so dear to Jean Froissart and Geoffroi de Charny, was another element of primordial importance in the code of chivalry. Jean Froissart had expressed in an eloquent sentence how eminent the virtue of prowess had to be amongst the priorities of a young knight in search of fame:

> Li nom de preu est si haus et si nobles et la vertu si clère et si belle que elle resplendist en ces sales et en ces places où il a assamblée et fuison de grans signeurs, et se remonstre dessus tous les autres, et l'ensengn'on au doi et dist on: 'Velà cesti qui mist ceste cevaucie ou ceste armée sus, et qui ordonna ceste bataille si faiticement et le gouverna si sagement, et qui jousta de fier de glave si radement, [...] et qui fu trouvés entre les mors et les bleciés navrés moult durement, et ne daigna onques fuir en place où il se trouvast[35].

Prowess was basically courage, with a large admixture of initiative - often to the detriment of strategy - and technical skill. It was prowess which made these 'belles appartises d'armes' of which the narration would delight the aristocracy's ears. Battles were, of course, particularly favourable events for these feats of arms for which heralds and chroniclers were on the look-out. We find some particularly striking deeds in the accounts Monstrelet, Wavrin and Lefèvre de Saint-Rémy left us of the battle of Agincourt. Wavrin and Saint-Rémy's narratives are especially interesting because both knights had been present at the famous battle, Saint-Rémy being on the English side, and Wavrin fighting on the French side. In the relations of our three Burgundian chroniclers, the splendid feats of arms performed by the French during the battle have a very special overtone. Our chroniclers knew that these noble deeds had done nothing to change the course of the fight, and were aware that the flower of French chivalry had been slain by some commoners armed only with bows,

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[35] JEAN FROISSART, ed. LUCE, I, 3-4.

hatchets and mallets. Thus their mention of some of the French knights' best deeds gives a truly tragic, and very moving flavour to their narration. Saint-Rémy recounts, for instance, how Duke Antoine de Brabant had arrived at the battle 'à peu de compaignie', because he was so impatient to take part in the fight that most of his knights had been unable to keep pace with him. Without halting to wait for them, the Duke 'print une des bannières de ses trompettes et y fist ung pertuis par le milieu, dont il fist cotte d'armes. Jà si tost n'y fut descendus que tantost et incontinent par les Anglois fut mis à mort' (I, 256). Knights especially enjoyed performing particular ceremonials which could embellish their deeds, such as oaths. Saint-Rémy relates how eighteen French noblemen had solemnly sworn to do their best to knock King Henry's crown off his head, 'ou ilz moroient tous'. None of them were to survive. Yet, one knight managed to get so close to King Henry that he knocked down 'un des flourons de sa couronne, comme l'en disoit'. Had all the knights of France acted as these eighteen knights, Saint-Rémy concluded, the outcome of the battle could well have changed (I, 250). Françoise Autrand has emphasized that most contemporaries, whether noble or not, commenting on a great defeat, such as that of Poitiers in 1356, would attribute the debacle mainly to a want of bravery amongst the knights, giving priority to this explanation, or others of a similar, moral kind, over more tactical considerations[36].

Yet, because it encouraged personal initiative, and because it stemmed from the desire to distinguish oneself and acquire some personal glory, the display of prowess could often be detrimental to tactics. We saw how Clarence had met his death at Beaugé (1421) and caused the first English defeat since the taking of Harfleur by dashing to meet the Dauphinists without bothering to wait for his archers. Sometimes the prince himself could set a bad example: the young and proud Duke Philip often illustrated this at the start of his military career, but seems to have been protected by an unbelievable good luck. The victory of Mons-en-Vimeu, which, as Monstrelet pointed out, was more an encounter than a battle, but which was blown up to epic proportions by Wavrin and Chastelain especially, could well have ended in a much less fortunate way. Indeed, Chastelain explains without a hint of blame how

[36] F. AUTRAND, 'La déconfiture. La bataille de Poitiers (1356) à travers quelques textes français des 14e et 15e siècles', in *Guerre et société...*, p. 93-121 (p. 101-102).

Philip

> ne tint [...] en celuy jour oncques, ni route, ni ordonnance, et ne regardoit, ni qui fut près ni loin de sa personne, mais tousjours mains et bras en besongne sur les sallades et visières, hurtoit et chocquoit sur les uns et sur les autres. Toutes presses lui estoient bonnes et toutes places visitées (I, 266).

Wavrin seems, however, to have felt a retrospective shiver down his back as he recalled that the young Duke had chased the Dauphinists down to the river 'à petite compaignie, et en la fin se trouva seul excepté ung gentilhomme [...] qui le fist retourner hastivement, car il estoit acheminé vers une petite montaignette sur laquelle estoient aulcuns daulphinois [...] cuidant que ce feussent de ses gens' (II, 378).

But, of course, in the eyes of our chivalrous chroniclers, nothing could be worse for a knight than being guilty of cowardice, and fleeing a battlefield. Monstrelet relates how those who had left the Duke exposed at Mons-en-Vimeu, and fled for their lives, completely fell out of grace with Philip, who thereafter banished them from his court, when told about their despicable action (IV, 64). There were, however, 'peu [...] de gens de nom' amongst the culprits. Chastelain, with his literary gift for elaboration, gives us more details and explains that some of these knights, whom Philip trusted since they belonged to the nobility and had a reputation for being valiant warriors in the time of John the Fearless, died before the Duke would pardon them. Others departed and went on what could almost be described as a penitential pilgrimage: 'Aucuns en eslonge de leur pays se disposèrent à loingtains voyages qui en effacèrent et amoindrirent la mémoire' (I, 273). Fleeing when all was evidently lost often was the only sensible alternative, but our chivalrous chroniclers would much prefer to see the whole chivalry of a prince exterminated, rather than turning tail. This attitude was shared by the non-noble part of the population - after all, the duty of the nobility was to sacrifice their lives for the good of those who did not fight. Thus the Bourgeois de Paris would report about the battle of Agincourt: 'et disoit-on communement que ceulx qui prins estoient n'avoient pas esté bons ne loyaulx à ceulx qui moururent en bataille'[37]. Jean de Wavrin superbly shows how

[37] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 66.

embarrassed he felt for having fled, with his captain the famous English knight Falstoff, the battlefield of Patay (1429) - where Joan of Arc was present - as the English saw that the battle was irremediably lost. Wavrin tries to justify the conduct of Falstoff, which was after all very sensible, considering that it was better to save what remained of the English army than to sacrifice it to the wrath of the French:

> Adont messire Jehan Fastre voiant le dangier de la fuite, congnoissant tout très mal aller, eut conseil de soy sauver, et luy fut dit, moy acteur estant present, qu'il prensist garde à sa personne, car la bataille estoit perdue pour eulz.

Wavrin takes care to explain that there was no hope, at this stage, of a reverse of fortune in favour of the English. At the same time, he stresses that Falstoff himself never wanted to flee, 'disant que mieulz amoit estre mors ou prins que honteusement fuyr et ainsi ses gens habandonner'. Falstoff only agreed to follow the advice given as he saw that there definitely was no hope of saving anyone, except his few troops by taking to flight. He then proceeded to turn back on his tracks, 'demenant le plus grant duel que jamais veisse faire a un homme, et pour verité se feust reboutté en la bataille se n'eussent esté ceulz quy avec luy estoient'. As for himself, Wavrin explains that there was no other alternative than following Falstoff, since he was under his orders: 'moy je le sievis comme mon capittaine, auquel le duc de Bethfort m'avoit commandé obéyr et mesmes servir sa personne' (III, 303-304). This time discipline and sense prevailed. Yet, as is well known, Falstoff had to go through great troubles in order to justify his conduct to the Duke of Bedford, and was, for a while, deprived of the Order of the Garter. Wavrin sides with him, explaining that his excuses were in any case 'raisonnables', and that they were eventually 'très bien approuvées' (III, 306).

Another chivalrous virtue was that of courtesy. Knights of different allegiances may have waged war against one another, but our Burgundian chroniclers show that they shared a mutual respect between members of the same caste. Philip the Good was obviously moved by the wish to appear magnificent as he decided to set free two noblemen who had been captured at the battle of Mons-en-Vimeu: Lefèvre de Saint-Rémy recounts how Philip graciously offered them 'cheval et

harnas; et avec ce, leur donna à chascun V^{c} pieces d'or' (II, 43). However, this magnanimous gesture towards two enemies also stemmed from a particular attitude, that of courtesy between knights and respect for a worthy enemy of the same chivalric class. As Chastelain expressed it, 'il falloit que les rayes de sa [Duke Philip's] noblesse resplendissent en ses adversaires qui valeureusement s'estoient portés encontre luy'. The chronicler adds 'moult certes prisoit les vaillances d'aucuns de eux, car les avoit mesmes bien assayés' (I, 284). The acknowledgement of the worth of a brave enemy from the chivalrous class, and the respectful and sympathetic attitude that was supposed to follow, were a sign of nobility. Thus the war of the knights could be distinguished from the war of the commoners by a sort of politeness between aristocratic fighters, which made the waging of war appear very civilized. Moreover, knights would usually avoid killing each other in action; they would rather take their noble enemies prisoner, in order to ransom them. The chivalrous chroniclers do not hide this practice of ransoming aristocratic prisoners – more seldom do they point out another, rather common, practice, that of ransoming civilians, though they do occasionally mention it[38] - but make it more acceptable by covering it up with the lustre of courtesy. Accounts of discussions entertained by great knights and their aristocratic hostages, or of the apparent liberality with which these knights would treat prestigious prisoners, are famously impressive; they have contributed to our general understanding of the 'noble' code of conduct.

Jean de Wavrin, for instance, relates how, after the battle of Verneuil (1424), the Duke of Bedford brought with him to Rouen his very aristocratic prisoner, the Duke of Alençon. Upon meeting his wife on the threshold of his hostel, he introduced the French Duke: 'Mamie, véez cy vostre cousin d'Alenchon, nostre prisonnier'. The chronicler relates how Bedford's spouse, Anne de Bourgogne, 'lui respondy que bien feust il venu, si l'embracha et le baisa' (III, 122). Alençon seems to have been treated as a distinguished visitor. Wavrin explains that he apparently stayed for a few days in Bedford's hostel as his host, before being transferred to the

[38] See for example ENGUERRAN DE MONSTRELET, IV, 49, where the author narrates how Poton de Saintrailles and Jacques de Harcourt 'ardirent et abatirent [...] une très belle église, dedens laquelle s'estoient retrais avecques aucuns de leurs biens les habitans d'icelle ville [Conchy-sur-Canche], lesquelz furent tous ou en la plus grant partie emmenez prisonniers comme chétifz audit lieu de Saint-Riquier'. However, since Saintrailles and Harcourt were Dauphinists, Monstrelet was quite likely to mention their exactions.

castle of Crotoy. When reading accounts of polite conversations between a knight and his prisoner, we tend to forget the strong element of material interest that lay behind such courteous behaviour. Modern historians have pointed out with much cynicism that high-ranking prisoners were treated with much consideration because the ransom expected from them could be considerable, and that courtesy only appeared at war between members of the same privileged, aristocratic caste. Still, as Franco Cardini has rightly emphasized, however hypocritical the code of chivalry may appear to us, it was a respectable effort to limit the barbarity of warfare, thus differentiating war from the antique *furor*[39].

Loyalty, honour, 'proèce', and courtesy were some of the main chivalrous virtues. There were others, most notably that of being trustworthy. Our Burgundian chroniclers often demonstrate that a true Burgundian knight was a man of his word. Jean de Wavrin severely reproached some Norman knights from the Pays de Caux for having changed sides on the eve of the battle of Verneuil, calling them 'lasces chevaliers et escuyers de Northmandie [...] quy autreffoys avoient fait serment de loyaulté et fidelité audit duc de Bethfort regent' (III, 120-121). They deserved very well the ill luck which had befallen them, the Duke of Bedford having won the day. The bonds created by an oath of allegiance did not allow knights any change of convictions.

The last chivalric virtue which emerges – albeit seldom – from our chronicles is that of dedication to the love of a lady. Geoffroi de Charny had given this traditional virtue, extolled in romance literature from Chrétien de Troyes onwards, a pre-eminent position in his *Livre de chevalerie*, as he declared about young knights eager to gain glory and renown: 'Si doivent icelles gens vivre loiaument et liement, entre les autres choses amer par amours honorablement, que c'est le droit estat de ceulx qui celi honour veulent acquerir'. Charny also emphasized that the beloved lady's reward would be the assurance that she had inspired the great deeds of a valiant knight, while no woman would ever feel proud in being loved by a 'chaitif maleureux'[40]. In the chronicles of our chivalrous historiographers, women do not

[39] Cf. CARDINI, p. 323-324.
[40] GEOFFROI DE CHARNY, p. 118-122.

often appear. Their works are primarily concerned with wars, and thus the world which they present is predominantly masculine. Occasionally, however, one can observe that the honour of ladies was still considered as a convenient traditional pretext for fighting: Chastelain, for instance, explains that as Duke Philip's host was passing before Saint-Riquier, 'six gentilshommes, par l'agrément de leur prince, tramirent un poursuivant en ladite ville, requérir et semondre autres six gentilshommes, quels qu'ils fussent, pour rompre lances en l'honneur de leurs dames encontre eux' (I, 245-246). It seems, however, that things had slightly changed since the days of Froissart and Charny, for Chastelain informs us that

> combien qu'il y pouvoit avoir de vertes testes, pour mettre leurs vies sur le coup d'un hasart, aussi bien que à l'autre lez, n'y eut celuy toutes-voies qui en fust cru, ni qui pust obtenir congé de leur capitaine de le faire prestement.

As one can see, the captains in charge of the army were rather reluctant to let any of their men put their life into jeopardy without a serious excuse. Still, six men answered the challenge, and the tournament was staged with much ceremony – after many precautions had been taken to avoid any accident or treachery.

As one studies the treatment of the chivalric virtues in the works of our chroniclers, one can already perceive the general trends which would progressively shape Renaissance chivalry: while the virtue of loyalty to the suzerain was becoming increasingly predominant, individualistic customs such as answering a challenge for the honour of a lady during a campaign were beginning to be discouraged. The ideal of knighthood was slowly evolving, producing new generations of knights which would be totally devoted to their prince, and disciplined. The old ideals of the knight-errant did not really suit the Renaissance princes' interests, at least in their 'authentic' form. But let us now consider a final point, which further helps to define the attitude of knights with regard to warfare.

5. Aesthetics of the war of the knights

It was not only the code of chivalry which distinguished knights from ordinary fighters: their whole outlook on the waging of war was different. War seemed beautiful to them, not only in the physical, but also in the moral sense. In fact the two aspects went hand in hand. In a revealing passage of his work, Monstrelet marvels at the spectacle offered by the army of John the Fearless drawn up in battle formation between Pontoise and Melun. He describes the forces of Duke John, made up of 'grant nombre de gens moult bien habillez et désirans de le servir contre tous ses ennemis'. He stands in awe of this powerful host where one could see so many noblemen 'de diverses nacions, qui en moult belle ordonnance avecques toutes leurs gens furent bien ilec par l'espace de deux heures', and relates how John the Fearless rode with some of his greatest vassals 'tout au long des batailles pour les veoir, faisant à iceulx [the knights of his host] très grans honneurs et inclinacions et ainsi les remerciant du bon service qu'ilz lui faisoient'. Monstrelet then concludes: 'pour dire vérité c'estoit belle chose de les veoir tant y avoit de notables hommes et fleur de gens d'armes bien habillez' (III, 214-215). Throughout his description, the historiographer mingles terms praising the knights' appearance, the beauty of their garments, and words extolling their moral virtues. One could see from the richness of the knights' trappings that they were nobles, and as such, their souls must have been as fair as their appearance.

When confronted with the army of Henry V, as it appeared on the battlefield of Agincourt, our chivalrous chroniclers seem completely bewildered. There was nothing noble about the look of King Henry's archers, described at length by Monstrelet and Saint-Rémy: 'la plus grant partie estoient sans armeures, en leurs pourpoins, leurs chausses avalées soubz le genoil, et ayant hachètes ou espées pendues à leurs ceintures. Et si en avoit plusieurs tous nudz piez et sans chaperon'[41]. The Burgundian chroniclers were used to the impressive appearance of the Dukes' chivalry. What was more astonishing, and moreover an exemplary lesson of humility, was that this army of *va-nu-pieds* would utterly destroy the proud heavy cavalry of France. Monstrelet and Wavrin were similarly taken aback by the appearance of King Henry's 8,000 Irish soldiers, who ravaged the countryside during the terrible siege of

[41] ENGUERRAN DE MONSTRELET, III, 106 ; JEAN LEFÈVRE DE SAINT-RÉMY, I, 254. Quotation from Monstrelet.

Rouen (1418): 'la plus grant partie alloit de pié, ung pié chaussé et l'autre nu, sans braies et povrement habillez, aians chascun une targète [...] avec gros couteaulx d'estrange façon'. The chroniclers were shocked by their behaviour in the war waged by Henry V, behaviour which coincided with their appearance: 'lesdiz Yrlandois [...] prenoient petis enfans en leurs berceaulx et autres bagues, à tous lesquelz montoient sur vaches, portant lesdiz petis enfans et bagues devant eulx sur lesdictes vaches, et furent par plusieurs foiz trouvez des François en cel estat'[42].

In war, above all, knights enjoyed the 'belles apartises d'armes' and 'hauts faits d'armes' which were the physical manifestation of the virtue of 'proèce'. The 'faits d'armes' stemmed solely from courage, strength and virtue, and connoisseurs watched them, or heard them recounted, with the greatest delight. Many 'patterns' of feats of arms were identified; some seem to have particularly fired the imagination of our chivalrous chroniclers, and their readership. One markedly popular 'fait d'armes' seems to have been the fight inside one of the mines and counter-mines which were often dug under the walls of besieged fortresses. Aristocratic readers certainly found the dramatic idea of fighting underground, in a dark and restricted space, particularly exciting. The chroniclers always mention when one or many knights had the honour of being dubbed inside a mine, before a combat[43]. Another glorious kind of feat of arms which especially enthralled the noble readership was when a knight had the honour of fighting at length against a king or a prince, by accident, for instance during an assault. Thus it should not come as a surprise to see Chastelain resorting to all the treasures of rhetoric as he describes the momentous fight which Henry V and Philip the Good had against Barbasan, the captain of Melun, and one Ovide Bourgeois, who might not have been a knight, but certainly earned the title after this combat, on either side of a barricade which had been erected inside a mine reached by a counter-mine, under the walls of Melun. Chastelain extols the glory acquired by the two Dauphinists after this prodigious action: 'dont leur gloire n'est à taire d'avoir maintenu estour [combat] contre deux si hautement vaillans et esprouvés hommes de leur temps, sans blasmer nul du nombre des meilleurs' (I, 157). This episode is of course reminiscent of the famous event recounted by Froissart, where Eustache de

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[42] Quotation from ENGUERRAN DE MONSTRELET, III, 284-285 ; see also JEAN DE WAVRIN, II, 249.

Ribeumont fought against Edward III without recognizing him, only this time not underground but on the walls of Calais, during an assault[44]. Such feats of arms may have been impressive and enjoyable to hear recounted, but they were more often than not useless and of no tactical importance. Jean de Wavrin, who, unlike Chastelain or Monstrelet, was a knight, knew this only too well. To the narrative which Monstrelet had made of the courageous 'fait d'armes' performed by the bastard of Arly under the walls of Rouen – challenged by one Jean le Blanc, the bastard of Arly had accepted the fight and mortally wounded his opponent – Wavrin, while admiring the deed performed, added the bitter comment: 'mais au vray dire, peu povoient valloir telz apartises d'armes ne pourfitter auz assegiés et asségans, sinon pour renom de valleureuse noblesse' (II, 250).

However, one event in the waging of war was especially favoured and privileged by knights, because it was loaded with significance, and particularly charged with emotion: the pitched battle. Philippe Contamine has shown how important the concept of the pitched battle was in the ideology of medieval warfare[45], despite the fact that, as experts tend to emphasize more and more today[46], battles did not happen so often during the Middle Ages, as rulers were not always keen on risking most of their military power on a single occasion. Knights considered battles as very special, almost sacred events, especially since proper pitched battles only seldom happened – almost 10 years elapsed between the major battles of Agincourt (1415) and Verneuil (1424). Though the Church disagreed with this opinion, the pitched battle was, in the eyes of an overwhelming majority of the population, equivalent to an ordeal, the judgement of God. Thus it should not come as a surprise if the chivalrous chroniclers devoted many pages, and deployed all their literary talents, to describe the most important battles of their time.

Monstrelet, Wavrin, who had the privilege of participating in the two major

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[43] See for instance ENGUERRAN DE MONSTRELET, IV, 185.
[44] Cf. JEAN FROISSART, ed. LUCE, IV, 80.
[45] P. CONTAMINE, 'L'idée de guerre à la fin du Moyen Age: aspects juridiques et éthiques', in *La France au XIVe et XVe siècle...*, item XIII. See especially the first pages on the pitched battle, and the Church's stand vis à vis the conception of the battle as an ordeal.
[46] See for instance M. PRESTWICH, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages. The English Experience*, New Haven / London, Yale University Press, 1996, p. 186.

battles of the first decades of the 15th century, Agincourt and Verneuil, and Lefèvre de Saint-Rémy, who was also present at the battle of Agincourt, but on the English side, illustrate perfectly how knights considered battles, especially the particularly dramatic and spectacular defeat of Agincourt, as sublime moments. The knights of France had gone to the battle of Agincourt with a joyful heart; Saint-Rémy explains that the number of French casualties could have been even greater than it was, for 'à tous costez, gens aplouvoient, comme se ce fust à aller à une festes de joustes ou de tournoy' (I, 268). This initial delight and exultation at the thought of going to a battle made the disaster even more tragic for the French. The chroniclers tell us that many princes who had not had the honour of being present at the famous battle would regret it all their life. Saint-Rémy testifies to having heard Philip the Good, at the age of sixty-seven, deploring the fact that he had not fought at Agincourt, 'fust pour la mort ou pour la vie' (I, 239-240). And the same author discloses that one of the reasons why the Duke of Clarence had apparently acted so foolishly at Beaugé was that the English prince of blood 'désiroit la bataille pour ce qu'il n'avoit point esté à celle d'Agincourt, que jamais n'y cuidoit venir à temps' (II, 36).

Battles gave rise to some special events, and were usually preceded by poignant ceremonials. Lefèvre de Saint-Rémy recounts how, on the morning of Saint Crispin and Crispian's day, the French knights forgave each other's wrongdoings, and made their hearts at peace: 'Les aucuns s'entrebaisoient et accolloient par paix faisant, que pitié estoit à les veoir. Toutes noyses et discords, qui avoient esté entre eulx et qu'ilz avoient eu du temps passé, furent là transmuées en grant amour'. This scene is all the more moving since it took place in the general context of the civil war. Saint-Rémy also shows how an approaching battle was surrounded by a religious awe: on the previous day, our author had seen the English, who thought that they would have to fight that day, ' en grant dévocion, eulx mectant à genoulx, les mains joinctes vers le ciel, faisant leurs oroisons à Dieu qu'il les veusist mectre en sa garde' (I, 249, 242).

Jean de Wavrin gives more space to the aesthetics of the battle of Verneuil than that of Agincourt (III, 108-121). He describes at great length the beauty of Bedford's army as it was ready to fight, a beauty whose character seems to have been

as much physical as moral: 'sans faulte moy acteur de ceste euvre n'avoie jamais veu plus belle compaignie, ne où il eust autant de noblesse comme il avoit là, ne mieulz ordonnée ou monstrant greigneur samblant ou voullenté de soy combattre'. Another impressive aspect of the battle was the 'grant noise et grant huée avecques bruit tumultueux des trompettes et clarons', which deafened the warriors as they rushed against each other. The fight itself is described by Wavrin as 'horrible', 'moult felle et cruelle', anything but beautiful, one might think. The archers were shooting 'sy cruelement que horreur estoit à les regarder'. Despite all this, one soon realizes that Wavrin considered this horrible violence to be ultimately sublime, since it brought out the best qualities in those who were fighting; on such occasions, the author eventually explains, 'si n'i avoit celluy quy n'esprouvast totalement sa vertu et sa force'. It is difficult to believe that Wavrin was sincere as he deplored the 'grant horreur et pitié irréparable de ainsy veoir Christienneté destruire l'un l'autre': having read his praises of the battle, this comment simply sounds as a conventional thing to say for a Christian, or a rhetorical device intended to make the report more emotional. What is more, it is interesting to note that Wavrin considered the battle of Verneuil as a paradigm, a model of a 'proper' battle, which went on according to the rule book. Indeed, the knight-chronicler explains:

> Je vey l'assemblée d'Azincourt, ou beaucop avoit plus de princes et de gens, et aussi celle de Crevant, quy fut une tres belle besongne; mais pour certain celle de Verneuil fut du tout plus a redoubter et la mieulz combatue.

As one can see, Wavrin classified the great battles in which he had had the honour of taking part according to some very specific criteria: Verneuil was the most 'beautiful' of all because it had been fought in the traditional style, unlike Agincourt where the French had already lost the battle by the time they had reached the English lines. Also, the fight at Verneuil had been particularly physical and fierce, with equal chances on both sides. Thus Verneuil ranked higher as a spectacle in Wavrin's opinion than Agincourt, despite the fact that the 1415 victory had been much more remarkable in the efficiency of the methods employed by the English.

Some knights, however, were fully aware of the risks run by rulers when

letting a pitched battle decide on the fate of their dominion. According to Monstrelet, the few knights who worried about fighting the English 'en bataille arrestée' at Agincourt were 'des plus sages' amongst the other French knights (III, 104-105). They had not forgotten the lessons taught by Crécy and by the successful campaigns led by Charles V through du Guesclin's agency. Still, at Agincourt, Marshal Boucicaut and d'Albret, despite apprehending the consequences of a pitched battle against the English, could not hope to persuade such a huge and disorganized host, composed of knights from diverse origins, not to fight in the manner sanctified by tradition[47].

I hope that I have highlighted most of the characteristic features of these Burgundian chivalrous chronicles. One should note that, while retaining a very specific character, the Burgundian chivalrous genre of historiography was constantly evolving. Thus, the chronicles of Saint-Rémy and Wavrin appear much more partial than that of Monstrelet, despite the fact that both authors used the earlier narration extensively. Even more than Monstrelet, they extol the institution of chivalry, of which Duke Philip is presented as the champion. But it was the first official historiographer of Burgundy Georges Chastelain who was to give its fully-fledged character to the Burgundian writing of history, a character which would endure in the chronicle of Charles the Bold's official historiographer Jean Molinet; Olivier de la Marche also displays the same ideology, though he could not live up to Chastelain's stylistic standards. Thanks to his mastery of rhetoric, Chastelain gave a heroic version of the early years of Duke Philip, praising his patron and the noble chivalry of Burgundy to the sky, as well as the ideals that they revered[48]. Indeed, Philip the Good had singled out chivalry as *the* line of conduct for his duchy, which still needed to assert its power and prestige on the international scene, as a young autonomous principality. The prince's ambition was not only to compete with prestigious rivals such as the Kingdoms of France and England, but also to attract and secure the allegiance of a growing number of knights. For chivalry, despite becoming increasingly obsolete and promoting ideals which often were hypocritically ignored, still was the code of

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[47] Cf. C. HIBBERT, *Agincourt*, London, Batsford, 1964, p. 106-107.

[48] On the ideals supported by Chastelain, cf. G. SMALL, *Georges Chastelain and the Shaping of Valois Burgundy. Political and Historical Culture at Court in the 15th Century*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1997, and DELCLOS's excellent work *Le témoignage de Georges Chastellain.*

conduct that the aristocracy would naturally adopt, at least seemingly, in order to distinguish itself from the rest of medieval society.

I shall now contrast the Burgundian chivalrous chronicles with a genre of historiography, which seems more specifically French; this genre was still enjoying its heyday during the first decades of the 15th century, and had certainly not disappeared when Monstrelet started writing his *Chronique*. I shall refer to this kind of historiographical literature as the 'clerical' chronicles, because it was written by clerics, but it could equally be labelled the 'anti-chivalrous' chronicle, for its ideology was radically different from that upheld by Wavrin, Saint-Rémy and Chastelain.

B. An alternative vision of the war of the knights: the French 'clerical' chronicle

1. A more traditional vision of warfare

The raging civil war between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs, the renewal, in 1415, of the hostilities between France and England, and the spectacular and dramatic conquests of the English in the Kingdom of France were also recounted by many French chroniclers. Among all their accounts, one can clearly identify a particular genre of historiography, which had many adepts; I have chosen to refer to this genre as the 'clerical' chronicle. All the authors who practised this genre were clerics; they often wrote in Latin, though apparently, by the 15th century, an increasing number of them were composing in the vernacular. The 'clerical' chronicles which recount the English invasion of France are more contemporary to the events they narrate than the Burgundian 'chivalrous' chronicles we have just seen; indeed, it seems that by the time Charles VII had reasserted his authority over the Kingdom, clerical chronicles were less in vogue, certainly because their ideology

An allegorical illustration of the old antagonism dividing the knights and the common people, a predominant theme of the 'clerical' tradition of historiography

Fig. 3. An illumination from a manuscript of Alain Chartier's *Quadriloge invectif*, composed around 1422. The author is asleep. In his dream, he is a witness to an animated discussion between the Knight, the People and the Cleric, presided by France. The figure of the People is dressed as a peasant. On the right-hand side, the Knight is bullying the People, who lies at his feet, in rags, while France is desperately trying to prevent her castle from collapsing.

did not fit that promoted by the King and the ruling class. And yet, the clerical genre of historiography had enjoyed a great popularity at least since the mid-14th century.

Most of the main characteristics of the genre appear in the chronicle of Jean de Venette[49], a Carmelite friar who happened to be Froissart's near contemporary. Like Froissart, Jean de Venette recounted the wars of his time, notably the disastrous defeats of Crécy and Poitiers, but in a manner very different from Froissart's. While the latter had glorified the Hundred Years War, Jean de Venette presented it as a great calamity, heralded by the appearance of a disturbing comet in the sky. Froissart had extolled the main actors of the wars of his time, the knights, but Jean de Venette, who belonged to a family of peasants, voiced all the resentment which peasants felt against knights during the sad reigns of Philip VI of Valois and John II the Good: knights were arrogant, they never agreed with the Clergy and the Third Estate and they also failed to oppose the English aggression. And instead of protecting the Kingdom of France, as was their function, they would rather 'trample it under foot, robbing and pillaging the peasants' goods'[50]. When the peasants' revolt known as the *Jacquerie* broke out, in 1358, Jean de Venette wrote sympathetically about the peasants' undertaking, though he did blame them severely for having acted on their own initiative, rather than under a lord's authority, and for the many atrocities that they committed.

The main ideas expressed by Jean de Venette in his work appear as the basic ingredients of the early 15th century clerical chroniclers. Indeed, in all these works, one finds that warfare is presented in a similar, blunt and demystifying light, and the same resentment against knights is displayed. In this section, I propose to contrast the depiction of the war of the knights by three clerical chroniclers, the famous 'Bourgeois' de Paris, the monk of Saint-Denis, and Pierre Cochon, to the chivalrous vision embodied in the works of Monstrelet, Wavrin, Saint-Rémy and Chastelain. The Bourgeois de Paris, whose chronicle covers the years 1405-1449, was in fact a cleric, most probably from the University of Paris. He was, as is well-known,

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[49] I have used an American translation of Jean de Venette's Latin chronicle: cf. JEAN DE VENETTE, *Chronicle*, transl. J. BIRDSALL, ed. R. A. NEWHALL, New York, Columbia University Press, 1953.
[50] JEAN DE VENETTE, p. 66.

Burgundian 'dans ses sources comme dans ses opinions'[51]; he also was a Burgundian subject for as long as Paris remained under Burgundian rule (from 1418 to 1436). I have still chosen to consider him as a French clerical chronicler, because Paris was only Burgundian for a relatively short time, and, more importantly, because his work followed the tradition of the French clerical chronicle; its ideology is undoubtedly very similar to that of Jean de Venette's work[52]. It is interesting to note that the monk of Saint-Denis, identified as Michel Pintoin, whose chronicle seems very typical of the genre, was writing the semi-official historiography of the Kings of France: he was continuing the old tradition of Dionysian historiography. Since the beginning of the 13th century, the monks of Saint-Denis who had been composing the *Grandes Chroniques de France* had regarded themselves as the Kings of France's historiographers, even though the latter had never granted them any title. On some occasions, however, the Kings had entrusted to a monk of Saint-Denis the mission of writing specific historiographical works. Michel Pintoin had been asked by Charles VI himself to write the history of his reign, and to the monks of Notre-Dame de Paris who stressed that the chronicles of Saint-Denis were simple, unofficial works, the monks of Saint-Denis had answered: 'Il n'y a eu ne n'a present que ung chroniqueur de France'[53]. Thus the 'clerical' chronicle genre had, at the time, a semi-official character. The readership of Michel Pintoin's chronicle must have been much wider than that of the Bourgeois de Paris, who was writing either for himself, or for the restricted circle of his university colleagues, or those of the chapter of Notre Dame[54]. The monk of Saint-Denis recounted the events that occurred in the Kingdom of France between 1380 and 1422[55]. The last clerical author I used, Pierre Cochon, was a priest from Normandy – he often was in Rouen, which became after its fall the capital of English territories in France - and had thus become a subject of the King of England after Henry V's spectacular conquest. Cochon was apparently writing for himself, or for a very restricted readership, because many of his comments show that,

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[51] See Colette Beaune's introduction in the *Journal...*, ed. BEAUNE, p. 5-26 (quotation p. 16).
[52] I have used, for all quotations, Tuetey's classic edition.
[53] On the Dionysian tradition of historiography see B. GUENÉE, *Histoire et culture historique dans l'occident médiéval*, Paris, Aubier-Montaigne, 1980, p. 399-342 (quotation p. 341).
[54] *Journal...*, ed. BEAUNE, p. 17-18.
[55] I have used a recent reprint of Louis-François Bellaguet's bilingual edition (6 vol., Paris, Crapelet, 1839-1852): *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys contenant le règne de Charles VI, de 1380 à 1422*, ed. and transl. L. -F. BELLAGUET, 3 vol., Paris, Éditions du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1994.

after the conquest, he was in favour of the Dauphinists – even though he had originally been in favour of the Burgundians. Certainly his chronicle, had it been publicized, would have been censored by the English authorities. Cochon also was the author of a little diary which closes in 1434, entitled, in Charles de Robillard de Beaurepaire's edition, *Chronique rouennaise*. His best and most useful work, the *Chronique normande*, ends abruptly in 1430, though Cochon only died around 1456[56].

Despite their obvious interest, these 'clerical' chronicles seem to have attracted far less attention from scholars than the chivalrous chronicles we have just seen. Historians have used them for gathering factual information about the Hundred Years War, but have not emphasized the fact that they form a genre of historiographical literature, with clearly identifiable origins, diametrically opposed to the chivalrous writing of history. In his overview of French and Burgundian historiography during the Hundred Years War, admittedly a short yet informative work, Michel Mollat du Jourdin laid stress on the particularities of Jean de Venette's journal, mainly the fact that, unlike the Burgundian chivalrous chroniclers, Jean de Venette described at great length the sufferings, and also the occasional feats of arms – we owe him the well-known story of 'Grand Ferré' – of the peasant class during the Hundred Years War[57]. But Mollat du Jourdin did not highlight the great similarities in style and ideology which later clerical chroniclers, such as the Bourgeois or Pintoin, share with Jean de Venette. In a very recent work, however, Nicholas Wright has pointed out that the contemporaries who described the horrors of the Hundred Years War were for the most part clerics, and that their works were strongly influenced by the predicatory tradition. These authors usually did not have direct experience of warfare, and their works often used the same rhetoric devices in order to appeal to the reader's emotions. He also included the clerical chroniclers of the late 14th and early 15th century in a wider circle of personalities who had their hearts set on defending the peasant class; this circle comprised not only chroniclers, but also poets such as Eustache Deschamps or Alain Chartier, lawyers such as Honoré Bonet,

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[56] PIERRE COCHON, *Chronique normande (1408-1430)*, ed. C. DE ROBILLARD DE BEAUREPAIRE for the Société de l'Histoire de Normandie, Rouen, Le Brument, 1870. For the *Chronique rouennaise*, see p. 316-356.
[57] MOLLAT DU JOURDIN, p. 14, 119, 133.

authors of political tracts like Jean de Montreuil, and preachers like Jean Gerson. However, Wright, who is primarily a historian, did not make an attempt at defining in detail the characteristics of the clerical chronicle genre, and although he made extensive use of Jean de Venette's journal, he did not study the works of de Venette's early 15th century heirs: Pintoin, the Bourgeois, or Cochon[58]. As authors, the clerical chroniclers have not received all the attention they deserve. Cochon, for instance, has been rather ignored by scholars, despite the obvious interest of his chronicle. And only recently has the Bourgeois de Paris benefited from a modern critical study, in the form of Colette Beaune's annotation of her modern translation of the *Journal*, despite the fact that this diary of the Hundred Years War has been very popular with historians and history enthusiasts alike, at least since the 19th century. But let us now turn to the study of the sources.

2. The demolition of the attractive, traditional image of the knight

Despite the glorious image presented by chivalrous chronicles, the chronicles written to please and extol the aristocracy, most knights were far from behaving like saints in wars. Knights were supposed to protect those who did not fight, the clerics and the working class, but they committed countless exactions, and civilians, the common people, especially the peasant class, were the ones who suffered most from their abuses. The knights' exactions bred much popular resentment, and our three chroniclers, like Jean de Venette before them, made themselves the *vox populi*. The Bourgeois de Paris, for instance, often expresses in eloquent speeches the despair which overcame the poor and the peasants in these troubled times. In a dramatic episode, he recounts how, during the conquest of Brie in 1421, the peasants of the region had complained to the English and Burgundian lords about the devastation wrought in their fields, and how the warlords 'ne s'en faisoient que mocquer ou rire'. The peasants then decided to leave their wives and children and to become outlaws, and the Bourgeois voiced their anger and wretchedness with a moving speech inspired by the *Danses Macabres* of the period:

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[58] Cf. N. A. R. WRIGHT, *Knights and Peasants. The Hundred Years War in the French Countryside*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1998. On the authors who describe the horrors of late medieval warfare,

> Que ferons nous? Mettons tout en la main du deable, ne nous chault que nous devenons[...]. Mieulx nous vaulsist servir les Sarazins que les Chrestiens, et pour ce faisons du pis que nous pourrons [...] car par le faulx gouvernement des trestres gouverneurs, il nous fault renyer femmes et enfans, et fouir au boys comme bestes esgarées; non pas ung an ne deux, mais il a ja xiii ou xv ans que ceste dance doloreuse commença [59].

The Bourgeois de Paris was especially keen to denounce the crimes of the knights, and tales of their outrages are common in his diary. In the Bourgeois's work, knights and their companies kill civilians, burn villages, loot houses, and ransom the burgesses and the peasants, who were in principle protected by the laws of war, as Honoré Bonet, author of the *Arbre des batailles*, which was often quoted in legal disputes, had insisted[60]. Thus the Bourgeois recounts, for instance, how in 1417 the Armagnac garrison of Paris would often take to the fields to fight the Burgundians. On their way back, they would loot and capture civilians, and steal 'tout le bestail qu'i povoient trouver, comme beufs, vaches, chevaux, asnes, anesses, jumens, porcs, brebis, moutons, chevres, chevreaulx et toute autre chose dont ilz povoient avoir argent'. In churches, the soldiers 'prenoient [...] livres et toute autre chose qu'ilz povoient happer'. On their way back to Paris, they were 'aussi troussez de biens que fait le heriçon de pommes'. The Bourgeois concludes: 'et quelque personne qui s'en plaignoit à justice ou au connestable, ou aux cappitaines, tout bel luy estoit de se taire'[61]. One might think that it was only the common soldiers who behaved like thugs, but most of the Bourgeois' rancour is directed at the knights. Indeed, even in those anarchic days, despite the fact that military careers were open to a much wider range of medieval society, the knights still always were in the foreground in military matters. The captured defenders of Meaux, who were paraded by the English in Paris after the fall of the city, 'estoient [...] tous de renon de chevance, mais les laboureurs du païs en icellui temps n'avoient nulz pires ennemis, car ilz estoient pires à leurs voisins que n'eussent esté les Sarazins'[62]. Moreover, it is clear that the Bourgeois

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see especially p. 13 and p. 17-18.

[59] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 164.

[60] HONORÉ BONET, *L'Arbre des batailles*, ed. E. NYS, Brussels, Muquardt, 1883, p. 140 and 208-209. On the *Arbre des batailles*, see WRIGHT, 'The Tree of Battles...', p. 12-31.

[61] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 82-83.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

held the knights responsible for the damage committed by the common soldiers under their orders: we have seen how he emphasized the arrogance of the captains' reaction, when civilians dared to complain about the behaviour of their troops.

The Bourgeois' opinion, however, must be analysed with caution, for, as is well known, his arguments are very biased. He was an ardent supporter of the Burgundians, one of the reasons for this being that John the Fearless' politics had been to flatter and seek the support of the Third Estate and the common people. Thus, the Bourgeois was always prone to denounce the abuses of the Dauphinists, but did not always mention the crimes committed by the Burgundian troops, whose behaviour was very similar to that of the French companies. In his chronicle, until the Treaty of Arras (1435) which saw the reconciliation of France and Burgundy, a treaty which he accepted with bad grace, the Dauphinists - whom he kept referring to as the Armagnacs long after the murder of Bernard of Armagnac in 1418 - are constantly presented as the sons of the devil. The Bourgeois highlighted every base action committed by French troops, while being much more lenient towards Burgundian soldiers. How could the Dauphinists ever act virtuously, when they had treacherously slaughtered Duke John the Fearless? This crime, in the Bourgeois' opinion, could never be expiated enough. Nonetheless, even our hysterically anti-Dauphinist chronicler soon had to realize that the Duke of Burgundy's soldiers were far from being paragons of virtue. Occasionally, he would give free rein to his anger, and during these outbursts of rage and rancour, he would severely castigate the Burgundian soldiers. Thus he cursed the 6,000 Picards - a people whom Chastelain constantly extols for being fine soldiers, despite the fact that they were quite ill-disciplined - who stayed in Paris in 1429 as the Duke of Burgundy's escort, having been billeted on the Parisians. He tells us that their presence caused much friction between the inhabitants and the soldiers. As they were returning to their territories, the Picards 'n'encontroient homme qu'ilz ne desrobassent ou batissent'[63]. Not only did they behave as rogues, but they were, according to our chronicler, useless as soldiers, and this made their exactions even harder to swallow. In 1430, together with some other Burgundian troops, they besieged Compiègne for four months, to no avail. The Bourgeois had not forgotten their rowdy conduct in Paris; he explained: 'si

n'estoit nulz plus fors larrons et mocqueurs de gens', stressing that 'vraiement III^{c} Anglois faisoient plus en armes que V^{c} Picquars'[64].

It is a fact that, when witnessing the shocking state of indiscipline of the French army during the troubled reign of the mad King Charles VI, and the unhappy early years of Charles VII, our clerical chroniclers often thought that the English knights and soldiers were much more admirable than the French ones, and they considered it as the height of shame that the soldiers of the 'ancien ennemy', the King of England, should be more effective as warriors, and better disciplined. Indeed, Henry V was a born leader of men, and ruled his knights and soldiers with an iron hand; all the more reasons to believe that the English were the scourge of God, sent to castigate the French for their sins. This was the opinion of the monk of Saint-Denis, who wrote: 'Les Français d'autrefois, qui étaient de vrais catholiques [...], sont remplacés par des fils corrompus, des fils criminels, qui méprisent la foi chrétienne, et se plongent sans pudeur [...] dans toutes sortes de vices [...]. Et le Seigneur, justement irrité, leur a retiré sa grâce'[65]. When they tell us how the English troops behaved better than the French during Henry's conquest, the chroniclers reflect the sentiment of a very large proportion of the French population. Thus Michel Pintoin explained that, during the Agincourt campaign, the English soldiers behaved more virtuously than the French, and were better disciplined; he concluded by disclosing how, generally, the people of Normandy preferred them to the French soldiers[66]. And yet, the English did not always go easy on the civilians, but our chroniclers were still more disposed to forgive their cruelties than those committed by the French, because they had entered the Kingdom as enemies, and were waging war in the normal, ancestral way, while the French soldiers were supposed to protect the population, and behaved just as if they also were enemies. Cochon recalled in his *Chronique rouennaise* the depressing sight offered by the state of the country around Rouen after the departure of the French soldiers, in 1415, as they had followed Henry V on his way to Calais. Throughout the time when the English had been besieging Harfleur, the French

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[63] *Ibid.*, p. 248.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 256.
[65] *Chronique du Religieux...*, III (Book XXXVI), 576-577.
[66] *Ibid.*, III (Book XXXVI), 553.

> essilierent tant le païs, [...] que hommez, fames, enfanz lessierent leur mesnagez. Et les diz gens d'armes prenoient quanque il demouroit ès maisons, et ardoient les uz et fenestrez; et n'estoit plus de pitié, quant ilz se partirent, de veoir les leux où il avoient habité, comme as Amurées, à Saint-Saver, Soteville, et toute la valée jusques Mouliniax; et de l'autre costé de Rouen[67].

At this particular time, the reprehensible and ineffective conduct of the French army was all the more difficult to stomach, as a heavy tax had been levied on the Clergy and the Third Estate, in order to help prepare the realm's defence. The people of France, Pintoin bitterly noted, 'apprirent bientôt [...] à leurs dépens qu'il n'y avait point de différence entre ces gens et les Anglais, ou plutôt que ceux-là les rançonnaient et les pillaient davantage et exerçaient des brigandages plus intolérables'[68]. In this comment, Pintoin seems to indicate that there was nothing to choose between all those who were supposed to deal with the Kingdom's defence, regardless of whether they were great lords, bureaucrats, knights or common soldiers. In the same vein, the Bourgeois de Paris recounts how, instead of opposing Henry V's troops who had just taken Harfleur, the French men-at-arms 'faisoient autant de mal [...] aux pouvres gens, comme faisoient les Angloys, et nul autre bien n'y firent'[69]. He also narrates how, during the conquest of Normandy, in 1417, some Parisian merchants who had been travelling through Normandy and the Ile de France had been taken prisoner and ransomed three times, firstly by the English, secondly by the Burgundians, and lastly by the French. When they eventually managed to return to Paris, these 'bons marchans, hommes de honneur' would swear to heaven

> que plus amoureux leur avoient esté les Angloys que les Bourguignons, et les Bourguignons plus amoureux cent foyz que ceulx de Paris, et de pitance et de rançon, et de paine de corps et de prison, qui moult leur estoit esbahissant chose, et à tout bon chrestien doit estre[70].

In a later passage, as he was reflecting on the miseries which had befallen the Kingdom, the Bourgeois commented on the conduct of the 'signeurs de France' –

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[67] PIERRE COCHON, *Chronique rouennaise*, p. 339.
[68] *Chronique du Religieux...*, III (Book XXXVI), 535-537.
[69] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 62.

with more than a hint of rhetorical exaggeration: 'je croy que les tyrans de Romme, comme Neron, Dioclecian, Dacien, et les autres ne firent oncques la tyrannie qu'ilz font et ont fait'[71]. By 1430, however, the Bourgeois was more inclined to think that French, English, and Burgundian soldiers were all the same in their behaviour; indeed, at that date, the English were less careful to avoid appearing hostile to civilians. Thus he wrote, at the time of Joan of Arc and of the reversal of fortune in the Hundred Years War:

> n'y a aucun qui soit maintenant aux armes, de quel costé qu'il soit, François ou Anglois, Arminac ou Bourgoignon ou Picquart, à qui il eschappe rien qu'ilz puissent, s'il n'est trop chault ou trop pesant, dont c'est grant pitié et dommaige que les signeurs ne sont d'accort [72].

During the first two decades of the century, the indignation that the Clergy and the Third Estate felt towards the knights of France was particularly acute, not only because of all their abuses, but also because the knights could not stand up to the powerful English army. The Burgundian chivalrous chroniclers recounted the battle of Agincourt as a moving tragedy, paying tribute to the courage of the noble chivalry of France which had gone light-hearted to the fight, but the clerical chroniclers related the battle sharply, or with many angry and mocking comments. The monk of Saint-Denis depicts the joy of the knights as they were going into action as a sign of arrogance; he explains how the dukes and counts had charged shouting cheerfully 'Mont-joie! Mont-joie!', and adds the caustic remark: 'ils ne pensaient guère qu'à cette joie présomptueuse allaient bientôt succéder le deuil et la tristesse'[73]. The knights of France had contemptuously turned down the 6,000 equipped men offered by the burgesses of Paris, under the pretext that the French would be three times more numerous than the English, which would make the victory less glorious[74]. According to Pintoin, they were entirely responsible for their subsequent doom, and he relates the outcome of the battle without trying to hide his scorn: 'Alors la noblesse de France fut faite prisonnière et mise à rançon, comme un vil troupeau

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[70] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 129.
[72] *Ibid.*, p. 258.
[73] *Chronique du Religieux...*, III (Book XXXVI), 561-563.
[74] *Ibid.*, III (Book XXXVI), 549.

d'esclaves, ou elle périt sous les coups d'une obscure soldatesque'[75]. Pierre Cochon relates the battle very dryly, stating that the knights of France had refused the help of all fighters who did not belong to the nobility, and concludes: 'Et fu la pluz laide besongne et plus malvese que, puis mil anz, avenist au roialme de France'[76]. As one can gather from this comment, Cochon did not consider the event with awe as did chivalrous chroniclers such as Saint-Rémy or Monstrelet; he saw it mainly as a deplorable massacre of fools on a large scale, and in his opinion, the tragedy lay chiefly in the consequences of the battle: the long enslavement of a large part of France.

Because of their inefficiency, which had been particularly blatant at the time of Henry V's first French venture, in 1415, the knights of France had lost, in the eyes of our chroniclers, the respect which was naturally their due; being not only useless, but also harmful, they were seen as mere parasites. The monk of Saint-Denis illustrated perfectly the fact that, already with the fall of Harfleur - despite their heroic resistance, the town's garrison and burgesses had been forced to surrender after waiting in vain for some assistance - the knights of France had lost all the lustre and prestige which their office implied, as he observed: 'La chevalerie française devint, à cette occasion, la fable et la risée de tous les étrangers; elle fut raillée dans des chansons injurieuses'[77]. Such derogatory remarks are in plenty in his narration of Henry V's invasion. After the fall of Rouen, he attributed to the personified city a speech which severely castigated the chivalry of France. The city especially lingered on the knights' sins, in a vigorous tirade which seems very typical of the predicatory genre (one of the most mortal offences that the knights are reproached for being the commonplace vice of playing dice!) :

> Chevaliers sans courage, qui êtes si fiers de vos cuirasses et de vos casques empanachés, qui mettez toute votre gloire dans le pillage et le jeu de dés, cette source des parjures et des blasphêmes contre Notre-Seigneur, vous qui vantiez avec tant d'arrogance les prouesses de vos aïeux, vous voilà maintenant devenus la fable des Anglais et la risée de toutes les nations étrangères[78].

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[75] *Ibid.*, III (Book XXXVI), 563.
[76] PIERRE COCHON, *Chronique normande,* p. 275.
[77] *Chronique du Religieux...,* III (Book XXXVI), 543.
[78] *Ibid.*, III (Book XXXIX), 307.

The King of France's army no longer was what it used to be. Pintoin explained that the King's soldiers slain at Agincourt were essentially 'des étrangers, des bâtards, des hommes sans naissance, des exilés et des proscrits, plus avides de pillage qu'accoutumés à la discipline militaire'[79]. He could not readily accept the fact that the Kings of France were increasingly relying on mercenaries for the defence of their realm, and that the office of knight was, in these troubled times, less exclusively reserved for the aristocracy. Similar ideas are expressed in Cochon's work: on one occasion, he referred to some *routiers* as 'une maniere d'estrangiés, Lombards et autres, de la compaignie des dits Franchois'[80]. Both authors were, as one can gather, rather conservative in their views about military affairs - though we shall see that Pintoin could be more open-minded.

The knights of France would only start to recover their respectability and credibility with the beginning of the re-establishment of France, and the feats of Joan of Arc. This does not, however, apply to all authors: in 1429 and 1430, the Bourgeois still considered French knights as murderers and rascals, because they did not support his party, and because they almost managed to storm Paris, on the 7th September 1429, thus causing him a great fright. Even during the later years of his life, after he had acknowledged Charles VII as his monarch, the Bourgeois would never trust the chivalry of France. The successes achieved in 1429 restored much of Cochon's confidence in the worth of French knights, but his respect certainly did not apply to the whole of the kingdom's chivalry. Thus he used very strong language to qualify the *routiers* who were, in August 1429, on the rampage in the countryside around Aumalle; they had entered Aumalle through the agency of a priest, who, according to Cochon's highly-coloured account, 'ne fit onques si mauvese journée; et lui vausit mieulx, après ce que il fu baptisié, que sa mere lui eust jeté la teste contre la paroy'. Cochon describes these *routiers* as

> une maniere de larons qui apatichoient les villez, et prenoient gens prisonniers de tous estas, et les mestoient à grosses finanches. Et s'allerent rendre avec eulx plusieurs gens du pais de Caux, merdalle et

[79] *Ibid.*, III (Book XXXVI), 547.
[80] PIERRE COCHON, p. 303.

> truandalle, qui faisoient tant de maulx que c'estoit mervaille [...]. Et couroient celle merdalle-là jusques emprès Rouen [81].

Many of these *routiers* were undoubtedly knights, from the aristocracy, for Cochon tells us in a later passage that some of the *routiers* of Étrépaigny who had once sworn allegiance to Bedford, and were captured by the English, were beheaded[82]. The chivalrous chroniclers of Burgundy would never use such explicit language to qualify the *routiers*. Cochon, however, understood that the *routiers* of Aumalle were going against Charles VII's orders; indeed, he explains that 'le dit Charles, roy de France [...] ne leur avoit abandonné sinon à prendre les Anglois et les officiers dessoulx eulx et à les pillier, et leur avoit deffendu les bonnes gens du pais' and concludes 'mès c'estoient les varlès au diable: ils faisoient plus que commandement'[83]. Thus Cochon did appreciate Charles VII's early efforts to limit the devastation wreaked by his soldiers. In fact, the desire to dissociate the King from the responsibility for the abuses performed by the Kingdom's knights, and for their weaknesses on the battlefield, is characteristic of the clerical chronicles. Jean de Venette had explained, as he was recounting the defeat of Poitiers, that, had all noblemen behaved like King John, the battle would not have been lost[84]. Michel Pintoin pointed out that the disgraceful behaviour of French knights in 1415, which led to the fall of Harfleur, might rebound on Charles VI, but that he certainly was not responsible for it, 'car il n'est pas douteux que son courage n'eût empêché ce malheur, si l'état de sa santé le lui eût permis'[85]. Only the Bourgeois would always hold a grudge against Charles VII, although, like most of his contemporaries, he had excused his father for the great miseries which had happened during his reign, on account of his illness.

Thus, the French clerical chroniclers reflect in various manners all the animosity that a large part of the French late medieval society felt towards knights, despite the prestige which their office traditionally implied. According to Nicholas

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[81] *Ibid.*, p. 302. Cochon was particularly infuriated by the behaviour of the *routiers* of Aumalle because his very parish suffered from their abuses: he might have been among the people who, as he subsequently relates, had to flee into Rouen, Dieppe or Caudebec. Cf. de Robillard de Beaurepaire's introduction, p. v.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 304. Decapitation was a sentence usually reserved for the nobility.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 302-303.
[84] JEAN DE VENETTE, p. 64.
[85] *Chronique du Religieux...*, III (Book XXXVI), 543.

Wright, the formulation of their discourse followed closely the pattern laid by a sermon tradition of castigating a cowardly, greedy and arrogant knighthood, and speaking in defence of the humble, the poor and the peasants; and indeed, this is very likely, for our three authors were clerics, and they share a great many similarities of style. Thus we find in the work of Cochon, and especially those of Pintoin and the Bourgeois, the same tendency to denounce the proud knights of France, who are, amongst all their other crimes, systematically reproached for their vanity – apparent in their dress, in times of war and peace alike – and their habit of playing dice, a vice which, to us, may not seem the most shocking of all. On the other hand, and this is particularly striking in the *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, the clerical chroniclers defend the peasant class in long, vigorous tirades; they often refer to the Old Testament or the Psalms whenever they want to give an epic dimension to the sufferings of the people – who can only find comfort in religion – or to Roman history, when it comes to denouncing the tyranny or the depravity of the nobility. Yet, beyond this social clash between the aristocracy on the one hand, and the Clergy, the bourgeois and the peasantry on the other, exposed in the works of the clerical chroniclers, one finds that the whole attitude of our clerics with regard to warfare, and especially that never ending conflict, the Hundred Years War, was very different from that of the chivalrous chroniclers.

3. The absence of 'nobility' in the clerical chroniclers' depiction of the Hundred Years War

Michel Pintoin, Cochon and the Bourgeois de Paris present us with a picture of the Hundred Years War that has nothing to do with the 'chivalrous' depiction of the conflict. The heirs of Froissart were aware of the fact that the first decades of the century had been particularly sinister times for the Kingdom of France, and deplored it. However, we have also seen that they considered the major engagements of the war with a sense of awe, that they regarded the figure of the knight, the warrior *par excellence*, with a kind of religious respect, and that they praised many aspects of the waging of war according to particular aesthetic and moral parameters. By contrast, the clerical chroniclers hardly saw any nobility in the waging of war, at least as far as

the Hundred Years War was concerned. They would probably have approved a defensive war, a crusade, perhaps even a war of conquest, provided that it was waged effectively and successfully by the King of France at the head of an army which behaved in an irreproachable manner. But the Hundred Years War was a different matter. The conflict seemed endless, and in the 1420s, it had left the Kingdom bled white. Apart from those deriving profit from collaboration, or those who favored a fight to the death of either party, most French contemporaries were extremely wary of it. Moreover, in the 15th century, the Hundred Years War was partly a civil war, and our clerical chroniclers could not see any noble aspect in the fact that the 'signeurs de France' were tearing each other to pieces, thus causing the ruin of the realm. Finally, one should note that civilians were the main victims of the war, and the peasant class in particular suffered tremendously from the conflict: peasants had to pay the *appatis* demanded by the garrisons which had settled near their villages, they were exposed to the danger of being taken prisoners, and subsequently ransomed; the soldiers would often loot their villages, steal or kill their cattle, burn their fields and houses. It was quite common at the time for contemporaries to witness the exile of entire villages; the inhabitants would flee their devastated region, their parish priests at their head, in a desperate attempt to escape famine[86]. The tribulation of the people of France was admirably described by the poet Alain Chartier, who, in his prose work *Le Quadrilogue invectif* (1422), made the allegorical figure 'Le Peuple' exclaim, in a fit of despair:

> Que appelle je guerre? Ce n'est pas guerre qui en ce royaume se mayne, c'est une privee roberie, ung larrecin habandonné, force publique soubz umbre d'armes [...] que faute de justice et de bonne ordonnance fait estre loisibles. Les armes sont criees et les estendars levez contre les ennemis, mais les esploiz sont contre moy a la destruction de ma povre substance et de ma miserable vie [...]. Je vis en mourant, voiant la mort de ma povre femme et de mes petis enfans et desirant la mienne[87].

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[86] On the ravages of the Hundred Years War see MOLLAT DU JOURDIN, p. 132-152.

[87] ALAIN CHARTIER, *Le Quadrilogue invectif*, ed. E. DROZ, Paris, Honoré Champion, 1950 (2nd ed., 1st pub. 1923), p. 21. Alain Chartier, however, does not lay all the blame on the chivalrous class. Indeed, the purpose of this very intelligent work, disclosed at the end of the discussion by 'France', is to give each of the three Estates the right to speak, so that each of them may, through the others, know and acknowledge their misdeeds; the mission of the artist is to record it for posterity. On the nature and extent of the havoc wreaked by knights in the French countryside during the Hundred Years War see MOLLAT DU JOURDIN, p. 133-141.

In the works of our clerical chroniclers, war is stripped of all the lustre which it possessed in the eyes of the chivalrous viewpoint's exponents; at least until the start of the military re-establishment of France, the waging of war is deprived of any eminence and dignity. There is a good deal of irreverence in the way the Bourgeois relates the misfortune which befell the Dauphinist lord Guy de Nesle as he was attempting to bring some reinforcements into the besieged town of Meaux, at night, by means of a ladder covered up with white sheets. Georges Chastelain recounted the story as a sad misadventure, explaining how Guy de Nesle had fallen through a rotten plank into the ditch. Captured by the English, he was brought before King Henry, who treated him with respect, 'jugeant bien et voyant à l'œil qu'il estoit homme de haut courage et que la prise avoit esté belle pour luy' (I, 298). The Bourgeois relates this episode in a very different way, which perhaps shows how the common people would usually discuss such incidental military events. He explains that as Guy de Nesle, preceded by 'IIII ou V ribaulx', was climbing up the ladder, one of his soldiers accidentally dropped a bag full of herrings on his head, thus hurling him down into the ditch. As the Dauphinists were lamenting: 'Helas! Monsigneur est cheu!', the English sentries, alerted by these cries, mocked the Dauphinist knight, inquiring in their broken French: 'Monsigneur, de par le deable, pert vous mors tretous'. The Bourgeois concludes by stating that Guy de Roy was eventually captured by one of King Henry's cooks. As Colette Beaune rightly pointed out, the chronicler must have taken delight in narrating this amusing and disrespectful story of a French knight taken prisoner by an English cook[88].

One could argue that, in this particular episode, the Bourgeois' irreverence is due to the fact that the victim was a Dauphinist. However, our author can also be hard on his own camp: one just needs to read a particular paragraph of his account of the battle of Verneuil - that which relates the actual fight - to understand his conception of the war of the knights. This report is the complete antithesis of the account that Jean de Wavrin left us of his 'favourite' battle. Wavrin stated that the fight had offered all those involved the chance to display their virtue and 'proesce'. By contrast, the Bourgeois - who still was in favour of the Duke of Bedford - depicts

it as a particularly ugly and grotesque episode, something which resembled more the massacres performed by Frère Jean in *Gargantua*, than one of the greatest battles of the Hundred Years War:

> les deux osts vindrent l'un contre l'autre, et commencerent à frapper et mailler l'un sur l'autre de toutes manieres d'armeures de guerre que on peust pancer, de traict ou d'autre chose. Là eussiez ouy tant doloreux criz et plaintes, tant hommes cheoir à terre, que puis n'en releverent, l'un chacer, l'autre fouir, l'un mort sus, l'autre gesir à terre gueulle baiée, tant sanc espandu de chrestiens, qui oncques n'avoient veu en leur vivant l'un l'autre, et si venoient ainsi tuer l'un l'autre pour ung pou de pecune qu'ilz en attendoient à avoir[89].

Although the Bourgeois considered that the French defeat was well-deserved, he did not make any distinction between the two sides in his description of the actual engagement. In his opinion, the battle was simply a deplorable massacre, and he refused to see any dignity in the motivations of the fighters: they were simply fighting for some money (their pay), not even a large sum. Apparently, the Bourgeois did not consider, let alone understand, that some of the French may have been driven by a patriotic spirit.

Our clerical chroniclers often appear insensitive to the 'belles appartises d'armes' and displays of 'proesce' which made war a noble thing in the eyes of the chivalrous chroniclers. After all, as Michel Pintoin cynically remarked, at Agincourt, those who were considered as the 'preus' of the Kingdom, the flower of French chivalry, had been decimated by 'des gens sans mérite et sans naissance', 'une obscure soldatesque'[90]. Pintoin, Cochon and the Bourgeois gave much greater prominence to another, omnipresent aspect of war: its horrors, and the sufferings of the humble. The Bourgeois, in particular, devotes pages and pages of his journal to the description, in universally recognizable terms, of the war's most dramatic episodes, which form as many moving scenes denouncing the cruelty of war. Thus, he pictures the pitiful sight offered by the arrival, as the Parisians were celebrating a peace treaty between the English, the Dauphin, and the King of France, of a crowd of

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[88] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 166-167; ed. BEAUNE, n. 34 p. 181.
[89] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 197.
[90] *Chronique du Religieux...*, III (Book XXXVI), 563-565.

refugees who had escaped from Pontoise: despite the peace treaty, at the break of dawn, the town had been stormed by the English. From the walls, the sentries could see

> grans tourbes de hommes, femmes et enfens, les ungs navrez, les autres despouillez; l'autre portoit deux enfens entre ses bras ou en hostes, et estoient les femmes, les unes sans chapperon, les autres en ung povre corcet, autres en leur chemise; povres prebstres qui n'avoient que leur chemise ou ung seurpeliz vestu, la teste toute descouverte[91].

The Bourgeois explains how 'aucunes femmes grosses acoucherent en fuite, qui tost après moururent', and records the refugees' lamentation: 'Dieu, gardez nous par vostre grace de desespoir, car huy au matin estions en nos maisons aises et manans et à medy ensuivant sommes comme gens en exil querans nostre pain'. The Bourgeois also recounts how, in 1420, one could see in the streets of Paris 'sur les fumiers [...] cy dix, cy vingt ou xxx enfans, filz et filles, qui là mouroient de fain et de froit et n'estoit si dur cueur qui par nuyt les ouist crier: "Helas! Je meur de fain!" qui grant pitié n'en eust'[92]. The chivalrous chroniclers also depicted some of the miseries of the time, but they did it much more seldom, focusing on the most tragic, outstanding events, such as the truly appalling agony suffered by the 12,000 poor men and women who had been expelled from Rouen during the dramatic siege of the city: Henry V had refused to let them make their way through the English siege, and they were left to die in the ditch[93]. By contrast, the clerical chroniclers are much more prolix on the common people's sufferings. It is true that the Bourgeois, for instance, was oblivious of the fact that the aristocracy, and particularly the gentry, also had its share of suffering[94]. Michel Mollat du Jourdin has pointed out that the male progeny of many aristocratic families had been decimated after many years of service in the war; the renewal of the Hundred Years War had caused the ruin of numerous

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[91] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 126-127.
[92] *Ibid.*, p. 146.
[93] The Burgundian chivalrous chroniclers seem to have been particularly shocked by this tragic episode, and they devoted many lines to its detailed narration. It is quite likely that they highlighted this particular story as an emblem of the great miseries of the time. Cf. ENGUERRAN DE MONSTRELET, III, 299; JEAN LEFÈVRE DE SAINT-RÉMY, I, 349.
[94] Cf. the *Journal...*, ed. BEAUNE, n. 106 p. 151.

families, and many Norman nobles had preferred exile to the English domination[95]. Marie-Thérèse Caron has emphasized that the gentry was also affected by the political crisis: faced with the growing ambition of the princes of royal blood, and the foreign invasion, they did not know whom to obey, and did not have the means to resist the will of the powerful; they must have felt very disorientated[96]. Finally, they probably were sensitive to the social crisis, confronted as they were with the resentment of the common people. Alain Chartier saw this well, as he made the figure of the 'Chevalier' reply to 'Le Peuple', in his *Quadrilogue invectif*:

> Nous ne povons pas vivre du vent, ne noz revenues ne nous suffiront a soustenir les fraiz de la guerre, et se le prince ne se recueult de son peuple dont il nous puisse paier, et en servant la communité nous vivons des biens que nous trouvons, a Dieu m'en rapporte d'avoir noz consciences excusees[97].

The clerical chroniclers have also been criticized for being too formulaic[98]. It is true that they tend to overuse rhetoric, and often repeat themselves in their tirades. We have seen how many commonplace criticisms, which clearly belong to the predicatory tradition, could be identified in their tirades against knights: for example as they blamed knights for their clothing extravagance. This is rather obvious in Cochon's exasperated description of the clothes which were all the rage among the nobility during the 1380s – while the common people were striving to pay heavy taxes - as he explains: 'et revint une maniere d'estas de vestures pippellotées de tantes manierez de desguseeurez qu'il n'est nul qui les peust escripre, avec unez grandez manchez pendantez [...] et y povoit bien mucher pain, cha [chair], chapons rostis, et, se mestier estoit, tous larrechinz'[99]. Cochon's comments are a humorous variation on a well-known theme. Jean de Venette had deplored 'the luxury and dissoluteness of many of the nobles and knights' which was flagrant in the year 1356: he had scoffed at the fact that they wore feathers on their hats, adorned themselves with precious stones, and spent their time playing real tennis and dice[100]. When developing on the sufferings of the common people during the war, the clerical

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[95] MOLLAT DU JOURDIN, p. 141-142.
[96] CARON, *Noblesse et pouvoir...*, p. 166-167.
[97] ALAIN CHARTIER, p. 33.
[98] WRIGHT, *Knights and Peasants*, p. 13.
[99] PIERRE COCHON, p. 173.

chroniclers could slip into gross exaggeration: this is particularly evident in the Bourgeois' horrifying story of the torments which the bastard of Vaurus, a Dauphinist captain, allegedly inflicted on a young and pregnant peasant woman. The Bourgeois explains at length how the poor woman did all she could in order to find the money necessary in order to pay her husband's ransom, only to find out that the bastard of Vaurus had already had him hung. Exasperated with her as she had gone out of her senses, the Dauphinist captain ordered that the girl should be tied to a tree, with the lower part of her body exposed. Her martyrdom only ended when hungry wolves eventually devoured the child inside her womb. As Colette Beaune has noted, all narrative elements in this appalling story were present in order to shatter the reader. It is quite clear that this story had been propagated by the English, so as to overshadow the fact that the bastard of Vaurus had been executed without a proper trial[101]. However, not all the clerical chroniclers' tales about the horrors of war were exaggerated, or simply invented: the suffering of the common people during the conflict is an obvious and well-documented fact. Were it not for the clerical chroniclers and the other exponents of the predicatory tradition, such as Gerson, Bonet or Alain Chartier, our picture of the Hundred Years War would be very one-sided; unlike Froissart and his heirs, they have revealed the dark and gruesome aspect of the war.

Set against the backdrop of all the horrors of war, the 'faits d'armes' did not carry much weight in the eyes of the people. This was well expressed by Alain Chartier in his debate, as he made 'Le Peuple' declare to 'Le Chevalier':

> se je veisse que par chevalereuses hardiesses de la guerre, dont vous faictes le bruit, les ennemis sentissent la perte et le dommaige, le mien en seroit plus aisé à soustenir, mais tousjours mal souffrir, quant il ne redonde a aucun bien, fait le couraige cheoir en desespoir et perdre patience entierement[102].

The clerical chroniclers also indicated that, in this context, they failed to be impressed by chivalrous displays of 'proesce'. In a striking and crucial passage of his

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[100] JEAN DE VENETTE, p. 61-62.
[101] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 170; ed. BEAUNE, n. 65, p. 185.
[102] ALAIN CHARTIER, p. 23.

chronicle, which surprisingly seems to have been missed by modern scholars, the monk of Saint-Denis literally demolished the foundations of the chivalrous chronicle, as Froissart had laid them:

> La plupart des habitants du royaume applaudissaient à ces atrocités et les vantaient à la façon des hérauts d'armes: 'En telle rencontre, disaient-ils, les Armagnacs ont vaincu les Bourguignons'. Puis venaient d'autres, qui prétendaient que les Armagnacs avaient eu plus souvent le dessous, comme si de pareils faits méritaient, à leurs yeux, d'être consignés par écrit. Quant à moi, aux yeux de qui toutes ces hostilités n'avaient aucun résultat que la désolation du royaume, j'ai cru que le récit devait en être abandonné aux accents de la muse tragique, plutôt que retracé par la plume de l'historien[103].

Still, it would be an error to consider the clerical chroniclers as pacifists, at least in the modern sense of the word, that is, opposed to the use, by the state, of violence as a political resource. They did dislike war, especially when waged between Christians. Michel Pintoin praised the decision of John of Cornwall, whose son had had his head blown off by a cannonball, to quit the business of war: 'réfléchissant à l'injustice de la guerre et aux graves dangers auxquels elle expose le corps et l'âme, [il] fit vœu dès lors de ne plus combattre contre les chrétiens, et renonça à porter les armes'[104]. However, Cornwall was an English knight, and it seems that the story should be seen as a moral tale intended to denounce the English aggression. Indeed, on many occasions, Michel Pintoin praised resistance against the English[105]. The clerical chroniclers knew that war was always accompanied by a trail of woes, but they still regarded it as a legitimate means to achieve one's ends, provided that the cause was just. Jean de Venette had not been opposed to the concept of the *Jacquerie*, for it had been embarked upon with a zeal for justice, but he had condemned the way in which it had been waged: the peasants had not been fighting under a lord's authority, and they had committed countless horrible crimes[106]. The clerical chroniclers supported a swift and efficient way of waging war. Indeed, if wars were simply the means to an end, they had to be brief, so as to limit

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[103] *Chronique du Religieux...*, III (Book XL), 399.
[104] *Ibid.*, III (Book XLI), 449.
[105] See for example III (Book XXXVIII), 103, where the monk of Saint-Denis proudly relates how the messengers sent by Henry V throughout Normandy in 1417, asking the country to submit, and promising the 'douceurs du repos et de l'aisance', met with no success whatsoever.
[106] JEAN DE VENETTE, p. 76 ff.

unnecessary misery.

It seems that the common people reproached knights for waging war in a completely opposite manner, for it was commonplace in the literature which reflected the ideas of the masses to tax the knights with prolonging the war in order to enrich themselves. Thus the anonymous 14th century tract *La complainte sur la bataille de Poitiers*, written shortly after the disastrous defeat where King John II the Good had been captured, had pictured the knights of France realizing that, should a French victory bring the war to an end, they would lose their livelihood; the tract subsequently accused them of having come to terms with the English: they would not kill each other, but rather take each other prisoners, so as to make sure that the war would always go on[107]. The Bourgeois de Paris, who wrote his diary more than half a century later, reflects this opinion. He frequently grumbles about a key aspect of the war of the knights: the practice of taking noblemen prisoners instead of killing them. Thus, after having mentioned that the lord of Guitry and other Dauphinist knights had been taken prisoner at the fall of Montereau (1420), the Bourgeois adds the sarcastic comment: 'lequel fut delivré avec les autres, qui depuis fist tant de tirannye au païs de Gastinoys et ailleurs que fist oncques sarazin'[108]. Similarly, he explains that the Duke of Bedford was deluding himself as he thought that asking the prisoners taken at the fall of Meulan (1423) - who were all noblemen - to swear allegiance to him would help to advance his conquest of France, for 'aussitost qu'ilz porent yssir, ilz ne tindrent oncques ne foy ou serment qu'ilz eussent fait, mais firent pis qu'ilz n'avoient fait devant'[109]. The Bourgeois often appears as an extremist in his views, and it is quite clear that he would have preferred that all noble prisoners should be killed. As he relates the fall of Gaillon, Sézanne and Nangis (1424), he deplores the fact that, having negotiated their surrender, the garrisons were allowed to leave unharmed, 'senon ceulx de la garnison du chastel de Sedanne [Sézanne, which had been stormed as the garrison had refused to surrender], qui furent tous mis à l'espée, et les autres firent pis la moitié qu'ilz n'avoient fait devant'[110]. Michel Pintoin and Cochon seem to have been more moderate in this respect; in any case they hardly make any

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[107] Cf. FOWLER, p. 177.
[108] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 141.
[109] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

comments about the practice of ransoming noblemen instead of killing them. Still, the Bourgeois certainly was not alone in having such radical views. In his account of the Parisian uprisings of 1418, where hundreds of Armagnacs were massacred by the enraged mob, he relates how the people of Paris attacked the Bastille Saint-Antoine and seized the distinguished Armagnac nobles who were kept prisoners inside the fortress. As the Duke of Burgundy was vainly trying to placate them, they demanded that the prisoners should be transferred into the Châtelet, arguing that 'ceulx que on mettoit oudit chasteau estoient touzjours delivrez par argent, et les boutoit on hors par les champs, et faisoient après plus de maulx que devant'. According to the Bourgeois, John the Fearless 'bien veoit qu'ilz disoient verité', and agreed to transfer the prisoners, under an escort's protection. As the prisoners were approaching the Châtelet, they suddenly were faced with hundreds of infuriated Parisians, who slew them[111]. On this particular occasion, however, the Bourgeois seems to have been shocked by the crowd's behaviour, perhaps because he was uncomfortably near to the bloodshed: he relates how the prisoners, who for the most part were close to the king, were 'tous martirez de plus de cent plaies', and adds that John the Fearless felt greatly disturbed about this slaughter.

The clerical chroniclers clearly were demanding in their views about how warfare should be waged, for they expected military undertakings to be, not only brisk, but also successful. Needless to say this rarely happened, especially since the Dauphin and his council, whose situation had become increasingly worrying ever since the Treaty of Troyes (1420), were very circumspect in their planning of military operations. It is interesting, however, to contrast the reactions of two of our chroniclers when faced with the amazing successes achieved by Joan of Arc in 1429, since her methods were in complete accordance with the ones they favoured. Cochon was enthralled by her achievements, and he seems to have particularly liked an important element of her strategy: the ultimatum. He explains: 'Et cregnoit l'en mout celle Pucelle, car elle usoit de somassions, et disoit que, se l'en ne se rendoit, elle prendroit d'assault'[112]. The Maid of Orléans favoured expeditious methods, and preferred taking towns by storm to long sieges; this audacious way of waging war

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[111] *Ibid.*, p. 108-109.
[112] PIERRE COCHON, p. 301.

tended to scare her adversaries[113]. Even as he relates the failed attack on Paris, Cochon is filled with admiration: he describes it as 'si appre et si merveleux que ceulx de dens furent tous esbahis, et n'y avoit homme qui se osast descouvrir dessus le mur pour le trait de ceulx qui assailloient'. In fact, the Parisian resistance was much fiercer than Cochon believed. Cochon blamed Charles VII's counsellor La Trémoille for the eventual French failure: the counsellor decided to negotiate with Philip the Good, and had the army withdraw[114]. By 1430, Joan no longer was in the foreground of political and military affairs, and in Cochon's opinion, the war had again taken its usual, depressing course; his chronicle closes with the bitter comment: 'Et recommencherent Anglois très fort à conquester ce qu'ilz avoient perdu, et François à reperdre ce qu'ilz avoient conquesté'[115]. The Bourgeois de Paris, on the other hand, was horrified by Joan's methods. They were in accordance with his conception of strategy – on one occasion, he contrasted Salisbury's efficiency, as a military commander, with the alleged inertia of Bedford, who 'se reposoit es citez de France à son aise lui et sa femme qui partout où il alloit le suivoit'[116] – but Joan was fighting for the Armagnacs, the detested adversary. Thus, he presented her habit of giving ultimatums as a sign of great arrogance and cruelty, explaining: 'qui n'obeïssoit aux lettres qu'elle faisoit elle faisoit tantost mourir sans pitié quant elle en avoit povoir'[117]. As one can see, the clerical chroniclers' appreciation of Joan's methods thus depended, as one might expect, on party spirit.

4. The war of the *communes*: the people's contribution to the defence of the Kingdom, or an alternative to the war of the knights?

Faced with the apparent total inefficiency of the knights – which was flagrant in the eyes of the clerical chroniclers, from the fall of Harfleur up to the start of the re-establishment of France – our chroniclers had the impression, or even the

[113] On this aspect of Joan's strategy see P. CONTAMINE, 'La guerre de siège au temps de Jeanne d'Arc', in his work *De Jeanne d'Arc aux guerres d'Italie. Figures, images et problèmes du XVe siècle*, Orléans / Caen, Paradigme, 1994, p. 85-95.
[114] PIERRE COCHON, p. 306-307.
[115] *Ibid.*, p. 315.
[116] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 230.
[117] *Ibid.* , p. 268.

conviction, in the Bourgeois de Paris' case, that the people of France would defend the Kingdom just as well, perhaps even better. At least, without entertaining revolutionary thoughts, they could legitimately deplore the fact that the knights did not make better use of what already was at their disposal, the armed militias of the Kingdom's towns and villages. This was again a traditional theme of this literature which reflected the views of the common people. Shortly after the disaster of Poitiers, the *Complainte sur la bataille de Poitiers* had urged the Duke of Normandy, who had escaped from the battle, to take up the fight again, in order to avenge King John. Only this time, he should not neglect to permit the people of France to participate in the fight:

> S'il est bien conseillé, il n'obliera mie
> Mener Jaque Bonhomme en sa grant compagnie
> Guerres ne s'enfuira pour ne perdre la vie[118].

Françoise Autrand has argued that 'Jaque Bonhomme' did not refer to the peasants of France, but to the burgesses' armed militias sent by the towns of the Kingdom to help the King in his wars. This is probably true *de facto* – according to Michel Mollat du Jourdin, peasants only organized themselves into armed self-defence groups on relatively rare occasions (though this did happen sometimes: the example of 'Grand Ferré' is well-known)[119] – but it is worth pointing out that, according to Jean de Venette, 'Jaque Bonhomme' was the name which knights had derisively given to peasants, and originally to those 'sent to the wars who bore arms in rustic fashion of peasants'[120].

The Bourgeois de Paris was especially enthusiastic about the *communes*; to be more precise, he unreservedly supported one popular militia: his own, the Parisian *milice*. His account of the 'Journée des harengs' (1429) is, in this respect, very revealing. The Parisian *milice* and an English squadron were escorting a convoy of supplies – mostly fish as it was Lent – sent by the burgesses of Paris to the English

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[118] Quotation from AUTRAND, p. 99.
[119] MOLLAT DU JOURDIN, p. 137-139.
[120] JEAN DE VENETTE, p. 63; in a recent interview, Philippe Contamine asked the question: 'Y a-t-il vraiment des non-combattants au Moyen Âge dans un contexte où tout adulte, "de 14 à 70 ans" disent certains textes, peut être mobilisé en cas de besoin et où chacun a conscience qu'il doit éventuellement devenir homme de guerre?'. Cf. 'Le Moyen Âge, une période faussement militaire', p. 114.

army besieging Orléans. As the convoy was approaching Orléans, they were attacked by a Dauphinist battalion. Although the Parisian *milice* probably did not represent more than half of the escort, throughout the passage, the Bourgeois refers to the defenders as 'noz gens', a term he never uses when referring to English, nor even Burgundian armies alone. As a result, the Parisian *milice* seems to take the credit for every positive thing the defenders do. The Bourgeois denounces the cruelty of the Dauphinists, who reject the English offer to wage a *guerre guerrable* - where prisoners would be taken - and insist on waging a *guerre mortelle*. Yet we saw how, on other occasions, the Bourgeois preferred that no prisoners should be taken. By contrast to the enemy, the defenders appear as virtuous and prudent: they humbly commend themselves to God, while taking cover behind the wagons. On the whole, the Parisian *milice* takes the credit for having carried the day, and the militiamen are praised for using an ingenious defensive technique, which they had in fact learnt from the English archers: that of driving in a sharp stake before them before shooting. Throughout the passage, they are presented as ideal soldiers, and contrasted with professional soldiers, who put their bodies and soul at risk 'pour gaigner ung pou d'argent'[121]. As Colette Beaune has remarked, his conception of the soldier appears rather outmoded, at a time when standing armies were about to be created, and when the Church stated that those who died for their country could gain admittance to paradise[122].

At the time of Henry V's invasion, the Bourgeois presented the Parisian *milice* as being more courageous than the knights. In 1419, he explained: 'il sembloit proprement que tous s'en fouissent devant les Angloys'. Henry V was approaching Paris, and Duke John the Fearless had left the capital defenceless: 'en ce temps n'avoyt chevalier de renon d'armes à Paris, ne cappitaine nul, non plus que le prevost de Paris et cellui des marchans, qui n'avoient pas acoustumé à mener fait de guerre'. But as the English arrived before the walls of Paris, they did not dare to storm Paris, 'pour la commune, qui tantost se misdrent sur les murs pour deffendre la ville'. The Bourgeois proudly adds: 'et fussent voulentiers ladicte commune aux champs yssue, mais les gouverneurs ne voldrent laisser homme yssir. Quant ce virent les Angloys,

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[121] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 230-233.
[122] *Journal...*, ed. BEAUNE, n. 40, p. 252.

ilz s'en allerent pillant, tuant, robant, prenans gens à rançon'[123].

According to the Bourgeois, the war of the *commune* was very different from that of the knights. He contrasted its behaviour in 1418 – the year of the terrible uprisings in Paris, a time when the *commune* felt particularly exalted – with that of the Burgundian nobility. Infuriated by the fact that no one could leave Paris, for fear of the Armagnacs, who had been enraged by the massacre of their leader and his supporters, the Parisian *commune* had launched an attack on the Armagnac fortress of Montlhéry. According to the Bourgeois, the militiamen

> eussent gaigné le chastel et les traistres de dedens, se n'eussent esté aucuns gentilzhommes qui avec eulx estoient, qui les devoient garder et mener; mais, quant ilz virent que la commune besongnoit si bien, si parlementerent aux Arminalx qui bien veoient qu'ilz ne povoient longuement durer contre la commune [...], et prindrent grant argent des Arminaz, par ainsi qu'ilz feroient lever le siege.

He then explains how the Burgundian knights ordered the *commune* to raise the siege, under the pretext that they had been warned against the coming of Armagnac reinforcements[124]. As one can see, in the Bourgeois' opinion, the *commune*'s conception of war as an efficient cleaning up of the wicked, and that of the knights, who fought in order to enrich themselves, were simply irreconcilable. In this passage, the Bourgeois gets completely carried away by his faith in the war of the *commune*. He relates how the *commune* came back to Paris, only to find that the governors of Paris would not let them enter the town. The Burgundian noblemen who were in charge of the *commune* had left it alone, for, in his opinion, they were afraid of the Armagnacs, but the Bourgeois emphasized that none dared to attack the militiamen; in fact, he ingenuously explained, 'qui eut laissé faire les communes, il n'y eust demouré Arminac en France en mains de deux moys qu'ilz n'eussent mis à fin', before adding

> Et pour ce hayoient les gentilzhommes qui ne vouloient que la guerre, et ilz la vouloient mettre à fin. Quant on vit qu'ilz avoient si grant voulenté d'affiner la guerre, on les laissa entrer dedens Paris, et

[123] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 128-129.
[124] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

> allerent faire leur labour; et les Arminalz faisoient du pis qu'ilz povoient[125].

In this paragraph, the Bourgeois – ignorant of the fact that, from the moment they had been sent to Montlhéry, the Parisian militiamen had been manipulated by John the Fearless, who simply wanted them out of his way in order to restore order in Paris[126] - shows that he trusted the Parisian *commune* blindly; in his opinion, the militiamen's way of waging war was the ideal one, because they fought with only one aim in mind: that of eradicating evil and disturbances, which should be the sole purpose of war. Unlike the knights, they did not trouble themselves with irrelevant considerations, such as chivalrous ideals or the beauty of war, and they did not earn their living from war. They had not made the waging of war their profession – indeed, as soon as the war was over, they would return to 'leur labour' – thus they had nothing to gain by dragging wars out; their interests were identical to those of civilians. There is also, in the Bourgeois' assertions that the militiamen hated the 'gentilzhommes', an explicit indication that the Parisian *commune*'s resentment vis-à-vis the knights had the character of a class struggle.

The Bourgeois was an extremist; he also had, more than Jean de Venette, a rebellious turn of mind. Cochon and Michel Pintoin did not have such draconian views. Still, they were very bitter about the fact that the knights, as a rule, had nothing but contempt for the *communes*, the people's contribution to the defence of the Kingdom, a force with whom they had far more affinities. Both authors pointed out how, at Agincourt, the Kingdom's knights had completely disregarded the support offered by the *communes*. According to the monk of Saint-Denis, the Parisian burgesses had offered 6,000 fully equipped militiamen, asking that they should be placed in the front line. He picked out the scornful remark passed by Jean de Beaumont: 'Le roi ne devrait pas accepter le secours de ces artisans; car nous serons alors trois fois plus nombreux que les Anglais'. Pintoin thereafter angrily noted – showing that he had taken this comment personally:

> Il regardait sans doute comme une indignité qu'on laissât prendre les

[125] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[126] *Journal...*, ed. BEAUNE, n. 191, p. 129.

> armes aux gens du menu peuple. On en a vu cependant beaucoup qui se sont illustrés par leur vaillance, et c'est en ne repoussant jamais le mérite, dans quelque rang qu'il se trouvât, que le royaume est devenu si florissant[127].

It was the same arrogance, he added, that had caused the disasters of Courtrai (1302) and Poitiers (1356). In line with these views, Cochon explained that the knights of France, seeing themselves so numerous, felt overconfident, 'et par orgueul firent crier en leur ost que nul n'alast en la bataille, s'i n'estoit noble, et furent tous les gros vallès boutez ariere, qui estoient assez pour desconfire les Englois'[128]. Both authors considered that the knights had been entirely responsible for their own doom. This time, the Bourgeois, who was perhaps better informed on the matter, gave a different version of the story: he reveals how, at Agincourt, the toll had been equally heavy for the *communes*; indeed, many of the Kingdom's bailiffs 'avoient avecques eulx admenez les communes de leurs baillaiges, qui tous furent mis à l'espée'. His report still differed from that of the 'chivalrous' chroniclers, as he included in his obituary the names of some of the towns whose *communes* had gone to the battle, under the command of their bailiffs, and had been destroyed[129]. No doubt the Bourgeois intended to pay homage to the common people who had offered their lives for the defence of the Kingdom.

5. The return of confidence in the chivalry of France

Despite the fact that the clerical chroniclers did not trust the chivalry of France, and often castigated it in very forthright terms, the concept of the 'good' knight was not foreign to the clerical ideology. Towards the end of 1415 and in 1416, at a time when France was relatively peaceful, Henry V having returned to England in order to prepare his full-scale invasion, Michel Pintoin depicted the French constable Bernard VII d'Armagnac as one example of an ideal knight. In his view, the 'good' knight was one who acted quickly, and achieved clearly visible results. Thus he explains that as Bernard d'Armagnac was informed of a *chevauchée* led in

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[127] *Chronique du Religieux...*, III (Book XXXVI), 549.
[128] PIERRE COCHON, p. 274.
[129] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 65-66.

Normandy by the Earl of Dorset, 'l'illustre connétable de France [...] non moins habile que brave et se rappelant que la célérité lui avait réussi dans plus d'une occasion' immediately directed his company towards Normandy. Pintoin tells us how eloquent Bernard d'Armagnac was, which provides him with the opportunity, in the classical style, to insert a harangue in his narration, laying stress on the necessity for Bernard's French soldiers to be disciplined, trustworthy, brave and efficient. Thanks to his competence and his quickness of wit, the constable managed to carry the day, even though the French were less numerous than the English. Pintoin described the engagement in a manner which shows that he was not systematically insensitive to the spectacular 'faits d'armes': 'tous les cavaliers, donnant de l'éperon à leurs chevaux, fondirent sur l'ennemi bride abattue et la lance en arrêt, ainsi qu'il avait été convenu, frappant partout de leurs haches d'armes à coups redoublés et avec une force irrésistible'[130]. The Bourgeois de Paris also seems to have considered effectiveness as the primary virtue of a 'good' knight: in his narration, the fearsome Earl of Salisbury often appears as his 'ideal' knight, for example in his report of Salisbury's irresistible advance towards Orléans in 1428; he tells us how the English warlord 'prenoit chasteaulx et villes à son vouloir, car moult estoit expert en armes'. There is a hint of irony in his account of Salisbury's unfortunate death before Orléans, as he comments that 'Fortune [...] lui monstra de son mestier dont elle sert ses amez sans deffier', but he still contrasted his efficacy with Bedford's alleged apathy[131].

Another trait of the 'good' knight, emphasized by Pintoin in Bernard d'Armagnac's harangue prior to the engagement of Valmont, was his respectful and fearful attitude towards God. Thus the constable encouraged his knights to beg the Lord forgiveness of their sins, 'afin d'obtenir ainsi facilement l'assistance divine'[132]. But one of the very greatest military virtues was the ability to enforce discipline. Indeed, it was the slack discipline prevailing in French and Burgundian armies which caused most of the peasants' sorrows; on the contrary, good discipline ensured the support of the whole nation. Thus, Michel Pintoin presented the siege of Harfleur organized by Bernard d'Armagnac towards the end of 1415 as an ideal military

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[130] *Chronique du Religieux...*, III (Book XXXVI), 753-757.
[131] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 229-230.

campaign, emphasizing how the constable would have any soldier or knight who bullied peasants or travellers executed, regardless of the malefactor's social standing. These drastic disciplinary measures had been enforced with the intention of securing 'la faveur de tous', and Bernard d'Armagnac 'maintint si bien, quatre mois durant, la tranquillité dans le pays, que les habitants de la campagne purent vaquer à la culture des terres jusqu'au port d'Harfleur'. Pintoin's Book XXXVI ends on an optimistic note, with a comment allegedly made by the constable about those who tormented civilians: 'Tête Dieu! ils méritent bien un pareil châtiment, eux qui, malgré la solde qu'ils reçoivent du roi, causent toutes sortes de dommages au royaume'[133].

Because he was closer to the royal circle than either Cochon or the Bourgeois de Paris, Michel Pintoin understood that knights would fight properly only if they regularly received their wages. In his opinion, the enormous and exceptional tax levied after the battle of Agincourt was acceptable, because it had enabled Bernard of Armagnac's 'ideal' campaign in Normandy. At the same time, he was aware that most French people, who for a long time had been under pressure from heavy taxation, did not readily accept the fact that 'si l'on payait largement les gens de guerre de leurs services, ils obéiraient plus fidèlement, ils craindraient de mettre le royaume au pillage, et la discipline militaire serait rigoureusement observée'[134]. Still, Pintoin knew that taxation was a necessary evil that ensured a proper defence of the Kingdom. As a result, although he blamed them for their insolent arrogance, he could not entirely disagree with the knights of the Armagnac garrison of Paris who, in 1417, openly declared: 'Certes [...], nous n'irons pas risquer notre vie pour la défense des manants de ce pays. D'ailleurs, le roi ne peut plus rétribuer convenablement les services militaires'[135]. Other clerical chroniclers were often opposed to the concept of exacting from the people the soldiers' pay, if only because the Clergy often had to contribute as well. The Bourgeois de Paris, for instance, was strongly opposed to the creation, in 1445, of a special *taille* which would regularly be levied on the French population in order to provide the wages of the soldiers of Charles VII's newly created standing army. With evident bad faith, he asserted that

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[132] *Chronique du Religieux...*, III (Book XXXVI), 755.
[133] *Ibid.*, III (Book XXXVI), 761.
[134] *Ibid.*, III (Book XXXVI), 751.
[135] *Ibid.*, III (Book XXXVIII), 149.

'tout temps faisoit on grosses tailles, sans ce que on feist aucun bien pour le commun; et touzjours s'enforçoient les Angloys et avitalloient leurs forteresses'[136]; in fact, the *taille*, together with the military reforms of 1445 and 1448, allowed the swift recovery of Normandy, a campaign which most other chroniclers considered to be ideal. Similarly, Bishop Thomas Basin of Lisieux, who in many respects appears as a clerical chronicler of the next generation, wrote against the establishment of a standing army paid through a special *taille*; in his opinion, the whole nobility of the Kingdom, whose very function was to defend the realm, was enough to protect it, and this force presented the advantage of not needing any wages in peacetime. Moreover, Thomas Basin regarded the military *ordonnances* of 1445 and 1448 as a first and drastic step towards the establishment of an autocratic regime[137].

Michel Pintoin also had to acknowledge that, in dire times - such as after the battle of Agincourt, where so many knights of the Kingdom had been slain - it was necessary to turn to foreign mercenaries to protect the realm. Personally, he preferred Genoese mercenaries, because of the old alliance between France and Genoa. He did not deny that the Genoese had behaved bravely in 1415 and 1416, as they were protecting the coast of Normandy against the return of Henry V. Pintoin contrasted their conduct with that of the Spanish mercenaries, who fled before King Henry's fleet, and depicted the viscount of Narbonne branding the Spanish as a 'race dégénérée' in his harangue to the Genoese mercenaries[138]. What Pintoin could not stand was the fact that, in these troubled times, many men of low descent who had become thugs would take advantage of the war to make a career in the army: such false knights, he tells us, were particularly numerous in the host of the Dukes of Burgundy, who seemed to be encouraging them. He describes how these brigands 'achetèrent de beaux chevaux, prirent les allures de nobles écuyers, et se réunirent aux Bourguignons et aux troupes qui gardaient les places fortes et les villes closes'. Their behaviour was by far the worst of all, as they did not even spare children[139]. We do find evidence of this in Monstrelet's chronicle, as he relates how the leader of

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[136] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 379.
[137] On the *ordonnances* and the chroniclers' reactions see Chapter 7 of this thesis, Section 1.
[138] *Chronique du Religieux...*, III (Book XXXVII), 13, 37-43, 57; III (Book XXXVIII), 99; quotation from III (Book XXXVII), 39.
[139] *Ibid.*, III (Book XXXVIII), 91.

a troop of brigands, called Tabari, was claiming to be on Duke Philip's side (III, 283). Monstrelet seems to have considered him, at first, with much suspicion; one year later, as he pointed out that Tabari and his men were amongst Philip's company, Monstrelet referred to him as 'ce vaillant chevalier [...] à tout ses brigans' (III, 376-377)[140]: unless we should read the sub-text as an ironical comment, it seems that, by setting his seal of approval to the transformation of a brigand into a knight, Duke Philip had determined Monstrelet's attitude vis-à-vis Tabari.

We have seen that, on rare occasions, during the period in question, the monk of Saint-Denis extolled the 'faits d'armes' of the chivalry of France - or even the mercenaries - and generally expressed a more sympathetic opinion on French knights. These supportive moods coincide with periods where the knights were behaving better towards civilians – often because they had exceptionally received some wages – or had achieved particular successes. After 1417, however, as Henry V was performing his spectacular conquest of Normandy, the monk of Saint-Denis relapsed into a hostile attitude towards the knights of the realm, cursing the whole Kingdom's chivalry in vehement tirades; following the murder of John the Fearless in 1419, his imprecations are principally directed against the Armagnacs[141]. And yet, after the Treaty of Troyes in 1420, there seems to be, in Pintoin's chronicle, a strong return of confidence in the chivalry of France, which remains evident until the close of his work in 1422. The main reason for this change seems to have been a compelling patriotic feeling. Michel Pintoin admired the chivalry of England, and more generally King Henry's army, for its worth and efficiency[142], but he still considered Henry V as an aggressor. Throughout his narration of the conquest of Northern France, Michel Pintoin had written in support of those who had offered resistance to the English advance, whether they had been clerics, knights or even women – like the noble widow of La Roche Guyon, who, after vainly trying to resist the English attack on her castle, refused to marry, as King Henry wished, the pro-English Frenchman Guy le Bouteiller, whom she called 'traître' and 'déloyal'[143]. Pintoin favoured the resistance of all classes of the population, but, in his narration, French knights seem to be - at

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[140] For a mention of Tabari's death see ENGUERRAN DE MONSTRELET, III, 387.
[141] See for example *Chronique du Religieux...*, III (Book XLI), 443.
[142] Cf. *Ibid.*, III (Book XLI), 447.
[143] *Ibid.*, III (Book XXXIX), 313.

least *de facto* - in the foreground as the traditional defenders of the realm. After the Treaty of Troyes, Pintoin wrote more and more enthusiastically about the deeds of the Armagnacs, whom he had castigated earlier. He extolled the exploits performed by Étienne de Vignolles – the famous La Hire – against Duke Philip, calling him brave and skilful[144]. The last military engagement related by Pintoin in his chronicle is a French victory won in 1422 by the Count of Aumale and the Viscount of Narbonne near Mortagne, in Perche – shortly after another small victory won near Bernay. Here, Pintoin calls the Armagnacs French for the first time, describes many French knights as 'chevaliers pleins de vaillance', and concludes his account by stating that the English soldiers had been hunted down like so many wild beasts[145].

One can also see an apparent return of confidence in the knights of France in Cochon's chronicle, only at a later date, in 1429, with Joan of Arc's successes. Again, the main incentive was Cochon's patriotic feelings, mixed with the fact that the French had at last achieved some notable and even spectacular victories. Thus Cochon related very enthusiastically the victory of Patay, concluding with a few lines where he gave free rein to his hatred of the invaders

> Et là furent Anglois très bien catrés, plus que onques mès n'avoient esté en France. Et s'en vouloient retourner en Angleterre et leissier ainssi le pais; se le regent leur eust souffert. Et estoient adonc Anglois si abolis que ung Franchois en eust cachié trois[146].

Throughout the year 1429, Cochon extolled the 'fais d'armes' of the French chivalry – we saw that he particularly appreciated the fact that the common people were given the chance to couple their action with that of the knights. It is quite clear that his attitude towards the Kingdom's chivalry had changed: as he related the impressive seizure, by the French, of Château-Gaillard – one of La Hire's greatest coups – and the subsequent release of Barbasan, a Dauphinist captain – referred to by Cochon as 'ung bon et notable chevalier' - who had been kept prisoner for seven years in the fortress, Cochon wrote with exultation:

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[144] *Ibid.*, III (Book XLI), 459.
[145] *Ibid.*, III (Book XLIII), 475-479.
[146] PIERRE COCHON, p. 300.

> Et fu le dit Barbasan mené à Loviers à grant joie et solemnité, avec iii ou iiij autres chevaliers qui avoient esté pris audit lieu de Melun; et les avoient là mis les dits Anglois comme ung des plus fors lieux de Normandie, et de ce furent moult courciés lesdits Anglois[147].

He also described the attack on Paris very enthusiastically. Cochon emphasized that Charles VII was condemning the behaviour of the *routiers* of Aumale, Blangy and Estrépaigny, who were rampaging through the countryside around them, thus dissociating them from the reconquest effort[148]. His pro-French feelings also led him to disavow the action of the people of Paris: having mentioned that the Parisians had made a sortie against some Dauphinist troops who were surrounding Paris, he scornfully concluded 'y mourut grant quantité des gens de Paris qui ne furent pas plains, car ilz ne savoient riens de fait de guerre'[149]. Cochon, however, concluded his chronicles with bitter words, as by 1430 the English had checked the French advance: until the next French successes, the war would recover its usual aspect.

Only the Bourgeois de Paris' diary does not betray a similar return of trust in the chivalry of the Kingdom. The Bourgeois considered the liberation of Paris, in 1436, as a special, moving and joyful moment[150]; however, he did not stop thereafter his imprecations against the knights, the soldiers, the governors and the King himself. The reconquest was not, in his opinion, proceeding quickly enough; he denounced – very unfairly – the constable Arthur de Richemont as an idler and an incompetent[151]; he kept moaning against the taxes, stating with much bad faith that no one could see any positive military results[152]; in 1443, he went as far as charging the Dauphin Louis with buying the cows and horses which his 'larrons' (his soldiers) had stolen from the peasants of the Ile-de-France[153]. The Bourgeois de Paris was an *esprit frondeur* by nature; he seems to have been systematically opposed to the ruling class. In a sense, the type of petulant and personalized historiography which he wrote was bound to disappear from the French literary scene for a long time: it was a product of the political chaos which had prevailed during the Hundred Years War. With the re-

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[147] *Ibid.*, p. 308-309.
[148] *Ibid.*, p. 302-304.
[149] *Ibid.*, p. 309.
[150] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 314-320.
[151] *Ibid.*, p. 346-347.
[152] *Ibid.*, p. 369-370 and p. 379.

establishment of royal power and the rise of absolutism, which started under Charles VII and, of course, Louis XI, clerical chroniclers could no longer allow themselves to be as radical in their ideology as the Bourgeois de Paris. It is quite a revealing fact that many passages of the Bourgeois' diary were at some stage scratched out or otherwise eradicated, and Colette Beaune has wondered whether these extracts of a 'texte qui sentait le soufre' had been censored during the 16th century, with a view to a possible edition[154].

C. The 'chivalrous' chronicle in France: diversity in a tentative genre

1. A more unadorned type of historiography than the Burgundian 'chivalrous' chronicle

Not all historiographical works written in France during the first half of the 15th century belong to the clerical genre. Indeed, the chivalrous chronicle, a chronicle which fitted the aristocracy's interests, was flourishing, but it was a much simpler, plainer type of writing than the genre of historiography which was developing in the Duchy of Burgundy, under the aegis of Duke Philip the Good. Compared with the chronicles of Wavrin, Chastelain, Saint-Rémy or even Monstrelet – the most unpretentious of all - the chivalrous chronicles written in France appear, with a few exceptions, rather dry and very factual. To look for the author's few subjective comments in the chronicle of Gilles le Bouvier – also known as Herald Berry – for instance, is a task akin to that of looking for a needle in a haystack. In a sense, French chivalrous chronicles were closer in spirit to Jean le Bel than Froissart: Jean le Bel had advocated the use of prose over that of verse to celebrate chivalrous exploits, for, in his opinion, verse by nature tended to embellish and exaggerate martial deeds to

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[153] *Ibid.*, p. 369.
[154] Cf. Colette Beaune's introduction in her edition, p. 9-10.

such an extent that they became 'oultrageuses' and implausible[155]. Moreover, French chivalrous chronicles do not present the homogeneity of the Burgundian chivalrous chronicles. Chastelain, Wavrin, Saint-Rémy, and also, to a comparatively lesser extent, Monstrelet, were all dedicated to the cause of the House of Burgundy, and they all appeared partisan, very partisan in the case of the first three. By contrast, the French chivalrous historiography of the period does not have such a set character. Some chronicles, of course, were written with the primary aim of extolling the King of France, of depicting the truly impressive process by which the 'roi de Bourges', as his enemies derisively called him, slowly became the *roi très victorieux*, thanks notably to the action of his noble chivalry, and also to his diplomatic successes - though the chroniclers, without overshadowing these achievements, naturally focused on the martial deeds, which, after all, were responsible for the eventual recovery of Normandy (1450) and Guyenne (1453). Chief amongst these is the chronicle of Jean Chartier, who was raised by Charles VII to the status of first official historiographer of the Kings of France. The monks of Saint-Denis were already considered as the semi-official historiographers of the French sovereigns, but Jean Chartier's function was made official by the fact that he was appointed a royal officer; Chartier had to take an oath, and on 18 November 1437, royal letters were issued, ensuring that he would receive yearly wages[156]. Chartier's chronicle covers the years between 1422 and 1450[157]; in addition, he was the author of a chronicle written in Latin[158]. I have also used the chronicle of Charles VII's first herald Gilles Le Bouvier, which opens in 1403 and ends in 1455[159]. Apart from these chronicles composed specifically for the King of France, there was a host of chivalric biographies which were written for princes or great officials of the Kingdom. I have chosen not to ignore them altogether in my study as their ideology is very close to that of chivalrous chronicles. They also provide additional information of a similar kind – after all, chivalrous chronicles were composed from the testimony of eyewitnesses from the chivalrous class, such as

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[155] JEAN LE BEL, *Chronique*, ed. J. VIARD and E. DÉPREZ for the SHF, 2 vol., Paris, Laurens, 1904-1905, I, 1-2. On this aspect of Jean Le Bel's historiography see KEEN, 'Chivalry...', p. 402.
[156] Cf. GUENÉE, p. 341-342.
[157] JEAN CHARTIER, *Chronique de Charles VII*, ed. A. VALLET DE VIRIVILLE, 3 vol., Paris, Jannet, 1858. Unless otherwise specified, quotations from Jean Chartier are taken from this edition.
[158] For extracts of this chronicle see JEAN CHARTIER, *Chronique latine [de Charles VII]*, ed. C. SAMARAN (*La chronique latine inédite de Jean Chartier (1422-1450)*), Paris, Honoré Champion, 1928 (*Bibliothèque du XVe siècle*, XXXVI).
[159] GILLES LE BOUVIER, also known as LE HÉRAUT BERRY, *Les chroniques du roi Charles VII*, ed.

heralds or knights – about the events of the times in which their main character had been involved. I have used the *Chronique d'Arthur de Richemont*, beginning with the year 1398 and closing in 1458, written by the Breton Guillaume Gruel for the constable of France and Duke of Brittany Arthur de Richemont[160] as the work does not much differ from a conventional chronicle, save that it focuses on the events where the constable played a part. Admittedly Guillaume Gruel was a Breton, like his patron, but his *Chronique* seems much closer to the French tradition of biography and historiography than Burgundian works. We also have some chronicles written specifically for a House of the Kingdom of France: the best example is Perceval de Cagny's *Chroniques*, begun in 1436 for the Dukes of Alençon[161]. What is especially interesting about this work is that the author frequently disapproved of the King's policy, though he conventionally laid the blame on the King's counsellors – this will be developed in the next chapter. Finally, I have used the curious *Chronique de la Pucelle*, a chronicle written at a much later stage than the other works mentioned. Indeed, the chronicle is now considered to have been written after Joan of Arc's Rehabilitation Trial in 1456[162]. In my opinion, however, the first part of the work may well have been written at an earlier stage, for the character of the chronicle changes drastically with the appearance of the Maid: before 1429, it appears as a rather conventional French chivalrous chronicle, but with a few interesting comments that one does not find anywhere else; after 1429, as it relates the deeds of the Maid, the work verges on hagiography[163].

2. Respect for the chivalrous class and its values

Unlike the clerical chronicles, the chivalrous chronicles, which were written specifically for the aristocracy or, in the case of Jean Chartier and Herald Berry, the King himself, had great esteem for the institution of chivalry, and its values. This is

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H. COURTEAULT and L. CELIER for the SHF, Paris, Klincksieck, 1979.

[160] GUILLAUME GRUEL, *Chronique d'Arthur de Richemont*, ed. A. LE VAVASSEUR for the SHF, Paris, Renouard, 1890.

[161] PERCEVAL DE CAGNY, *Chroniques*, ed. H. MORANVILLÉ for the SHF, Paris, Renouard, 1902.

[162] Cf. P. CONTAMINE, 'Naissance d'une historiographie. Le souvenir de Jeanne d'Arc, en France et hors de France, depuis le "procès de son innocence" (1455-1456) jusqu'au début du XVIe siècle', in *De Jeanne d'Arc aux guerres d'Italie*, p. 139-162 (p. 153).

particularly evident in the opening of Chartier's chronicle – begun in 1437 – as the King's historiographer declared that he had undertaken to write the history of Charles VII's reign 'affin qu'il soit perpétuelle mémoire des gestes et faiz du dit roy, de sesdits adversaires et de leurs chevalleries', and that the King's intention was 'à l'aide de sa très noble chevallerie et au moyen de la conduicte de son bon conseil, de conquérir son droit paternel et dedens brief temps de expeller sesdits ennemis et de mettre telle et sy bonne police en son dit royaulme, que son peuple vivra en bonne paix soubz luy'[164]. It is interesting to note that, in the Latin chronicle that he had begun writing shortly before his French chronicle, Jean Chartier's style was, at the beginning and throughout the first few pages, much more 'chivalrous' than in his French chronicle. If one compares the first chapters of the Latin chronicle and those of the French work, one realizes that the historical substance is identical in both texts, only in the Latin version one finds many additions with an obvious 'chivalric' flavour: thus Chartier explains in his Latin chronicle how, as Charles VII had become King in 1422, his father having died that year, the loyal Dauphinist knights 'se sentirent de toutes parts régénérés de joie dans leurs cœurs et dans leurs esprits, et se préparèrent sur divers points à une lutte belliqueuse'[165]. As Jean Chartier recounted, in the Latin chronicle, the victory of Mortagne won by the Count of Aumale and the Viscount of Narbonne (1422), he added a few personal comments such as 'ces magnanimes champions conduisaient l'avant-garde', and as he related the fight of Blanque-Taque, he described the fight in rather epic terms: 'Là s'éleva un combat si âpre et si acharné des deux parts, que bien du monde y trouva, pour prix de sa peine, une mort effroyable'[166]. We have seen, however, that when Michel Pintoin was elated by the deeds of the French, he was very willing to extol them by means of his Latin rhetoric. Chartier used the last chapter of Pintoin's work in order to relate the events which happened around the time of the deaths of Henry V and Charles VI, and he seems to have emulated, or even outdone Pintoin's style, in order to extol the deeds of Charles VII's chivalry. Soon, however, the Latin chronicle becomes very

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[163] *Chronique de la Pucelle*, ed. A. VALLET DE VIRIVILLE, Paris, Delahays, 1859.
[164] JEAN CHARTIER, I, 27.
[165] *Ibid.*, I, 14. Vallet de Viriville has translated, in opening pages of the first volume of the *Chronique de Charles VII*, the first few chapters of the *Chronique latine*. It seems, however, from Vallet de Viriville and Charles Samaran's indications (*La chronique latine...*, p. 5, 50-51), that from Chapter 6 onwards, with a few exceptions (Chapters 11 and 12), the two works are almost identical.
[166] JEAN CHARTIER, I, 15, 20.

similar in style to the French chronicle, which relates the military events of Charles VII's reign rather dryly, with only a few occasional subjective comments.

However plain French chivalrous chronicles may seem compared to what was emerging in Burgundy, through the impetus given by Philip the Good, they still include enough idiosyncratic comments to show that their authors and readers regarded the ideals and values of chivalry with the same deference. We have seen that Chartier's work was, like the chivalrous chronicles of Burgundy, and like the chronicle of Froissart, devoted to the relation of the noble deeds of the Kingdom's chivalry. The same aims are advertised in the opening pages of Herald Berry's chronicle, as he tells his readers 'que au xvi^e^ an de mon aage, qui fut l'an mil cccc et deux', he decided to take his 'plaisir et delectation a veoir et a suivyr le monde ainsi comme ma complection y estoit encline'. First and foremost he committed himself to 'veoir a mon poveoir les honneurs et haulx faiz de cellui tres noble et tres chrestien royaulme'. His ambition, now that he had reached a riper age - and that, as Charles VII's first herald, he could claim to have seen many 'haulx faiz' - was 'd'escripre a mon povoir et en ma conscience a la verité sans donner louange a l'une partie ne que a l'autre des differends et guerres que cy après ont esté ou dit royaulme de France et aussy des autres choses advenues et autres royaumes ou je me suis trouvé'[167]. As one can see, his prologue is, in essence, quite similar to that of Froissart's chronicle, though it lacks all the literary lustre of the older work.

The French chivalrous chroniclers show that they shared the same system of values as the historiographers of Burgundy. Thus the importance, for a nobleman, of keeping his word is exemplified in the *Chronique d'Arthur de Richemont*, as we are told that Richemont, who had been captured by the English at Agincourt, refused to escape, even when offered the opportunity by some Breton ambassadors, because he had sworn an oath to Henry V: 'Et lui [Richemont] fut demandé se il vouloit que on l'emmenast par force; mais il ne voult et ne l'eust pour riens fait. Le conte de Suffort l'avoit mené jouer aux champs et tirer de l'arc'[168]. The knights' reverence for the notion of 'proesce' is also clearly manifested on many occasions: Guillaume Gruel,

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[167] GILLES LE BOUVIER, p. 3-4.
[168] GUILLAUME GRUEL, p. 22.

for instance, recalled that, like the ideal 'preu' of Froissart[169], Richemont had been found on the battlefield of Agincourt: the Breton prince 'fut congneu à sa cote d'armes, et si estoit elle toute sanglante'[170]. Our chroniclers also show that they had the greatest respect for the chivalry of France, the Kingdom's mounted heavy cavalry, as a tactical force. One simply needs to read Perceval de Cagny's account of the battle of Beaugé to understand that, in his opinion, the supremacy of the French heavy cavalry over that of any other country was indisputable, and that the only reason why the English had so often had the upper hand, was that they did not fight in the traditional, noble manner – in a word, they did not observe the rules of the 'war of the knights'. According to de Cagny, on the day of the fight,

> ledit de Clarence ne se voult point aider d'ung bien grant nombre d'archiers qui estoient pres d'illecques, et ne print sinon les archiers de son corps, disant que ceulx de France disoient que les Englois ne gaignoient point les journées, sinon par les archiers et que à ceste fois verroit comme il luy en prendroit. Et ainsi fut mort et ceulx de sa compaignie.

De Cagny concludes his account of the battle which could be seen as a modest French revenge for Agincourt, with the very chivalrous words: 'Ceste journée fut moult honnourable'[171]. There is also evidence, in the French chivalrous chronicles, of the fact that the chroniclers of the aristocracy did not usually think highly of the *communes*' support, which was so dear to the clerical chroniclers. Thus the author of the *Chronique du bon duc Loys de Bourbon*, a chivalrous biography composed around 1429 and relating the deeds performed by Louis de Bourbon in the previous century, casually recounted how Louis de Bourbon 'avoit [...] licencié le plus des gens inutiles et des communes, et n'ot retenu fors gens d'eslite en nombre', as he was preparing to defend his siege of Belleperche against an attack led by the lord of Buckingham[172]. It seems that the knights' opinion of the *communes* did not improve during the 15th century. The author of the *Chronique de la Pucelle* reproached them for having no respect for the rules of the 'war of the knights': he explained how,

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[169] Cf. p. 46.
[170] GUILLAUME GRUEL, p. 18.
[171] PERCEVAL DE CAGNY, p. 120-121.
[172] *La chronique du bon duc Loys de Bourbon*, ed. A. –M. CHAZAUD for the SHF, Paris, Renouard, 1876, p. 80.

during the reconquest by Joan of Arc and the Dauphinists of the fortresses surrounding Orléans 'les gens du commun occioient entre les mains des gentilshommes tous les prisonniers anglois qu'ils avoient prins à rançon'; in order to save them from the wrath of the common people, the Earl of Suffolk, his brother and the other noble prisoners taken at Jargeau had to be conveyed to Orléans by night, on boats[173].

It would be quite tedious to multiply evidences of the French chivalrous chroniclers' deference for the values of chivalry – we have seen with the study of the Burgundian chivalrous chronicles what these values were. There are, however, many differences between the French chivalrous works and the chronicles of Burgundy, apart from the fact that the former are plainer in style. One can sense, in particular, a growing nationalism in many French chronicles; this is particularly manifest in the chronicle of Jean Chartier and the *Chronique de la Pucelle*.

3. The assertion of Charles VII's legitimacy and the emergence of a national consciousness

The chivalrous chronicles of Burgundy were, of course, very partisan, and more systematically than those of France, especially the works of Chastelain, Wavrin and Saint-Rémy. However, the ideals of chivalry implied the concept of an international brotherhood between knights, and one can sense that the Burgundian chivalrous chronicles respected this concept. Besides, the chroniclers of Burgundy were, in a sense, in a tricky situation: Duke Philip the Good had been allied with the English for more than a decade, but when they composed their chronicles, Burgundy had by then relinquished the English alliance, since the Treaty of Arras in 1435, and was now on amicable terms with France. Only Chastelain was clearly hostile to the English in his work. Wavrin had been fighting on the English side, and held the English in great esteem: his *Croniques d'Engleterre* were dedicated to the narration of their deeds. And Saint-Rémy, who had been in Henry V's host at the battle of Agincourt, respected them. Perhaps Monstrelet, Wavrin and Saint-Rémy deemed the

[173] *Chronique de la Pucelle*, p. 299.

ideal of chivalry as an international brotherhood particularly convenient in order to relate the war without appearing hostile to either the French or the English. French chroniclers such as Jean Chartier, on the other hand, did not have such complexes. As Charles VII was slowly gaining the upper hand in the war, Chartier was intent on venting the King's resentment towards the English, and his own. This is evident in his prologue, as he explains:

> Et a esté occuppé la plus grant part d'icelluy royaulme viollamment et contre raison par les dits Angloiz, anciens ennemis du dit roy et de ses prédecesseurs roys de France, comme encores est de présent. Et ont prins et applicqué les rentes et revenues des [...] pays d'icelluy royaulme estans en leur subjection et dominacion, et joyssent de plusieurs grans citez, villes, chasteaulx et forteresses, ou grant préjudice et dommage dudit roy Charles septième, héritier de France, et mesmement de la bonne ville [...] de Rains[174].

He also pointed out how most Frenchmen mourned over the fact that the Dauphin had been denied any legitimacy at the Treaty of Troyes,

> considérans les énormes maulx qui leur povoient venir par la mutacion de leur seigneur naturel, et que ladite seigneurie se gouverneroit par estranges manières et nacions, qui estoit et est contre raison et ordre de droit, à la totalle destruction du peuple et du royaulme de France[175].

Already Michel Pintoin had stated, as he related the death of the fearsome conqueror whose ambition was to wear the crown of France, that Henry V's reasons for invading the Kingdom were 'peu fondées'[176]. Systematically, French chroniclers of the next generation pointed out, at least briefly, in their works that, according to them, the English kings' claims to the throne of France had no legitimacy. Thus Gilles Le Bouvier, as he related that the Prince of Orange had refused to swear allegiance to Henry V, curtly commented: 'le roy d'Engleterre se disoit roy [de France] indeument en plusieurs manieres'[177]. These 'legitimist' passages in French chronicles echo the discourse of a different kind of French literature from the period:

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[174] JEAN CHARTIER, I, 26.
[175] *Ibid.*, I, 28.
[176] *Chronique du Religieux...*, III (Book XLIII), 481-483.
[177] GILLES LE BOUVIER, p. 96.

the whole corpus of war propaganda writings, originating mainly from the King's civil servants, for example Jean de Montreuil, Noël de Fribois, Jean Juvénal des Ursins or Robert Blondel, which appeared during the 15th century. This outbreak of propaganda literature has been studied in detail by Peter Lewis[178]. It is quite clear that the Hundred Years War had exacerbated national sentiments on both sides of the channel. The slow emergence of what could be called a national consciousness was not a creation of the royal circle: it can be felt in many works of diverse origins from the period, such as the poems of Charles d'Orléans or the chronicle of Pierre Cochon. However, the most flagrant manifestation of this shaping of a national consciousness took a political form: a host of treatises began to appear, intending to convince their readers that the assertions and claims of the King of France were fully justified. The same phenomenon can be witnessed in England at the same period. One could argue that the impulse came from the top, and was dictated by the personal concerns of the sovereigns. It would be wrong, however, to neglect the personal motivations and convictions of these political writers, and the fact that they had a wide audience. War propaganda could take many forms in these treatises. It could appeal to the reason of its readers by using political arguments; it could also emphasize religious aspects, such as God's alleged support of one of either causes. Finally, war propaganda could resort to bare emotions, such as hatred. This was evident in the treatise *A toute la chevalerie de France* written by the royal secretary Jean de Montreuil, as he declared: 'quant je voiz que ilz ne desirent rien tant que gaster et destruire ce royaume [...] je les ay en telle abomination et haine que j'aime ceulz qui les heent et hez ceulx qui les aiment'[179]. One should note that Jean de Montreuil's invectives were directed not only against the English, but also against all Frenchmen he viewed as collaborators. In his Latin chronicle, Jean Chartier similarly castigated those who could be accused of having collaborated with the enemy, as he denounced the Frenchmen who 'prêtèrent un serment inoui autant que criminel au roi d'Angleterre, cet intrus tel quel, afin de laisser le gouvernement aux Anglois'[180]. Chartier explicitly singled out the Parisians as one example of Frenchmen who had collaborated during the occupation; he did not, however, dare to say anything about the behaviour of the

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[178] Cf. P. S. LEWIS, 'War Propaganda and Historiography in 15th Century France and England', in his work *Essays in Later Medieval French History*, London, Hambledon Press, 1985, p. 193-213.
[179] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 194
[180] JEAN CHARTIER, I, 14.

Burgundians, France being at peace with Burgundy at the time, and the re-establishment of France having been achieved thanks to Burgundy's change of alliance. In his French chronicle, the invective against collaborators was abandoned altogether, perhaps because Chartier did not want any longer to twist the knife in a fresh wound. According to Charles Samaran, Chartier started to compose his French chronicle after 1437, and by this time, Paris had been under Charles VII's rule for already quite a few years[181]. It is thus quite likely that Charles VII did not want to insist upon the past mistakes of the city, having pardoned the Parisians on their liberation day.

The bitter resentment towards the English and the emergence of national sentiments can also be felt in the *Chronique de la Pucelle*, which often appears quite violently anti-English. Thus the chronicler emphasized the brutality of the Earl of Salisbury's behaviour during his Loire campaign, the fact that the Duke of Orléans had vainly asked him not to attack his territories 'veu qu'il estoit prisonnier' – thus making Salisbury's conduct appear anti-chivalrous - and the fact that his soldiers had looted the church of Cléry and committed 'des maux innumérables'. He explained how a multitude of soldiers 'tant Anglois comme faulx François' subsequently besieged Orléans, and referred to the English captain Glasdale as a man 'de hault courage, plein de toute tyrannie et orgueil'. The chronicler also praised the fierce resistance of all the people of Orléans, in particular the women 'dont aucunes furent veues durant l'assault qui repoussoient de lances les Anglois', and who brought wine, food and fruits to the defenders[182]. With the appearance of Joan of Arc, the nationalist discourse naturally strengthens. One particular episode which has the calibre of a symbol is the story of the Bastard of Bar, a French knight who was a prisoner of Talbot and was kept 'enferré par les pieds d'un gros et pesant fer' by the English during the siege of Orléans. When the English were forced to raise their siege, the Bastard of Bar was taken away by Talbot's confessor, an Augustinian friar, but the two men could not catch up with the English troops. As he found himself alone with the English friar, the French knight 'print l'Augustin à bons poings et luy dit qu'il n'iroit plus avant, et que, s'il ne le portoit jusques à Orléans, il lui feroit [...]

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[181] Cf. SAMARAN, *La chronique latine...*, p. 50-51.
[182] *Chronique de la Pucelle*, p. 256-258, 260-263.

desplaisir'. The friar had to carry the knight upon his shoulders to Orléans. Surely the chronicler regarded this tale – which, it seems, first appeared in Chartier's chronicle – as an emblem of the new vitality of the Kingdom of France, which had been under the yoke of the English for so long[183].

4. A more realistic image of the knight and a more pragmatic discourse on warfare

The French chivalrous chronicles also differ from the Burgundian ones in the sense that they sometimes appear more realistic in their discourse on warfare. This might be due to the fact that the style of the Burgundian chivalrous chronicles is rather bombastic, while their French counterparts usually remain down to earth. In particular, the French chivalrous chronicles of the period often give us a more genuine picture of knights. One revealing example is a curious episode of the first part of the *Chronique de la Pucelle*, a work which is otherwise rather factual in its first half. As the chronicler related the fight of Montargis, an encounter where the Dauphinist knight Étienne de Vignolles, also known as La Hire, had again won renown, he recounted how, shortly before the fight,

> La Hire trouva un chapelain auquel il dist qu'il luy donnast hastivement absolution, et le chapelain luy dit qu'il confessast ses péchéz. La Hire lui répondit qu'il n'auroit pas loisir, car il falloit promptement frapper sur l'ennemy, et qu'il avoit fait ce que gens de guerre ont accoutumé de faire. Sur quoy le chapelain luy bailla absolution telle quelle[184].

The chronicler thereafter relates how La Hire 'fit sa prière à Dieu, en disant en son gascon, les mains jointes: "Dieu, je te prie que tu fasses aujourd'huy pour La Hire, autant que tu voudrois que La Hire fit pour toi s'il estoit Dieu et que tu fusses La Hire"', and adds: 'Et il cuidoit très bien prier et dire'. The chronicler carries on, recounting the fight 'qui fut, comme on disoit, une bien vaillante entreprise mise à effet par ledit Estienne de Vignoles dit La Hire. [...] Au pourquoy les pauvres gens

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[183] *Ibid.*, p. 298; JEAN CHARTIER, I, 79-80.
[184] *Chronique de la Pucelle,* p. 246.

firent la nuict grande joye et chère dans la ville'[185]. The episode of La Hire's confession and prayer is, by its vivid realism, like a gem in an otherwise very plain text, as it shows the knight behaving in a very practical manner, knowing that any time wasted might jeopardize the fight's outcome; our chronicler certainly does not blame La Hire for having somewhat livened up the conventional practice of religion, in his wish to be efficient, as he knew that haste in this particular situation was required above anything else. Moreover, it puts the crimes for which knights were often blamed into perspective: as La Hire explained to the chaplain: 'il avoit fait ce que gens de guerre ont accoutumé de faire'. In other words, one could not make an omelette without breaking eggs. La Hire's comments made the Bourgeois' opinion that soldiers placed not only their bodies, but also their souls at risk, 'pour gaigner ung pou d'argent'[186], appear outmoded. Finally, by stressing that the poor people of Montargis, the town he had saved, celebrated La Hire's victory, the chronicler emphasized that knights did not systematically bring sorrow to the common people; the whole Kingdom could benefit from their successes, and the people could follow their adventures and rejoice over the exploits of particular heroes, such as La Hire.

The *Chronique de la Pucelle*'s tale of La Hire's prayer and the realistic picture of a French knight that it offers are very reminiscent of the kind of stories and speeches one finds in Jean de Bueil's *Jouvencel*, a semi-autobiographical work which has received much praise from modern scholars[187]. *Le Jouvencel* was not exactly a chronicle, but it was based on its author's experiences of war. Besides, Guillaume Tringnant, one of the three original editors of the work, has given us in his 'Exposition', in the opening pages of the *Jouvencel*, many important clues which help us to retrace the whole of the author's career and know the real events to which he is referring. In a sense, *Le Jouvencel* is de Bueil's memoirs in disguise; the realism with which he describes his career as a knight and, later, an officer of the King, heralds Blaise de Monluc's *Mémoires*. Jean de Bueil's work, composed around 1470, was written as a manual for young squires intending to make a career in the army. It is interesting to note that La Hire also appeared in the *Jouvencel* – the famous knight

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[185] *Ibid.*, p. 247.
[186] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 233.
[187] For modern assessments of the *Jouvencel*'s worth in the war literature of the times see, amongst many other works, HUIZINGA, p. 77-78 and KEEN, 'Chivalry...', p. 413-414.

had been de Beuil's captain for many years – as the old captain of Crathor; Jean de Bueil had certainly derived much of his philosophy of the waging of war from his teachings. In the *Jouvencel*, the figure of the modern soldier is emerging; the work is much more pragmatic than Geoffroi de Thoisy's *Livre de chevalerie*, and gives a very realistic picture of the life of French knights during the Hundred Years War. In particular, the *Jouvencel* showed that there was nothing glamorous about the everyday life of a young squire who wanted to gain renown: stealing the goats and the laundry of the soldiers from the nearest enemy fortress were the first deeds performed by the 'Jouvencel' at the start of his career[188]. This reminds us of the *Chronique de la Pucelle*'s portrayal of Charles VII's army during the coronation campaign: the chronicler explained how many noblemen 'non ayant de quoy eux armer et monter, y alloient comme archers et coustillers, montez sur petits chevaulx'; under the walls of Troyes, the knights found themselves in such dire necessity – for Charles VII did not have enough money to pay their wages – that they had to live on a diet of 'espics de bled froissez et [...] febves nouvelles'[189]. The *Jouvencel* gave an explicit picture of the way of life and motivations of the modern knight, in his role as an officer of the King. His ambitions should be to gain honour and reputation 'à soustenir bonne querelle et à secourir son souverain seigneur ou son prouchain en bonne querelle et en bon droit'; de Bueil primarily insisted on the need to loyally serve the King, and he simply assumed that his quarrel was just. He also emphasized the need to be disciplined, explaining: 'le principal point de toute la guerre, c'est après Dieu la discretion du chief'. Jean de Beuil was never oblivious of religious aspects, but we get the impression in his work that the soldier simply needed to be confident in the fact that, by loyally serving the King, he would achieve salvation. The author himself had spent his life waging the wars of the *Roi Très Chrétien* 'en soustenant sa querelle de tout mon petit pouvoir'[190]. The soldier should not expect any material comfort from his profession: comradeship and the satisfaction one feels when performing one's duty would be his main pleasures. When old and penniless, the good knight would be invited into every house, and people would exclaim: 'Ha! le bon homme, qui a si bien servi le Roy et le royaulme! C'est grant pitié qu'il ait

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[188] JEAN DE BEUIL, I, 24-25.
[189] *Chronique de la Pucelle,* p. 312, 315.
[190] JEAN DE BEUIL, I, 118, 130, 15.

necessité'[191]. Jean de Beuil was aware of the fact that soldiers could not live on fresh air, thus he pragmatically recommended:

> s'ainsi est que, pour avoir d'autres affaires ou moyennant le conseil d'aucuns, il soit troublé et desconseillé en manière qu'il ne nous puisse donner provision de payement ou de gaiges, il nous faudra lever de nous-mesmes vivres et finances, tant sur ceulx de nostre obeissance comme sur nos ennemys, le plus raisonnablement que faire se pourra.

Knights could demand 'tribuz et appatissemens' from enemies 'et, sur ceulx de nostre party, ferons aucune cueillette la moindre et la plus doulce que faire se pourra, en leur remonstrant comment par ce moyen nous les soustendrons contre tout le monde'. He knew, however, that ideally the King should provide his soldiers with regular wages. By the time he composed the *Jouvencel*, the *ordonnances* of 1445 had already been created, ensuring that the soldiers of the King's standing army would receive regular pay. Thus he could retrospectively explain: 'Et ainsi passerons le temps jusques ad ce qu'il plaise au Roy nous faire aucune ordonnance'[192]. As the great medievalist Johan Huizinga clearly saw, the *Jouvencel*, with its realistic depiction of the figure of the knight, was a typically French product. In *L'Automne du Moyen Age* (*Herfstij der Middeleeuwen*), he contrasted the personage of the 'Jouvencel' with that of Jacques de Lalaing, as depicted by Chastelain, and shrewdly concluded:

> La littérature bourguignonne, de caractère plus archaïque, plus solennelle et plus emprisonnée dans les formes féodales, n'aurait pu le produire [the 'Jouvencel']. A côté du Jouvencel, le héros bourguignon [...] est une curiosité antique faite, comme Gillon de Trazegnies, sur le vieux cliché du chevalier errant. Le livre des exploits de ce héros est plus rempli de tournois romanesques que de guerres véritables[193].

Generally, one can say that, at the dawn of the Renaissance, the French chivalrous chroniclers were offering a more realistic and up-to-date depiction of the knight and his ideology than their Burgundian homonyms. But it also seems that their whole attitude towards the waging of war was much more pragmatic than that of the

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[191] *Ibid.*, I, 56.
[192] *Ibid.*, I, 95-96.

Burgundian chivalrous chroniclers. For example, one can observe that their comments on a key aspect of the waging of war, strategy, are often sharper. The Burgundian chroniclers did not fail to point out the mistakes made by the losing side in a battle, but they often excused them, and their indications of the *faux pas* made by an army were often buried in an epic discourse. Guillaume Gruel's narrative of the battle of Agincourt is not lengthy. He was not insensitive to the 'grandes armes bien combatues', and related how King Henry was knocked down to his knees by a powerful blow during the battle. However, he devoted half of his report to a discerning analysis of the reasons for the defeat of the French, and summarized them very acurately, explaining that the battlefield

> trop estoit estroicte pour combatre tant de gens; et y avoit grant nombre de gens à cheval de notre parti, tant Lombars que Gascons, qui devoient ferir sur les esles des Angloys; et quant ils sentirent le trait venir si espessement ilz se misdrent en fuyte et vindrent rompre la bataille de noz gens, en telle manière que a grant peine se peurent jamais rassembler que les Angloys ne fussent tousjours près d'eulx[194].

In this passage, the causes of the defeat are briefly and lucidly exposed: the battlefield was too narrow and did not allow any strategic moves; the shooting of the English archers forced the French advance guard to turn back, thus paralysing and disorganising the whole of the French army. It was then annihilated by the English host, which kept advancing like a road roller. Similarly, in the first part of the *Chronique de la Pucelle*, the author presented some of the causes of the French defeat of Verneuil, without being afraid to denounce the errors in some generally accepted ideas and to blame the foolishness of many members of the Dauphinist host. Thus he recounted how, as the Dauphinists were informed of the Duke of Bedford's advance, the Scottish leaders and 'aucuns François jeunes de grande volonté et courage qui n'avoient pas cognoissance des faicts de guerre et venoient droict de leurs maisons' decided to fight the English army, contrary to the opinion of the Earl of Aumale, the viscount of Narbonne and

> autres anciens capitaines et gens de guerre qui sçavoient parler de

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[193] HUIZINGA, p. 78.
[194] GUILLAUME GRUEL, p. 17-18.

> telles matières, renommez d'estre vaillans et eulx cognoissans en faict de guerre: car oncques on ne conseilla au royaume de France combatre les Anglois en batailles rangées, et si on l'avoit faict il en estoit mal venu[195].

It is interesting to note that the chronicler, unlike the chivalrous chroniclers of Burgundy, did not regard pitched battles as awesome events, the most prestigious experience that a knight could have in his career. Chastelain, for example, had empasized how eager Duke Philip was to fight the Dauphin and his troops in a pitched battle, as he was marching to rescue Cosne-sur-Loire, stating: 'c'estoit la chose en terre que plus il demandoit' (I, 321). By contrast, the author of the *Chronique de la Pucelle* indicated that a long experience of being defeated in pitched battles by the English had taught the French to avoid fighting them in battles. Aumale and Narbonne would have rather brought reinforcements into Verneuil and the neighbouring fortresses. But according to the chronicler, 'y eust aucuns qui disoient qu'il sembloit que ceux qui estoient d'opinion qu'on ne combatist point avoient peur; et toutefois c'estoit des plus vaillans et mieux cognoissans en faict de guerre'[196]. Eventually, those in favour of a battle had their way. The chronicler thereafter relates how the two armies marched against each other, the knights having dismounted on both sides, 'mais les Anglois marchoient pesamment et sagement, sans eulx guères eschauffer'; the Scots on the contrary 'marchoient légèrement et trop hastivement, du désir qu'ils avoient de parvenir à leurs ennemis, et pareillement les Francois, tellement qu'on disoit que la plupart d'eux estoient hors d'haleine avant que de joindre aux ennemis'[197]. The French chroniclers usually did not fear to blame the knights' errors; they could also praise particular decisions taken, even if they were controversial from a conventional chivalric point of view. Thus it is interesting to note that Guillaume Tringnant, author of a short chronicle which he added to *Le Jouvencel* in order to make de Beuil's work less cryptic, paid tribute to Falstoff's decision, at Patay, to take flight with his company, by explaining: 'Messire Jehan Fastoc emmena une compagnie d'Anglois jusques à Yenville et les saulva par sa bonne conduicte'[198]. The compliment is all the more remarkable since Falstoff was

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[195] *Chronique de la Pucelle,* p. 223-224.
[196] *Ibid.*, p. 224.
[197] *Ibid.*, p. 225.
[198] See Guillaume Tringnant's *Commentaire* in JEAN DE BEUIL, II, 265-299 (quotation p. 280).

an enemy.

Out of all our French chivalrous chroniclers, the one who appears the wisest in military matters and the quickest to blame French knights for their mistakes, is Herald Berry. This comes somehow as a surprise, for the reader could expect Gilles Le Bouvier, as a herald, to have fallen into all the chivalrous clichés. But Le Bouvier had taken a modest part in the political proceedings of the period, he had been on some important diplomatic missions, and seems to have watched with great concern the political and military happenings of his time in France. His chronicle is generally very dry in tone, but the few subjective comments one finds in his work show that he had strong opinions about the conduct of warfare. Le Bouvier reveals, for instance, that unlike the Burgundian chroniclers who had praised Philip the Good for fighting alongside his knights at Mons-en-Vimeu, he was opposed to the idea that the King should participate in fights. Thus he explained how, in 1415, the Duke of Berry - who was already furious to learn that a battle had been decided - categorically refused to let the King take part in the battle, arguing that 'il avoit esté à la bataille de Poitiers ou son pere le roy Jehan fut prins, et disoit que mieulx valoit perdre bataille seule que roy et bataille'. And yet, as Le Bouvier tells us, '[le] Roy y fust voulentiers allé, car il estoit hardi chevalier et fort et puissant'[199]. But the point was not whether the King was courageous and a worthy knight; what mattered was that he was the King, and as such could run the risk of being killed or captured, for experience and history had shown that the consequences would be tragic. Herald Berry saw war as a serious business, and there was no place for frills in his conception of the waging of war. On many occasions his views, as expressed in his chronicle, run counter to the ideals of chivalry. Thus he felt no need to mourn over the death of the Earl of Arundel, an English knight described as a 'vaillant chevalier', who died from his wounds after having been captured before Gerberoy in 1435: Herald Berry noted that his death did not profit those who had captured him, 'car ilz en eussent eu grosse finance'; on the other hand, he observed: 'ce fut grandement le proffit du Roy, car [...] se il eust plus vescu, il eust bien peu faire plus grant dommaige a la seignorie de France et au bien de la chose publique'[200]. Le Bouvier's remark is almost Machiavellian, as it shows

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[199] GILLES LE BOUVIER, p. 67.
[200] *Ibid.*, p. 163-164.

that in his opinion, the good of the Kingdom took priority over the sadness that one may have felt at the death of a worthy disciple of chivalry.

Herald Berry was also eager to denounce the faults of the chivalry of France - or, occasionally, those of English knights - without fear of using strong language. Foolhardiness was one of his *bêtes noires*. It is interesting to contrast Herald Berry's report of the death of the Duke of Clarence at Beaugé with that of Monstrelet. The Burgundian chronicler excitedly described how Clarence had darted to the battle without bothering to wait for 'la grant tourbe de son ost', in order to engage in a 'bataille merveilleuse et dure et moult ensanglantée'. He saw the death of Clarence as a tragedy 'car moult estoit aymé pour sa *prudence*' (IV, 38-39). Herald Berry depicted him rising from the table, all inflamed, upon hearing that the Dauphinists were near, and exclaiming: 'Alon leur corre sus! Ilz sont nostres! et que il ne viengne avecques nous que les hommes d'armes'. His account of the battle is brief and merciless, with only a few carefully selected details intended to emphasize Clarence's pride: 'Le duc de Clarence vint devant sa bataille, ung chappeau de fer en sa teste, et ot dessus ung chappeau d'or et de pierrerie moult riche, lequel fut le premier tué'[201]. When his side was to blame, Herald Berry was all the more acid. Thus he explained how, in 1415, the French had won a victory over the English at Valmont, but had thereafter spoilt much of it: as the French were chasing them, the English 'attendirent en ordonnance et les François les assaillirent follement'; as a result, 200 Frenchmen were killed 'par leur oultraige'[202]. He also was infuriated by occurrences of indiscipline in the French army, for he recognized lack of discipline as one of the main sources of defeats. He recalled how, at Verneuil, the Lombard cavalry, which had been entrusted with an attack from the rear, had soon left the battlefield so as to chase the English pages, and ended his account of the battle with the caustic remark: 'tost après la desconfiture retournerent les Lombars dedans le champ, cuidans que les François eussent gangnee la bataille, et trouverent les François mors et tous nus'[203]. He also recounted how Le Mans had been taken by the English because the French 'n'avoient faite aucune fortifficacion entre la ville et le chastel et aussi [...] ne faisoient point de guet'; as the English entered the town, they

[201] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[202] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

found 'les François couchez en leurs litz ou ilz dormoyent *comme pourceaulx*'[204].

Thus, in many ways, the French chivalrous chroniclers' discourse on warfare was usually much more pragmatic than that of the Burgundians. The reason for this difference is not difficult to imagine: the many bitter defeats inflicted by the English on the French, and the slowness of the re-establishment of France, which only took place after a long process of trial and error in the military domain, had provided French chroniclers with food for thought. Leaving aside the issue of the change of alliance of Burgundy, it is quite clear that the French army had eventually managed to overcome its weaknesses and its complex vis à vis the redoubtable and remarkably efficient English army, and was, by the end of the Hundred Years War, one of the most formidable military forces in Europe. By contrast, the Burgundian chivalrous chroniclers, whose state had not been through France's painful and laborious experience, still appeared, at the same period, rather immature.

• Conclusion

I hope I have shown the main characteristics of the different genres which, in Burgundy and France, throughout the first half of the 15th century, until the 1460s, described the 'war of the knights', and specifically the resumption and the end of the disturbingly long conflict now known as the Hundred Years War. It may seem that I have generalised the features of the different genres, in order to conveniently place all these different authors into three categories. Still, the existence, in France, at the time, of two different schools of historiography, and the development, in Burgundy, of a genre of chronicle and of a discourse on warfare which particularly fitted Philip the Good's interests, is manifest. By the 1450s, the best chivalrous chronicles of Burgundy had acquired a literary gloss, a kind of Proustian *lustre*[205], which pervades

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[203] *Ibid.*, p. 119.
[204] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
[205] Cf. G. GENETTE, 'L'or tombe sous le fer', in *Figures I*, Paris, Seuil, 1966, p. 29-38: reflecting on a sonnet by Ronsard, and referring to one of Marcel Proust's letters to the Comtesse de Noailles,

the whole of their works. Admittedly Proust was referring to the masters of literature, and only Chastelain's work, out of all the others, could perhaps be regarded as a masterpiece. Still, the language - particularly ornate in Chastelain's *Chronique* - and the ideology of the best exponents of Burgundian chivalrous historiography give their work a sort of homogenizing gloss, due to the light shed by the ideals of chivalry. And in a sense, the narratives of the battle of Agincourt that we find in the works of Monstrelet, Saint-Rémy and Wavrin could be considered as small masterpieces, suffused as they are with the emotion that the authors felt when recalling the tragic death of the flower of French chivalry, and the failure of many chivalrous ideals.

Of course, the chronicles of Monstrelet, Saint-Rémy, Wavrin and Chastelain do present some idiosyncratic features. Wavrin, for example, could be very pragmatic when describing military actions: we saw how he recognised that the 'faits d'armes' were not very useful strategically; we shall also see that his narrative of a crusade could be at the same time, but in turns, epic and yet strikingly realistic, a proof that while Wavrin considered the crusade, the chivalrous activity *par excellence*, as a special event, he was aware of the fact that crusading no longer was what it used to be (if it ever was). The case of Chastelain is also particularly interesting, for one can feel, as one advances in the reading of his chronicle, an increasing maturity. With the end of the Hundred Years War, the Duchy of Burgundy will enter a long period of peace; thus Chastelain will be less concerned with the writing of martial actions, and more with politics. With the advent of Louis XI and Charles the Bold, Chastelain's tone becomes very disenchanted. When Molinet took over from Chastelain, following the older author's death, his tone was very reminiscent of that of the first chapters of Chastelain's chronicle, as he praised to the skies the martial deeds of Charles the Bold. Soon however his excitement is replaced by anxiety and disenchantment, until the settlement of the Burgundian crisis.

The present chapter should not lead the reader into thinking that all

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Genette has explained: 'C'est sans doute à de tels effets que pensait Marcel Proust lorsqu'il écrivait que la "beauté absolue" de certaines œuvres leur vient d' "une espèce de fondu, d'unité transparente, où toutes les choses, perdant leur aspect premier de choses, sont venues se ranger les unes à côté des autres dans une espèce d'ordre, pénétrées de la même lumière, vues les unes dans les autres, sans un seul mot qui soit resté en dehors, qui soit resté réfractaire à cette assimilatilon"'(p. 30). On the Proustian lustre see also, in the same work, 'Proust palimpseste', p. 39-67 (p. 43-44).

Burgundian historiography was purely 'chivalrous'. The 'clerical' tradition did exist: the long and fascinating chronicle of Adrien de But, which has, unhappily, never been translated, is the perfect example of a Burgundian clerical chronicle[206]. However, it seems that clerical chronicles in Burgundy were overshadowed by the genre Philip the Good appreciated most. Still, some Burgundian chronicles were somewhere in between the clerical chronicle – even though their authors were not clerics – and the chivalrous chronicle: the author known as Pierre de Fenin, for instance, is most of the times as chivalrous in his ideology as Monstrelet, whose narration he obviously used, but he more often than Monstrelet deplored the damages committed by knights in Picardy, his country[207]. Similarly, Jacques Du Clercq's chronicle is in form very similar to the chivalrous chronicles, and often presents signs of a chivalrous ideology, but Du Clercq was also prone to denounce the exactions committed by knights as well as their pride; he did not shrink from holding them up to ridicule. His chronicle often seems typical of a bourgeois mentality.

What is specially interesting in the case of France is that while at the beginning of the 15th century the clerical chronicle, a well-established genre, could claim to have a semi-official character, thanks to its representative Michel Pintoin, by 1437, with the appointment of Jean Chartier as Charles VII's official historiographer, the chivalrous chronicle had replaced the clerical one as the type of historiography officially supported by the Kings of France. For Jean Chartier, despite being, like Pintoin, a monk of Saint-Denis, wrote in a clearly different mode: Chartier's chronicle belongs to a French genre of chivalrous historiography which, albeit that it was still tentative at the time, already had many distinctive features. Despite the fact that the reign of Louis XI inspired some of the best history writers of the century, such as Thomas Basin and, of course, Philippe de Commynes, it seems that Louis XI was not really interested in promoting official historiography. Guillaume Danicot may be regarded as the official historian of Louis XI, but he did not receive any

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[206] Cf. ADRIEN DE BUT, *Chronique,* in *Chroniques relatives à l'histoire de la Belgique sous la domination des ducs de Bourgogne*, ed. J. M. B. C. KERVYN DE LETTENHOVE, 3 vol., Brussels, Hayez for the Académie Royale de Belgique, 1870-1876, I, 211-717.

[207] PIERRE DE FENIN, *Mémoires (1407-1427)*, ed. É. DUPONT for the SHF, Paris, Renouard, 1837. According to Émilie Dupont, Pierre de Fenin was a different person from Charles VI's *écuyer et pannetier.*

wages, and neither did he hold an office[208]. The reign of Charles VIII and especially that of Louis XII, however, would see the re-establishment and development of the chivalrous chronicle as the kind of historiography most favoured by the King; the major properties of the French chivalrous chronicle at the dawn of the 16th century will be studied in detail in my fifth and seventh chapters.

By 1437, the clerical chronicle was outmoded as the Kings of France's official kind of historiography. However, it certainly did not disappear, even though the radical type of diary written by the Bourgeois de Paris would not have any progeny. The clerical chronicle continued to be written by various authors, but in developed forms. Thomas Basin seems to be the most gifted heir of writers such as Cochon or Pintoin. In many ways his chronicle is typically clerical. Basin often refers to the Bible, in particular the Old Testament, in his discourses. He also, on many occasions, spoke in favour of the peasant class, stressing for example their unhappy attempts to organise themselves into self-defence groups, or even armies, in order to resist the attacks of pillagers, or when they rebelled against the English, in 1436[209]. Basin also demystified the Hundred Years War: some of his most famous pages are those which describe, in moving and strikingly realistic terms, the desolate state of Normandy during the darkest years of the conflict[210]. Finally, some of his comments have quite a subversive character: already in his *Histoire de Charles VII* he had written against the creation of a standing army, denouncing the change as one step towards the establishment of a tyrannical regime. And as is well known, the primary aim of his *Histoire de Louis XI*, written in exile, was to demolish the figure of Louis XI. Basin, however, wrote a new type of clerical chronicle: Marc Spencer has shown in his book on Basin[211] how strongly influenced the chronicler's histories were by Italian humanist historiography, in particular the works of Leonardo Bruni, compared to contemporary French chronicles. This is evident, not only in his choice of references – many are taken from classical history or Roman authors such as Cicero – but also in the structure and ambition of his works. The clerical chronicle was no longer the type of historiography most favoured by the King, but it had not

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[208] Cf. GUENÉE, p. 344.
[209] THOMAS BASIN, *Histoire de Charles VII*, I, 192-209.
[210] *Ibid.*, I, 84-89.
[211] See my Introduction, note 12.

disappeared, and was constantly evolving. Even at the very end of the 15th century, the spirit of the clerical chronicle was still alive in the chronicle of the Breton historiographer Alain Bouchart, who wrote for Anne de Bretagne, or the work of Robert Gaguin, the first true humanist historiographer of France. This will be developed briefly in the overall conclusion of this work. For the moment, I intend to turn to a brief and exceptional event of French late medieval history, of which the narratives are very revealing of the evolution, in ideological terms, of the French historiographical discourse on warfare: this event is the episode of Joan of Arc, which took place between 1429 and 1431.

Chapter 2: 'La matière de la Pucelle est si haulte et si merveilleuse que c'est chose bien à noter et digne d'entrer en tous livres-registres, pour mémoire perpétuelle, à la gloire de Dieu et honneur du royaume'. The evolution of the discourse on Joan of Arc in French historiography

Comment voy je ses Anglois esbays!
Resjoys toy, franc royaume de France.
On apparçoit que de Dieu sont hays,
Puis qu'ilz n'ont plus couraige ne puissance.
Bien pensoient, par leur oultrecuidance,
Toy surmonter et tenir en servaige,
Et ont tenu a tort ton heritaige.
Mais a present Dieu pour toy se combat
Et se montre du tout de ta partie...

Charles d'Orléans, *Ballade* [1]

• Introduction

Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orléans, crossed the political, military and social scene of her time like a meteor, causing intense feelings and reactions. Countless historians, from 1429 to the present day, have recounted her short and extraordinary story: Joan's assertions that God had sent her to help Charles VII recover his realm, the victories won in 1429 at Orléans, Jargeau, Meung, Beaugency and Patay, when a few months before the French were losing hope, Charles VII's journey to Reims and his coronation on 17 July 1429, the failed attack on Paris, Joan's capture in Compiègne on 23 May 1430, her trial, and her death in Rouen on 30 May 1431. Joan's successes and her failures are well documented, but because the facts are so

[1] CHARLES D'ORLÉANS, *Poésies*, ed. P. CHAMPION, 2 vol., Paris, Honoré Champion, 1923-1924, I, 157, v. 1-9. In this piece, Charles d'Orléans is not referring to Joan of Arc, but to the recovery of Normandie and Guyenne. Still, this *Ballade* expresses many ideas which will be studied in this

extraordinary, and because of the elusive nature of Joan herself, all modern historians, from the cynical Henri Guillemin to the enthusiastic Régine Pernoud, look upon Joan's story differently[2].

For those interested in Joan the individual, the trials of condemnation and rehabilitation's minutes make for fascinating reading[3]. Although Henri Guillemin deems the witnesses' testimonies biased, the minutes still contain crucial information about Joan's youth and adventures which will not be found anywhere else. The other source of information we have is the testimony of numerous chroniclers. Their comments are also of great interest to the historian; in particular, they reveal how public opinion was clearly divided according to political allegiances: while the King of France's supporters accepted Joan's claims more or less wholeheartedly, Burgundians were usually very hostile to the Maid. Until the Arras treaty in 1435, the Duchy of Burgundy was allied to England, thus most of the people who supported the Burgundian regime considered Joan as a foe, even after 1435 - had she not fought against the Burgundians, at Lagny and Compiègne? For Burgundian writers, stating or suggesting that Joan had been sent by God to help Charles VII with his war would have meant criticizing the policy of Philip the Good, who had been England's ally for more than a decade. And since it was the Burgundians who had captured Joan at Compiègne, arguing that Joan was on a divine mission would have been suggesting that Philip the Good and Jean de Luxembourg had committed a great sin by selling the Maid to the English.

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chapter, such as the joy and relief occasioned by the re-establishment of France and the conviction that France was now in favour with God.

[2] Joan of Arc has obviously been the subject of many biographies. Among many other interesting works, see H. GUILLEMIN, *The True History of Joan 'of Arc'*, transl. W. OXFERRY, London, Allen & Unwin, 1972 (first published as *Jeanne dite 'Jeanne d'Arc'* in 1970); R. PERNOUD, *Jeanne d'Arc*, Paris, Seuil, 1959; *Jeanne d'Arc, par elle-même et ses témoins*, Paris, Seuil, 1962; W. S. SCOTT, *Jeanne d'Arc: Her Life, Her Death, and the Myth*, London, Harrap, 1974.

[3] Cf. *Procès de condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*, ed. P. TISSET for the SHF, 3 vol., Paris, Klincksieck, 1960-1971; *Procès en nullité de la condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*, ed. P. DUPARC for the SHF, 5 vol., Paris, Klincksieck, 1977-1989; see also the *Procès de condamnation et de réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc dite la Pucelle*, ed. J. QUICHERAT for the SHF, 5 vol., Paris, Renouard, 1841-1849. Jules Quicherat, a pioneer in the study of Joan, incorporated in his fourth and fifth tomes the testimonies and opinions of a great number of chroniclers and poets.

The opinions of French and Burgundian chroniclers on Joan of Arc have been studied by many scholars, from Jules Quicherat and Charles Lightbody[4] to Philippe Contamine[5]. Lightbody and Contamine have preferred to focus on the nature of the comments of chroniclers themselves rather than on the persona of the Maid, for the comments of 15th century chroniclers on Joan tell us a lot about late medieval attitudes towards warfare, politics, or specific social issues. In a recent article, Philippe Contamine offered an exhaustive review of the judgement of French, Burgundian and English chroniclers on Joan throughout the 15th century[6]. He put forward many interesting ideas about specific authors, showed how the debate about Joan of Arc had developed in the three states, and demonstrated that the Rehabilitation Trial (1456) had been a crucial event in the evolution of the discourse on Joan in French historiography. However, Contamine was mainly interested in the survival of Joan's memory in 15th century historiography, and thus did not fully develop all his conclusions, for example on the tenor of the comments about Joan, in France, towards the end of the 15th century. Besides, the sheer quantity of material considered by Contamine demanded that he should overlook some of the peculiarities of many accounts, such as those of Perceval de Cagny or Martial d'Auvergne.

In this chapter, I have chosen to focus primarily on the evolution of the discourse on Joan in French historiography, throughout the 15th century. The comments of Burgundian chroniclers are of course interesting, and offer a thought-provoking variety of refutations of Joan's assertions that God had sent her to help the King of France[7]. However, Burgundian opinions on Joan did not evolve, while French accounts offer an interesting pattern of development, which is very revealing of some of the tendencies of the evolution of the chroniclers' discourse on the French monarchy, the Kings of France's war, and God. The aim of this chapter is to study the process through which these three elements became intimately linked, at the dawn of the Renaissance, in order to produce a propagandist writing of history. But before we can tackle the issue of Joan of Arc, it is necessary to examine, in a more general

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[4] Cf. C. W. LIGHTBODY, *The Judgements of Joan: Joan of Arc: a study in cultural history,* London, Allen and Unwin, 1961.

[5] Philippe Contamine has recently devoted many articles to Joan of Arc in his work *De Jeanne d'Arc aux guerres d'Italie.*

[6] Cf. CONTAMINE, 'Naissance d'une historiographie'.

[7] For an excellent survey of the Burgundian opinions on the Maid see LIGHTBODY, p. 58-83.

context, the attitude of her contemporaries with regard to the problem of God's possible involvement in a secular war; this will inevitably lead us to consider a very important concept in medieval thought on warfare: the just war.

1. God and secular warfare: medieval attitudes of mind

The medieval mind was naturally inclined to explain every aspect of the world that surrounded it by having recourse to God's will. And warfare was something that recurrently affected men during the Middle Ages: either as participants or as victims, all would, at least once during their lifetimes, find themselves involved in it. Thus it seems natural that medieval men should have involved God in their speculations about war. Because wars happened so often, and because their outbreak seemed unavoidable, they were seen as being part of God's plan. In an *Epistle to the Romans,* Saint Paul had written, referring to the secular prince: 'he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil' (13. 4). According to Honoré Bonet, author of the standard treatise about warfare, written in the reign of Charles V, which was widely read at the close of the Middle Ages, war was certainly not condemned by divine law: 'bataille n'est une male chose ainçois est bonne et vertueuse, car bataille ne regarde autre chose selon sa droite nature que retourner tort à droit et faire retourner dissenssion a paix selon le contenu de l'Escripture'[8]. From Augustine and Aquinas to Bonet, theologians and lawyers had tried to define the concept of the just war, the kind of war Christians were allowed to wage. According to Thomas Aquinas, three conditions were required for a war to be just. Firstly, it had to be waged by a prince, since they alone bore the responsibility for the state's welfare. Secondly, the cause had to be just, that is to say the people against whom war was declared had to be guilty of some injustice. Defending the faith, the native land or fellow Christians was also considered as a just cause. Finally, the belligerent's intention had to be right. He would wage war 'neither from aggrandisement nor cruelty, but with the object of securing peace, of repressing

the evil and supporting the good'[9]. One should note that Aquinas included defending the fatherland amongst his examples of just causes. The patriotic argument was particularly developed during the 15th century by Charles VII's propagandist writers, such as Jean de Montreuil or Jean Juvénal des Ursins[10]. From the 14th century onwards, theologians also began to turn their attention towards a problem which they now considered as crucial: the need for *jus in bellum.* A war could not be just if conducted in a wicked way[11]. Thus, immediately after having stated that war was not evil by nature, Honoré Bonet, who was painfully aware of all the exactions committed by knights and soldiers during the Hundred Years War, added: 'Et se en bataille se font plusieurs maulx, ce n'est mie selon la nature de la bataille, mais est faulx usaige. Si comme de ung homme d'armes qui prent une femme et lui fait honte et vergongne ou fait bouter le feu en l'eglise'.

Since war was not intrinsically wicked – as Bonet reminded his readers, God had himself waged war, in his realm, against the evil angels[12] - and since just wars were considered to be profitable for humankind, should one conclude that God would systematically help the righteous in war? No, answered Bonet. Indeed, often the good had been defeated in battle. He tells us that the Church was against going to war in order to prove one's right, because this meant dictating to God what He should do. And what would be the purpose of Judgement Day, if all ills were to be punished in this world[13]?

And yet, a large proportion of medieval society still tended to consider war as an ordeal, the judgement of God. Honoré Bonet was aware of this as he wrote that, despite the opinion of the Church, it was a well-established practice amongst rulers to go to battle in order to prove their right. But Bonet also wrote, referring to the story of David and Goliath: 'Dieu qui est verité et qui surmonte tout pouvoir et toute

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[8] HONORÉ BONET, p. 83.
[9] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 35: *Consequences of Charity*, ed. and transl. T. R. HEATH, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1972, p. 81-93 (2a2ae, 40: 'De bello'). Quotation p. 83.
[10] Cf. P. CONTAMINE, 'La théologie de la guerre à la fin du Moyen Age: la guerre de Cent Ans fut-elle une guerre juste?', in *De Jeanne d'Arc...*, p. 39-51 (on the patriotic or nationalistic argument see p. 46).
[11] On this issue see CONTAMINE, 'L'idée de guerre...', p. 83 ff.
[12] HONORÉ BONET, p. 5.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 70-71.

puissance mieulx donnera la victoire à celui qui est bien son amy combien qu'il soit moult foible de corps qu'il ne fera à celui qui est bien fort de corps sans avoir l'amour de lui', and declared: 'nostre seigneur Dieu mesme est sire et gouverneur des batailles'[14]. As one can see, it was hardly possible for medieval men to dissociate God from victory or defeat, since after all, nothing in this world could occur without God's consent. The losing side would often explain a defeat with the argument that God had allowed the enemy to triumph in order to punish the vanquished for their pride and sins. This argument is found over and over again in French chronicles or poems dealing with the catastrophe of Agincourt[15].

The winning side would rarely disagree. In his chronicle, Enguerran de Monstrelet pictured Henry V modestly – but not tactfully - explaining to Herald Montjoye: 'Nous n'avons point faict ceste occision, ains a esté Dieu tout puissant, comme nous créons, par les péchez des François' (III, 110-111). As one can see, in the medieval mind, God and the outcomes of warfare were always intimately linked. The English, who had obtained so many spectacular victories against the French since the outset of the conflict, had not failed to claim, as part as their propagandist discourse, that their great victories clearly showed that God was supporting the Kings of England. In 1439, during negotiations between the two sides, Archbishop John Kemp of York declared that the most flagrant proof that the English had rights over France was the many victories God's divine justice had granted them. At the same time, contemporaries could also argue that victories and defeats resulted from the whimsical tricks of fortune, rather than from a divine verdict. Thus Archbishop Regnault of Chartres answered John Kemp, during the same negotiations: 'si lesdictes batailles eussent esté declarratoires par justice divine de leur droit, la chose feust pieça finie et n'eust pas si longuement duré'[16]. Medieval theories about God favouring one party or another in secular wars were thus rather supple. This explains why, when confronted with a country girl, Joan, who claimed that she would make God's will obvious – when usually God remained silent about His plans or about whom He favoured – and who did achieve, at first, some amazing successes, 15th century chroniclers reacted differently.

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 71-72, 76, 84.
[15] We saw in the preceding chapter, p. 67, the monk of Saint-Denis' opinion.

Most Burgundian chroniclers rejected Joan's claims. Enguerran de Monstrelet was perhaps the least hostile towards the Maid: his refutation of Joan's assertions was based on prudence and reason rather than inspired by hatred or scorn. According to Monstrelet, Charles VII and his council were fully justified in receiving Joan, at first, with much suspicion, considering her as

> une folle, desvoiée de sa santé. Car, à si grand princes, et aultres nobles hommes, telles [...] parolles sont moult doubtables et périlleuses à croire, tant pour l'yre Nostre Seigneur principalement, comme pour le blasphème qu'on en pourroit avoir des parlers du monde (IV, 315).

Even in an age when everybody believed in God, those who exercised power were used to relying on their wit and fortune rather than miracles. With these comments, Monstrelet also propounded that assertions such as Joan's were theologically very controversial, and even dangerous, for they could well provoke the wrath of God. Finally, Monstrelet warned his readers against the debate which could be generated amongst the public by such explosive theories: when the common people are left free to speculate about articles of faith, heresy often raises its ugly head. As for Joan's miracles, Monstrelet tried to invalidate them by finding natural explanations for them, explaining, for instance, how public opinion had attributed the great victories at Orléans exclusively to Joan's presence, neglecting the fact that most of the King's best captains had taken part in the fights (IV, 322)[17].

Jean de Wavrin had a provocative theory about Joan. He recounted how Robert de Baudricourt, captain of Vaucouleurs, had sent Joan, along with an escort, to the King of France, and explained:

> messire Robert [...] l'introduisit, et aprinst de ce qu'elle devoit dire et faire, et de la manière qu'elle avoit à tenir, soy disant pucelle inspirée de la providence divine, et qu'elle estoit transmise devers ledit roy Charles pour le restituer et remettre en la possession de tout son royaulme (III, 262-263).

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[16] Both examples are taken from CONTAMINE, 'L'idée de guerre...', p. 73.
[17] For a complete analysis of Monstrelet's views on Joan see LIGHTBODY, p. 61-70.

In his opinion, Joan was simply an actor playing a role, a creation of Baudricourt sent by him to Charles VII in order to raise the morale of the French and frighten the English. If Joan was a puppet, she certainly was not Baudricourt's puppet. Baudricourt was just a modest captain, and he had rebuked Joan many times before choosing to give her a chance[18]. But Wavrin's theory deserves our attention because it presents Joan as a political instrument. According to Wavrin, somebody - he chose Baudricourt, perhaps because he was reluctant to attribute such a great sin to the King of France - must have been cynical enough to involve God in this conflict through a masquerade in order to change the course of the war, by manipulating the masses. Wavrin was well aware of the use that could be made of God, in politics and in warfare alike.

Georges Chastelain did admire the courage exhibited by Joan at Compiègne during the sally where she was captured (II, 48-49), but considered her as a 'blasphémeresse en Dieu et superstitieuse devineresse' (II, 204), as she had made prophecies which were not always realized. Moreover, he could not accept that a woman should fancy herself a warrior: Chastelain stressed that it was an archer, 'radde homme et bien aigre, ayant en grand despit que une femme [...] seroit rebouteresse de tant de vaillans hommes' (II, 49), who, like a champion of manhood, had grabbed the Maid's coat and hurled her off her horse before capturing her. The rules of nature, once temporarily disturbed, had forced themselves upon Joan as violently as the ground upon which she had fallen.

These are only a few of the refutations of Joan's assertions put forward by Burgundian chroniclers. By contrast, French chroniclers provided us with a host of justifications of the Maid's claims, which, as the century advanced, slowly took the shape of a consistent discourse.

2. The testimony of Joan's French contemporaries

The testimony of the men who had experienced, in Joan's own words, 'la pitié qui estoit au royaume de France'[19], appears very heterogeneous in character, though most of them looked favourably on her.

2. 1. Supporters from various backgrounds

The Maid's extraordinary story had provoked a debate which had stirred the entire nation. Joan rekindled the people's interest in the war, and in the Dauphin's cause. Her assertion that God was supporting the Dauphin, her deeds, her sentence and death gave rise to a controversy, which gripped the whole of the civilian class, men and women alike. She won supporters from all classes of medieval society, and this is well reflected in the chronicles of the period. The Bourgeois de Paris hated Joan, because she was supporting the Armagnac party, but he offered the best evidence that her deeds and sentence had sent a shock wave throughout the Kingdom. After relating her death, he commented:

> Assez avoit là et ailleurs qui disoient qu'elle estoit martire et pour son droit signeur, autres disoient que non et que mal avoit fait qui l'avoit tant gardée. Ainsi disoit le peuple, mais quelle mauvestie ou bonté qu'elle eust faicte, elle fut arse celui jour[20].

Amongst the non-official chroniclers who supported Joan, two writers were particularly enthralled by her deeds: Pierre Cochon, the Norman priest, and Perceval de Cagny, who was master of horse to the Duke of Alençon. We saw in the first chapter how Cochon passionately related the deeds performed by the Dauphinists, headed by Joan, against the old enemies of the Kingdom. Cochon supported Joan because she was effective (at least at the beginning) against the English, and her custom of giving ultimatums, as well as her tactics which privileged assaults over long sieges, particularly pleased him, because they livened up the knights' usual way of waging war. We saw how the knights were often accused, in the literature produced during the Hundred Years War that reflected the common people's interests, of making wars last in order to enrich themselves. Cochon must have seen

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[18] LIGHTBODY, p. 73.
[19] *Procès...*, ed. TISSET, I, 163.
[20] *Journal...*, ed. TUETEY, p. 270.

Joan's methods as a breath of fresh air in the practice of the war of the knights: as long as these methods were successful, they made the war visibly progress, when it usually looked like a stalemate. Moreover, Pierre Cochon particularly appreciated the fact that Joan, who was herself a country girl, and, as such, a symbol of the people's readiness to help the King in his war, had encouraged the *communes* of the towns and villages near Orléans to take part in the realm's liberation. He wrote very enthusiastically about the fact that they could, alongside the knights, contribute towards the expulsion of the English from France:

> Et avoit avec elle grant quantité de gens de pais à pié, lesquielx faisoient très bien leur devoir, et avoient fait ès batailles contre les Anglois. Car les Anglois les avoient menachiés d'ardoier: par quoy ilz estoient plus indignez contre eulx[21].

Knights usually despised the communes, yet with this comment Cochon pointed out that they could fight, and were willing to participate in the realm's defence.

Cochon's comments on Joan reflect the opinion that the common people who supported Joan were likely to hold. By contrast, Perceval de Cagny discloses the views of one of the most powerful princes of royal blood: the Duke of Alençon. Alençon was one of Joan's closest noble companions, thus it should not come as a surprise if de Cagny appears as an enthusiastic adherent of the Maid. In his opinion, Joan was indisputably God's envoy. Thanks to her, the French had liberated seven cities in less than four months and won the battle of Patay, Charles VII had been crowned, and, throughout the coronation campaign, 'touz chevaliers et escuiers et autres gens de guerre' had been happy to serve the King, 'combien qu'ilz furent petitement souldoyez'. All these achievements were, in his eyes, sufficient proofs of the divine nature of her mission[22]. De Cagny was careful to emphasize that Alençon was the Maid's closest friend, as he pointed out: 'elle amoit [Alençon] très fort: et faisoit pour lui ce que elle n'eust fait pour nul autre'[23]. Thus Alençon appeared very privileged, having won, more than anybody else, the Maid's affection.

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[21] PIERRE COCHON, p. 301.
[22] PERCEVAL DE CAGNY, p. 172.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

The most interesting aspect of de Cagny's account, however, is that the story of Joan granted him the opportunity to criticize the policy of the King and of his council. In his opinion, Joan could very well have accomplished all that she undertook. If she failed before Paris and La Charité, it was because the King and his counsellors did not really want to fight against the English. De Cagny explains that, after his coronation, Charles had slipped into a kind of lethargy: he seemed to be content with what he had regained, uninterested in furthering the reconquest. The chronicler shows how reluctant Charles was to attack Paris, and relates that, the day after the assault, the King ordered Joan and Alençon - who were already preparing for another attack - to return to Saint-Denis, even though the whole army trusted Joan to take Paris. Charles eventually left Saint-Denis, and de Cagny concludes in a very critical manner: 'Et ainssi fut le vouloir de la Pucelle et l'armée du roy rompue'[24].

De Cagny is the only French chronicler of his time to reveal clearly that Joan had grown to be an embarrassment for Charles. Although he was careful to add: 'sembloit que il [the King] fust conseillé au contraire du voulloir de la Pucelle, du duc d'Alençon et de ceulx de leur compaignie'[25], it is worth noting that de Cagny criticized the King's policy in a rather explicit manner. His comments reflect the opinion of the war party, a lobby which was opposed to any negotiation with England or Burgundy, and promoted the exclusive use of force for the recovery of the Kingdom[26]. Alençon, who wanted to regain his territories in Normandy as quickly as possible, was one of the spearheads of this war party, and his aims were in harmony with Joan's expeditious methods. De Cagny made this clear as he stated that, following the failure of Paris, the King's counsellors, Regnault de Chartres, Gaucourt and La Trémoille 'ne vouldrent oncques consentir, ne faire, ne souffrir que la Pucelle et le duc d'Alençon fussent ensemble, ne depuis ne la poeult recouvrer'. While the Maid and Alençon only wanted to fight the English, the King and his council were inexplicably trying 'de trouver appointement avecques le roy d'Engleterre et le duc de Bourgoigne', and de Cagny added very sarcastically: 'Pour demourer en paix, le roy monstra bien que il en avoit tres grant vouloir et ayma mieulx à donner ses heritaiges de la couronne et de ses meubles tres largement que soy armer et soustenir

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 164-170.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

le fais de la guerre'[27]. He also accused the King and his council of having neglected to help the Maid after September 1429: because they had sent her neither money nor supplies, she was forced to raise her siege of La Charité. In his opinion, the King was flagrantly ungrateful to God and the Maid, 'par laquelle le roy avoit receu et eu de tres grans honneurs et biens dessus desclairés'[28], as he was searching for a peaceful settlement of the conflict, instead of proceeding with his war, as God wanted. Modern historians have shown that Charles was aiming to consolidate his power in the territories he had recovered, and above all to win the Duke of Burgundy's support. In the long run, this policy proved to be the best choice, but according to de Cagny, Charles was simply and inexplicably neglecting the encouragement expressed by God Himself. De Cagny was, in any case, strongly opposed to any reconciliation with Philip the Good, who had 'confisqué et forfait tout ce qu'il tenoit de la couronne'. His comments about the Treaty of Arras reveal all his hostility, as he states that making peace with Philip was kind enough, but that Charles VII should not have agreed to give money to Philip so that churches might be built in John the Fearless' memory: this had brought dishonour upon the French. He probably hoped that Alençon would replace Philip as the greatest prince of royal blood. Indeed, as he related Charles VII's coronation, he pointed out with evident satisfaction that Alençon had knighted the King that day, adding: 'et le servit de per de France ou lieu du duc de Bourgoigne'[29].

2. 2. The cautious stand of many captains

From the beginning, many chroniclers revealed that Joan had not been unreservedly welcomed by those in charge of the King's war, Charles' captains. Jean Chartier, for example, explained that 'quelque conclusion qu'ilz [the captains] prinssent, [...] elle concluoit aucune autre chose ou contraire et contre l'oppinion de tous les cappitaines, chiefs de guerre et autres qui là estoient'[30]. No wonder that many of the army's captains regarded her with much suspicion. As experienced warriors,

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[26] Cf. LIGHTBODY, p. 43.
[27] PERCEVAL DE CAGNY, p. 171, 206.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 172, 205.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 208-209, 159.
[30] JEAN CHARTIER, I, 75.

they were naturally distrustful of this young girl who intended to take a large part in the decision-making process. Besides, the bitter defeats of the first decades of the century had taught French soldiers to consider the waging of warfare as a serious business, and to be suspicious of frills. Guillaume Gruel, the biographer of Arthur de Richemont, seems to reflect best some of these captains' attitude. According to him, shortly before the battle of Patay, Joan ordered La Hire and other captains of the King's host to fight Richemont's company, in accordance with the King's wish, as the constable was approaching to offer the French his help. The captains allegedly replied 'qu'il y en avoit en la compagnie qui plustost seroient à luy que à elle, et qu'ilz ameroient mieulx lui et sa compagnie que toutes les pucelles du Royaume de France'. By emphasizing the loyalty of the captains towards their comrades and the bonds that united them, Gruel seems to suggest that the Maid was out of her place in such a manly environment as the French army. As he relates Richemont's encounter with Joan, Gruel shows that the constable of France avoided declaring himself about Joan; Richemont apparently told Joan: 'je ne scey si vous estes de par Dieu ou non; si vous estes de par Dieu, je ne vous crains rien, car Dieu sceit mon bon vouloir; si vous estes de par le deable, je vous crains encore moins'[31]. Richemont was content with having his conscience at peace, by acting according to what he thought was just; the rest did not really concern him.

Gilles Le Bouvier, also known as Herald Berry, was not a captain, but he certainly took great interest in military matters. It seems that he did not reject Joan's assertions, for as he narrated the story of the herald sent by her to the English at Orléans, he wrote:

> Ilz prindrent le herault et jugierent qu'il seroit ars [...] ; et toutesfois avant qu'ilz eussent le conseil ou oppinion de ceulx de la ville de Paris pour l'ardoir ilz furent levez, mors et desconfiz ; et partirent si hastivement qu'ilz laisserent en leurs logeis ledit herault bien enferré et s'en fouirent[32].

Herald Berry's style is rarely subjective, yet clearly what he means is that the English should not have taken Joan's threats so lightly, and that a message from God, such as

[31] GUILLAUME GRUEL, p. 71.

the one brought by the herald, should not be rejected without due consideration. Still, Le Bouvier was disappointed by Joan's failures before Paris and La Charité, and used harsh words to refer to the latter, calling it a 'défaite honteuse'[33]. On the whole, he is rather cold towards Joan, and it is worth noting that he does not even mention her death, or her trial. Perhaps he felt embarrassed about stating an opinion on Joan, who suffered a number of failures after the coronation campaign; perhaps he simply did not care about her fate.

2. 3. The accounts of Charles VII's historiographers

Jean Chartier and Robert Blondel, the author of *De reductione Normanniae*, a work completed in 1455, which related Charles VII's glorious reconquest of Normandy, left interesting accounts of Joan's career, which are very favourable to the Maid. Since both authors wrote their works before the Rehabilitation Trial (1456), their accounts are the earliest official versions of Joan's history to be found in French historiography. However, the fact that they chose to extol the Maid does not necessarily mean that the King had given them guidelines to follow in that respect; they might well have been inclined to do so. Still, the versions that they offer already contain many elements of the later discourse on Joan of Arc.

Robert Blondel was extremely enthusiastic about Joan's deeds, and praised them with all his Latin rhetoric. In his opinion, Joan had undoubtedly been sent by God: he refers to her as 'haec Puella sancto spiritu monita ac divino fervore accensa' and explains that it was God, not men, who had instructed her about military matters. The English had infuriated God by their conduct, and He had decided to expel them from the Kingdom. Blondel expressed this idea with particular vehemence, explaining how the English, 'gens rapax, gens sacrilega', had desecrated the rich chapel of Notre Dame de Cléry, and concluding, aiming at them: 'Exinde omnia infausta tibi sacrilegae procedunt'. God had turned his back on the English and was now standing by the French, who, through His support, would perform amazing deeds. Blondel presented the struggle for Orléans in a Manichean light, emphasizing

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[32] GILLES LE BOUVIER, p. 134.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

the formidable might of the English siege, and described the battle of Patay as a stupefying miracle, where the power of God had been manifest: as if stricken with paralysis, the otherwise strong and well-trained English soldiers had let themselves be butchered like pigs on the market; like peasants inexperienced in the waging of war, they had offered no resistance[34].

Blondel concluded his account with a reflection on Charles VII's coronation, marvelling at the fact that the King, once so dejected, had now recovered the glory inherent in his position, thanks to divine assistance: 'nunc providentia divina sacro diademate redimitus, verus et legitimus sceptri haeres, in regem sublimatur'. He did not, however, talk about the Maid any longer following the coronation.

The story of the Maid provided Robert Blondel with the opportunity for asserting the King's legitimacy; in 1429, God had clearly shown the justice of Charles' cause. In the course of his narrative of Joan's adventures, Jean Chartier stressed that Charles VII's war was obviously a just war, as he related that the French reconquered 'ce que injustement [les Anglais] avoient occupé sur le royaulme de France, de longtemps et sans raison'[35]. He ignored the Kings of England's claim that they had justly inherited the throne of France. Chartier saw no blasphemy in Joan's assertion that it was God's will that Charles VII should recover his Kingdom. He tells us that Joan's conduct was 'belle et honneste' – every week she would go to confession and receive Holy Communion[36] - a proof that she was not, as the English maintained, a heretic. Another, greater proof of the fact that she had indeed been sent by God was the deeds that she performed. One of her greatest actions was the remarkable fact that, thanks to her, after the great victories obtained on the Loire, hundreds of French knights had rallied to the King, attracted by what they had heard about Joan, 'laquelle tenoient plussieurs estre venue de par Dieu, car ses œuvres et gouvernement le démonstroient assez'[37]. They knew that Charles could hardly afford

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[34] 'Mirum! velut inepta membra et manus abscissas gererent, corpore robusti et bello exercitatissimi, invasi, minus reluctantes truncantur: ac alii huc illuc per sepes et dumos fusi, miseranda caede ut porci ad macellum expositi, non dico a militibus, verum a rusticis bello inexpertis, trucidantur'. For Robert Blondel's comments about Joan of Arc see *Procès...*, ed. QUICHERAT, IV, 347-349.
[35] JEAN CHARTIER, I, 83.
[36] *Ibid.*, I, 89, 122.
[37] *Ibid.*, I, 84.

to pay them, but the will to fight in a war sponsored by God Himself was stronger than the lure of money[38]. Finally, as his most persuasive argument, Chartier mentions some of Joan's extraordinary actions that were regarded by many as miracles: how she instantly recognized Charles at Chinon amongst his courtiers, though some were more richly dressed than him, or how she asked for a sword hidden in the church of Sainte-Catherine-de-Fierbois, whose existence nobody suspected[39]. By mentioning these supernatural events, Chartier almost presented Joan as a saint. He also was one of the first chroniclers to unequivocally present her as a martyr, stating that, after having captured her, the English, 'sans procès, maiz de leur voulenté indeue, la firent ardoir en icelle ville de Rouen publiquement, en luy imposant plusieurs maléfices'[40]. In his Latin chronicle, written before his *Chronique de Charles VII*, Chartier was much more explicit in this respect, as he compared Joan before her judges to Christ before Caiaphas, and stated that Jean de Luxembourg, like Judas, committed suicide after having sold Joan to the English[41].

Chartier tried to provide an explanation for Joan's change of fortune after the coronation campaign, and presented a very quaint theory. In his opinion, it was at Auxerre that Joan lost her powers, as she broke her sword - the sword that had been miraculously found in the church of Sainte-Catherine-de-Fierbois - over the back of a prostitute, while beating her with the flat of the weapon. He related how the King's blacksmiths could never mend it - a sign that the sword came from Heaven - and concluded: 'Et estoit chose notoire que, depuis que ladite espée fut rompue, ladite Jehanne ne prospéra en armes au prouffit du roy ne autrement, ainssi que par avant avoit fait'[42]. The modern reader is rather startled by this strange, superstitious explanation, which shows how remote from the modern understanding of warfare some medieval views still could be in the 15th century. God's action is here so intimately linked to the results of wars that any consideration about strategy or the balance of power becomes irrelevant. Instead, Chartier concentrates all the strength of the French into an object of divine origin: the sword of Joan, which acquires a

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[38] *Ibid.*, I, 80-81.
[39] *Ibid,* I, 67, 71.
[40] *Ibid.*, I, 122.
[41] Passage quoted and translated in CONTAMINE, 'Naissance d'une historiographie', p. 144-145.
[42] JEAN CHARTIER, I, 90, 122.

nature akin to that of the 'oriflamme', the red standard allegedly offered by God to the Kings of France.

The explanation offered by Chartier probably did not convince all supporters of Joan, for one of the first preoccupations of the next generation of chroniclers would be to provide some more satisfactory reasons for Joan's change of fortune, as well as her capture and death. These chroniclers also developed the themes handled by Chartier and Blondel: mainly, the saintliness of Joan, the divine origin of the help she offered to the King, and the glorification of the French monarchy through her story.

3. Joan in French chronicles, immediately following the Rehabilitation Trial

As time passed, Joan's memory seemed to recede in France. It looks as if Charles VII was not particularly eager to promote her remembrance - after all, he had done nothing to save her from her fate. But as the years elapsed, and as Charles was becoming more and more triumphant, regaining Normandy in 1449, the feelings of the King towards Joan changed. According to Henri Guillemin - but Guillemin's systematic cynicism challenges somewhat the reliability of his assertions - the idea of a Rehabilitation Trial originated solely in the brains of the royal circle; it was the King's *magistrats* allegedly, who 'dug up' Joan's mother, so as to make her request a revision of her daughter's trial, to clear the family's reputation. Contamine seems less inclined to believe that the Rehabilitation Trial, held in 1456, was only the result of cold calculation. In any case, the fact that a retrial was held shows that the rehabilitation of Joan's name did matter for Charles VII, if only because her sentence to death as a heretic stained the glory of the reconquest, and the prestige of the crown of France. The Rehabilitation Trial did not receive as much publicity as Joan's mother had requested, but it did cause a renewal of interest in Joan in the historiography of the period[43]. It is to the comments of three chroniclers, who wrote

[43] On the Rehabilitation Trial see GUILLEMIN, p. 172-194, and CONTAMINE, 'Naissance d'une historiographie', p. 139-140, 151-152.

their works shortly after the retrial, that I now wish to turn: the anonymous author of the *Chronique de la Pucelle*, Mathieu Thomassin, and Thomas Basin.

3. 1. Joan in the *Chronique de la Pucelle* and Thomassin's *Registre Delphinal*: achieving sanctity

The *Chronique de la Pucelle*, which incorporated much information from Joan's trial and retrial, is a curious work which seems to belong more to hagiography than historiography. In 1932, René Planchenault put forward the hypothesis, which has not been rejected, that the work was composed by Jean Juvénal des Ursins[44]. Thus it seems very likely that the *Chronique de la Pucelle* originated from the royal circle: the chronicle would be an official tribute to the memory of Joan, the retrial's follow-up work. At the same time, it is interesting to note that the work was never completed, and stops abruptly after the siege of Paris: a sign, perhaps, that the King's interest in Joan was rather inconstant.

The *Chronique de la Pucelle* shed a supernatural light on all the military events in which Joan had taken part, making Joan appear as a saint - without, however, explicitly referring to her as one - and depicting the war waged in 1429 in a way which clearly stressed that God had been overseeing every French deed. The novelty, by comparison with the narratives of Blondel and Chartier, was that the work used much material drawn from the testimony of the witnesses interrogated during the retrial, thus adding many miracles, great and small, which had not been mentioned earlier in chronicles. Apart from making the narrative more detailed and lively, these additions were intended to convince the reader more fully of the divine nature of Joan's mission. Thus we find, for example, a story recounted by Joan's squire Louis de Coutes and by Dunois in their testimony, according to which the assault of the English bastille of les Tournelles, at Orléans, only proved successful after Joan had given a particular signal: having planted her standard near the rampart, Joan waited for the banner to be touching the bulwark, and only then did she declare to the French fighters: 'Tout est vostre, et y entrez'. According to the testimony of

[44] R. PLANCHENAULT, 'La Chronique de la Pucelle', in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 93 (1932), 55-104; CONTAMINE, 'Naissance d'une historiographie', p. 153.

some great captains who had been involved in this action, the chronicler adds, the French mounted and assailed the bulwark 'aussi aiséement comme par un degré'; they could not understand how this could have happened, 'sinon par un œuvre divin'[45]. The chronicler also explained that, in such a manly environment as the army, Joan's chastity had been preserved partly thanks to divine intervention: many knights, and even some great lords, had tried to seduce the Maid, but, as if miraculously, 'aussi tost qu'ils la voyoient, toute volonté leur cessoit'. This was drawn from the testimony of Alençon and Joan's page Jean d'Aulon, who had stated that they had occasionally slept on loose straw next to Joan, or seen her breasts or legs as she dressed, but had never felt aroused, though they found her fair[46].

The *Chronique de la Pucelle* also stressed that Joan had waged war in a just manner, a point emphasized in the retrial; thus the campaigns led by Joan appeared exemplary as far as *jus in bellum* was concerned. The chronicler was the first, with Mathieu Thomassin, to incorporate in his narration the famous letter written in simple and straightforward terms by the Maid at Blois, in which she had requested, in the name of the King of Heaven, the English lords, knights, and even archers to leave the country, warning them that if they did not comply, she would make 'si gros hahay, que encore a mil ans en France ne fut veu si grant'[47]. Offering one's enemies the chance to avoid destruction by sending an ultimatum was one of the basics of *jus in bellum*. The chronicler also recounted how, at Blois, before leading her troop into Orléans, Joan had insisted that every French soldier should make sure that he was in a state of grace: she ordered her men to confess, and had their *fillettes* sent away. Finally, he showed that Joan could not be accused of being unnecessarily cruel: during the assault of the Fort of Saint-Loup, she protected some English soldiers who had disguised themselves as priests, on the grounds that 'on ne debvoit rien demander aux gens d'église'[48]. As he relates that she had them safely led into Orléans, the chronicler seems to imply that Joan knew they were not priests, but that she had taken pity on them.

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[45] *Chronique de la Pucelle*, p. 293-295; *Procès en nullité...*, ed. DUPARC, IV, 6, 49-50.
[46] *Procès en nullité...*, ed. DUPARC, I, 486 and IV, 70; *Chronique de la Pucelle*, p. 314.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 282.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 283, 289.

We have seen that Robert Blondel had avoided the issue of Joan's change of fortune, and that Chartier had offered a rather simplistic explanation. The *Chronique de la Pucelle* put forth a solution which has since then been more popular with supporters of Joan than Chartier's. In a short episode, Dunois asked Joan whether she knew the time and place of her death. Joan replied: 'J'ay accomply ce que Messire m'a commandé de lever le siège d'Orléans et faire sacrer le gentil roy; je vouldrois bien qu'il voulût me faire ramener auprès mes père et mère, [...] et faire ce que je soulois faire'[49]. The chronicler had drawn this material from Dunois' own testimony for the retrial: Dunois had apparently overheard Joan saying that, when God did not need her services any longer, she wished to return to her parents; he also explained later on how Joan kept repeating that God had sent her to raise the siege of Orléans and lead Charles to Rheims[50]. The chronicler fused the two comments into one episode, thus clearly defining Joan's mission and making it end with Charles' coronation. Joan could therefore not be blamed for any failure subsequent to that event.

Mathieu Thomassin wrote his *Registre Delphinal*, a register of the rights and history of the Dauphins of France, for the Dauphin Louis. His treatment of Joan of Arc was rather different from that of the *Chronique de la Pucelle*, being more a discourse than a story. The *Chronique de la Pucelle* introduced various narrative elements about Joan of Arc into historiography; with Thomassin, many ideological ingredients entered the French historical discourse about Joan, which would be developed under the reigns of Charles VIII and Louis XII. In Thomassin's dicourse, the prophecies made by the Maid or allegedly made about the Maid loom large. He explained how, as Joan was being examined at Poitiers, some clerks and doctors had dug up 'une prophétie de Merlin, parlant en ceste manière: *Descendet virgo dorsum sagittarii et flores virgineos obscurabit*'. This prophecy, already mentioned in Joan's time by Christine de Pisan[51], was now part of the whole mythology associated with the Kingdom of France. Thomassin amplified this mythology with an important

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[49] *Ibid.*, p. 326.
[50] *Procès en nullité...*, ed. DUPARC, IV, 10-11.
[51] CHRISTINE DE PISAN, *Ditié de Jeanne d'Arc,* ed. and transl. A. J. KENNEDY and K. VARTY, Medium Aevum Monographs, New Series IX, Oxford, Society for the Study of Mediaeval Languages and Literature, 1977, p. 34, stanza XXXI.

prediction of the Maid herself: he recounted how Joan had augured that, even if she had to die, the English would still be eventually expelled from France[52]. Thomassin had drawn this prophecy from the minutes of Joan's trial: Joan had indeed declared to Cauchon that the English would, in the end, be 'boutez hors de France', adding that she revealed it now, so that people might remember her words when the French would be triumphant[53]. Thomassin had seen the last English soldiers leave France, and he could emphasize that this prediction, crucial for France, had since then been realized.

Mathieu Thomassin also was the first chronicler to see all the potential that could be extracted from the Maid's story, in order to extol the Kingdom of France and show its privileged position as God's protégé. Christine de Pisan had already, in 1429, presented many of the ideas which would become commonplace in the discourse about Joan at the end of the century; thus it should not come as a surprise if Thomassin quoted a few verses from her *Ditié* as a tribute to the poetess, and to the fair sex, 'par le moyen duquel toute chrestienté a eu tant de biens'. Thomassin compared, rather boldly, the mission of the Maid, who had saved the Kingdom of France, with that of the Virgin Mary, who had brought salvation to the whole of humankind[54]. Sending the Maid was the greatest sign of love God had ever made to the Kingdom. Indeed, God especially loved the Kingdom of France, and kept a watchful eye on it, because He had elected it as His favourite agent, the zealous propagator and defender of the Catholic faith:

> Et sache ung chacun que Dieu a monstré et monstre ung chascun jour qu'il a aimé et aime le royaulme de France, et l'a especialment eslu pour son propre héritage, et pour, par le moyen de lui, entretenir la saincte foy catholique et le remettre du tout sus: et par ce, Dieu ne le veut pas laisser perdre[55].

The same ideas had been expressed by one of the learned authors who had written treatises in Joan's favour to help with the rehabilitation procedure: Robert Ciboule had pointed out that by saving the *Royaume Très Chrétien*, whose Kings had always

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[52] Cf. *Procès...*, ed. QUICHERAT, IV, 305, 311-312.
[53] *Procès...*, ed. TISSET, I, 166, 169-170.
[54] Cf. *Procès...*, ed. QUICHERAT, IV, 310.

encouraged the practice of the true religion, inside and outside their realm, and were known as the devoted supporters of the Holy See, Joan had in fact saved the whole of Christendom[56]. It is difficult to tell whether Thomassin was speaking in favour of a new crusade as he wrote about God's plans for the Kingdom, but there is no sense of urgency in his lines; it seems that he was mainly referring to the Kingdom's crusading history, which had earned it a reputation as a zealous defender of the faith.

Mathieu Thomassin provided the reader with his own explanation for Joan's change of fortune at the end of her short career, and his solution was the most elaborate of all offered so far. According to Thomassin, Joan had been asked whether she thought that she would last long, and had replied that,

> s'il luy convenoit mourir avant que ce pour quoy Dieu l'avoit envoyée fust accomply, que après sa mort elle nuyroit plus ausditz Anglois qu'elle n'auroit fait en sa vie, et que non obstant sa mort, tout ce que pour quoy elle estoit venue se accompliroit[57].

In other words, she would act from heaven, by interceding with God. Thomassin still considered that Joan's mission was to completely expel the English from France; by stating that she had not only her earthly life, but also her after-life to carry out this mission, he could account for the fact that she had died well before the final French triumph. Not only did Thomassin virtually present Joan as a saint, but he also described her as a patron for France: after her death, she could intercede with God for the Kingdom, and protect it from heaven. As we know, Thomassin's views have enjoyed a great popularity, even though Joan had to wait until 1920 before the Holy See canonized her.

Finally, because Joan's story was so wonderful and outstanding as a sign of the great love God bore the Kingdom, Thomassin expressed the wish that it should be forever extolled in French historiography. Thomassin explained why he himself had related the story in the *Registre Delphinal*, arguing that it concerned one of the Dauphins of France, Louis' father, and added, in a declamatory tone: 'D'autre part, la

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[55] *Ibid.*, IV, 309.
[56] CONTAMINE, 'La théologie de la guerre ', p. 50.
[57] *Procès...*, ed. QUICHERAT, IV, 311-312.

matière de la Pucelle est si haulte et si merveilleuse que c'est bien à noter et digne d'entrer en tous livres-registres, pour mémoire perpétuelle, à la gloire de Dieu et honneur du royaume et du Daulphiné'[58].

3. 2. The opinion of Thomas Basin on Joan

The opinion of Bishop Thomas Basin of Lisieux, who wrote a memoir supporting Joan's cause for the Rehabilitation Trial, is particularly valuable as it offers the judgement of a prelate. We have seen, through Bonet's words, that the Church generally preferred not to involve God in matters of secular warfare. Thomas Basin may well reflect this caution as he refuses to assert that Joan's voices came indeed from God, and concludes: 'Sur sa mission, sur les apparitions et révélations affirmées par elle, nous laissons à chacun la liberté de penser ce qu'il voudra [...] selon sa capacité et son jugement'[59]. However, Basin also explains that God could very well have sent Joan in order to help the French against the English 'qui alors opprimaient gravement ledit royaume'. Like Chartier, Basin refuses to consider the claims of the Kings of England, and sees in this conflict mainly one aggressor, the English, and one victim, the French. Why should Christ not decide to help an oppressed people? He also speculates on the argument that God might have sent Joan 'pour abaisser l'orgueil des Français et des Anglais'[60]. This argument is particularly interesting, as it does not spare the French either: Joan might have been a help, but she was also a reminder that the French were helpless by themselves, and that all good came from God. Finally, like Christine de Pisan[61] and many other contemporary writers, Basin reminds us that the Old Testament was full of precedents for God choosing a woman in order to help an oppressed people: were not the Jews successively saved by Deborah, Judith and Esther? This particular argument was very popular amongst those who wrote treatises in favour of Joan[62], but it had not been mentioned in a chronicle. As for Joan's failures, Basin tried to explain them through theology. He reminded his readers that many messengers of God, like the prophets,

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[58] *Ibid.*, IV, 311.
[59] THOMAS BASIN, I, 167.
[60] *Ibid.*, I, 165.
[61] See CHRISTINE DE PISAN, *Ditié*, p. 45, stanza XXVIII.
[62] On the symbolical importance of Judith see M. WARNER, *Joan of Arc. The Image of Female Heroism*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1981, p. 230-232.

had to experience great misfortunes, before being eventually executed by men. Perhaps God was disappointed by the lack of gratitude expressed by the French? And after all, Basin concludes, 'qui a pu pénétrer les intentions du Seigneur ?'[63].

As we can see, Basin was very inclined to accept the idea that Joan was on a divine mission, which is not surprising, since he had contributed to the retrial. However, one should note that his analysis of Joan's case was rather prudent and relatively disinterested compared to that of official or semi-official chroniclers such as Chartier, the *Chronique de la Pucelle*, or Thomassin: rather than starting with the assumption that Joan was a saint, before commenting on her life, Basin, who was writing for himself, examined Joan's career according to the precepts of theology. It is also interesting to note that Basin blamed the ungratefulness of the French and of the King himself, without, however, being more explicit in his statements. During the last decade of the 15th century, a number of chroniclers were to develop the themes put forth by Chartier, the *Chronique de la Pucelle*, and Thomassin; in particular, these chroniclers would use Joan's story in order to laud the Kingdom of France, and its monarchs, to the skies.

4. The memory of Joan in French historiography in the reigns of Charles VIII and Louis XII

In his *Registre Delphinal*, Mathieu Thomassin expressed the wish that Joan's story should be systematically extolled in French historiography. But Louis XI, for whom Thomassin had been writing before he became King, did not seem to take much interest in the figure of Joan[64]. Perhaps Louis was too serious a politician to be charmed by her tale. On the other hand, Louis was not particularly interested in promoting historiography in general. Thomassin's wish was only realized at the very end of the century, which saw a remarkable renewal of interest in the figure of Joan, in French historiography.

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[63] THOMAS BASIN, I, 165-167.
[64] CONTAMINE, 'Naissance d'une historiographie', p. 156.

The first important work which dealt at length with Joan was Martial d'Auvergne's *Vigiles du roi Charles VII*, a work composed in verse, intended by its author as a tribute to Charles VII, and offered to Charles VIII in 1484. The work was to be very popular with readers until the end of the 15th century. On the whole, the *Vigiles* were the natural continuation of Thomassin and the *Chronique de la Pucelle*'s discourses on Joan. The use of verse allowed Martial d'Auvergne to exalt Joan's story and emphasize the miraculous character of her deeds. As he closed his account of the siege of Orléans, he invited his readers to reflect on the greatness and benevolence of God towards the Kingdom, explaining:

> Or, notons icy la merveille,
> Les faiz de Dieu et les vertus,
> Quant à la voix d'une Pucelle
> Les Anglois furent abatus[65].

Martial d'Auvergne refuted and rejected the argument of Burgundian historiographers like Monstrelet, according to which experienced rulers knew well that assertions such as Joan's were 'moult doubtables [...] à croire', as he pointed out that

> Nostre Seigneur communément
> N'a point acoustumé de ouvrer,
> Ne de donner alleigement
> Quant ailleurs on le peut trouver.
>
> Mais où nature et les humains
> N'ont plus de povoir et puissance
> C'est alors qu'il y mect les mains,
> Et qu'il fait sa grace et clémence[66].

Indeed, God did not often use miracles in order to change the course of politics, but this was because men could (and did) rely on themselves in such matters. But when all hope was lost, God was the last resort, and through his kindness he could take pity on men, and decide to help them. Martial d'Auvergne included in his account an observation on the tricks of fortune, which superbly encapsulates what seems to have

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[65] *Procès...*, ed. QUICHERAT, V, 58.
[66] *Ibid.*, V, 58-59.

been the French reflection on the experience of the Hundred Years War at the dawn of the Renaissance:

> Se Fortune au commencement
> Si donne persécution
> C'est pour après plus haultement
> Octroyer consolation.

Drawing on Boethius, he added:

> Que fortune adverse est plus seure
> Pour congnoistre Dieu et bien vivre,
> [...]
> Elle impartist humilité,
> Elle soustient tous aspres deulz
> Et après, par prospérité,
> Ung seul bien si fait valoir deux.

France had emerged victorious and stronger from the traumatic conflict; in a sense, like Job in the Old Testament, the Kingdom had learnt, through suffering, how to get closer to God. Now that God was again with France, sheltering her under His wing and protecting her from her enemies, the times of prosperity had returned. And since Joan had been the sign of God's return of benevolence, her story had to be exalted. As Martial d'Auvergne concluded:

> Ne fut-ce pas moult grant merveille
> D'avoir réveillé tant de gens
> Au bruit d'une simple Pucelle?[67]

It is amusing to note - but this is what the Maid's story is all about - that, while Burgundian authors such as Chastelain found the fact that a young woman had been leading Charles VII's army unnatural, thus shocking, French authors such as d'Auvergne found it unnatural, and, as such, miraculous.

Martial d'Auvergne did not neglect to laud the King whenever his narrative gave him the opportunity to do so. This is particularly manifest in a short episode,

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[67] *Ibid.*, V, 66-67.

which appears neither in Chartier, nor in the *Chronique de la Pucelle* or Thomassin. As the English garrison of Troyes were leaving the town, which had chosen to open its doors to the King, they intended to take their French prisoners with them. The prisoners subsequently turned to Joan and implored her help, kneeling before the Maid. Charles VII was informed about this incident, and the chronicler explains: 'Sy commença à soy soubzrire / Du desbat et de la querelle'. Charles decided to content each side by paying the ransom out of his own pocket, and the English 'louèrent le feu roy fort, / L'appelant prince de façon'. The chronicler goes further, exalting the King for his sense of justice, which was manifest in his relations with the enemies, as well as with his own soldiers[68]. Not only does the King appear chivalrous and magnanimous in this episode, but he almost appears as a figure of God the Father, bringing redemption to his subjects through his kindness and magnificence; one should note that the chronicler emphasized how the French prisoners had first turned to Joan, as if to a saint who would intercede for them.

Interestingly, Martial d'Auvergne took care, in his narrative, to clear the King's conscience in regard to the way he treated Joan after the failure of Paris. The chronicler explained that, having returned to Gien, Charles intended to send the Maid against Rouen 'pour conquester et besongner', but this plan was opposed by La Trémoille and the other counsellors, who deemed 'qu'il n'en estoit point de mestier', and sent her before Saint-Pierre le Moustier instead[69]. From the beginning, chroniclers had been inclined to accuse the King's counsellors, or the army's captains, of mistrusting the Maid, or of acting malevolently towards her, thus making them partly responsible for Joan's failures and death. However, by stating that the King wanted to send the Maid against the powerful capital of the English conquests - which is very unlikely - Martial d'Auvergne made the responsibility for Joan's failures and death fall on the counsellors alone. His version of Joan's story is thus very different from that of Perceval de Cagny.

Following the *Vigiles de Charles VII*, more works appeared that were written along the same lines, only giving more importance to the themes developed by

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[68] *Ibid.*, V, 63-64.
[69] *Ibid.*, V, 71.

Mathieu d'Auvergne and Thomassin. This does not mean that the memory of Joan, when extolled, was systematically treated in a bombastic style. Robert Gaguin, for instance, presented the Maid's story as a miracle performed by God in favour of the King of France, and ranked her among the 'justes et preuzdhommes' who had been persecuted by tyrants and their villainous counsellors[70]. The episode of the Maid was presented as a sign of God's love for the Kingdom, but without strong emphasis. Some chroniclers, however, developing Thomassin and d'Auvergne's discourse, gave much more importance to the Maid's story as a symbol of God's special fondness for the Kingdom and its monarchs. This tendency is also illustrated in other kinds of literature, as in Octavien de Saint-Gelais' *Séjour d'honneur*, a poem composed in 1489. In this piece, the poet has a vision of 'ung roy glorieux, préparé / Fulcy de paix, begnin, doulx comme ung ange', triumphant 'en champ d'honneur paré / Et siege d'or tapissé de louenge'. Next to him, he sees a woman 'sur fier cheval marchant, / [...] qui fut d'harnoys luysant armée'. This strong and martial feminine figure, who acts 'comme si tous jours elle / Tint en seurté les souldars soubz son aesle', is the guardian and saviour of France; the Maid 'par miracle trouvée'[71] is the first person, in Saint-Gelais' mind, that can be associated with the glorious figure of Charles VII.

Around 1500, a history of the Maid containing a summary of the two trials was composed by an anonymous writer, known as 'l'abréviateur du procès'. The author himself tells us that the work was written on Louis XII's order, at the instigation of the admiral Louis Malet de Graville[72]. In his account, 'l'abréviateur du procès' claimed that he could reveal the famous prayer secretly made by the King, which the Maid had repeated to Charles in Chinon, to convince him of the divine nature of her mission. The secret disclosed by the author is far too affected and carefully structured to be convincing as *the* secret, but it is nonetheless interesting as it offers a digest of the King's worries with regard to his war. In his first prayer, Charles allegedly begged that, should he not be the Kingdom's true heir, God should make all his courage vanish, that he may no longer be 'cause de faire et soustenir la guerre dont procède tant de maulx'. In his second prayer, he requested that, should

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[70] ROBERT GAGUIN, *Les Grandes croniques*, transl. PIERRE DESREY, Paris, Poncet le Preux, 1514, fol. cliv, v°-clxii, r°.
[71] *Procès...*, ed. QUICHERAT, V, 91-92.
[72] *Ibid.*, IV, 257.

the miseries that had befallen the Kingdom proceed from his own sins, God might relieve the people of their torments, and punish him instead. Finally, Charles prayed that, if the miseries of the war proceeded from the people's sins, God might forgive them, 'et apaiser son ire, et mectre le royaulme hors des tribulations ès quelles il estoit, jà avoit douze ans et plus'[73]. The story of the Maid thus allowed our author to expose the anxieties that the war caused the King. His first concern was about the justice of his war, and his second concern about his subjects. The King is intimately united to his people; uncertain of whether the calamities which had befallen his realm proceeded from their sins or his own, he intercedes for them with God, and is ready to bear the burden of chastisement, should he be the one guilty. But as we know, God had listened to Charles' prayer: his cause was just, and the French were now again in God's grace.

Because of the weight carried by Joan as a sign of God's grace offered to the French, some chroniclers included her in the whole Christian mythology associated with the Kingdom's history. This is manifest and eloquently expressed in Pierre Sala's *Hardiesses des grands rois et empereurs*, a work offered to Francis I in 1516, where the former butler reminded the young King that France had a very long history of being miraculously saved by God in wars, declaring:

> Cela est chose notoire que, de tous temps, Nostre Seigneur n'a jamais abandonné ses bons roys à leur grant besoing. N'avez-vous pas ouy cy devant des beaulx miracles qu'il fit pour le roy Clovis, qui fut le premier roy crestien, et conséquemment pour le roy Dagobert, pour Charles le Grant et pour plusieurs autres roys? Et de fresche mémoire, de celluy gentil roy Charles VIIe, dont nous parlons[74].

Ever since Clovis had made a pact with God, the French had been under His protection. Before Pierre Sala, the 'abréviateur du procès' had explained that, having read the whole corpus of historiography dealing with the Kingdom of France, 'toutes les croniques qu'on appelle les Croniques de France, de Froissart, de Monstrelet, de Gaguin et autres croniques', he had compared Joan's story with 'tous les merveilleux cas advenus audit royaume, depuis le temps Marcomire et Pharamon [...] jusques à

[73] *Ibid.*, IV, 258-259.
[74] *Ibid.*, IV, 278.

présent'. Of all the marvels and miracles which had happened in France since the times of the legendary Frankish king Pharamond, Joan's epic was, in his opinion, the most striking and the most extraordinary; more than any other, it was worthy of being exalted in chronicles, 'en mémoire perpétuelle des François'[75].

• Conclusion

The history of the treatment of the episode of Joan, in French historiography, throughout the 15th century, is thus the story of a long manipulation of the material available, aiming to make it fit the French monarchy's interests, and to give it the status of an emblem. During the first half of the century, the opinion of non-official chroniclers on Joan was apparently much influenced by the authors' own ideals, or interests: Pierre Cochon was enthusiastic about Joan partly because she livened up the conventions of the war of the knights and symbolized the common people's will to participate in the realm's defence; as for Perceval de Cagny, he took advantage of her story to criticize the King's policy which displeased his patron, the Duke of Alençon. At the end of the century, the discourse about Joan in French historiography seems much more homogenous, though some works are more magniloquent in their discourse than others. Many present Joan as one of the most extraordinary signs, sometimes the most extraordinary sign of all times, of the love God has always borne the Kingdom. France and its monarchs appear as being favoured by God; the Lord protects them from all their enemies, because France has a special role to play in His divine plan. Joan is almost a pretext to extol the French monarchy. Ironically, the relations between the Maid and Charles VII had often been tense; after the failure of Paris, she had quite clearly become an embarrassment for the King. But this fact was increasingly hushed up as the century advanced; the blame was laid solely on the King's counsellors, or on some of his captains.

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[75] *Ibid.*, IV, 257.

Of course, the development of the treatment of the 'matière de la Pucelle' was not uniform throughout the 15th century. The story of the Maid was exalted in historiography during particular times: shortly after her death, after the Rehabilitation Trial, and during the reigns of Charles VIII, Louis XII and the early years of Francis I. But there were whole periods where the memory of Joan was rather neglected. Charles VII's interest in Joan was quite inconsistent, even though he did order her posthumous retrial to be held, and Louis XI hardly did anything to keep the memory of the Maid alive. Still, the general trends in the development of the discourse about Joan are clearly visible. One should note that, more than the Kings of France, it was apparently the Kings' subjects who made the discourse about Joan in French historiography evolve: although their innovations were along the lines of what the Kings of France expected, the impulse seems to have been theirs, except in the case of the *Chronique de la Pucelle*, which may have been commissioned by Charles VII, and of the work of 'l'abréviateur du procès' - written on Louis XII's order.

Finally, the development of the treatment of Joan in French historiography demonstrates particularly well the shaping of the French propagandist discourse on war, in this case defensive war. The notion that God loves the Kingdom of France and its monarchs, that they are part of His divine plan, and that He thus watches over them and protects them from their enemies, the reflection on the eventually beneficial role of adverse fortune, with regard to the experience of the Hundred Years War, all these ideas were slowly elaborated throughout the century in French historiography, though many of them were present from the beginning in the works of propagandists or poets such as Christine de Pisan. Our understanding of the nature of the French propagandist discourse on war, in historiography, at the end of the 15th century, will be completed in Chapter 5, which is devoted to the treatment, in French historiography, of an offensive war: the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples by Charles VIII in 1494-1495. For the time being, however, let us turn to what was being written, in Burgundian historiography, under the rule of Philip the Good, about a war which also involved God, but in a more natural and traditional way: the crusade. Throughout his life, Duke Philip seriously considered embarking upon this very chivalrous adventure, and the chroniclers of Burgundy gave much of their

attention to this preoccupation. It is the comments made by Burgundian chroniclers about the crusading endeavours of Philip the Good that I now propose to study.

Constantinople besieged by the Ottoman Turks (1453), as represented in a contemporary Burgundian manuscript

Fig. 4. 'Le siege du grant turc'. The topography of the site of the Golden Horn and the tactics used by the Turks are accurately represented ; however, the figures of the Turks are very fanciful : Mehmet II and his subjects are dressed in pseudo-oriental accoutre, a mixture of antique, Western and fantastic clothes and armours. To judge by appearances, the Turkish siege seems eqivalent to a Burgundian *guerre de magnificence*, only the dragons on the banners denote that the Turks belong to the forces of evil. From a manuscript of Betrandon de la Broquière's *Voyage d'Outremer* (1455).

Chapter 3: Philip the Good's crusading endeavours in Burgundian historiography (I). A war never waged, the proposed 'saint voiage' (1453-1464)

> Alors le Turcq, comme desesperez, fist avanchier ses banieres [...]. Lors les Françoiz, a haultes voix criant: 'Jhesus! Nostre Dame! Monjoye! Saint Denis!' la baniere du roy s'avança, et toutes les aultres la sievyrent; et, tant que destriers puerent aller, les ungs parmi les aultres s'entrefierent tellement que le seigneur de Saintré, qui sur son tres puissant destrier armé estoit, tous deux tres richement houssez d'orfavrerie esmaillee a ses armes, [...] comme a Dieu pleust, ataint le Turcq de sa lance par l'estroit de sa baviere [...] , et, a l'espaindre qu'il fist, le renverssa au le tronçon de sa lance tout mort à terre.
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> Antoine de La Sale, *Saintré* [1]

• Introduction

Often regarded as a hinge between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the year 1453 saw two considerable events, which would change the face of geopolitics in Europe: the end of the Hundred Years War, and the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks. The Hundred Years War ended *de facto* with the battle of Castillon on 17 July 1453, but no treaty was signed to make this official, and although Charles VII could justifiably be called *le très victorieux*, his attention was still devoted to the English problem, in case of their possible return; moreover, the heavy task of restoring the Kingdom to prosperity was certainly not finished. Meanwhile, Philip the Good could take advantage of the long period of relatively untroubled peace - with the exception of the bloody wars of Ghent (1453) - which his disengagement from

[1] ANTOINE DE LA SALE, *Saintré*, ed. M. EUSEBI, 2 vol., Paris, Honoré Champion, 1993-1994, II, 327-328.

the English alliance had inaugurated for Burgundy, to give his attention to an old dream: his crusading plans.

Philip the Good had always felt deeply concerned about the defence of Christendom[2]. He had often sent galleys and men-at-arms to the Levant, to help save the last shreds of the Byzantine Empire. His major effort, an expedition sent to Constantinople in 1444 as a contribution to the Varna crusade, will be looked at in detail in the next chapter, through the study of Jean de Wavrin's narrative of this crusade. Some successes had been achieved: in 1444, the help of Geoffroy de Thoisy's soldiers had proved decisive in the relief of the island of Rhodes, besieged by a composite force of Mamelukes and Turks. Philip also regularly sent financial help to the Christian communities of the Middle-East. After the fall of Constantinople, Philip the Good's desire to take part in a major *passagium* - the usual term for a crusading expedition beyond the seas - became one of his primary concerns. At the Feast of the Pheasant in February 1454, Philip made his famous vow that, should the King of France decide to take the cross, or send a prince of his blood, or another prince with an army against the Turks, or should any other prince decide to go on a crusade with a sufficiently powerful army, he, Duke Philip, would take part in this crusade with all his chivalry. It should be noted that Philip's gesture was generous but prudent, his vow being conditional: the reservations were clearly expressed [3]. Philip subsequently left his Duchy to attend the Imperial Diet of Regensburg (April 1454), where plans of a crusade were to be elaborated by the

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[2] Historians have devoted much attention to Philip the Good's crusading efforts, and the modern material available on the subject is constantly expanding. See in particular HOUSLEY, p. 101-109; J. RICHARD, 'La Bourgogne des Valois, l'idée de croisade et la défense de l'Europe', in *Le Banquet du Faisan. 1454: l'Occident face au défi de l'Empire ottoman*, Actes du colloque tenu à Lille et à Arras du 21 au 24 juin 1995, ed. M. -T. CARON and D. CLAUZEL, Arras, Artois Presses Université, 1997, p. 15-27; C. MARINESCO, 'Philippe le Bon, duc de Bourgogne et la croisade: première partie: 1419-1453', in *Actes du VIe Congrès international d'études byzantines*, t. 1, Paris, École des hautes études Sorbonne, 1948, p. 147-168; 'deuxième partie: 1453-1467', in *Bulletin des études portugaises de l'Institut français au Portugal*, n. s. 13 (1949), 25-32; J. PAVIOT, *La politique navale des ducs de Bourgogne, 1384-1482*, Lille, Presses Universitaires, 1995, p. 105-139; Y. LACAZE, 'Politique "méditerranéenne" et projets de croisade chez Philippe le Bon: de la chute de Byzance à la victoire chrétienne de Belgrade (mai 1453-juillet 1456)', in *Annales de Bourgogne*, 41/161 (1969), 5-42 (part 1) ; 41/162 (1969), 82-132 (part 2).

[3] On the Feast of the Pheasant, one of the most striking and intriguing festivities of the Middle Ages, see M. -T. CARON, *Le Banquet du Vœu du Faisan. Fête de cour et prise de conscience européenne*, Arras, Université d'Artois, 1995; A. LAFORTUNE-MARTEL, *Fête noble en Bourgogne au XVe siècle. Le Banquet du Faisan (1454): Aspects politiques, sociaux et culturels*, Montréal / Paris, Bellarmin /

Reichstag. Philip was unsure whether he would return to his Duchy, and it seems that from the Holy Roman Empire he would have proceeded on his way towards the Levant, had an expedition been organized with the princes of the Empire. But the Emperor did not attend, which shocked both Philip and the princes, and no definitive conclusions were reached. It was decided that another Diet would take place in autumn in Frankfurt. This time Philip could not attend in person, but sent ambassadors. Although the princes of the Empire did eventually agree on a crusade, the Diet of Frankfurt revealed what sort of problems rendered the organization of a major *passagium* extremely difficult. The humanist Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, a most ardent advocate of a crusade, was representing the Emperor at the Diet, and recorded how the princes were constantly complaining about the Emperor, the Pope and the curia, 'who, they said, were false and greedy and wanted to rake in gold'[4]. Eventually the crusade was postponed because of Pope Nicholas V's death. Philip the Good encountered many internal difficulties during the pontificate of Calixtus III, making it impossible for him to fulfil his vow. Yet, his desire to take part in a crusade was still strong, and in 1463 intensive preparations were made in the Duchy, as Philip was hoping to join Aeneas Sylvius, who had become Pope Pius II, on a *passagium*. But new difficulties arose, and Philip had to postpone his departure. His natural son Antoine was sent with many Burgundian noblemen as a vanguard. The fiasco of the 1464 expedition, described in great detail by both past and present historians, is one of the most romantic events of the 15th century. It seems that the *passagium* was doomed even before Pius II's death at Ancona definitively settled the question. Philip the Good was in any case too old to fulfil his vow[5].

Many studies, especially during the last decade, have been devoted to the impressive corpus of literature related to crusading written in the Duchy of Burgundy during Philip the Good's rule[6]. The sheer mass and variety of material: plans for a

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Vrin, 1984; M. DE GRÈVE, *Le Vœu du Faisan et les écrivains, problèmes de réception*, in *Le Banquet du Faisan. 1454: l'Occident...*, p. 137-144.

[4] On the Diets of Regensburg and Frankfurt, see R. SCHWOEBEL, *The Shadow of the Crescent. The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453-1517)*, Nieuwkoop, de Graaf, 1967, p. 32-33. Quotation p. 33.

[5] On the 1464 fiasco and the last days of Pius II see R. J. MITCHELL, *The Laurels and the Tiara. Pope Pius II. 1458-1464*, London, Harvill Press, 1962, p. 255-265.

[6] See for example G. DOUTREPONT, 'A la cour de Philippe le Bon. Le Banquet du Faisan et la littérature de Bourgogne', in *Revue générale*, 35 (1899), 787-806 and 36 (1900), 99-118; SCHWOEBEL, p. 82-101; J. DEVAUX, 'Le *Saint Voyage de Turquie*: croisade et propagande à la cour

crusade, reports of spies sent to the Levant, romances related to crusading, is particularly striking, and demonstrates that Philip's interest and ambitions were more than a whim or mere hypocritical boasting. The testimony of Burgundian chroniclers, however, has attracted relatively less attention. It also seems that their message has sometimes been overlooked. According to the historian Jacques Paviot, apart from Chastelain and Wavrin, Burgundian chroniclers were apparently not very interested in Philip the Good's crusading efforts; in his opinion, this probably reflects a lack of concern about the chivalric ideals of their prince[7]. The aim of this chapter is to show that, on the contrary, Burgundian chroniclers did support their prince in his plans; the nature of their ideas on crusading, and on Philip's plans, will be made explicit. The last part of this chapter will be specifically devoted to the testimony of Georges Chastelain, which is by far the most important and the richest in ideas expressed. We shall see the evolution in Chastelain's thought about Philip's plans, which made him the only Burgundian chronicler to draw conclusions from Philip's failure to fulfil his vow: mainly that, in the 15th century, crusading ideals could no longer be the same as before. Before anything, however, it is necessary to briefly recapitulate the theory of crusading, and its peculiarities in the 15th century.

1. Theory and practice of crusading in the 15th century

The concept of holy war had been slowly elaborated by the Church throughout the first millenary of the Christian era. At the beginning of the 5th century, Augustine, whose cathedral city had been besieged by the Vandals, laid the foundations of the just war in *De civitate Dei*. We saw its ingredients in the last chapter; Thomas Aquinas did not make any substantial changes. But the just war was no holy war: it was considered as a necessary evil. Still, it was a first step towards the

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de Philippe le Bon (1463-1464)', in *'A l'heure encore de mon escrire'. Aspects de la littérature de Bourgogne sous Philippe le Bon et Charles le Téméraire*, *Les Lettres romanes*, n. s. (1997), 53-70; J. GUÉRET-LAFERTÉ, 'Le livre et la croisade', in *Le Banquet du Faisan. 1454: l'Occident...*, p. 107-114.

[7] PAVIOT, p. 133-134.

sanctification of particular military actions. During the 9th century, the repeated attacks on Christendom by pagans, notably the Vikings and the Moors, led the Church to unreservedly promise salvation to all warriors who fought, under its aegis, against the enemies of the faith[8]. The holy war soon also became offensive: it was basically the war waged for the Papacy, against those viewed as enemies of the faith, whether external, such as the Muslims, or internal, such as heretical sects. With the conquests of the Seljuk Turks against Byzantium, new goals appeared for a holy war: recovering the Holy Land and Jerusalem, Christ's patrimony, which was now in the infidels' hands, and rescuing the Christian communities and peoples of the East. In 1095, Pope Urban II preached the First Crusade in the name of Christ (as opposed to that of Saint Peter) to all knights of Christendom (as opposed to the Papacy's faithful servants), likening the *passagium* to an armed pilgrimage, thus blending the lure of holy war with that of pilgrimage[9]. By the 13th century, the legal customs surrounding crusading had been authoritatively defined by canonists such as the jurist Hostiensis and Pope Innocent IV[10]. The legitimacy of offensive holy war was defended by Innocent IV and Thomas Aquinas, who declared that crusading in the Levant was necessary if only because of the hostility with which Islamic authorities faced Christian missionaries. In the words of Aquinas: 'Christ's faithful frequently wage war against the infidels, not indeed to coerce them to believe [...] but in order to compel them not to hinder the faith of Christ'[11].

In his excellent work *The Later Crusades*, Norman Housley has shown that, contrary to what one might think, throughout the 14th and 15th century, enthusiasm for the crusade was still strong among Catholic society, and that the legitimacy of crusading was largely undisputed. There were opponents to the concept of crusading, and well before Luther, who argued, like William of Tripoli in 1271, that Muslims could be converted 'through the pure word of God'. But such men were in a minority. Moreover, the very evolution of geopolitics in the 14th and 15th century made it unlikely that Christians would think more pacifically about their non-Christian

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[8] On the evolution from the concept of the just war to that of the holy war see J. FLORI, *Pierre l'Ermite et la première croisade*, Paris, Arthème Fayard, 1999, p. 119-128.
[9] Cf. J. FLORI, 'Dieu, cet éternel alibi', in *L'art de la guerre au Moyen Age*, 6-11.
[10] Cf. M. J. HEATH, *Crusading Commonplaces: La Noue, Lucinge and Rhetoric against the Turks*, Geneva, Droz, 1986, p. 13.
[11] This quotation, and the next, are taken from HOUSLEY, p. 381.

neighbours, and Muslims in particular, for the expansionist policy of the Ottoman Turks endangered Europe itself. In the second half of the 14th century, Murad I had occupied Thrace, Roumelia and Macedonia. His son Bayezid crushed the Serbs at Kosovo Polje in 1389, and Serbia and Bulgaria were annexed. During the first half of the 15th century, Murad II secured Thessalonica, Bosnia and Wallachia. And on 30 May 1453, the young Mehmet II stunned the whole of Europe by taking Constantinople after a long siege, thus definitively bringing what remained of the Byzantine Empire to an end. The shock caused in Europe can be imagined from reading the accounts of contemporary chroniclers. Jean de Wavrin inserted a long and accurate account of the siege in his chronicle (V, 251-257), a translation of the famous report of Jacopo Tedaldi, an eye-witness. Mathieu d'Escouchy left a different version of the story, greatly exaggerating the atrocity of the massacres. In an episode that seems directly taken from the *Legenda Aurea*, he recounted that the Emperor's daughter was raped by Mehmet II, then stripped naked and forced to watch the slaughter of hundreds of Christians, before being eventually beheaded, as she refused to abnegate her faith[12]. Olivier de La Marche was rather shocked by the fact that, with the violent and heroic death of 'la plus noble personne du monde', Emperor Constantine XI Paleologus, who descended from the Roman Emperors, the oldest dynasty in the world had become extinct (II, 337)[13]. The alarming advance of the Ottoman Turks provoked a chorus of horrified reactions, notably from humanists, emphasizing the moral necessity of a crusade, to save not only the Christians now living under the Turkish yoke, but also Greek culture and its antique heritage[14]. In particular, they appealed to the moral obligation to protect Christendom that faced the Christian princes, who had done nothing to save Constantinople.

To defend Christendom was considered as *the* primary responsibility of a Christian prince. Originally, this had been the task of the Holy Roman Emperor, as the Pope's right arm. Charlemagne himself had clearly defined his role, referring to the example of Josuah, who fought the armies of Amalek while Moses was interceding for him by raising his hands[15]:

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[12] MATHIEU D'ESCOUCHY, II, 50 ff.
[13] For a study of the 15th century accounts of the fall of Constantinople see SCHWOEBEL, Chapter 1.
[14] Cf. HEATH, *Crusading Commonplaces*, p. 25-37.
[15] Exodus, 17. 8-15.

> À nous, avec le secours de la piété divine, de défendre partout au-dehors l'Église du Christ contre les attaques des païens et les ravages des infidèles et de veiller au-dedans à faire reconnaître la foi catholique. À vous, très Saint Père, en élevant, tel Moïse, les mains vers Dieu, d'aider notre armée afin que, par votre intercession et par le don du Dieu qui le guide, le peuple chrétien ait toujours et partout la victoire sur les ennemis de son saint nom[16].

However, since the deterioration of the relations between the Papacy and the Emperors, the sovereign pontiffs had turned to the other princes of Christendom[17]. God had granted the Christian princes power, and it was only natural that they should use it to defend the faith. They were the shield of Christendom. Thus Pius II could declare to Alfonso V of Portugal: 'to obtain salvation you are obliged, as a prince and as a Christian, to assist with all your strength in defending the holy faith'[18]. Before him, Gregory VII, Innocent III and Boniface VIII had often recalled princes to their duty to defend the faith[19]. Still, despite the fact that princes kept boasting about their crusading ambitions, and although they did feel concerned about the fate of Christendom, their rule appeared increasingly self-seeking, a result, no doubt, of the rise of autocratic regimes and of the emergence of nation-states[20]. Christendom was less and less united.

Below the figure of the prince, the Church could address knights - even though they were becoming increasingly dependent on the prince - for crusading was traditionally seen as *the* chivalrous duty, ever since Pope Gregory VII had given a literal meaning to the word *miles Christi*[21]. We saw in the first chapter how, according to Geoffroi de Charny, the first garment a knight had to put on prior to his dubbing ceremony symbolized his duty to protect the faith[22]. In the 14th and 15th century, knights still saw crusading as the most honourable thing they could do. Georges Chastelain never tired of praising the Burgundian knight Jean de Rebremette, who had taken part in the Reconquista, and had successively slain two

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[16] Quotation found in FLORI, *Pierre l'Ermite*, p. 120.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 127-128.
[18] Quotation from HOUSLEY, p. 453.
[19] Cf. SCHWOEBEL, p. 73.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 33-34.
[21] Cf. CARDINI, p. 321-322.

Moors in single combat, before the walls of Granada. Rebremette had taken a public oath at the Feast of the Pheasant to fight a Saracen in single combat; he had fought for the King of Portugal in Africa, but had not been able to fulfil his vow there. The King of Castile, seeing Rebremette's remarkable deed, knighted him on the spot and granted him, as arms, the severed head of a Moor balancing on the tip of a sword. Chastelain concluded: 'depuis en haut lieu d'honneur ay vu porter audit Rebremette ledit tymbre, lequel lui refrecissoit sa gloire [...] en la bouche des hommes' (III, 353-358). In the 14th and 15th centuries, many knights such as Rebremette took part, as volunteers, in crusades in Spain, Lithuania, Africa or the Levant. According to Norman Housley, many of the most widely respected knights of the period, such as Gaston-Phoebus de Foix or Marshal Boucicaut, were characterized by the extent of their crusading service[23]. Having a hero of the crusades among one's ancestors, as Philip the Good could claim about Baudouin de Flandres, was, of course, particularly reputable. Thus, as a prince, and also as a knight, it was only natural that Duke Philip, who had chosen chivalry as the line of conduct for his Duchy, should have taken his duty of defending the faith particularly seriously. What is perhaps more remarkable, is that there was apparently no hypocrisy in Philip's attitude: modern historians tend to consider that Philip's crusading ambitions were rather disinterested. Philip did not demand in advance control over certain territories that were expected to be liberated; in 1454 he offered Charles VII the lead of the crusade, setting up as his vassal. It seems that his only material interests were the glory and renown that his crusading endeavours earned him[24].

2. Burgundian support for Philip the Good's crusading efforts

The moral support offered to Philip the Good by the official, semi-official and also non-official chroniclers of Burgundy with regard to his crusading endeavours and plans was expressed in many different ways. Olivier de La Marche, at the time *écuyer pannetier* to Philip the Good, Georges Chastelain, the monk Adrien de But, Jacques Du Clercq, Mathieu d'Escouchy - who was Burgundian until probably 1465 -

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[22] Cf. p. 36-37.
[23] On noble attitudes towards crusading cf. HOUSLEY, p. 394-403.

and the monk of the Abbey of Floreffe firstly emphasized Philip's isolation among other Christian princes in his concern about the safety of Christendom, and in his positive actions on that score. They often sternly blamed the other princes for their apathy. Chastelain was particularly severe towards Charles VII and Henry V, as he explained that God had punished them by cutting their lives short, because they had not taken the warnings of the hermit Jean de Gand seriously enough (I, 337-341 and IV, 368-369). Both stories show that Chastelain considered the defence of the faith as the primary duty of a Christian prince; the fact that Henry V died well before the fall of Constantinople was deemed irrelevant. If Chastelain was particularly acrimonious towards Henry V and Charles VII, it was because the English conqueror had chosen to be the persecutor of another Christian people, instead of fighting for the faith; as for Charles VII, he was guilty of ingratitude, having failed to realize that 'telle grâce et gloire à luy donnée, comme d'avoir tout son royaume recouvert sans dangier, n'avoit point esté faite à luy pour glorifier sa personne'. God's gift of power carried consequences: He had exalted the prince above all other men, but this in turn implied greater responsibilities for the prince. Power was a grace bestowed by God upon the prince to give him the means to serve His purposes. In fact, the more powerful a prince was, the more guilty he should feel if he did not do anything to protect the faith. Instead of trying to pick a quarrel with Philip for having sheltered the Dauphin Louis, Charles should have paid more attention to his Christian duties. In the same vein, but with more caustic humour than stern moralizing, Jacques Du Clercq mocked Emperor Frederick III, who had failed to attend the Diet of Regensburg because he was afraid that Philip might compel him to accompany him: 'il n'y volloit pas aller, car icelui empereur Frédéric n'estoit pas chevallereux en armes, ains estoit tout quoy avec sa femme, et ne ly challoit de guerre'[25]. Frederick's faint-heartedness contrasted with the Duke's chivalrous eagerness to expose his body for the faith. Olivier de La Marche was less harsh towards the Christian princes, as he suggested that their nonchalance, at the time of the fall of Constantinople, might have been part of God's plan. Thus La Marche could envisage God's plans in a different way than Chastelain: his attitude was, in a sense, more fatalistic.

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[24] Cf. RICHARD, p. 25-27.
[25] JACQUES DU CLERCQ, XIII, 170.

In the context of the other Christian princes' lack of concern, all Burgundian chroniclers pointed to Philip the Good as the major, if not the only source of hope for Christianity. Olivier de la Marche was careful to emphasize that Philip could not, among the Christian princes, be blamed for the fall of Constantinople: he had warned the other Christian rulers against the danger by sending them embassies, but had not been able to shake their inertia (II, 206). The Duke could not save Christendom on his own; his chivalrous ideology and generosity did not prevent him from being realistic, and one should note that he was careful to make his vow conditional at the Feast of the Pheasant. In any case, he could not be accused of ingratitude towards God. Olivier de la Marche made it clear that Philip's crusading endeavours fulfilled his moral obligation to make good use of the power that God had offered to him, as he related how, in 1464, Philip 'qui avoit accoustumé de recongnoistre envers Nostre Seigneur les biens et les graces qu'il luy faisoit' immediately answered the Pope's call by mobilizing his chivalry (III, 35-36).

Praises of Philip's crusading efforts did not originate solely from members of the Duke's household. In the little chronicle that he wrote in verse for his fellows, the monk of the Abbey of Floreffe lavished praises on Philip for his repeated actions in defence of the faith[26]. He admired him especially for his vow, by which Philip had obliged himself to take a decisive step for the defence of Christendom. The monk of Floreffe was by no means an official or semi-official chronicler, but he gave us, for our 'récréation', a long account, in prose, of the famous 'banket' held in Lille on 17 February 1454. He insisted upon the great cost of the Feast - 'plus de diex mille escus'[27] - not, it seems, from the general, admiring tone of the account, in order to blame it, but rather to impress the reader with Philip's magnificent expenditure on this very worthy occasion. The monk of Floreffe took care to explain that the primary aim of the Feast was not only to inspire Philip's knights, but also to stimulate the other princes of Christendom to follow Philip's example, by impressing them:

Et aussi ce pour animer

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[26] *Chronique de l'abbaye de Floreffe*, in *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire des provinces de Namur, de Hainaut et du Luxembourg*, ed. F. DE REIFFENBERG for the Académie Royale de Belgique, 8 vol., Brussels, Hayez, 1844-1874, VIII, 63-198 (p. 168-169).
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

Les corages des princhés franchois
Et aultres seigneurs de nos lois...

They should not fear to leave their realms: the Duke himself had superbly ignored, in his magnanimity, those who declared:

Bon duc, se widiez vos pays,
[...]
L'en vous juerat de faus traix.
Franchois sont sur vous envieux.
Trop vous porriez fyer en eulx! [28]

The aim of the banquet was to advertise the crusade and to infuse into the knights who witnessed it a holy desire to act. Olivier de la Marche praised Philip for this intention, stating that Philip wanted his knights to follow him 'de leur volonté et devocion, sans contraincte' (II, 337-338). Modern scholars have shown that the banquet of Lille was a major work of propaganda.

From reading Burgundian chronicles, we can sense that the Feast of the Pheasant created a great stir among Philip's subjects. Olivier de la Marche, who was on the committee which organized the event, and Mathieu d'Escouchy inserted in their narration what could be seen as the official account of the Feast - perhaps written by La Marche. This long and detailed account describes at length all the impressive *entremets* which demonstrate how developed the art of festivity was in Burgundy. It also includes an allegorical episode in which the author is shown pondering about the banquet once the tables have been removed, wondering whether he has been dreaming. The author then shares his thoughts with a chamberlain of Philip, suggesting that the cost may have been excessive, and wondering whether Philip's decision to take the cross was not a little hasty. But the chamberlain emphasizes that Philip's resolution had been carefully considered for a long time, that Philip held his projects dear, and that the banquet was ultimately his idea: the Duke had intended to make his vow public as impressively as he possibly could[29]. Bruno Laurioux has suggested that this episode was intended as a criticism of the

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 169, v. 3021-3025, 3027-3031.
[29] OLIVIER DE LA MARCHE, II, 369-371; MATHIEU D' ESCOUCHY, II, 222-223.

Duke's lavish expenditure[30], but it seems that, on the contrary, it was meant to silence any objections.

I wish to conclude on the banquet with a comment made by Chastelain, which shows that the Duke's chronicler understood perfectly all the consequences of Philip's vow, and thus all its purposes. The pages of Chastelain's chronicle that perhaps related the banquet are lost, however on many occasions he referred to the grand event. As he recounted Philip's return from the Holy Roman Empire, Chastelain explained that the Duke only had one thing on his mind: the preparation of his 'voiage de Turquie', for not only was he particularly bent on making the *passagium*, but also 'y avoit-il mis l'honneur plus avant que nul autre, parce que de tout ancien temps s'y estoit offert, et sur tous les autres princes chrestiens avoit esté continuel susciteur de ceste besogne' (III, 10). The honour of the Duke was at stake: this was the best guarantee of his action, for what could be more valuable to the creator of one of the most prestigious orders of chivalry in Christendom, the Order of the Golden Fleece, than his honour?

We saw that Duke Philip intended to give as much publicity as he could to his vow, and thus made the Feast of the Pheasant one of the most magnificent festivities of the century. As a rule, magnificence was a crucial element of Philip's crusading endeavours, and it seems important at this stage to study its origin and manifestations more carefully.

3. Magnificence: a key aspect of Philip's crusading endeavours

In his celebrated work *La guerre au Moyen Age*, Philippe Contamine called our attention to a thought-provoking expression that he found in a short propagandist French treatise of the mid-15th century entitled *Le débat des hérauts d'armes de France et d'Angleterre*: the *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*. It seems that the practice of extolling the prince and his power, and the military history of one's state,

[30] B. LAURIOUX, 'Banquets, entremets et cuisine à la cour de Bourgogne', in *Splendeurs de la cour de Bourgogne. Récits et chroniques*, ed. D. RÉGNIER-BOHLER, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1995, p. 1027-

gave rise to this concept towards the end of the Middle Ages. In the *Débat*, the French herald explains to the English one that, in his opinion, the English, contrary to the French, have never waged any *guerre de magnificence*, and adds:

> Item, sachez, sire herault, que je faiz grant difference entre guerre commune et guerre de magnificence. Car je dis que guerre commune est en soy mesmes ou contre ses voysins et lignagiers, et guerre de magnificence est quant princes vont en ost conquerir en loingtaing et estrange païs, ou soy combatre pour la foy catholique deffendre ou eslargir[31].

Contamine left a clear field for more developments concerning the concept of the *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*, but it seems that scholars have not, until now, devoted more attention to it. As one can see, the French herald considered crusading as the pre-eminent example of a *guerre de magnificence*. But what did he exactly mean by this ? In *Le premier volume de la Toison d'or*, Guillaume Fillastre, the second chancellor of the Order, explains very well, with all his eloquence and rhetoric, how Philip the Good's crusading efforts were, first of all, an expression of his magnanimity; following the patterns of courtly ideology, his work clearly shows the importance of magnanimity and magnificence in Philip's endeavours to protect the faith. Magnanimity, as one can see from the medieval and Renaissance corpus of *speculum principis*, was the intrinsic desire to be great and to do admirable actions, a lust for greatness which was not reprehensible but praiseworthy, its primary aim being exemplary[32]. Guillaume Fillastre demonstrates that Philip the Good saw the fall of Constantinople as a direct challenge, and almost an insult, to his magnanimity: 'Car ces nouvelles ouyes sa Magnanimité luy fist le sang et les membres frémir'[33]. As a great prince, Philip felt compelled to react.

1035 (p. 1029).

[31] *Le débat des hérauts d'armes de France et d'Angleterre*, ed. L. PANNIER & P. MEYER, Paris, Firmin Didot for the SATF, 1877, p. 12; CONTAMINE, *La guerre au Moyen Age*, p. 455.

[32] See for example CHRISTINE DE PISAN, *Le livre de la Paix*, ed. C. C. WILLARD, The Hague, Mouton, 1958, p. 105-106.

[33] GUILLAUME FILLASTRE, *Le premier volume de la Toison d'or*, Troyes, Nicolas le Rouge, 1530, fol. cxxxii, v°.

Magnificence, a concept which has recently been carefully studied by British historians of art and culture[34], was very much linked to magnanimity, as it was the physical expression of the greatness of the prince. Magnificence was the display of the prince's power, wealth and greatness; it was also the prince's generosity, as he made others benefit from his grandeur. Most Burgundian chroniclers made Philip's magnificence one of the chief elements of their narratives of his crusading efforts. The monk of Floreffe, like many others, recalled how Philip had regularly sent 'grant nombre de navie', filled with knights, to the Levant, as well as 'moult très-grant finance', adding:

> Aultres innumérables biens
> A très maintes fois fais li princhе
> Aux crestiens extans ès provinces
> Dont dessus est faite mencion[35].

Similarly, the anonymous author of the curious, propagandist chronicle entitled *Le livre des trahisons de France envers la Maison de Bourgogne*, relating the 1444 expedition, described how Philip had sent Walleran de Wavrin and Geoffroy de Thoisy to the Levant, with many ships, 'puissamment artilliés et accompaigniés de bons archiers', among which figured 'la plus grosse nave qui se trouvast adont en toutte la mer de Levent'[36]. Olivier de la Marche enjoyed recounting the magnificent - and noisy - departure of Antoine of Burgundy, in 1464, from the harbour of Sluys:

> et estoit belle chose de veoir les bannieres et les penons de chascun bateau; car chascun cappitaine vouloit monstrer quel homme il estoit en ce hault et sainct voiaige. Les trompettes et les clairons sonnoient, à

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[34] See S. ANGLO , *Images of Tudor Kingship,* London, Seaby, 1992, p. 6-9; S. THURLEY, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England, Architecture and Court Life*, London / New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993, p. 11; see also G. KIPLING, *The Triumph of Honour. Burgundian Origins of the Elizabethan Renaissance*, The Hague, Leiden University Press, 1977, p. 28-30, 160-164. Thurley and Kipling have shown how the concept of Magnificence was developed by the Valois Dukes of Burgundy, and how the Dukes' magnificence influenced court life in Tudor England. Kipling has also demonstrated how, in the court of Burgundy, Magnificence was presented as the primary ambition of the ideal Christian prince.

[35] *Chronique de l'abbaye de Floreffe*, p. 168, v. 2997-2999, 3007-3010.

[36] *Le livre des trahisons de France envers la Maison de Bourgogne*, in *Chroniques relatives à l'histoire de la Belgique...*, II, 1-258 (p. 227). Ironically, throughout the 1444 campaign, the 'grosse nave' was used as a merchant ship, and did not take part in any fights. Still, it suffered some damages, and was eventually left to rot before Constantinople (see H. TAPAREL, 'Un épisode de la politique orientale de Philippe le Bon: les Bourguignons en Mer Noire (1444-1446)', in *Annales de Bourgogne*, 55 (January-March 1983), 5-29).

> monter les gens d'armes chascun en son naviere [...] et d'aultre part tiroit l'artillerie, qui espouventoit et effroyoit toute la compaignie (III, 38).

Traditionally, the departure of a crusading fleet was always splendid; it was a special and moving event. One could compare this report with Robert de Clari's account of the departure of the crusading fleet which stormed and sacked Constantinople in 1204; the description ranks among the most beautiful pages of Clari's chronicle.

The *guerre de magnificence* was thus, for a prince, a way of acquiring honour and renown, through a splendid display of his wealth and power. The crusade, the noblest of all causes, was the best medium to distinguish and immortalize one's name. Philip's magnificence in his crusading endeavours was manifest in the expeditions he sent, as well as in the advertising of his 'voiage' - this explains the showiness of the Feast of the Pheasant - and the staging of its preparations. However, in order to be truly impressive, the display of power should have visible effects. The chroniclers who insisted most upon Philip's magnificence emphasized the successes achieved. They especially praised the actions performed by Burgundian captains near the coasts of Africa or Syria. Olivier de la Marche recounts how, after the collapse of the 1464 expedition, the Burgundian knights Frederick de Witem and Pedro Vasquez de Saavedra - a Spanish knight who was living at the court of Burgundy -

> garnirent leurs bateaulx le mieulx qu'ilz peurent; et firent ung an la guerre aux Sarrasins, vaucreant la mer à leur advantaige, où ils acquirent grant honneur; car ce n'est pas peu de chose, après l'armée rompue, de soubstenir la guerre ung an contre les infidelles (III, 41).

Modern scholars have shown, however, that Burgundian corsair actions were, in fact, not very glorious, and often exercised against the Orthodox or Muslim subjects of Genoa or other merchant republics[37].

It seems that Philip's magnificence in his crusading efforts had its most important effects, not on the Turks, but on other Catholic countries. Indeed, our Burgundian chroniclers show the prestige that Burgundy had gained, thanks to

[37] See TAPAREL, p. 20-22; PAVIOT, p. 119-123, 138-139.

Philip's magnificence, in the eyes of the German princes, for instance, who were very impressed by the fact that Philip had taken the trouble to come in person to the heart of the Holy Roman Empire to attend the Diet of Regensburg. This journey in the Roman Empire was often depicted, in Burgundian chronicles, as a pre-'voiage', a prelude to the *passagium*, where Philip had visited 'maintes regions estrangnes [...] par tous les Allemaingnes'[38]. Chastelain especially insisted upon the courage exhibited by Philip on this occasion: this journey in Germany could have proved very dangerous, since some German princes were originally rather hostile to Philip (III, 35). But Philip's visit was eventually a triumph. Mathieu d'Escouchy depicts the glorious reception enjoyed by the Duke in various towns of Bavaria. Often, as in Ulm, the Germans would ask Philip to reconcile different parties[39]. In his account, the prestige and power of the Duke is made very clear, as he adds: 'Et joyssoit par tout où il passoit de touttes prerogatives, comme se eust esté l'empereur en personne'[40]. This remark is especially interesting as it implies contempt for the real Emperor, who had failed to attend the Diet of Regensburg.

Mathieu d'Escouchy also describes with admiration the great honours bestowed by Pius II upon the prince of Clèves, Philip's ambassador at Mantua in 1459. He recounts that Pius made the Duke of Clèves sit amongst the cardinals, whereas even Antonio d'Aquaviva, one of the greatest princes of the Kingdom of Naples, had to sit amongst the other ambassadors. He also depicted Pius benevolently listening to the Duke of Clèves, as the Duke asked for Philip to be excused for not having come in person, and answering: 'je sçay bien les excuses estre veritables et raisonnables; et pleust à Dieu que chascun prince de la crestienté, selon soy, fist aussy bon devoir comme lui!'. Finally, he contrasted these honours with the rather cavalier, almost rude manner in which Pius received Charles VII's ambassadors[41].

Thus, although this *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence* was never to be waged, at least in the grand way, as a *passagium*, it was successful in the sense that it brought honour not only upon Philip, but also upon the whole Duchy, and that it

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[38] *Chronique de l'Abbaye de Floreffe*, p. 174, v. 3122-3123.
[39] MATHIEU D'ESCOUCHY, II, 387-392.
[40] *Ibid.*, II, 249.
[41] *Ibid.*, II, 387-392, 394.

demonstrated his Magnificence. But was this enough ? After all, the fact remains that the expeditions sent by Philip often did not achieve much, and, more importantly, that Philip eventually never fulfilled his much advertised vow. Admittedly, the vow was conditional, but it had been pronounced very bombastically, to say the least. Still, it seems that none of our Burgundian chroniclers judged Philip's failure to enact it severely. Often they do not mention the fact, thus defending him by omission. The author of the *Livre des trahisons de France* simply states, in a marginal note, that Philip could not fulfil his vow, 'pour la mort quy le souprist'[42]. Adrien de But explicitly states that Philip did not fulfil his vow, but lays the blame on external elements, in particular on Louis XI, who prevented Philip from departing on many occasions, the first time when he was still the Dauphin, and took shelter from his father at the court of Burgundy, thus making Franco-Burgundian relations very tense, and the second time in 1462-1463, by inducing the inhabitants of Liège to rebel against Philip - something which de But blamed with particular vigour[43].

As for the results of Philip's crusading efforts, Burgundian chroniclers could not always blow up the few successes achieved out of proportion - as the author of the *Livre des trahisons de France* did with the 1444 campaign, stating that Walleran de Wavrin and Geoffroy de Thoisy had 'mervilleusement couru et pillié les terres du soldan et les terres du Turc'[44] - and sometimes they had to acknowledge that only poor results had been achieved. Yet Olivier de la Marche, for example, did not seem to feel a contradiction as he wrote, having described the glorious departure of Antoine's fleet: 'et fut celle belle assemblée rompue à petit exploit' (III, 41). A better example, since after all the collapse of Antoine's expedition was due to Pius' death, would be, as we shall see in the next chapter, Jean de Wavrin presenting, in his dedication, the 1444 expedition to the Levant as a war of magnificence, but showing in his narration that few positive results had been achieved. It seems that, simply, the results did not call into question Philip's Magnificence for our authors.

4. The more critical stance of some chroniclers

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[42] *Livre des trahisons...*, n. 2, p. 227.
[43] ADRIEN DE BUT, p. 445, 449.

Some Burgundian chroniclers, however, appear more critical than the rest. Unsurprisingly, they were not official historiographers. As Jacques Paviot has mentioned, Adrien de But related at length how 'quasdam galeas et navim grandem' sent by Philip to Rhodes had threatened to loot his very abbey in Flanders, and how the abbot only could get rid of them by paying a heavy ransom. These men had been sent to fight the infidels, but 'ad effectum, pullulantibus domesticis insidiis et rebellionibus, nichil est aliud actum quam more piratarum ad oras insistere rapinis et illunionibus'[45]. It had necessitated an attack on his very monastery to open de But's eyes about the kinds of deeds that Philip's crusaders could perform. However, Paviot failed to point out that de But did not attribute these excesses to a fault in the organization of this particular expedition, even though Philip, like Jacques Coeur and others, found it very convenient to fill his galleys with idlers, criminals and other 'caïmans' in order to provide the ships with a cheap crew[46]. Instead, de But blamed it on the vicious natures of the crewmen themselves, and of their captain. A few pages later, de But described how Philip again resorted to the same practice in order to fill some new galleys, but, despite the excesses committed a few years earlier, he did not blame this practice; on the contrary, it seems that he considered it necessary, since, after the wars of Ghent, Flanders was full of idlers and criminals[47]. On the whole, Adrien de But acknowledged and admired Philip's crusading efforts.

Jacques du Clerq was also more critical than other Burgundian chroniclers. The most striking instance of his attitude is the very cold words he used to close his summary of the Feast of the Pheasant, ironically concluding that many lords 'feirent plusieurs grands voeux, desquels je n'en parlerai pour tant qu'il ne feurent pas accomplis ne faits, et si seroit la chose trop longue à racompter'[48]. At the end of the day, the Feast of the Pheasant was, to use Shakespeare's words, 'much ado about nothing'. Du Clercq also shows that the demands made by Philip to his subjects were not always as wholeheartedly accepted as Chastellain would have us believe in his

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[44] *Livre des trahisons...*, p. 227.
[45] ADRIEN DE BUT, p. 309; PAVIOT, p. 123.
[46] Cf. TAPAREL, p. 9.
[47] ADRIEN DE BUT, p. 352.
[48] JACQUES DU CLERCQ, XIII, 168.

Chronique (III, 77). He recounts how the Estates of Artois were 'moult esbahis' by his exorbitant demands, which they granted 'tant par crainte que par amour'. A few pages later he recounted how the taxes were collected 'nonobstant qu'il [the Duke] n'allast nulle part, et qu'il euist dit qu'il n'en vouloit nulles, jusques à ce qu'il iroit sur lesdits Turcs'[49].

Du Clercq is often bitter, sometimes mean - on such occasions, his work is reminiscent of the *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*. As he related the return of Antoine's expedition in 1464, he stated: 'et fust leur voyage de petite value et peu d'efficace'. He also blamed the fact that the knights had not performed anything on this occasion, 'combien que par la mer qu'ils passèrent, ils passèrent par moult de pays sarrazins et infidels'. However, it should be noted that most of Du Clercq's rancour was directed at the knights, who would much rather 'guerroyer à leurs voisins' than protect Christendom, and that he never seemed to question the Duke's good will[50].

On the whole, from reading the Burgudian accounts of Philip's efforts, we get the impression that most chroniclers were very traditional in their attitude towards crusading. Du Clerq is certainly the most backward: to him crusading chiefly meant that the noblemen of the Duchy should go to the Levant, or any other place full of Saracens, and fight, as opposed to giving priority to the most active enemies of Christendom, the Ottoman Turks. He also found it difficult to accept the financial requirements of crusading. Still, our chroniclers did notice some changes. The commonplace but relevant fact that the constant strifes between Christian princes made the organization of a major *passagium* almost impossible is one of them. It is also worth noting how Chastelain emphasized that Pius II had declared a crusade against the Turks because Mehmet II, 'le travailleur des chrestiens', was undeniably Christendom's greatest enemy, and that Antoine was not supposed to attack the 'Tartares', nor the 'Mores de Grenade, ne de Barbarie', without the Pope's explicit consent (V, 51). Some chroniclers also stressed that the actual fighting in crusading was now the business of professional armies. According to Norman Housley, the old

[49] *Ibid.*, XIII, 175, 208-209.
[50] *Ibid.*, XIV, 378-381, 337.

crusading ideal of an armed pilgrimage was still popular among the common people in the late Middle Ages: rather than perpetually giving money for indulgences, and most of the times seeing no results, they often preferred to serve in person[51]. In 1456, mass crusading had miraculously saved Belgrade from the Turks, but most of the times, it created more havoc than good. Thus du Clerq explained that the masses of common people who decided to respond to Pius II's appeals by serving in person would probably have achieved nothing because they had no leader to discipline or guide them[52]. The court chroniclers seem to accept the fact that what was now needed from civilians was financial help. Jean Molinet, in his famous *Complainte de Grece*, emphasized their role as he mentioned their financial contribution, in the prophecy of Merlin recalled and explained by 'Angleterre':

> Ne verrons nous pareillement en ses jours degoutter argent des ongles des mugissans? Et qui sont ceux mugissans? Ne sont ce mie les paÿsans et riches bonshommes qui desployeront l'espargne de leurs tresors pour secourir au bien publicque?[53]

Thus Molinet placed on a comparable level the help offered by the Burgundian knights and the financial contribution of civilians.

I hope I have shown that, contrary to Jacques Paviot's opinion, Burgundian chroniclers not only supported Philip the Good in his crusading plans and endeavours, but also took pride in them. They presented his efforts as a *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence* - save that it was never waged, at least as a *passagium* - emphasizing that Philip's magnificent actions in favour of the safety of Christendom brought honour upon him, and that this was ultimately profitable to the whole Duchy. However, there is certainly some truth in Paviot's statement that the conflict between Charles the Bold and Louis XI, which started shortly after 1464, and the events happening in England, were ultimately more important to the Burgundian chroniclers than the liberation of Eastern Europe. It seems that the chroniclers' interest for the crusade died with Philip the Good: after the fiasco of 1464, when

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[51] HOUSLEY, p. 403, 407-410.
[52] JACQUES DU CLERCQ, XIV, 341-342.
[53] JEAN MOLINET, 'La complainte de Grece', in his *Faictz et dictz*, ed. N. DUPIRE, 3 vol., Paris, SATF, 1936-1939, I, 9-26 (p. 23).

Philip was definitively too old to fulfil his vow, their concern became much more sporadic. A symbol of this shift of interest could be Adrien de But's assertion that, in 1466, Louis XI learnt from reading the Koran how to behave like a tyrant, and that princes did not commit a sin if they persecuted their adversaries, or used fraud and treachery[54]. In other words, Louis XI was becoming as dangerous as the Turks to the welfare of the Burgundian state. But it is perhaps unfair to chose Adrien de But as an example for this shift of interest, for he seems to be the only chronicler whose concern about the progresses of the Ottomans remained unchanged.

Moreover, the Burgundian chroniclers often found themselves in a clumsy position as they were trying to extol Philip's crusading efforts when the results were often rather disappointing. And none drew any far-reaching conclusions from a crucial point, the sign of a chivalric ideal's defeat: Philip's eventual failure to fulfil his vow. None, except, perhaps, Georges Chastelain, and it is to his testimony that I now wish to turn exclusively.

5. Georges Chastelain and the death of an ideal

Georges Chastelain, Philip's official historiographer, is the Burgundian author who has the most to say about his patron's crusading endeavours. Whole chapters of his *Chronique* are devoted to this theme, and they can be analyzed as a quite independent whole, in a sense, a story inside the story. Until recently, only Jean-Claude Delclos had devoted some interesting lines to this part of Chastelain's narration. In particular, Delclos demonstrated that the sixth book of the work was composed almost as the events proceeded, which gives a striking sense of immediacy to Chastelain's comments, and enables us to see the evolution of his thought[55]. Jean Dufournet briefly pointed out an important aspect of the chronicler's thought, the Machiavellian character of some of his comments on crusading in the *Chronique*'s

[54] 'Ludovicus, Franciae rex, volumina legens Machometi, coepit juxta contenta despotico regimine uti, quo contra Dei mandata multa sibi licere dixit atque non esse peccatum adversarios persequi, quolibet modo, fraudulenter aut intoxicatione, et a fratre suo primum incepit'. Cf. ADRIEN DE BUT, p. 474.
[55] Cf. DELCLOS, *Le témoignage...*, p. 71-74, 134-137, 149, 265, 293.

sixth book[56]. Very recently, Jean Devaux concerned himself with Chastelain's comments, stressing again the chronicler's support for his patron's plans, however he failed to emphasize the striking originality of Chastelain's testimony: the evolution of the chronicler's reflection, and his increased realism with regard to crusading[57]. According to Delclos, Chastelain's comments on the 1464 expedition do not question his support of Philip's ambition to take part in a crusade: his reserve was based on the fact that, seeing the disastrous turn which the expedition was taking, and the fact that very few states had offered their support, Chastelain, fearing for the Duke's safety, opposed the idea that Philip should join this particular expedition[58]. In this section, however, I propose to show that Chastelain's opposition to Philip taking part in the 1464 crusade was heralded by the chronicler's earlier comments on the problems which prevented Philip from taking the cross, and that the defects of the expedition only revealed and reinforced a new turn of mind with regard to crusading. By studying the evolution of his thought from 1454 to 1464, I intend to demonstrate that Chastelain, who felt deeply concerned about Philip's dream, presented the Duke's crusading endeavours as a kind of tragedy in many acts of which Philip would be the hero, a psychological drama which could be entitled: 'the death of an ideal'.

The story for us starts in 1454, since the parts of the chronicle that would have dealt with the fall of Constantinople and the Feast of the Pheasant are lost. We do know, however, from Chastelain's prologue, that he felt very distressed about the fall of the Byzantine capital, and the achievements of Mehmet II. It is a significant fact that Chastelain gave so much importance to the Turkish advance in his prologue, when chroniclers usually simply promised, at that stage, to relate the 'nobles entreprises, conquestes [...] et fais d'armes' performed by noble and valiant men 'tant de crestienté comme des infidelles de nostre foy'[59]. Chastelain instead replaced the deeds of Mehmet II in the general context of the troubled age he lived in, when kingdoms were made and unmade, when the cosmos itself had shown 'signes et

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[56] J. DUFOURNET, 'Retour à Georges Chastelain', in *Le Moyen Age*, 88 (1982), 329-342 (p. 338-339).
[57] DEVAUX, 'Le *Saint Voyage...*', p. 55-59.
[58] DELCLOS, *Le témoignage...*, n. 238 p. 134.
[59] MATHIEU D'ESCOUCHY, I, 1.

prodiges'. In this truly apocalyptic context, Mehmet appeared as a new antechrist, whom none dared to oppose, except Philip:

> Et dernièrement, qui pis vaut, s'est eslevé en mes jours l'ennemy cruel de Dieu, le grand Turc, un nouveau Mahomet, violeur du crucifix et de son Eglise, [...] prince de l'armée de Satan, lequel [...] a osté aux chrestiens leur bastille de Constantinople et soumise à sa dition en confuse et doloreuse attente cy-près. Et n'a esté trouvé un seul prince chrestien qui, par ensemble, ny particulier, se soit essayé [...] y résister, ny par armes, ny par conseil, réservé un seul de qui présentement ne veul faire mention, pour raison de non autruy charger, ny grever (I, 11).

In 1454, as Philip returned from his travels in the Holy Roman Empire, he was, according to Chastelain's narrative, at the height of his glory. He was even, so to speak, in a state of grace: throughout the journey, this 'long périlleux voiage' (III, 6), during which all the princes 'qui autreffois l'avoient deffié de feu et de sang' (III, 35) had miraculously become, not only his friends, but almost his subjects, God had clearly demonstrated that he was watching over Philip, as an acknowledgement of his efforts to serve Him. In the good towns of his Duchy Philip was acclaimed wildly, as a hero, so much that 'à peine à mortel homme n'en séoit point faire autant' (III, 6). At this moment, the ideal of crusading was not only alive and well, but at its most exalted point. Everybody, in the Duchy and elsewhere, was expecting the Duke to take the cross. The excitement reached its climax with the apparition of a comet, 'un grant merveilleux feu [...] si merveilleusement clair que tous voians s'en espoentoient', which, during the first night that Philip was staying in the Hague (he had come to Holland, amongst other things, to ask the Estates for subsidies for the crusade) crossed the dark sky, flying over Philip's town house, and disappeared into 'la parfonde mer' (III, 69). Many witnesses gathered that this comet was heralding great things for the Duke; Chastelain felt assured that these things were related to the *passagium*.

Chastelain's narrative of the events of 1454 and the following months, when everybody was expecting the Duke to take his leave shortly, is filled with a curious mixture of excitement and sadness. The sadness appears, for instance, in the words supposedly uttered by Charles VII, who admired the Duke at the time, envied him,

and feared that he might never meet him, as Philip was about to depart for a perilous journey:

> Saint Jehan! saint Jehan! beau-frère de Bourgogne s'en va en Turquie, ce poise moy, saint Jehan! c'est le plus honoré prince qui vive, il doit beaucoup à Dieu, si je l'avoie vu une fois, j'en morroie plus aise, saint Jehan! saint Jehan! (III, 32).

In these lines, crusading appears as the dream, the fantasy so to speak, of every head of state; Charles admired Philip because he was about to make this dream a reality. The sadness is also felt in the discourse of Jean Boursier, a French knight who had come to Philip's court in Bruges to tell Philip that the King was granting him his leave and allowing him to levy the subsidies: Boursier 'plusieurs fois fondit en larmes que ne pooit restraindre' (III, 37), as he was telling the Duke that Charles greatly admired him and encouraged him, but felt compelled to warn him against the great dangers of the journey.

This mixture of joy and sadness is comparable to the feeling that a Christian would harbour when seeing a fellow Christian walking towards martyrdom. Chastelain emphasized that Philip understood he might never return from his journey, and that he accepted it. The chronicler depicts Philip almost scolding a French bishop who warned him, considering 'tel prince qu'il estoit', against the dangers of a *passagium*. Philip answered the bishop:

> Vraiement, monseigneur de Langres, je considère bien que vray est ce que vous dites, et que du dangier y chiet beaucoup, [...] mais face Dieu de moy ce qu'il lui plaira, car quant je sauroye véritablement que j'y devroie mourir [...] , si je trouve les choses disposées pour y pooir aller, sy irai-je et ne m'en tenra riens nulle (III, 33).

In this speech, religious fervour triumphs over reason, to the point of becoming madness, in the positive, Christian sense of the term. Philip could not understand that a clergyman should play the devil's advocate by trying to bring him to his senses, and by subtly suggesting that, as a head of state, he had no right to jeopardize his life. From reading Chastelain, we get a very precise idea of what the chronicler's conception of a crusade was, at least before the dramatic events of 1464. Chastelain

appears as a deeply religious man, even when judged according to the religious standards of the 15th century. He insists very much upon the smallness and helplessness of man compared to the greatness of God. Men had to submit to God's will; this also applied to great princes, whatever considerable responsibilities they may have had. God expected Philip to risk his life and leave his states, and he had to obey: 'Dieu le veult!' - in the words of the First Crusade's heroes.

We have seen how most chroniclers presented Philip's proposed *passagium* as a *guerre de magnificence*. Chastelain also emphasized the magnificence of Philip's crusading efforts: we only need to refer to his description of the Duke's preparations between November 1463 and February 1464, when Philip still thought that he would take part in an expedition. The description gives us a clear idea of Philip's power and wealth: everything is mentioned, from the 'louchets et [...] pelles de fer pour manouvriers' to the rich tents, trappings for the horses, and 'autres riches estoremens de corps pour fait de guerre, qui valoient rançons de rois et princes'. The Duke naturally had some armours and garments prepared, which were particularly splendid 'car les avoit gardés pour cestuy voyage comme pour fin de sa gloire' (IV, 430-431). However, Chastelain, more than any other chronicler, also insisted on Philip's humility, for the crusade was primarily a penitential experience, and nowhere else do we get such a powerful image of the Duke actually 'taking the cross', ultimately laying everything in God's hands, ready to imitate Christ. The crusade would bring glory, but it was also a burden. The story of Charles VII's widow asking the Duke to let her take part in the expedition, 'non pas, ce fit dire, comme une royne de tel Estat comme elle avoit esté, mais comme une povre meschine toute humble, dessous la grâce de Nostre-Seigneur' (IV, 363-364), is I think very revealing of the state of mind of Philip, as it appears in Chastelain's narration. It is difficult to imagine what this crusade, led by an old man, followed by the knights of the Duchy, accompanied by an old woman in her carriage, could have achieved. As we can gather, Philip's ideals of crusading as depicted by Chastelain were not exactly practical, despite the intensive preparations made. Apparently, the results of the campaign did not even matter that much; the most important thing was that, should Philip die, he would go straight into heaven.

The first difficulties, after the excitement of 1454, arise with the Dauphin's arrival at the court of Burgundy in 1456, and they will regularly prevent Philip from taking the cross until 1464. Chastellain marvels at the character of these unexpected difficulties; to him, they appear extraordinary. He recalls a prediction made to Jean de Châlon - a Burgundian lord who seems to have been more practical than Philip, since, unsure of whether the crusade would take place, and wishing 'à en savoir le vray, afin de soy pourvoir et préainser sur ce, selon l'exigence du cas', Châlon had recourse to an astrologer, who explained:

> Je trouve que qui voudroit aller quérir une pierre au fond de la parfonde mer, en une roche, on la tireroit dehors aussi facilement et à si peu de peine, comme on pourra mener, ne traire ce prince dont la question est, en cestuy voyage (IV, 451-452).

The last difficulty, the quarrel between Philip and his son Charles, which made it impossible for Philip to leave since Charles was supposed to govern the Duchy in his absence, is described by Chastelain as being simply diabolical (IV, 459). Clearly the devil was doing all he could to prevent Philip from taking the cross. But quarrels between princes an their sons often occurred in the Middle Ages: the same thing had happened between Charles VII and the Dauphin Louis. Philip and Chastelain were starting to realize how difficult it was for a Renaissance prince to chivalrously defend the faith in person: because the prince was governing more autocratically, his office implied many new obligations and responsibilities. If one adds to this the problem of the neighbouring states' attitude, it is quite easy to understand why Philip eventually never took the cross.

Nevertheless, at the time, Philip's crusading ideals were still vivid: this is quite obvious in the very moving pages that relate the preparations made between November 1463 and February 1464, when Philip was still hoping to depart. Chastelain depicts the Duke in front of all the knights who had taken a vow at the Feast of the Pheasant ten years earlier, inquiring whether they were ready to follow him. Jean Devaux has pointed out how skilfully Chastelain pictured the virtues of

chivalry slowly taking over the crowd (IV, 441)[60]. The noblemen were at first quite taken aback, until a knight loudly renewed his vow:

> luy, non le tout plus sage du pays, béoit par une arrogance d'embler cestuy mot à tous les grands qui là estoient [...] par quoy, quant il fut dit, il demeura dit, fust fol, fust sage, n'y accomptoit riens, et les autres qui en rirent l'ensiévirent (IV, 442).

In this passage, religious 'madness' and chivalrous enthusiasm still triumph over reason. Soon this will change. The episode where Chastelain insists upon the fear of the Estates of the 'bonnes villes', who saw that Philip was preparing to leave without having solved the problem of his quarrel with his son, thus not knowing who would govern the Duchy, and who decided 'de [...] aller par un commun accort eux ruer à genoux devant le duc et luy prier qu'en compassion de tous ses bons et humbles subgects, il leur voulsist declarer avant son partement en quelle main [...] il les laisseroit' (IV, 464) illustrates perfectly Norman Housley's comment that, although the prince was theoretically obliged to defend the faith, he soon realized that 'the obligation faced by each subject to put service to prince before everything inevitably entailed a corresponding obligation on the prince's part to do nothing which would imperil the realm and his subjects'[61].

Considering all these difficulties, Chastelain wrote Chapter 62 of Book VI wherein he declared that, should Philip never manage to fulfil his vow, which seemed likely in January 1464, he should be excused, 'car qui fait ce qu'il peut, ne Dieu, ne homme, ne fortune ne peuvent demander plus riens'. And to protect him against 'les mal parlans', Chastelain added 'que sa bonne volenté et diligence montrées tous les jours, luy seront et devront estre réputées pour effet lors'. Philip's crusading endeavours had earned him as much honour as if he had actually taken the cross, and his 'gloire perpétuelle quant au monde' was intact (IV, 461). It is strange that no scholar should have emphasized the importance of this chapter whereby the official historiographer took it upon himself to excuse his prince from a chivalric vow as honourable and ambitious as that pronounced by Philip. Being clearly disappointed

[60] DEVAUX, 'Le *Saint Voyage...*', p. 58.
[61] HOUSLEY, p. 453.

with the unfavourable circumstances, almost with God himself - after all, Philip could not do anything if He did not pull his weight - Chastelain resorted to the more practical solution of stating that Philip's endeavours were, in terms of honour gained or saved, equivalent to a *passagium*.

Yet, at the beginning of 1464, there were still chances that Philip might fulfil his vow: Pius II was organizing a large-scale expedition, and had decided to lead the crusade in person, despite his age, in the hope that other rulers might follow his example. Pius also was constantly pressing Philip to keep his promise and take the cross[62]. In his narrative of the collapse of Pius' expedition, the shift in Chastelain's attitude becomes even more striking, and in these pages the ideals of crusading, as they were expressed in the first part of the chronicle - I do not wish, of course, to suggest that Chastelain became opposed to crusading in general - receive a fatal blow. Chastelain describes in great detail the collapse of the expedition, the heated debate that took place at the court of Burgundy, and the grief of the Duke who gradually had to relinquish the idea of fulfilling his vow, even though he never completely abandoned the hope of taking the cross.

Chastelain's comments about the practice of mass crusading, for example, show that his views were increasingly contrasting with Pius' ideals concerning crusading. Crowds of common people had responded to Pius' appeal by choosing to serve in person. Pius could not be blamed for this because he had explicitly stated that only those who were fully armed and could sustain themselves for at least half a year should serve in person[63]. However, we learn from the small gifts he made, as a gesture of good will, to priests who had proposed to raise their own companies, that he had not discouraged the common people from taking the cross if they wanted. After all, as the Sienese envoy Leonardo Benvoglienti had pointed out to the Signoria, these improvised crusaders were much more praiseworthy than all the princes who were not performing their duty as defenders of the faith[64]. Chastelain started by blaming the Venetians who were asking the common people to pay a fee in order to join the crusade; however his argument soon changed. He described in vivid

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[62] ADRIEN DE BUT, p. 421-422, 449; GEORGES CHASTELAIN, V, 45.
[63] Cf. MITCHELL, p. 264.

detail the turn which the crusade would have taken if these amateur soldiers, who arrived in flocks 'atout la croix en leur poitrine', with no money, had been welcomed with open arms, stating that 'on les eust tués et meurdris comme bestes; fussent morts de faim et de povreté, eussent fait et cuidié faire meschief, [...] car n'eussent point eu de chef, ne de prince pour à qui eux retraire, ne rallier' (V, 47). Of course, there is no evidence that Chastelain was ever in favour of mass crusading, and one cannot assert that his ideals changed in that regard. But what matters is that Chastelain, who was at the beginning blaming the Venetians, ended up stating:

> ne suis pas tant for adhérent au parti de ceux qui blasment les Vénitiens en leur convoitise, que je ne soie encore de la secte de ceux qui distinguent et discernent leur haulte et merveilleuse prudence, qui les tient et a tenus jà si longuement en règne et en gloire (V, 47-48).

The subtle use of the word 'discernent', and the laudatory words employed to describe the Venetian Republic, strongly suggest that Chastelain was in fact much more inclined to praise the Venetians than to blame them. Yet, we saw how Chastelain had hitherto prized enthusiasm higher than prudence. Eventually, his desire to see this crusade as starting very badly - and it admittedly was - in order to excuse Philip's failure to join it led Chastelain to praise the Venetians, whom Pius had always held in contempt, because they were 'seeking the Peloponnese not Jesus'[65].

Chastelain's disillusionment and increasing pragmatism becomes more obvious in the next pages, as the chronicler describes the heated debate that took place at the court of Burgundy, over the question of whether Philip should join the Pope. Pius vigorously requested the Duke's presence, and Philip's ambassadors had promised in his name that he would personally join company with the crusaders. Yet, Chastelain shows how strongly rebuked by Philip's counsellors Guillaume Fillastre was, because the chancellor insisted that it was a question of honour that the Duke should go (V, 54-55). Chastelain excuses the prelate, whose good will was obvious, but cannot agree with him. He depicts with frightful images the fate that awaited

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[64] *Ibid.*, p. 262.
[65] Quotation from Pius II's *Commentaries* found in SCHWOEBEL, p. 77.

Philip and the House of Burgundy, as could be gathered from the rather appalling state of the crusading fleet - few of the promised troops had arrived, and pestilence had broken out in Ancona:

> la maison de Bourgogne en seroit destruite et minée à jamais d'avoir et de substance, et n'en venroit riens à effet, ne à fruit; car il [Philip] mourroit en chemin, ce disoit-on, en estrange terre [...] et n'auroit assistance des princes chrestiens, si non povre (V, 49).

As one can see, the thought that Philip might die like Saint Louis, however glorious such a death would be, did not enchant our chronicler.

The last sparkles of the Duke's earlier crusading ideals can be seen in Chastelain's description of Philip's long tormented thoughts (V, 53), a passage which has been praised by Jean-Claude Declos because it demonstrates Chastellain's skill as an amateur psychologist[66]. For Chastelain, however, the break was accomplished. In a startling passage about Guillaume Fillastre which sounds the death knell for many medieval ideals, Chastelain explicitly states that religion and politics are two distinct things which cannot always be reconciled:

> Et pour ce dit-on que ces grans théologiens et ces gens dévots qui riens ne savent des affaires du monde, ne sont experts des humaines convenabletés [...] et ne sont communément point profitables à royaux consaux, ne en affaires de princes, pour ce que leur jugement gisent tout là haut en l'air, et n'ont point de pieds [...] en terre, certes, parce qu'ils n'y ont point de vocation, ne de pratique, ne maniance de publique nécessité, avecques qui toute divine loi et escript dispensent et ploient (V, 55).

Thus, Chastelain's original ideas about crusading had changed radically. He used to envisage crusading as an act of folly inspired by God, unhindered by earthly considerations, a generous and joyful walk to martyrdom, exactly like Pius II, who movingly declared to his cardinals on September 23, 1463: 'we must change to paths long disused [...]. Abstinence, purity, innocence, zeal for the faith, religious fervor, scorn of death, eagerness for martyrdom have set the Church of Rome over the whole

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[66] DELCLOS, *Le témoignage...*, p. 335.

world'[67]. But in his desire to excuse the Duke, Chastelain ended up blaming Pius for having tried to drag Philip down with him in his mad suicidal dream, stating that the Pope 'usoit de légèreté [...] et de peu d'avis, de le [Philip] solliciter ainsy seul pour un si grant cas' (V, 63)[68]. Eventually Philip won, because his frustrated crusading efforts had still brought him glory, and because he had done everything he humanly could.

- **Conclusion**

Philip's crusading endeavours surely were a generous and relatively disinterested action, springing from a sincere desire to perform his duty as a Christian prince, and from a true concern about the safety of Christendom, but they were also motivated by a thirst for honour and glory. We saw that crusading was a chivalrous ideal *par excellence*; it is thus not surprising if Philip, as a most chivalrous prince, eager to procure his state more prestige on the international scene, chose to direct his attention to this particular activity. Burgundian chroniclers emphasized all the magnificence of Philip's crusading actions and endeavours, and how much honour they had brought him. But there was more than one flaw in this *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*. Most importantly, the chroniclers could not provide an adequate explanation for the fact that Philip eventually never fulfilled his vow, which, albeit conditional, had been pronounced with almost outrageous ceremony at the Feast of the Pheasant. Georges Chastelain, who clearly adored his Duke, took his dearest dream most seriously, and as he closely followed the unfolding of events, he saw better than anyone else the tragedy unfolding, the slow death of an ideal. Chastelain's particular sensitivity was also due to the fact that he was as much an artist as a chronicler; besides, as an amateur psychologist, he was most fitted to describe this

[67] Quotation from SCHWOEBEL, n. 72, p. 81.

[68] There seems to have been a lot of resentment in Burgundy against Pius at the time of his death, perhaps for the same reason, for Jacques Du Clercq declared that Pius died 'en grand dangier pour son ame, et en parloit-on en mauvaise manière; [...] et en ce temps le plus des gens d'église [...] estoient si abandonnés et outrageux en orgueil, luxure et convoitise, qu'on ne polroit plus dire' (JACQUES DU CLERCQ , XIV, 352).

'war never waged'. His writing and thought was acquiring more and more maturity, especially when compared to his narrative of the early years of Philip's rule, as seen in my first chapter. However, as far as his report of Philip's crusading efforts is concerned, the distance travelled by Chastelain is tantamount to a loss of illusions, in this case about the old chivalric dream of crusading.

For the next chapter, I wish to remain within the field of Philip's crusading endeavours, turning to a different problem: the practice of crusading, on the field. Philip never went to the Levant, but sent many Burgundian knights as part of his crusading endeavours. One of the best testimonies of these Burgundian experiences of the Levant is Jean de Wavrin's narrative of the crusading expedition lead by his nephew Walleran in 1444-1445: we shall see how Walleran, as an eyewitness, and his uncle described these exotic military operations; we shall also see that the expedition was often far from being a *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*, though it was conceived as one.

Crusading as a *guerre de magnificence* : a 15th century illumination

Fig. 5. All sails set : the magnificence of a crusading fleet steering for alien lands. This 15th century illumination depicts a Franco-Genoese expedition to Barbary which took place in 1390. From a manuscript of Froissart's *Chroniques*.

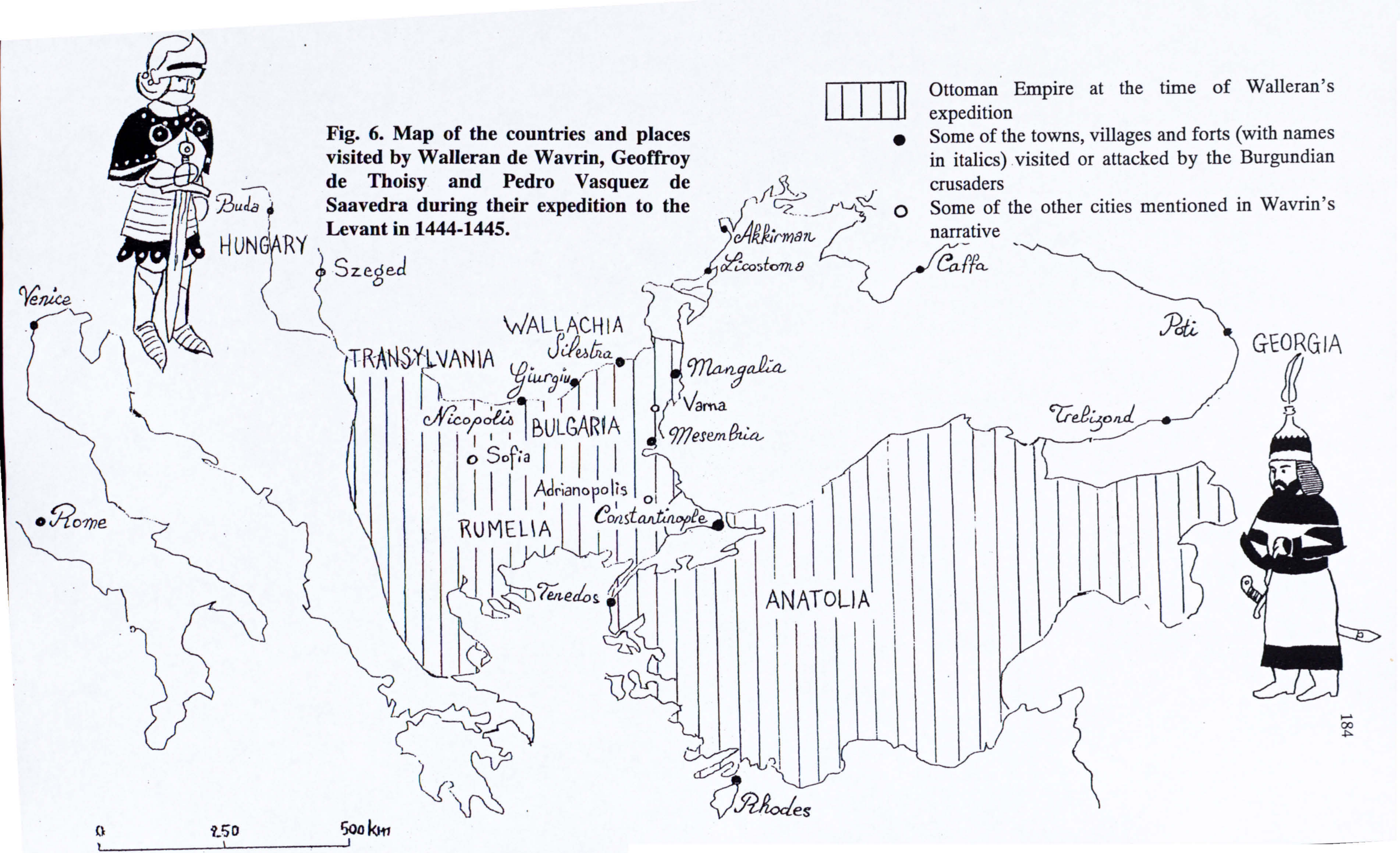

Fig. 6. Map of the countries and places visited by Walleran de Wavrin, Geoffroy de Thoisy and Pedro Vasquez de Saavedra during their expedition to the Levant in 1444-1445.

Chapter 4: Philip the Good's crusading endeavours in Burgundian historiography (II). Adventures in the Levant: Jean de Wavrin's narrative of Walleran de Wavrin's expedition against the Ottoman Turks (1444-1445) [1]

> Item, quand l'on arrma lesdites galleez l'on porta la banniere de monseigneur le Duc [...] en la loge de la pleyse Sainct Marc et fu fait ledit armement publicquement a son de trompettes et de menestrez...
>
> Extract from Walleran de Wavrin's report of the 1444 expedition[2]

• Introduction

The preceding chapter concentrated primarily on the theory and ideal of crusading in Burgundy under the rule of Philip the Good, taking a particular interest in the Burgundian chroniclers' comments about Philip's proposed 'saint voiage'. We saw, however, that the help offered by Philip to the Christian states and communities of the Levant was not purely theoretical, since much of his naval policy was directed towards the relief of the Christians threatened with, or already under the Turkish yoke. Most Burgundian chroniclers presented the expeditions sent by Philip to the Levant as magnificent actions, and praised the deeds performed by Burgundian captains, though some, more critical or better informed than the others, were aware of the defects in these expeditions, or in the results achieved. In this chapter, I propose

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[1] A French version of this chapter, entitled 'Des chevaliers bourguignons dans les pays du Levant: l'expédition de Walleran de Wavrin contre les Turcs ottomans (1444-1445) dans les *Anchiennes cronicques d'Engleterre* de Jean de Wavrin', will be found in *Le Moyen Age*, 106 / 2 (2000), 255-275.
[2] ADN, B 1984, n° 59 234, article VIII.

to further investigate the treatment, in Burgundian historiography, of these crusading actions, by concentrating exclusively on the best account of a crusading expedition sent by Philip to the Levant to be found in a Burgundian chronicle: Jean de Wavrin's narrative of his nephew Walleran's crusade.

In 1444, Burgundy was one of the only Western European powers to take part in what François Pall referred to as the last European alliance against the enemies of Christianity[3] - although modern historians tend to regard every 15th century crusading effort as 'the last crusade'. In June or July 1442, Philip and his court had been visited by a rather exotic 'chevalier'[4], the Greek ambassador Theodore Carystos. Carystos had been sent by the Byzantine Emperor John VIII Paleologus to various Western European princes to request them to help save the Byzantine Empire's last remains. Only Pope Eugene IV, the Venetians and Philip were to respond positively. Philip promised to send ten ships, though he only had his 'grosse nave', a carvel and a whaler at his disposal. The Duke had four galleys built in Nice, and the Republic of Venice lent him four more galleys. Walleran de Wavrin was appointed 'lieutenant et capitaine général' of the Burgundian fleet, and was to share the command of the Christian fleet with the Venetian prelate and papal legate Francesco Condelmare, as well as with the Venetian admiral Alvise Loredano[5].

We must be thankful that Walleran happened to be the nephew of Jean de Wavrin, for the latter inserted in his *Croniques d'Engleterre* an accurate and fascinating account of Walleran's crusade, which is also the longest wholly original report to be found in his chronicle. This exotic interlude, rather unique in Burgundian historiography, testifies to Jean de Wavrin's interest for crusading and Levantine affairs, and offers us an invaluable insight into the reflections that direct confrontation with the reality of 15th century crusading could inspire in Burgundian knights. In 1967, Robert Schwoebel described Wavrin's account as 'one of the longest, most interesting and best informed reports on any Turkish-related topic to be

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[3] F. PALL, 'Un moment décisif de l'histoire du Sud-Est européen: la croisade de Varna (1444)', in *Balcania*, 7 (1944), 102-120.
[4] Cf. GEORGES CHASTELAIN, *Le livre des faits du bon chevalier messire Jacques de Lalaing*, in *Œuvres*, VIII, 1-259 (p. 33).
[5] On the preparation of the fleet and the campaign see TAPAREL, 'Un épisode...', and PAVIOT, p. 113-123.

found in any Western chronicle of the 15th century', adding that it deserved to be studied more carefully[6]. It seems that the longest analysis of the narrative which is not purely historical was made by Dorothy Vaughan in 1954; it still is mainly a summary, and her personal comments about the text are scarce. The notes which Émilie Dupont and Nicolas Iorga added to their editions of the report are invaluable, but they mainly help to clarify this text dealing with events which were in their time very obscure[7].

We learn from Jean de Wavrin himself that he often participated in long conversations about history and war with his lord - for Jean de Wavrin was a bastard - and nephew Walleran (I, 1-2)[8], and certainly the main source for Jean's report was Walleran's own oral narration of his adventures to his uncle. Nicolas Iorga thought that Walleran had dictated the narrative to Jean[9]. But in his dedication of the *Croniques d'Engleterre*, in the prologue, Jean seems to imply that Walleran may be surprised - and probably delighted - to find a narrative of his adventures in the chronicle. Comparing Jean's account with the short reports that Walleran wrote for his Duke, preserved in the Archives départementales du Nord[10], does not help identifying the 'true' author. One could argue that the reports, unlike the account, are written in a business-like style and that Jean, as a compiler, had more literary experience than Walleran; on the other hand, Walleran did not intend his reports to be literary exercises. Thus the 'true' author eludes us; probably both Walleran and Jean should be considered as the narrative's authors. In fact, the absence of one single author helps us to see 'l'œuvre fermée [se transformer] en œuvre ouverte', to paraphrase Umberto Eco and Roland Barthes, with regard to the message of the

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[6] SCHWOEBEL, n. 12, p. 110.

[7] Cf. D. M. VAUGHAN, *Europe and the Turk. A Pattern of Alliances (1350-1700)*, Liverpool, University Press, 1954, p. 60-61; JEAN DE WAVRIN, *Anchiennes cronicques d'Engleterre. Choix de chapitres inédits*, ed. É. DUPONT for the SHF, 3 vol., Paris, Ve Renouard, 1858-1863, II, 12-162; N. IORGA, 'Cronica lui Wavrin si Romînii', in *Buletinul Comisiei istorice a României*, VI, Bucarest, Datina Romaneasca, 1927, p. 59-148. See also N. IORGA, 'Les aventures "sarrazines" des Français de Bourgogne au XVe siècle', in *Mélanges d'histoire générale*, ed. C. MARINESCO, Cluj, Cartea Româneasca, 1927, p. 7-56.

[8] All references to Wavrin's *Croniques* still apply to William Hardy's edition, unless when Émilie Dupont's edition is explicitly mentioned.

[9] IORGA, 'Les aventures...', p. 14.

[10] ADN, B 1984, n° 59 234 and ADN, B 2074, n° 65 309.

account[11]. Indeed, Wavrin's account is rather ambiguous, because it is the story of the confrontation of chivalrous ideals with other mentalities. There is a plurality of voices and senses in the account that does not need a study of the words' semantics to be detected: it simply results from the fact that Walleran and Jean faithfully transcribed the opinions of men of cultures different than their own: the Hungarian Turk hunter János Hunyadi, the Byzantine Emperor, even some Turks. Wavrin's account is also the story of the confrontation of a Westerner's expectations vis à vis the crusade with reality. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the way in which Wavrin - whether Walleran or Jean or both - depicted this 15th century crusade, to understand how a Burgundian nobleman imagined, and experienced, the reality of crusading in the Late Middle Ages.

1. Context of Walleran's crusade

Before turning our attention to Wavrin's narrative, it is interesting to take a close look at Jean de Wavrin's dedication of his work to Walleran, as it explains why Jean included an account of Walleran's Levantine adventures in the *Croniques d'Engleterre*:

> Et aussi se en ce mon très honnouré seigneur comprendez ou trouvez chose qui puist tourner ou pourfiter à l'amplification et recommandation de vostre noble personne, il le vous plaise retenir à la loenge de nostre seigneur Jhesu Crist, en aiant, par vostre grace mémoire de vostre très humble serviteur (I, 4).

As one can see, Wavrin's first reason for including this narrative in his chronicle was to praise his nephew and patron, by advertising the good work he had performed for Christendom. In fact, we shall see that Walleran did not accomplish much with this

[11] 'Chaque époque peut croire [...] qu'elle détient le sens canonique de l'œuvre, mais il suffit d'élargir un peu l'histoire pour transformer ce sens singulier en sens pluriel et l'œuvre fermée en œuvre ouverte. La définition même de l'œuvre change: elle n'est plus un fait historique, elle devient un fait anthropologique, puisque aucune histoire ne l'épuise'. Cf. R. BARTHES, *Critique et vérité*, Paris, Seuil, 1966, p. 50. Barthes is here drawing on U. ECO, *L'Œuvre ouverte*, Paris, Seuil, 1965.

expedition, but the fact that he put his life at risk for Christendom - which should be the dream of every knight - was in itself laudable. As if expecting some show of modesty from Walleran, Jean added that his narrative was ultimately intended to extol the name of God, who was and always should always be honoured by great works for the protection and propagation of the Christian faith. One should note that, despite the title of his chronicle, Wavrin, keeping with the medieval tradition of the *speculum historiale*, was always prone to narrate important events that took place in far-off countries, especially when related to the progress or defeats of Christianity's enemies.

In his dedication, Jean de Wavrin also emphasized how Walleran had been sent

> comme capitaine général de pluiseurs galées et navires armées et garnies de grant nombre de gens d'armes et de trait, par l'ordonnance [...] de très hault et très exellent et puissant prince Phelipe, duc de Bourgoingne [...] es mers du Levant et de Grece, pour obvier [...] alencontre des entreprises des infidèles turcs (I, 2).

By laying stress on the power of the fleet, Wavrin clearly portrayed the expedition as a magnificent and generous gesture from Philip, in a word, a *guerre de magnificence.* Having seen how Jean heralded his narrative, let us now turn to the account.

It is greatly to Jean de Wavrin's credit as a historian that he placed the conflicts in which Walleran took part in the broader context of the Ottoman sultans' attempts to extend their dominion. Throughout the first part of his narration, Jean de Wavrin skilfully skips from events in the Occident, in Rhodes or the Bosphorus to affairs taking place in Hungary, Wallachia, or Bulgaria. In the case of the latter three, Wavrin could not rely on first hand testimony, but he still dwelt on them at length in his effort to produce a continuous and intelligible narrative. Wavrin's story begins in Wallachia, with the imprisonment of Vlad Dracul, the Voivode of Wallachia, father of Vlad Tepes better known as Dracula. He recounts, with many colourful details that demonstrate his skill as a story-teller, how Sultan Murad II, hearing for the first time about a country called Wallachia, 'pays fort riche et bien peuplé d'hommes grans et

puissans' (V, 5), started to get envious and expressed the wish to incorporate Wallachia into his Empire. Murad II invited Vlad Dracul to a feast at the Sublime Porte on the pretext that he wished to conclude an alliance between the Wallachians and the Turks. Vlad accepted, but he was seized during the feast, and imprisoned. It should be noted that Wavrin greatly simplified the relations between Wallachia and the Porte: to him, Vlad's imprisonment and the Turkish aggression upon Wallachia that followed simply resulted from Murad's greed. But in reality, Murad knew both Wallachia and Vlad Dracul very well, the latter being Murad's vassal, albeit a Christian. It seems that Vlad II was in fact ousted from his throne by János Hunyadi, who was chasing the Turks of Transylvania and was angry at the fact that Vlad had let them pass freely through Wallachia. Vlad subsequently sought refuge at the Porte, and was imprisoned for having had intelligence with the Hungarians[12]. The story that Vlad II had been betrayed by the Turks seems to have been widely circulated in the 15th century as we also find it in a letter of the Constantinopolitan friar Barthélémy de Gênes[13]. We cannot, however, expect Wavrin to have understood how critical Vlad's position was, since the Voivode was obliged to compromise both with the Hungarians and the Turks. Wavrin's narrative is otherwise remarkably well informed, with informative touches of local colour: this is noticeable for instance in his description of the feast held at the Porte, as he describes the sultan sitting 'dedens ung pavillon tout doublé d'un veloux cramoisy, [...] paré de riches coussins et oreillies de drapz d'or et de soye, lequel pavillon estoit [...] troussé contremont environ de dix piedz de haulteur adfin qu'il veist ses gens et capittaines' (V, 7). Wavrin subsequently relates the victories obtained by Hunyadi against the Turks in Wallachia, which encouraged the Hungarians to undertake a major offensive in Bulgaria.

Our chronicler appears particularly well informed in his account of the Long Campaign or *Langer Feldzug*, when the new Polish King of Hungary Wladislaw III Jagellon, János Hunyadi, the papal legate Cesarini and the exiled Serbian Despot George Brankovic managed to penetrate deep into Ottoman territory, gaining some impressive victories without the help of the powers of the Occident, who were either

[12] For a biography of Vlad II see R. FLORESCU and R. T. MC NALLY, *Dracula. A Biography of Vlad the Impaler*, New York, Hawthorn Books, 1973, p. 29-45.

unprepared, or engaged in domestic disputes. The campaign is presented as a conflict between the forces of God and evil. Wavrin relates at length how, prior to their greatest victory, Cesarini granted absolution to all Christians, and adds: 'le legat fist dreschier la croix et porter devant luy, et le roy fist desploier ses banieres et marchier ses batailles ou nom de Jhesu Crist contre le Turcq' (V, 28). It is interesting to note that Wavrin knew how severe the casualties in the Christian host had been, due to the cold mainly, even though, as he himself points out, the Hungarians and Cesarini had decided to keep this fact secret and to contradict those who would spread it (V, 30). Nonetheless, Wavrin dwells on the torments endured by the Christians in the mountains shaken by snow-storms[14]. Walleran had probably been told about these hardships by some Hungarian or Wallachian knights. Jean de Wavrin concludes by depicting the grief mixed with joy of the survivors, adding that God may have allowed this stroke of misfortune to reward some of the courageous warriors for their 'bonnes affections et voullentez [...] pour rénumération desqueles choses il les voulloit herbregier en son paradis par tel martire' (V, 29-30).

The successes of the *Langer Feldzug* were advertised all over Europe. This impressive news was what the Western powers needed to accelerate the preparations of their fleet and in July 1444 Walleran de Wavrin left Venice with his galleys, steering towards Greece.

2. First encounters of the Burgundians with infidels

Walleran's arrival in the Straits of the Dardanelles provides us with an interesting passage. Wavrin recounts how Walleran halted at Tenedos where, as he was told, the ancient Greeks on their way to attack Troy had landed. He then inquired where the site of Troy was and decided to have his first skirmish against the Turks on that location (V, 38-39). This episode shows how excited Walleran felt about waging war in places which were oozing history. His desire to fight on a spot where the great heroes of Antiquity had battled before him may be regarded as a chivalrous fantasy:

[13] The letter appears in JEAN DE WAVRIN, ed. DUPONT, II, 2-11.

Walleran wanted to be able to regard himself as the successor of Achilles, Agamemnon, and their likes. After all, as Michael Heath has pointed out, many people in the 15th century considered the Turks as the Trojans' descendants[15]; perhaps Walleran did also. Later in the account, Jean de Wavrin will describe at great length the harbour of Mangalia on the Black Sea, explaining how it had been built by the Amazons (V, 64). These two cultural interludes seem to illustrate to some degree Gordon Kipling's theory that the ideal of the 'learned knight' in the 16th century was a legacy of the Burgundian court[16].

While Walleran de Wavrin was in Constantinople, his fellow Geoffroy de Thoisy, who had left Nice in May 1444, decided, with Philip's agreement, to lend assistance to the knights of Rhodes, who were being besieged by a composite force of Mamelukes and Turks. The raising of the siege was the greatest deed to be accomplished during the whole campaign, and Wavrin related the fierce combats with many details (V, 33-38). This episode allows us to witness Geoffroy de Thoisy's heroic and self-assured attitude, which seems to have been the norm among our Burgundian crusaders. Upon his arrival in Rhodes, Geoffroy learnt from the Grand Master how the mercenaries sent by the King of Aragon were about to take their leave, because the knights of Rhodes could not afford the high wages that they demanded. Geoffroy required of the Grand Master to be officially welcomed by the knights of Rhodes in the presence of all the foreign captains, and before them the Burgundians declared that they did not ask for any wages, and that

> se aulcuns par lascheté de courage demandassent guaiges excessifz adfin de par ce quérir moyen de la ville et cité habandonner à leur honneur, et quant ores aulcuns le habandonneroient si estoient ilz assez puissants pour au Dieu plaisir la tenir contre tous les malvoeillans (V, 35).

Geoffroy's exemplary stance put all the foreign captains to shame, and won back their support. We shall see how Walleran later displayed a similar assurance

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[14] I have not found this episode in any French, Burgundian or Greek chronicle, which seems to indicate that the Christian losses were indeed kept secret.
[15] M. J. HEATH, 'Renaissance Scholars and the Origins of the Turks', in *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance. Travaux et documents*, XLI, Genève, Droz, 1979, p. 453-471.
[16] See especially Chapter 7 in KIPLING.

successively before John VIII and Hunyadi, only less successfully, for his chivalrous self-confidence would clash with the Emperor and the Hungarian hero's prudence.

3. Two dramatic episodes: Murad II crosses the Straits and overwhelms the Hungarians at Varna

A month after Walleran's departure from Venice, Wladislaw III ratified the treaty of Szeged, which provoked a well-known controversy following the disaster of Varna[17]. Some of Wavrin's contemporaries made violent remarks about the fact that Wladislaw had broken the peace solemnly sworn at Szeged. The Greek historiographer Chalcodondyles seems to agree with George Brankovic as he depicts the Despot declaring to Wladislaw that it was 'chose trop détestable de fausser ainsi les promesses jurées'[18]. And the Byzantine chronicler Doukas explains, as he relates Murad II's death, that Murad had never broken his word, unlike some Christians who were thereafter 'justly punished by the judgment of the Avenger'[19]. Wavrin gives his version of the facts with many details, concentrating on the excuses given by Wladislaw to Cesarini for having signed the treaty, and on Cesarini's anger (V, 42). He does not, however, state a personal opinion, perhaps because he deemed the subject delicate. Still, we sense that Jean de Wavrin was certainly not traumatized by the fact that the Christians had broken their treaty. Keeping one's word was a chivalric virtue, but it seems that when dealing with the infidel, derogations were allowed. Wavrin gives us all the arguments of the legate Cesarini, without showing any disapproval. The Pope had not been asked his opinion, therefore the treaty was void (V, 42). Wavrin shows well through Cesarini's words that making peace would have meant missing a unique opportunity. He pictures the legate exclaiming:

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[17] On the controversy see HOUSLEY, p. 88; VAUGHAN, p. 58-59, and PALL, p. 107-113, the latter being particularly informative.

[18] I have used the 16th century translation of Chalcocondyles by Blaise de Vigenere entitled *L'Histoire de la décadence de l'Empire grec et establissement de celuy des Turcs*, Paris, Abel l'Angelier, 1584. Despite its age it is a trustworthy translation, at least for our purpose. For Brankovic's comments see p. 423.

[19] DOUKAS, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks*, transl. H. J. MAGOULIAS, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1975, p. 188-189.

pensez-vous se le Turcq feust puissant pour convenir a bataille contre vous qu'il vous eust convoquié à paix [...] ? Certes nennil. Nostre Saint-Père a eu nouvelles [...] que le Turcq est si bas et a tant perdu es prétérites batailles contre vous et autres qu'il ne scet ou recouvrer gens, et que ores est-il heure de reconcquérir la Grèce ou jamais (V, 42-43).

Chalcocondyles makes it clear in his chronicle that, at the time of the treaty, the Turks were facing problems from every quarter, and considered themselves doomed[20]. Finally, Wavrin shows Cesarini absolving the Christians for breaking their treaty without a single word of disapproval. In any case, Jean de Wavrin's opinion on this subject probably reflects that of Walleran, and it is hard to imagine that Walleran would have been pleased to have made this whole journey for nothing. Jean's account depicts the confusion of the members of the Christian fleet when shown the treaty by some Turkish officers, and their relief as the news arrives that the treaty is void (V, 46).

The Christian fleet's mission was to prevent the Turkish forces of Anatolia from crossing the Straits of the Bosphorus to face Wladislaw's army. Wavrin's narrative of the Christians' helplessness as Murad's powerful host passes from one continent to another is probably the most exciting passage of his report, and it is strange that no scholar should have yet commented upon it. Some modern historians even doubt that the fleet made any attempt to stop Murad's troops[21]. Perhaps Walleran did not tell his uncle the whole truth, yet I find Jean's narration quite convincing, and in any case very powerful. By inserting the letter of the Constantinopolitan friar Barthélémy in her edition of Wavrin's chronicle, Émilie Dupont augmented the dramatic impact of this narration, for Barthélémy, who was confident in God's help, wrote to the prior of Saint John of Jerusalem: 'que feroient vingt gallees pour garder le destroit? Je vous di, tres cher seigneur, que dix galees souffiroient, à present, pour garder le pas contre eulx'[22].

Wavrin starts by showing Walleran patrolling the Straits shortly before the arrival of the Turkish army, in a passage which bathes in a 'peace before the storm'

[20] LAONICOS CHALCOCONDYLES, p. 412-421.
[21] Cf. HOUSLEY, p. 88: 'no attempt was made by the fleet to stop him [Murad]'.

atmosphere. This episode is also intended to excuse Walleran in advance for his failure: according to Jean, the Christians clearly saw that the shots of the Turks' culverins could reach the other side of the Straits (V, 47). Walleran explains to Emperor John VIII, through his envoys, that it will be impossible to guard the Straits if he does not occupy either the Roumelian shore, or the Anatolian shore with his troops, but John VIII refuses. The prudent Emperor failed to be reassured by Walleran's chivalrous and heroic offer of his body and troops to assist the Byzantine soldiers Walleran wanted him to send (V, 48). All he could do was send two of his own galleys in support of the Christian fleet.

Wavrin then depicts, with many colourful details, the arrival of Murad's army on one side of the Straits, while his heir, the young Mehmet, and Khalil Pasha occupy the other side with their troops. The Turks begin to bombard the galleys with guns cast on the spot, thanks to the metal carried by camels. As often in a drama there is a traitor: in Wavrin's narrative the part is played by the Geneose, with whom Walleran would later have some altercations, in Caffa, for having captured three merchant ships[23]. According to Walleran and the Venetians, the Genoese had supplied the Ottomans with boats (V, 46-47). As the Turks proceed to cross the Straits on these small boats, Walleran and his galleys try to stop them, but because of the Turkish cannon-shots and of the particularly strong current between the two shores, they cannot do much (V, 49). Wavrin's narrative then takes epic and almost apocalyptic dimensions. During the night, 'ung grant orage et tempeste venant de la mer Majour [the Black Sea]' breaks out, making the Christians' task even more dangerous. Wavrin gives Manichean proportions to the episode, presenting it as a struggle between God and Satan, as he states that this tempest seemed to be 'chose dyabolicque', whereas the Turks 'le réputoient a fast de leurs dieux' (V, 50). The Turks install an enormous bombard which will luckily explode after the third shot 'par l'ayde de Dieu [...] et se eust ataint une gallée a plain cop elle l'eust envoié au fons de l'eaue par la fortune du tempz, la radeur du courant et l'ayde du deable' (V, 51). The poor Emperor of Constantinople receives a severe judgement from Wavrin as he tells us that John VIII's galleys were the ships that received the most damage,

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[22] See Wavrin's *Anchiennes cronicques...*, ed. DUPONT, II, 10.
[23] TAPAREL, p. 20.

as if this was God's punishment for the Byzantines' cowardice: 'comme se ce feust miracle les pierres d'engiens par deseure celles de Bourgoigne, si battoient celles de l'empereur et dommagoient plus que nulles des autres' (V, 50). Wavrin closes his narration with a particularly dramatic event. A Turkish officer demands to parley after the passage of the last Turkish soldier. Admitted on board, he declares :

> 'Le roy de Hongrye et les Hongres ont parjuré et faulsé leur loy, Moratbay [Murad II] va a bataille contra eulz', et en frapant de sa droite main sur la manche de son espée dist: 'mais par ceste espée nous vainquirons la bataille' (V, 51).

It seems that the inclusion of this climactic and terribly prophetic event betrays some sort of uneasiness that Wavrin may have felt: we saw that the chronicler was not particularly shocked by the violation of the treaty, yet this striking scene which closes the chapter, besides being an instance of literary flourish, seems to indicate that his assurance quivered for a moment.

Wavrin's narrative of the battle of Varna (10 November 1444) is also remarkable, besides being an original and valuable source for historians. Once again, Wavrin gives epic dimensions to this event, making the battle much different from other 'secular' battles. In order to fully feel the drama taking place, one must bear in mind that the Hungarians did not expect Murad to have crossed the Straits. We can sense a worried atmosphere as he depicts the Hungarian knights who are startled by the sight of many fires over the mountains at night. Hunyadi is not convinced that these are merely peasants burning dry weeds and decides to take a closer look. He hears the drums beating and knows for sure that the Turks are near (V, 52). Such colourful details - the use of drums was a typical aspect of the Ottoman way of waging war - make Wavrin's narrative particularly lively. He describes the battle with all the tactical details one always finds in his accounts of engagements; having been a soldier himself, he surely intended his accounts of battles to be as useful as possible to captains. Wavrin appears as strikingly well informed, especially if we compare his account with those of Gilles le Bouvier or Adrien de But[24], who stated that Wladislaw and Cesarini were captured, tortured and eventually flayed alive.

[24] ADRIEN DE BUT, p. 276; GILLES LE BOUVIER, p. 271-272.

Presumably Walleran learnt the details of the battle from the Hungarian survivors taken under his protection at Mesembria (V, 63-64).

It is particularly interesting to see what Wavrin has to say about the King's foolish behaviour, which cost him the victory and his life. Wavrin emphasizes Hunyadi's wisdom; having put to flight most of Murad's army, Hunyadi tries to dissuade Wladislaw from attacking the Sultan and his janissaries who are standing firm on top of a mountain, arguing with moving words: 'Pour l'honneur de Dieu ne vous mettez pas en nécessité de perdre ce quy est guaignié'. The battle, he adds, is won, the sun is setting, and there is no need to fight the janissaries, who will resist fiercely (V, 55). The reference to God's honour clearly indicates that excessive heroism would be, not only a strategic mistake, but also a sin: it could ruin what had been achieved through God's grace. Wavrin reports the jealous comments of the knights to Wladislaw: 'Sire, le vaivode a fait sa bataille dont il a honneur, ceste bataille seconde doit estre à nous [...] forgons le fer entandis qu'il est chault' (V, 56). The speeches that Wavrin inserted in the Livian and Tacitean tradition seem sometimes commonplace, but after all, history - especially military history - has a tendency to repeat itself. Wavrin also denounces the fanatic zeal of Cesarini, as he depicts the legate shouting, aiming especially at Hunyadi, that all those who refuse to take part in the fight will be excommunicated. Nonetheless, Wavrin is filled with admiration for the Hungarian and Polish knights as he relates their disastrous offensive: he recounts how the Christians 'se misrent au ramper comme tygres' and attacked Murad 'par grant corage et hardement', adding the epic detail that Wladislaw may have fought against Murad himself, before getting his head chopped off by a janissary (V, 57). Such a mixture of blame and admiration does not appear in Chalcocondyles' narrative of the battle, which is also very detailed. The Greek historiographer is much more severe: he explains that Wladislaw, 'poussé d'un appétit de gloire', made a decision to attack the janissaries which was 'à la vérité plus hardie et courageuse, que bien digérée'[25]. In other words, Wladislaw had acted like a fool. One could say that Wavrin illustrates the medieval and chivalrous point of view, while Chalcocondyles presents us with a judgement closer to the classical mentality.

The same remark springs to mind if one compares the comments of both authors about the decision of John VIII, who really does not get a very good press in Wavrin's report, to make peace with the Turks after hearing about the Christians' defeat. Chalcocondyles praises Chatites, a Greek vassal of Murad, who had avoided informing Murad frankly of John VIII's decision not to support the Turks after the successful crossing of the Straits, and was the principal author of the peace subsequently made, a peace which would last until Murad's death and brought Murad the praises of the Byzantine chronicler Sphrantzes[26]. Wavrin, on the other hand, tells us how Walleran chivalrously promised John VIII, who was dreading Murad's attack, that he would offer his body and troops to defend the city. However,

> il fut dit à l'empereur qu'il envoieroit ambassadeurs devers le Grant Turcq pour avoir paix à lui s'elle se povoit trouver, à quoy il s'accorda voullentiers [...] et se fist ce traitié au desceu desdis cardinal et seigneur de Wavrin, dont ilz furent moult mal contentz (V, 59).

Wavrin goes on to say that Walleran and Condelmare, the Venetian cardinal with whom he shared the command of the fleet, considered that the Emperor had imposed on their good will: their help was bound to be useless, since John VIII had refused to occupy one shore of the Straits with his troops.

It is also very illuminating to compare Chalcocondyles' conclusion about the battle with Wavrin's comments. The epic Wavrin tries to minimize the extent of Murad II's victory by stating that, according to Greek witnesses, 'on trouvoit les corpz des Turcqz mengiés des pourceaulz, mais ilz n'atouchoient auz Christiens'; above all, he stresses: 'il fut trois jours que Turcqz ne Crestiens ne se moustrerent sur la place' (V, 57), a sign that, according to the old medieval customs of warfare, there had been no real victor. By contrast, Chalcocondyles sums up the historical consequences of Varna with a clear-headedness modern historians would not contradict:

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[25] LAONICOS CHALCOCONDYLES, p. 438, 442.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 429, 444; GEORGE SPHRANTZES, *The Fall of the Byzantine Empire (1401-1477)*, transl. M. PHILIPPIDES, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1980, p. 58.

le gaing de cette bataille haussa le menton aux Turcs et leur rendit l'Empire de l'Europe du tout asseuré et paisible, d'autant que les Grecs, et autres peuples circonvoisins se repentans de s'estre ainsi legierement declarez contre Amurat, firent de là en avant sa volonté en toutes choses[27].

4. Corsair activities on the Black Sea

After Varna, it was decided that some of the Christian ships should patrol the Black Sea's various harbours, in a desperate and quixotic search for Wladislaw, who was thought by some to be still alive - though Wavrin makes it clear that the quest was most probably vain. This is where some of the most striking Burgundian acts of piracy mentioned in the previous chapter took place. Wavrin recounts how Walleran, on his arrival at Caffa, heard with much distress that Geoffroy de Thoisy had been taken prisoner in Georgia. Geoffroy had learnt at the court of David, the Greek Emperor of Trebizond, that a rich merchant ship was supposed to be sailing somewhere off the coast of Georgia and had decided to capture it; as Emperor David was trying to dissuade him from doing so, arguing that it was a Christian ship, Geoffroy had replied to his face 'qu'il avoit commandement de guerroier tous scismaticques non obeissans à nostre saint père' (V, 66). Having arrived off Georgia, Geoffroy decided to loot the little harbour of Poti. Unhappily for him, the prince of the region, the Patan of Gouria, had been warned by some Greeks against Geoffroy's activities. As he landed in Poti, Geoffroy was attacked by the Georgians and captured despite his resistance. Wavrin relates how Walleran sent Renaud de Confide, who had brought this news, back to Emperor David, to beg him 'que pour Dieu, et de sa grace il voulsist envoier au pays de Georgie' so that Geoffroy may be released (V, 66).

Wavrin gives many details, but he does not seem to blame Geoffroy. Perhaps the comment that Geoffroy, on his arrival at Poti, 'avoit grant voullenté de pillier le village' (V, 66), indicates that Geoffroy was going too far, but on the whole the

[27] LAONICOS CHALCOCONDYLES, p. 444.

incident is recounted as a *fortune de guerre*, one of these things which happened. As Nicolas Iorga has pointed out, acts of piracy in campaigns against infidels would not be criticized by contemporaries until well into the 17th century[28]. We saw in the last chapter that Adrien de But's bitter comments about piracy in crusades followed an aggression against the chronicler's own abbey in Flanders; there is no evidence that he would have blamed an attack on Orthodox Christians. Walleran himself had captured three merchant ships from the Orthodox or Muslim subjects of Genoa; Wavrin casually recounted the episode, stating that the ships were Turkish. But in fact, they only looked Turkish, and Wavrin did not mention that when Walleran arrived in Caffa, the Genoese confiscated part of his booty. As Henri Taparel cynically remarked, the only visible result of the whole campaign was that Philip the Good and the Genoese remained on bad terms: Philip never understood that the Orthodox or Muslim subjects of Genoa could not be considered as enemies[29].

Still, it seems that Wavrin felt somewhat uneasy as he related Geoffroy de Thoisy's adventure, especially if we compare his account with a short Burgundian chronicle partly published by Émilie Dupont in her edition of Wavrin's chronicle. This anonymous account presents all of Geoffroy de Thoisy's actions on the Black Sea and the Mediterranean as glorious deeds, making his cruise appear as a *guerre de magnificence*. As for Geoffroy's capture in Georgia, the chronicler recounts it as an honourable adventure, stressing that the Georgians were very chivalrous, albeit rather exotic in manners: Geoffroy 'fut doucement traictiés; car, non obstant que en ce dit pais, que l'on appelle Mygrelye [Mingrelia], soient gens estranges et d'estrange vie, toutesfois entre eulx cely seroit deshonnorés qui aroit mal traicter [...] ung prisonnier'[30].

5. Crusading adventures in Romania

[28] IORGA, 'Les aventures...', p. 9.
[29] TAPAREL, p. 20-22, 28.
[30] See Wavrin's *Anchiennes cronicques...*, ed. DUPONT, III (Pièces justificatives), 151-159 (quotation p. 157).

Walleran de Wavrin had sent the Spanish knight Pedro Vasquez de Saavedra - an habitué of the Burgundian court - to Buda in order to ask the Hungarians whether they would be ready to attempt a new invasion of Greece. Amazing as it may seem, since they had lost their King, the Hungarians accepted. János Hunyadi replied that he would meet Walleran and Condelmare before Nicopolis in mid-August 1445. Walleran was to ask the help of Vlad Dracul, and while the Hungarians were getting organized, he decided to help Vlad II to recover some forts along the Danube from the Turks. Wavrin describes these crusading adventures in Romania with a profusion of colourful details that demonstrate again his art as a story-teller, only this time he could rely on the first-hand testimony of Walleran. As a result, his account of Walleran's actions in Romania has a very different flavour from that of his narratives of Varna and the Long Campaign: here there is no epic inspiration, but a very down-to-earth realism instead. Wavrin does not inform us so much about the geography of medieval Romania - though he does make some comments of that type - as about the mentality of our 15th century crusaders, whether Wallachian, Hungarian, Venetian or Burgundian. One cannot say that Wavrin's account of Walleran's adventures in Romania is always agreeable to read; in fact, many of the actions recounted are rather brutal and raw. We saw in my first chapter that Jean de Wavrin had himself been a soldier, as well as a crusader - albeit against heretics - and that he had taken part in some very gruesome actions[31]. Thus we cannot expect too many sentimental considerations from him.

Wavrin occasionally shows the darkest side of man, made even more frightening by the fact that it is mixed with a certain innocence. He depicts, for instance, how the crusaders decided to set fire to the fort of Turtucaia. Our crusaders were to find this technique very practical and eventually resorted to it quite systematically - a sign that artillery still had much progress to achieve in 1445. At Turtucaia, the Christians piled up wood against a tower, and Wavrin comments:

> Quant doncques ce bois fut ainsi assemblé à l'encontre du pan de mur, aussi hault qu'on le povoit gecter contremont la tour, on boutta le feu dedens quy fut en la fin grant et horrible a veoir [...] si commencèrent

[31] See p. 38.

> à esprendre ladite couverture et les barbacanes, pourquoy tous les Christiens commencèrent a cryer noe [Noël] (V, 84).

Wavrin describes the Turks' reaction with some suggestive details: 'et sembloit bien à oyr le son des veraulz [verrous] que les Turcqz eussent grant haste d'issir'. Later in the evening, as the crusaders were contemplating the glowing remains of the tower, some comments were made by 'les compaignons de Pycardie que pour une nuit Saint Jehan ilz n'avoient jamais veu plus beau feu' (V, 86).

Crusading certainly does not appear, in the narrative of Walleran's actions in Romania, as a *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*, despite Wavrin's presentation of the expedition as such in his prologue. Here, Wavrin exposes all the pieces of meanness, cruelties, abuses and jealousies between the representatives of different nations which made this crusade, all things considered, very un-magnificent. At its best, the lack of harmony between the crusaders has some very amusing effects. In the episode of the planned attack on Silestra, for instance, we see Walleran leading the vanguard with his galley on the river and joining the Wallachians who are already camping in front of the town. The Wallachians inquire where Condelmare is and Wavrin shows them the sails of the cardinal's galley, adding that he will arrive soon. However, much to their confusion, Walleran and the Wallachians see Condelmare lowering his sail. The Wallachians do not understand and Walleran has some very bitter words: 'quant on fait ung prestre chief de guerre il n'en pourroit pas bien venir' (V, 73). Many hours pass; the sun reaches its zenith and it becomes too hot to consider an attack on the town. Eventually Condelmare arrives, and Wavrin describes, with much skill, the comic features of the protagonists:

> quant ledit cardinal vint il passa devant la gallée du seigneur de Wavrin ouquel regardant commencha a rire, mais ledit de Wavrin luy moustra visage félon et courouchié, si entra prestement en une barque [...] et quant il aprocha la gallée du cardinal il crya en hault: 'monseigneur est-il bien heure d'assaillir la ville?' (V, 74).

This is however nothing compared to the quarrel between Walleran and Condelmare which will later break out, because Walleran had attacked Turtucaia without the cardinal's consent, while the latter's galley was aground on a sand bank. Wavrin

depicts the scene with much insight into character, showing Walleran uneasy because the cardinal does not salute him, then bashful as Condelmare pettily reproaches him for having committed 'une grande trahison, laquele il nuncheroit à nostre saint père le pape et à tous les princes christiens'. Walleran offers to defend his honour in single combat; the cardinal declines the proposal, on the grounds that he is a priest, but Walleran hastily specifies that the offer was not intended for him. Eventually, flattered by Walleran's argument that the honour of the taking of Turtucaia will fall to him by right, Condelmare composes himself, 'parlant [...] tousjours un peu sur gorge'. But Walleran will bear Condelmare malice, and it is only after having been reprimanded in turns by a Constantinopolitan friar that the two commanders will make peace with one another (V, 87-92). Walleran did not always get along with Condelmare; unsurprisingly, his relations with Saoudji, a cousin and rival of Murad II, whom the crusaders trusted to gain the support of the Turks of Silestra, but who miserably failed in his attempt, were also rather tense (V, 76-78).

At its worst, the disharmony between the crusaders gives rise to scenes of extreme violence and barbarism: Dorothy Vaughan has called our attention to a shocking passage where we see the Burgundians and the Wallachians fighting against each other over the prisoners made at Turtucaia[32]; unable to separate them sword in hand, Walleran gave the order to kill all the prisoners, but the crusaders still fought over the weapons and dresses of the slain Turks (V, 85). Dorothy Vaughan has also commented upon the problems that arose because of Vlad Dracul and Walleran's diverging opinions on the ethics of warfare, pointing out that throughout this episode, it became clear that Vlad II was simply making use of his Western allies. Yet to Walleran this probably did not really matter, since helping Vlad meant helping Christians against Turks. We do detect, however, a growing irritation with Vlad on the part of Walleran, especially after Vlad provoked, through carelessness and technical incompetence, the explosion of Walleran's best bombard, thus killing two of Walleran's sailors (V, 95). Walleran was also shocked by the massacre of the Turks of Giurgiu perpetrated by Vlad's son Mircea, on Vlad's orders, when the Turks had been granted a safe conduct. Although Walleran had done nothing to save the Turks, he had refused to sign their safe conduct, when Mircea had revealed his

treacherous plans. And as the Christians, while sailing towards Nicopolis, saw the Turks' naked bodies lined up by the Wallachians along the riverbank, they deemed it 'cruele chose a veoir'; perhaps Walleran then acknowledged that Christians could be more barbaric than the Turks (V, 101-102)[33]. Yet it was Vlad who provided the crusaders with the best proof that their efforts had not all been wasted. Encouraged by the Christians' victories, thousands of Bulgarians asked Vlad II to take them under his protection. The crusaders helped them to cross the Danube, and Vlad declared that:

> quant ores la présente armée de nostre saint père et du duc de Bourguoigne n'auroient fait en ce voyage autre bien que de saulver onze ou douze mille âmes des Christiens, et les corpz mis hors de chetivoison et des mains des Sarrazins, ce luy sambloit bien estre une grant operation (V, 105).

Vlad did not fail to point out that Walleran and Condelmare had not only saved the refugees' bodies, but also their souls, since living under Turkish rule meant, for 15th century Christians, not only the subjection of the body, but also the danger of losing one's soul, as one could be tempted to abnegate one's faith and become a Muslim[34]. To the Westerners, this was no small consolation. Luckily for him, Walleran probably never learnt that, soon after these events, Vlad, who could no longer afford to wage war against the Turks, agreed to renew the peace negotiations; one of the requirements of the peace treaty was the expulsion from Wallachia of 4,000 Bulgarian settlers[35].

• Conclusion

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[32] VAUGHAN, p. 60.
[33] For a short analysis of Walleran's attitude towards the Turks in general, and Wavrin's portrayal of the Ottomans as individuals, see my article 'Des chevaliers bourguignons...', p. 272-274.
[34] Cf. on this matter E. FÜGEDI, 'Two Kinds of Enemies - Two Kinds of Ideology. The Hungarian-Turkish Wars in the Fifteenth Century', in *War and Peace in the Middle Ages*, ed. B. MC GUIRE, Reitzel, 1987, p. 146-160.
[35] FLORESCU and MC NALLY, p. 38.

I hope I have shown all the worth and interest of this narrative of Walleran's crusading adventures, a literary interlude comparable to the travel accounts of Bertrandon de la Broquière and Ghillebert de Lannoy[36], which demonstrates the interest Duke Philip and many of his subjects took in the Levant. The practicality and informative aspect of such texts contrasts with the more fanciful depiction of Levantine adventures that we find in Jean Wauquelin's *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, *Gillion de Trazegnies* or Antoine de La Sale's *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré*, all romances related to the Levant and crusading that flourished at the court of Burgundy under Philip's rule. Just as both kinds of works, the realist and the fanciful, seem to be representative of Philip's interest in crusading, Wavrin's narrative presents us with an interesting mixture of epic spirit and realism - though even in the epic parts, Wavrin still appears particularly well informed. It seems that, for the episodes of the Long Campaign and the battle of Varna, Wavrin's epic and impassioned tone results from the fact that he drew his information from second-hand testimony. Thus the writing of these particular episodes was strongly influenced by the crusading fantasies of Jean de Wavrin, Walleran, and the Hungarian knights who had related the events to Walleran; here, a heroic and Manichean vision greatly magnified the facts. However, whenever Wavrin's report draws on first-hand testimony, it slips into a realistic vision, thus enabling us to see how this late medieval crusade was conducted, and gain valuable insight into the crusaders' character. The one exception to that rule is the episode where Murad II crosses the Straits, which is clearly epic and almost apocalyptic. Apart from the fact that the event was indeed extraordinary, it seems that Wavrin's impassioned tone was intended to excuse Walleran for his failure, by presenting him at grips with superhuman forces.

One may wonder whether Wavrin's realism in the second part of his narrative was actually meant to demonstrate that the expedition was far from being, in practice, a *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*, or whether the graphic details were simply there to make the narrative an enjoyable story. It is doubtful that Wavrin had any

[36] BERTRANDON DE LA BROQUIÈRE, *Le Voyage d'Outremer*, ed. C. SCHEFER, Paris, Leroux, 1892 ; for Lannoy's travel accounts see GHILLEBERT DE LANNOY, *Œuvres*, ed. C. POTVIN and J. - C. HOUZEAU, Louvain, Lefever, 1878, p. 99-162. Both La Broquière and Lannoy had been sent as spies to the Levant to gather information with a view to a *passagium*.

intentions to divest the ideal of crusading of its mythical quality. The 'voyage' brought honour to Walleran, if only because he had proven his good will; in acknowledgement and thanks for the trouble he had taken, he received a precious relic from Emperor John VIII, and indulgences from Pope Eugene IV. Wavrin concludes his narrative by stating that the relic, a fragment of Christ's dress woven by the Virgin Mary herself, was now exposed in the church of Lillers, and that all visitors could benefit from Wavrin's indulgences (V, 119). Still, Wavrin's realistic presentation of the facts does betray Jean and Walleran's disillusion with regard to this particular crusade. The expedition had hardly achieved anything. Georges Chastelain made it clear as he bluntly declared about our crusaders in his biography of Jacques de Lalaing: 'comme j'entendis pour lors, ils ne profitèrent guère à la chrestienté, ne aussi ne fut faite chose qui fust à leur profit'[37]. Walleran was aware of this, and Jean's account does not hide his disappointment. However, Walleran cast the blame on others, notably the Byzantines and the Hungarians: on his return to the Occident, he reported to the Pope that 'se plus avant euist peu faire service à la deffence de la Christienneté et que la chose de la partie des Hongres et Grecz euist esté mieulz disposée, que libéralement et voullentiers il s'i feust plus avant employez' (V, 118). We saw that Walleran had been displeased with John VIII's refusal to occupy one shore of the Straits with his troops, and with his decision to make peace with Murad II. As for the Hungarians, they had irritated him by refusing to chase the Turkish host, the Turks having eventually returned deep into their territory, burning the land behind them. Hunyadi had then offended Walleran and Condelmare by telling them that they might as well return home, as winter was approaching, which meant that the galleys would be ice-bound if they stayed (V, 115-116). At the end of the day, it seems that Walleran did not get on very well with men of different cultures and mentalities. In particular, his heroic, self-assured, chivalrous stance clashed with John VIII and Hunyadi's prudence and experience. It also appears, from his report to Eugene IV, that he did not learn much from this campaign. Still, because Wavrin's narrative faithfully reports the opinions and statements of all protagonists, the reader may choose a different conclusion to the adventure, offered by János Hunyadi, 'le blanc Chevalier', a man who was greatly

[37] GEORGES CHASTELAIN, *Le livre des faits...*, in *Œuvres*, VIII, 34.

admired in the whole of the Occident, and, of course, Burgundy[38]. Having explained to Walleran that the Turks, who were retreating into their territory burning everything on their track, expected the Christians to chase them and hoped to attract them deep into their Empire, so that, their supplies cut off, the Christians might be at their mercy, Hunyadi closed his speech with the words: 'est nécessité de combattre les Turcqz soubtillement et malicieusement quy les voelt vaincre, car ilz sont gens cauteleux' (V, 115-116). In other words, a campaign against the Turks should not be led heedlessly; it required a lot of wisdom. Perhaps Jean de Wavrin understood Hunyadi's lesson better than Walleran.

In the next chapter, I shall pursue on the theme of the 'guerre de magnificence', only this time looking at French historiography, towards the close of the century. As the painful experience of the Hundred Years War was receding in time, France was becoming an increasingly powerful nation. Charles VII had restored peace in France, thanks notably to his institution of a permanent army paid by regularly collected taxes. Louis XI had subdued the princes of royal blood, and had contributed to the fall of his most unruly vassal, Charles the Bold - though the ruin of Burgundy was largely due to the failure of Charles the Bold's ambitious expansionist policy. In 1494, the young King Charles VIII could indulge in the luxury of undertaking an outstanding offensive military campaign: the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples, thus inaugurating the Wars of Italy, an enterprise to which the Kings of France would devote their attention for many decades. We shall see how most French historiographers of the period presented Charles VIII's conquest as a *guerre de magnificence*, but without the complex or the feeling of disillusion harboured by Burgundian chroniclers with regard to Burgundy's *guerres de magnificence*.

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[38] Cf. D. DE COURCELLES, 'Le roman de *Tirant lo Blanc* et le Vœu du Faisan: le pouvoir de la parole entre politique et littérature', in *Le Banquet du Faisan. 1454: l'Occident...*, p. 173-186. On Hunyadi see p. 179-180.

The King of France Charles VIII and his French subjects, magnificent and triumphant victors over the Italians (Fig. 7, 8, 9)

Fig. 7. Charles VIII in full martial glory. Charles' garments and his horse's apparel are strewn with Jerusalem crosses, a reminder of the fact that Charles is not only King of France, but also of Sicily and Jerusalem. The flaming sword featured on the tent – a symbol, no doubt, of armed Justice – is another of Charles' emblems. From a manuscript entitled *Louanges de la France*, c. 1497.

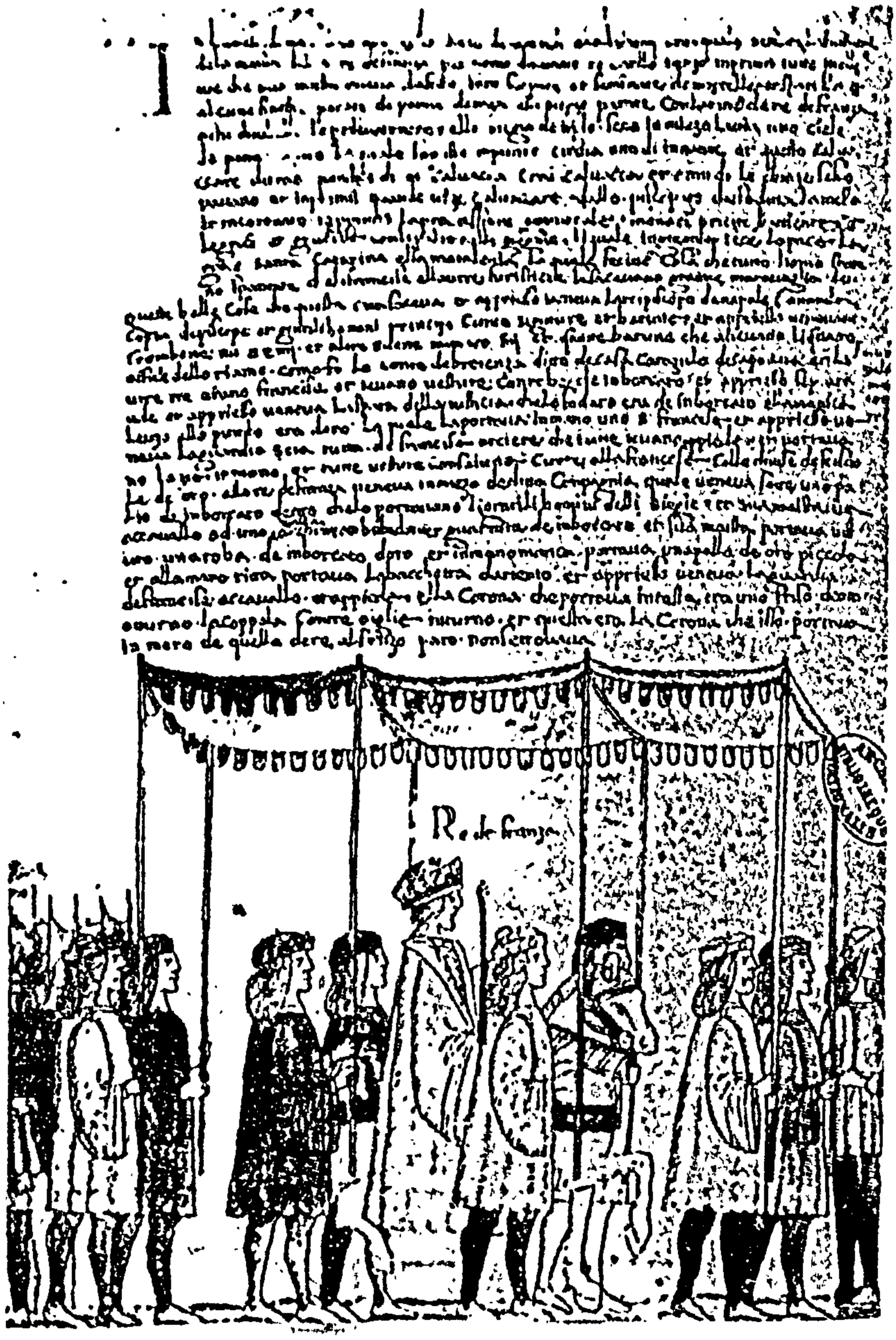

Fig. 8. Charles VIII's solemn entry into Naples (12 May 1495). From the illustrated chronicle of Ferraiuolo. In his unsophisticated style, akin to that of a modern cartoonist, the Neapolitan chronicler has sketched all the details of Charles' entry into Naples, thus recording the pomp and ceremony of the whole event.

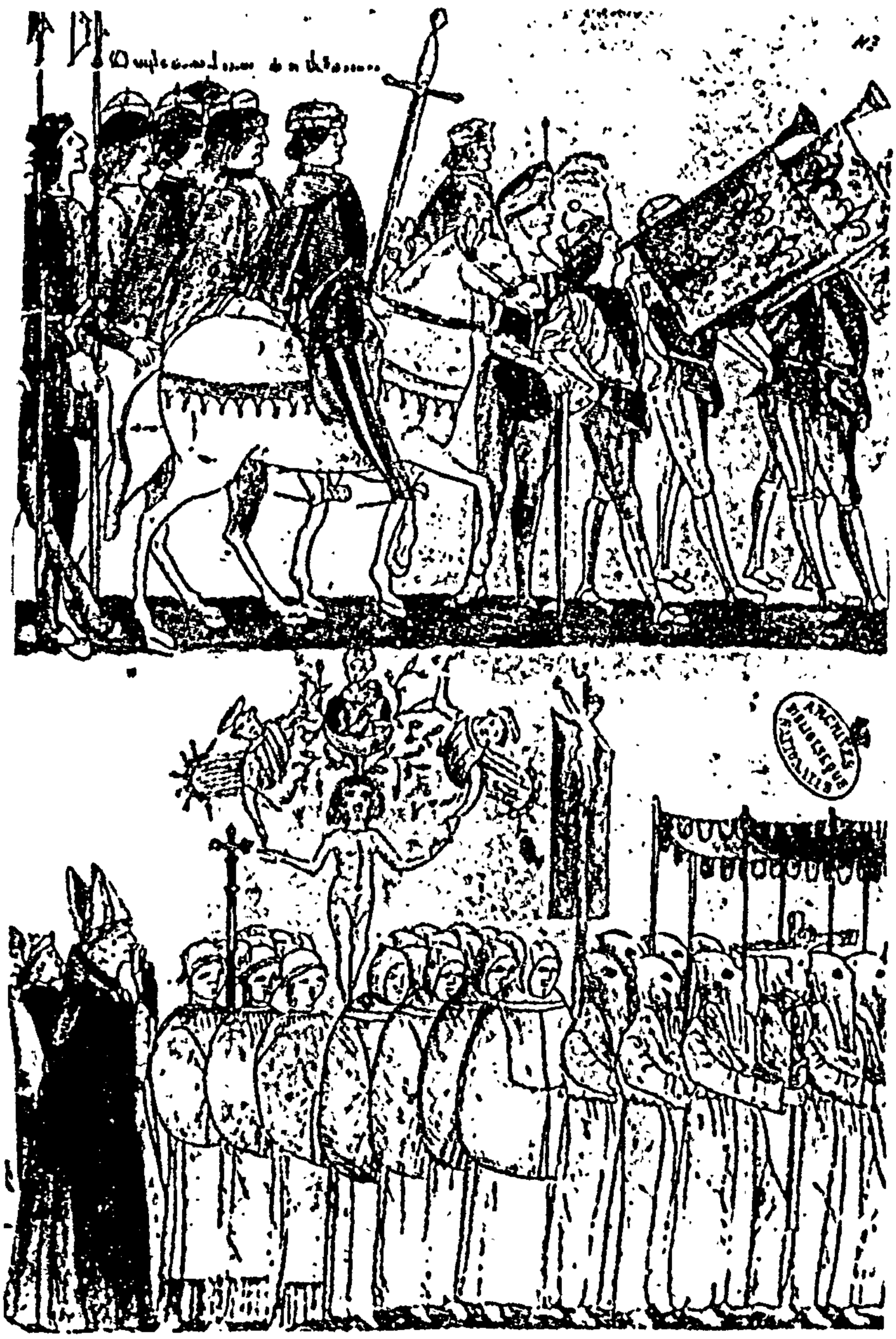

Fig. 9. Charles' entry into Naples: the Sword of Justice, the brotherhoods and the clergy. From Ferraiuolo's illustrated chronicle.

Chapter 5 : Tales of a conquest (I). 'Comment le roy Charles huitiesme [...] alla conquérir le royaulme de Naples en grant triumphe': Charles VIII's invasion of Italy (1494-1495) in French chronicles

> Au demourant je vous prie d'avertir les prélatz, gens de bien, bonnes villes et citéz de mon royaume de France des grandes grâces que Dieu m'a faictes et de la victoire qu'il luy a pleu me donner à la conquêste et recouvrement de mon royaume de Napples [...], car je vous asseure, mon frère, qu'il n'est plus de nouvelles en Ytalie [...] du cymetière des Françoys qu'ilz disoient y estre, mais y a acquis la nation de l'honneur et renommée largement, et autant qu'il est possible. On parle sans cesse de mon exploit et de mon artillerie...
>
> From a letter of Charles VIII to Pierre de Bourbon, *lieutenant général* of France during the conquest, under the date of 28 March 1495[1]

• Introduction

In 1494, the twenty-four year old King of France Charles VIII was crossing the Alps at the head of an army of 1,500 French *lances* and 1,500 Italian *lances* (which amounts to 15,000 horsemen of which 7,500 were fighters), 1,200 mounted cross-bowmen, and 14,000 foot-soldiers of whom 3,000 were Swiss pikemen, to conquer the Kingdom of Naples, ruled by Alfonso II of Aragon[2]. Charles VIII had inherited his claim to the Kingdom from the *bon roi* René d'Anjou, who had bequeathed Anjou, Provence

[1] *Campagne et bulletins de la Grande Armée d'Italie*, ed. J. DE LA PILORGERIE, Nantes / Paris, Forest et Grimaud / Didier, 1866, p. 214-215. Quotation in title from ROBERT GAGUIN, fol. ccxvi, v°.

[2] For details about the numbers of Charles' invading army see I. CLOULAS, *Charles VIII et le mirage italien*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1986, p. 46-48.

and his rights to the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily to Charles' father Louis XI[3]. To the great surprise of the Venetians and of the King of Spain, Ferdinand the Catholic, Charles VIII did not only reach Naples after a triumphant descent into Italy, of which the different people warmly welcomed him, but was also crowned King of Naples on 12 May 1495, Alfonso II and his son Ferrandino having fled from their realm[4]. Charles left ministers and troops in his new Kingdom and started his return journey[5]. By this time, however, Pope Alexander VI and the Venetians had turned overtly hostile, and on 12 April 1495, the Holy League had been proclaimed, officially uniting Alexander VI, the Holy Roman Emperor, the King of Spain, Ludovico Sforza and Venice against the Turk and the enemies of Italy. Of course, the League's primary aim was to oppose Charles VIII[6]. At Fornovo, Charles' army, then of about 10,000 men, had to confront a composite force of Venetians, Milanese and Bolognese troops, amounting to 30,000 men. A fierce battle was fought (6 July 1495), and both sides have since claimed the victory to be theirs. It is however generally attributed to the French, who inflicted a great number of casualties on the Italians while losing only a few men, managed to force the passage and could thus return safely to France[7].

The French descent into Italy was narrated by many French and Italian chroniclers. Modern historians have tended to devote most of their attention to the Italian accounts - such as the remarkable narratives of Guicciardini, Machiavelli, or Marino Sanudo - and to Philippe de Commynes' relation. Although Commynes' narrative has its weaknesses, it is a truly exciting and intelligent work, and it is difficult to understand how Sainte-Beuve could ever write: 'A partir de la mort de Louis XI, les Mémoires de

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[3] See in particular D. ABULAFIA, 'Introduction: From Ferrante I to Charles VIII', in *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy. 1494-1495. Antecedents and Effects*, ed. D. ABULAFIA, Aldershot (Hampshire), Variorum, 1995, p. 1-25.

[4] For a comprehensive overview of Charles VIII's campaign see especially CLOULAS and *Campagne et bulletins...*

[5] On Charles' policy for the Kingdom of Naples and his institutional reforms see E. SAKELLARIOU, 'Institutional and Social Continuities in the Kingdom of Naples between 1443 and 1528', in *The French Descent*, p. 327-353, and A. DENIS, *Charles VIII et les Italiens: Histoire et mythe*, Geneva, Droz, 1979, p. 96 ff.

[6] On the formation of the League see CLOULAS, p. 155-160.

[7] On the battle of Fornovo see CLOULAS, p. 194-206; D. CHAMBERS, 'Francesco II Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua, "Liberator of Italy"', in *The French Descent*, p. 217-229 (p. 223-226).

Commynes perdent sensiblement en intérêt'[8]. Jean Dufournet has shown much of the richness of Commynes' account[9].

It is said that, compared to the best Italian accounts and to Commynes' narrative, other French accounts appear rather superficial, propagandist, and lacking insight. This does not, however, make them uninteresting, and it is on these other French chronicles that I intend to concentrate in this chapter. The most notable source is André de La Vigne and Octovien de Saint-Gelais' *Voyage de Naples*, published between 1498 and 1502, a work written half in verse and half in prose[10]. It is interesting to note that André de La Vigne took part in the expedition and was entrusted with writing *the* official French account of the expedition; this was, it seems, a novelty in French historiography, and demonstrates the Kings of France's concern, at the dawn of the 16th century, for an official writing of their wars which would promote their vision, ambitions and aims. Most other French accounts, apart from Guillaume de Villeneuve's *Mémoires*[11] (completed in 1497) and Jean de Saint-Gelais' *Histoire de Louys XII*[12] (written around 1510), follow closely de La Vigne's narrative. Thus we have Pierre Desrey's addition to his translation of Robert Gaguin's *Compendium* entitled *Les Grandes croniques*[13], first published in 1514, and a *Mer des hystoires* published in 1503 by Antoine Vérard[14]. Finally, we have Jean Bouchet's *Annalles d'Acquitaine* and a section of Bouchet's *Panegyric du seigneur Loys de la Trimoille* (1527)[15].

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[8] C. -A. SAINTE-BEUVE, *Causeries du Lundi*, 3rd ed., 15 vol., Paris, Garnier, 1857-1872, I, 240-259 (art. of 7 January 1850). Quotation p. 258.

[9] See for example J. DUFOURNET, 'Commynes et l'Italie', in his work *Philippe de Commynes*, p. 81-112.

[10] See ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE , *Le Voyage de Naples*, ed. A. SLERCA , Milan, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1981.

[11] GUILLAUME DE VILLENEUVE, *Mémoires*, in *Choix de chroniques et Mémoires sur l'histoire de France*, ed. J. A. C. BUCHON, Paris, Delagrave, 1886, p. 269-293.

[12] JEAN DE SAINT-GELAIS , *Histoire de Louis XII, Roi de France, Père du peuple*, ed. T. GODEFROY, Paris, Abraham Pacard, 1622 (see p. 79-97).

[13] 'Addition de Pierre Desroy [...] sur et avecques les croniques du très famé hystoriographe [...] Robert Gaguin', in ROBERT GAGUIN, fol. ccxvi, v°- ccxxxiv, r°. According to Franck Collard, Robert Gaguin's relation of Charles VIII's conquest is mainly based on the bulletins published in France relating Charles' progresses, and does not present any particular interest. Cf. F. COLLARD, *Un historien au travail à la fin du XVe siècle: Robert Gaguin*, Geneva, Droz, 1996, p. 210.

[14] *Mer des hystoires*, 2 vol., Paris, Antoine Vérard, 1503 (see vol. 2, fol. cclxxi, v°-cccvii, v°).

[15] JEAN BOUCHET, *Annalles d'Acquitaine*, Poitiers, Jacques Bouchet, 1524 (see fol. liv, r°-lix, v°); *Le Panegyric du seigneur Loys de la Trimoille,* in *Choix de chroniques et Mémoires*, p. 727-807 (see p. 755-762 for the narrative of the conquest).

It does not take a thorough reading of these sources to see that all of our writers took a very partisan stance, and posed as champions of Charles VIII's cause. In this chapter, I intend to look into the discourse of these chroniclers and consider the light in which they presented the expedition, to specify the ideological elements of their propagandist talk. We shall see that, apart from Philippe de Commynes, all our French writers presented Charles VIII's conquest of the Kingdom of Naples as a *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*, though they did not explicitly use this expression of the *Débat*'s French herald[16]. Commynes appears as *the* exception, for his narrative of the conquest is radically different; the nature of his discourse will be analysed in the next chapter and contrasted with the partisan discourse of other French writers.

1. The intended crusade

It is quite well-known that Charles VIII presented the Naples expedition as a preliminary step for a crusade against the Ottoman Turks. A manifesto in Latin published in Florence on 27 November 1494, bearing the King of France's seal, provides the best example of Charles' publicized intentions. The manifesto starts by recalling, in rather commonplace rhetorical language, 'les meurtres et les massacres, le sac des nobles cités, la ruine des peuples fidèles [...], crimes odieux et sans nombre commis par les ignobles Turcs'. The King then declares his resolution to chivalrously defend the faith, 'quittant avec regret notre très-chère épouse et notre fils unique, implorant en outre le secours de Dieu, dont nous embrassons la cause'. Charles VIII also emphasizes that, by taking the cross, he is acting according to 'la coutume de nos pères, les rois de France très-chrétiens'. Finally, he indicates that, on his journey, he intends to recover his Kingdom of Naples; all other principalities should have no fear, for his sole intentions

[16] See my third chapter, p. 162-163.

are to protect Christendom 'et [...] travailler [...] à augmenter [...] la puissance, l'honneur et la dignité de la sainte Église'[17]. We have seen at length in the last two chapters that crusading was the supreme example of a *guerre de magnificence*. Especially in times when the Christian princes neglected their primary duty, there could not be, for a prince, a more honourable, praiseworthy and exemplary way of showing his power and might than putting it in the service of the defence of the faith: such a martial deed was the best way to acquire eternal renown and glory. As Charles VIII pointed out in his manifesto, and as contemporary French panegyrists were repeatedly emphasizing, the Kings of France had a long history of distinguishing themselves in such *guerres de magnificence*; since the times of Clovis, the *Rois Très Chrétiens* were the mot zealous defenders and propagators of the faith. As Mathieu Thomassin had written, they almost had a contract with God: He protected the Kingdom from its enemies while they fought to uphold the Church[18].

Charles VIII's crusading aims were allegorically expressed by André de la Vigne and Octovien de Saint-Gelais in a poem called *Ressource de la Crestienté*, published in 1494, before Charles had reached Naples; the *Ressource* thereafter served as an introduction to the *Voyage de Naples* and the two works were published under the title of *Le Vergier d'honneur*[19]. The *Ressource* records the lamentations of 'Dame Crestienté', a fair woman in distress. She enters a delightful orchard and meets 'Noblesse', a princess of Trojan descent, who then takes her to 'Majesté Royale'. 'Majesté Royale' benevolently listens to 'Dame Crestienté''s complaint against the Turks and promises to avenge her. A character called 'Je-ne-sçay-qui', whom Anna Slerca identifies with the people[20], opposes Charles' crusading plans, but his advice is refuted by 'Bon Conseil', and the crusade is decided. The *Ressource* is very reminiscent of Jean Molinet's

[17] This text has been translated and published by J. de La Pilorgerie in *Campagne et bulletins...*, p. 101-103.
[18] See my second chapter, p. 138.
[19] There are many 16th century editions of the *Vergier d'honneur*; see for instance ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE and OCTOVIEN DE SAINT-GELAIS, *Le Vergier d'honneur*, Paris, Antoine Vérard, 1500.
[20] Cf. A. SLERCA, 'La *Complainte des estatz sur le voyage et guerre de Neaples* de Jean Bouchet', in *Passer les monts. Français en Italie - l'Italie en France (1494-1525)*, ed. J. BALSAMO, Paris / Florence, Honoré Champion / Cadmo, 1998, p. 213-236 (see p. 222-223 and 225-226).

Complainte de Grèce, one of the first pieces that Molinet wrote for Philip the Good, in support of his crusading plans. The two pieces are very similar in form: like Molinet, de La Vigne and Saint-Gelais chose a very fashionable literary expedient, developed by Alain Chartier, Jean Gerson and Christine de Pisan, presenting us with a dream fantasy, an allegorical setting. Both works make a conventional analogy between defending Christendom and saving a beautiful lady - such an allegory was obviously bound to please a knight. An important difference, however, is the appearance of 'Je-ne-sçay-qui' in the *Ressource*, who represents the opposition and is silenced by 'Bon Conseil'. The chroniclers will point out how, on his triumphal return to France in 1495, Charles neglected to visit Paris, to punish the Parisians for having refused to offer him 100,000 francs for his expedition[21].

Originally, Charles' crusading intentions were thus forcefully advertised. However, de La Vigne hardly mentioned Charles' crusading plans in the *Voyage de Naples*, and nor did the other French chroniclers. Only Commynes dwells on them, and describes one unhappy effort to make the peoples of the Balkans revolt against the Turks; what is more surprising is that our realist author did believe in Charles' chances of success, because he assessed them according to political factors: compared with Mehmet II, Commynes deemed Bayezid II incompetent (III, 102). Presumably, the other French chroniclers did not mention Charles' crusading plans because they had not materialized, and because his efforts had been unsuccessful. They did, however, refer to them on one occasion: as they related the death of Djem, Bayezid's brother, this 'captif estrange'[22] whom Pope Alexander VI Borgia had handed over to Charles VIII, and who 'eust peu estre cause dont le roy Charles eut recouvert Constantinople'[23], Pierre Desrey and Jean Bouchet explained that 'on l'avoit donné au roy tout empoisonné'[24]. Thus the failure of the crusade was entirely the Pope's fault. The crusade remained fine words, but this did not prevent our chroniclers from presenting Charles' expedition as a successful *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*; we shall now see on what grounds.

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[21] ROBERT GAGUIN, fol. ccxxxiv, v°.
[22] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, *Le voyage de Naples*, p. 240.
[23] JEAN BOUCHET, *Annalles...*, fol. lvii, r°.

2. A host of honourable motivations

Charles VIII may have emphasized his crusading aims in 1494, but his primary objective - and the one he achieved - was the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples. The French chroniclers - I am leaving aside Commynes' work for the moment - all present Charles VIII's conquest as a just war, inspired by the most praiseworthy motivations. Apart from those who seem to take it for granted, such as the compiler of the *Mer des hystoires* of 1503 who simply says, about the Kingdom of Naples: 'lequel luy appartenoit'[25], our authors demonstrate that the Kingdom belonged to Charles. Some, such as Jean Bouchet in his *Annalles d'Acquitaine*, even took the trouble of reproducing the whole history and genealogies of the Angevin Kings, starting with Urban IV's gift of the Kingdom to Charles of Anjou. Bouchet stresses that Charles was careful to ask 'les présidens de ses cours de parlement avec son Chancelier et les princes du royaume' to fully investigate his rights[26]. Surely this demonstrated his concern about the justice of his cause.

Our chroniclers also express the opinion that by recovering his heritage, Charles made a charitable action with regard to his Neapolitan subjects. Many ghastly stories were circulating in France about the Kings of Aragon, and it is difficult to judge whether they had substance. At any rate, the chroniclers did not question them - even Commynes repeated them. In the *Voyage de Naples*, André de La Vigne makes Charles appear as a saviour, as the King does not fail to respond to the pleas - expressed in rather unkempt *rhétoriqueur* verse - of the Neapolitans who were in exile in France:

> Remembre toy de tes pofvres esclaves,
> serfs et espaves, ou cent fois pis qu'en caves

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[24] PIERRE DESREY, 'Addition...', fol. ccxxiv, r°.
[25] *Mer des hystoires*, 1503, vol. 2, fol. cclxxi,v°.
[26] JEAN BOUCHET, *Annalles...*, fol. liv, r°.

mis aux entraves, maleureux à tousjours[27].

Later in his narrative, de La Vigne will resort to supernatural arguments to convince us more fully of the rightness of Charles' claims. A phial containing some of Saint Gennaro's blood was kept in Naples cathedral. When placed next to the skull of San Gennaro, the dried blood would usually liquefy. According to de La Vigne, the Neapolitans firmly believed that the liquefaction of the blood showed that God was listening to their prayers, and they had told the French that 'par ce sang [ils] avoient la cognoissance de leur prince s'il devoit estre leur seigneur ou non'. On 1 May 1495, a few minutes after having been stirred by Charles VIII, the blood of Saint Gennaro started to liquefy. De La Vigne was filled with wonder and commented that it was 'ung des grans miracles que jamais homme ne vit, dont tout le peuple françois [...] se donnoient grant merveilles de ce voir'[28]. The Pope had refused to grant Charles his title, but God Himself had demonstrated that Charles was truly King of Naples.

Our chroniclers do not only stress that Charles' rights were valid, but also imply that, since the Kingdom was his property, it was for Charles a question of honour to recover his own. The Burgundian chronicler Jean Molinet was, since the death of Charles the Bold, a subject of the Holy Roman Emperor, but he wrote his poem 'Le voiage de Napples' in support of Charles VIII's undertaking, and used the same ideological language as the French chroniclers[29]. In his poem, Molinet explains that Charles VIII, 'le cerf non serf' - the hero of the piece is a hart, for the heraldic animal of the Kings of France was the 'cerf volant' - 'Sentant mengier l'herbe de sa pasture [...] / Pour soy vengier s'est vollut deslogier'[30]. In the same vein, Pierre Desrey tells us that Charles, 'prince tousjours magnanime et de noble cueur', could not leave his inheritance

[27] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 131, v. 32-34.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 261-262.
[29] According to Jean Devaux, Molinet's poem may well have been commissioned as a present to Charles VIII by Archduke Philip the Fair, who did not want to jeopardize the peace obtained in the Lower countries, despite his father Maximilian's injunctions. Besides, it was rather natural that Molinet, as a faithful admirer of the ideals of chivalry, should have been enthralled by Charles' Italian campaign. Cf. J. DEVAUX, *Jean Molinet*, p. 323-336.
[30] JEAN MOLINET, 'Le Voiage de Napples', in his *Faictz et dictz*, I, 277-283 (p. 278).

in somebody else's hands[31]. According to de La Vigne, preserving one's honour was, for the prince, not only a necessity but also a source of anxiety, almost a burden: at the end of his account, he pitied Charles who had to be confined to bed for three days in Grenoble, and commented:

> non sans cause, car il avoit souffert en son voyage, a mon advis, autant de paine, de traveil, de soucy, de chagrin et d'autres choses que peult avoir ung prince et ung roy qui ayme son honneur comme il faisoit, que pourroit ne sçauroit faire homme vivant du monde[32].

In chivalrous society, one was morally obliged to preserve one's honour. Recovering the Kingdom of Naples was also a question of honour, and the fact that the risks and troubles taken may seem disproportionate to such a motivation made the enterprise even more admirable as a *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*. Steven Gunn has stressed how, for Western princes, by the beginning of the Renaissance, honour had become the main excuse for an aggressive foreign policy[33].

Finally, there was another reason that moved Charles to cross the Alps, and it was not the least important: de La Vigne explicitly referred to 'los, gloire, bruyt et renom'[34] as one of Charles' motivations. The aim of a *guerre de magnificence* was, for a prince, to attract the attention of the whole of Christendom, and to immortalize his name, state and nation. Charles certainly succeeded in doing so, and our chroniclers wrote with enchantment about the grandeur of his enterprise, which he successfully brought to effect; the French historiographers thus ensured that his fame would be perennial.

3. An outstanding exploit

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[31] PIERRE DESREY, 'Addition...', fol. ccxvi, v°.
[32] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 323.
[33] S. GUNN, 'Chivalry and the Politics of the Early Tudor Court', in *Chivalry in the Renaissance*, ed. S. ANGLO, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1990, p. 107-128.
[34] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 130, v. 6.

Our chroniclers clearly present Charles' conquest, this 'voyage et tres magnifique entreprinse'[35], as the *Grandes croniques* call it, as an extraordinary undertaking. The argument is emphatically stated and encapsulated in the speech delivered by a young maid on Charles' return at Chieri. This speech figured in the numerous pageants staged for Charles in the towns that welcomed him on his triumphal return, and de La Vigne integrated it into his narrative[36]. It enumerates all the things that made Charles' venture admirable. Firstly, of course, the place was remarkable. Charles' 'voyage' had taken him far away from his Kingdom; he had shown his might in the remotest, but also the most renowned of places. As the young maid declared to Charles:

> tu n'as pas passé par ung villaige seullement, tu n'as pas fait apparoir ta puyssance merveilleuse en ung petit bourg sans plus [...] tu as dompté et mys soubz la mercy de ta main dextre Millan la populouse, Genes la superbe, Pavye la saige, Boulongne la crasse, Florence la belle, Pise l'antique, Sene la vierge, Napples la gentille et Romme la saincte, qui est la ville cappitalle de tout le monde[37].

Truly this made Charles' expedition a *guerre de magnificence*. The crusade had failed, but this did not really alter the prestige gained by Charles in this enterprise: as the French herald declared to the English one in the *Débat des hérauts d'armes*, a *guerre de magnificence* was also 'quant princes vont en ost conquerir en loingtaing et estrange païs'[38]. Italy was obviously a 'loingtaing et estrange païs' - at least, considering that Charles had gone as far as Naples, and that he had succeeded where the 15th century Angevin princes had failed; moreover, it was a renowned and celebrated country. De La Vigne and the chroniclers who used his account described at great length the marvels of Italy, the great monuments, the famous towns, the ruins of Rome, Poggio Reale - the country residence of the Kings of Naples, an enchanting place - and the natural marvels such as Etna, 'une grande montaigne moult forte laquelle brusle et art tousjours'[39]. The

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[35] PIERRE DESREY, 'Addition...', fol. ccxvii, r°.
[36] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 296-299.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 298.
[38] See my third chapter, p. 163.
[39] PIERRE DESREY, 'Addition...', fol. cxxvii, v°.

conquest is almost presented as a touristic expedition, and Charles and his soldiers did not neglect to visit all these places.

The speech of the young maid also dwells on the reputation of the Italians, in particular the magnificence of their princes. One would have expected such an opulent country to have been fiercely guarded, in a sense, as difficult of access as the Garden of the Hesperides, yet in less than two months, Charles had subjugated 'le pays ou se disoit estre toute la largesse du monde'[40]. The compiler of the *Mer des hystoires* of 1503 replaced 'largesse' by 'sagesse', probably intentionally, to refer to the Italians' reputation for wisdom and astuteness[41]. The young maid also tells us how the Kings of Aragon were renowned for their bravery and their martial worth:

> estoyent, ainsi qu'on disoit, le roy Alphons et son filz duc de Calabre, les plus fiers et plus heureux en armes qui furent oncques en Ytallie, acompaignez des plus oultrageux gendarmes tant barbarins, estradiotz que autres qui furent oncques veuz. Mais que sont ilz devenus?[42]

By praising the Italians, in particular Charles' enemies, and emphasizing their doom, the *pucelle* makes Charles' conquest look truly extraordinary.

4. Charles' stupendous wealth and might displayed

As Sydney Anglo and other modern scholars have shown, magnificence was all about display[43]. What may seem to us today to have been an outrageous wasting of money was considered to be vital for the welfare of the state by those who governed and their satellites. The King had to show that he was the King, therefore he had to display his wealth and his power. This also ensured the reverence of his subjects, hence their obedience, hence order in the realm. It seems that the importance, for Renaissance

[40] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 298.
[41] *Mer des hystoires*, 1503, vol. 2, fol. cclxxxxix, v°.
[42] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 298-299.
[43] See above, Chapter 3, n. 34.

princes, of being magnificent also applied in times of war, for the waging of war provided rulers with the opportunity to display their wealth and might not only to their enemies, but also to all their subjects and neighbours, who would then be in awe of them. This element of display in warfare becomes very important in the chronicles of the late 15th and early 16th centuries, especially in official and semi-official ones. The chroniclers of the Dukes of Burgundy, who had made magnificence a primordial element of their rule, had paved the way. One simply needs to refer to Jean Molinet's description of 'la magnificence au siège de Nuysse' (1475), in his *Chronique*, to understand the importance that Charles the Bold attached to magnificence in his campaigns. Molinet marvelled at the tents of the Burgundian nobles, 'mansions de diverses fachons et pompeuses coustances, composées par mirable et solide artifice comme pour y demourer a perpetuite' ; as in a town, one could see in the Burgundian siege taverns, a market, public baths, courts of real tennis, etc. On the whole, Charles the Bold's siege was 'chose admirable et la plus somptueuse qui jamais avoit esté veue de nostre temps' (I, 56-57)[44].

The French accounts of Charles VIII's invasion show well that the conquest was for Charles an opportunity to display his awesome power to the whole world. In de La Vigne's *Voyage de Naples* and the *Mer des hystoires* of 1503, several pages are devoted to the preparations for the conquest, which take gargantuan proportions. André de La Vigne uses enumeration, a trick of rhetoric, enhanced - according to contemporary taste - by many plays on words and alliterations, in order to impress us. Everything is mentioned, from the ships

> plains de harnois, d'arbalestres, de vires,
> de gros canons, serpentines, courtaulx
> pavoys dorez, grand escussons d'yvires...

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[44] It seems that the field of magnificence at war during the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance is still largely unexplored by scholars. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the few attempts to study it have originated from art historians. Christiane Raynaud, for instance, has noted that for late medieval princes, and the Dukes of Burgundy in particular, magnificence did not only excuse, but also explain and justify the waging of war. Cf. C. RAYNAUD, 'L'imaginaire de la guerre dans *L'histoire du bon roi Alexandre*', in her work *Images et pouvoirs au Moyen Age*, Paris, Le Léopard d'Or, 1992, p. 119-137.

to the

broches, briaches, branches, brandons bruslez,
bribeurs broillez, bricoleurs barboillez,
bruns bredoillez, bigarees banieres [45].

Participants are being summoned from all over Europe: armourers from Milan, craftsmen from Spain and Flanders, and mercenaries, 'Lancequenetz, Suÿsses / et leurs complices', from Switzerland and Germany[46].

The long description of Charles VIII's army appears as an obligatory passage in our chroniclers' narratives, to mark the King's overwhelming power. The chroniclers enumerate the different army corps with their captains: the Scottish archers, the Swiss pikemen, the hundred *gentilshommes de l'hôtel du roy* - an elite corps on whom the Kings of France, like their European princely neighbours, were increasingly relying[47] - etc. The King's artillery, which had done so much to expel the English from France, and was at the time the most modern in Europe[48], is naturally not neglected: de La Vigne dwells on the power of the 'grosses bombardes', or the 'trop marmiteuses coulevrines piteuses'[49]. The chroniclers are impressed by the composition of the navy: 11 'caraques', 226 galleys, 24 'grosses naves', 60 brigantines, 'non comprinses les barques et flettes desquelles y avoit sans nombre'[50], Desrey adds. Charles sent ambassadors and other nobles

bien renommez par leurs haulx vasselaiges,
riches d'onneur et de lascheté minces,

[45] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 132, v. 107-110, 91-93.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 131-132.
[47] Cf. J. R. HALE, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe, 1450-1620,* Leicester, Leicester University Press / Fontana Paperbacks, 1985, p. 136.
[48] Guicciardini, for instance, showed well the preponderant part played by 'this pestilential armament' during Charles' Italian campaign. Cf. FRANCESCO GUICCIARDINI, *History of Italy and History of Florence*, ed. and abridged by J. R. HALE, transl. C. GRAYSON, Chalfont St. Giles, Sadler and Brown, 1966, p. 152 (*History of Italy*, Book I, Chapter 11).
[49] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 133, v. 115, 122.
[50] PIERRE DESREY, 'Addition...', fol. ccxvii, r°.

> parfaitz en bien, vertueux en langaiges [51]

all over Italy. The chroniclers also marvel at a novelty, the appointment of a 'Maréchal des Loges',

> lequel en grande curiosité et diligence bailla par escript en beaulx petis rosles au roy Charles et à les mareschaulx tous les lieux, cités, viles [...] et vilages d'icelluy voyage, et si narroit et donnoit à entendre la situation des logis[52].

Charles' expedition may have been an invasion, but the French were now civilized; the work performed by the 'Maréchal des Loges', for instance, showed that they had evolved since the times of the barbarous Gauls' descent into Italy. A conventional courteous element appears repeatedly in de La Vigne's account: the analogy between the conquest and winning a woman's heart. Thus, among all the King's followers, the *mignons* are described as 'pour assaillir ung feminin donjon / trop plus propres que dix autres miliers'[53].

The King is followed by all his servants, and all the objects needed for his service and everyday activities, 'bagage servant à tous offices de la maison du roy comme pour la chambre, chapelle, garde robe, panetrie tant de bouche comme de commun [...] et aussi pour garde vaisselle de bouche [...], pour tapisserie et fourrures'[54]... As the compiler of the *Mer des hystoires* of 1503 points out: 'quelque part que le roy aille son estat ne se bouge de sa vitaille, ne de sa bouche, ne des chambellans et de tous ses domestiques'[55]. The army also includes an infinity of craftsmen, carpenters, coalmen, carters, 'maîtres pour faire cordes et chables and gens sçavans pour abatre murailles'[56]. Finally, there is another infinity of people who are just there to make the army even more impressive and magnificent:

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[51] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 149, v. 751-753.
[52] PIERRE DESREY, 'Addition...', fol. ccxviii, r°.
[53] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 152, v. 831-832.
[54] PIERRE DESREY, 'Addition...', fol ccxvii, v°.
[55] *Mer des hystoires*, 1503, vol. 2, fol. cclxxv, v°.
[56] PIERRE DESREY, 'Addition...', fol. ccxvi, v°.

> clerons, trompettes [...] joueurs de haultsboys, sonneurs de cornets [...] joueurs de la grande espee et de la petite au bouclier, joueurs de la hache d'arme et de la courte dague, jousteurs de lance [...] et gentilz compaignons qui avoient bon corps pour faire souplesses[57].

However, by contrast with Desrey, de La Vigne mentions 'ung grant tas de rustres gauldisseurs / qu'on voit souvent suivre et hanter la court'[58], referring to such men. A swarm of parasites was a natural consequence of Charles' largesse.

To the modern reader, the descriptions of Charles VIII's army during its entries into Florence, Rome or Naples quickly become tedious - and we do not find them in Commynes' narration. However, the fact that our chroniclers devoted so much ink to the detailed descriptions of these parades show that they were considered as very important. These ostentatious displays of power were intended to impress the Italians, and they certainly did as we learn from reading the Italian chronicles. The French chroniclers describe the *gentilshommes de l'hôtel*, 'tous moult bien armés et montés sur chevaulx excellentement bardés de diverses parures', their footmen, 'richement abillés de draps d'or, velours, satin ou taffetas pour le mendre drap', with 'belles rapierres en leurs mains', or the archers of the guard, 'armés de brigandines gardebras, gorgeries et cleres salades, chargés de belle orfavrerie'[59]. Charles' soldiers appear both beautiful and fearsome; this general impression was the one intended, and is epitomized in de La Vigne's description of the *gentilhommes de l'hôtel*, who 'monstroyent bien par leurs ruades bauldes / qu'en France y a gens qui ont cueur et corps'[60].

Charles' princely virtue of magnificence at war is also shown and praised at Vercelli - where in September 1495 Philippe de Commynes and others were trying to conclude a peace treaty with the League - as the chroniclers depict Charles inviting the Milanese and Venetian ambassadors to visit his camp 'tout a leur bon plaisir'. Charles'

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[57] *Ibid.*, fol. ccxviii, r°.
[58] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 152, v. 837-838.
[59] PIERRE DESREY, 'Addition...', fol. ccxxi, v°.
[60] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 215, v. 3108-3109.

behaviour is contrasted with that of the Duke of Milan Ludovico Sforza, who had never let any ambassador visit his camp, 'de paour que l'on sceust son ordre, estat et façon de faire'. Charles did not have such complexes, because he was the strongest: on this occasion, his magnanimity forced the Italians to acknowledge his superiority. The ambassadors, de La Vigne adds, 's'esmerveillerent moult du bon ordre, de l'excellence et de la puissance au roy de France'[61].

As we know, Charles VIII's descent into Italy was, on the whole, a triumph - save for the ticklish fact that the Neapolitans rebelled against the French less than two months after Charles' departure from Naples, something which the chroniclers mention briefly but do not really dare to analyse. Like a Gallic Caesar, Charles had come to Italy, he had seen Italy and he had vanquished the Italians at Fornovo. Since a *guerre de magnificence* was all the more impressive when successful, our chroniclers highlighted every moment where Charles' power had taken effect. Each one of his martial deeds was extolled. One of the events at which the chroniclers marvelled most, and which was truly a exploit, was Charles' crossing of the Appenine passes on his return journey with all his artillery, as he had refused to dismantle it. This feat of arms was hitherto unheard of in military history. De La Vigne describes at length how the Swiss infantrymen harnessed themselves by hundreds to each piece of artillery, together with the horses, and hauled the canons up the mountain under an exceptionally hot sun. Once the top had been reached, the Swiss had to hold the canons back on the way down, which was even more laborious. De La Vigne presents the whole event as a tremendous exploit, depicting the Swiss musicians playing their tabors amongst the 'cris et hurlemens merveilleux' to cheer the workers, and concludes with some awe: 'a bien regarder les croniques et hystoires du temps passé, on ne trouve point si grande ne si penible entreprise avoir esté faicte'[62]. Charles' subjects could not fail to underline the analogy to be made between Charles crossing the Alps to invade Italy, and Hannibal who had performed the same deed with his elephants. But as the maid of Chieri pointed out, Charles had surpassed

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 305.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 278.

Hannibal himself, for Hannibal had not been able to enter Rome, while Charles had visited the holy city and exercised justice there[63].

As for the battle of Fornovo, de La Vigne related it in a heroic style, emphasizing the courage and valour of the French, their artillery's efficiency compared to the poor results achieved by the Italian guns, and the doom of the League's forces. In the Livian tradition, the chronicler depicted Charles delivering a harangue to his knights in very conventional language; the young King stressed that his cause was just, that God was with the French and that He would demonstrate on this day 'la bonne amour, la dilection et la charité singuliere qu'il a aux bons et loyaux Françoys'. Charles also held out to the soldiers the 'onneur, louenge et gloire' which would await them in France on their victorious return. The fact that a violent storm had broken out during the battle provided de La Vigne with the opportunity to depict the confrontation in an epic and almost apocalyptic light: 'autant que dura la tuerie, la chace et l'escaramouche, oncques ne cessa de venter, de plouvoir, de tonner et d'esclerer comme si tous les dyables eussent esté par les champs'. De La Vigne saw this as a sign of the wrath of God against the treacherous Italians, who, once friendly - Charles had come to Italy at Ludovico Sforza and Alexander VI's request - had become hostile to the French. Eventually, God granted the victory to the French, 'pour garder et sauver le très crestien roy, pillier de la foy catholique', and the Italians were vanquished 'et mis soubz les piedz des vertueux Françoys'[64]. As one can see, the idea that God supported the Kings of France in their wars, because they were His faithful and zealous servants – an idea which, as we saw, often appeared at the dawn of the 16th century in the chroniclers' discourse about Joan of Arc[65] – also applied to offensive wars.

5. The French chroniclers and the Italians

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 298.
[64] For de La Vigne's account of Fornovo see *ibid.*, p. 283-289.
[65] See Chapter 2, Sections 3.1 and 4.

De La Vigne's comments on the Italians in his report of the battle of Fornovo show that he did not make much effort to understand the natives' feelings. The same can be said of all our chroniclers. Thus, they praised the fact that, until Fornovo, the conquest had been remarkably peaceable - save for Louis of Orléans' victory at Rapallo (5 September 1494) and the brutal sack of a few towns by Charles' vanguard - but they attributed it exclusively to Charles' great power. It is true that the deterrent strength of Charles' army partly explained the fact that the French had hardly met any resistance. However, unlike Commynes, other French chroniclers did not try to understand why the Italians had not only let Charles cross the peninsula, but also welcomed him wholeheartedly on his descent. It appears as if this was simply to be expected. After all, as Molinet - who was supporting Charles' venture - metaphorically expressed it: 'Le moine doit danser au pied l'abbé'[66]. Charles was the King of France, and his will simply had to be obeyed. According to Jean de Saint-Gelais, Charles was welcomed everywhere 'ainsi qu'il appartient à un tel prince de l'estre'[67]. André de La Vigne severely criticized the Florentines for having dared to resist[68], but the chronicler did not recognise the irony in his speech as he reproached the Florentines for arrogantly claiming that Pisa belonged to them[69]. Apparently, only the King of France had the right to declare a country his property, and to wage war against its rulers.

By the time of Louis XII's conquests, it seems that the French chroniclers had lost a few of their illusions. In the part of his work dealing with Louis XII, Jean de Saint-Gelais explained, as if he had just realized it: 'il n'est aucune nation qui sçaiche tant ni ne veuille complaire à ceulx qui sont les plus forts que font les Italiens'[70]. In a way, the word 'sçaiche' is an acknowledgement that the strongest was not necessarily the ultimate winner. In any case, none of our chroniclers understood the Italians as well as Commynes, and none of them saw more clearly why the Italians had welcomed Charles so warmly, to later turn their backs on him.

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[66] JEAN MOLINET, 'Voiage de Napples', p. 279, v. 48.
[67] JEAN DE SAINT-GELAIS, p. 85.
[68] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 208, v. 2885-2889. Piero de Medici had first opposed the French before eventually giving much more than they expected.
[69] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

• Conclusion

The works of the French chroniclers - leaving Commynes aside - are not very helpful for us to understand the reactions of the Italians; however, they illustrate perfectly the concept of the *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*. Charles' crusading plans had failed, but this did not seem to matter for our chroniclers; at this early stage of the wars of Italy, their confidence in the King's power, and in the renown that Charles had gained thanks to this magnificent martial deed, was intact. Their assertiveness contrasts with the kind of uneasiness and disillusionment that we saw in many Burgundian accounts of Philip the Good's crusading endeavours. The conquest of a far-off country like the Kingdom of Naples was a perfect way, for the King of France, of displaying his power, and this is what our chroniclers remembered from Charles' descent into Italy: the marvels of the journey, and Charles' triumph. It should be noted that the concept of the *guerre de magnificence* is closely linked with the ideals of chivalry; indeed the conquest appears as a *prouesse*, an outstanding feat of arms which brought the King glory and renown. As for the material realities of the conquest, such as the financial gains, they were either ignored by our chroniclers, or included amongst the marvels of Italy. Thus de la Vigne marvelled at the profusion, variety and richness of the goods that the French had found inside the Castello Nuovo, and added with disarming simplicity: 'l'en fut plus de huyt jours entiers a les vuyder par force de gens et de charrettes'[71]. After all, this was a prize Charles only deserved, after his tremendous *prouesse*.

Of all our French chroniclers - save Commynes - only Guillaume de Villeneuve depicted in detail the un-magnificent part of the conquest: the expulsion of the French

[70] JEAN DE SAINT-GELAIS, p. 148.

from Naples, which Charles had not witnessed. Villeneuve was naturally well informed about these later events, as he had been personally involved in them, as a French captain. He had also suffered from them, having been taken prisoner by Ferrandino and detained on a galley, as well as in the Castel Nuovo, for a whole year. Still, his narration does not differ much in ideology from that of other French chroniclers: it is all about honour - his honour as a French knight, and that of Charles - and about the chivalrous virtues of the French. Villeneuve made no attempt to look beyond the martial, chivalrous and heroic aspect of events and to understand the Italians' feelings, or the political side of the whole story. In fact, he willingly avoided considering this aspect of the invasion, arguing for instance about the formation of the League: 'je m'en tairay, car à moy n'appartient, ne mon sens n'est assez suffisant pour parler [...] d'une si haute matière ne si corrompue comme ceste-cy'[72]. The role of the King of France's soldiers was not to discuss such matters, but simply to obey orders; besides, politics - especially Italian politics - were far too subtle and fraudulent affairs for a simple, honest French knight. Still, Villeneuve's experience led him to question Charles' magnificence - without at all criticizing the King - for he felt impelled to 'supplier, que si une autre fois vous amenez le très-chrestien roy de France aux Italies, [...] que pour l'onneur de Dieu, vous l'amenez mieulx accompaignié qu'il n'estoit, à celle fin que vous ne mettez en si grant péril [...] la couronne de France'[73]. Villeneuve was here referring to the battle of Fornovo, whose outcome could well have been tragic for the French. Perhaps the tremendous power of Charles, as extolled by de La Vigne, was not sufficient after all for such a considerable enterprise.

Not all literature written in France about Charles' conquest was overtly supportive. Anna Slerca has shown that Jean Bouchet's *Complainte des estatz sur le voyage et guerre de Neaples* was rather ambivalent, and might suggest that the people of France did not wholeheartedly support Charles' Italian projects. The piece was written shortly after Charles' return, in 1496, when the King was considering a second descent

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[71] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 251.
[72] GUILLAUME DE VILLENEUVE , p. 271.
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 270.

into Italy. It was offered to the King as a present, when a delegation of the people of Lyon were visiting Charles to ask for the creation of a parliament in their town[74]. Thus it was quite natural that the *Complainte* should reflect the interest of the people; it is in a way close to the 'clerical' tradition of literature that we saw in the first chapter. However, as far as late 15th and early 16th century historiography was concerned, the tone seems to have been unanimously admiring, and all chroniclers - if we expect the few anxious reserves made by Villeneuve – implicitly presented and extolled the conquest as a *guerre de magnificence*, which brought honour and renown to France. Only one voice was dissenting: that of Commynes, whose account will now be discussed.

[74] Cf. SLERCA, 'La *Complainte des estatz...*'. Jean Bouchet's *Complainte des estatz* appears in his larger work *L'Amoureux transy sans espoir.*

Fig. 10. Charles VIII and his army set out on their return journey (20 May 1495). From Ferraiuolo's illustrated chronicle. There is hardly anything magnificent about Charles in this drawing. As in a caricature, the King is presented as a short, weak and rather unattractive young man, whose tough warriors – a primordial factor of his successes – are head and shoulders above him.

Chapter 6 : Tales of a conquest (II). Charles VIII's descent into Italy in Philippe de Commynes' *Mémoires*

> Les Français, pour s'héberger à leur manière, forçaient de tous côtés l'entrée des maisons, jetaient dehors hommes, bêtes et meubles, brûlant le bois, mangeant et buvant à discrétion sans rien payer, ce qui occasionna une grande rumeur dans le peuple.
>
> Jean Burchard, *Journal*[1]

• Introduction

In the last chapter, we saw how most French chroniclers implicitly presented the conquest as a *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*. I now wish to contrast their interpretation with the very different vision of a French contemporary, as exposed in his *Mémoires*: Philippe de Commynes. Like Villeneuve and de La Vigne, Commynes participated in the conquest, though he only was with the King during part of the return journey, having spent the last months of 1494 and the first of 1495 as Charles VIII's ambassador in Venice. Commynes' version of the events is particularly valuable, not only because he witnessed, for some time, the behaviour of the French, but also because he was in a privileged position to see the Italian reactions.

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[1] Extract from JEAN BURCHARD, *Diarium*, in *Archives curieuses de l'histoire de France depuis Louis XI jusqu'à Louis XVIII*, ed. M. L. CIMBER (L. LAFAIST) and J. L. DANJOU, 27 vol., Paris, Beauvais, 1834-

When Commynes was sent to the Serene Republic in September 1494, he had a long experience of politics, having been Louis XI's adviser for about a decade. His views on war, of great originality for the times, have been exposed and analysed by Jean Dufournet, Jean-Claude Delclos and Joël Blanchard[2]. In particular, these scholars have shown, concentrating mainly on the *Mémoires*' first six books that relate Louis XI's struggle against Charles the Bold, that unlike the 'chivalrous' chroniclers of Burgundy, Commynes saw no greatness in the waging of war: our memorialist considered warfare very lucidly, regarding it mainly as the source of much unnecessary suffering and cruelty. Moreover, Commynes - like his former master Louis XI - reckoned that going to battle was most of the time baneful to politics, because it gave too many odds to chance, and one could not rely on chance when the future of the state was at stake[3]. To taking the field, Commynes much preferred diplomacy. Thus, because of his realist and pragmatic outlook on warfare, and because the exercise of violence failed to seduce him, Commynes was rather insensitive to the great ideals of chivalry.

In this chapter, I intend to show that, unlike the other contemporary French chroniclers, Commynes stripped the conquest of all its magnificence, as a result partly of his outlook on war in general, and partly of a knowledge of men and politics unaltered by chivalrous ideals. There was, however, another reason for Commynes' particular tone, which cannot be ignored. Jean Dufournet has shown that Commynes bore Charles VIII a grudge, because the King had not made capital out of his talent; Commynes was used to much more consideration for his person under Louis XI's rule. Thus Commynes was jealous of the King's advisers, such as Bishop Guillaume Briçonnet (who was made a cardinal during the conquest), and tended to denigrate their opinion. Moreover,

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1840, 1ère série, I, 225-313 (p. 273). Translated by the editors. Jean Burchard was master of ceremonies of the chapel to Pope Alexander VI. The scene is set in Rome.

[2] See Chapter 2 and Chapter 7 of J. DUFOURNET, *La destruction des mythes dans les 'Mémoires' de Philippe de Commynes*, Geneva, Droz, 1966; J. DUFOURNET, 'Comment lire les Mémoires de Commynes ? L'entrevue de Péronne et l'expédition contre Liège', in *Philippe de Commynes*, p. 217-249 (p. 242-249); J. -C. DELCLOS, 'Les rayons et les ombres...' ; J. BLANCHARD, *Commynes l'Européen : l'invention du politique*, Geneva, Droz, 1996, p. 233-243, 275-283.

[3] This opinion is often expressed in the *Mémoires*; see for instance I, 65; I, 121; III, 224.

Commynes was held responsible by many courtiers for the rapid loss of the newly conquered Italian territories, because he had failed to prevent the formation of the League while in Venice, and had been fooled by Ludovico Sforza's empty promises of support for Charles, following the King's return to France. As a result, Commynes wrote his account partly as an apology: he emphasized that he had acted wisely, contrary to many, but that all his efforts had been in vain, notably because of lack of support from the court[4].

Finally, we shall see that, faced with the overall success of Charles' descent into Italy - when he had predicted a shameful failure - and having been greatly impressed by the whole venture, which eventually had come to be a grand and epic event, Commynes ultimately reconsidered his opinion: Charles having safely returned to France, Commynes became in favour of a new expedition, which he would perhaps even have regarded as a true *guerre de magnificence*. But before turning our attention to Commynes' account, I wish to consider the original nature of his feelings with regard to Charles' conquest, and conquests in general.

1. Commynes and conquest

Commynes did not make any comments in his *Mémoires* about the concept of wars of conquest, however it is easy to see that he was not easily seduced by such brilliant feats of arms, or *guerres de magnificence*. When he explains that the Venetians 'ne sont point pour se acroistre en haste, comme firent les Romains; car leurs personnes ne sont point de telles vertus' (III, 113), we feel that he tends to agree with their position. Commynes fought at times alongside his masters - at Montlhéry with Charles the Bold, or at Fornovo - but he much preferred politics to war, intellectual duels to violence. In

[4] Cf. J. DUFOURNET, 'Commynes, l'Italie et la Ligue anti-française', in *Italie 1494*, ed. A. C. FIORATO,

the first part of his *Mémoires*, Commynes blamed Louis XI for having decided to invade Burgundy following Charles the Bold's death; the King had thus initiated a long and painful war. Instead, Commynes advocated the search for a peaceful solution, for example the Dauphin's wedding to Mary of Burgundy (II, 166-168). Commynes was a prudent man, and warfare, with all the risks it brought, was not the solution that met his support.

This does not mean that Commynes was systematically opposed to conquests. He deemed the Catholic Kings' Reconquista (completed in 1492) admirable, calling it 'une belle et grande conqueste, et la plus belle qui ayt esté de notre temps' (III, 288). As one can see, the lure of the crusade did not leave him insensitive - indeed, he believed that Charles VIII could have expelled the Turks from the Levant. But Commynes generally admired remarkable princes, and it comes as a surprise to see that he likewise thought rather highly of Mehmet II - when considered according to political standards, rather than moral ones - even though, as a Christian, he felt ashamed that Constantinople should have fallen to the Turks (II, 338). However, men such as Mehmet II, 'saige et vaillant prince, plus usant de sens et de cautelle que de valleur ne hardiesse', were exceptional, and Commynes would certainly not have advised any prince to launch into wars of conquest. Indeed, the thirst to attain glory through conquests had spelt ruin for Charles the Bold, because he did not possess the cunning and 'malice' necessary to bring his high ambitions to a successful issue, and 'avecques les autres choses propices à faire conquestes, si le très grant sens n'y est, tout le demourant n'est riens' (I, 189).

For such reasons, Commynes was opposed in 1494 to the idea of the King embarking on the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples, for in his opinion, the very things needed to carry out 'si grand emprise' (III, 3) were wanting: the King and his entourage did not possess the necessary wisdom and experience, and the material means brought into play were not sufficient.

Paris, Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1994, p. 95-120.

2. The conquerors divested of their mythical quality

André de La Vigne, Desrey, Saint-Gelais, Villeneuve - with reservations - and the *Mer des hystoires* of 1503 all presented Charles VIII as the most powerful prince on earth, displaying his power to the Italians, who had to submit to his authority. Commynes' narrative is poles apart from this perspective: there is nothing magnificent in his *Mémoires* about the King, his ministers or his army - though Commynes acknowledged Charles' good will, the worth of some of his captains, the soldiers' zeal and the strength of Charles' artillery.

Other chroniclers pictured Charles VIII as a new Caesar or Hannibal; Commynes, by contrast, presented him as a king who fancied himself a new Caesar or Hannibal. In 1494, Charles was very young 'et ne faisoit que saillir du nyd' (III, 33); Commynes describes him as 'foible personne, plain de son vouloir' (III, 3), hardly the figure of a conqueror. He was not serious and industrious enough to bear the burden that the rule and administration of a new and foreign country would represent. At Naples, once in possession of the Kingdom, Charles 'ne pensa que à passer temps' (III, 134). In December 1495, as Commynes had just returned from a journey to Venice and Milan, where he had been trying to negotiate a solution, so that the King might keep his new Kingdom, Commynes found Charles in Lyon 'entendant à faire bonne chère et joustes; et de nulle aultre chose ne luy challoit' (III, 253). Jousting may have been a most chivalrous activity, but it would not help Charles to keep Naples.

Commynes shows well that the idea of a conquest, with all the glory traditionally associated with it, had turned the King's head. He exposed how Ludovico Sforza had manipulated Charles to serve his own ends, taking advantage of the King's fancies, and using fine language such as:

> 'Sire, ne craignés point ceste emprise. [...] Quant vous me vouldrez croire, je vous aideray à faire plus grant que ne fut jamais Charlemaigne,

> et chasserons ce Turc hors de ceste empire de Constantinoble aiséement, quant vous aurez ce royaulme de Naples.' (III, 45)

This reported speech of Ludovico is like a parody of all the dreams of eternal renown that the King and many members of the court associated with this conquest, imaginings lucidly described by Commynes as the 'fumées et gloires d'Italie' (III, 20) - though he did believe that the King could have liberated Constantinople, only this necessitated far more work and material means than what had been done and brought into play.

The situation would have been less worrying had Charles been surrounded by good advisers; however, Commynes' portrayal of Charles' entourage is rather unflattering. These men lacked the experience needed for such affairs, and seemed to multiply mistakes. Guillaume Briçonnet, the Bishop of Saint-Malo, did not know much about war. At Fornovo, Commynes was amazed at his suggestion that perhaps everything would be fine if the army simply passed alongside the League's host under the cover of a few gunshots (III, 173). At Vercelli, on the other hand, Briçonnet opposed the peace process, and Commynes severely criticizes this prelate who was in favour of a battle when he would not have had to fight himself (III, 231). Commynes also recounts how he was sent shortly after the battle of Fornovo, together with Briçonnet and Gié, to negotiate with the Italian captains. As neither the Italians nor the French envoys could agree to cross the river, Gié and Briçonnet told Commynes to cross it and start upon negotiations. Commynes accepted, but once on the other side of the river, a French herald arrived and told him that Gié and Briçonnet had decided to return to the French host, and that he could negotiate whatever he wanted. Commynes was left in a very embarassing position, as he did not even know what the King really wanted (III, 197-199).

Louis of Orléans, Charles VIII's cousin and the future King of France, also gets his share of blame in the *Mémoires*[5]. While Charles was in Italy, Louis was supposed to

[5] It should be noted that Commynes felt rather resentful towards Louis of Orléans, for personal reasons: Commynes had compromised himself in the 'guerre folle' by supporting Louis, and had been imprisoned

remain in Asti with his troops and the reinforcements sent there from France after the formation of the League. Should any difficulties arise, Louis could thus have come to Charles' rescue. But 'non obstant ce que le roy luy avoit escript, luy vint ceste praticque si friande que de luy bailler ceste cité de Novarre, qui est à dix lieues de Millan' (III, 150). Commynes is very ironical when stating that Louis intended to be useful to Charles by laying hands on Novara: he knew that Louis was satisfying his own ambitions, since the House of Orléans had rights to the Duchy of Milan. Jean de Saint-Gelais does not fool anybody today when stressing that amongst all of Charles VIII's subjects, even the humblest, one could not have found anyone more obedient and devoted to his King than Louis of Orléans[6]. In Commynes' opinion, Louis was not only disobedient, but almost incompetent as a tactician: if Louis had decided to attack Ludovico Sforza, he should have gone as far as possible - since Ludovico's subjects were supporting him - and made the most of the opportunity. Instead of that, Louis thought that Novara was enough, and let himself be besieged in Novara by Ludovico's forces, which had by then grown in number. And because he had neglected to gather any provisions inside the town, his troops had to suffer from a dreadful famine, attributed by Saint-Gelais to 'la haulte vertu du gentil prince qui estoit dedans, lequel eust mieulx aimé mourir que d'entrer en traicté, ny prendre party qui ne luy eust esté honorable'[7]. As a result, Commynes concluded, instead of being helped by Louis, Charles had to come to Louis' rescue (III, 150).

As for the King's favourites, apart from Briçonnet, most of them were young knights, eager to fight, and full of self-confidence. In their youthful arrogance, they completely underestimated the Italians: 'toute sa compaignie estoient jeunes gens et ne croyoient point qu'ilz fussent nulz aultres gens qui portassent armes' (III, 141).

3. Charles' magnificence questioned

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for five months as a result, yet on his accession to the throne, Louis did not pay particular attention to our author (*Mémoires*, III, 314).

[6] JEAN DE SAINT-GELAIS, p. 94.

We have seen the importance granted by de La Vigne to the preparations for the conquest, which demonstrated Charles' magnificence. By contrast, Commynes bluntly stated: 'toutes choses necessaires à une si grand emprise failloient'. Of course, the King had assembled a great army, but there was a lack of good captains, not enough tents for everybody and, above all, 'nul argent content' (III, 3). Commynes understood that money was the sinews of the conquest, and that, without finances, Charles' efforts would not achieve much, at least in the long term. One of the reasons why money was so crucial to the undertaking is exposed later on in the account: Italian princes - save for the richest - captains and families 'ne servent point sans argent' (III, 272-273), because they in turn would not be served by their troops if they did not pay them. Italy may have seemed remarkably easy to conquer, the ideal territory to earn renown with great conquests, because it was full of riches and politically fragmented, but the very peculiarities of Italy also presented prospective conquerors with unforeseen difficulties which could only be overcome with experience.

Other French chroniclers were only slowly realizing that Charles' apparently overwhelming power might not have been sufficient to keep the conquered territories. De La Vigne hardly commented upon the Neapolitans' rebellion which happened while Charles was still in Italy, but Villeneuve felt impelled to beg the King to bring more troops with him on his next journey. By the time of Louis XII, Jean de Saint-Gelais could timidly point out some of the defects of Charles' expedition - for instance, the fact that Charles had borrowed money from Ludovico Sforza - so that Charles' successors may not make the same mistakes; the chronicler stressed that a conqueror needed at least four things to bring his enterprise to a successful issue: a great number of soldiers, 'argent largement à les souldoyer, et pour subvenir à tout ce qui peut advenir', artillery, and 'vivres qui ne faillent point par faulte d'ordre, ny autrement'[8].

In Commynes' *Mémoires*, the French lack of money at the start of their enterprise is epitomized by the rings of the Duchess of Savoy and of the Marchioness of

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 94.

Montferrat, which Charles borrowed on the way and pawned for 24,000 ducats altogether. Commynes concluded: 'Et pouvez veoir quel commencement de guerre, si Dieu n'eust guidé l'euvre!' (III, 37). This telling detail contrasts wonderfully with the magnificence of Charles' preparations that appears in other French chronicles.

4. Charles' army and the hardships of war

The onward march of the French was undeniably an awesome event, especially because its success was completely unexpected - at least from the Italian point of view. Commynes, like the Venetians with whom he was staying, heard with amazement the news of Charles' unchecked advance, of his triumph as the populations of Italy warmly welcomed him and as princes fled before him. Commynes' awe was all the greater because he had predicted a failure. However, Commynes showed that the return of the French to France was far less glorious than the other chroniclers would have us believe. His depiction of the journey of the French from Siena to Asti is a masterpiece of realism, owing to the fact that Commynes had taken part in the return march. Other French chroniclers had emphasized the overwhelming power of Charles' army, which always appeared ready to face any situation, and was never overtaken by events. Commynes showed the power of the seemingly invincible French army, but also presented it as something human, exposing its many weaknesses. Beyond this, we can see that Commynes was naturally inclined to concentrate on the hardships of war and on human factors such as fear, uncertainty, weariness - all the imponderables of war which de La Vigne had only described to extol the soldiers' virtue, by showing what they had stoically endured - and to present the soldiers, not as heroes, but as humble human beings.

The greatness of the victory of Fornovo, for instance, is much diminished. There is only one truly 'glorious' moment: Commynes' depiction of the King just before the

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

battle. Charles was radiant with determination, mounted on a splendid horse; for the first time, this short and weak youth 'sembloit [...] tout aultre que sa nature ne portoit ne sa taille ne sa complexion; [...] ce cheval le monstroit grant; et avoit le visaige bon et bonne couleur et la parolle audacieuse et saige'. At this moment, the words of Savonarola, who had told our chronicler that Charles was God's instrument, crossed Commynes' mind (III, 175-176). This 'magnificent' episode is very different from all the moments where de La Vigne extolled Charles VIII - for instance, in his account of Fornovo, when de La Vigne compared Charles to Caesar, Hannibal or Alexander[9] - because it describes a very personal, passing but forcible impression. And because Commynes' admiration was spontaneous, his tone is all the more moving and convincing.

This is, however, the only 'glorious' passage of the account of the battle. The fight itself is described very realistically, with some gruesome and noticeably un-magnificent details. For instance, Commynes describes the role of the French servants who wielded their small axes - normally used to chop wood - to finish off the Italian knights who had fallen from their horses: 'presque tous avoient des haches pour coupper boys [...] dont ilz rompirent les visières des armetz, et leur en donnoient de grans coup sur les testes; car bien mal aiséz estoient à tuer, tant estoient fort arméz' (III, 186-187). The act of killing has no nobility in his account. Commynes pitied Francesco Gonzaga's uncle Rodolfo, who was one of the first Italians to be killed, though he had been opposed to the battle (III, 181, 186). Commynes stressed that at Rapallo and Fornovo, the Italians were shocked by the brutality of the French; they were used to sparing prisoners (III, 39, 186, 192, 200).

According to Guillaume de Villeneuve, Charles left the battlefield of Fornovo like an epic hero, 'l'espée au poing, et toujours retournant sa face droit à ses ennemys'[10]. Commynes presents us with a totally different picture. After the battle, the Italians' host was still large, for many squadrons had not fought. Commynes was trying to negotiate some kind of agreement with the Venetians. However, on the second night after the

[9] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 288.

battle, the King's chamberlains informed him of Charles' decision to leave shortly before dawn, when the Venetians were still sleeping. A few hours later, a French trumpet sounded 'faictes bon guet' to deceive the Venetians. The army left, and Commynes adds: 'nous tournions le dox aux ennemys et prenions le chemin de sauveté, qui est chose bien espouventable pour ung ost' (III, 203).

In Commynes' account, the return journey appears hectic and unorganized, anything but magnificent. De La Vigne stressed that the soldiers were by then beginning to be very tired, and that they sometimes had to bear great troubles. Still, in his report, they appear above the difficulties. Above all, fear is never mentioned[11]. By contrast, Commynes relates how the French wandered from their road in the woods near Fornovo. He could hear the captains asking for the guide, and receiving the same answer: 'Je n'en ay point' (III, 203). In a sentence that greatly challenges the magnificence of our conqueror, Commynes adds: 'il n'estoit point de croyre que ung tel roy chevauchast de nuyt sans guyde, là où il en pouvoit assez finer'. He recounts that the army was seized with fright as it came out of the woods, because the soldiers mistook their vanguard for an enemy battalion, while the vanguard mistook the army, which was not coming out from where expected, for the Venetians (III, 204). Commynes also tells us that for quite a few days the Venetians were only twenty miles away from Charles' army, and that the rearguard was constantly being attacked by stradiots, kept at a distance by the German arquebusiers. During those days, '[nous] avions peu de gens de cheval qui se voulsissent mettre derrière' (III, 207). The men were harassed, and were starting to think only about one thing: getting home as soon as possible. Food was lacking, and the knights had to sleep wherever they could (III, 209). Commynes' account is rather different from that of Desrey, who stated that Charles crossed Lombardy 'sans plus creindre ses ennemys [...] tousjours en gloire et en triumphe'[12].

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[10] GUILLAUME DE VILLENEUVE, p. 272.
[11] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 292 ff.
[12] PIERRE DESREY, 'Addition...', fol. ccxxxii, v°-ccxxxiii, r°.

5. The conquerors and the conquered

Unlike other French chronicles, Commynes' *Mémoires* show that the conquest of Naples was like a medal, with its reverse side. As Anne Denis has shown[13], Italian accounts of the conquest have an internal structure: they can be divided into two diametrically opposed parts. Italian chroniclers firstly related Charles' triumph, before describing his disgrace in the eyes of most of the Italian people; they recounted his conquest of the Kingdom of Naples, and then related how Ferrandino of Aragon reconquered the Kingdom with the help of the Venetians and the Catholic Kings of Spain, amongst others. They often compared the two stages, emphasizing how similar they had been in quickness and intensity, and thus illustrating a fundamental principle of political theory. In the words of the Milanese Giovan Pietro Cagnola, 'come in poco tempo Carlo re lo aveva acquistato, così in poco tempo lo perdette'[14].

Amongst all contemporary French chronicles, Commynes' *Mémoires* are the only work where we find this symmetrical structure. Apart from Guillaume de Villeneuve, who witnessed the collapse of the French Kingdom of Naples, most French chronicles of the time simply state that the Neapolitans rebelled against the French just a few weeks after their departure, occasionally adding a few bitter comments about the Neapolitans' lack of faith. Commynes did not only describe these events, but also strove to understand why the Neapolitans did rebel, and why the rest of the peninsula, which had firstly welcomed Charles, eventually turned against the French. And unlike all other French chroniclers, even those who took part in the expedition, such as de La Vigne or Villeneuve, Commynes understood the feelings of the Italians. Already before 1494, he had been sent to Florence by Louis XI, where he had met Lorenzo il Magnifico (II, 269-273). By the end of his life, Commynes could be regarded as a specialist in Italian affairs. In the words of the anonymous author of the *Séjour de deuil pour le trépas de*

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[13] DENIS, p. 138 ff.
[14] Quotation from *ibid.*, p. 139.

messire Philippe de Commynes: 'Il cognoissoit mieux l'Ytallye / Que nul qui nous soit demouré'[15].

In 1494, Commynes tells us, the people of Italy had great expectancies about the French. Guicciardini may have referred to the years immediately preceding 1494 as a 'golden age', but according to Commynes, Italy was full of problems and crises, which he described as the 'pitiéz d'Italie' (III, 59). Already in the first books of his *Mémoires*, he had explained that the 'princes d'Ytalie [...] dominent assez cruellement et violentement sur leurs peuples quant à leurs deniers' (II, 208). The princes of Italy, the *faraoni* as some Italian writers called them, were often acting tyrannically. The usurper Ludovico Sforza, for instance, used to collect 700,000 ducats every year from his subjects, when according to Commynes, 500,000 ducats a year would have been more than enough (III, 18). Moreover, many cities in Italy were harshly ruled over by others, such as Pisa by Florence (III, 147).

As the people of Italy saw Charles VIII's progress, they began to put great hopes in the King of France: 'de tous coustés le peuple d'Italie commença à prendre cueur et desiroit nouvelletés, car ilz voïoient choses qu'ilz n'avoient point veü de leur temps' (III, 50). Commynes shows that the Italians considered the French even more highly than other French chroniclers tell us - a guarantee of his veracity - as he explained: 'le peuple les [the French] adouroit comme saincts, estimant en nous toute foy et bonté' (III, 51). But Commynes, whose understanding of politics was greatly influenced by his Italian experience, was aware that the Italians were not as innocent as they pretended; he elsewhere recounted how an Italian Carthusian monk had told him, with a hint of cynicism: 'Nous appellons, en ce païs icy, sainctz tous ceulz qui nous font du bien' (III, 58). The Italians expected something in return for their support; they could very well turn their backs on those who disappointed them.

[15] Quoted in DUFOURNET, 'Commynes et l'Italie', p. 81.

Commynes shows how the Italians' enthusiastic feelings quickly died down, and how they rapidly turned against the men they had regarded as saviours. He uses an unusual image in order to illustrate this change:

> Et se vit changer la fortune aussi promptement et aussi visiblement comme l'on voit le jour en Halande ou en Norvuewe, où les jours d'esté sont plus longs que ailleurs, et tant que, quant le jour fault au soir, que en une mesme instance ou poy après, comme d'ung quart d'heure, on voit de rechief naistre le jour advenir (III, 102).

Commynes makes it clear that the French themselves were to be blamed for this change. The whole of Italy could have rebelled against their princes and chosen Charles as their ruler 'si du costé du roy les affaires eussent esté bien conduictz et en ordre et sans pillerie'. However, 'tout se faisoit au contraire, dont j'ay eu grand dueil pour l'honneur et bonne renommée que pouvoit acquerir en ce voyage la nation de France' (III, 50-51). As one can see, Commynes attached much importance to the image of France that Charles and his soldiers should have given to the Italians, an image of courtesy, generosity and true greatness. Commynes exposes to his readers the behaviour of the French in Italy, which in his opinion greatly sullied the honour they had acquired with the conquest. An epitome of this bad behaviour could be the conduct of the knight Robert de Balzac[16] in the Medici palace in Florence, where he had been waiting for the King's arrival: 'quant il vit la fuyte dudict Pierre de Medicis, se print à piller tout ce qu'il trouva en la maison, disant que leur bancquier à Lyon luy debvoit grant somme d'argent' (III, 67). Despite the chronological mistake pointed out by Calmette[17], which makes this story more exemplary than true, and the fact that the people of Florence themselves looted what was left inside the palace after the King's departure, the picture Commynes gives us of Robert de Balzac's conduct illustrates perfectly the ordinary behaviour of the French in Italy.

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[16] According to Commynes, Robert de Balzac was to sell Pisa to the Pisans notwithstanding the King's will, thus greatly displeasing the Florentines, who had already given money to Charles to recover Pisa (III, 262-263).

[17] See the *Mémoires*, III, 67, n. 3.

Commynes discloses how in Naples many Frenchmen thought only about two things: 'prendre et prouffiter' (III, 134). He also says that Charles' government in Naples displeased the Italian nobles, especially the Angevin, because Charles gave all the important offices almost exclusively to Frenchmen; sometimes the same office was given to two or three Frenchmen (III, 101). Finally, sternly moralizing as was his custom, Commynes tells us how the French, drunk with glory, began to despise the Italians: 'tout se mist à faire bonne chère et joustes et festes; et entrèrent en tant de gloire qu'il ne sembloit point aux nostres que les Ytaliens fussent hommes' (III, 99). Thus the conquered people, whose hopes had all vanished, and who saw themselves being treated in such a cavalier manner by some arrogant foreigners, were bound to react and to forsake the men they had considered so highly.

6. The French descent into Italy, 'vray mistère de Dieu'

And yet, despite all his misgivings and criticisms, in the final analysis Commynes considered the Naples expedition as a glorious episode, if not a *guerre de magnificence*. As he had stated at the beginning of his narration, Briçonnet and Charles' other favourites, whom he criticized so much, were well entitled to say 'qu'ilz furent cause de donner grant honneur et grant gloire à leur maistre' (III, 3). Commynes had opposed the expedition in 1494, yet the first part of the conquest was an immense triumph. Like the Venetians, Commynes had thought that Charles would never go further than Florence, but the King had reached Naples and conquered the Kingdom. And like the Italian princes, Commynes had witnessed Charles' progress with awe and astonishment. All his anticipations had proven wrong. Piero de Medici had fled from Florence, and the intelligent, brave and powerful Kings of Naples had left the country, after a very timid resistance. The second part of the journey also contradicted Commynes' expectations. The League's army could well have utterly defeated the French and captured the King. When the French were crossing the swamps that lay at the foot of the Appenine mountains, following a narrow path, even a cart thrown across the

track, together with two pieces of artillery, could have stopped them (III, 152). The French seemed to multiply mistakes, yet everything eventually went well: the League's army was defeated, and Charles returned home with his soldiers. As Commynes reported the King's decision to send soldiers to Genoa for an offensive, thereby further diminishing his host and jeopardizing his return, the memorialist could not repress his amazement at such a huge mistake: 'Et m'esbaÿs comment il est possible que ung si jeune roy n'avoit quelzques bons serviteurs qui luy osassent avoir dict le peril en quoy il se mectoit. De moy, il me sembloit qu'il ne me croyoit point du tout' (III, 153). This is what makes Commynes' account so fascinating, the constant idea that everything should have gone wrong, but that everything went right. The troops sent for the offensive on Genoa had been defeated, yet Charles managed to gain the victory at Fornovo without their help.

Confronted with such a mysterious enigma, Commynes had to find a solution, and found it in the preachings of Girolamo Savonarola. Anne Denis has shown that, towards the end of the century, Italy was shaken by a strong current of milleniarism[18]. In the 1490s, the elements had broken loose: earthquakes, eclipses, violent storms and floods followed one another. Many, besides Savonarola, felt that either a great change or something terrible was about to occur. Savonarola preached that God had singled out Charles VIII - though not because of any personal merits - as his instrument, and that the French King was to punish the Italian princes for their crimes, to reform the Church through violence, and to convert the infidels.

It seems that French chroniclers other than Commynes did not take the fears of the Italians seriously. When mentioning the mysterious collapse of a section of the walls of the Castello San Angelo in Rome, where the Pope had taken refuge as Charles was approaching the Holy City, they tell us that the Romans were very shocked and scared by this event. They do not, however, tell us anything about the reactions of the French, nor do they give their own opinion. In his *Panegyric* of La Trémoille, Jean Bouchet mocked

[18] DENIS, p. 52-62.

the superstitious pope who was scared by these prophecies and took the fall of part of his castle's walls as a bad omen[19]. Apparently, only Desrey, in a version of his addition to the translation of Gaguin's *Compendium*, mentioned the prediction made by 'Hierosme Savonarole (qui depuis fut très-injustement brûlé à Florence par l'envie cruelle de ses ennemis)' in 1493 about the advent of the French in Italy. He did not, however, deal with Savonarola's view that Charles was God's instrument, and unlike Commynes, did not make this point the main theme of his narrative[20].

Commynes saw in Savonarola's preachings the answer to his questions. According to Savonarola, Charles 'estoit envoyé de Dieu pour chastier les tirans d'Italie et [...] riens ne povoit resister ne se deffendre contre luy'; through Charles' agency, 'l'estat de l'Eglise seroit refformé à l'espée' (III, 145). Commynes had met Savonarola in Florence, and had asked him whether Charles would be able to return home. Savonarola had replied:

> qu'il auroit à faire en chemin, mais que l'honneur luy en demoureroit, et n'eust-il que cent hommes en sa compaignée; et que Dieu, qui l'avoit conduict au venir, le conduiroit encores à son retour; mais pour ne s'estre point bien acquitté à la refformation de l'Eglise [...] et pour avoir souffert que ses gens pillassent [...] le peuple [...], que Dieu avoit donné une sentence contre luy (III, 145-146).

This prediction, personally made by Savonarola to our author, elucidated many things for Commynes: it explained why Charles had been able to conquer Naples so easily, to return safely home, despite all the mistakes, and to win the battle of Fornovo. As for the divine punishment with which Savonarola threatened the King, it could be the Dauphin's death, or the premature death of Charles himself (III, 146, 309).

As a result, Commynes concluded that the conquest, 'vray mistère de Dieu' (III, 146) had been entirely directed by God; the idea that the Lord was leading Charles'

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[19] JEAN BOUCHET, *Le Panegyric...*, p. 759.
[20] See Desrey's *Relation du voyage de Charles VIII pour la conqueste du royaume de Naples* published in the *Archives curieuses*, 1ère série, I, 199-223 (p. 282).

army, which recurs everywhere in the *Mémoires*, became the main theme of his narrative. Strangely, the account written by Commynes, who usually appears as a realist amongst our French chroniclers, is impregnated with an atmosphere of milleniarism, and the reports of other French chroniclers, despite being imbued with the ideals of chivalry, and despite their laudatory tone, appear much more pragmatic in ideology: although they would not have dared to deny that God had been in charge of the conquest - as Charles conventionally states in the harangue that he makes, in de La Vigne's account, prior to the battle of Fornovo[21] - they basically attributed the result of the expedition to Charles' overwhelming might.

7. Prospects of a new descent into Italy

Commynes' mysticism did not hold him from considering the chances of the Kings of France to earn more renown and lands in the peninsula, since after all the expedition had been full of promises; the later additions that he made to his report show that Commynes, who was once against a descent into Italy, and who strove at Vercelli to have Charles and the League make peace with one another, eventually changed his mind completely and wrote in favour of a new expedition. The next descent into Italy could well be a successful and rewarding *guerre de magnificence*.

Commynes enumerated the advantages enjoyed by the King of France, which could make the next descent a 'belle avanture' (III, 276): the King was very wealthy, thus he could afford to buy the support of the Italian families and captains (III, 272-273). He was assured of the Duke of Ferrarra's support, as well as that of Francesco Gonzaga - the captain of the League's army, now displeased at the Venetians - the Orsinis, the Vitellis, and the Florentines, who were now so weak that they had no alternative. Less than 80,000 écus would have been necessary to pay those who needed wages long enough to destroy Ludovico Sforza; once Milan conquered, Naples could be recovered.

[21] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 285.

It is interesting to note that, unlike our other chroniclers, the realist Commynes did not attach much importance to the justness of Charles' rights over Naples, since after all the Neapolitans, who were never satisfied with their rulers, seemed ready to welcome anybody; thus Commynes declared with arresting pragmatism: 'de la nature dont il [the Kingdom of Naples] est et les gens qui l'habitent, il me semble qu'il est à celuy qui le peult posseder; car ilz ne veullent que mutation' (III, 289).

This does not, however, mean that Commynes did not care about the ethical aspect of a new campaign in Italy. Jean Dufournet sees four main reasons for Commynes' change of mind. The most obvious is that Commynes, who still wanted to regain some of the power he enjoyed under Louis XI, chose to support the idea of a new campaign to please Charles VIII and Louis XII. Secondly, Commynes wanted to get his revenge on Ludovico Sforza, who had deceived him after the conclusion of the treaty of Vercelli. Thirdly, our memorialist wanted to help the Florentines, who had lost all of their power after the loss of Pisa. Finally, Commynes had become fascinated by Italy, by the Italians' wisdom and shrewdness, and their subtle politics, the constant negotiations or 'practique avecques les ennemys' (III, 70) which presented a real challenge to his intelligence[22]. However, given Commynes' mysticism, which looms so large over his narrative, one may well see an additional and more ethical reason for Commynes' wish to see the King of France return into Italy. Commynes may have hoped that Charles VIII or Louis XII would carry out the mission entrusted by God to the King of France, as explained by Savonarola: to eradicate the 'pitiéz d'Italie', and to reform the Church 'à l'espée'. Commynes was undoubtedly supporting the motion that the Church, at the time governed by the very controversial figure Alexander VI Borgia, needed a thorough reform, if necessary through violence. In his opinion, Charles was too young in 1494 to perform this task, regarded by 'toutes gens de congnoissance et de raison' as 'une bonne, grande et très saincte besongne', and his advisers were not adequate. Still, the deed could be done, for 'le vouloir du roy [Charles VIII] y estoit bon, et est encores, en ce cas, s'il y estoit aidé' (III, 88-89). Only the reform of the Church would require 'grant mistère',

[22] Cf. DUFOURNET, 'Commynes, l'Italie...', p. 120.

that is to say, much difficult work, for it was a noble and holy task. But would not taking the sword to perform this deed, as well as to castigate the Italian tyrants, be a most impressive *guerre de magnificence* - perhaps as much as taking the cross?

• Conclusion

Commynes' account of the 1494 expedition is thus of great originality and richness when compared with the narratives of other chroniclers. It is also a highly personal report, which does not belong to any tradition of historiography, at least to any of the kinds written in the 15th century. Commynes does not write 'chivalrous' history, nor does his work resemble the clerical chronicle. His *Mémoires* are also very different from the kinds of *Mémoires* that some of his contemporaries wrote; Guillaume de Villeneuve, for instance, also related the first War of Italy as a participant, but his report is still very close to the 'chivalrous' historiography: Villeneuve's main interest lay in instances of 'faits d'armes' and other honourable deeds. Nor can it be said that Commynes wrote the kind of early humanist historiography practised by Robert Gaguin: though he does demonstrate - especially in his relation of the conquest - some knowledge of classical history, classical historiography was by no means a model for him. And yet, his work is strongly reminiscent of one major classical source: Julius Caesar's *Commentaries*, because like Caesar, Commynes related events which he had witnessed, and in which he had been a participant, in unsophisticated language, with an analytical outlook[23].

Commynes gave us a very original picture of the French descent into Renaissance Italy. All his French contemporaries implicitly presented the conquest as a *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*, but Commynes emphasized all the defects in the

campaign, making it appear badly prepared, poorly conducted, in a word, very unmagnificent. There was, of course, much jealousy in Commynes' attitude that influenced his view. What amazed and almost shocked Commynes was that everything should have gone wrong, and that everything went incredibly well for Charles: the conquest was, on the whole, impressively successful, and brought the King of France much honour and renown. Inspired by Savonarola's visionary explanations, Commynes concluded that, throughout the journey, God had been leading Charles by the hand. This gives his account a truly special flavour, as it makes the conquest appear as an extraordinary adventure. Commynes was obviously not the first to argue that God was helping the French in one of their wars: we saw in my second chapter that the treatment of Joan of Arc in French historiography allowed the late 15th century French chroniclers to make a similar statement. However, with regard to this particular, offensive war, contemporary chroniclers seem to have chosen a perspective which, all things considered, appears very secular. Perhaps their tone resulted from the fact that the intended crusade had failed. Commynes' vision, by contrast, is undeniably mystical: in his narrative, the French appear helpless and unknowing of God's help, almost like pathetic puppets in the divine plan. Still, Commynes was eventually so impressed by the whole venture that he became openly in favour of a new descent into Italy. The idea of a *guerre de magnificence* in Italy apparently took his fancy; if the next descent was better planned, its results could be grandiose.

Commynes' narrative of the conquest was published in 1528, thus it was only well into the 16th century that his version of the events started to alter the memory of Charles' venture. A *Mer des histoires* of 1543 used not only de La Vigne's account, but also that of Commynes to narrate the 1494 expedition[24]. From de La Vigne, the compiler kept the impressive figures used to describe Charles' army, and the glorious chivalrous deeds, praising for instance Charles' conduct at Fornovo. However, drawing on Commynes, he also pointed out the mistakes committed by the French, especially with

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[23] On Commynes' place in the history of historiography see J. DUFOURNET, 'Commynes et l'invention d'un nouveau genre historique: les Mémoires', in *Philippe de Commynes*, p. 17-33.
[24] *Mer des histoires*, Paris, Ambroise Girault, 1543, fol. clxxi, r° to fol. clxxvii, v°.

regard to the loss of the Kingdom of Naples, so that his readers might reflect on them. Savonarola's predictions also appeared in this compilation, as in later works[25]; it seems that they greatly appealed to the imagination of readers.

Remaining within the context of the first French conquests in Renaissance Italy – only, this time, including Louis XII's early Italian campaigns – I wish to end the thesis with a study of the representation of the King's agents in his wars. In the first chapter, we saw how Burgundian and French chroniclers depicted the prince's soldiers – concentrating almost exclusively on the knights – during the first half of the 15th century; in the next and final chapter, we shall see how the representation of the soldiers had evolved in French historiography, by the dawn of the 16th century.

[25] See for example the *Mémoire particulier fait par une personne d'esprit et bien instruite des affaires touchant Charles VIII*, published in the *Archives curieuses*, 1ère série, I, 159-198 (p. 185). The work apparently dates from the early 17th century. The author stressed that the 1494 expedition had been related by de La Vigne, 'mais bien plus en homme d'estat par Comines' (p. 192).

Graphic images of the Renaissance French soldier in illustrated French manuscripts and early printed books of the late 15th and early 16th centuries (Fig. 11 to 16)

Fig. 11. The battle of Fornovo (6 July 1495). From a *Mer des hystoires* published by Antoine Vérard in 1503. The main stages of the battle and the different corps of the French army are portrayed with a degree of authenticity hitherto unseen in French art.

Fig. 12. The battle of Fornovo (detail). A detail of Fig. 11. The French archers and footsoldiers stand in avenging poses, slaying the stradiots (Albanian soldiers who fought for the Venetians) who have attacked the baggage train. One can see the Swiss pikemen in battle formation behind them.

Fig. 13. Louis XII's entry into Milan. An allegorical illustration. The knights and footsoldiers are wearing Louis XII's colours, a golden and red livery. Mars is driving his chariot by their side. From the *Alarmes de Mars sur le voyage de Milan avec la conqueste et entrée d'icelle*, an early 16th century manuscript.

Fig. 14. Béraud Stuart, Lord of Aubigny, and his company on their way to Italy. The mounted Scots archers are clearly recognizable. From an early 16th century manuscript entitled *Le livre du gouvernement des princes*.

Fig. 15. The French army descends into Italy. A 16th century illumination from the *Croniques* of Jean d'Auton. The pikemen, crossbowmen and knights are wearing Louis XII's livery.

Fig. 16. The siege of a town. Although it is taken from a manuscript of Enguerran de Monstrelet's chronicles, this illustration could perfectly represent an episode from the Wars of Italy: the French army of the early 16th century, the knights, mercenaries, crossbowmen and guns are represented with striking accuracy.

Chapter 7: Images of the Renaissance French soldier in 'monarchist' chronicles at the dawn of the 16th century

Adieu le service du roy
Que soloye faire soir et matin

Danse macabre of the late 15th century[1]

• Introduction

The first chapter concerned itself with the treatment of the 'war of the knights', in French and Burgundian historiography, during the first half of the 15th century. We saw that the knight was the key figure of historical narratives, as the primary agent of the prince in his wars. In Burgundy, the genre that flourished was the chivalrous chronicle, which presented knights as the heroes of the wars of their times, glorified the ideals of chivalry, and revelled in stories of glorious 'faits d'armes'. In France, two kinds of historiographical literature co-existed. The clerical chronicle was very critical towards knights, divesting them of their mythical quality. However, by the second quarter of the

[1] Paris, Guyot, 1486, fol. a vii, v°. Reproduced in L. GILLET, *La cathédrale vivante*, Paris, Flammarion, 1964, p. 349-380 (quotation p. 362)

15th century, this vision of the 'war of the knights' was losing ground. The chivalrous chronicle, on the contrary, was flourishing. Its evolution was much slower than in Burgundy, but already some distinctively French features were recognisable. Like its Burgundian homonym, the French chivalrous chronicle focused on the figure of the knight, shaping its vision and discourse according to the chivalrous ideology. But the lessons of the Hundred Years War made its discourse on warfare more pragmatic than the Burgundian one; thus French chivalrous historiographical narratives offered a more modern and realistic portrayal of knights, and of their role as soldiers of the King, emphasizing in particular the crucial need for knights to be disciplined and less egotistical.

In this final chapter, it seems appropriate to return to the representation, in French historiography, of the King's agents in his wars, to see how the French chivalrous chronicle had evolved in this respect by the dawn of the 16th century. I have voluntarily left aside the clerical chronicle, less in vogue by then, but whose influence was still recognisable in some works. Instead, I will concentrate on the works then in favour with the King, or benefiting from royal patronage; these were the heirs of the French chivalrous chronicles seen in the first chapter. The sources I used are, mainly, the accounts of André de La Vigne and Jean d'Auton who respectively related, on commission, Charles VIII and Louis XII's Italian campaigns[2]. The novelty of these official chronicles is that, like modern journalists, de La Vigne and d'Auton followed the French army in its conquests; both exposed themselves to some extent to the dangers of war in order to understand military life, and give an authentic flavour to their narratives, while at the same time pleasing their readership's tastes. It seems that this new kind of official writing of war was inaugurated by Charles the Bold of Burgundy's official historiographer Jean Molinet, who was present at the siege of Neuss in 1474. Like Molinet, de La Vigne and d'Auton were *rhétoriqueurs*, and embellished their narratives

[2] When Jean d'Auton wrote his first chronicle, the *Conqueste de Millan*, which I used extensively, he did not have an official title; by 1499, however, Louis XII had set his seal to d'Auton's work by naming him 'historiographe du Roy'. Cf. R. de Maulde La Clavière's notice to Jean d'Auton's *Chroniques de Louis XII*, IV, xvi.

and discourses through refined language, while striving to sound authentic in their reports.

This study also includes semi-official and non-official historiographical works cast in the same ideological mould as the official ones, such as Guillaume de Villeneuve's *Mémoires*, which are written in a much simpler style than our *rhétoriqueurs*' chronicles, but look up to the same ideals. Apart from d'Auton, all these sources have already been introduced: they are the same works that presented Charles VIII's descent into Italy as a *guerre de magnificence*. Though they all extolled chivalry, I will not refer to them as 'chivalrous chronicles', but rather as 'monarchist chronicles'; this change of terminology seems necessary to differentiate a new type of historiography, which came up to the Kings of France's expectations, and served their interests, in times of growing absolutism.

The reader will have noted that the title of this chapter promised a study of the representation of the soldier, rather than specifically of the knight. Although our 'monarchist' chroniclers still concentrate on knights, the official ones demonstrate some interest in the figure of the common soldier, when older chivalrous chroniclers clearly despised him. This rise of interest was only justifiable, since the common soldier's tactical importance had constantly been increasing. During the 15th century, as a result of the Hundred Years War's lessons, the Kings of France recognised the tactical worth of archers - which the English had known for a long time - and gave them a much more important role in their army. Also, the unexpected slaughter of the fine chivalry of Charles the Bold of Burgundy performed by the Swiss pikemen at Granson and Morat (1476) provided the King of France with food for thought; Louis XI was the first to hire Swiss mercenaries for his army, and Charles VIII then Louis XII had more and more recourse to them, as well as to German *landsknechts*, for their Italian campaigns. Finally, another figure had emerged, whose epoch was only beginning: the gunner, who was for a

large part responsible for the eventual French triumph over the English[3]. One section of this chapter will be exclusively devoted to the common soldier; we shall see that the chroniclers' interest in him was modest, but it still was an innovation.

It is only relatively recently that number of works have appeared which try to define the ideology of the Renaissance soldier, taking a particular interest in the knight, since sources tell us much more about him than any other kind of fighter, but also because it is considered particularly interesting to study the mutations that took place in the minds of the chivalrous fighting class at the dawn of modern times[4]. Scholars are now more familiar with the general changes in the behaviour and mentality of the soldier in this period. These mutations were turning the military into a class apart from the rest of society; they herald the soldier of the *Ancien Régime*, as far as France is concerned, and even today's professional soldier. My aim will be to examine the image of the Renaissance French soldier disseminated and promoted by the sources mentioned above, whose perspective on that score does not seem to have attracted the attention of scholars, perhaps because they were deemed conventional, propagandist and often bombastic in style. Jean Jacquart, for instance, does not seem to find much interest in Villeneuve's *Mémoires* - though he appreciates their simplicity of style - because he judges the adventures related very conventional, full of stereotypes also found in Bayard and Louis II de La Trémoille's biographies[5]. But in 1497, when Villeneuve completed his work, not all of the conventions to which Jacquart refers were age-old. Also, the fact that Villeneuve's narrative is conventional does not necessarily question his good faith. The context of my study will be Charles VIII and Louis XII's *guerres de magnificence*, looking at events that took place between 1494 and 1500. Before entering upon the subject, however, it is necessary to go half a century back in time, and consider the

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[3] On these general changes see HOWARD, Chapters 1 and 2. On Swiss mercenaries and the Kings of France see P. CONTAMINE, *Guerre, État et société à la fin du Moyen Âge. Études sur les armées des rois de France. 1337-1494*, Paris / The Hague, Mouton / École Pratique des Hautes Études, 1972, p. 308.

[4] See for instance CONTAMINE, *Guerre, État...*, p. 526-531; VALE, *op. cit.*; *Chivalry in the Renaissance*, *op. cit.*; HALE, *War and Society* (see especially Chapter 5: 'The society of soldiers: the professionals'); J. JACQUART, 'De quelques capitaines des guerres d'Italie: de la réalité à l'image', in *Passer les monts*, p. 83-90.

[5] JACQUART, p. 88-89.

historical circumstances which influenced our chroniclers' perspectives with regard to the French soldier of the Renaissance.

1. The creation of the standing army in France and the emergence of the professional soldier

A historical circumstance which may have engendered new attitudes in the French soldier, and changes in his portrayal, may be found in the military reforms introduced by Charles VII in 1445 and 1448, which greatly affected the soldier's status, and are generally regarded as laying the foundations for the organization of the *Ancien Régime* army. In 1445, Charles VII decided that the time was ripe and the political and monetary situation secure enough to drastically reform his army. The King chose 15 captains, gave them the command of 15 companies of cavalry - each company being composed of 100 *lances* - and the rest of the army was disbanded. The 1,500 cavalry *lances* which Charles retained at his service constituted the new permanent army; the soldiers were to be quartered 'par les villes de ce royaume' and regularly paid 'des biens du peupple'[6]. Because they were to stay in the King's service and received wages even in times of peace, the *compagnies d'ordonnance*'s soldiers could truly be considered professionals. Charles had kept the best equipped fighters, and they were to be regularly reviewed. They were a crack corps, the King's own troops, received their wages from him - through a special tax levied on the people - and had to swear allegiance to the Crown on enrolment. With his *ordonnances*, Charles was greatly increasing the King's control over his soldiers[7].

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[6] GILLES LE BOUVIER, p. 271.

[7] For an exhaustive account of the mid-15th century reforms, the composition of the *compagnies d'ordonnance*, and their evolution throughout the century, see CONTAMINE, *Guerre, État...*, p. 278-301 and p. 488-530. A more digestible account will be found in *Histoire militaire de la France*, dir. A. CORVISIER, t. 1: *Des origines à 1715*, dir. P. CONTAMINE, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1992, p. 201-205.

Charles VII's reforms also regulated the *compagnies d'ordonnance*'s composition. A *lance fournie* now comprised one heavy cavalryman, his two servants, the page and the *coustilleur*, and two mounted archers aided by a servant[8]. One can see that the man-at-arms still played a preponderant role in the King's new army. A new generation of historians has shown that it was wrong to exaggerate the scope of the military changes that took place at the end of the Middle Ages by making the role of the heavy cavalry appear merely decorative. In the late 15th century, the French heavy cavalry was still highly considered in Europe, and could prove very efficient. In 1494-1495, the French heavy cavalry decimated the less heavily armed Italian knights; together with the Swiss pikemen, they could easily rout the Italian and Spanish infantry, which lacked cohesion[9]. One of the great strengths of the King of France's army, however, was the diversity of its forces. Charles VII's reforms greatly increased the number of archers in the French host. Charles had also created a special infantry force to reorganize the system of the *communes*: the *francs-archers*, who in exchange for their service did not have to pay the *tailles*. The chroniclers who may be regarded as the heirs of the early 15th century clerical chroniclers were the first to appraise this new institution, which gave the common people the chance to be represented in the King's army. Thus Thomas Basin, taking up an idea dating back to classical antiquity, and dear to Italian humanist historiographers, explained that many villagers of France coveted the honour of joining the *francs-archers*' ranks, because 'chez presque tous les hommes, l'amour de la liberté est tellement inné que pour elle les âmes généreuses acceptent sans hésiter de s'exposer à la mort'[10]. Then again, he cynically added, this zeal might have been motivated by the wish to be exempted from the heavy *taille des gens d'armes*. The *francs-archers* played an important role in the campaigns of Normandy and Guyenne but, partly because of inadequacies in the promoting system, probably also because their wages were low and irregularly paid, their office rapidly lost its appeal and prestige, and

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[8] CONTAMINE, *Guerre, État...*, p. 278.

[9] Cf. J. -M. SALLMANN, 'L'évolution des techniques de guerre pendant les guerres d'Italie', in *Passer les monts*, p. 59-81 (p. 68-70). See also VALE, p. 127-128.

[10] THOMAS BASIN, *Histoire de Charles VII*, II, 23-25.

they became rather inefficient[11]. The Kings of France began to rely increasingly instead on foreign mercenaries, especially the Swiss pikemen, renowned throughout Europe for their fierceness and frightful efficiency. Finally, the French Kings had at their disposal an impressive artillery train; Charles VII had understood that the growing power of guns was a force to be reckoned with, and his successors ensured that their artillery remained one of the most powerful and modern forces in Europe.

Charles VII's military reforms won applause from most of his contemporaries and the majority of the chroniclers of the period, such as Mathieu d'Escouchy, Herald Berry or Jacques Du Clercq, as well as later ones, like Robert Gaguin, emphasized their usefulness. One of the things the chroniclers praised most was the great improvement of the troops' discipline. As the soldiers were paid more regularly, they stopped - for a while - looting peasants and villagers. The Burgundian Jacques Du Clercq seems to have wished that Philip the Good had taken similar measures. He marvelled at the behaviour of the French troops during the reconquest of Normandy, emphasizing that the campaign had been exemplary with regard to *jus in bellum*: the King's soldiers had received their wages monthly,

> et n'y avoit si osé ne si hardi qui osast prendre, durant ladite guerre ou conqueste de Normandie, prisonnier, ni ranchonner cheval [...], ni vivres en quelque lieu que ce fust sans payer, [...] fors seulement sur iceux Anglois et gens tenants leur parti, qui estoient trouvés faisants guerre et en armes[12].

This unusual demeanour contrasted greatly with that of the Burgundian troops during the wars of Ghent, exposed by Du Clercq, who blamed it on the fact that Philip's soldiers did not receive their wages[13]. As Charles was recovering French territory, he wanted to ensure that public opinion would support him. The *compagnies d'ordonnance* could not have made a better impression on their first campaign. Unhappily, the troops' exemplary behaviour did not last for very long, and the Kings of France did not always pay their

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[11] Cf. CONTAMINE, *Guerre, État...*, p. 344-366.
[12] JACQUES DU CLERCQ, XII, 85.

troops with such regular precision. Yet, an improvement had been made. The subsequent efforts of Charles VII's successors with regard to their standing army were tending towards the same ideal: a professional army whose soldiers would be paid regularly, so that knights, for instance, would not complain that they were spending all their fortune on the King's war, and that the Kingdom's people would not suffer from the soldiers' exactions. Thus Jean de Saint-Gelais extolled Louis XII because the King did not force the realm's nobles to fight in his wars: the *arrière-ban* was never summoned[14], 'et [Louis XII] ne leur [the realm's nobles] a donné oncques occasion de faire despenses, pource que toutes ses guerres il les a conduictes et faictes à sa solde, et sans y contraindre aucun, si n'est de liberale volonté, et ceulx qui sont à ses gaiges et bienfaicts'. According to Saint-Gelais, Louis XII also ensured that his soldiers treated civilians well, for instance when billeted with the locals, so that 'quand le pauvre laboureur a payé sa petite cotité de la taille [the *taille des gens d'armes*] [...], il peut dire que ce qui luy demeure, soit bœuf, ou vache, veau ou mouton est sien'[15].

The chronicler Thomas Basin was one of the only contemporaries to voice some disapproval when Charles VII created the standing army[16]. His concern is quite typical of the clerical genre of historiography: Basin did admire the swiftness with which Normandy had been recovered, and emphasized the need for the King's soldiers to be disciplined and to stop looting civilians, but he was shocked by the 'lourdes et ruineuses charges' the people had to pay in exchange for their safety. Basin pointed out that 'depuis des temps immémoriaux, le royaume de France nourrit avec une merveilleuse abondance une armée permanente et ordinaire'; this army was the Kingdom's nobility, and Basin almost presented its traditional obligation to defend the realm as an element of Nature's cycle. Thus he nostalgically advocated the use of the *arrière-ban*, oblivious of the fact that this force was hopelessly slow to raise, and that the nobles summoned were often poorly equipped and ill-disciplined: its defects had been obvious in 1415. Basin

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[13] *Ibid.*, XII, 96-97.

[14] Summoning the *arrière-ban* meant that all the realm's nobles were mobilized, as happened in 1415.

[15] JEAN DE SAINT-GELAIS, p. 121-122, 123.

[16] See Marc Spencer's thorough study of the question in SPENCER, p. 107-119, 257-258.

only saw its advantages: a huge army could be raised, and the nobles did not need any wages in peacetime. Moreover, Basin saw the instituting of a permanent force as a first step towards the establishment of a tyrannical regime: unscrupulous rulers could use it as an instrument of coercion and repression against the common people[17]. The archbishop of Rheims Jean Juvénal des Ursins expressed the same concerns in his sermon *Verba mea auribus percipe, Domine*, which contains many clerical commonplaces[18]. And yet, Basin and Juvénal des Ursins seem to have been preaching in the desert: whether Charles VII's subjects welcomed the creation of the *compagnies d'ordonnance*, whether they did not realize that they could become a terrible financial burden -as they did in Louis XI's reign - or whether they did not have the choice, the standing army was now a permanent feature of French life.

Thus, in 1494, the *compagnies d'ordonnance* had been in existence for about 50 years. Charles VIII was leading into Italy the most powerful and modern army in Europe, yet its composition and structure was still extremely similar to that of the forces which had reconquered Normandy and Guyenne; the only major difference was the presence of the Swiss and German mercenaries, whose number would keep increasing throughout the Wars of Italy, as a result of the Kings of France's expanding need for more manpower, especially of the infantry type. Charles VIII's invasion inaugurated a new era for warfare. A well-known theme of Guicciardini's *History of Italy* is that the French introduced many calamities in Italy; most notably they changed the face of warfare in this country. The Italians were shocked by the fierceness of the French, who often fought without taking prisoners to scare their enemies, and by their artillery's awesome power. Soon, however, all belligerents would fight in the same brutal way, also ensuring that their artillery was up-to-date and made the best possible use of. Italy became the testing ground of all technical and tactical military innovations.

After fifty years of military professionalism, in an age when war was rapidly evolving, becoming increasingly destructive - an age which the French themselves had

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[17] THOMAS BASIN, II, 25-47.

introduced - and when the Kings of France's expansionist policy had the French army operate on foreign ground, what did the Renaissance French soldier look like? Our 'monarchist' chroniclers offer particularly valuable images of the French soldier in action which explain the mentality and conduct of the actors of Charles VIII and Louis XII's *guerres de magnificence*; we shall see, however, that these images are rather idealized. Let us firstly turn to the figure of the knight, for it is on him that our chroniclers still dwelt most.

2. Continuity and mutations in the knights' patterns of behaviour

2. 1. Reverence for traditional chivalrous ideals

In its basic feature, the chivalrous chronicle of the early 15th century had not evolved, for knights are still in the limelight in monarchist chronicles. All knights were nobles, and at the dawn of the 16th century, perhaps more than ever the nobility was pulling the strings in politics, administration and warfare alike. Jean d'Auton tells us that Louis XII embarked on the conquest of Milan when he saw that the situation at home was perfectly settled, that is: 'les Estaz tenus et arrestés, l'Esglize unye et pacyfiée, Noblece exaulcée et magnifyée, Labeur sublegé et soustenu' (I, 7). Everything was in its place, and everyone's place was clearly defined. Modern historians have pointed out that, more than his predecessors or successors, Louis XII, the *père du peuple*, sought, and did obtain, the Third Estate's support[19]. Still, the significant power was held by the nobility, and d'Auton demonstrates that this was unquestioned. The Third Estate's power and ambitions had to be checked and bridled - for instance, in case it might refuse subsidies for an Italian venture - while the nobility could only be exalted. In the military domain, the nobility's predominance was unchanged; fighting had been the business of nobles for centuries, and Charles VII's reforms did not prevent them from choosing to become professionals. In fact, being of noble birth was always an advantage for

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[18] See *Histoire militaire...*, I, 205-206.

candidates for a military career. Jean Jacquart has pointed out that the advancement of the famous Bayard was very slow throughout his military career, despite his reputation, because he was of low birth[20]. The nobility guarded very jealously access to the army's commanding posts.

It is well established that, during the Renaissance, the ideals of chivalry still appealed strongly to knights, despite their anachronistic character in times when warfare was becoming increasingly murderous, mechanized and anonymous[21]. In fact, as their tactical usefulness diminished, knights felt more inclined to cling to the lore associated with chivalry that enhanced the prestige of their status. The lure of chivalry is best exemplified in the behaviour of the three monarchs who successively led the armies of France into Italy: Charles VIII, Louis XII, and Francis I. The first thing that strikes us as we read the chronicles of André de La Vigne, Jean d'Auton or Jean de Saint-Gelais, Desrey's 'Addition' to Gaguin or Guillaume de Villeneuve's *Mémoires*, is that none of the ideological decorum traditionally associated with the figure of the knight has disappeared; on the contrary, it looms larger than ever, sometimes verging on caricature. These chivalrous interests were described by René de Lucinge as being still very popular by the beginning of the 17th century with a large aristocratic readership who took delight in following the latest adventures of romance heroes such as Amadis de Gaule. Lucinge describes how he himself had learnt from them

> les amours, les guerres, l'entregent des cours, les loix de chevallerie, la forme des deffis anciens, les combats singuliers, l'honneur et le support que les chevaliers doivent aux dames, le soulagement des oppressez, qui les oblige au respect, à la foy et à la loyauté[22].

Amongst the chivalrous virtues extolled in our monarchist chronicles and memoirs, honour figures in the forefront. This chivalric virtue appears as Guillaume de Villeneuve's main concern in his narrative, as the knight emphasized that throughout his

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[19] Cf. F. J. BAUMGARTNER, *Louis XII*, Stroud, Alan Sutton, 1994, p. 248-249.
[20] JACQUART, p. 85.
[21] See for example HOWARD, p. 12-19; VALE, p. 147-174.

adventures and captivity, his honour remained intact. Villeneuve had been left in charge of Trani after the King's departure from Naples. As the Venetians were besieging the castle, thirty-two of Villeneuve's men escaped to surrender to Frederigo of Aragon, and he was left alone with eight companions. Yet, until the very end, Villeneuve refused to surrender: he relates how he took refuge in a room at the top of the highest tower, where he had a heavy cannon installed, and how he was shouting to the Venetians 'qu'ils s'en allassent, car il aymeroit mieux mourir que de le [the castle] rendre jamais sans le commandement de son roy'. As Villeneuve was held prisoner of Frederigo of Aragon, slave on his galley, Frederigo expressed the wish to talk to him, and suggested that our proud knight had originally intended to surrender to the Venetians. Cut to the quick by this remark, Villeneuve replied that he had turned down an offer of 10,000 ducats, and that whoever questioned his loyalty, 'il estoit prest [...] de le combattre l'espée au poing dedans ladite poupe de la gallée et de l'en faire desdire'. Yet, weak as he was - as he himself tells us - after four months spent as a galley slave, Villeneuve did not stand a chance against a healthy opponent[23].

In the most partisan of our chronicles, by André de La Vigne, the concern with honour often verges on the grotesque. Take, for instance, de la Vigne's account of an incident in the French camp at Vercelli, where the French and the League were trying to negotiate a peace treaty. The alarm was given for a very trivial reason: some Milanese soldiers had stolen two pieces of ordnance from French troops returning from Novara. According to de la Vigne, as soon as the news reached the camp, Louis of Orléans rushed out of his tent 'et s'en alla tout a pied sans armures quelzconques, seullement à tout un arc et sa trousse, jusques sur le pont ou il fut armé et acoustré'. He was followed by the King with his archers, men-at-arms and *pensionnaires*, 'tellement que le pont ployoit dessoubz les gens d'armes'. The concern about honour extends to the whole army, for 4,000 Swiss and *landsknechts* thereafter 'commencerent a sonner flustes et tabourins et marcher au champ a tout leurs enseignes desployees'[24]. For this particular

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[22] RENÉ DE LUCINGE, *La maniere de lire l'histoire*, ed. M. J. HEATH, Geneva, Droz, 1993, p. 66.
[23] GUILLAUME DE VILLENEUVE, p. 273-274, 286.
[24] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 307-308.

incident, André de la Vigne seems to have been anxious to show that, though the French, in their magnanimity, were trying to negotiate a peace treaty, they were ready to continue the war should the Italians show the slightest sign of disrespect. The last thing de La Vigne apparently wanted was that his readers might believe the French had chosen to negotiate through cowardice. The concept of honour, which embodied the pride nobles took in their status, would be one of the most enduring legacies of the chivalrous ideology.

Honour seems the most important chivalrous element in our chronicles, but we still find almost all the other concepts attached to chivalry in them. Interestingly, courtly love, which as we saw was not particularly emphasized in 15th century Burgundian chivalrous chronicles - except when dealing, for instance, with Duke Philip's many mistresses - and hardly ever mentioned in the French chivalrous histories, often appears in our monarchist chronicles, at least in the official ones. It seems that the context of conquest was particularly favourable to the inclusion of digressions on the beauty of Italian ladies, who were in turn captivated by the imposing presence of our soldiers clad in iron. Such comments are commonplace in de La Vigne and d'Auton's narrations of entries. Thus, as he depicts the beauty of countless Italian ladies who had flocked to see Charles VIII's entry in Florence, de la Vigne seizes this opportunity to explain, with many arrogant clichés and unsubtle things understood, that French soldiers are much better lovers than other, more soft-hearted men:

> Les Florentines a faces angeliques
> sur eschauffaulx, fenestres et tauldis.
> Venysïennes, Rommaines auctentiques
> vindrent illec voir le roy des hardiz;
> et leur sembloit estre en ung paradis
> de voir Françoys en leurs terres marcher,
> car bien sçavent que pour enharnacher
> la nef Venus d'amoureux advirons,
> et pour a point ung connin embrocher,
> qu'ilz n'y vont pas ainsi que bourgerons[25].

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 209, v. 2920-2929.

We are reminded of Robert de Clari's description, in a similar context of conquest, of the ladies of Constantinople admiring the Frankish knights from the walls of the city in 1204, commenting 'que ce sembloit [...] que ce fussent anges, si erent il bel'[26]; only the Frankish knight was more refined in his comments than our late 15th century *rhétoriqueur*.

2. 2. Beyond the apparent constancy of ideology: the change from knight into officer of the King

Despite the reverence displayed for traditional chivalric virtues, some unmistakable mutations can be perceived in the knight, as represented in the monarchist chronicles. One thing in particular springs off the page, the constant repetition of a concept expressed in various forms: 'au service du roy', 'l'ardent desir [...] de servir leur vray prince et seigneur', 'pour le bon zèle qu'ilz avoient à lui', 'faire service à leur roy et souverain seigneur', 'bon serviteur et loyal pour le roy', etc[27]. Obviously the importance of being loyal to one's suzerain was not a new idea. However, our monarchist chronicles demonstrate that loyalty to the King had become a crucial necessity. This emphasis laid on the French warriors' loyalty to their sovereign reveals that there had been a switch from the knight as vassal to the knight as officer of the King. As far as the soldiers of the *compagnies d'ordonnance* were concerned, they were now considered as professionals, paid for their service (more or less regularly) in times of war and peace alike. They fought for the King and for him only. The captains of the *Maison du roi,* of the *ordonnance*, of the artillery, of the *francs-archers*, the territorial commanders, even the *arrière-ban*'s captains were directly appointed by the King. The times when a feudal lord could join the King's host and force himself upon the King had now almost completely gone. Originally, Charles VII had chosen the captains he wanted to retain in his service;

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[26] ROBERT DE CLARI, *La conquête de Constantinople,* in *Historiens et chroniqueurs du Moyen Âge,* ed. A. PAUPHILET, Paris, Gallimard (Pléiade), 1952 (2nd ed., 1st pub. 1938), p. 17-91 (see p. 51).

[27] Quotations respectively from JEAN D'AUTON, I, 14; ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 284; PIERRE DESREY, 'Addition...', fol. ccxxxii, r°; GUILLAUME DE VILLENEUVE, p. 271, 277.

all other captains who remained under arms with their men were basically considered as outlaws. As for the men-at-arms of the *ordonnance*, they were chosen by the captains, but this choice had to be agreed by the King's officials during the reviews. And all the men of the *ordonnance* had to swear to their captain that they would serve the King 'contre touz ceulx qui puent vivre et mourir'[28]. This explains the importance granted by our monarchist chroniclers to the loyalty specifically owed to the King. Steven Gunn has explained how the Tudor Kings of England, capitalizing first and foremost on loyalty owed to the suzerain, exploited traditional chivalric virtues to serve their own political ends[29]. The same could be said about the Valois rulers of France. We saw in the first chapter that Philip the Good and his father had tried to secure their knights' allegiance by extolling chivalric virtues, in particular fidelity towards the suzerain. Yet the Kings of France achieved more concrete results. Apart from the fact that their authority was far more ancient than that exercised by the Dukes of Burgundy over their noble subjects, one can say that the institution, in the French army, of an efficient contractual system of remunerated service, with prospective pensions or advancement to reward earnestness, greatly accounted for the improvement of the knights' constancy. The chivalrous ideology adapted itself to the new circumstances - and was made to fit the King's interests. Guicciardini saw well that one of the great strengths of the French army was that the captains and knights 'had no other ambition than to earn their King's praise', unlike the Italian captains who often changed masters out of ambition or greed[30]. Charles the Bold of Burgundy had been one of the first princes to follow the Kings of France's example by setting up his ordinances in 1471; however, we shall never know how the professional Burgundian army would have evolved, since the Duke's unreasonable expansionist policies quickly destroyed his army and state.

The ideals of French knights were evolving. Guillaume de Villeneuve's *Mémoires* demonstrate that loyalty to the King had become a new sort of ethic. Reading

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[28] See in CONTAMINE, *Guerre, État...*: 'Quatrième partie: Les débuts de l'armée de l'Ancien Régime (1445-1494)' (see especially Chapter 10 and Chapter 16). See also the 'Conclusion générale', p. 536. Quotation p. 491.

[29] GUNN, p. 107-128.

their conclusion, one could almost speak of a religion. Villeneuve explained that the torments he had to suffer during his long captivity at the hands of the Aragonese had led him to take a vow, so that God and the Virgin Mary might hasten his release. Shortly after his deliverance, Villeneuve fulfilled this vow: on foot, from Monègue, where he had disembarked, Villeneuve went to see the King, in the same state as he was during his captivity. He describes for us the King's reaction:

> Mais quand il veist ledit de Villeneufve ainsi défait de sa personne, et piteusement vestu, avec un carcan au col cinq livres pesant, comme bon prince esmu de pitié [...] et comme bon et vray père de famille doit faire à son bon serviteur, recueillit ledit de Villeneuve très bénignement, monstrant estre très joyeux de sa délivrance; et qu'il soit ainsi le monstra par effet, car dès le lendemain luy envoya ledit seigneur tous ses habillemens qu'il avoit vestu, jusques à sa chemise. Et en oultre luy feist ledit seigneur plusieurs autres grans biens et dons inestimables à luy et aux siens, pour monstrer exemple aux autres ses bons serviteurs[31].

Villeneuve's last words depict his happiness and pride now that he was close to his sovereign. In this episode, the loyalty owed by the soldier to the King becomes almost spiritual, as Villeneuve pictured himself as a martyr for the King's cause. It is interesting to note that this new ethic of service to the King seems to have relegated, to some extent, the old chivalric ideal of being in God's service to the background. More exactly, the two notions had been blended. In the 1470s, Jean de Bueil had declared, in the *Jouvencel*, that 'tout homme qui expose son corps à soustenir bonne querelle et à secourir son souverain seigneur ou son prouchain en bonne justice et en bon droit, fait et accomplist le commandement de Dieu'[32]. But despite de Bueil's repeated injunctions to fight 'en bonne querelle', reading the Jouvencel's career, which reflects that of de Bueil, we get the impression that the knight did not need to ask himself questions: by loyally serving the King, he performed his Christian duty. Thus we saw how Villeneuve refused to consider the arguments of Charles VIII's opponents, and the political aspect of the

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[30] FRANCESCO GUICCIARDINI, *History of Italy*, p. 153-154 (Book I, Chapter 11).
[31] GUILLAUME DE VILLENEUVE, p. 293.
[32] JEAN DE BUEIL, I, 118.

conquest: his duty was to obey the King, and fight, without asking himself questions[33]. In effect, the knights' ethos was increasingly secularized.

Our monarchist chroniclers show that all chivalric virtues were subordinated to that of fidelity towards the King. In Villeneuve's work, for example, all questions of honour rest on the issue of Villeneuve's zeal and loyalty towards his King. Egotistical behaviours were no longer accepted, or excused. We saw that the Burgundian chivalrous chronicles of Duke Philip's time related with some awe and only a hint of blame how the Duke of Clarence at Beaugé, and French knights such as Duke Antoine de Brabant at Agincourt, had brought about not only their own death, but also their side's defeat, because they had been driven by an exclusive concern about their own glory[34]. By contrast, Jean d'Auton stressed that the Renaissance French knight had no right to imperil the King's interests through an excessive concern about his own honour. This precept was particularly important for a captain or a commander, because he not only had to apply it to himself, but also to make sure that others would observe it. Thus d'Auton related how, as Ludovico Sforza was reconquering the Duchy of Milan in 1500, Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, governor of Milan for Louis XII, ordered the Count of Ligny to leave Como - which Ligny was determined to defend fiercely - and to join the French forces in Milan, so that the French might be united and thus stronger. But Ligny refused, and Trivulzio had to send him two further messages insisting that he should leave Como. Trivulzio's final letter commanded

> sur toute l'obeissance qu'il [Ligny] devoit au Roy et sur toute la craincte qu'il avoit de l'offencer, qu'il se retirast a Millan [...] ou sinon, qu'il [Trivulzio] feroit en sorte que envers le Roy se pourroit mal trouver; et, en lessant la place, de riens ne povoit amaindrir le priz de son honneur, car myeulx estoit soy d'heure retirer, pour l'accroissement du commun proffit, que a la longue tenue d'honneur singulier s'arrester et hazarder le tout a perdicion irrecouvrable (I, 163).

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[33] See my fifth chapter, p. 230.
[34] Cf. Chapter 1, p. 34-35, 46-47.

Jean d'Auton's reference to the 'commun proffit' in the last quotation shows that the King's service was also grafted to another notion, that of service to the state. The time when the model of the Roman legionary would replace that of the 'preux chevalier', and an obedient, disciplined service, that of a more individualistic, chivalrous enterprise, was not far away[35]. In fact, there is in d'Auton at least one explicit reference to some models taken from classical antiquity. D'Auton praised to the skies the zeal, ardour and stoicism exhibited by the Bastard of Amenzay at the siege of Novara in 1500: the Frenchman was determined to snatch a standard from a Burgundian adversary[36], and his tenacity was such that he seemed to be insensitive to the countless arquebus and crossbow shots that ran through his body throughout the fight, so that 'par le degouct du sang, en apparaissoit la vraye enseigne' (the Burgundian standard was red, with golden lions: d'Auton means that Amenzay's body had become as red as the coveted standard). According to d'Auton, 'oncques sur le dur Sceva Cesarien [Mucius Scaevola] tant de dars ne furent tirez [...] que a celle foys'. Eventually, after an hour, Amenzay managed to seize the standard, but he was mortally wounded, and d'Auton concludes:

> N'estoit ce bien legitimer degenerée nature? Si estoit, car ancores comme ung autre Epaminondas, duc de Thebes, qui, joyeusement, en mourant, baisa l'ecu dont il avoit vigoureusement la chose publicque deffandue, pareillement, nonobstant les extremes singlotz dont estoit celuy françoys actaint, jucques a son logis l'enseigne en emporta, sans monstrer visage triste par proximité de fin, sachant heureuse Renommée de vertuz embellye, après mort temporelle, porter le triumphe de louange eterne (I, 210-211).

By comparing Amenzay to Mucius Scaevola, the Roman hero who let his hand burn in a fire before the tyrant he wanted to murder, to punish it for having missed its target, and Epaminondas, the Greek warrior who, mortally wounded, chose to die with his eyes fixed on his shield, a symbol of his fatherland, Jean d'Auton extolled a new ideal for the Renaissance French knight, that of ascetic service to the state. Like Roman soldiers, knights - and soldiers in general - should stoically endure the greatest hardships in the

[35] HALE, *War and Society*, p. 130.

name of the state. Yet, their reward was the same as the one Froissart promised to his heroes: thanks to the chronicler, they would earn eternal renown.

Nonetheless, the Renaissance French knight could also expect a different kind of reward for his zeal, gains which were more material and probably more incentive. Some knights were praised for their apparent detachment from monetary rewards: in his biography of La Trémoille, Jean Bouchet was careful to emphasize his hero's altruism, stressing that the French commander had often declined any material reward. Thus, having led in person the celebrated manhandling of the pieces of Charles VIII's ordnance across the Appenine paths, La Trémoille told Charles VIII that the only reward he wanted was the King's grace and benevolence[37]. But La Trémoille's position was already privileged. Apart from the prospect of advancement, the knights of the *compagnies d'ordonnances* could expect more than the mere payment of their wages as reward for a brilliant feat. The King's generosity took a variety of forms: the reward could be a *pension* - for instance, a man-at-arms would be appointed controller of a salt granary - or the gift of a land, of a forest, or simply a sum of money[38]. These gifts only concerned a minority of soldiers, but the hope to receive such rewards could still increase the knights' ardour. Interestingly, the fact that the knight's zeal and loyalty was to an extent determined by the material rewards he could receive is made more explicit in our monarchist chronicles than in the earlier type of historiography. It shows that the practice was not seen as being incompatible with the ideals of chivalry. Thus, de la Vigne mentioned how, at Vercelli, Charles VIII visited his camp and his captains, commanding 'qu'ilz feissent bon devoir' and promising 'qu'il les recompenseroit bien'; the chronicler concluded: 'de laquelle visitation et bonne chere les ditz capitaynes furent moult joyeux et contens'[39], emphasizing that Charles' promises had the desired effect. Similarly, we have seen how Villeneuve's account ended with the 'grans biens et dons inestimables' bestowed upon him by Charles VIII. After all, service to the King now had

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[36] Many Burgundians were now the subjects of the Holy Roman Emperor, who had sent troops in support of Ludovico Sforza.
[37] JEAN BOUCHET, *Le panegyric...*, p. 761.
[38] CONTAMINE, *Guerre, État...*, p. 512-513.

a contractual nature, and mentioning the King's material gifts and rewards simply showed his largesse and magnificence.

3. Interest in the figure of the common soldier

I have focused until here on the figure of the knight; yet, one of the great novelties of the monarchist chronicles is that some of them demonstrate an interest in the common soldier. Chronicles written by noblemen do not usually take more interest in him than they did earlier: the only names of common soldiers which appear in Guillaume de Villeneuve's *Mémoires*, for instance, are those of the thirty-two men of his company who betrayed him and went over to the enemy[40]. However, it is interesting to note that the chroniclers who do talk about common soldiers are the official ones: not only do André de la Vigne and Jean d'Auton mention many footsoldiers by name[41], but they also occasionally portray them as heroes. It seems that this practice was inaugurated in the 1470s by the Burgundian Jean Molinet. Thus we learn in Molinet's *Chroniques* how a black footsoldier, Cristofle, 'ung grant morienne [...] de la société des Ytaliens', was captured by the Germans at Neuss, who 'disoient entre eulx que c'estoit l'ennemy d'enfer et, de fait, le volrent assommer'. Cristofle escaped and brought safely back to the Burgundian camp one of his companions (I, 38-39). Elsewhere, Molinet recounts the chilling adventure which happened to the archers that Charles the Bold had left in charge of the ramshackle castle of Vaumacourt, near Granson, where Charles had had all the defenders hanged after storming the place. The archers feared the revenge that the Swiss would take for what Molinet explicitly denounces as Charles' cruelty, and indeed, as the Swiss besieged Vaumacourt, they warned the Burgundians that they should expect no quarter. Molinet clearly presents the archers as heroes, as he stresses that, despite these news, each archer seemed a little Ogier the Dane. The archers managed to escape and,

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[39] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 303.
[40] GUILLAUME DE VILLENEUVE, p. 274.

after many peregrinations, were able to relate their narrow escape from the hands of the Swiss to their comrades (I, 138-139, 141-142). Jean d'Auton demonstrates a similar interest in the figure of the common soldier as he relates, for instance, the peculiar experience of the Gascon archer Fortune: the bowman was in the front line at the assault of Forli (December 1499) when, suddenly, he was hit by two arquebus stones. D'Auton depicts the torment Fortune had to endure, since 'apres grande effusion de sang, se trouva debilité du pouvoir et offusqué de la veue'. The Gascon 'se voua a Nostre Dame de Haulte Faye' (in the Périgord region) and, suddenly recovering his sight and strength, was able to take part in the end of the assault (I, 132). Jean d'Auton probably 'interviewed' himself the miraculously cured archer, in the manner of a modern journalist. These are of course mere anecdotes, but show that, for Molinet, and subsequently the Kings of France's official chroniclers - perhaps following Molinet's example - the particular adventures of common soldiers could be as entertaining, perhaps even as edifying as the knights' experiences.

Although they were more prone to insurrection or indiscipline than the knights, the common soldiers are often praised for their zeal and loyalty to the King's cause. Even Commynes testifies to the increased spirit of cohesion and stoic subordination which reigned amongst the King of France's soldiers, as he admiringly declares about Charles VIII's return journey: 'jamais je ne oÿs homme se plaindre de necessité qu'il eust, et si fut le plus penible voyage que je veïz jamais en ma vie, et si en ay veü avecques le duc Charles de Bourgongne de bien aspres' (III, 210). Yet, as in the knights' case, the common soldiers' ardour was partly motivated by the material benefits they might get. De La Vigne related, for instance, with perhaps a hint of irony, how the gunners bombarding the Castel Nuovo redoubled their efforts in the hope of some reward when the King could see them, and he emphasized the results achieved:

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[41] Jean d'Auton, for instance, mentions how an archer 'nommé Libourne' rescued the knight Jean Dubois before Alexandria (in Piedmont). A few pages later, he mentions the death of one of Louis XII's *Landsknechts*, 'nommé Pietre' (I, 57, 63).

> ce dit jour mesme, pource que le roy fut disner en la maison d'un seigneur de la ville de Napples, qui estoit auprés du lieu ou l'artillerie avoyt esté assiegee, aprés disner les canonniers et bombardiers saichant le roy ou il estoit, et qu'il les pouvoit veoir et adviser, se parforcerent si tres depiteusement a tirer et tempester la dicte place du Chasteau Neuf, moyennant aussi quelques gracieux dons d'argent que le roy leur envoya [...] , que environ trois heures aprés disner, ceulx de dedens [...] furent contrains de rechief a parlementer[42].

The chronicler shows that, in the French army, there was a price for every deed of valour, as he often tells us the exact sum of money that different soldiers received for particular achievements. Thus, we are told that a gunner who managed to kill with an impressively precise shot the leader of the Italian crossbowmen of the Castel dell' Ovo was rewarded with 10 gold crowns; a soldier who, on his own initiative, swum from the coast to the same fortress, to check for countermines, received 20 gold crowns[43]. Apparently, this concern for precision on de La Vigne's part only applied to the common soldiers, perhaps because a sense of aristocratic seemliness prevented knights from informing the chronicler of the exact amount they had received.

Having considered the figures of the knight and of the common soldier - though one must stress that the representation of the latter is still sketchy - I wish to move from the individual to the group and analyse the portrayal of the army in action, to see how the Renaissance French soldiers worked as a body, what their morale was as a group, how they were seen as a whole. We shall see that our monarchist chronicles, especially the official ones, presented the French army not only as a team, but also as a formidable machinery.

4. Esprit de corps, discipline, fierceness: key-notes of the French army's policy

[42] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 252.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

In effect, what did the army of the Renaissance Kings of France look like? How did it act on the field? Our monarchist chroniclers, especially the official ones, do their best to depict an ideal army, strong, united in the face of danger, and, as it were, invincible. Firstly, the relationship between the officer and the common soldier was changing. In theory, the officer did not scorn the 'piétaille' any longer, but worked by their side to achieve the best possible results. This is best exemplified in the conduct of Louis de La Trémoille during the manhandling of Charles VIII's pieces of ordnance across the Appenine paths. To motivate and encourage the *landsknechts* and the Swiss who were to perform this feat, the King's lieutenant general, the victor of Saint-Aubin du Cormier during the war of Brittany, did not hesitate to lend a hand. De la Vigne depicts La Trémoille carrying 'les grosses boulles de fonte, de plomb et de fer qui estoit ung tres estrange faiz a porter, pource qu'il les convenoit porter entre les mains et en chappeaux, qui n'estoit pas sans grant ennuy et paine merveilleuse'. Thanks to his efforts and sollicitude, as La Trémoille did not recoil from distributing drinks and food to cheer the *landsknechts*, the deed was done within a few days. Had La Trémoille treated them with disdain, 'a grant paine l'eussent voulu faire les dictz Allemans'[44]. Similarly, Jean d'Auton relates how in 1499, during the siege of Alexandria in Piedmont, Louis XII's lieutenant generals, Ligny, Trivulzio and the 'grant maistre de France [...] voluntiers donnoyent le vin aux compaignies pour toujours myeulx affuster leurs engins et amorcer leurs coullevrines' (I, 63). Such examples are still rare in our chronicles, but do testify to a great change taking place. The time was near when Blaise de Monluc would advise French captains: 'vous devez estre ordinairement parmy voz soldats, afin de les cognoistre nom par nom, s'il vous est possible', adding: 'Ils sont hommes comme nous, et non pas bestes; si nous sommes gentils-hommes, ils sont soldats'[45].

De La Vigne presented the manhandling of Charles' artillery as a splendid deed performed by the Swiss and German mercenaries, pointing out how their musicians had encouraged them throughout the manoeuvre by playing their tabors and other

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[44] *Ibid*, p. 278-279.

[45] BLAISE DE MONLUC, *Commentaires, 1521-1576*, ed. P. COURTEAULT, Paris, Gallimard (Pléiade), 1964, p. 24, 25.

instruments; this was one peculiarity of their way of operating. Generally, de La Vigne and d'Auton pictured the foreign mercenaries as being surprisingly well integrated with the rest of the army; the chroniclers extolled some of their deeds and praised their imposing presence during the entries. Occasionally there was friction, mainly when their pay was late: d'Auton describes such an instance when the Swiss threatened to side with the enemy, because the King's controllers were paying them one month of service when more than two months were due. On this occasion, the Swiss captains argued that they should remain loyal to the King, because he valued the ardour of the Swiss above that of all other peoples, and was constantly enriching their country; the Swiss were then appeased (I, 196-197). On the whole, the monarchist chroniclers are sympathetic towards foreign mercenaries. Once again, the Burgundian Jean Molinet seems to have led the way: referring to the fact that Charles the Bold did employ such forces in his armies, Molinet had declared:

> Végèce conseille aux princes que mieulx vault enseignier ses propres chevaliers au très noble mestier d'armes que prendre estrangiers à sauldées. Et le duc, parpayant ses deniers, estoit servi de Lombars et d'Englois qui grandement s'employèrent; mais, pour ce qu'il estoit cremu et redoubté de touttes nations, et que le ciel et la terre lui favorisoyent plus que à nul autre, il avoit ce previlège de trespasser les commandemens des philosophes (I, 61-62).

Beyond the commonplace glorification of the Duke's power, one can see that Molinet acknowledged that classical authors were rather opposed to the use of foreign mercenaries, but that he ultimately judged the matter very pragmatically: Charles found it convenient and necessary to hire mercenaries, therefore it was legitimate for him to do so.

The monarchist chroniclers also present the new French army as being much more disciplined than in former days. In accounts of battles and assaults, the King of France's host strikes one as formidably efficient. This is exemplified in de La Vigne's account of the battle of Fornovo, which appears ideal in the way the French conducted themselves: everyone, whether knight, gunner, or footsoldier, had a role to play, and

performed it well. The key-note is order. De La Vigne relates how, after the artillery had fired some deadly shots, the vanguard advanced steadily 'en seure et certaine ordre', followed by 'l'artillerie [...] bien acompaignie d'un costé et d'autre de Souysses et Allemans', and goes on: 'en ceste façon et maniere en ordre de vertueuse et virile hardiesse, toute l'armee entierement marcha avant'. The actual fight was similarly well organized. The increased discipline of the French army also applied to the knights, whose traditionally reckless behaviour had caused so many traumatic defeats during the Hundred Years War. Things had changed since the days of Agincourt: de la Vigne explains how at Fornovo the Italians expected an easy victory,

> adjouxtant foy ad ce que par autres foys ilz avoyent ouy dire des Françoys: c'est assavoir que les Françoys tenoient aux champs la plus mauvaise ordre [...] du monde. Mais on leur donna bien a congnoistre le contraire de leur mauvaise pensee; car jamais meilleure ordre ne fut tenue en bataille du monde.

At Fornovo, the only people who did not behave in an orderly manner were the civilian staff, 'vivandiers et autres gens non armez'. Despite the efforts displayed by the captain in charge of them, they did just what they pleased; de La Vigne emphasizes that they were responsible for their own doom[46].

The emphasis laid on the improvement of discipline in the French army did not hinder our chroniclers from exploiting a theme which was age-old in Italy: the *furia francese*. The chroniclers knew well that the Italians considered the French a fiery nation, and reading their works, it becomes quite clear that they accepted and took pride in this stereotype. The idea that the French were particularly fierce warriors dated back to Livy, was formulated again by Polybius, and would by the 16th century become commonplace in Italian then French literature[47]. However, the rest of Livy's statement on the martial worth of the Gauls, which was well known amongst humanist circles, explained that, while the Gauls were to be dreaded more than any other men at the start

[46] ANDRÉ DE LA VIGNE, p. 283-284.

of an enterprise, they were feebler than women on their withdrawal. Philippe de Commynes knew this stereotype, but only agreed with its first part, and as far as cavalrymen were concerned. As for the second part of this common opinion, our reasonable memorialist deemed that 'à la retraicte d'une emprinse, toutes gens du monde ont moins cueur que au partir de leurs maisons' (III, 207-208). It seems that the other French chroniclers ignored the second part of Livy's statement, taking pride in his complimentary comments instead. In his *Panegyric* of La Trémoille, in the speech that Alfonso of Aragon allegedly delivered to the Pope, to warn him against the barbaric cruelty of the French, Jean Bouchet clearly delineated the French reputation for being formidable at war:

> Les bellicqueux mouvemens des Gaules sont plus terribles que d'autres gens, parce qu'ils sont soudains et précipités; et davantage sont si cruels qu'ils ne guerroient que pour tout tuer et occire; si ne veulent induces ne treuves, permutacions de prisonniers, ne prester l'oreille à gens éloquens, à prière, persuasions ne exhortacions. Et, d'autant qu'ils abhorrent [...] la gracieuse coustume de batailler qui est entre les Italiens, nous doyvons plus craindre leurs armes et plus prendre de peine à les chasser d'avec nous [48].

Similarly, Jean d'Auton depicts Caterina Sforza pronouncing, from the walls of Forli, a speech addressed to the French which is full of rhetorical commonplaces. Caterina condemns the cruelty of Louis XII's soldiers with words which are at the same time flattering, since they acknowledge the overwhelming power of the French: 'O vous, bellicqueulx Françoys, qui, a la secousse de vostre dure main, toute la terre des Italles faictes plyer et trambler...'. The address ends by begging the French to have mercy on an unfortunate widow (I, 134). D'Auton shows that the French ferocity was not merely theoretical - though as Guicciardini noted, soon all the nations involved in the Wars of Italy would vie in brutality[49] - as he depicts, without a word of blame, how the French opened the conquest of Milan by brutally slaughtering the garrisons and civilians of La

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[47] Cf. Livy, *Roman History* (Book V, Chapter 39; Book VI, Chapter 42 in particular); Polybius, *History* (Book II, Chapter 35); Machiavelli, *Discourses* (Book III, Chapter 36).

[48] JEAN BOUCHET, *Le panegyric...*, p. 756.

[49] See his *History of Italy*, Book I, Chapter 9.

Rocca d'Arazzo and Annone (I, 21, 25). The French usually started their Italian campaigns with a few shocking massacres, to scare the garrisons of the country's fortresses, so that they might surrender without resisting; this perhaps explains why d'Auton did not blame these preliminary cruelties. It is interesting to note that the humanist historiographer Robert Gaguin set out to defend the 'courageuse ferocité des Françoys' against Italian accusations, on the grounds that it was more practical and, ultimately, less cruel: 'les Italiens escripvains l'appellent cruaulté, pour ce que les gens d'armes de Italie prenans soulde myeulx ayment la despoulle de leurs ennemis que la fin de la guerre'[50]. Gaguin regarded the Italian way of waging war as hypocritical, because the *condottieri*'s aim was to enrich themselves by taking prisoners and making wars drag. We saw that the clerical chroniclers censured this aspect of the 'war of the knights' above all. The French were now acting differently: their war was an efficient war, aiming to restore peace as quickly as possible.

The fierce nature of the French also meant that things could get out of control. The French army's discipline had improved, but was still far from being ideal. When Jean d'Auton depicts the French footsoldiers rebelling against the authority of the captains who were trying to keep them from looting Alexandria, the first image that springs to our mind is that of a wild beast suddenly breaking loose. D'Auton describes Ligny doing his best to control the fury of the footsoldiers who had turned berserk, threatening them with hanging:

> leur vint au devant, l'espee au poing, sur eux chargent a tour de bras, en leur faisant deffence [...] que oultre ne missent la marche et que, si nulle force ou pillage fasoyent, que la corde telle raison en feroit que nouvelles partout en seroient semées. Mais tant mal fut la deffence octorizée et la menasse de Loys de Sainct Symon, qui d'une fenestre a eulx parloit, peu estimée, que pour tant ne cesserent, mais lascherent ung trect ou deux contre le compte de Ligny et ceulx qui leur desordre vouloyent empescher (I, 71).

[50] ROBERT GAGUIN, fol. ccxl, r°.

D'Auton may have been partisan, but such instances of realism in his chronicle do him credit; as one can see, our official chronicler was not systematically oblivious of the Renaissance French army's defects, which were still numerous.

Remaining within the field of the French army in action, I wish to close this chapter with some remarks on the military condition at the dawn of the 16th century, as illustrated notably in some particularly graphic episodes of Jean d'Auton's narrative of Louis XII's campaigns.

5. Grandeur and servitude of the military condition

Philippe Contamine has emphasized how the soldier of the late Middle Ages was becoming more and more alienated from the rest of society[51]. We saw that the military were turning into professionals, at least those belonging to the *compagnies d'ordonnance*, who, together with the crack corps of the princely guards, and the foreign mercenaries, were by now the troops on which the King relied most. Thus, it was quite natural that civilians should increasingly consider soldiers as living on the fringe of society, while soldiers themselves should, even more than before, see themselves as a caste apart. In the 1470s, the Burgundian Molinet had defined in a very explicit manner the role of soldiers in society by setting it against the bourgeois' comfortable life, picturing two different ways of life which could not be reconciled:

> Pensez ung petit, vous, rices bourgois et aultres hongnars qui murmurez sur l'estat de noblesse, qui vivez en transquilité pacifique et repos delitable [...], pensez ung petit et considerez que les nobles chevalereux n'ont pas tout d'avantage [...]. Le rice tresor de proesce est de sy chier coust et digne preciosité que les haulx conquerans du monde y aventurent corps et ame et, très souvent, les plus vaillans y demeurent en la poursieute. Et, vous [...] desprisiez la chose qui vous est la plus propice et ceulx par qui et de qui vous vivez et prosperez en felicité mondaine [...],

[51] CONTAMINE, *Guerre, État...*, p. 526-530.

> vous vivez en espoir d'augmenter vostre estage et ilz meurent pour vous et pour vostre heritage (I, 68-69).

In this tirade, Molinet described the military condition as one of grandeur and servitude: it was eminent because the zealous devotees of 'proesce' would immortalize their name through their deeds, but it was also a servitude, since soldiers had to suffer great hardships to protect the state's civilians, their lands and their rights. One could argue that Molinet was here referring exclusively to the men who constituted his readership: the nobility, whose traditional role was to defend the country. Still, his comments could apply to the modern soldier, for they clearly define the essence of the military condition: the soldier devotes his life to the service of the state, which he has chosen to serve under particularly harsh conditions, but this in turn brings a gratification other men cannot experience.

Jean de Bueil's *Jouvencel* is particularly helpful to understand better how the soldier - at least, the noble one - viewed his condition. In this work, a fictitious experienced captain explains to young soldiers that military life may not be comfortable or financially rewarding, but is still much more enjoyable and estimable 'que d'aller à la court presser le Roy ne faire l'ennuyeux après les seigneurs'. 'Mieulx vaut nostre mestier et est mieulx convenable', de Bueil adds, 'que d'aller baguenaulder à la court et regarder qui a les plus belles pointes, les plus gros bourreletz ou le chappeau le plus pelé à la façon de maintenant'[52]. Jean de Bueil saw the military profession as a manly and honourable occupation. It also was the source of sensations which no other profession could procure: 'c'est joyeuse chose que la guerre', as the 'Jouvencel' famously exclaimed, praising for instance comradeship in arms and the solidarity that existed between soldiers in the face of danger:

> Il vient une doulceur au cueur de loyaulté et de pitié de veoir son amy, qui si vaillamment expose son corps pour faire et acomplir le commandement de nostre Createur. Et puis on se dispose d'aller mourir ou vivre avec luy, et pour amour ne l'abandonner point [...] Pensez-vous que homme qui

[52] JEAN DE BUEIL, I, 42, 55.

> face cela craingne la mort ? Nennil; car il est tant reconforte, il est si ravi qu'il ne scet où il est. Vraiement il n'a paour de rien[53].

Admittedly, there was not much novelty in such ideas. Comradeship in arms had been extolled by Joinville a century and a half earlier, and the soldierly contempt for the fripperies of court life was similarly age-old. And as Contamine has pointed out, the professional of war had been existing *de facto* for centuries[54]. Still, the essence of the military condition, the joy and pain that it brought, were now clearly delineated. Huizinga has noted that there was nothing specifically medieval in de Bueil's praises of comradeship in arms, of forgetfulness of self in the face of danger; the knight's words are still relevant to today's professional soldier[55].

Moreover, at the dawn of the Renaissance, the conditions of war had changed drastically. Soldiers were living in an extremely hard environment. At times, their living conditions were literally extraordinary, and it is easy to understand why the military were regarding themselves more and more as a different sort of people. The monarchist chronicles describe with striking vividness some of the worst aspects of what Franco Cardini referred to as 'la belle vie du militaire', using ironically an expression sanctioned by usage[56]. In the 1490s, artillery was completely reshaping warfare. A couple of decades earlier, Jean Molinet had heralded in his *Chroniques* the new challenges which guns and powder were presenting to the Renaissance soldier. In a curious tirade addressed to the readers of chivalrous romances, he had declared, in a slightly comical tone:

> Vous mettez en compte vos difformez monstres et horribles geans qui se confyoient en la grandeur de leur corps, en la férocité de leurs bras et en crudelité de leurs bastons; mais, s'ilz eussent ouyz en leur tempz les espoentables tonnoires tempestans et sentu les hydeuses pierres fouldroyans dont le duc et les siens ont esté pluseurs fois servis et

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[53] *Ibid.*, II, p. 20-21.
[54] CONTAMINE, *Guerre, État...*, p. 542.
[55] HUIZINGA, p. 78.
[56] Cf. Chapter 6 of CARDINI.

> rencontréz en divers orages, ilz se fussent trouvéz perplex, confus, et sur le point de renoncier aux armes (I, 59-60).

The greater the challenge was, the greater the fortitude of the men who could face them, the higher their valour and the renown that they would obtain. Amongst our French monarchist chroniclers, Jean d'Auton depicts best, using the resources of his rhetorical and classical formation, the inhumanity of the new face of warfare, because he is dealing with a period where the French were facing much heavier resistance than during Charles VIII's excursion. One of his most horrifying passages - reminiscent of First World War trench warfare - is his rendering of the shower of fire which was pouring upon the French camp as Louis XII's soldiers were besieging Alexandria:

> A l'une foys deux ou troys homes, a l'autre troys ou quatre chevaulx estoient mors ou affollés, et a l'autre foys les gros arbres errachiez et fouldroyés, tentes et pavillons parmy le camp percés et abbatus, et tellement qu'en tout ce cartier n'estoit question que de faire le chien couchant et soy garder, sur la vye, de ne tenir par les chemins parlement (I, 54).

On the next day, at the break of dawn, the French pieces of ordnance resumed the hostilities, thundering 'comme si les Furyes Infernales fussent hors de leurs stigies, voire et de telle sorte que, au reveil, fut a chascun advys que, sous leurs tantes et pavillons, et plus d'une lieue autour, y hust terremote impetueulx' (I, 55). Jean d'Auton demonstrates the brutality, suddenness and anonymity with which death could strike in these new conditions. At the siege of Imola in 1499,

> ung gentilhomme nommé Adryain de Brymeu, estant au derriere d'une chappelle [...], d'une piece d'artillerye eut sur luy tout le derriere de sa brigandine emporté, et fut moult foullé et estonné du coup; toutesfoy ne fut gueres blecyé. Mais, a touchant de luy, ung sien varlet du mesme coup heut la teste emportée, et ung jeune page [...] fut de ce coup pareillement occiz (I, 125).

Yet, in d'Auton's narration, the French soldier can take all these hardships. He faces the dangers with the fortitude of a Renaissance hero. Jean d'Auton describes for

instance how, as a breach had been made into the walls of Alexandria, the soldiers flocked by hundreds to throw bundles of firewood into the moats. He marvels at the fact that, despite the defender's heavy fire, none of the French soldiers would let themselves be distracted from their duty; even the humblest members of the army seemed lion-hearted: 'voire et plusieurs serviteurs et laquays sur le bort des foussez faysoyent saux et gambades, et a coups de main gectoyent pierres en la ville' (I, 64). The chronicler contrasts the courageous, exemplary behaviour of the French with the pusillanimity allegedly exhibited by Cesare Borgia at the siege of Forli. As the French were crossing the moats, which they had filled in with tables, doors and bundles of firewood, to assault the castle, Cesare Borgia 'ne voulut tant son honneur lesser escarter que a l'affaire ne se preuvast', and started to join the crowd. But in fact this led to further humiliation, for

> deux pas n'eust cheminé en avant que en l'eau ne se trouvast jusques au dessus des genoilz; qui moult le refroidist. Aupres de luy, estoit ung des gentishommes de la maison du Roy, nommé Castelferrus, qui a ce besoing luy fut si propice que, tout le travers de l'eau, a son coul l'en emporta (I, 131).

Cesare would probably have felt much more in his element at his father's curia, intriguing against some Roman noblemen. He seems to have been a particular butt of d'Auton, for a few pages later, our chronicler explains that, as the army had gained possession of Forli, Cesare, 'lequel estoit las', retired to a room to take some rest. Yet, he did not enjoy his relaxation for very long, as one his men soon came to warn him that, in a room just below his, where a stock of powder kegs was kept, some *landsknechts* were in the process of getting drunk. They had brought torches with them, and Cesare was thus in great danger. Shortly after he had left his room, the powder exploded. Some of the *landsknechts* escaped, 'de feu et de soulphre les visaiges et les mains tout enfumez', and the others died (I, 136-137). Obviously d'Auton did not expect Cesare to stay in his room, yet it is quite likely that, by including this anecdote in his narration, Jean d'Auton intended to show that the Duke of Valentinois would never find his place amongst the soldiers of the French army - albeit Germans in this case - a type of men who had no fear and literally played with fire.

The Renaissance Kings of France's *guerres de magnificence* presented French soldiers with a host of new challenges which sorely tried their valour, and d'Auton took care to record all these trials at length, emphasizing the soldiers' courage, asceticism, and strength of mind as they were put through the tests, often successfully, sometimes not. 'Proesce' took various forms; single combats and traditional 'faits d'armes' were still - perhaps more than before in France - related with awe[57], however tactically unimportant most may have been, but on Italian ground, adventures were manifold and often unexpected. Sometimes the land itself presented some unusual and exotic difficulties, as when the captain Louis d'Ars, sent with forty men-at-arms and one hundred archers to Bellinzona by Ligny, had to follow narrow tracks in the mountains 'pour la passée d'ung seul homme à la foys; et, au bas de la montaigne, estoit une riviere courant, nommée la Treze, royde, tant impetueuse et bruyant qu'il n'y avoit cueur tant asseuré qui n'eust assez occasion de frayeur' (I, 150). D'Auton also particularly favoured stories of small groups of soldiers who, finding themselves isolated, had to cover great distances in hostile territories to join the army; this kind of adventures frequently happened when Ludovico Sforza was recovering Milan, Louis XII having returned to France; the French army then had to act autonomously, facing heavy opposition. Sometimes common soldiers were the heroes of such peregrinations: twenty archers who were striving to join Louis d'Ars had to cover one hundred Lombard miles without eating, with enemies pressing them closely. The challenge was however too great: having lost their horses and been forced to travel in disguise by night, all eventually had to surrender. Louis d'Ars, who was himself trying to join Ligny with his men, was more successful, and d'Auton praised his discipline and commanding skill; after a long odyssey through the whole of Lombardy, the captain managed to join the French, leaving quantities of dead enemies behind him (I, 171-177). It is probable that d'Auton and his readers particularly enjoyed these stories because they featured French soldiers having to act like the knight-errants of romances; the main difference was that such adventures were not a choice but a necessity. The Renaissance French soldier's valour was

[57] See for instance JEAN D'AUTON, I, 41, 57, 190.

unceasingly put through new tests; he had to be ready to face any challenge, whether of an age-old or novel kind.

• Conclusion

I hope I have shown the main features of the representation of the King of France's soldier in monarchist historiography at the dawn of the 16th century. Obviously every work has its peculiarities; thus the representation of the soldier does differ to a certain extent according to different works. Jean de Saint-Gelais, for instance, concentrates exclusively on the 'Noblesse Françoise'; he hardly tells us anything on soldiers others than the King's lieutenant generals, who appear as paragons of chivalry. In fact, the warrior about whom Saint-Gelais is the most prolix is Louis of Orléans, who is presented as an ideal knight; this does not, however, tell us much about the Renaissance French soldier. Guillaume de Villeneuve concentrates almost exclusively on knights - and himself in particular, but this enables us to have an insight into the character of the Renaissance French knight, in this case a captain. André de La Vigne and Jean d'Auton, the Kings' official chroniclers, give us the most complete depiction of the French soldier; not only do they portray commanders, captains and knights in action, but they also offer interesting snapshots of the common soldier, whether archer or foreign mercenary. Taken together, all these works support one another, and offer a rather finished image of the Renaissance French soldier.

How did the image of the French soldier evolve, compared to that offered by the chivalrous chronicles of the end of the Hundred Years War? As far as the main character, the knight, is concerned, one notes that, following the Burgundian example, the ideals of chivalry have taken much more importance, and seem to direct his every action, despite the fact that the traditional model of chivalrous conduct was *de facto* even

more obsolete than at the beginning of the century. However, the Renaissance French knight was no Don Quixote, and one sees that the peculiarities of the French knight of the mid-15th century chivalrous chronicles still hold good. The lessons of the Hundred Years War had not been lost. The ideals of chivalry may still be revered, but there has been a shift of emphasis, prepared as we saw in the mid-15th century. Loyalty to the King was now primordial, and all other chivalrous virtues were subordinated to it. A new ideal also appeared, that of ascetic service to the state: behind the chivalrous prototype, we are beginning to see the model of the Roman soldier. As men-at-arms were losing their tactical importance, the knight was bound to eventually disappear. Though this was a slow process, noblemen would have to relinquish the idea of serving the King as heavy cavalrymen. Many would eventually start their military career as infantrymen, and hope to become captains, before ending commanders - as Blaise de Monluc did in the 16th century. One could say that in our monarchist chronicles, the transformation of the 'knight' into 'private soldier', 'captain' or 'commander' is illustrated by figures such as the Bastard of Amenzay, Louis d'Ars, Trivulzio or La Trémoille. One novelty introduced by some monarchist chronicles, however, is that knights are not the only persons extolled for their deeds: in de La Vigne and d'Auton's works, the common soldier is also present - albeit on a modest scale. Some *roturiers* are mentioned by name, and their actions are occasionally pushed forward. As in the case of the knight, the common soldier's ideal seems to be one of obedient, ascetic service to the King and the state. Thus our images of the Renaissance soldier are not simply images of knights, or of noblemen.

Finally, I wish to consider whether our monarchist chronicles present us with realistic or idealistic images of the Renaissance French soldier. Obviously their portrayal of the French soldier is rather idealistic: with a few exceptions, the soldiers appear obedient, disciplined, courageous, valiant, ascetic and zealous. Very seldom, if ever in the knights' case, do they seem prey to feelings such as fear, greed, cruelty, rebellion or bitterness - which would be justifiable, considering that the soldiers' wages were quite low, even those of men-at-arms, that the King only offered pensions to a minority, and

that the common soldiers' prospects of advancement were little[58]. The few depictions Commynes made of Charles VIII's soldiers were much more true to nature, though he acknowledged that they were more zealous and obedient than the French soldiers of former times. Our monarchist chroniclers' rendering of French soldiers is heroic ; in that respect, they seem - this is especially striking in the official works - to have followed the model offered by Burgundian historiography. Also, de La Vigne and d'Auton, like Molinet, and Chastelain at the beginning of his chronicle, magnified the challenges of war and the waging of war; like the Burgundian official historiographers, they developed the 'aesthetics' of war, taking for instance into account the transformations wrought by new technologies, such as artillery. The décor being dramatized, war's actors appear even more as heroes. Guns, cannonballs and bombardments may be presented as horrible, but we feel that the chronicler still viewed them as grand, because they brought out the soldiers' valour. Like Chastelain and Molinet, d'Auton and de La Vigne 'embellished' war and its actors. Obviously the fact that, like the official Burgundian chroniclers, de La Vigne and d'Auton wrote in the rhetorical style, accounts partly for this similarity.

And yet, at the same time, there is some realism in our French chroniclers' depiction of the French soldier. Villeneuve was no *rhétoriqueur*, but Jean Jacquart deems his narrative very conventional; still, it seems to reflect the mentality of an average French captain, obedient and submissive yet confident in his strength, that of the King, and in the justness of the King's cause, even in the midst of difficulties. This mentality appears to have been the norm among French knights and captains, at the beginning of the Wars of Italy, when France was aggressive, powerful and triumphant : the letters written by French knights and captains during Charles VIII's campaign similarly display a great self-confidence and rather arrogant faith in the King's power and the justness of his cause, yet a dutiful and obedient turn of mind[59]. Similarly, de La Vigne and d'Auton's depiction of the King of France's army is accurate in many respects, notably in the illustration of the army's organization, of its way of operating, of

[58] See CONTAMINE, *Guerre, État...*, p. 508, 528.

the relations between the captains and the soldiers, even in some details such as the amount of money given by the King to common soldiers as a reward for a fine deed. The fact that Charles VIII and Louis XII wanted their official historiographers to follow the French host in their *guerres de magnificence* is revealing: they wanted to recognise their army when reading these works, so that their deeds, those performed by their chivalry or even by the common soldiers, might seem more authentic. One may compare de La Vigne and d'Auton's portrayal of the French army with a print inserted in the *Mer des hystoires* of 1503, representing the battle of Fornovo (**Fig. 11, 12**)[60]. In this print, the unfolding of the battle, the different corps of the French army, the knights, the Swiss formation and the guns, are depicted with a degree of realism hitherto unseen in French iconography. Yet, the French army is clearly idealized: the soldiers, whether knights or common soldiers, all appear fearless, avenging and triumphant. In the same way, one could say that de La Vigne and d'Auton present us with a very graphic portrayal of the French army, but that this depiction clearly promotes an ideal image of the French soldier.

[59] These letters appear in *Campagne et bulletins...*

[60] John Hale has commented at length on a very similar print commemorating the same event, emphasizing the iconographical importance of these contemporary depictions of Fornovo. Cf. J. R. HALE, *Artists and Warfare in the Renaissance*, New Haven / London, Yale University Press, 1990, p. 260-261.

Conclusion

Je suis ce Téméraire au soir de la bataille
Qui respire peut-être encore sur le pré
Mais l'air et les oiseaux voient déjà ses entrailles

Pour m'ouïr il n'est plus que soldats éventrés
[...]
De mon armure noire envahi par le froid
Pourrai-je murmurer mon histoire farouche

Louis Aragon, 'Le Téméraire'[1]

According to one of his contemporaries, Louis XII once declared that the Greeks had done mediocre deeds in wars, but had great writers to embellish them; the Romans had performed great deeds yet wrote of them with dignity; as for the French, they had also been admirable in wars, but lacked great writers to tell about it. Louis added that he intended to remedy that[2]. This comment sums up, in a way, the efforts made by the Kings of France of the early Renaissance period to promote an official, and thus 'definitive' writing of their wars, which would take its place in the *Geste* of the French nation; we have seen that this *Geste* itself was developing and expanding at the dawn of the Renaissance (Chapter 2, Sections 3. 1 and 4). A chronicler like Jean d'Auton may not be our idea of the ideal French chronicler: the modern mind tends to value Philippe de Commynes much more highly, because he prized politics over war, the workings of the mind over physical prowess. The most celebrated part

[1] LOUIS ARAGON, *Le roman inachevé*, Paris, Gallimard (Poésie), 1966 (1st ed. 1956), p. 29-34 (p. 29).

of Commynes' *Mémoires*, the first six books, describes how the sly Louis XI, a prince 'assez craintif de sa propre nature', but 'le plus saige pour soy tirer d'un mauvais pas', a man who knew how to please 'ceulx dont il avoit besoing' (I, 67-70), eventually triumphed over the magnificent and bellicose Charles the Bold. The Duke of Burgundy took pride in the fact that he had defied the whole power of the Holy Roman Empire at Neuss, yet our lucid memorialist deemed Louis XI worthier of praise, 'car qui a le prouffit de la guerre il en a l'honneur' (II, 26). In my sixth chapter, I contrasted Commynes' narrative of Charles VIII's descent into Italy with the heroic version of the monarchist chronicles, highlighting how Commynes had stripped the conquest of its magnificence and divested the conquerors of their superhuman aura. Commynes' version of the conquest is much more convincing to the modern reader than that of de La Vigne, because our memorialist's characters have psychological depth, and act as humans. The great novelty of Commynes' writing of history, compared with the chivalrous and clerical historiography, is that, rather than recount history according to some ideological, moral or aesthetic patterns which were more or less pre-established, Commynes searched for the cause of history in the psychology of men - and since he personally knew the actors of history, he could understand their motives. Yet in his narratives, God always appears as the ultimate cause in history; this gives an impressive spiritual and moralizing overtone to his historiography, which is otherwise very rational.

However, the idea that the early Renaissance Kings of France had of the official writing of their wars was very different from Commynes' innovative genre of historiography. At the time of the Wars of Italy, the Kings of France were carrying out a double offensive, one which was both cultural and military[3]. The French sovereigns wanted their wars to be glorified; to ensure this, they turned towards the concept of historiography which the magnificent and chivalrous Dukes of Burgundy had promoted, and instituted through the appointments of Chastelain, then Molinet as their official historiographers. Philip the Good and Charles the Bold had singled out chivalry as the line of conduct for their Duchy, partly because of their own taste, and partly because this policy fitted their interests: the Dukes deemed the glorification of

[2] Reported in BAUMGARTNER, p. 159.

chivalry the best way to appeal to the nobility, and secure its allegiance. Following Jean Froissart's example, the official and semi-official historiography of Burgundy adopted a chivalrous ideology; it extolled martial and chivalrous virtues, glorified the 'war of the knights' - war being the ideal business for a nobleman to prove his worth - and offered a heroic portrayal of the Dukes' agents in their wars (Chapter 1, A). However, Froissart had written for many different patrons (Philippa de Hainaut, Guy de Blois, Aubert de Bavière...), thus his political stance varies throughout his work, and if his discourse sometimes appears partisan, it still might be more attributable to the beliefs of the men he consulted than to his own convictions. By contrast, the late medieval Burgundian chivalrous chronicles adopted a clearly partisan stance, propagandistic in the case of the official historiographers. As Paul Zumthor has emphasized, the *rhétoriqueur*'s task was to produce a discourse which reflected the image the prince had of himself and of his role, and which he wanted to promote[4]. The same could be said about the semi-official Burgundian chroniclers such as Jean de Wavrin or Lefèvre de Saint-Rémy, who were not *rhétoriqueurs*, but also reflected and promoted their prince's ideology.

The life of a knight or of a nobleman aspiring after knighthood was in theory dedicated to the waging of war, and in Burgundian chivalrous chronicles, war was either blatantly in the forefront or, depending on political circumstances, at least present in the background. The practice of extolling the prince's martial activities led to the development of a concept which had apparently originated in France, the *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*. This kind of war, which drew its inspiration from the greatest epic episodes of the French nation's *Geste* – and, first and foremost, the crusades – was, for a prince, a way of earning renown and glory by engaging his body, his troops and his might in a remarkable enterprise. Unlike a 'common', 'natural' war, a quarrel between neighbours, the *guerre de magnificence* was a kind of luxury in which the prince could indulge. It demonstrated his magnanimity, his natural propensity to achieve great things; it brought the prince honour and fame, offering eminence to his state. The magnificent and chivalrous Dukes of Burgundy, eager to strengthen the prestige of their young state, made the *guerre d'honneur et de*

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[3] S. HIMMELSBACH, '"Long poëme" et "grand genre": l'élaboration de formes narratives longues au début du XVIe siècle', in *Nouvelle Revue du Seizième Siècle*, 15/1 (1997), 27-40 (p. 29).

magnificence an important element of their policy. When his state was at peace, Philip the Good chose to turn his thoughts to a most noble task, the defence of Christendom, and mobilized funds, equipment and troops to that effect (Chapters 3 and 4). I chose to concentrate on Duke Philip's crusading efforts because of the archetypal status of crusading as a *guerre de magnificence*, yet one could show that the chroniclers of the next generation – at least, the official and semi-official ones – implicitly presented Charles the Bold's endeavours to expand his state as a *guerre de magnificence*. Jean Molinet and Olivier de La Marche's accounts of Charles the Bold's siege of Neuss (1475) – the first stage of a future campaign against the Holy Roman Empire, which Charles had undertaken 'desirant accroistre sa renommée par touttes terres et provinces au decorement de ceste maison très relucente [the House of Burgundy]' – are exemplary in that respect, as both authors praised every striking aspect of an action Charles had intended to be daring, splendid, and admirable[5]. Both chroniclers extolled Charles' boldness, as he dared to oppose the formidable might of the Empire: according to La Marche, the final confrontation against the Emperor's army - which, however, resulted only in a few skirmishes – was 'une escolle d'honneur [...] pour apprendre le mestier de la guerre' (I, 137-138). The chroniclers were also most impressed by the magnificence of Charles' siege, described at length by Molinet[6]. La Marche explained with some awe that Charles had entertained some royal and princely visitors, such as the King of Denmark, while laying siege to Neuss, adding: 'Et ne croy pas que cent ans avant aist esté siege de celle magnificence'. The chronicler concluded: 'Et est legier à entendre que de grant valeur fut le prince qui soustint sy grant fais' (I, 138), emphasizing that the siege of Neuss should be the cause of much commendation for Charles (even though, pragmatically speaking, it was a notorious failure). Charles' alleged motives for waging this war were extremely honourable: the Duke was supporting his cousin Bernard de Bavière, who had been driven away from his archbishopric of Cologne, against Bernard's rival the Landgrave of Hesse, upheld by the Germans. Molinet stressed that Bernard de Bavière had received his archbishopric from the Pope; by taking his defence, Charles acted as 'vray champion et protecteur chevalereux' of the Holy Church (I, 29-30).

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[4] ZUMTHOR, p. 39-77.
[5] JEAN MOLINET, *Chroniques,* I, 28-105 (quotation p. 28); OLIVIER DE LA MARCHE: see especially I, 136-138.
[6] See my fifth chapter, p. 222.

Molinet thus presented Charles' campaign as a fight in the Church's defence - an ideal *guerre d'honneur et de magnificence*. In fact, if we are to believe La Marche, all of Charles' wars had the same most honourable aim: 'son desir et affection estoit d'aller contre les infideles en sa personne, et desiroit de se faire sy grant et sy puissant qu'il peust estre conducteur [...] des autres, car à nulluy ne vouloit estre subject' (I, 145). According to the chivalrous chroniclers, Charles' dream was thus identical with that of Philip: to defend Christendom against the infidels, only that Charles was more ambitious than his father - since he wanted no superior to lead him in a *passagium* - less honest and less disinterested.

At the dawn of the Renaissance, as France was emerging from the traumatic Hundred Years War conflict, re-asserting her might and prestige, and turning into one of the most powerful nations in Christendom, the Kings of France were increasingly concerned with the promotion of an official writing of French history, and, primarily, of their wars. This reflected a noticeable trend amongst Western European states: between 1437 and 1516, official and semi-official historiographers appeared in France, Burgundy, Venice, as well as Naples, Castile or Hungary[7]. France was in fact a precursor in that respect, since her monarchy designated its official historiographer as early as 1437, with the appointment of Jean Chartier. However, the Dukes of Burgundy were far more successful in establishing a distinguished official writing of their deeds, which celebrated their exploits and extolled their memory in an impressive and dignified manner, concentrating on themes most likely to please its princely and aristocratic readership's fancy. As the Kings of France launched out into their splendid Italian adventures, they chose artists to relate their martial exploits who wrote in a manner very similar to that of the magnificent Dukes of Burgundy's official chroniclers (Chapter 7, Conclusion). The resemblance is in many respects so striking, one is very much inclined to think that the immediate predecessors of the *roi magnifique*, Francis I, wanted to emulate the Dukes of Burgundy by having their deeds recorded in a grand, heroic style, and that the chroniclers of Charles VIII and Louis XII drew their inspiration from the Burgundian school of historiography, in particular from Jean Molinet. Like the official chroniclers of Burgundy, André de La Vigne and Jean d'Auton - one could also include the *rhétoriqueur* Jean Marot, author

of *Le Voyage de Gênes* (1507?) and *Le Voyage de Venise* (1509?)[8] - unreservedly put all their literary skills at their princes' service, recording their deeds in an overtly panegyric and propagandistic tone. Jean d'Auton defined his role as such (blending service to the prince with the classical notion of the common good) when declaring that he had written his *Conqueste de Milan* 'sachant [...] la plume des poetes disers et elegans orateurs d'Athenes et de Romme moings d'ayde n'avoir faict a la chose publicque que la lance des hardys combateurs' (I, 3). Like the Burgundian historiographers, our monarchist chroniclers gave a heroic portrayal of the prince's agents in his wars, concentrating on knights, and shaping their discourse according to the ideals of chivalry (Chapter 7, Section 2. 1): their prime interest was to explore 'la riche myne de vertueuse proesse, les incomparables tresors d'honneur immortel et heureuse renommée' which the 'noble excercice des armes' (I, 1) afforded, and to bring all deeds worthy of universal consideration to light. Jean Molinet had been present at Neuss; de La Vigne and d'Auton followed their sovereigns in their campaigns, thus making their reports of military actions sound more authentic and detailed, and offering a graphic depiction of the French army, for example by taking some interest in the figure of the common soldier (Chapter 7, Section 3). The French monarchist chroniclers also implicitly presented their patrons' Italian campaigns as *guerres d'honneur et de magnificence*, in the same vein as the Burgundian chroniclers had presented Philip the Good's crusading efforts and the martial deeds of his son. Originally, Charles VIII had conquered Naples with the aim of obtaining an appropriate base for waging war against the infidels. The *passagium* never materialized, but Charles' *guerre de magnificence* was still a success: because the King had spectacularly crossed and subdued so many foreign and far-off countries, the descent into Italy still earned him everlasting renown according to the monarchist chroniclers (Chapter 5).

Finally, the Burgundian legacy into which the early Renaissance official historiography of France had come can also be seen, quite simply, in the French chroniclers' language, the 'émancipation du signifiant', to use Paul Zumthor's

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[7] GUENÉE, p. 342-344.

[8] I did not consider Jean Marot in this thesis, only because he was dealing with events that belong to the 16th century.

expression[9]. An elaborate language was *the* distinctive feature of Burgundy's official historiography; it was also an ideal semi-official chroniclers revered: La Marche wrote his *Mémoires* hoping that Chastelain or some other distinguished Burgundian *rhétoriqueur* would 'coucher [ses souvenirs] ou noble lit paré et embasmé de ces nobles et riches termes, inventions et fruicts, dont le goust et l'entendement ne peult jamais empirer ne mourir' (I, 185). Recourse to elaborate language was regarded by official chroniclers as the most effective means to offer a definitive version of their patrons' deeds, '"définitive" parce que rehaussée, ennoblie par l'art, et partant supérieure à la chronique pure et simple'[10]. Besides, bridled as they were in their opinions, our *rhétoriqueurs* could only find emancipation in their artistic use of the *signifiant*. De La Vigne and Jean Marot were particularly inventive and sophisticated in the composition of their discourse, writing in prose and verse (with a predilection for the epic decasyllabic verse) by turns, and choosing the number of verses in their stanzas according to the episode related, thus introducing clever dynamics into their text[11]. At the dawn of the 16th century, the official writing of the Kings of France's wars was thus worthy of the high deeds it related[12].

Despite the presence, in the monarchist chroniclers' accounts, of some obvious references to classical antiquity, the official historiographic literature of early Renaissance France seems in fact to owe its character mostly to the Burgundian chivalrous chronicle. However, despite its professed confidence in the excellence of the virtues of chivalry, which governed the *grands ducs d'occident*'s actions, the official and semi-official historiography of Burgundy seemed to harbour a complex – especially with regard to the Dukes' *guerres de magnificence* - which grew as time went by. We have seen how the Burgundian chroniclers extolled Duke Philip's crusading endeavours and emphasized that his efforts and actions in defence of the faith had earned him much renown (Chapter 3). Yet, we sense some uneasiness in their accounts, due to the fact that Philip's endeavours to revive the old chivalrous

[9] ZUMTHOR, n. 10, p. 102.
[10] HIMMELSBACH, p. 40.
[11] See *ibid.*, p. 35-36.
[12] A woman's initiative greatly accounted for the development of the French historiographical (and, more generally, artistic) scene: Anne de Bretagne, successively the spouse of Charles VIII and Louis XII, was the patron of many early Renaissance French literary figures, such as d'Auton and Jean

crusading dream were, at the end of the day, not very successful, nor were the results of his crusading actions very impressive. Jean de Wavrin involved himself in strange contradictions as he presented Walleran's crusade as a *guerre de magnificence*, yet revealed, through his realism, that the expedition had been anything but magnificent (Chapter 4). Similarly, Chastelain showed how difficult it was for Philip to concretize his crusading dreams when his state was experiencing internal or external difficulties (Chapter 3, Section 5). And in his effort to excuse Philip's failure to fulfil his much advertised vow, the chronicler ended up restyling his opinions on crusading. Both authors thus display some disenchantment with regard to crusading, the *guerre de magnificence* par excellence.

The results of Philip's crusading endeavours were, pragmatically speaking, rather disappointing, yet because of his unquestionable zeal for the defence of Christendom, and because, following the Treaty of Arras, Philip generally avoided coming into conflict with his European neighbours, his honour was always intact in the eyes of our Burgundian chroniclers. Things changed with the advent of Charles the Bold. Chastelain was soon alarmed by Charles' thirst for glory: 'le duc Charles faisoit à craindre, à cause de son grand courage, lequel il descouvroit et sembloit monstrer par effet, qui de nul ne tenoit compte, ne de roy, ne d'empereur' (V, 455-456). As the unreasonable ambitions of Philip's son were drastically damaging Burgundy's relations with France and her neighbours, endangering the future of the Duchy itself, the Burgundian chroniclers' disenchantment vis-à-vis chivalry and the *guerre de magnificence* became far more acute. Charles' excellence was somewhat called into question, though the King of France's share of blame was even greater, because of his notoriously non-chivalrous behaviour. In his old age, Chastelain felt increasingly bitter with regard to the Christian princes, whom the historiographer severely blamed for prizing their own glory and interests higher than the Christian faith (V, 475-477). There is no doubt that Charles was included in his diatribes[13]. Jean Molinet's loyalty towards his Duke never faltered, yet already during the siege

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Marot. See Y. GIRAUD and M. -R. JUNG, *La Renaissance*, t. I: *1480-1548* (*Littérature française*, ed. C. PICHOIS, t. III, Paris, Arthaud, 1972), p. 27.

[13] On this subject see Chapter 5 ('Les illusions perdues (fin) : les princes et leur entourage, la noblesse') in DELCLOS, *Le témoignage...*, p. 263-289.

of Neuss, in the midst of his dithyrambic praises of Charles' deeds, the chronicler felt impelled to beg in a perturbed tone:

> O très puissant duc [...], aras tu tousjours l'espée en dextre? [...] Mitigue ton ardent desir, refrène ton hault emprendre, deprime ta haulte pretente, convertis [...] ta lance en rainsel d'olivier [...] . Ton père [...] s'est acquis non [nom] vertueux par bonté pacificque, garde toy que tu n'aqières non vicieux par durté terrificque (I, 92-93)[14].

After the disaster of Nancy (1477), Molinet was naturally completely at a loss: his world had crumbled, and the chronicler did not know where to turn. He was greatly shocked by the behaviour of Louis XI: instead of following the example of 'les glorieux rois triumphans', his predecessors who 'desployèrent jadis leur auriflambe sur les mescreans [...] sarrasins et barbarins en exultation de la foy catholicque, dont ilz ont acquis honneur de perpetuelle memoire' (I, 213), Louis let his knights loose on Burgundy to conquer the Duchy.

In the last chapters of his chronicle, Chastelain had castigated the nobility of France and Burgundy, who were increasingly preoccupied with their own interests, to the detriment of morality. Molinet will also blame the Burgundian nobility for forsaking the Duchy's princess and going over to the enemy, and extol instead, in the manner of a clerical chronicler, the fierce resistance opposed to the French by the common people of Burgundy, concluding an account of two admirable deeds performed by some Flemish peasants against the French with the words: 'Mirez vous gentilzhommes, mirez vous en ces paysans et ne deprimez pas trop les laboureurs qui vous nourissent et deffendent l'eritage de la pucelle [Mary of Burgundy]' (I, 239-241)[15]. Molinet's faith in chivalry would only be restored through the wedding of Maximilian of Habsburg - whom, together with his father, the chronicler considered as the saviour of Burgundy - to Mary of Burgundy.

The official and semi-official historiography written in Valois Burgundy during the Duchy's last decades thus bore the stamp of an increasing loss of illusions

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[14] On the Burgundian chroniclers' views on Charles the Bold see J. DUFOURNET, 'Charles le Téméraire vu par les historiens bourguignons', in *Philippe de Commynes*, p. 281-297.
[15] See also JEAN MOLINET, 'Le naufrage de la Pucelle', in his *Faictz et dictz*, I, 77-99.

with regard to chivalrous ideals and the Dukes' *guerres de magnificence* - especially those waged by Charles the Bold. By contrast, the official and semi-official historiography of France, which, as we saw, took the Burgundian school of historiography as a pattern in many respects, appeared increasingly self-confident and triumphant in its discourse about the French monarchy and its wars. As Martial d'Auvergne had emphasized, France had assimilated the painful lessons of the Hundred Years War: the conflict had taught France humility; she had gained much experience (Chapter 2, Section 4). Now that France was again in favour with God, she could achieve great things. The French monarchist chroniclers stressed that God was now protecting the Kingdom, favouring it in its wars[16]. It is quite a revealing fact that in 1494, the Burgundian Jean Molinet - by now a subject of the Holy Roman Emperor - was greatly impressed with Charles VIII's *guerre de magnificence*, and viewed this triumph of chivalry with great enthusiasm. Molinet apparently hoped that Charles VIII would perform what the Dukes of Burgundy had not managed to achieve: 'recouvrer la Terre Sainte et aultrez notables citéz occupées des maldis Turcqz' (II, 404). However, despite the French chroniclers' repeated claims that France was God's most dutiful servant, their tone was, in actual fact, strikingly secular. We saw that Commynes' mystical and moralizing account of the conquest contrasted with the reports of de La Vigne and other monarchist chroniclers, who basically presented the French success as the natural result of Charles' overwhelming might. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the crusade had not materialized. Indeed, one could say that, although early Renaissance historiography talked of France as God's special agent, it almost appears as if God was, to them, an instrument to exalt the French monarchy.

God was allegedly favouring France, but there was also another, most profane explanation for the French chroniclers' confident, triumphant and boastful tone when relating Charles VIII and Louis XII's *guerres de magnificence*. At the dawn of the 16th century, the Kings of France's army was one of the most modern and powerful military forces in Europe. Although, in many respects - such as the emphasis on the aesthetics of war, or the glorification of chivalry - the monarchist chroniclers modelled the writing of their prince's war on that of Burgundian historiography, their

[16] See also Chapter 5, p. 227.

portrayal of the French army reflected this evolution. The early French chivalrous chronicle had prepared the ground, with its pragmatic depiction of military actions (Chapter 1, C, Section 4). Thus, the French army of the early Renaissance, and the French knights in particular, as depicted by the monarchist chroniclers, appear much more up-to-date than the Burgundian army, and its knights, in Burgundian historiography (though Jean Molinet's chronicle did reflect some changes in the Burgundian army, when Charles the Bold was taking the contemporary Kings of France's host as a pattern for his reforms). The monarchist chroniclers present us with a French army that is united, disciplined, whose members stand together, and which is, as a rule, terribly efficient (Chapter 7, Section 4). Also, the chroniclers' portrayal of the early Renaissance French knight is not obsolete: though he may cling to some of the lore of chivalry, one can see, beyond the figure of the knight, the commander, the King's 'officier', or the private, in any case a soldier devoted to his prince, and to the 'chose publicque' (Chapter 7, Conclusion). Marie-Thérèse Caron has argued that the fall of the great princes of royal blood was due to the fact that the princes had failed to secure their nobles' entire support, despite their efforts[17]. In the military field, the zeal and faithfulness of the Renaissance French knight demonstrates that the Kings of France had efficiently recovered the French nobility's loyalty to their cause.

According to Martial d'Auvergne, the experience of the Hundred Years War had taught France humility. Yet, at the dawn of the 16th century, the official and semi-official historiography of France sang in chorus the French monarchy's exploits, exhibiting an arrogant confidence in the Kings of France's power. Only a few voices spoke in a different tone. Philippe de Commynes was one, though we saw that the prospects of a *guerre de magnificence* in Italy eventually took his fancy. The other voice was that of the few chroniclers who may be regarded as the heirs of the clerical chroniclers of the Hundred Years War. With the rise of absolutism, the currency of the clerical chronicle had declined. Also, the end of the Hundred Years War, and the military reforms of Charles VII, which had greatly reduced the French soldiers' exactions on French territory - one of the clerical chroniclers' main concerns (Chapter 1, B, Section 2) - had contributed to the relative rarity of the

[17] Cf. CARON, *Noblesse et pouvoir...*, p. 283-287.

clerical chronicle. However, many French historiographical works of the late 15th century do present a number of the clerical chronicle's features. We saw that Thomas Basin's chronicle was fairly typical of the genre, for instance as he criticized the *ordonnances*, on the grounds that they could become an instrument of coercion at the King's disposal (Chapter 7, Section 1). Robert Gaguin, regarded as France's first humanist historiographer, is also reminiscent of the clerical chroniclers, for instance as he praises the 'vaillance et prouesse' of the *francs-archers* who took part in the liberation of France[18]. The Breton historiographer Alain Bouchart, who wrote for Anne de Bretagne, provides us with an interesting and moralizing judgement on France's domineering assertiveness in the late 15th century, in the context of an event which took place only a few years before the Wars of Italy: the Brittany campaign. Bouchart explains how the Breton barons who had called the powerful French army for help bitterly regretted their impulsiveness when they saw the damage wrought by the French soldiers upon the country, and realized that the French would grasp the opportunity to lay hands on Brittany[19]. And indeed, shortly after his triumphant victory of Saint-Aubin du Cormier, La Trimoille was besieging Rennes. The speech delivered by Jacques Bouchart - a member of the Parliament of Brittany, perhaps a relative of the chronicler - to La Trimoille's heralds aims to decrease the French's arrogance, as Jacques Bouchart urged the French not to let their successes go to their heads: 'Vous autres, Françoys, ferez assez d'entreprinses de guerres, de batailles tant que il vous plaira, mais Celuy qui sans fin regne la suz donne les victoires. Ne vous en attribuez pas la gloire: c'est à Luy que elle appartient'. Eventually, the French decided to examine, together with some Breton lawyers, the justness of their claim over Brittany, fearing that, should the King emulate 'Alexandre de Macedone, Julius Cesar et aultres chevetains payens qui sans foy et sans loy vivoient et triumphoient [...] Dieu s'en pourroit bien irriter et par vengence donner ung tel heurt au roy et à son armee que à jamais le royaulme s'en sentiroit'[20]. The monarchist chroniclers of the Wars of Italy also insisted on the need for a prince to verify the justness of his claims, and the necessity to give glory to God for the victories He granted, but never with such forcefulness, and threatening urgency. The days when France had been at

[18] ROBERT GAGUIN, fol. clxxv, r°.
[19] ALAIN BOUCHART, *Grandes croniques de Bretaigne*, ed. M L. AUGER and G. JEANNEAU, dir. B. GUENÉE, 3 vol., Paris, CNRS, 1986-1998, II, 473, 476, 482.
[20] *Ibid.*, II, 497-499.

its lowest were not so remote; the dramatic fate of the last *grand duc d'occident* demonstrated that the wheel of fortune could always revolve[21].

Throughout the 15th century, the French historiographical writing of warfare thus went through a manifest evolution, from the clerical perspective or the unostentatious, pragmatic chivalrous reports prevailing at the beginning of the century, to the patriotic and partisan monarchist chronicle. I hope I have shown the extent of the Burgundian chivalrous chronicle's influence over French historiography, especially the official strand, as regards the writing of the prince's wars. At the dawn of the 16th century, few French chronicles stood aloof from a panegyric discourse aiming to glorify the Kings of France's *Geste*. Yet, despite this last flourish which seemed at the time to herald a bright future for the French chronicle, the days of the chroniclers were drawing to an end. Commynes' *Mémoires* were only published in 1524 (and the relation of the conquest in 1528), but they met with tremendous success when eventually divulged; the work's good fortune was to the detriment of most other 15th century historiographers. The *Mémoires* aroused the enthusiasm of countless readers: Emperor Charles V, Ronsard, Montaigne, Diane de Poitiers, Henry III and Henry IV are amongst the most distinguished. Commynes' innovatory type of historiography announced what would become the 16th century's most favoured genre: the *Mémoires d'épée*, a writing of wars and history written by men who had taken part in the events they related, men who were primarily concerned with the unvarnished truth, who wrote in unsophisticated language, plainly stating the reflections their observations had suggested to them. Alongside Caesar's *Commentaries*, the acknowledged prototype which, as a model, gave the genre its humanist authority, and, to a lesser extent, works such as Joinville's *Vie de Saint Louis*, especially the part relating the French adventures in Egypt, so striking in its realism - one should also quote Jean de Bueil's semi-autobiographical manual, *Le Jouvencel*, which described a military career with an authenticity heralding Blaise de

[21] Interestingly, we find echoes of the old clerical outlook in the 16th century *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, in times when fortune no longer seemed to favour the French monarchy. A short while before the dramatic defeat of Pavia, for instance, the chronicler described the fear of the Parisians as the English, allied to the Empire, and the Burgundian subjects of the Emperor were devastating the north of France, and stressed that Francis I seemed too preoccupied with his Italian conquests to care about the fate of northern France: 'Et est assçavoir que le Roy estoit pour lors à Lyon, à cause de ses guerres

Monluc's *Commentaires* - Commynes greatly contributed to the shaping of 16th century historiographical literature, of which Martin du Bellay, the biographer Brantôme, Blaise de Monluc or Michel de Castelnau are the most renowned representatives[22]. Jean Dufournet has suggested that Commynes, who himself had been a Burgundian subject, might have written his *Mémoires* as a reaction against the kind of historiography written by Olivier de La Marche or Chastelain[23]. This is perhaps the case; what is certain is that the *Mémoires* genre invented by Commynes eventually brought the sophisticated, heroic and overtly partisan historiography promoted by the Dukes of Burgundy, then by the Kings of France, to an end.

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qu'il avoit en sa duché de Milan' (*Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris sous le règne de François 1er (1515-1536)*, ed. L. LALANNE for the SHF, Paris, Renouard, 1854, p. 174).

[22] On the fortune of Commynes' *Mémoires*, and their considerable influence on 16th century historiography, see J. DUFOURNET, 'Les premiers lecteurs de Commynes ou les *Mémoires* au XVIe siècle', in *Philippe de Commynes*, p. 145-191.

[23] See DUFOURNET, 'Commynes et l'invention...', p. 30.

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