

Hue de Lannoy and the question of the Burgundian state

BY RICHARD VAUGHAN

In March 1398 Duke Philip the Bold, first of the four Valois dukes of Burgundy, went to Brussels to try to persuade the Estates of Brabant to accept his son Anthony as heir. The draft speech to be made to the Estates on Duke Philip's behalf by Waleran of Luxembourg, count of St. Pol, has survived and was among the many pieces printed by Kervyn de Lettenhove in his twenty-five volume edition of the chronicle of Froissart¹. The count was to explain that, because Philip the Bold and his family were already in possession of Flanders and were likely to obtain Hainault and Holland, a Burgundian prince would be better able to govern and defend Brabant than any other. If this came about, Philip and his sons *auroient la puissance de France et d'Angleterre*, »would have the power of England or France«.

The question I would like to ask here is whether or not Philip the Bold's spokesman was right; or was he being much too optimistic? In fact, could Burgundy, merely by adding a few territories, even an important territorial complex like Brabant with its associated duchy of Limbourg, have become like, or as powerful as, either France or England?

Both England and France possessed, and had for some time possessed, attributes wholly lacking in Burgundy. Namely, a single substantial urban nucleus or capital city, a single language, a king, and, perhaps most importantly, a name. The significance of these attributes can easily be underlined even though we stick strictly to the facts, eschewing the romanticising hyperbole sometimes employed by over-nationalistic English and French historians. For example, according to Bernard Guenée, »à la fin du Moyen Age, ne réalisent pas tous avec le même bonheur que la France la coincidence entre un Etat, un nation, une langue«².

As to a capital city, this was so conspicuously absent in Burgundy that the first two Valois dukes actually used Paris! Paris which, according to a – perhaps envious – Burgundian observer, was the heart of the allegorical body of the French kingdom. He refers to *le corps mistique du royaume, dont la ville de Paris est le cuer*³.

As to a single name, it is true that the words ›France‹ and ›England‹, and ›Germany‹ too for that matter, were often employed in a vague geographical sense for a certain ill-defined area; but

1) KERVYN DE LETTENHOVE, Froissart, xiii. 342–5.

2) GUENÉE, L'Occident aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles, 119.

3) CHAMPION, Guillaume de Flavy, 156.

they were always available for a more specific use, for example in the phrase ›king of France‹ or *Franciae rex*, first officially used as a title in 1204⁴), or the phrase ›kingdom of France‹. But this was by no means true of Burgundy. Nowhere is there any sign of the emergence of a possible name for all the Valois duke's territories. Nor was there even any way in which the northerly or Low Countries group of lands – Flanders, Brabant, Holland and the rest – could be separately designated, except by the phrase *pays de par deçà*. But it is a mere misconception to think that the duke's northern lands were always the *pays de par deçà* while the southern, or truly Burgundian lands, the duchy and county of Burgundy, were the *pays de par delà*. The phrases were by no means consistently used. If a ducal document was drawn up in Burgundy, then it is the northern lands that are referred to as *de par delà*. Here, no emerging terminology for territorial groupings is apparent.

As to a king, everybody knows that the Valois Burgundian dukes tried to promote themselves to the royal rank. But neither Philip the Good in 1448 nor Charles the Bold in 1473 were successful in becoming kings of Frisia, of Burgundy, or whatever.

It is only when we move from the world of political and geographical facts, like king, capital and language, to the more tenuous world of literature, religious devotion or court ceremonial, that the Valois dukes of Burgundy seemed able to place themselves on a par with the king of France or England. But in setting St. Andrew up alongside SS. Michael and George, in building the Charterhouse of Champmol outside Dijon to vie with Saint-Denis or Westminster, or in constituting the *Toison d'Or*, the order of chivalry of the Golden Fleece, in imitation of Edward III's order of the Garter, the dukes were far from acquiring any semblance of the political power of France or England.

More than ten years ago now Yvon Lacaze published a notable paper on the role of traditions in the genesis of a Burgundian national sentiment under Philip the Good⁵). He showed how, in the field of literature, a sort of Burgundian propaganda strove to endow the duke and his lands with a past by linking him with predecessors like Girart de Vienne and Garin le Lorrain. But no single ›national sentiment‹ emerges, only a grouping or at best mingling, of (mostly provincial) mythologies, namely the Burgundian kingdom, the Lotharingian tradition, the idea of Friesland and its kingdom and, finally, a classical tradition which introduced the Golden Fleece, Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Of course, this was no incipient national consciousness; just a hotch-potch of myths. The Dutch author Wouters had nothing positive to report as a result of his search for ideas about national consciousness among Burgundian chroniclers⁶). Nor is there anything in Burgundy to match the love of, and the idea of, France to be found in the poetry of Alain Chartier and the writings of other French literary figures.

In important ways, then, Burgundy could never be the equal of France or England. Before turning to look at Burgundian ideas about Burgundy, it may be instructive to consider exactly

4) GUENÉE, *L'Occident aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles*, 114.

5) LACAZE, *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes* cxxix (1972), 303–85.

6) WOUTERS, *Publications de la Société Archéologique et Historique dans le Duché de Limbourg* lxxxv (1949), 751–87.

what was meant by ›France‹, ›England‹ and ›Germany‹ when these terms were employed, not as geographical areas or for kingdoms, but for those curious things that in the middle ages were called nations. Here, a group of texts cited by the diarist of the Council of Constance, the Burgundian ecclesiastic Guillaume Fillastre, are of interest⁷). When the Council opened, five separate nations were accepted *de facto* as together forming the universal Church. Thus, permits to leave the city were being issued over five seals, one for the president of each nation. Fillastre tells us that the English caused a furore when on one occasion, being asked to apply their seal in the last space, after those of the Italian, French, German and Spanish nations, the president of the English nation effaced the Spanish seal, fixed his own in its place, and wrote in the last space, ›The same for Spain‹. Soon after this incident the French entered a protest against the acceptance of an English nation at the Council on the grounds that ›the kingdom of France was much larger than England, and the Italian, German and French nations incomparably greater than the English nation‹. A subsequent French document explained in detail why the English ›do not and cannot form a nation‹. It cites a papal bull dividing the papal obedience into four general parts or nations: the French nation, the Spanish nation, the Italian nation, and the German nation which includes England and Denmark. It argues that, if England insists on being a separate nation on its own, then others beside the German nation should be split up, notably France, which should be divided into at least two nations, namely ›the great and noble kingdom of France‹ and ›the remainder of the Gallic nation, not part of the kingdom of France‹. This latter seems to refer to Navarre, Provence, Savoy and possibly the county of Burgundy. The document continues with a request, that ›the English nation cease to exist and become part of the German nation‹. It also asserts that every other nation except the English nation comprises more than a single kingdom.

The reply of the English representatives at the Council was not long in coming. Naturally, they described themselves as ›envoys of Henry, king of England and France‹. After demolishing, as they thought, one after another, all the French arguments in favour of abolition of the English nation, they launched into a detailed comparison of France and England which has a significant bearing on my theme.

Whereas the said lords are aiming to exalt the realm of France to the stars, comparing it with the realm of England in number of provinces and dioceses and claiming eleven provinces and 101 broad and spacious dioceses for the realm of France, we reply that on doubtful or disputed points they may well be telling impossible falsehoods, when on a point that is obvious and well known they deviate so shockingly far from the truth. For the realm of France, as everyone knows, contains but two provinces, Rheims and Sens, and twenty dioceses, while the realm of England alone has two extensive provinces, Canterbury and York, and twenty-five dioceses. Beneath the sway of our enemy of France there are about sixty dioceses and of the king of England 110 of great size. Further, the Church of the realm

7) I have quoted here from the translation by LOOMIS, *The Council of Constance*, 301–3 and 32. The texts are printed in the original Latin in Finke, *Acta*, ii. 13–170.

of France has the honor of only one legate *a latere*, while the Church of England is perennially distinguished by two legates, vice-gerents of the lord pope in the provinces assigned to them.

Our opponents assert that there are four counties in the realm of France, each greater than the realm of England, but the contrary is the truth. In the realm of England, beside various duchies and baronies, there are thirty-two spacious counties, of which, needless to say, four or five, by God's will, are equivalent to the whole realm of France, except in frivolous verbiage. Britain itself is so broad and spacious that the distance from its north to its south, even if one travels a straight road, is, we all know, about eight hundred miles or forty legal days' journey. By common report the realm of France is not so vast.

In the realm of France, there are barely 6000 parish churches, as they say who know, but in the realm of England, in addition to a multitude of cathedrals, collegiate churches, monasteries, priories, hospitals, guest houses, and other pious edifices, there are over 52 000 honorable parish churches, richly endowed . . .

They dare call it inconsistent with justice and reason to treat the English nation as equal to the whole Gallic nation, in spite of the various facts already rehearsed. But saving our protest, we declare it exceedingly strange that they should so detest the renowned nation of England as to refuse to treat it as an equal. Do not law, reason, and letters put the two nations on an equality? As regards all the requirements for being a nation like the Gallic nation, with the authority of a fourth or a fifth of the papal obedience – whether a nation be understood as a race, relationship, and habit of unity, separate from others, or as a difference of language, which by divine and human law is the greatest and most authentic mark of a nation and the essence of it . . . or whether it be understood, as it should be, as an equality of territory with for instance, the Gallic nation – in all these respects the renowned nation of England or Britain is one of the four or five nations that compose the papal obedience and I say, speaking without disparagement or injustice to anyone, possesses as much force and authority as the renowned nation of Gaul . . .

The Gallic nation speaks in the main one language, understood as a whole or, at least, in part by the vulgar throughout the entire extent of the nation. But the renowned nation of England or Britain includes within and under itself five languages or nations, no one of which is understood by the rest, namely, English, which the English and Scots share alike, Welsh, Irish, Gascon and Cornish. By all rights it may represent as many nations as it includes distinct languages . . .

Our opponents have attempted to divide the whole papal obedience into four principal parts or nations, but they should certainly not divide it into the four parts proposed, namely Italy, Gaul, Spain and Germany. They might, however, divide the papal obedience in Europe into four principal regions or nations or churches, much as Albertus Magnus once divided Europa into four principal parts or realms, namely, the Eastern, the Western, the Northern, and the Southern churches. The Eastern region or Christian church of the papal obedience in Europe, should be Hungary, Bohemia, Poland and Germany. The Western

division or church should be France and Spain. The Northern division or church in Europe should be England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, with their islands, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. The Southern should be Italy and the Greeks who belong to our obedience, such as the Cypriots and the Cretans in Candia.

Thus we see that the idea of a nation at the Council of Constance in 1415 had nothing to do with a modern nation, nor, incidentally, do we find in the Council's records any reference to states. Yet those representatives were trying to articulate something more than just the aspirations of a ruler. At the Council of Basel in 1433 the famous dispute over the seating arrangements, or *Sitzstreit*, provoked similar rivalries and similar aspirations, but Burgundy was now directly involved. After all, it was the Burgundian cardinal Jean Germain who started the quarrel by claiming seats for himself and the other Burgundian delegates at the Council immediately next to those of the royal envoys and above those of the imperial electors⁸). His arguments for Burgundian precedence were three-fold. Philip the Good was descended from the Trojan Francus, from the Burgundian king Gundulph, from Pepin and from Charlemagne. He was related to the royal families of France, England, Castile, Portugal, Navarre and Cyprus. And, perhaps most tellingly, his possessions included four duchies, fifteen counties and numerous other territories, not to mention towns. Here, we notice that the duke's prestige is expressed quantitatively, in terms of the number of different territories he possessed, and, significantly, no attempt is made to promote Burgundy to the level of a kingdom.

The comparison between Burgundy and France, and the analysis of Burgundy, can be taken further by examining a group of Burgundian memoranda, more or less political in content, dating from between 1422 and 1439. These memoranda have been printed in ones and twos by six different editors. All are to be found in the same manuscript, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS. français 1278, a collection of documents written by or relating to the brothers Huart or Hue and Ghillebert de Lannoy⁹). It is not my present purpose to examine the manuscript and its contents as a whole, nor to consider questions of authorship or autograph handwriting. It must suffice here to say that several of the memoranda in the manuscript are original autograph drafts; that at least one is written and signed by Hue de Lannoy, namely the *Avis sur la guerre avec les Anglais* of 1435; and that the author of at least one, namely an *Instruction pour entreprendre la guerre contre les herectiques de Behaigne*, that is the Hussites, was Hue's brother Ghillebert¹⁰).

The brothers de Lannoy were both extremely well qualified to write about the duke of Burgundy's lands and policies and to advise the duke on important affairs¹¹). Hue was born in 1384; Ghillebert in 1386. Both travelled widely on their own account and on embassies for the duke in Italy, Spain, England and the East. Both became chamberlain-councillors and military

8) VAUGHAN, Philip the Good, 207-9.

9) The contents are described by POTVIN, *Œuvres de Ghillebert de Lannoy*, 473-505.

10) It is not among those used in this study, but see LACAZE, *Revue historique* ccxli (1969), 69-98.

11) See respectively, B. DE LANNOY, *Hugues de Lannoy*, and POTVIN, *Œuvres de Ghillebert de Lannoy*.

captains under John the Fearless. Both lived at Lille, and both fought on the French side at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. Aged thirty in 1414, Hue became governor of Walloon Flanders, that is, sovereign-bailiff of Lille, Douai and Orchies. He held that office for ten years. In 1433–1440 he was governor of Holland and *overste van den raad*; an office which seems to have been nearly identical with the later *stedehouder*. The prestige of the de Lannoy family at the Burgundian court was well evidenced in January 1430, when Hue, Ghillebert and their younger brother Baudouin were all among the twenty-four original knights of the order of the Golden Fleece.

The earliest in date of the memoranda to be discussed here was written in early February 1422. It is a report made by Hue de Lannoy, who had just been appointed grand master of the arbalesters of France, that is, commander-in-chief of the French royal infantry and artillery, for King Henry V, regent of France. It is in two parts: the replies to a royal questionnaire, and a list of munitions then available in Paris. It is of technical, military interest only. Both parts are printed by Baudouin de Lannoy at the end of his biography of Hue de Lannoy, as is also another memorandum dating from the first half of 1422, but this time addressed to Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy. It is a report, also the work of Hue, on the recruitment of Burgundian troops in Flanders and Artois and elsewhere, together with drafts of the letters necessary for the mobilisation of these troops¹².

Next after this 1422 group of memoranda is a group of three apparently by Hue de Lannoy and dating from late in 1429 and early 1430. They were all of them presented to Duke Philip and they all include advice on military and political affairs in France. The first advises the duke to make peace if possible but to prepare for war; the second proposes ways of detaching Arthur of Brittany, count of Richemont, from the French side; and the third, drawn up in spring 1430, outlines a plan of campaign for the Anglo-Burgundian forces. All three were printed by Pierre Champion in his biography of Guillaume de Flavy¹³.

Standing somewhat on its own is a memorandum apparently dating from 1431 outlining a scheme for improving the duke of Burgundy's revenues. This has not yet been edited in full¹⁴.

A further group of memoranda were drawn up in 1435–6 and relate to the rather delicate situation in France and Burgundy after the Peace of Arras in 1435, when Duke Philip the Good more or less abandoned his ally the king of England and came to terms with King Charles VII of France. This group comprises two documents, the one signed by Hue de Lannoy in late 1435, already mentioned, and another, this time dated but not signed, of September 1436, which is an elaborate plea to the duke to do his utmost to make peace with the English. The first of these

12) B. DE LANNOY, Hugues de Lannoy, documents 16, 17 and 18. BN MS. fr. 1278, fos. 60–1, 62–3 and 67–72.

13) CHAMPION, Flavy, pièces justificatives nos. 23, 24 and 30. BN MS. fr. 1278, fos. 45–6, 47–8 and 12–14. The first of these pieces is also printed by B. DE LANNOY, Hugues de Lannoy, document no. 35, but dated 1432. The second, concerning the count of Richemont, is also printed by COSNEAU, Richemont, 539–41.

14) VAUGHAN, Philip the Good, 259–60. BN MS. fr. 1278, fos. 66a–b.

documents was printed by Potvin in 1879; the second by Kervyn de Lettenhove in 1862, but wrongly dated¹⁵).

Another memorandum standing apart on its own was submitted to Duke Philip by Hue de Lannoy on 2 March 1438. It consists of an eloquent and indeed somewhat heated plea to the duke to remunerate his officials properly and stop making cuts in their wages. It has particular reference to himself as head of the duke's council in Holland. In the previous year his salary had been cut by half, now, complains Hue, it is to disappear altogether. This document was printed by van Marle in his book on Holland under Philip the Good¹⁶.

Finally, last but certainly not least, is an elaborate memorandum or plan of reform drawn up in 1439. It was carefully edited by Potvin among the *Œuvres* of Ghillebert de Lannoy; indeed, he believed it to have been the work of Ghillebert rather than Hue¹⁷. In the manuscript, it occurs in four different versions, several of them much corrected¹⁸). This *Avis à monseigneur* is the most important single source for what follows.

These memoranda or memoirs, when taken together and analysed as a group, show in the first place that the phrase ›the Burgundian lands‹ makes sense and the phrase ›the Burgundian state‹ does not. In his 1422 report on the recruitment of Burgundian troops in Picardy and Flanders, Hue de Lannoy refers to and deals with the duke's lands of Artois, Flanders and the rest separately; and he draws up different draft letters to be sent to the authorities in each land, as well as to the fief-holders and to the *bonnes villes*¹⁹). We are, in fact, dealing with aggregates of groups within each land, and aggregates of lands or *pays* which together form the possessions of the duke, and nothing more than this. Thus, one of the memoranda refers to Duke Philip the Good's French enemies as planning to destroy ›my lord the duke of Burgundy and his lands‹, *et ses diz pays*, and another explains that the dukes' political position is based on their popularity in France and ›the great power which they have in various lands and lordships‹, *en divers pays et seignories*²⁰).

In this way of thinking there is no such thing as a state, considered as a single inviolable unit, but a mere aggregation of lands under a single ruler. Hue even applies this somewhat ›Burgundian‹ way of thinking to the kingdom of France, suggesting that the king of France might be persuaded to part with Normandy, to the English²¹). Elsewhere, he advises King Henry VI of England to make some ›large and notable lordship‹ over to Duke Philip the Good; and in the same document he refers to the lordships of lesser people in terms exactly similar to

15) POTVIN, Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire (4) vi (1879), 117–38 and KERVYN DE LETTENHOVE, Bulletin de l'Académie de Belgique (2) xiv (1862), 218–50. BN MS. fr. 1278, fos. 40–4 and 34–9. Most of this document was translated into English in my Philip the Good, 102–7.

16) VAN MARLE, Hollande sous Philippe le Bon, no. 12. BN MS. fr. 1278, fos. 124–5b.

17) POTVIN, Œuvres de Ghillebert de Lannoy, 291–326. It had earlier been printed by KERVYN DE LETTENHOVE, Bulletin de l'Académie de Belgique (2) xiv (1862), 218–50, wrongly dated.

18) BN MS. fr. 1278, fos. 16–21, 26–33, 44a–b and 22–25a and 25b.

19) B. DE LANNOY, Hugues de Lannoy, 201–11.

20) COSNEAU, Richemont, 539–41 and B. DE LANNOY, Hugues de Lannoy, 228.

21) VAUGHAN, Philip the Good, 105.

those used for the duke's lordships²²). Thus *pays* could be collected together, ceded or transferred like so many fiefs.

Is there not a difference here between Burgundy and France? Hue himself refers to *le bien du roy et de son royaume de France*²³). The *royaume* is not remotely like a state – it seems to be something that belongs to the king; but at least it appears to be regarded as indivisible, not a mere aggregation of territories.

If we turn from the way the Burgundian lands are conceived in the de Lannoy memoranda to the aims of military or other action by the ruler, we move even further from anything like a state. It is true that the phrase *le bien publique* occurs and that the *pays* of the duke urgently require to be *en bonne paix et seurté*²⁴). The aim of the new season's campaign in Picardy is *pour y faire courrir marchandise et labouraige et remettre le dit pays de tout en paix*²⁵). The good of the people? No, hardly! The object of this exercise is to promote the prince's welfare, not the people's. Time and again in these memoirs we find that the real aim of good government or successful war is not the people's good but the augmentation of the ruler's revenues. The train of thought repeatedly leads away from the people and towards the person of the ruler.

This becomes even clearer when we examine what amounts to a central theme in the group of memoranda under review, namely reform. The programme of reform advocated in the 1439 *avis*, which may have been by Ghillebert de Lannoy, is directed at the ruler, not at the state. It is the ruler whose affairs are in crisis and who must seek a remedy. This is the document which was printed by Kervyn de Lettenhove in 1862 under the title *Programme d'un gouvernement constitutionnel en Belgique au quinzième siècle*. Naturally, it was nothing of the sort; neither constitutional government nor Belgium existed in the fifteenth century. The duke was advised to adopt the following measures in order to straighten out his affairs. He must take care to maintain good relations with his immediate neighbours ruling in France, England and Germany. He should organise alliances with foreign powers further afield. He should see to his army and artillery in case he has to resort to war and, above all, put his finances in order against this same eventuality. In order to obtain the grace of God, win the affection of his people, and earn renown throughout the world, he should rule justly and in concert with a council. Healthy finances and a good council are seen as the keys to success, but only the personal success of Duke Philip the Good. No structural adjustments to the body politic are envisaged. Let us look a little further at the de Lannoy approach to the council and to the duke's finances.

The council bulks large in the thinking of the memoranda. All those submitted to the duke are explicitly made »subject to the correction of the duke and his council«. In order to live in *justice et bonne ordonnance* a prince ought to establish a council of eight, ten or twelve notable persons of *bonne renommée et conscience*, carefully chosen. They are to include *tant clers que chevaliers* and are to reside permanently with the duke. They must be conscientious, wise and of

22) B. DE LANNOY, Hugues de Lannoy, 228 and 229.

23) B. DE LANNOY, Hugues de Lannoy, 226.

24) B. DE LANNOY, Hugues de Lannoy, 207, 205.

25) B. DE LANNOY, Hugues de Lannoy, 201.

good repute and they are to swear a solemn oath on the holy gospels that they will be true to the duke and counsel him according to reason and justice without regard to persons, however close they may be to them. They will not depart from the truth for love, hatred, profit, or fear of harm. They will maintain the utmost secrecy and will inform the duke of anything favourable or unfavourable to him that comes to their notice. They will take no steps to promote anyone to any sort of office unless they know them to be suitable and will on no account make private representations to the duke for anyone's advancement, but only to the council. They must also agree to accept no remuneration or office from anyone other than the duke except by order of the duke expressed in full council, and they are on no account to accept gifts by way of bribes. If infringements of the oath by colleagues come to their notice they must report them to the duke²⁶.

The 1439 advice or memorandum also insists that the councillor's oath must be everywhere published and posted up in public places in the towns where it can be seen by all. Underneath the text of the oath there is to be a statement in writing explaining that if any of the councillors are found to have broken the oath, especially through accepting bribes, they will for ever lose the duke's favour and be banished from his territories. Half of their goods will be confiscated, and one third of the confiscated goods' value will be given to the informer²⁷.

Once the council has been established the duke must solemnly declare to the councillors and promise on the word of a prince that he will engage in no affairs, enterprises or requests without first receiving and listening to the advice of his councillors; that he will adhere strictly to his own *ordonnances* and not make any changes to them except if passed in full council; and that he will freely allow them to say whatever they like without taking umbrage²⁸. Indeed, the duke is henceforth to rule in conjunction with his council and, though his councillor concedes that he is not bound to follow the council's advice, he insists that, as everyone knows, the duke is «so good and so wise» that, providing he is properly informed by the council, he will only act according to reason and justice »for his honour and profit and the good of his people«²⁹.

Besides the council, the other subject on which these memoranda bestow detailed attention is finance; and sound finances are thought necessary, just as was the council, ultimately only for the ruler's benefit, not the people's. On finance, the memoranda are in some respects curiously modern; thus the most important thing for the duke is to have his finances inspected or, if you like, his accounts audited, so as to ascertain the net annual revenue from all his lands after the deduction of expenses. To increase these net revenues he must make economies by reducing the number of officials, or in some other way. In fact, the duke must adjust his expenses to his receipts, calculating receipts first and then spending accordingly, not vice versa. On the other hand de Lannoy's essential vision of the ducal finances is medieval and old fashioned: the duke ought to reduce his expenses so that he can live off his own domains – *vivre du sien et de ses*

26) POTVIN, Ghillebert de Lannoy, 299–302.

27) POTVIN, Ghillebert de Lannoy, 317.

28) POTVIN, Ghillebert de Lannoy, 303–4.

29) POTVIN, Ghillebert de Lannoy, 318. For the following paragraph, see the same, pp. 306–10.

demaines – without having to ask his subjects for money in the form of *aides*, unless it be in very exceptional circumstances. Here de Lannoy's thinking is totally out of touch with reality: *aides*, or so-called extraordinary finance, had become the principal and absolutely necessary feature of nearly all public finance long before this time. He comes nearer the mark when he suggests, as a last resort, that the duke could always levy a forced loan in case of a military emergency; but his panacea for all the duke's financial troubles is his proposed council – *ung conseil de preudommes bien esleu... trouvera légèrement provision et remède en toutes les doubtes et questions...*

The political ideas expressed in the de Lannoy memoranda seem to demonstrate only the most superficial analysis of the Burgundian body politic and its institutional and financial structure. Emphasis is on the duke and his personal position, not on any sort of polity. Gains and losses of territory seem to be considered only in connection with the duke's personal financial situation. The only result actually mentioned, of the transfer of Ponthieu, Amiens and the Somme towns back to the crown of France, proposed in the 1436 advice, is the consequent loss of finance to the duke³⁰. The principal aim of the various reforms advocated is the increase of the duke's popularity, and the principal aim of increasing the duke's popularity is to enable him to raise more finance.

We find the same rather naïf approach to the question of rebellious subjects; for example in the memorandum Hue de Lannoy drew up and signed in 1435³¹. The duke is advised to strive always to avoid war and to maintain his lands in peace. Why? In order to keep his subjects contented and therefore more willing to provide him with the much needed finance. Care must be taken always to consult the Estates before making war, apparently for the same reason³². And in the 1435 memorandum the duke is urged to procede at once in person to Flanders, to set right all matters of complaint, and to explain and justify his possible military operations against the English to the Estates; military operations which are not at all of his own free will but are purely defensive. De Lannoy correctly realises that there will always be a danger of rebellion in Flanders and Holland while the duke is at war with England, their principal trading partner. And rebellion, like war with neighbours, is to be avoided at all costs. The ultimate aim of all these memoranda is to make the duke »one of the most powerful and honoured of Christian princes, and in a short time extremely rich and *garny de trésor*«³³. There is absolutely no trace of anything remotely like a Burgundian state. In keeping with developments elsewhere in Europe, above all perhaps in Italy, it is not the emergence of states and the construction of polities that claims our attention in fifteenth-century Burgundy, but the increasing personal power of the individual ruler.

In my books on the Valois dukes of Burgundy I used the phrase »the Burgundian state« for want of a better one. I wished to emphasise that I proposed to consider the development and activities of a political organisation which included numerous different territories rather than

30) VAUGHAN, Philip the Good, 105–6.

31) POTVIN, Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire (4) vi (1879), 117–38.

32) VAUGHAN, Philip the Good, 106.

33) POTVIN, Ghillebert de Lannoy, 325.

either, on the one hand, to write biographies of the different dukes or, on the other hand, to describe the detailed history of different territories. I concentrated my treatment on organs and policies that appeared to be of more or less central, or general, importance. Here, I have endeavoured to show that even in the best informed circles of Burgundian councillors, there is no serious consideration of the nature of the Burgundian polity, indeed no concept of Burgundy as a whole, apart from the person of the duke. Although, in comparing Burgundy with France, I have implied important differences between the two, I do not see the existence of a state in France as one of them. Rather I would agree with my friend and former colleague Howell Lloyd³⁴), who describes in a recent book how the French state was first discovered or invented in the sixteenth century. But, as to the Burgundian state, that is a myth.

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34) LLOYD, The state, France and the sixteenth century.