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*International Journal of Studies
on the House of Bourbon*



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EDIZIONI LA VILLA

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*The Patronage of Cardinal
Charles II de Bourbon (1434-1488)*

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EN

As one of the most important political and religious figures of the mid-XV century, Charles II de Bourbon (1434-1488) has not received the attention he deserves. Charles, archbishop of Lyon, was made a cardinal by pope Sixtus IV; he was also an important courtier and a confidant of King Louis XI of France. Cousin to Charles the Bold, he also bore numerous connections with the Burgundian court and the Southern Netherlands. This article aims at re-appreciating the artistic patronage of the wealthy cardinal, in spite of the difficulties raised by the paucity of surviving artworks he commissioned; particular attention will be paid to his collection of tapestries, which have never received detailed analysis. Charles II de Bourbon's arms appear on only three pieces today: woven to extremely high quality, probably from the Southern Netherlands, the cardinal's tapestries are undoubtedly among the finest and most expensive pieces of the XV century.

FR

Charles II de Bourbon (1434-1488), l'un des plus importants personnages au niveau politique et religieux du milieu du XVe siècle, n'a pas encore reçu l'attention qu'il mérite. Archevêque de Lyon, il fut fait cardinal par le pape Sixte IV ; il fut aussi un important courtisan et un confident du roi Louis XI de France. Cousin de Charles le Téméraire, il entretient d'importantes relations avec la cour de Bourgogne et les Pays-Bas méridionaux. L'Auteur veut réévaluer le travail du cardinal en tant que patron des arts, malgré la rareté des pièces qui nous sont parvenues. Une attention particulière sera accordée à sa collection de tapisseries, pas encore analysée en détail. Les armes de Charles II de Bourbon ne sont aujourd'hui visibles que sur trois tissus de très haute qualité, provenant peut-être des Pays-Bas méridionaux, sans doute parmi les tentures les plus belles et les plus chères du XVe siècle.

ES

Carlos II de Borbón (1434-1488), una de las figuras políticas y religiosas más importantes de mediados del siglo XV, no ha recibido la atención que merece. Arzobispo de Lyon, fue creado cardenal por el papa Sixto IV; fue un importante cortesano y confidente del rey Luis XI de Francia. Primo de Carlos el Temerario, mantuvo importantes relaciones con la corte de Borgoña y los Países Bajos meridionales. Este artículo revaloriza el cardenal como mecenas de las artes, a pesar de la escasez de obras encargadas por él que existen en la actualidad. Se prestará especial atención a su colección de tapices, que aún no ha sido analizada en detalle. Las armas de Carlos II de Borbón sólo pueden verse hoy en tres telas de gran calidad, probablemente procedentes del sur de los Países Bajos, que figuran sin duda entre las piezas más bellas y costosas del siglo XV.

IT

La figura di Carlo II di Borbone (1434-1488), una delle più importanti a livello politico e religioso della metà del XV secolo, non ha ricevuto l'attenzione che merita. Arcivescovo di Lione, fu fatto cardinale da papa Sisto IV; fu anche un importante cortigiano e un confidente di re Luigi XI di Francia. Cugino di Carlo il Temerario, intrattenne importanti relazioni con la corte di Borgogna e i Paesi Bassi meridionali. Il presente articolo mira a rivalutare l'operato del cardinale quale patrono delle arti, nonostante la scarsità di pezzi da lui commissionati giunti fino a noi. Particolare attenzione sarà prestata alla sua collezione di arazzi, non ancora analizzata nel dettaglio. Le armi di Carlo II di Borbone sono visibili oggi solo su tre tessuti di altissima qualità, probabilmente provenienti dai Paesi Bassi meridionali, indubbiamente fra i pezzi più belli e costosi del XV secolo.

KEYWORDS

Charles II de Bourbon; cardinals of Bourbon; patronage; XV-century France; tapestry.

Charles II de Bourbon was the third son of Charles I de Bourbon and Agnes of Burgundy, the sister of the powerful Duke Philip the Good. Current research mainly focuses on his two brothers, the well-known Dukes Jean II de Bourbon (1426-1488) and Pierre II de Beaujeu (1438-1503)¹. Charles de Bourbon was nevertheless a prominent figure in the French political landscape in the second half of the fifteenth century, as well as an ambitious patron². Whilst in the service of King Louis XI of France, Charles influenced the decisions of the sovereign and probably his artistic policy³.

¹ On the Dukes and their entourage, the bibliography is abundant. See especially *Espérance : le mécénat religieux des ducs de Bourbon à la fin du Moyen Âge. Catalogue de l'exposition de Souvigny, Musée Municipal, 15 juin-11 novembre 2001*, éd. par FRANÇOISE PERROT, Souvigny, Ville de Souvigny, 2001; *Le Duché de Bourbon, des origines au Connétable. Actes du colloque des 5 et 6 octobre 2000 organisé par le Musée Anne de Beaujeu, l'Ecole nationale des chartes et l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne*, Saint-Pourçain-sur-Sioule, Bleu Autour, 2001; ANDRÉ LEGUAI, *Les Ducs de Bourbon, le Bourbonnais et le royaume de France à la fin du Moyen Âge. Recueil d'articles*, Yzeure, Société bourbonnaise des études locales, 2005; MARTHA WOLFF, *Les Bourbons et leur duché*, in *France 1500. Entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance*, éd. par ÉLISABETH TABURET-DELAHAYE – GENEVIÈVE BRESCHBAUTIER – THIERRY CRÉPIN-LEBLOND, Paris, RMN, 2010, pp. 159-160.

² On the life of Charles de Bourbon, the most accomplished work is CATHERINE REYNAUD, *Le cardinal Charles de Bourbon, archevêque de Lyon (1434-1488)*, Thèse de l'École nationale des Chartes, 1970. There are also two monographs: ANTOINE PÉRICAUD, *Notice sur Charles de Bourbon, cardinal-archevêque de Lyon 1446-1488*, Lyon, Vingtrinier, 1855; ANDRÉ RECOULES, *Le cardinal Charles II de Bourbon 1434-1488. Un prélat calomnié*, Moulins, Société d'Émulation du Bourbonnais, 2007. For a summary of Charles's patronage, see *À ses bons commandements... La commande artistique en France au XV^e siècle*, éd. par ANDREAS BRAEM – PIERRE MARIAUX, Neuchâtel, Alphil, 2014, pp. 477-478; TANIA LÉVY, *Les peintres de Lyon autour de 1500*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2017, pp. 110-119; MATHIEU DELDICQUE – MAXENCE HERMANT, *Charles II cardinal de Bourbon*, in *Les Bourbons en leur bibliothèque (XIII^e-XVI^e siècle)*, éd. par OLIVIER MATTÉONI, Paris, Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2022, pp. 265-274.

³ Louis XI has often been criticized for his lack of ambition in the arts. We know today that the King of France was a committed artistic patron, see SOPHIE CASSAGNES-BROUQUET, *Louis XI ou le mécénat bien tempéré*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007. On King Louis XI and the Bourbons, see OLIVIER MATTÉONI, *Un prince face à Louis XI. Jean II de Bourbon, une politique en procès*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 2012.

This essay aims to re-examine the life and patronage of the powerful cardinal, despite the difficulties linked to the scarcity of preserved archives and works of art. His life was remarkable in several ways: his family and political ties, that placed him at the heart of crucial historical events, his ecclesiastical career, smooth and brilliant, and finally his numerous incentives in the artistic field.

A TRUSTED ADVISER TO KING LOUIS XI

Nothing prepared Charles to become so close to Louis XI. The relationship between the house of Burgundy and that of Bourbon never ceased throughout the fifteenth century. Its foundation was sealed through matrimonial alliances: Charles I was married to Agnes of Burgundy, daughter of John the Fearless, and Charles the Bold first married Isabella of Bourbon, daughter of Charles I. The mother of Charles II, Agnes of Burgundy, stayed close to her brother Philip⁴. Many of Charles I and Agnes's children were brought up at the Duke of Burgundy's court, including Pierre de Beaujeu, future Duke of Bourbon, Louis, future Prince-Bishop of Liège, or Jacques, Knight of the Golden Fleece.

As for Charles II, he was brought up at the sumptuous court of Moulins. It was decided that he would have a career within the clergy. Charles became archbishop of Lyon in 1444, at the age of only 11. The archbishopric was administered, during his minority, by other bishops. He took his function only in 1466⁵. Charles was very close to the house of Burgundy during the early years of his ecclesiastical life.

⁴ The family was very close to the court of the Duke of Burgundy. See, for instance, the expenses for the court feasts, given by Isabella: LILLE, ARCHIVES DÉPARTEMENTALES DU NORD (from now on A.D.N.), B. 3424, B. 3426, B. 3427 (years 1459-1462). On Agnès, see ANDRÉ LEGUAI, *Agnès de Bourgogne, duchesse de Bourbon (1405?-1476)*, «Études bourbonnaises», CCLXXVI (1996), pp. 405-417.

⁵ At this occasion, the city of Lyon offered him some silver tableware («deux pots et deux aiguières en argent doré du poids de 30 marcs», cfr. LYON, ARCHIVES MUNICIPALES (from now on A.M.), BB 11). He received again some presents in 1482-1483 (A.M., BB 17).

In 1461, the situation changed. The new King Louis XI invited Charles de Bourbon into his Royal Council. Louis XI, nicknamed by his adversaries the *universelle aragne* ('universal spider'), soon realized the need to divide and rule⁶. Furthermore, the suspicious sovereign did not trust completely his entourage. Louis XI, renowned for his acute political mind, had understood how dangerous the princes could be for the monarchy because of their ambition and territorial power.

Another event brought the Bourbon clan into the hands of the King of France: the conflict of the League of the Public Weal⁷. The war of the Public Weal took place from March to October 1465. It was a rebellion of princes led by the Count of Charolais, the future Charles the Bold, to counter Louis XI's accumulation of wealth. Duke Jean II de Bourbon, accompanied by his brothers, Archbishop Charles and Pierre de Beaujeu, took part in the conflict, alongside Charles of Valois, the King's brother, and other great lords. Louis XI emerged a weakened King from this confrontation: he granted land to Philip the Good by the Treaty of Conflans and Saint-Maur, and signed a treaty of peace with François II of Brittany. As for the Bourbons, Louis XI asked them to abandon the other princes of France who had not supported any of their claims during the conflict, and to enter without further reservations into his service. The King needed the abstention and neutrality of Jean II de Bourbon, as well as his full collaboration. Duke Jean accepted his proposal and regained the East of the kingdom of France, the King pledged his daughter in marriage to Pierre de Beaujeu, and Louis XI promised Charles the legation of Avignon and the cardinal's hat.

Charles de Bourbon thus became very close to the King and remained his trusted adviser until the King's death in 1483. Louis XI appreciated the diplomatic talent of the Archbishop of Lyon. He made good use of his adviser in the following years. For instance, in 1468, Charles was in Péronne, during the famous meeting between the King of France and

⁶ HISARA KONDO, *Le 'lion rampant' et 'l'universelle araigne'*, «Revue des Amis de Ronsard», VII (1994), pp. 1-28.

⁷ On this conflict, see JEAN FAVIER, *Louis XI*, Paris, Fayard, 2001; OLIVIER BOUZY, *La révolte des nobles du Berry contre Louis XI. Guerre et économie en 1465*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2006.

Charles the Bold. At the time of the rebellion in Liège, Charles de Bourbon played his role, advising the King to go to the siege of Liège with the Burgundian army⁸. Charles had gained the King's trust. At Amboise in 1470 he was charged with baptising the sovereign's fourth son, the future Charles VIII, and he was chosen as his godfather. Pierre de Beaujeu was also rewarded for his loyalty: Louis XI signed the marriage contract with his daughter Anne de France in 1473. In 1474, Charles the Bold negotiated with his brother-in-law the King of England Edward IV to eliminate the King of France. Louis XI broke the Anglo-Burgundian alliance by paying the King and signing the treaty of Picquigny. Charles de Bourbon arrived in Picquigny with Louis XI and his older brother Jean on August 29 to sign the treaty, which put an end to the Hundred Years War⁹.

From 1472 to 1476, Charles also served as papal legate to Avignon. He agreed to be replaced as papal legate by Sixtus IV's nephew, Giuliano della Rovere. In exchange, he was made administrator of the bishopric of Clermont and became a cardinal. In 1476, Charles was at the apex of his career: Archbishop of Lyon, Primate of the Gauls, Archbishop of Clermont in Auvergne, the King's personal adviser and ambassador, lieutenant of Paris, godfather of the heir to the throne, holder of numerous abbeys and cardinal.

After the King's death in 1483, Charles de Bourbon joined the new King Charles VIII's council. The regency was first entrusted to his sister-in-law Anne and his brother Pierre. The Estates-General were summoned by the Beaujeu clan in Tours in January 1484. The cardinal gained Pierre and Anne's favour by supporting them during this event. At Charles VIII's coronation banquet in Reims, the cardinal was given the distinct honour of being seated on the left side of the sovereign. Charles was proclaimed

⁸ Philippe de Commynes, the Duke's chamberlain, managed to pacify the irritable Charles the Bold. This was when Commynes passed into the King Louis XI's camp. See JOËL BLANCHARD, *Philippe de Commynes*, Paris, Fayard, 2006.

⁹ About Charles II de Bourbon, Philippe de Commynes said: «Comme je vous ay dit, le Roy estoit arrive le premier et la aux barrieres; et estions douze aupres de luy, entre lesquelz estoient le feu duc Jehan de Bourbon et le cardinal son frere. [...] Le roy d'Angleterre le print a grand plaisir, et parloit de bon visaige, car il scavoit bien que ledit cardinal estoit bon compaignon» (PHILIPPE DE COMMYNES, *Mémoires*, IV, chapter X, éd. par JOËL BLANCHARD, Paris, La Livre de Poche, 2001, p. 316).

Duke of Bourbon and Auvergne on the death of his brother Jean on April 1488. He was opposed to Pierre, whose claims to the title were supported by his wife Anne. Charles renounced his rights to the title on April 15th. In exchange, he wished to make Lyon his permanent residence and asked for other compensations: to enjoy the usufruct of Beaujolais, have his creditors reimbursed as well as all debts contracted by his father, mother and other brothers. Charles did not enjoy these rewards for long because he died unexpectedly in September 1488¹⁰.

THE HOUSE OF BOURBON AND THE ARTS

From the time of Charles I's dukedom onwards, the Bourbon family started bringing together an ambitious number of artists and his successors, Jean II and Pierre II, with the assistance of Anne de France followed suit¹¹. This shows how the Dukes wished to distinguish themselves from the King, as well as affirm their singularity vis-a-vis other princely houses. This policy of the Bourbon princes succeeded in transforming Moulins into one of the most renowned cultural centres in the kingdom in the second half of the fifteenth century. Their court housed a literary and artistic activity of the highest order and whose main protagonists were the Dukes and their close entourage.

The years 1450-1460's were marked by a special artistic collaboration, as well as a political one, between the Burgundian and Bourbon courts, especially in the development of their Chapel. The court's prestige was

¹⁰ A description of the cardinal's funerals, dated 13 September 1488, is still preserved (cfr. A.M., BB 19, f. 107v).

¹¹ See footnote 1, and also *La sculpture bourbonnaise entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance*, sous la direction de MAUD LEYUDEC – DANIELE RIVOLETTI, Dijon, Éditions Faton, 2020. On Anne de France, see especially *Anne de France. Art et pouvoir en 1500. Actes du colloque organisé par Moulins, Ville d'art et d'histoire, le 30 et 31 mars 2012*, éd. par THIERRY CRÉPIN-LEBLOND – MONIQUE CHATENET, Paris, Picard, 2014; *Anne de France. Femme de pouvoir, princesse des arts*, sous la direction de GIULIA LONGO – AUBRÉE DAVID-CHAPY, Dijon, Éditions Faton, 2022.

due to the presence of great musicians, like Johannes Ockeghem¹². The musician, like many other court singers, later served King Louis XI. The Franco-Flemish inspiration is typical of the court of the Bourbons, showcased by the painter Jean Hey's works, brought to Moulins by the Archbishop of Lyon himself. Just like his brothers Jean and Pierre, Charles played a go-between role¹³. The archbishop was indebted to the ways of his family, and he adopted its choices, especially the triple devotional tradition (i.e. the figure of Saint Louis, the Passion, and the Virgin). He could use his ecclesiastical revenues to live his life as a lord, as his rank required, and commission many works of art. It is a daunting task to reconstruct his personal collection because it was scattered after his death¹⁴.

CHARLES DE BOURBON 'BÂTISSEUR'

Charles de Bourbon owned several dwellings, including the Hotel de Bourbon in Paris and the Archiepiscopal Palace in Lyon. He cared about the buildings he had been entrusted to manage, justifying his involvement in sometimes spectacular and significant undertakings, be they constructions, repairs or embellishments.

¹² Cfr. ANDRÉ LEGUAI, *De la seigneurie à l'État. Le Bourbonnais pendant la guerre de Cent Ans*, Moulins, Les imprimeries réunies, 1969, pp. 366-367.

¹³ Charles was also close to his half-brother, Louis de Bourbon-Roussillon (as proved, for instance, by a loan of 2000 ecus from Louis to Charles in August 1472, see PARIS, ARCHIVES NATIONALES, AB/XIX/3326-7). Louis (1450-1487), illegitimate child of Charles I, had married Jeanne de France, the illegitimate daughter of King Louis XI. Louis and Jeanne were great patrons of the arts too, see CLAIRE DECHAMPS, *Un couple de bibliophiles dans le milieu royal : Louis, bâtard de Bourbon, et son épouse, Jeanne, bâtarde de France*, in *La bâtardise et l'exercice du pouvoir en Europe du XIII^e au début du XVI^e siècle*, éd. par ÉRIC BOUSMAR – ALAIN MARCHANDISSE – CHRISTOPHE MASSON – BERTRAND SCHNERB, «Revue du Nord», (hors-série), 2015, pp. 267-284.

¹⁴ Unfortunately, the will has disappeared. His collections went probably to his brother Pierre, and perhaps to other family members. Also, he left behind a lovechild, Isabelle, who married Gilbert de Chantelot, seigneur de La Chaise. De Chantelot was the cardinal's 'maître d'hôtel', cfr. OLIVIER MATTÉONI, *Servir le prince. Les officiers des ducs de Bourbon à la fin du Moyen Age (1356-1523)*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998, p. 353.

Charles set about rebuilding the Archiepiscopal Palace in Lyon in 1466-1467¹⁵. He built also in Lyon, on the southern flank of the primacy of the ancient capital of Gaul, the chapel where he wished to be buried¹⁶. He had in fact taken over the initiative of his uncle, Jean de Bourbon, Bishop of Le Puy, to honour and glorify his lineage. The Bourbon chapel, a true masterpiece of the flamboyant Gothic style, was completed by Duke Pierre II and Anne de France¹⁷. This chapel displayed mural paintings (now lost). François-Roger de Gaignières (1642-1715) recorded one in his compilation of drawings¹⁸. It was an almost square-shaped painting, that look like tapestry, its background decorated with alternate vertical stripes with the cardinal's colours (white, blue/white, red) and replenished with the monogram CHB, an elision of his name. The cardinal of Bourbon did appreciate mottoes¹⁹. In the centre is an open fleur-de-lisé pavilion. On the front of the tent is a lion over the Bourbon blazon (azure, three fleurs-de-lys,

¹⁵ GILBERT GARDES, *Le palais archiépiscopal de Lyon*, Lyon, Conseil d'architecture, d'urbanisme et de l'environnement du Département du Rhône, 1980.

¹⁶ See MATHIEU MÉRAS, *Note sur le tombeau du cardinal Charles de Bourbon à la primatiale Saint-Jean-de-Lyon*, «Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques», n.s., XX-XXI (1984-1985), pp. 225-232.

¹⁷ For the church, see ÉTIENNE HAMON, *Les architectes des ducs de Bourbon (vers 1480-1510) : les chantiers et les hommes*, in *Le Duché de Bourbon, des origines au Connétable*, pp. 121-135: 122-127. The archbishop was also involved in some theatrical representations for the cathedral (for instance, in July 1487: «du jeu et mistère de la Passion, qui naguères avoit esté mis sus et se devoit jouer en la ville», cfr. A.M., BB 19, f. 50v). In 1493, the religious services were suspended in the cathedral because of an old misunderstanding between the cardinal deceased and the chapter (A.M., BB 21).

¹⁸ François-Roger de Gaignières (1642-1715) amassed an impressive collection of drawings of the tombs and other monuments of France. For the painting, see PARIS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE (from now on BnF), PC 18, p. 14 and BnF, ms. Clairambault, 640, f. 63.

¹⁹ See HELMUT NAUMANN, *Die Wappenzeugnisse des Kardinals Charles de Bourbon*, «Archives Héraldiques Suisses», CIV (1990), 2, pp. 98-121; LAURENT HABLLOT, *La ceinture ESPERANCE et les devises des ducs de Bourbon*, in *Espérance : le mécénat religieux*, pp. 91-103; JEAN-BERNARD DE VAIVRE, *Autour de la Dame à la licorne et d'autres tentures. II. Notes de méthodologie et études comparatives*, «Monuments Piot», XCIV (2015), pp. 89-200, in part. pp. 126-127; JACQUES HANOUNE, *N'espoir ne peur. Origine et diffusion de la devise du duc Charles II de Bourbon*, «Médiévales», LXXVII (2019), pp. 153-166.

a bend gules) accompanied by the archiepiscopal cross. The banners of the tent bear its emblem: a dexter arm with a flaming sword and a phylactery with the inscription *NESPOIR NE PEUR* ('Neither hope nor fear'). Two griffins and two bears hold the tent from the top and bottom corners.

The cardinal paid for stained-glass windows and decorations in several churches. Some traces of Charles' passage are still visible in the town of Moulins. In the choir of Notre-Dame, his monogram is clearly painted on the stained-glass window representing the *Crucifixion*²⁰. In 1483, the Pope's legate had promised to grant indulgences to those who would intervene in favour of the Church and attend the feast of the Holy Thorn²¹. The cardinal, who was the instigator of this concession, offered several stained-glass windows on this occasion. Roger de Gaignières recorded another stained-glass window that was in the church of the Celestins in Paris²². The Bourbon blazon, the motto of the cardinal, the sword, the monogram, and this inscription were engraved on the window: «Reuerend pere en dieu monseigneur charles de bourbon cardinal archeuesque de lyon, mit la premiere pierre de leglise ceans en lhonneur et reuerence des dix mil martyrs [...]», which attests that Charles had contributed to fund a chapel in honour of Saint Louis.

JEAN HEY, A PAINTER IN HIS SERVICE

The enigmatic figure of the painter known as the Master of Moulins has captivated art historians for a long time. The identification of Jean Hey

²⁰ See FRANÇOISE GATOULLAT – MICHEL HÉROLD, *Les vitraux d'Auvergne et du Limousin*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2011 (*Corpus Vitrearum*), pp. 73-89, with bibliography; SOPHIE LAGABRIELLE, *Les vitraux de la collégiale Notre-Dame de Moulins, un manifeste Bourbon en faveur de l'Immaculée Conception*, in *Miroir du prince 1425-1510. La commande artistique des hauts fonctionnaires à la cour de Bourgogne*, sous la direction de BRIGITTE MAURICE-CHABARD – SOPHIE JUGIE – JACQUES PAVIOT, Gand, Snoeck, 2021, pp. 226-239.

²¹ É. HAMON, *Les architectes des ducs de Bourbon*, p. 122.

²² BnF, PC 18, p. 13.

as the Master of Moulins is generally accepted today²³. This is corroborated by documents in Lyon which mention him as a painter to the cardinal of Bourbon since 1482, a member of his house, and as the beneficiary of an administrative sinecure in Lyon in the 1480s²⁴. After the cardinal's death, Jean Hey continued his career at the court of Pierre and Anne de Beaujeu.

The refined portrait of Charles de Bourbon preserved in Munich (Alte Pinakothek), no doubt testifies to this relationship²⁵. The painting was probably combined with a devotional painting to form a diptych. The coat of arms of the Bourbons and the cardinal's hat on the hanging and the pulpit's canopy are hereby illustrated. At this stage of research, Jean Hey is the only known painter attached to the service of cardinal de Bourbon²⁶.

AN 'AMATEUR' OF RARE BOOKS

The cardinal's library is best known²⁷. Indeed, Charles II commissioned several exceptional manuscripts, including a bilingual gospel, in Greek and Latin, bearing on one hand his emblem, a dexter arm issuing from a cloud brandishing a flamboyant sword, and on the other hand his motto *NESPOIR NE PEUR*²⁸. The manuscript was illuminated in Paris around 1480 by the

²³ See the numerous publications of Philippe Lorenz, and also PIERRE-GILLES GIRAULT – ÉTIENNE HAMON, *Nouveaux documents sur le peintre Jean Hey et ses clients Charles de Bourbon et Jean Cueillette*, «Bulletin monumental», CLXI (2003), 2, pp. 117-125.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ Portrait dated 1482. See *France 1500. Entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance*, pp. 162-163, 165, n. 65; *Kings, Queens, and Courtiers. Art in Early Renaissance France*, ed. by MARTHA WOLFF, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 2011, p. 125, n. 56.

²⁶ ALBERT CHÂTELET, *Les Bourbon et les peintres*, in *Le Duché de Bourbon, des origines au Connétable*, pp. 145-151: 148-149.

²⁷ *La passion des manuscrits enluminés. Bibliophiles français : 1280-1580*, éd. par FRANÇOIS AVRIL, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, 1991, p. 84; FRANÇOIS AVRIL – NICOLE REYNAUD, *Les manuscrits à peintures en France, 1440-1520*, Paris, Flammarion, 1993, pp. 259, 270-274; M. DELDICQUE – M. HERMANT, *Charles II cardinal de Bourbon*, pp. 268-271.

²⁸ BnF, ms. Grec 55.

Master of Jacques de Besançon. A splendid manuscript remains the *Vie et miracles de monseigneur Saint Louis*, which was probably commissioned by the cardinal for his sister-in-law Jeanne de France (died in 1482)²⁹. On the death of Jeanne, it was offered to Charles VIII. The Bourbons were proud to descend in direct line from Saint Louis. The artist who richly illuminated this manuscript bears the name of his patron. The anonym artist, called the ‘Master of Cardinal de Bourbon’, caught the attention of Louis XI and other relatives, including Antoine de Chourses and his wife Catherine de Coëtivy³⁰.

The archbishop was also very interested in the very first printed books³¹. Around 1470, he acquired a *Rhetorica* by Guillaume Fichet, who had established the first printing press in Paris³². In Lyon, under his impulse, a typographer from Liège, Guillaume Le Roy, set up his printing presses in a bourgeois home in the city. In the next ten years, a dozen printers set up shops in Lyon and gained a great reputation in later years. The cardinal used this new technique to print the ritual and the statutes of his diocese, perhaps including a *Missal* in 1487³³.

A TAPESTRY PATRON

As a true courtier, Charles loved to surround himself with sumptuous objects, especially tapestries. Some contemporary documents confirm this to a certain extent. In 1483, Charles celebrated the peace concluded between Louis XI and Maximilian of Habsburg in his Parisian Hotel. Jean de Roye, secretary to the Duke Jean II and concierge of the Bourbon Hotel in Paris, declared that

²⁹ *Ivi*, ms. fr. 2829. See *Saint Louis, roi de France : Livre des faits de Monseigneur saint Louis*, éd. par MARIE-THÉRÈSE GOUSSET – FRANÇOIS AVRIL – JEAN RICHARD, Paris, Chêne, 1990.

³⁰ F. AVRIL – N. REYNAUD, *Les manuscrits à peintures en France*, pp. 270-274.

³¹ M. DELDICQUE – M. HERMANT, *Charles II cardinal de Bourbon*, pp. 271-274.

³² BnF, RLR, Vélins 297-299.

³³ ARCHIVES MUNICIPALES DE MONTBRISON, *Missel du cardinal Charles de Bourbon*, 1487.

Le très noble et très révérend père cardinal de Bourbon se réjouit de cette paix et, à cette occasion, fit jouer une belle moralité [...]. Ces festivités auraient eu encore plus d'éclat si le temps n'avait pas été pluvieux et préjudiciable pour les belles tapisseries et tout le décor de l'hôtel, car sa cour était en totalité tendue de tapisseries du cardinal qui en avait beaucoup d'une grande qualité³⁴.

Unfortunately, the tapestries belonging to the prelate are almost all lost. Through the archives, we know that the archbishop bought some textiles as Abbot of Saint-Vaast of Arras in 1469, especially a series that displayed the *History of Godefroy de Bouillon*: «à Gonsalve de Committres, espaignart, pour quatre tappiz à soye où est l'ystoire de Godeffroy de Buillon contenant II^c LXIII aulnes, mesure d'Arras»³⁵. That year he acquired other textiles (wall hangings, portiere, seat cover, carpet) from a merchant in Lille, Camus Dugardin³⁶. This merchant, active between 1450 and 1470, is known for having sold tapestries to the Dukes of Burgundy³⁷. Charles de Bourbon made several other purchases, including a *Story of Saint Anne* from the merchant Despars in Bruges: «achapt d'un tappis de haulte lisse à soye, où est une ystoire de Sainte Anne, contenant LXXV aulnes, mesure de Bruges, achapté à Marcq Despars, marchant demourant en la ville de

³⁴ JEAN DE ROYE, *Chronique scandaleuse. Journal d'un Parisien au temps de Louis XI*, trad. par JOËL BLANCHARD, Paris, Pocket, 2015.

³⁵ For the document, see ADOLPHE GUESNON, *Réplique à l'auteur des Tapisseries d'Arras*, Lille, Lefebvre-Ducrocq, 1884, pp. 35-36, cited by JEAN LESTOQUOY, *Deux siècles de l'histoire de la tapisserie (1300-1500)*, Arras, CDMH, 1978, p. 84 and ADOLFO SALVATORE CAVALLO, *Medieval Tapestry in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, MET, 1993, pp. 67-68. The archival document, preserved in Calais, was probably lost during the First World War (1915). The subject of Godefroy de Bouillon was very popular at the end of the 14th century and in the 15th century. For instance, Philip II the Bold bought a series from Nicolas Bataille in 1396, and several sets are recorded in the inventories of Marguerite de Male (1405) and Philip the Good (1420).

³⁶ A. GUESNON, *Réplique*, p. 35.

³⁷ Philip the Good paid him in 1467 for several tapestries and Charles the Bold ordered a seat cover in 1468. See A. S. CAVALLO, *Medieval Tapestry*, p. 68; ANNA RAPP-BURI – MONICA STUCKY-SCHÜRER, *Burgundische Tapisserien*, München, Hirmer, 2001, p. 346; THOMAS P. CAMPBELL, *Tapestry in the Renaissance. Art and Magnificence*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 2002, p. 35.

Bruges [...]»³⁸. This set was transported to the court of Moulins. The coloured renderings of one tapestry bearing the Bourbon coat-of-arms were found in Roger de Gaignieres' archives³⁹. The tapestry prefigures the famous set of the *Lady with the Unicorn*. The upper part is made up of alternating vertical stripes (blue, white and red) strewn with white flowers. The drawing includes a border on which the bend *ESPERANCE*, the Dukes of Bourbon's motto, was placed, framed by four blazons⁴⁰. At the centre of the composition a Lady wearing a hennin is patting a unicorn's neck. Three phylacteries surround the Lady, with the inscription «Venena pello» (I banish poisons), an allusion to one of the powers attributed to unicorns in medieval times⁴¹. On the Lady's right side is the Bourbon blazon, overlying the archiepiscopal cross (without the cardinal's hat), which means we can attribute this tapestry to Charles and date it between 1466 and 1476.

Only two tapestries, preserved today, may have been commissioned by the cardinal of Bourbon: the *Three Coronations* and the *Adoration of the Magi* (Cathedral of Sens)⁴². We recognise on both pieces Charles' coat of arms. The presence of the cardinal's hat means the pieces can be dated between 1476 and 1488. It is interesting to note that the tapestries were kept by the Bourbons and then given to the Cathedral of Sens by a member of the

³⁸ A. GUESNON, *Réplique*, p. 35. On Despars, see OCTAVE MUS, *De Brugse compagnie Despars op het einde van de 15e eeuw*, «Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis te Brugge», CI (1964), 1, pp. 5-118; GUY DELMARCEL – ÉRIK DUVERGER, *Bruges et la tapisserie*, Bruges-Mouscron, De Poortere, 1987, p. 39.

³⁹ BnF, PC 18, p. 15 and BnF, ms. Clairambault, 640, f. 229. See J.-B. DE VAIVRE, *Autour de la Dame à la licorne*, pp. 128-129.

⁴⁰ L. HABLOT, *La ceinture ESPERANCE*, pp. 91-103.

⁴¹ An overview in MICHEL PASTOUREAU – ÉLISABETH DELAHAYE, *Les secrets de la Licorne*, Paris, RMN, 2013.

⁴² On the *Three Coronations*, see LYDWINE SAULNIER-PERNUIT, *Les Trois Couronnements. Tapisserie du Trésor de la cathédrale de Sens*, Paris, Mame, 1993; KATE DIMITROVA, *Coronation of the Virgin*, in *Kings, Queens and Courtiers. Art in Early Renaissance France*, pp. 70-71, n. 17 (with bibliography). On the *Adoration of the Magi*, see *Chefs-d'oeuvre de la tapisserie du XIVe au XVIIe siècle*, éd. par GENEVIÈVE SOUCHAL, Paris, Éditions des Musées Nationaux, 1973, n. 69; ELIZABETH CLELAND, *Adoration of the Magi*, in T. P. CAMPBELL, *Tapestry in the Renaissance. Art and Magnificence*, pp. 81-82, n. 6 (with bibliography).

family, probably by cardinal Louis I de Bourbon-Vendôme (archbishop of Sens from 1536 to 1557). They were of the highest quality, woven with very fine and rich materials (wool, silk, gold, and silver threads), which made them extremely valuable. Their design and the workshop that produced them recall Flemish productions, especially the Brussels manufactories. The archbishop's family ties with Burgundy certainly played a part in the acquisition of his tapestries.

The *Three Coronations* tapestry is divided into three parts. The central part is devoted to the crowning of the Virgin, the left one to the coronation of Bathsheba by her son Solomon, and the right part to the crowning of Esther by Ahasuerus. The subject and composition are similar to second half of the XV century printed editions of the *Biblia pauperum* (Bible of the Poor)⁴³. Very popular in the Netherlands and France in the XV century, the *Biblia pauperum* illustrates on each sheet a scene from the life of Christ taken from the New Testament, linked to two episodes from the Old Testament.

This tapestry, which is presented to us today as a textile altarpiece, was originally part of a larger series, in this case a *Life of Christ and the Virgin*. Indeed, several preserved tapestries from a slightly later period illustrate this same subject. The series of the Abbey Saint-Robert de la Chaise-Dieu, for instance, dating from the beginning of the XVI century, have the identical 'three coronations' theme⁴⁴. This scene is followed by the Last Judgment, prefigured in the Old Testament by the Judgment of Solomon.

⁴³ Many choir tapestries were inspired by the *Biblia Pauperum* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis* in the end of the XV century and in the first third of the XVI century. See, for example, the *Life of Mary* designed for the Cathedral of Reims in 1530 (Reims, Palais du Tau). Cfr. MARGUERITE SARTOR, *Les tapisseries, toiles peintes et broderies de Reims*, Reims, Michaud, 1912, pp. 68-101, 138-158; AUDREY NASSIEU MAUPAS, *La vie de la Vierge de Reims : une tenture de chœur parisienne*, in *Nouveaux regards sur la cathédrale de Reims*, sous la direction de BRUNO DECROCK – PATRICK DEMOUY, Langres, Éditions Dominique Gueniot, 2008, pp. 185-192.

⁴⁴ For this set, see *Saints de Chœurs. Tapisseries du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance. Catalogue* (Toulouse, Ensemble Conventuel des Jacobins, 24 avril-31 août 2004; Aix-en-Provence, Musée des Tapisseries, septembre 2003-décembre 2004; Caen, Musée de Normandie, janvier-mai 2005), éd. par PAOLA ISABELLA GALLERANI, Milano, 5 Continents Editions, 2004, pp. 113-125 (*Coronation of the Virgin*, p. 124).

The tapestry of the *Adoration of the Magi* probably served as an antependium. This piece carries the cardinal's emblem on the borders. The antependium production, illustrating specifically the *Adoration of the Magi*, was fashionable in the princely courts of the last quarter of the century: for example, Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian bought a similar piece from a merchant in 1478, as a present to King Edward IV of England⁴⁵. In any case, this kind of composition was popularized in the mid-fifteenth century by Brussels artists, including Rogier van der Weyden. The design of this tapestry has been compared to the paintings attributed to the Master of the View of Saint Gudule.

Finally, it is commonly accepted today that cardinal of Bourbon owned a series of Hercules. In 1934, Jean-Pierre Bacri had hypothesized that a fragment of tapestry preserved in Paris, illustrating *Hercules saving Hippodamia from the centaurs*, had belonged to the Cardinal⁴⁶. The attribution of such a piece to the prelate's collection is however a delicate issue.

This is not because of the subject: since the medieval period, the theme of Hercules was clearly associated with the highest Christian virtues⁴⁷. Associated to *Fortitudo*, he was considered as a model of 'active' Virtue, which consisted of courage, intrepid acts and erudition. Moreover, even though he was a high Church official, the Cardinal was also a prince by blood⁴⁸.

This hypothesis does not in fact rely on contemporary documents but on the presence of his coat of arms on the tapestry. There is a cardinal's

⁴⁵ G. DELMARCEL – É. DUVERGER, *Bruges et la tapisserie*, pp. 44, 46.

⁴⁶ Woven, perhaps in Tournai, in wool and silk, 217×465 cm, Paris, Mobilier National, GMTT/678. See JACQUES BACRI, *L'Histoire d'Hercule, tapisserie du musée des Gobelins*, «Gazette des Beaux-Arts», s. VI, XII (1934), pp. 204-211.

⁴⁷ ANNE-SOPHIE LARUELLE, *La figure d'Hercule dans l'art de la tapisserie à la Renaissance (c. 1450-1565). Iconographie et fortune politique*, PhD thesis, University of Liège, 2019; EAD., *Hercules in the Art of Flemish Tapestry (1450-1565)*, in *The Exemplary Hercules. From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment and Beyond*, ed. by VALERIE MAINZ – EMMA STAFFORD, Leiden, Brill, 2020, pp. 97-118.

⁴⁸ Some great series of Hercules can be found in prelates' inventories of that time. For instance, a set was owned by Geoffroy Herbert, bishop of Coutances in Normandy (in office 1478-1510). See *Recueil de documents écrits et de monuments figurés concernant*

hat, as well as the archiepiscopal cross. This important element would lead to dating the piece between 1476 and 1488. The major problem in this hypothesis is that the inside of the blazon is missing, and that it was clearly added after the fact. If the coat of arms dates from that time, the cardinal remains the best, and probably only, serious candidate.

Another fragment, still little known, could be a part the *Story of Hercules* set (now at the Davis Museum, Wellesley College, U.S.A.)⁴⁹. The tapestry shows an episode of war, perhaps the first destruction of Troy by Hercules, as well as the same coat of arms as the tapestry preserved in Paris. Although the tapestry is severely damaged, we can see at least one fleur-de-lys inside the blazon. The coat of arms could therefore be attributed to a member of the Bourbon family.

Jean Vittet and Arnaud Brejon suggested that, after the death of the cardinal, the series of Hercules was acquired by the King of France Charles VIII⁵⁰. Indeed, the King bought a seven-piece set in 1491. The series was also recorded in an inventory of the tapestries of the royal collection drawn up in Amboise in May 1494⁵¹. The inventory points out that the series was bought in Moulins. Charles VIII could have acquired the series through his sister, the Duchess Anne. It is indeed proven that the King, who wished to embellish Amboise, did not hesitate to obtain old works of art⁵². Moreover, thanks to an inventory of Queen Anne of Brittany, we know that the King

l'histoire et les antiquités de la Basse-Normandie, (BnF, ms. fr. 4901, ff. 8v-9v). It is interesting to note that Herbert was close to Duke Jean II de Bourbon.

⁴⁹ Woven in wool and silk, 269×256 cm, inv. 2001.0.16. First noticed in SCOTT MCKENDRICK, *The Great History of Troy. A Reassessment of the Development of a Secular Theme in Late Medieval Art*, «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», LIV (1991), pp. 43-82, in part. footnote 155.

⁵⁰ JEAN VITTET – ARNAULD BREJON DE LAVERNÉE, *La Collection de tapisseries de Louis XIV*, Dijon, Éditions Faton, 2010, p. 350.

⁵¹ For the transcription of the document dated 1491, see NICOLE REYNAUD, *Un peintre français cartonnier de tapisseries au XV^e siècle : Henri de Vulcop*, «Revue de l'Art», XXII (1973), pp. 6-21 (see footnote 37). For the 1494 inventory, see BnF, ms. fr. 22335, f. 151.

⁵² It was a common practice at that time. On this subject, see GENEVIÈVE SOUCHAL, *Charles VIII et la tenture de la Guerre de Troie*, «Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art», XXXIX (1970), pp. 185-189.

had received some objects from the cardinal of Bourbon⁵³. Others have suggested a stylistic rapprochement between the tapestry and two other Herculean tapestries preserved in Brussels and Tournai⁵⁴. In support of his hypothesis, Bacri had identified a very small blazon on the Brussels tapestry with the cardinal of Bourbon's coat of arms. The coat of arms with three golden fleur-de-lys on a field of azure, above the throne of King Eurystheus, is not, according to him, a mere allusion to the represented king⁵⁵.

The relationship with Charles II, however, is tenuous since the Bourbons had broken the lilies by adding a 'bend of Gules'⁵⁶. The fleurs-de-lys on a field of azure are more likely to be a global allusion to a King, or specifically an evocation of the King of France, in this case Charles VIII. As for the tapestry preserved in Tournai, there is no coat of arms. One could wonder if all these pieces were part of two different sets. The mystery remains and will only be fully resolved with the discovery of unexplored archival documents, or other tapestries.

⁵³ For instance, «deux grans chandeliers [...] aultrefois baillez audict feu roy, que Dieu absoille, par Monseigneur le cardinal de Lyon», cfr. *Inventaire et déclaration de la vexelle d'argent livrée par maistre Martin Pequineau, maistre de la chambre aux deniers de la Royne [...]* (11 January 1500), BnF, ms. fr. 22335, ff. 79-80.

⁵⁴ *Birth and the Youth of Hercules*, woven in wool and silk, 387×510 cm, Brussels, Musées Art & Histoire, inv. 3176; *Conquest of the Sheep Isles*, wool and silk, 296×296 cm, Tournai, Musée de la tapisserie. See MARTHE CRICK-KUNTZIGER, *Les compléments de nos tapisseries gothiques*, «Bulletin des Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire», III (1931), pp. 66-77.

⁵⁵ Indeed, in Greek mythology, Eurystheus was king of Tiryns. See J. BACRI, *L'histoire d'Hercule*, pp. 210-211. A hypothesis already found in M. CRICK-KUNTZIGER, *Les compléments de nos tapisseries*, p. 75.

⁵⁶ This bend appears on all the cardinal's preserved coat of arms. However, general speaking, the ecclesiastics were not obliged to break, cfr. JEAN-BERNARD DE VAIVRE, *Les armoiries et devises des Rolin*, in *La splendeur des Rolin. Un mécénat privé à la cour de Bourgogne*, sous la direction de BRIGITTE MAURICE-CHABARD, Paris, Picard, 1999, footnote 35.

