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RÉSUMÉ – Dans son récit du premier voyage de Charles de Habsbourg dans les royaumes d'Espagne (1517-1520), l'indiciaire de Bourgogne Rémi Dupuis a imaginé des rencontres mythologiques entre son maître et plusieurs dieux romains. La cour mythologique de Dupuis présente symboliquement les tensions qui se développent autour de Charles avant son départ. Le chroniqueur met en scène le prince comme un souverain tout-puissant en raison de sa capacité incontestée à dominer les terres et les mers.

MOTS-CLÉS – Charles Quint, Pays-Bas, littérature de Bourgogne, royaumes d'Espagne, Habsbourg.

DUMONT (Jonathan), « L'invention d'un héros. Charles de Habsbourg dans la chronique de Rémi Dupuis »

ABSTRACT – In his account of the first travel of Charles of Habsburg in the Spanish Kingdoms (1517-1520), the “indiciaire” of Burgundy Rémi Dupuis imagined mythological encounters between his master and several Roman Gods (Juno, Neptune, and Eolus). Dupuis’s mythological court symbolically presented the tensions growing around Charles before his departure. The chronicler staged the prince as an almighty ruler because of his unchallenged capacity at dominating lands and seas.

KEYWORDS – Charles V, Low Countries, Burgundian literature, Spanish kingdoms, Habsburg.

INVENTING A HERO

Charles of Habsburg in the Chronicle of Rémi Dupuis¹

This article explores an unpublished chronicle, the *Description poetique*, written by the last *indiciaire* (or chronicler) of Burgundy, Rémi Dupuis. This historiographic text was written during Charles of Habsburg's first voyage to the Iberian Peninsula (1517-20). It can be viewed as one of the last documented example of Burgundian court historiography, comparable to the works of better-known authors such as George Chastelain, Jean Molinet, and Jean Lemaire de Belges. This text is also important because it documents the early years of Charles of Habsburg's reign, a period that is far less known than the one following his imperial election (1519). The chronicle is actually a key document for understanding the fashioning of Charles' monarchical legitimacy, power, and symbolism at the beginning of his reign.

Although other chronicles and narratives record Charles' first journey in the Iberian Peninsula (for example, the *Premier voyage de Charles Quint en Espagne* written by Laurent Vital²), the *Description poetique* is unique, as it entwines an historiographic document, an epic novel and a chronicle. Indeed, the beginning of the text depicts Charles' journey from Brussels to Middelburg (Zeeland) in the tone of an epic tale: Charles meets the gods, goddesses, and heroes of Antiquity. He talks and interacts with them as if he himself were an actual hero. The purpose of this "heroization" of Charles combines aesthetics and politics. Rémi Dupuis disguises Charles' relatives and high courtiers as Olympian gods and goddesses, in order to display—in a *clair-obscur* of sorts—the curial conflicts

1 I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer of this article, whose suggestions and remarks have helped me to specify several important aspects of Dupuis' work. I wish to develop these new aspects in the edition of Dupuis' work on which I am currently working.

2 L. Vital, "Premier voyage de Charles Quint en Espagne, de 1517 à 1518", *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas*, ed. L.-P. Gachard, vol. 3, Brussels, Commission Royale d'Histoire, 1881, p. 1-314.

caused by Charles' departure to the Iberian Peninsula. The heroization of Charles bolsters his symbolic power, and therefore his legitimacy, in the newly acquired kingdoms, because he is not confined within the world of human beings.

In the following pages, I will first present the document and its author, Rémi Dupuis. Secondly, I will show how the author managed to depict Charles in a divine and heroic context, thus simultaneously hiding and revealing the political tensions at court. Thirdly, I will demonstrate how, by heroizing Charles, Dupuis presents his monarchical power as a political utopia.

THE LAST CHRONICLE OF THE DUKES OF BURGUNDY³

The *Description poetique* is preserved in a sole, unedited manuscript in the National Library of Belgium (= KBR) in Brussels⁴. It contains five different texts⁵ that indicate a clear connection between this manuscript, the court of Burgundy and the ducal library at the Coudenberg palace. Some marginal notes corroborate this first impression, such as, for example, the location of the manuscript in the ducal library ("*Du purpitre sur la porte le vii^e*") being mentioned on fol. 1^r. Another note states that the manuscript was taken out of the library by the French after the capture of Brussels in 1746, then returned in 1770⁶. Finally,

3 More on the author and his chronicle will be found in: J. Dumont, "Au creuset des transitions littéraires et politiques. La *Tryumphant et solennelle entree* de Rémi Dupuis", *Cy commence ung livre emprainté... Diffusion et réception de la littérature médiévale en langue française par l'imprimerie (1470-1550)*, ed. R. Adam, J. Devaux, N. Henrard, M. Marchal, and A. Velissariou, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2020, p. 149-166.

4 Rémi Dupuis, *Description poetique confermée à la vraye histoire du vouaige de [...] Don Charles [...] premier de ce nom compillée par maistre Remi du Puys*, Brussels, KBR, MS 10487-90, fol. 52^r-75^r.

5 Besides Dupuis' text (nr. 4), the manuscript contains: nr. 1, [*Discourse of the king of France's ambassadors to the duke of Burgundy*], fol. 1^r-22^r; nr. 2, [*Response to this discourse*], fol. 23^r-35^r; nr. 3, *Responce que fait monseigneur le duc de Bourgogne*, fol. 36^r-50^r; nr. 5, *Vie de benoite Cristine de la ville de Saint Thron en Hesbain*, fol. 76^r-112^r.

6 *Ibid.*, fol. 1^r: "Ce volume enlevé de la Bibliothèque roiale de Bourgogne depuis la prise de Bruxelles en 1746 et placé depuis dans la Bibliothèque du roi à Paris a été restitué par la France et replacé dans la bibliothèque de Bourgogne le 7 juin 1770." The book

Margaret of Austria's coat of arms and motto ("*Fortune infortune fort une*") appear on folio 53^r, and on folio 54^r, the cross of Saint Andrew — the patron saint of the ducal House of Burgundy and its dynastic state — and the flint stone, which had been one of the symbols of the House of Burgundy since the time of Duke Philip the Good⁷.



FIG. 1 et 2 – Brussels, KBR, MS 10487-90, fol. 53^r and 55^r (detail).

All these elements show that the manuscript is closely associated with the House of Burgundy and primarily with Margaret of Austria.

Remi Dupuis' biography can be established with the aid of the Burgundian accounts preserved at the *Archives départementales du Nord* (= ADN) in Lille. Several documents (*quittances*) show his connections with the court of Burgundy-Habsburg and Margaret of Austria. In 1510-11, Dupuis was "*Indiciayre et historiographe de l'Empereur [Maximilian] et*

binding (eighteenth century, red morocco) bears the French royal coat of arms. On the back is the monogram of Louix XV, king of France. The red stamp of the royal library is also visible on fol. 1^r and 112^v. See *Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque royale de Belgique*, ed. J. van den Gheyn, vol. 7, Brussels, Henri Lamertin, 1907, p. 330, nr. 5016.

7 J. D'Arcy Dacre Boulton, "The Order of the Golden Fleece and the Creation of Burgundian National Identity", *The Ideology of Burgundy. The Promotion of National Consciousness, 1364-1565*, ed. J. D'Arcy Dacre Boulton and J. R. Veenstra, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2006, p. 21-97, at p. 66-68, 75, 77, 83, 85 (cross of saint Andrew) and p. 71-72, 74-77 (flint stones).

de monseigneur l'archiduc [Charles]⁸. In 1512, he officially replaced Jean Lemaire de Belges as *indiciaire* of Burgundy⁹. In 1512-13, he started receiving wages, some of which were paid by Margaret of Austria. In 1513, he appeared as chronicler of the Houses of Austria and Burgundy (“*cronicqueur et historiographe des maisons d’Austriche et de Bourgoingne*”)¹⁰. In 1516, he became one of King Charles’ secretaries¹¹.

As Dupuis became the official historiographer for Charles’ early reign, he played a particularly active role in fashioning the young king’s political image. His two other surviving texts address three crucial events in this period of Charles’ rule: his emancipation (January 5th, 1515), together with his Joyous Entry into Bruges as Count of Flanders (April 18th, 1515); and the funeral ceremony, in Brussels, of Charles’ grandfather, Ferdinand of Aragon, at the Saint Michael and Gudula collegiate church (March 14th-15th, 1516). Both texts were published as occasional pieces¹². They therefore spread this vision of the ruler, his relatives, and the court in general at these two major political events, to a wider literate public, such as city and state officers, burghers and artisans. In other words, these texts contain the sociodicy of the ruling group in the Low Countries, that is, in Bourdieu’s terms, a narrative universalising the particular ways of thinking, practices and customs of one dominant group to the rest of the society, in order to legitimise the use of power by that group¹³.

Even if the *Descripcion poetique* was not circulated as widely¹⁴ — due to the fact that it is preserved in a sole manuscript —, it contains elements that link it to a sociodicean narrative. A sociodicy is also made up of stories that a dominant group tells itself in order to strengthen its own cohesion and homogeneity. Dupuis’ treatment of the mythological

8 Lille, ADN, B 2222.

9 Lille, ADN, B 2226.

10 Lille, ADN, B 2236.

11 Lille, ADN, B 2262.

12 Respectively: Rémi Dupuis, *La Tryumphant et solemnelle entree faicte sur le nouvel et joyeux advenement de [...] Monsieur Charles prince des Hespaignes, archiduc d’Austrice, duc de bourgogne, comte de Flandres, etc., en sa ville de Bruges l’an mil. v. cens et. xv. Le xviii^e jour d’apvril apres Pasques*, [Paris], Gilles de Gourmont, [1515]; Rémi Dupuis, *Les Exeques et pompe funerale de feu d’eternelle et tres glorieuse mémoire don Fernande roy catholicque [...]*, Leuven, Thierry Martens, 1516.

13 P. Bourdieu, *Sur l’état. Cours au Collège de France (1989-1992)*, ed. P. Champagne, R. Lenoir, Fr. Poupeau and M-Chr. Rivière, Paris, Raisons d’agir-Seuil, 2012, p. 272, 401-402.

14 It has to be stressed that here *poetique* refers to the epic tone given to the text.

and heroic aspects of Charles' travels in the *Description poetique* falls in line with this model.

MYTHOLOGIZING THE COURT

Most of the mythological references occur in the first part of the text¹⁵. This section narrates the journey of Charles of Habsburg from Brussels to the island of Walcheren in Zeeland, via Ghent and Bruges, in order to organise his departure to the Iberian Peninsula. According to Charles' and Margaret of Austria's itineraries, this journey took place between mid-May and September 1517. Charles then left Vlissingen (Zeeland) for the Iberian Peninsula on the 8th of September¹⁶.

However, Dupuis sets the events of this journey (for example, Charles' successive stays in Ghent, Bruges, and Middelburg) within a mythological context. The island of Walcheren ("*l'isle que l'on nomme Zeelande*")¹⁷ becomes the kingdom of Neptune, the sea-god¹⁸. Here, Neptune is served by his herald Eolus¹⁹, god of winds, and his court is populated by sea- and wind-gods and goddesses²⁰. Charles visits Walcheren in order to obtain Neptune's permission to cross the ocean safely. The young king is helped by Jupiter²¹ and Juno²².

15 *S'Ensuivent les alieances de la court traictees avec le Dieu Neptune pour vouaiger de Gaule Belgicque aux Espaignes* (Dupuis, *Description poetique*, fol. 52^v-65^v).

16 M. Bruchet and E. Lancien, *L'itinéraire de Marguerite d'Autriche, gouvernante des Pays-Bas*, Lille, L. Danel, 1934, p. 176-184 (Margaret's itinerary in 1517); L.-P. Gachard, „Itinéraire de Charles Quint“, *Collection des voyages*, t. 2, 1874, p. 20-21 (Charles' itinerary in 1517).

17 Dupuis, *Description poetique*, fol. 54^r.

18 Neptune: *Ibid.*, fol. 52^r, 53^r, 55^r, 55^v, 56^r, 56^v, 57^r, 58^r, 60^r, 60^v, 61^r, 62^r, 62^v, 63^r, 64^r, 65^r, 69^r, 69^v, 75^r.

19 Eolus: *Ibid.*, fol. 52^v, 55^v, 55^v, 60^r, 61^v, 62^r, 65^r, 71^v.

20 Thetis: *Ibid.*, fol. 52^r, 62^r, 63^r, 65^r; sea-goddesses ("*deesses marynes*", fol. 55^r); wind-gods ("*ventz*": fol. 55^v, 56^r, 62^v, 63^v).

21 Jupiter: *Ibid.*, fol. 52^r, 52^v, 55^r, 55^v, 60^v.

22 Juno: *Ibid.*, fol. 52^v, 55^r, 56^r, 62^r, 64^r. Other mythological figures appear only once or twice, but were probably intended to give an epic dimension to the narrative: Ariana: *Ibid.*, fol. 60^v; Helena: *Ibid.*, fol. 60^v; Jason: *Ibid.*, fol. 60^v; Laomedon: *Ibid.*, fol. 61^r; Medea: *Ibid.*, fol. 60^v; Pluto: *Ibid.*, fol. 52^r; Saturn: *Ibid.*, fol. 52^r, 57^r, 60^r, 60^v; Vulcan: *Ibid.*, fol. 52^r, 64^r.

Five mythological figures are given particular emphasis in the narrative: Aeneas, Jupiter, Juno, Eolus and Neptune.

Dupuis uses Aeneas to draw parallels with Charles of Habsburg, thus legitimising his early universal ambitions²³. Aeneas is portrayed as a king who had to endure hazards on earth and sea before founding Rome and, therefore, a universal empire (*“l’empire de tout le monde”*). In the same way, Charles has to face many dangers in order to re-establish the Roman monarchy (*“la monarchie des Romains”*), thus reuniting all separate crowns and powers in a single imperial one (*“Qui scest se le temps est venu que tout doit retourner a ung”*)²⁴.

The four main gods mentioned by Dupuis (Eolus, Juno, Jupiter, and Neptune) also serve a political purpose. Their mythological and epic identities are merged deliberately with the identities of four well-known members of the House of Burgundy-Habsburg and the court of the Low Countries. In this manner, Dupuis presents the political tensions between two court factions: those who were against, and those who supported, Charles’ journey to Spain. Therefore, Dupuis’ narrative contains constant crossovers between reality and fiction, thus adopting aspects of a poetic *songe*²⁵.

Although restricted to the background, Jupiter remains an important character in this narrative. The court is his “daughter” (*“la court je dit*

23 Aeneas: *Ibid.*, fol. 62^v, 64^r. The question of Dupuis’ Virgilian culture remains open, since Aeneas appears only a few times in the *Description poétique*.

24 *Ibid.*, fol. 63^{r-v}.

25 The poetic *songe* is a fictional literary dream supposedly experienced by the actor/author. While dreaming, they encounter mythic, legendary, and metaphorical characters that reveal something of the real world they inhabit, often from a moral perspective. Yet, in the case of *Description poétique*, Dupuis is not dreaming and does not present himself as an actor in the narrative (G. d’Angeli, “Le Type cadre du songe dans la production des Grands Rhétoriciens”, *Les Grands Rhétoriciens. Actes du v^e colloque International sur le Moyen Français*, Milan 6-8 mai 1985, t. 1, Milan, Vita e Pensiero, 1985, p. 7-20; Cl.-G. Dubois, “L’Imaginaire du songe au xv^e siècle”, *Réforme, Humanisme, Renaissance*, 23, 1986, p. 43-48; Fr. Joukovsky, *Songes de la Renaissance*, Paris, C. Bourgeois, 1991, p. 37-45). The *songe* genre was practised particularly by court writers called Rhetoricians (*Rhétoriciens*). These authors were active at the courts of Burgundy and France in the fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries. Dupuis was a member of this group, which also made a constant use of mythological analogies in their works, as shown by Fr. Cornilliat, “*Or ne mens*”. *Couleurs de l’éloge et du blâme chez les “Grands Rhétoriciens”*, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 1994. More generally, on the Rhetoricians, see Fr. Rigolot, “Rhétoriciens”, *Dictionnaire des Lettres françaises. Le xv^e siècle*, ed. G. Grente and M. Simonin, new ed., Paris, Le Livre de Poche, 2001, p. 1015-1018; P. Zumthor, *Le Masque et la lumière. La poésie des grands rhétoriciens*, Paris, Seuil, 1978.

fille de Jupiter")²⁶. Eolus and the winds do everything they can to obey Jupiter's command²⁷. While the winds are Eolus' subjects, the wind-god is Jupiter's subordinate²⁸: a way of saying that Charles' voyage relies, ultimately, on Jupiter's will. All gods and goddess have received Jupiter's order to quickly organise the royal journey ("*mandement de tres puissant Dieu Jupiter*")²⁹, and they must obey.

It is possible to identify Jupiter with Charles' grandfather, the emperor Maximilian of Habsburg. He was the first and most enthusiastic supporter of Charles' voyage: between January and May 1517, he travelled to the Low Countries mostly to convince his grandson to leave for Spain. The emperor even threatened to deprive Charles of his Spanish inheritance and give it to his young brother Ferdinand. Maximilian also wanted to detach Charles from Guillaume de Croÿ-Chièvres, who had a major influence on Charles' reluctance to leave the Low Countries. Therefore, Maximilian's journey could be considered as the key event that triggered the departure of Charles and his court to Zeeland and, later, to the Iberian Peninsula³⁰.

Juno is much more prominent in the narrative than Jupiter. Charles' journey cannot be organised without her³¹. She escorts Charles to Neptune's court on the island of Walcheren in order to convince the sea-god to give him safe passage³². Juno leaves her paradise (Brussels) with the young king ("*jeune roy*") for Ghent, then Bruges, and finally the island ("*l'isle*") of Walcheren³³. Despite her powers, Juno needs Neptune's help to guide the fleet across the ocean ("*avancer et guyder*

26 Dupuis, *Description poetique*, fol. 52^v.

27 *Ibid.*, fol. 55^v.

28 *Ibid.*, fol. 62^v-63^r.

29 *Ibid.*, fol. 55^v.

30 Chr. Kahl, "Lehrjahre eines Kaisers. Stationen der Persönlichkeitsentwicklung Karls V. (1500-1558). Eine Betrachtung habsburgischer Fürstenerziehung -bildung zum Ende des Mittelalters", PhD dissertation, Universität Trier, 2008, p. 286-287; H. Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I. Das Reich, Österreich und Europa an der Wende zur Neuzeit*, vol. 4, Vienna, Geschichte und Politik, 1981, p. 381-382; H. Zimerman, "Urkunden und Regesten aus dem K. u. K. Haus-, Hof- und Staats- Archiv in Wien", *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, ed. K. K. Oberstämmerer-Amte, vol. 1, Vienna, Adolf Holzhausen, 1883, p. I-LXXVIII, at p. XLVIII-XLIX, nr. 420-427, for Maximilian's itinerary.

31 Dupuis, *Description poetique*, fol. 54^v.

32 *Ibid.*, fol. 55^v.

33 *Ibid.*, fol. 56^r.

avec [sa] flotte)³⁴. Once at Neptune's court, Juno's speech moves and wins over the sea-god and his courtiers ("*Le propose d'icelle dame esmeut fort toute l'assistance et sur son cas mis en conseil*")³⁵. She dismisses all court opposition to Charles' voyage as laziness and negligence ("*la negligence ou nonchailance de la court*")³⁶. While she criticizes Neptune for having been misguided by bad advisers, Juno usually puts the blame on the court as a whole, rather than to individuals.

Juno can be identified with Charles' aunt Margaret of Austria, one of the most prominent political actors in the Low Countries. She acted as the regent there until Charles' emancipation (1507-15). Afterwards, she remained a member of the Great Council and Secret Council, despite having been overshadowed by Guillaume de Croÿ-Chièvres. She also played an important diplomatic and military role in the Guelders-Frisian war of 1514-17 (probably the "*affaires*" mentioned by Dupuis)³⁷. Margaret was in favour of travelling to the Iberian peninsula, as well as tightening bonds with England (through the proposed marriage of Charles to Mary Tudor, sister of Henry VIII). She was particularly distrustful of the recent alliance with France (February-March 1517). Finally, Juno's itinerary to the island of Walcheren perfectly matches that of Margaret³⁸.

Eolus is one of the two main divine entities that hinder Charles' travel. The wind-god is portrayed as the herald of Neptune³⁹. The influence of Eolus is great and, therefore, his support is necessary for the journey to Iberia⁴⁰. However, Eolus attributes — as Juno did — the responsibility for delays to the Court's negligence and lack of concern ("*tres*

34 *Ibid.*, fol. 57^r.

35 *Ibid.*, fol. 62^r.

36 *Ibid.*, fol. 55^r.

37 *Ibid.*, fol. 55^r.

38 See Bruchet and Lancien, *L'itinéraire de Marguerite d'Autriche*, p. 176-184; Margaret of Austria, „Mémoire présenté à Charles d'Autriche“, Brussels, 20 August 1515, *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, gouvernante des Pays-Bas, avec ses amis, sur les affaires des Pays-Bas de 1506 à 1528*, ed. L. Ph. C. van den Bergh, vol. 2, 1511-1528, Leiden, S. and J. Luchtmans, 1847, p. 117-130, nr. 226 (at p. 119-123: on the duke of Guelders, Charles of Egmont; 120-121: on King Francis I; 121: on the English marriage); *Correspondance de l'empereur Maximilien I^{er} et de Marguerite d'Autriche, sa fille gouvernante des Pays-Bas, de 1507 à 1519*, ed. J. Le Glay, vol. 2, Paris, Renouard, 1839, p. 442 (Margaret's itinerary); Charles of Habsburg, "Lettre to Francis I", Ghent, 14 June [1517], L.-P. Gachard, *Analectes historiques*, ser. 3, p. 188-189, nr. 72 (on the alliance with France); Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I*, vol. 4, p. 380-382.

39 Dupuis, *Description poetique*, fol. 61^v, 62^r.

40 *Ibid.*, fol. 60^r, 65^r.

grand murmure c'est esleve entre les seins mesmes d'Eolus et ses ventz qui mal se pourroient contentes de la perdicion du temps et chargeoient sur la negligence ou nonchaillance de la court"), but also to Juno having to deal with her own business ("*la grandeur et multitude des affaires*")⁴¹. Eolus also seems to be in conflict with Juno/Margaret of Austria.

It is very difficult to determine the identity of Eolus. He might be a syncretic figure, representing the entire group of opponents rather than one specific individual. If he were an individual, he must have been powerful, and have shared a special connection to our last character, Neptune, with whom he seems to work closely. In addition, Eolus must have had a particular grievance towards Juno/Margaret, as the wind-god is critical of her, albeit with caution. The ideal candidate would be Jean Le Sauvage/Jan De Wilde (1455-1518)⁴². Sauvage was a lawyer and clerk of finance. He reached the top of the Burgundian administration: member (1489-94), then president of the council of Flanders (since 1497), counsellor and master of requests of the prince (1492), knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece (1503), head and president of the Secret Council, as well as chancellor of Brabant (1509), and finally chancellor of Burgundy (1515). He followed Charles in Spain in 1517, and died in Saragossa (June 7th, 1518). He supported a Francophile policy and was rather reluctant to let Charles leave the Low Countries. Sauvage was particularly criticized in the Low Countries and Spain for his greed, and his accumulation of charges and honours. Margaret of Austria and Maximilian of Habsburg tried to prevent him gaining too much influence⁴³.

41 *Ibid.*, fol. 55^r.

42 Yet, it is still possible that Eolus could represent a more vague group of courtiers opposed to the travel. I associated Eolus to Sauvage, since Sauvage was inseparable from Chièvres, like Eolus from Neptune.

43 M. Boone, "Chancelier de Flandre et de Bourgogne (1385-1530)", *Les Institutions du gouvernement central des Pays-Bas habsbourgeois (1482-1795)*, ed. E. Aerts, M. Baelde *et al.*, vol. 1, Brussels, Archives Générales du Royaume, 1995, p. 209-225; A. J. M. Kerckhoffs-De Hey, *De Grote Raad en zijn functionarissen, 1477-1531. Biografieën van Raadsberoen*, Amsterdam, Universiteit Amsterdam, 1980, p. 133-136 (on Sauvage); J. D. Tracy, "Jean le Sauvage", *Contemporaries of Erasmus. A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. P. G. Bietenholz, Th. B. Deutscher, vol. 2, Toronto, 1987, p. 325-326; H. Vander Linden, "Sauvage (Jean)", *Biographie nationale de Belgique*, vol. 21, Brussels, Académie royale de Belgique, 1911-1913, col. 441-444; M. Vermeir, "Chancellor Jean le Sauvage / Ioannes Sylvagius: Erasmus' princeps christianus and a prince of Utopia for Thomas More", *Moreana*, 53/203-204, 2003, p. 269-282.

Neptune is the other key character in Dupuis' narrative. The sea-god is the foundation of all things ("*fondemens de toutes choses*")⁴⁴ and Charles must ally with him to secure his Spanish crowns ("*il valoit trop mieulx de ce joindre a Neptune*")⁴⁵. Although the sea-god initially supported Charles' journey, he has been turned against it by some courtiers who whispered bad advice in his ears ("*[ont] ventillé aux oreilles*"). Now he cannot be trusted ("*la loy naturelle et civile commande de non s'alyer ne mectre fiance en Neptune sur austain que on prise sa vye*")⁴⁶. After Juno's speech, Neptune changes his mind. However, Charles' voyage depends not on him, but on the will of Jupiter/Maximilian and Juno/Margaret. He has always been a great supporter of Charles and is astonished to be blamed for his ill-will ("*mal talent*"). The mistrust between him and Juno is due to the "bad winds of courts" ("*mauvais vent de court*"), talebearers and backbiters ("*rapporteurs [and] medisans*")⁴⁷. Eventually, Neptune agrees to ensure Charles a peaceful crossing to the Iberian Peninsula ("*vous aurez mer a souhet et vent de mesme que serez hors de tous dangiers*")⁴⁸.

Neptune is the leader of the opponents to Charles' Iberian journey. He is also an influential individual, and an opponent to Juno/Margaret. Therefore, it seems probable that Neptune is Guillaume de Croÿ-Chièvres (1458-1521), first duke of Aarschot, lord of Beaumont, Chièvres and Heverlee, and a key figure in the Low Countries during the early sixteenth century. Chièvres belonged to the powerful lineage of Croÿ and was a member of the Order of the Golden Fleece (1491).

44 Dupuis, *Description poetique*, fol. 52^r.

45 *Ibid.*, fol. 55^r.

46 *Ibid.*, fol. 55^v.

47 *Ibid.*, fol. 62^{r-v}.

48 *Ibid.*, fol. 64^r. Both Molinet and Ladam may have had an influence on Dupuis' *Description poetique*. For example, Molinet's *Le Bergier sans soulas* (Jean Molinet, *Les Faictz et Dictz*, ed. N. Dupire, vol. 1, Paris, Société des Anciens Textes français, 1936, p. 209-224) stages Neptune and Apollo associated respectively to the king of England and Maximilian of Habsburg. Moreover, Nicaise and Dupuis were exact contemporaries who both frequented Charles of Habsburg's court. Ladam's *Mémoire et épitaphe de Ferdinand d'Aragon* (1516, 867 v.) shows several correspondences with the *Description poetique*. Ladam laments Charles' of Habsburg's grand-father, king Ferdinand of Aragon, through the mouths of several Roman gods (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, Venus, Mercury and Diana). What is important for Ladam is the "memoration" (the remembering) of Ferdinand's high-deeds that Charles must amplify (Nicaise Ladam, *Mémoire et épitaphe de Ferdinand d'Aragon*, ed. Cl. Thiry, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1975 (see the editor's commentary on p. 61). And for Dupuis, Charles' first journey to the Iberian Peninsula was exactly the way to amplify these high-deeds.

He was a member of the Private Council since 1494 and of the Regency Council in 1501-03, during Philip the Fair's first Iberian voyage. In 1505, before his second journey to Spain, Philip named Chièvres his lieutenant-general in the Low Countries. Charles left this position when Margaret was entrusted with the regency (March 1507). In 1509, he appeared as first chamberlain and tutor to Charles, with whom he was intimate. After Charles' emancipation (January 5th, 1515), Chièvres joined the Privy Council. In 1516, Charles made him admiral of the Kingdom of Naples and captain general of the naval forces in all his lands — a title which makes him a solid candidate for Dupuis' Neptune. In 1517, Chièvres followed Charles to the Iberian Peninsula, thus becoming grand and first chamberlain of the prince's Castilian hostel, and head of the Castilian treasury ("*Contador mayor*"). Chièvres had a very strong influence on the young Charles. He wanted to build a strong French alliance, attempting to marry Charles to Claude de France, daughter of King Louis XII (treaty of Lyon, 1501). Therefore, as a Francophile and an opponent to the Iberian journey, he can be considered as the major opponent to Margaret's and Maximilian's plans⁴⁹.

Indeed, mistrust, and even hatred, between Maximilian of Habsburg and Margaret of Austria, on the one hand, and Guillaume de Croÿ-Chièvres and Jean Le Sauvage, on the other, was the main reason why Charles' departure was delayed. Consequently, Dupuis' fashioning of a mythological Zeeland as the court of Neptune, and his heroization of Charles, serve purposes beyond merely praising the young prince. Dupuis exposes, euphemistically and symbolically, the disagreements between two factions, one represented by Chièvres-Sauvage (Francophile and focused on the interests of the local elites of the Low Countries), and the other by Margaret-Maximilian (Francophobe and supporting

49 On Chièvres, see M. Böck, *Herzöge und Konflikt. Das spätmittelalterliche Herzogtum Geldern im Spannungsfeld von Dynastie, ständischen Kräften und territorialer Konkurrenz (1339-1543)*, Geldern, Historischen Vereins für Geldern und Umgegend, 2013, p. 622-629; H. Cools, "Mannen met macht. Edellieden en de Moderne Staat in de Bourgondisch-Habsburgse landen 1475-1530", PhD dissertation, Universiteit Amsterdam, 2000, p. 200-201, n° 68; Kahl, "Lehrjahre eines Kaisers", p. 286-287; A. M. Schlegelmilch, *Die Jugendjahre Karls V, Lebenswelt und Erziehung des burgundischen Prinzen*, Cologne, Böhlau, 2011, p. 204 sqq.; R. Wellens, "Guillaume de Croÿ, duc de Soria et d'Acre, marquis d'Aarschot, comte de Beaumont, seigneur de Chièvres", *Les Chevaliers de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or au xv^e siècle*, ed. R. de Smedt, vol. 3, Frankfurt/Berlin/Bern/New York/Oxford/Vienna, Lang, 2000, p. 247-249, nr. 105.

the interests of the Burgundy-Habsburg dynasty). The *Description poetique* also stages a symbolic reconciliation between the opponents, thus giving to Margaret — Dupuis' patron — the most honourable position⁵⁰, and downplaying Chièvres and Sauvage's roles in delaying Charles' journey. Moreover, all these actors were aware that their dispute had to end at some point. Margaret and Maximilian knew that Chièvres and Sauvage were necessary intermediaries ("powerbrokers")⁵¹ between the court and other political bodies in the Low Countries that allowed the dynastic state to function. Chièvres and Sauvage needed at least informal neutrality from Margaret and Maximilian, as their authority, influence, and wealth depended greatly on the offices and pensions they held from the central state. Finally, all actors were aware of the damage caused during the last decades of the fifteenth century by mistrust within the ruling group: the dispute between Duke Charles the Bold, John of Burgundy, count of Nevers and several members of the Croÿ family, or the opposition between Maximilian of Habsburg and Philip of Cleves⁵². Such a situation had to be prevented at all costs. Dupuis' narrative is part of that attempt to avoid tensions and restore peace within the ruling group.

In order to hasten Charles' departure, its opponents had to be convinced that the Iberian journey was as much in their interest as in that of the Burgundian-Habsburg House. If key-actors such as Chièvres and Sauvage were won over by receiving Spanish offices and pensions, this could not be done for all the central, regional, and local elite actors. Political narratives, ideology, or, in better words, "*sociodicea*" had to show that Charles' travel would create a new monarchic utopia.

50 However, she is not totally spared by Dupuis. Using a gender stereotype, the chronicler writes that Juno has delayed her departure from Brussels to Walcheren because all ladies are late ("*toutes dames sont tardives*", Dupuis, *Description poetique*, fol. 55").

51 I use here the definition of "powerbrokers" given in R. Stein, "Preface", *Powerbrokers in the Late Middle Ages/Les Courtiers du pouvoir au bas Moyen Âge*, ed. R. Stein, Turnhout, Brepols, 2001, p. VII-IX, at p. VIII.

52 On the first conflict, see the debates at the Order of the Golden Fleece during the chapter of Bruges (28 April-28 May 1468): *Die Protokollbücher des Ordens vom Goldenen Vlies*, vol. 2, *Das Ordenfest 1468 in Brügge unter Herzog Karl dem Kühnen*, ed. S. Dünnebeil, Ostfildern, Thorbecke, 2003. On the second conflict, see J. Haemers, "Philippe de Clèves. La position d'un aristocrate au cœur d'une révolte urbaine (1477-1492)", *Entre la ville, la noblesse et l'État. Philippe de Clèves (1456-1528), homme politique et bibliophile*, ed. J. Haemers, H. Wijsman and C. Van Hoorebeeck, Turnhout, Brepols, 2007, p. 21-99.

A MONARCHIC UTOPIA⁵³

In the early sixteenth century, Philip the Fair acquired the royal title that his lineage had actively pursued since the reigns of Dukes Philip the Good and Charles the Bold⁵⁴. This political success was followed by a series of symbolic legitimations in which court historiography and poetry played a decisive role. *La Description poetique* and Dupuis' other works — *La Tryumphant et solemnelle entree* and *Les Exeques et pompe funerale* — play their part in fashioning monarchical ideology in the Low Countries⁵⁵.

In *La Tryumphant et solemnelle entree*, Dupuis emphasizes that Charles' emancipation put an end to a cycle of destruction and misfortune that had begun after the death of Charles the Bold (January 5th, 1477)⁵⁶. Charles' reign opened a new era of economic stability for the Low Countries, which allows Dupuis to justify the intervention of the prince in the cities' economy, thus developing a kind of proto-mercantilist

53 I refer to the term "Utopia" instead of Foucault's "Heterotopia", since Dupuis presents something that remains purely fictional: Charles' armada was not the place where Charles' Monarchy came to life. The only aspect that the armada shares with the "Heterotopia" resides in its ceremonial on the sea described in part 2 of the *Description poetique*.

54 On Philip the Fair's acquisition of the Castilian crown, see J.-M. Cauchies, *Philippe le Beau. Le dernier duc de Bourgogne*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2003, p. 41-54, 135-45, 176-217. On the project for a "Burgundian" kingdom, see P. Bonenfant, "Le Projet d'érection des États bourguignons en royaume en 1477", *Le Moyen Âge*, 65, 1935, p. 10-23; A. J. Vanderjagt, *Qui sa vertu anoblist. The Concepts of noblesse and chose publique in Burgundian Political Thought (Including Fifteenth Century French Translations of Giovanni Aurispa, Buonaccorso da Montemagno, and Diego de Valera)*, Groningen, J. Mielot, 1981, p. 45-76; M. Prietzel, "Rhetoric, Politics and Propaganda. Guillaume Fillastre's Speeches", and J. R. Veenstra, "Le prince qui se veut faire de nouvel roy. Literature and Ideology of Burgundian Self-determination", *The Ideology of Burgundy*, p. 117-29, 195-221.

55 These three works are the only surviving texts by Dupuis. However, the Burgundian accounts suggest that Dupuis was working on a chronicle of the dukes of Burgundy. In the following document, he is rewarded for *La Tryumphant et solemnelle entree* and also for *ses croniques*, which cannot be the *Description poetique* because the document in question was issued in 1515, two years before the beginning of Charles' travel: [...] *des bons et agréables services qu'il luy avoit fait et faisoit lors journellement ou fait de ses croniques, mesmement en récompense d'un grant livre [my underlining] qu'il avoit fait, à son ordonnance, touchant le triomphe de sa ville de Bruges, à sa joyeuse entrée en icelle ville [...]* (Lille, ADN, B 2251, fol. 356^r).

56 Dupuis, *La Tryumphant et solemnelle entree*, fol. 4^r.

thought⁵⁷. *La Tryumphant et solemnelle entrée* helps to create the myth of a new Golden Age and to reinforce the prince's prerogative.

In *Les Exeques et pompe funerales*, Dupuis attempts to define the nature of Charles' new monarchic power. He describes a ceremony — apparently inspired by the Brussels funerals of Isabella of Castile (1505), itself inspired by French royal funerals⁵⁸ — that established a direct transmission of royal power between King Ferdinand of Castile and Aragon and Charles. The herald Golden Fleece announced the king's death ("The king is dead") and dropped his staff. He picked it up right after, proclaiming: "Long live the king", while Charles received a sword of justice that represented the transmission of power from the dead to the living king⁵⁹. However, this ceremonial utterly contravened Spanish political practice, whereby, to legitimate their power, the new sovereigns of Aragon and Castile had to present themselves before the representative assemblies (Cortes) of their kingdoms. Therefore, the Brussels ceremony described by Dupuis appears to be a political fiction, which bolstered the king's legitimacy, especially in the eyes of his subjects in the Low Countries⁶⁰.

La Description poetique develops this monarchic ideology in other ways that broaden the scope of Charles' power. Charles' armada is described as the embodiment of the king's virtues and powers⁶¹. The armada is a

57 *Ibid.*, fol. 38^v-39^r.

58 On Isabella's Brussels funerals, see Jean Molinet, *Chroniques*, ed. G. Doutrepoint and O. Jodogne, vol. 2, Brussels, Palais des Académies, 1935, p. 540-541. Burgundian funerals were influenced by French royal funerals, where the idea of an instant transmission of power between the deceased king and his successor was central. The funerals of Philip the Good introduced this idea in the Low Countries for the first time. See M. Gaude-Ferragu, *D'or et de cendres. La mort et les funérailles des princes dans le royaume de France au bas Moyen Âge*, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2005, p. 229-236; é. Lecuppre-Desjardin, *Le Royaume inacbevé des ducs de Bourgogne (xiv^e-xv^e siècles)*, Paris, Belin, 2016, p. 161.

59 Dupuis, *La Tryumphant et solemnelle entree*, fol. 21^r.

60 For an overview on the Spanish transmission of royal power, see M. Á. Ladero Quesada, "La genèse de l'État dans les royaumes hispaniques médiévaux (1250-1450)", *Le premier âge de l'État en Espagne, 1450-1700*, ed. Chr. Hermann, Paris, CNRS éditions, 1989, p. 9-65, at p. 19-20, 26-27.

61 The ship of the state was a dominant political allegory since Plato's *Republic* (Plato, *Republic*, I, 341 c-d.). In the Burgundian literature, it appeared especially after the death of Charles the Bold. In his *Naufrage de la Pucelle* (1477), Jean Molinet stages Mary of Burgundy, Charles' heir, on a sinking ship (Jean Molinet, *Les faitz et dictz*, ed. N. Dupire, vol. 1, Paris, Société des Anciens Textes français, 1936, p. 77-99). The ship of the state became a dominant political allegory during the reign of Charles V. One can particularly think of the ship *Victoria*, which was exhibited during several urban ceremonies and especially at Charles' funerals in Brussels (1558, see *La magnifique et sumptueuse Pompe Funèbre* [...]),

metaphor for Charles' beauty, for example, in a description of the fleet's standards shining in the sun ("*faisoit il moult beau veoir bannieres, estandars et penons ventiler et luyre au soleil*"). The king's courage is also emphasized. During the crossing, the fleet was threatened by a storm. However, Charles refused to land, arguing that it would be humiliating to seek shelter in another prince's lands. Dupuis underlines that this episode reveals the king's "royal virtue" ("*vertu royalle*") and courage ("*bault de cuer*")⁶². Finally, the armada is used to praise Charles' omnipotence. Cannons created such "thunder and lightning" ("*tonnerre et fouldre d'artillerie*") that no fish approached the armada for days⁶³. Dupuis reveals here that Charles' power is exerted not only on his human subjects, but also on animals and other living beings.

Charles' dominion over the seas plays an important part in the chronicle. Dupuis shows that Charles' sovereignty surpasses that of other kings, as it also encompasses the seas. Dupuis describes the rules that regulated Charles' armada on sea: ships were forbidden from entering harbour before the king's ship; the departure of the king's ship was to be announced by three cannon shots; all ships had to "bow" to the king each morning (lowering their standards); hoisting a specific standard (on the royal ship) meant that all captains were summoned to attend a council on the royal ship⁶⁴. He thus shows that the king imposed order over the sea for the first time.

Charles is not just a king ruling a single people, like the bulk of his peers, but the ruler of many, just as Neptune rules all sea- and wind-gods. Hence, on his armada, the king is surrounded by distinguished and honoured nobles ("*estoyent en la nave du roy et envyron sa personne*"), most of whom are members of the Order of the Golden Fleece ("*tous chevaliers de son ordre*") or of Spanish Orders. These men come from the Empire,

Anvers, Christophe Plantin, 1559, fol. 2^v; see also M. Schraven, *Festive Funerals. Funeral Apparati in Early Modern Italy, Particularly in Rome*, Groningen, University of Groningen, 2006, p. 65, n. 18; p. 78-79, fig. 2-3, and St. Schrader, "Greater than Ever He Was. Ritual and Power in Charles V's 1558 Funeral Procession", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 49, 1998, p. 69-93). The ship of the state was also used by the humanists. Erasmus of Rotterdam —whose patron was Chancellor Sauvage— uses the motive in the *Institutio Principis Christiani* (1516, here LB IV 561a), offered to Charles of Habsburg. Erasmus insists on the necessity to educate well the young prince (Charles) since the ship of the state cannot be conducted to a safe harbor by an ignorant and an incompetent.

62 Dupuis, *Description poetique*, fol. 73^v.

63 *Ibid.*, fol. 75^r.

64 *Ibid.*, fol. 65^v-67^v.

the Low Countries and the Iberian Peninsula (Portugal included), thus symbolising the European status of Charles' dominion⁶⁵.

Nevertheless, this elite cosmopolitanism does not mean that Charles forgets his Burgundian roots, as shown by his encounter with a Burgundian noble ("*né de Bourgoingne*") of lower nobility. Charles decided to go at the stern castle of his ship, which was swaying dangerously. Most of the noblemen following him dared not approach the edge of the bridge. Charles sarcastically asked how much they would like to be paid in order to stay with him for an hour or two. Some of them asked for large sums of money, but Montruchard declared that he did not want anything ("*non pour les biens de ce monde*"), and would face danger willingly with his king. He had left his homeland of Burgundy to help Charles acquire his new homeland of Spain ("*ains pour la patrie et retrouveray de la vostre d'ung sien gentilhomme il quiest abandonner la sienna*"). Here, Dupuis shows how a minor Burgundian noble could teach the classic noble virtues of courage and disdain for money to all the grandees from Austria, the Low Countries

65 *Ibid.*, fol. 68^v: Dupuis gives a list of these nobles. I provide here the names of those who can be identified at present. For the Low Countries: Andrew of Croÿ, lord of Beaurain (Cools, "Mannen met macht", p. 279, nr. 56); Anthony of Croÿ, lord of Sempy (*ibid.*, p. 280, nr. 57); Anthony of Lalaing, lord of Montigny (*ibid.*, p. 341-342, nr. 135); Ferry of Croÿ, lord of Le Rœulx (*ibid.*, p. 280-281, nr. 58); William of Croÿ, lord of Chièvres (see n. 48); James III of Luxemburg, lord of Fiennes (Cools, "Mannen met macht", p. 359, nr. 162); James of Gavere, lord of Fresin and Ollignies (*ibid.*, p. 301, nr. 81); Laurence Gorrevod, governor of Bresse (*ibid.*, p. 314-315, nr. 97); Philip II of Croÿ, count of Porcien (*ibid.*, p. 284, nr. 61); Philip of Lannoy, lord of Monlembaix (*ibid.*, p. 347, nr. 142); Waleran II de Brederode, lord of Vianen and Ameide (*ibid.*, p. 260-261, nr. 36); Werchin, seneschal of Hainaut (*ibid.*, p. 413, nr. 263). For the Empire: Friedrich II, Count Palatine; Henry V, duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg; Hoyer VI, count of Mansfeld; John V, marquis of Brandenburg (S. Dünnebeil, "Der Ordern vom Goldenen Vlies zwischen Burgund und dem Hause österreich", *Publications du Centre européen d'études bourguignonnes*, 46, 2006, p. 13-30, at p. 29). For the Spanish Kingdoms: Alonso Manrique de Lara, bishop of Corduba (R. Fagel, *De Hispano-Vlaamse wereld, De contacten tussen Spanjaarden en Nederlanders, 1496-1555*, Brussels, Palais des Académies, 1996, p. 367; Kahl, "Lehrjahre eines Kaisers", p. 281-282); Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, 3rd duke of Alva (Fagel, *De Hispano-Vlaamse wereld*, p. 186-187, 302, 341, 397, 401); Garcia de Padilla (*ibid.*, p. 293 n. 54; p. 325 n. 200; p. 332, 335 n. 245); "Jorge de Portugal", secretary of Queen Eleonora (*ibid.*, p. 291 n. 45); Juan Manuel, lord of Belmonte (Cools, "Mannen met macht", p. 362-363, nr. 167); Pedro Ruiz de la Mota, bishop of Badajoz (*ibid.*, p. 119 and n. 502, p. 324; Kahl, "Lehrjahre eines Kaisers", p. 281-282). The Spanish men formed a group of refugees and/or opponents to Ferdinand of Aragon. They were welcomed in the Low Countries from the 1490s. See also: J.-M. Cauchies, "Les étrangers dans l'entourage politique de Philippe le Beau", *Revue du Nord*, 345-346, 2002/2, p. 413-428; "Ordonnance de Charles, prince d'Espagne, archiduc d'Autriche, duc de Bourgogne, etc., pour le gouvernement de sa maison", Brussels, 25 October 1515, *Collection des voyages*, vol. 2, p. 491-494.

and Spain, as if Dupuis wanted to display Burgundy as the land of true nobility and, therefore, of true royal values (“*parole digne de roy*”)⁶⁶. Dupuis creates a semantic link between the past — Charles’ Burgundian inheritance, which was still a source of conflict with the French king — and his new lands in the Iberian peninsula, where the future of the Burgundian dynasty (and the men who served it) would now dwell.

The armada represents the ideal monarchy that Dupuis and, doubtlessly, Charles and his entourage contemplated, in 1517, at a time when the imperial crown was still a distant dream. It is a sovereign republic (“*republicque souverainne*”) carried by Neptune himself from one land to another (“*que Neptune par sa puissance transpourta d’une terre en aultres*”)⁶⁷. Dupuis insists that this utopia “is desired by all wise men, but nowhere is put into practice” (“*desiree de tous les saiges, mais nulle part mise en pratique*”), except in Charles’ armada. The fleet is described, in more concrete terms, as a “mighty city made of high castles decorated with royal adornments and inhabited by the flower of the nobility” (“*qui sembloit une puissant ville ediffiee de groz chasteaux paré de royaulx ornemens et peuplee de fleur de noblesse*”). This city is rich and perfectly orderly (“*police*”); political equality reigns amongst its citizens, as “the mightiest king of humans [Charles] and the poorest seaman were of the same condition” (“*le plus grand roy des humains et le plus povre matelot estoient de mesmes condicion*”)⁶⁸. They are equal because they can all expect the same fortune and misfortune when facing the fury of the elements.

This equality of condition has an impact on all seamen and passengers. As they all observe the noble ethics (*ethos*) of the cardinal virtues, the whole fleet is ennobled and becomes a “*flotte de noblesse*”. An anecdote demonstrates this aspect. Many birds followed the armada looking for an opportunity to catch fish that would had been left on the bridges of the ships. Dupuis underlines that these birds were lucky because those captured were released. Thus seamen act like nobles on a battlefield, merciful to their defeated enemies (“*ilz furent bien heureux de tumber en une flotte de noblesse car les prins furent ralachez pour cause qu’ilz venoient à mercy eulx rendre entre les mains des hommes qui ne leur devoient ne voulurent à ce moyen fer rudesse ains les laisses estre paissibles*”)⁶⁹.

66 For all the quotations in this paragraph, see Dupuis, *Description poetique*, fol. 72^v-73^r.

67 *Ibid.*, fol. 69^v.

68 *Ibid.*, fol. 69^r.

69 *Ibid.*, fol. 73^v.

However, the utopia represented by the armada is not intended to remain at sea, but to reach the Iberian Peninsula. Dupuis' chronicle ends before Charles' arrival in Castile⁷⁰, but he does describe the king's landing in Asturias. Dupuis portrays Asturias as a land where no king had come since the time of the Visigoths (*"depuis ce roy don Rodrigo qui perdit toutes les Espagnes et par la puissance des Mores fut desbassé jusques en ce lieu"*). The entire region is barren, its people wild⁷¹. Charles brings law and order into lawless lands, reintegrating the Asturians into the community of men. Thus, to Dupuis' eyes, he is a civilizing hero⁷².

The heroization of Charles of Habsburg in the *Description poetique* has multiple dimensions.

Dupuis starts by depicting the young king talking to, and interacting with gods and goddesses (Eolus, Juno and Neptune), and compares him to Classical heroes (Aeneas). The epic coloration given to the narrative here has an aesthetic and political purpose, consistent with the Rhetoricians' practice of using Classical and epic figures in vernacular texts.

The epic tone—the *poetique*—is a characteristic of the Rhetoricians. It was commonly seen as a vehicle for the expression of high matters, and for celebrating, praising, extolling the exceptional nature of a person or an event. André de La Vigne's *Voyage de Naples*, a narrative of King Charles VIII military expedition to Italy (1494-95), combines prose and epic verses⁷³. Jean d'Auton's *Alarmes de Mars* (1499, 976 v.) stages Mars, the god of war, urging the French to cross the Alps in order to overthrow Ludovico Sforza, duke of Milan⁷⁴. Jean Marot presents the military campaigns of King Louis XII against Genoa and Venice in two epic poems, the *Voyage de Gênes* (1506, 1306 v.) and *Voyage de Venise* (1509, 4105 v.)⁷⁵. From the Burgundian side,

70 Dupuis declares that his text will be followed by another chronicle, but this text was not written or at least has not survived (*Ibid.*, fol. 75^r: *"L'estat auquel il a trouvé ses pays et de son entree diray je en lieu plus convenable"*).

71 Dupuis, *Description poetique*, fol. 75^r.

72 The concept of the civilizing hero, who introduces law and order into lands that have not previously known them, is transferred to the context of the Late Middle Ages by L. Bolard, "Le Prince, héros civilisateur, *Le Moyen Âge*, 115/2, 2009, p. 291-308.

73 André de La Vigne, *Le Voyage de Naples*, ed. Anna Slerca, Milan, Vita e Pensiero, 1981.

74 J. Dumont, "Les Alarmes de Mars de Jean d'Auton. Édition et commentaire", *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France*, 551, 2016 (years 2012-2013), p. 97-166.

75 Jean Marot, *Le Voyage de Gênes*, ed. G. Trisolini, Genève, Droz, 1974; Id., *Le Voyage de Venise*, ed. G. Trisolini, Genève, Droz, 1977.

Jean Molinet and Nicaise Ladam constantly insert epic matters in their respective *Chroniques*⁷⁶. All these texts have a Virgilian tone⁷⁷.

The use of the epic matter has also to do with the Rhetoricians' intention of creating original mythologies for their princely patrons⁷⁸. Yet, I do not see such an attempt in the *Descripcion poetique*. Dupuis' purpose remains conditioned by the *hinc et nunc* goal of his patrons: to stage a symbolic reconciliation between two camps at court. Despite Chièvres' and Sauvage's opinions, Charles will leave the Low Countries for the Iberian Peninsula, but he cannot do so in a context of factional division. The epic coloration helps to disguise the responsibilities of powerful individuals (Chièvres, Sauvage, and even Margaret) by shifting the blame to the court as a whole (that is, to an indefinite group of people). In this regard, the *Descripcion poetique* can be seen as a critic of court life, such as Molinet's *Temple de Mars* (after 1476, 320 v.). In this text too, Molinet expresses a political *hinc et nunc*: he criticizes Charles the Bold's warlike projects which are ruining the Low Countries, thus expressing with caution the growing oppositions to war raising at court⁷⁹.

I would like to suggest here that, from a formal perspective, the originality of the *Descripcion poetique* resides in its combination of three different literary forms: an epic one (part. 1), a military one (part. 2 dedicated to a short naval treaty)⁸⁰, and a historiographical one (part. 3).

76 Respectively, Nicaise Ladam, *Histoire commançant en 1488 et finissant en 1543*, Bruxelles, KBR, MS 14864-14865, and Jean Molinet, *Chroniques*, éd. G. Doutrepoint, O. Jodogne, 2 vols, Bruxelles, Palais des Académies, 1935-37.

77 See *Virgilian Identities in the French Renaissance*, ed. Ph. J. Usher and I. Fernbach, Woodbridge, Boydell, 2012.

78 In this regard, the *Séjour d'Honneur* (1489-94) written by Octovien de Saint-Gelais is very interesting (Octovien de Saint-Gelais, *Le séjour d'honneur*, ed. Fr. Duval, Genève, Droz, 2002). We witness here the dreamlike travel of the *Acteur* accompanied by *Raison* to the *Séjour d'Honneur*, a mythicized French court. There he meets several historical French characters and receives their moral teaching. The *Illustrations de Gaule* of Jean Lemaire de Belges are probably the best example of an attempt at constructing a mythology (Jean Lemaire de Belges, *Les Illustrations de Gaule*, in Id., *Œuvres*, ed. A.J. Stécher, vols 1-2, Louvain, Académie royale de Belgique, 1882).

79 Jean Molinet, *Le Temple de Mars*, in *Recueil de pièces historiques imprimées sous le règne de Louis XI*, ed. É. Picot and H. Stein, vol. 1, Paris, Société des Bibliophiles français, 1923, p. 16-64. See also Cornilliat, "Or ne mens", p. 567-618.

80 It is important to stress that this part echoes a contemporary treaty (1517) written by Philippe of Cleves, duke of Ravenstein, on naval warfare (*Philippe de Clèves, L'Instruction de toutes manières de guerroyer [...] sur mer. édition critique du manuscrit français 1244 de la Bibliothèque nationale de France*, ed. J. Paviot, Paris, H. Champion, 1997).

Moreover, Dupuis intertwined two modes of expression that were typical for a Burgundian “indiciaire”: the writing of the “truth”, in other words, of events that had happened; and poetical fiction. No strict dichotomy exists between the two forms. The epic fiction is based on a documented historical context (the conflict between two antagonistic factions at court) and the chronicle is mostly made of selected moments that allow the author to present the prince as a hero.

The *Description poetique* also possesses some of the traits of a sociodicy, since it stages as universal the problems and interests of Charles, his relatives, and his courtiers. Throughout the description of the armada, the *Description poetique* helps to fashion Charles’ symbolic power. Dupuis suggests that Charles exerts his omnipotence over the sea and sea-creatures, therefore dominating nature itself. Moreover, Charles’ status as the king of many European peoples places him above other kings. Finally, Charles displays another trait of Classical heroes: he builds the foundations of a political Utopia and brings civilization to lands and peoples, such as the Asturians, who did not know it before. According to Dupuis, then, Charles is a civilizing hero.

Finally, the heroic form given to the text may be explained by its intended public. As only a single manuscript exists, the chronicle was clearly not intended to be circulated beyond the central circle of power. Maximilian and Margaret, Chièvres, Sauvage and their followers remembered the dangers encountered by Charles’ father, Philip the Fair, more than ten years earlier, on his way to the Iberian Peninsula: his shipwreck in England and his death (by poison?) in Burgos (September 25th, 1506)⁸¹. The memory of Philip’s fate is reflected in the *Description poetique*⁸². Therefore, the depiction of Charles as a sea-hero may also be a way to ward off misfortune and ensure the coming of the Golden Age and political Utopia that Charles’ reign had brought in the Armada and would bring to the Iberian Peninsula.

Jonathan DUMONT
Österreichische Akademie
der Wissenschaften

81 Cauchies, *Philippe le Beau*, p. 159-217.

82 Dupuis, *Description poetique*, fol. 56^{rv}, 73^v.