

# Les ducs de Bourgogne (1363-1477)

The dukes of Burgundy (1353 to 1477)



1 SIXTEENTH CENTURY, FROM A FIFTEENTH CENTURY ORIGINAL, *Portrait of Philippe le Hardi*, PERMANENT LOAN FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES. © MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE DIJON



2 ANONYMOUS FLEMISH CA. 1430, *Portrait of Jean sans Peur*, © ANTWERP MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS



3 FIFTEENTH CENTURY VERSION FROM AN ORIGINAL BY ROGER VAN DER WEYDEN, *Portrait of Philippe le Bon*, PERMANENT LOAN FROM THE MUSEUM OF ART AND INDUSTRY OF SAINT-ÉTIENNE. © MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE DIJON



4 FIFTEENTH CENTURY VERSION FROM AN ORIGINAL BY ROGER VAN DER WEYDEN, *Portrait of Charles le Téméraire*. © BERLIN, GEMÄLDEGALERIE

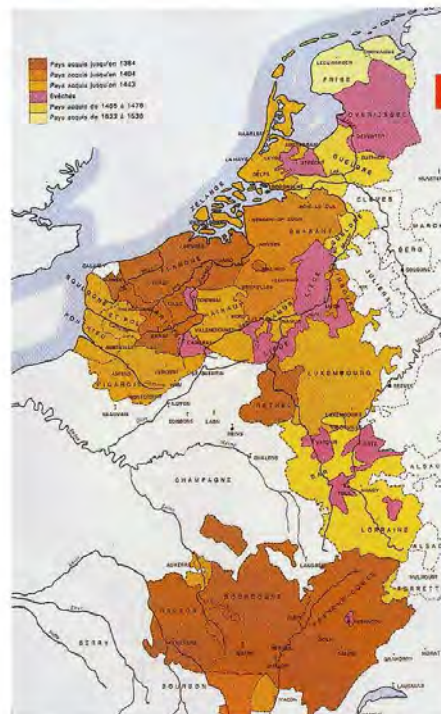
## A PRINCIPALITY BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

In 1363 Philippe le Hardi, son of King John the Good, was granted the Duchy of Burgundy, which had returned to the crown at the death of Philippe de Rouvres, the last Capetian duke. His dynasty held power for just over a century. The four reigning dukes in succession were Philippe le Hardi (the Bold), duke from 1363 to 1404 (*fig. 1*), Jean Sans Peur (the Fearless) from 1404 to 1419 (*fig. 2*), Philippe le Bon (the Good) from 1419 to 1467 (*fig. 3*), and Charles le Téméraire (the Bold) from 1467 to 1477 (*fig. 4*).

*These dukes of Burgundy* were among the most powerful princes in the West at the end of the Middle Ages. The marriage of Philippe le Hardi to Marguerite de Flandres united the counties of Flanders, Artois and Burgundy. Philippe le Hardi, brother to Charles V and uncle to Charles VI, considered himself above all a French prince and played a political rôle of the first rank at the court of France.

*His son Jean sans Peur*, while seeking to maintain his primacy in the political sphere, came into conflict with Louis d'Orléans, brother of King Charles VI. This rivalry between the two princes forced the realm into civil war. And it was the two princes who were the first victims of the war between the Burgundians and the Armagnac faction : Jean sans Peur had Louis assassinated in 1407 and the Dauphin, the future Charles VII, had Jean assassinated in turn at the bridge of Montereau in 1419.

*Within the context of the Hundred Years War*, which pitted France against England from the middle of the fourteenth century, Philippe le Bon sought the support of the English to whom he made significant territorial concessions in return, by the Treaty of Arras (1435). Territorial aggrandizement was one of Philippe's constant preoccupations. Progressively, through marriages, inheritances or bargaining, often backed by military action, he gained possession of the principal regions of the Lowlands : Brabant and Limbourg (1430), Hainaut, Holland, Zeeland and Frisia (1438), Luxemburg (1451). Charles le Téméraire added Guelderland in 1473 (*fig 5*).



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*Charles le Téméraire's* projects for connecting Burgundy and Franche-Comté to the Lowlands by acquiring Alsace and Lorraine, added to his scheming for a royal crown, ended by threatening French power. Louis XI seized the occasion of Charles' death at the battle of Nancy in 1477 to attach Burgundy to France. Charles' daughter, Marie, married the Hapsburg Duke Maximilian and transferred the Low Countries and Franche-Comté to the Austrian dynasty.

## PRINCELY SPLENDOUR



*Equestrian Emblems of the Count of Charolais, future Charles the Bold, book illumination in l'Armorial équestre de la Toison d'Or*  
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This astonishing political dominion gave birth to one of the most fascinating cultural and artistic centres of the late Middle Ages. The Court of Burgundy became the court of courts, where the aristocratic way of life with all its chivalric imagery shone at its greatest brilliance (fig. 6). The four Dukes, especially Philippe le Hardi and Philippe le Bon, lavishly displayed their wealth, attracted artists, musicians and men of letters

(fig. 7), built palaces, founded religious institutions and amazed their contemporaries by staging extravagant festivities. In addition to furthering their artistic tastes, this splendour was meant to symbolise their power and consolidate their prestige.

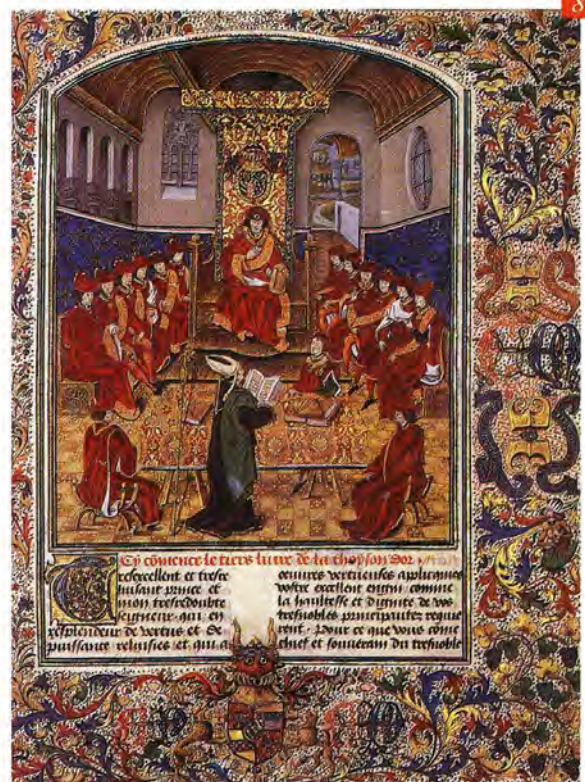
*Philippe le Bon*, connoisseur of the arts like his brothers Charles V, King of France, Jean Duc de Berry, Louis Duc d'Anjou, settled on Dijon for his capital. Here he founded the Charterhouse of Champmol as the burial place for his dynasty. The artists and sculptors, French and Flemish, whom he commissioned to work there, influenced by the powerful personality of Claus Sluter, were responsible for making Dijon and Burgundy one of the principal centres of artistic creation in the 1400's; from it arose the whole fifteenth century school of Burgundian sculpture.

During the reign of *Philippe le Bon*, most artistic and political activity shifted from Burgundy to the



ROGER VAN DER WEYDEN,  
*Jean Vauquelin presents his manuscript to Philippe le Bon, book illumination in the Chronicle of Hainaut*  
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Low Countries. With Jan Van Eyck, Robert Campin and Roger Van der Weyden, a revolution in painting took place there. For all that, the Duke never neglected Dijon and gave his closest attention to the construction of a new Ducal Palace. At the Sainte-Chapelle\* of Dijon, capital of the first and most important of his regions, Philippe le Bon founded and fixed the headquarters of the Order of the Golden Fleece, created in 1430 (fig. 8). The founding of this new Order, supposed to refurbish chivalric ideals and revive the Crusades, consecrated the strength and splendour of the Dukes. The Order of the Golden Fleece best expresses the high ideals of the Burgundian Court.



*Charles le Téméraire presides at a meeting of the Golden Fleece, book illumination from the Troisième livre de la Toison d'Or by Guillaume Fillastre*  
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\* See information sheet which treats this subject.