

COLLECTING IN EARLY MODERN AGE: THE CASE OF THE VALOIS BURGUNDY' COURT IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

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Resumen: Para poder analizar el personaje del coleccionista moderno, como el contenido y el gusto de las colecciones es necesario partir de los estudios de Julius von Schlosser, historiador de la Escuela de Viena, quien primero desarrolló un interés y agudas interpretaciones críticas sobre la problemática de las colecciones, principalmente en la corte de los Habsburgo. Gracias a su libro *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sammelwesens*, publicado en 1908, el autor definió el fenómeno del coleccionismo moderno.

En base al estudio de Schlosser distintos historiadores desarrollaron sus investigaciones aportando datos cada vez más específicos sobre los principales coleccionistas de la Época Moderna. Este artículo resume la historiografía sobre el tema del coleccionismo de los principios de la Edad Moderna y se centra en el caso de los duques de Borgoña y Flandes en la segunda mitad del siglo XV, cuando esta corte heredó la tradición de coleccionismo iniciada por el duque Juan de Berry, ejemplo de riqueza y esplendor para todas las cortes europeas. A través de la catalogación de bienes, análisis del contexto histórico e iconografía se definieron los aspectos del gusto y del valor que los artefactos representaban dentro de la colección.

Palabras clave: Julius von Schlosser / coleccionismo moderno / corte de Borgoña / duques de Borgoña / siglo XV.

Abstract: In order to analyse the taste, character and content collector of Modern collections, Julius von Schlosser's study should be mentioned. The historian of the Vienna School was the first who developed the interest and critical interpretations of the issue of collections, mainly in the case of the Habsburg's court. In his book *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sammelwesens* published in 1908, he popularised examples of studies of the modern collecting phenomenon.

Based on the study of Schlosser many historians developed their research, providing information about the most important collectors of modern age. This article resumed the historiography of the collecting in the Early Modern Age and focused on the case of the Dukes of Burgundy and Flanders in the second half of the fifteenth century, when their Court inherited the tradition of collecting initiated by the Duke John of Berry. With this fact it gave an example of wealth and splendour for all Europeans courts. Through the catalogue of the art pieces, analysis of the historical context and iconography, the aspects of taste and representing value of the artefacts from the ducal collection were defined.

Key words: Julius von Schlosser / modern collecting / Burgundian court / Dukes of Burgundy / fifteenth century.

Introduction

To collect is to gather objects belonging to a particular category the collector happens to fancy, as magpies fancy things that are shiny, and collec-

tion is what has been gathered.¹ We might ask where the history of collecting begins and also what form the earliest collections assumed. The plunder of war and the tangible fruits of industry have always passed from one generation to the

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¹ ALSOP, Joseph. *The rare art traditions. The history of art collecting and its linked phenomena wherever these have appeared*, London, 1982, p. 70.

next, and works of art, being constantly associated with power, served as a medium of exchange. At the same time, by virtue of their intrinsic worth, based primarily upon the precious metals and rare stones of which they were composed, they often serve as a reserve of public wealth and a symbol of the nation's credit.

Histories of collecting tend to treat the subject in general terms as though it were relevant only to the history of taste at a particular given period. But the important thing is to emphasise the contributions made by individuals, because in a culturally benighted, confused and eclectic age like our own, their special sensibility leads to all sorts of valid discoveries and helps to maintain sane standards of judgment.

The earliest collections of works of art consisted of objects which were displayed, yet also served a function in everyday life. They were generally associated on the one hand with religious practices, and on the other with state functions, so they were housed in temples or treasure-houses which were neither actually museums nor theoretical creations for cultural delectation.

We must therefore understand that, originally, the objects which we now prize as works of art (or museum specimens) had a utility value, and considered in the mass represented the power, wealth and splendor of the community which possessed them. Yet even in the earliest recorded periods it seems that the taste and enterprise of certain individuals soon began to show itself.²

The dedicated collector is animated by a desire to own everything within a limited field. To satisfy his needs, he combines his taste, be it natural or acquired, his sense of perfection and his instinct for tracking things down. But while seeking out particular works of art, he also investigates the evidence of their historical origins, reading any specialist literature on the subject. He needs the flair of a hunter, the mentality of a detective, the objectivity of a historian and the natural cunning of a horse dealer. Even so, in giving too great a credit to what he reads or hears, he is liable to confuse his instinctive reactions and so blur the sharpness of his vision.³

To be a collector is to advance in the social scale at a great pace. Connoisseurship, therefore, can be a closer and more intimate link than class.

Collectors are of many different types. To begin with there are the true lovers of things artistic,

who choose cautiously and with enlightened discrimination the finest examples of the various schools or individual artists whom they most admire. That is to say, such individuals are primarily inspired as collectors by aesthetic considerations and personal taste, and the fact that their mind and eye have been formed through contact with the art of past times which can give them a selective insight into the art their contemporaries. On the other hand are the great artist-collectors for whom practical considerations weigh at least as heavily as the aesthetic ones. That is to say, the artist-collector acquires works of art not merely to look at and to enjoy them, but to learn more about his own profession from the examples of others, thereby nourishing his own inventive gifts and spurring himself on to higher creative achievements. Another type of collector is represented by an artist-historiographer who sets out to assemble, on a systematic and historical basis, a collection of drawings which would illustrate stage by stage the progressive stylistic evolution of those artists whose biographies he was compiling. Then, of course, there have been the predatory collectors, who have rapaciously amassed vast quantities of works of art not because they loved or admired them but because the act of assembling them would appear symbolical of their worldly might and spiritual glorification.

The art-lover is very different from the collector. He seeks perfection through beauty and harmony, loving works of art not as part of a series or historical sequence, but rather on account of their diversity, which corresponds to his own mentality, with its eclecticism and untidiness. Fashions, progress, the course of daily life; these are all things which hardly affect the true collector or concern the ordinary art-lover who seeks a heightening of experience and sensation through art. Because his taste is always responsive, the art-lover develops his powers of selection. Whereas the dedicated bibliophile is in danger of being snowed under by an avalanche of his quarto books, the perfect dilettante in his quest for the ideal work of art runs the risk of so refining his possibilities that he ends his days gazing ceaselessly at a circle painted on a white canvas, or at a crystal ball. Then at last, he is in a position to appreciate what for him is unadulterated art, able to appraise all its qualities, far removed from the normal practice of accumulating

² COOPER, Douglas. *Great family collections*, London, 1965, pp. 13-14.

³ RHEIMS, Maurice. *Art on the market*, London, 1961, p. 3.

objects without having time to look at them properly.

Alois Riegl defining an art-lover –a “Kunstfreund”– as not just anyone who has a liking for creative art, nor one who is involved in the production or consumption (i.e., the enjoyment) of art; but, rather one who appreciates antique art, one who consumes old rather than modern works. He pointed out, however, that art lovers did not necessarily have “an aversion” to contemporary art. In addition, although Riegl did not point this out, a “Kunstfreund” need not make financial sacrifices in order to own the works of art he “consumes”.⁴

Besides the collectors and the dilettantes, there are the curio-hunters. They are a hybrid and diverting set of people, on the lookout for rare and unexpected rather than beautiful things, exercising a choice that seems all the more delicate because it is sly and perverse. A few of the privileged curio-hunters appear to stem from a cross between the connoisseur and the oracle’s pythons because they have a gift for spotting not only what is already rare but what will become rare in the future. These people belong to a human category that not having a taste for the good or the beautiful, but for the rare and unique; for what one possesses that others do not. It is not a predilection for what is perfect, but for what is fashionable and being vaunted currently.

“Knowledge is power” is a proverb that holds very true in the purchase of artistic treasures. A sharp eye is required both to discover the prize and also to take care of what has been bought. Do not leave your purchases about by unsold lots, or they will be certainly put up and bidden for again.⁵

A further ambiguity arises from the fact that the

impulse to collect has no consistency. It can express a sense of power and splendor. To come closer to the nature of motive we must distinguish purposive collecting, which may be identified with connoisseurship, from the mere accumulation of the miscellaneous, and possessions in general may be said to give a sense of security, not only in the sense that they are “valuable” that can if necessary be sold, but also because these items “feather” the domestic nest. But this is an instinct, possibly very primitive in its origins, which can run away with itself, leading to those clutters of family possessions.⁶

The mid-fifteenth century witnessed a change in the situation and the history of private collecting, in the modern sense, may be said to have originated when a new bourgeois class assumed power in some of the Italian republics. It was the bankers and men of commerce in Florence and Venice, the Falieris, the Mocenigos, the Dandolos and the Medicis, who ventured to break with the prevailing custom of accumulating all works of art in libraries and treasuries controlled by the Church or the ruling house.⁷ These men, whose wealth was newly earned and who certainly liked to display it, began to form collections of gems and works of art for their personal delectation in the privacy of their homes. From that time on the collecting bug has afflicted all manner of men and women, as power and riches have changed hands across the continent of Europe during the last five hundred years. “The trumpet of art” said Louis XIV, “blows louder through time and space than any other trumpet”. Certainly there has been plenty of evidence to support this thesis in the maneuvers which have led to Popes, Emperors, Kings, Queens, great nobles, men of letters, artists and ultimately the bourgeois successively vying with each other to accumulate a greater and more impressive display of treasures.

⁴ RIEGL, Alois. “Über antike und moderne Kunstfreunde”, *Kunstgeschichtliches Jahrbuch der K.-K. Zentral-Kommission für Erforschung und Erhaltung der Kunst- und Historischen Denkmale*, Beiblatt, 1, 1907, pp. 1-14.

⁵ ROBINSON, F. S. *The connoisseur. Essays on the romantic and pintoresque associations of art and artists*, London, 1897, p. 20.

⁶ READ, Herbert. Introduction to the book of Niels von Holst, *Creators, collectors and connoisseurs*, London, 1967, p. 3.

⁷ Evelyn Welch presents a fresh picture of Italian art between the ‘Black Death’ in the mid-fourteenth century and the French invasions at the end of the fifteenth. In it, Florence is no longer the only important centre of artistic activity but takes its place alongside other equally interesting and varied cities of the Italian peninsula. Oil paintings are examined alongside frescos, tapestries, sculptures in bronze and marble, manuscript illuminations, objects in precious metals, and a wide range of other works. Evelyn Welch explains artistic techniques and workshop practices, and discusses contextual issues such as artist-patron relationships, political and religious uses of art, and the ways in which visual imagery related to contemporary sexual and social behavior. Above all she recreates the dramatic experiences of contemporary Italians – the patrons who commissioned the works, the members of the public who viewed them, and the artists who produced them. WELCH, Evelyn. *Art and Society in Italy 1350-1500*, Oxford University Press, 1997.

Julius von Schlosser one first approximation to the origin of the collecting

Julius von Schlosser (1866-1938)⁸ was an influential scholar and leader of the so-called (second) Vienna School of art history; successor to Max Dvořák at the University of Vienna.

Schlosser wrote his dissertation on early medieval cloisters under Wickhoff, accepted in 1888. After graduation, Schlosser joined the Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung (Institute of Austrian Historical Research) under the diplomatic historian Theodor von Sickel (1826-1908). Sickel instilled in Schlosser a strict appreciation for textual primary sources. After six months of research in Rome, he joined the staff of the Imperial collections (Kunsthistorische Hofmuseum, the modern Kunsthistorisches Museum) in Vienna in 1889, initially in the coins and medals division.

Schlosser wrote his *Habilitationsschrift* in 1892. After a promotion to the arts and crafts collections, he was named director of the sculpture collection and (außerordentlicher) professor at Vienna in 1901. In 1903, he was offered a position at Prague, but chose instead to remain in Vienna. Schlosser's study of primary texts of art history led to an ever-greater fascination with Lorenzo Ghiberti. He published Ghiberti's memoirs in 1912.

But prior to this memoir study, he wrote his book *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sammelwesens* published at Leipzig (Klinkhardt & Biermann) at 1908.

With the exception of some isolated works and a

few preliminary, general studies, as well as of any summaries of dispersed and unconnected material, until the publication of Schlosser's book nobody had attacked in depth the origins of the collecting. Schlosser's work, therefore, is one of the most important contributions to the history of collecting in general.

According to Schlosser it was the duke Jean de Berry (1340-1416) who was the first modern collector on a large scale. His treasure chamber was filled with artistic works, not only for love of ostentation or for curiosity as up to this moment he had demonstrated the interest and the taste of the collectors. The duke of Berry was characterized by a taste for precious material, by rare objects, as most of the collectors of the Middle Ages, at the same time as it showed his interest for the formal artistic value and for a historical concrete preference. It is to say it was collecting works of art for if same.

Furthermore, he was searching, he was raking and he was even doing copies of works which original ones he could not obtain. In this respect the Old Age turned into an epoch of admiration and of desire of the collector. Greek or Roman antiquities were an object of worship. The collection of the duke of Berry was extended considerably by archaic reproductions. It was not looking for the false original one, but a copy, a faithful testimony to the ancient piece. On occasions the duke of Berry entrusted imitations of ancient works that transformed into new and modern pieces. So that Antiquity turned into an enormous source of artistic possibilities. Definitively, this collector produced without any kind of doubts, the first clear example of the base of the modern collecting.

⁸ Sources about Schlosser are: "Julius von Schlosser" in JAHN, Johannes, ed. *Die Kunstwissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellung*. 2 vols. Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1924, pp. 95-134; "Festschrift für Julius Schlosser zum 60. Geburtstag." *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien Neue Folge*, 1 (1927); *Julius Schlosser: Festschrift zu seinem 60sten Geburtstag*. Edited by Arpad Weixlgärtner and Leo Planiscig. Vienna: Amalthea, 1927; KURZ, Otto. "Julius von Schlosser: Personlita-Metodo-Lavoro." *Critica d'arte* 11/12 (1955): 402-419 [confirmation of death date]; DVORÁK, Max. *Idealism and Naturalism in Gothic Art*. Preface by Karl Maria Swoboda. Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1967, p. 222; KLEINBAUER, W. Eugene. *Modern Perspectives in Western Art History: An Anthology of 20th-Century Writings on the Visual Arts*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971, pp. 3, 4, 89 cited; KLEINBAUER, W. Eugene. *Research Guide to the History of Western Art*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1982, p. 122 mentioned; PODRO, Michael. "Against Formalism: Schlosser on Stilgeschichte." *Akten des XXV. internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte* (Vienna, 1983): vol. i, pp. 37-43; WÖLFFLIN, Heinrich. *Heinrich Wölfflin, 1864-1945: Autobiographie, Tagebücher und Briefe*. Joseph Ganter, ed. 2nd ed. Basel: Schwabe & Co., 1984, p. 493; BAZIN, Germain. *Histoire de l'histoire de l'art; de Vasari à nos jours*. Paris: Albin Michel, 1986, p. 164; *German Essays on Art History*. Gert Schiff, ed. New York: Continuum, 1988, pp. liii-lvi, 281; JOHNSON, W. McAllister. *Art History: Its Use and Abuse*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988, p. 21; GOMBRICH, Ernst H. "Einige Erinnerungen an Julius von Schlosser als Lehrer." *Kritische Berichte* 16/4 (1989): 5-9; HAJA, M. "Schlosser Julius Alwin von." *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950* 10 (1994): 218-219; *Metzler Kunsthistoriker Lexikon: zweihundert Porträts deutschsprachiger Autoren aus vier Jahrhunderten*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1999, pp. 350-53; ROSENAUER, Arthur. "Schlosser, Julius." *Dictionary of Art*; AURENHAMMER, Hans H. "Schlosser, Julius Ritter von." *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 23 (2007): 105-107; AURENHAMMER, Hans. *Kunstgeschichte an der Universität Wien*; Karl T. Johns, personal correspondence, December, 2012: [obituaries:]; GOMBRICH, Ernst. "Julius von Schlosser." *The Burlington Magazine* 74 no. 431 (February 1939): 98-99; SEDLMAYR, Hans. "Julius Ritter von Schlosser." *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 52 (1938): 513-519; HAHNLOSER, Hans R. "Zum Gedächtnis von Julius von Schlosser." *Belvedere* 13 (1938-43): 137-141.

The spirit of modern collecting that the duke of Berry imposed was an example followed in other European courts. England, Austria or France were quick to imitate the model who had inspired to the collection of the duke. In this respect, clear examples were provided by the collections formed by Margaret of Austria, for the Archduke Ferdinand of Tirol or for the dukes of Anjou.

A brief history of the studies on the primitive Flemings

The interest in research on the history of medieval art of Burgundy was closely connected with the stimulation of romantic and nationalistic currents in the nineteenth century. The importance for the issue of collecting at the court of Flemish dukes was the memory of researchers, who with their thoughts defined the main trends of interpretation of the history of artistic patronage and documented art works. An analysis of the European model of Christian piety was proposed by Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829), who represented the autonomy of the German and Dutch art in relation to the Italian Renaissance. Access to the collection of Dutch art ensured the researcher created the *Musée Napoleon* in 1802 and organized the exhibition of works of art by regional schools.⁹ According to the considerations of Schlegel, German and Dutch art dominated the humanism of Italian masters because of the simplicity and tranquillity of the works of Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling, which constituted an inseparable element of interpretation of the surviving documents.

Another researcher associated with *Musée du Louvre* was Le Comte Leon de Laborde, curator of the department of medieval, renaissance and modern sculpture. In his observations an important point was social and economic aspects supported by numerous archival records. He published his works with particular topics, but was never able to complete monographic publications to which the notes were considered missing; his more important work was *Les Ducs de Bour-*

gogne. Études sur les lettres, les arts et l'industrie pendant le XVe siècle (1849-52). While composing texts based on archival materials, he was making close comparisons with the material available in the private collections of English and Belgian churches.¹⁰ Both researchers undertook the study of documents related to the life and culture of the court to reconstruct the history consistent with the trend of romantic and nationalists, treating the issue of collection as a secondary topic. It is worth noting the presence of analysis of art works, which formed an inseparable element of interpretation of the surviving documents.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, art criticism rejected its interest in the Middle Ages; Jules Michelet in seventeen volumes of the *History of France*,¹¹ in the prologue to *The Renaissance*¹² approved the tendency to return to nature and democracy of the Italian dukes and criticized the aristocracy and the church. *Valois-Bourgogne* dukes have been identified as followers of the Renaissance model of rule, by maintaining constant contact with the Italian dealers and subsidiaries of banks.¹³ As a result of contact with humanism, they modelled their collections directly on the organisation of first early modern collectors...

Another example of the study of the Renaissance was Jacob Burckhardt, who interpreted the expansion of the Italian Renaissance as one of the most important factors in the development of European civilization. In the work entitled *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, he mentioned the Netherlands workshops as the creators of the poetic landscapes, if not rivalling *Interest of the Italian eye for nature from finding its own expression*...¹⁴ rejecting any appreciation for the taste of patrons from the second half of the fifteenth century. Indeed, he would not accept any alternative or contrast to the genius of *Cinquecento* artists and their patrons.

The publications of Burckhardt boosted activity of French, German, Dutch and Belgian nationalist

⁹ BELOZERSKAYA, Marina. *Rethinking the Renaissance: Burgundian Arts across Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 29.

¹⁰ BELOZERSKAYA, Marina, 2002, p. 31.

¹¹ MICHELET, Jules. *Histoire de France*. XVII vols., Paris, 1833-67.

¹² MICHALET, Jules, 1855, vol. VII.

¹³ VERATELLI, Federica. "I tratti del potere. I clienti italiani de Hans Memling". In: BORCHERT, Till Holger (coord.). *Memling. Rinascimento fiammingo*. (Held at: Roma, Scuderie del Quirinale, 11.10.2014-18.01.2015). Roma: SKIRA, 2014, pp. 53-65.

¹⁴ BURCKHARDT, Jacob. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. From: *Project Gutenberg*, <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2074/2074-h/2074-h.htm>> (Retrieved: 19.05.2015).

environments. A significant contraction was an exhibition in Bruges in 1900, supervised by Paul Wythsman, which initiated interest in Dutch art from the art amateur, literary critics and patriots. In addition, the independence of late medieval and modern artists coming from Flanders, gained the respect of the public in the early twentieth century whereby another monographic exhibitions devoted to the work of Peter Brueghel, Jan van Eyck, Hans Memling and Gerard David were organized.¹⁵ It is worth noting that exhibitions devoted to artists and painters largely ignored decorative arts and crafts such as gold works, carpentry, tapestries, imitation of manuscripts, etc. not allowing recipients to construct a full image of collection belonging to the dukes of Burgundy or members of their court.¹⁶

The beginning of the twentieth century was a moment of recognition for the creativity of artists associated with the court of the dukes of Burgundy, Philip the Good and Charles the Bold, and its decisive critic was Hippolyte Fierens – Gevaert, Rector of the University of Liege, who defined the Northern Renaissance, formulating thesis about the development of the rebirth of art in the areas of Flanders.¹⁷ In his observations, we can notice the bias description of works of individual artists, in accordance with applicable scheme focused on the general outlines of works of art, striving to reproduce the *oeuvre* of the artist, enriching them with biographical information.

A milestone in the study of art and culture of the dukes of Burgundy was Johan Huizinga and his *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*,¹⁸ published in 1919. He represented the tendencies analogical to the theses proposed by Burckhardt concerning domination of artistic trends over other centres of culture-creating. Huizinga concentrated on the cultural phenomenon started in the fifteenth century, the principalities ruled by Valois-Burgundy. Precise analysis of the works of art and chronicles of Georges Chastellain, allowed for an analysis of

the Burgundian court culture, which influenced the artistic creation. Dukes stimulated the development of trade in works of art in terms of paintings and other objects of artistic production. The complex structure of the court was recognized while examining the presence of ancient and medieval tradition expressed by means of art, characteristic for the Renaissance and parallel present on the Italian courts. The mentioned study was devoted not only to the interpretation of the painting, but also took into account economic aspects, political and social of duchy of Burgundy. At the same time the rules of the art market and patronage court were indicated. Huizinga suggested the hypothesis concerning the presence of conscious collecting, with characteristics similar to Italian environment.¹⁹ The approximation of research on Dutch art and the court of the dukes of Burgundy allow an understanding of the lack of consolidated hypotheses about the dimension and character of the collection.

An analysis of the phenomenon of collecting Julius von Schlosser changed the prospect of seeing the collection of objects at the turn of the middle Ages and Modern Age. Despite this, he did not develop enough motifs associated with the dukes of Burgundy because of a lack of material source. It should be noted that he suggested the method of analysis, which allowed an understanding of the origins of collecting to the north of the Alps and his sequels on the Habsburg court. Keep in mind that his study of collecting and art of Dutch developed in the twentieth century, including by Francis Henry Taylor.²⁰

Collectible tradition at the court of the dukes of Burgundy

Former historiography interpreted Italy as the cradle of collecting, pointing to the Renaissance interest in antiquity. Francesco Petrarca, with his collection of writings, poems, coins and other treasures was recognized as one of the first mod-

¹⁵ HASKELL, Francis. *Rediscoveries in Art: Some Aspects of Taste, Fashion and Collecting in England and France*. Cornell Univ Press, 1980, p. 51.

¹⁶ The use and the utilization of the images have been studied from a historical perspective by Hans Belting, *Imagen y culto. Una historia de la imagen anterior a la edad del arte*, Ed. Akal, Madrid, 2009.

¹⁷ FIERENS GEVAERT, Hippolyte. *La peinture en Belgique, musées, églises, collections, etc. Les Primitifs Flamands*. 2 vols. Brussels: G. van Oest, 1908-1909.

¹⁸ HUIZINGA, Johan. *El otoño de la Edad Media. Estudios sobre la forma de la vida y del espíritu durante los siglos XIV y XV en Francia y en los Países Bajos*. Madrid: Alianza, 1982.

¹⁹ KRUL, Wessel. "In the Mirror of van Eyck: Johan Huizinga's autumn of the middle Ages". *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 1997, 23:3, pp. 353-384.

²⁰ TAYLOR, Francis Henry. *The taste of Angels. A History of Art Collecting from Ramses to Napoleon*. Boston: An Atlantic Monthly Press Book, 1948, pp. 47-49.

ern collectors and a creator of taste. This statement needs to be corrected however, as it was proved by Julius von Schlosser at the beginning of the twentieth century, who pointed to the continuity in maintaining the medieval treasure of the cathedral, focused mainly on collecting reliquaries and manuscripts.²¹

In search of a direct impact on the roots of Burgundian collection we should keep in mind the ancestors of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold as they were mentioned by Julius von Schlosser. He did not propose a broader vision of the Burgundian collection, pointing to a lack of appropriate sources. He propounds the hypothesis of smaller financial outlays from the rulers of Burgundy to maintain collection.²² With the passage of time and the progress of research into the Flemish art, and collections of Burgundy, the vision of Schlosser can be denied.

The person of John II of France (1320-1364) is related to the beginnings of princely collection to the north of the Alps. He was an enthusiast of illuminated manuscripts and his collections were developed by his descendants: Jean de Berry, Louis of Anjou and Philip the Bold. The last one started the dynastic line of *Valois-Bourgogne* and inherited part of his father's collection. The development of the production of illuminated manuscripts and the International Gothic falls on the second half of the fourteenth century, which indicates changes in the taste of contemporary collectors.²³ Book of hours, calendars, psalters and other objects associated with private religious devotion became among the mansion, the key factor of the duke's prestige, and the most important workshops of production were related to Paris.

The composition of dukes collection included not only illuminated codices, collected in libraries but also art crafts objects such as silverware, tapestries, gems, medallions, etc. An example of public interest of luxury objects among the powerful elite is the exchange between the mansions in

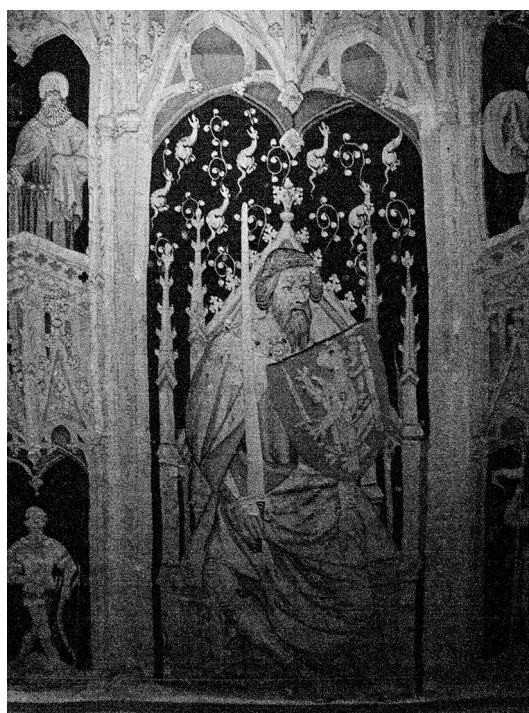


Fig. 1. Tapestry, *Le Neuf Preux*, about 1385, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloister, New York.

1391 years Duke Jean de Berry donated his nephew Charles VI, golden chalice (currently forming part of the collection of the British Museum in London). Another example confirming the diversity of the objects included in the princely collection is Duke Jean de Berry's tapestry of *Le Neuf Preux* (Nine Noble Heroes) (Fig. 1), referring to the tradition of courtly chivalry.²⁴

These examples and their presence in inventories of the House of Valois affirm the beginnings of the modern singularity of collecting as part of court culture in the fourteenth century.²⁵ This certifies the slow transformation of the court environment leading to the new Renaissance understanding of the phenomenon related to the accumulation of objects. Inheriting part of inventoried

²¹ VON SCHLOSSER, Julius. *Las cámaras artísticas y maravillosas del Renacimiento tardío. Una contribución a la historia del coleccionismo*. Madrid: Akal, 1988, pp. 16-19.

²² VON SCHLOSSER, Julius, 1988, pp. 50-51.

²³ BIAŁOSTOCKI, Jan. *Pó ny gotyk: studia nad sztuką przełomu średniowiecza i czasów nowych*. Warszawa: PWN, 1965, p. 32.

²⁴ STEIN, Wendy. "Patronage of Jean de Berry (1340–1416)" From: <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/berr/hd_berr.htm> (Retrieved: 19.05.2015). The medieval chivalrous tradition was a common element court culture in the Netherlands which was wrongly understood by historians as a continuation of Late Medieval. Interpreting the chivalrous culture it is important noticing reminiscences of ancient, biblical and medieval, as past eras. Nine Noble Heroes should be seen as: Hector, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar (three antique heroes), David, Joshua, Judas Maccabeus (three biblical heroes) and King Arthur, Charlemagne and Gottfried de Bouillon (three medieval knights).

²⁵ TAYLOR Francis Henry, 1948, p. 51.

collections by Philip the Good and Charles the Bold was the basis for their subsequent collection, which evolved an understanding of taste, closely related to the courtly customs.

An important element that confirms the continuity of the phenomenon of collecting initiated by Jean de Berry and developed in Burgundy in the second half of the fifteenth century is the fact that illuminated manuscripts were continued and supplemented, which in many cases makes it difficult to date them accurately or attribution of objects. An example is the manuscript *Trés Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, formerly assigned in whole to Limburg brothers, and now interpreted as a work produced for years.²⁶ In the years 1440-1450 after the end of the Hundred Years War, and the territorial expansion of Philip the Good, we can record the growth of artistic patronage over the production of illuminated manuscripts in the areas of Flanders which confirms the growth of the princely library resources and the development of workshop production in Bruges.²⁷

The ducal collections and collectors at the court of Burgundy

When we analyse the collection of the Burgundian court we should pay attention to the complex hierarchy of positions, which resulted from administrative reforms understood by Philip the Good in the first half of the fifteenth century.²⁸ In addition to the Duke's and aristocracy families the reform established participation of the middle class in the court life, which cultural patterns drew from the nobility environment, among others, having a collection of luxury goods. What draws attention is the fact that ordered objects were not only used to satisfy the needs of the collector, but their most important function was to represent the owner in the official celebrations as a symbolic expression of positions and possessions.²⁹

The previously described trends of the inheritance of artistic objects by court served to empower the position of the rulers of Burgundy and Flanders moreover influenced the growing importance of the medieval tradition as a historical reference. The creation of the Order of the Golden Fleece by Philip the Good in 1430³⁰ and orders related to the celebrations chapter houses determined by placing orders with the craftsmen involved in the production of valuable goods. Examples include paraments of the Golden Fleece (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) previously deposited in a princely *Sainte-Chapelle* in Dijon. The previously mentioned economic situation of workshops producing manuscripts in the second half of the fifteenth century was conditioned by the taste of collectors related to the environment court. This is confirmed by the manuscript *Livre d'heures de Philippe le Bon, or Roman d'Alexandre*.³¹ At the same time an increase of orders for tapestries produced in a workshop in Brussels was recorded. From this period come portraits of Philip the Good and young Charles the Bold made by Rogier van der Weyden's workshop. A significant increase in production undertaken for the court confirms the intense artistic patronage and collecting various objects by the court environment till the death of Philip the Good in 1467.³²

Rebellions in Flemish cities are related with the takeover by Charles the Bold. The first mission of the new prince was to restore order in the rebellious urban centres and depriving them of privileges. These events slightly influenced the decline in the production of luxury goods ordered by the court. In the decoration of palaces and residences of princes the objects collected by the father of Charles the Bold were used, which confirms the *Mille Fleurs* fabric, acquired by the Swiss army after the battle of Nancy. The artistic patronage of the reign of Philip the Good was connected with

²⁶ STIRNEMANN, Patricia; RABEL, Claudia. "The 'Trés Riches Heures' and two artists associated with the Bedford Workshop". *The Burlington Magazine*, 2005, vol. 147, n°. 1229, pp. 526-533.

²⁷ HAGOPIAN-VAN BUREN, Anne. *Philip the Good's manuscripts as documents of his relations with the Empire*, Centre Européen d'Etudes Bourguignonnes, 2008, pp. 49-52.

²⁸ VAUGHAN, Richard. *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy*. The Boydell Press, 2002, p. 140.

²⁹ BLOCKMANS Wim; DONCKERS, Esther. "Self-Representation of Court and City in Flanders and Brabant in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries". In: BLOCKMANS, Wim; JANSE, Antheun. *Showing Status. Representation of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages*, vols. II, Turnhout Brepols Publishers, 1999, vol. II, pp. 81-111.

³⁰ MÍNGUEZ, Víctor. "Un collar ígneo para un vellocino áureo. Iconografía de la Orden del Toisón". In: CHECA, Fernando (coord.); MARTÍNEZ-CORRECHER Y GIL, Joaquín (coord.). *La Orden del Toisón de Oro y sus soberanos (1430-2011)*. (Held at: Madrid, Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 1.12.2011 – 26.02.2012). Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2011, pp. 75-98.

³¹ BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, *Les livres à feuilleté*. From: <<http://expositions.bnf.fr/livres/>> (Retrieved: 19.05.2015)

³² VAUGHAN, Richard, 2002, p. 376.

the life of the court, the representation of power and celebration. An example of festival can be the feast organized on the occasion of the marriage of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York in Bruges, 3rd of July, 1468. In addition to the chronicle records documenting the course of events, in the European collections the objects commemorating the celebration were preserved, which belonged to the collection of Burgundy. Among other things, the crown ordered for Margaret of York, preserved in the treasury of the cathedral in Aachen, that its symbolism alluded to the origin and virtues of the Duchess. Another example is the series of tapestries exhibited during banquets, presenting the story of Hercules (The Burrell Collection, Glasgow) which in addition to knightly virtues symbolize the noble origin of Charles the Bold.³³

The takeover by Charles the Bold are related to the rebellions in Flemish cities. The first task of the new prince was to restore order in the rebellious urban centres and depriving them of privileges. These events slightly influenced the decline in production of luxury goods ordered by the court. The aggressive policy of conquest of duke contributed to lower financial effort on the development of the collection court. The deterioration of sovereign position resulted in an increase in the importance and enriching of the middle class. In the second half of the XV century they fully adapted the courtly pattern of collecting items imitating princely collections. It has been noticed an increase in painting workshops production, and clarifying the issue about the model of middle class donor portrait.

After the death of Charles the Bold at the Battle of Nancy in 1477 Duchy of Burgundy were at a disadvantage associated with inheritance of power. Salic law did not allow a woman to reign, and the only heir to the lost prince was his daughter Mary of Burgundy. Territories subjected to the sovereignty of France returned to the crown along with the assembled princes goods. Marriage of Duchess with Maximilian I Habsburg did not positively influence relations between the

court and the Flemish aristocracy. Not many foundations associated with the court preserved to this day, one of the most important are the Chronicles of Flanders from the late fifteenth century, probably founded by Maximilian I. This manuscript justified the Rupee of the Habsburgs on the Flemish territories, referring to the continuation of the tradition of the *Valois-Burgundy* dynasty.³⁴

To fully understand the phenomenon of collecting, the Burgundian court is not considered just an analysis of the causes related only to the dukes. In the last decades of the fourteenth century the important role played the middle class and aristocracies, who by developing their careers and fortunes, actively participated in the life of the court. As examples of ambitious careers can be used chancellor Nicolas Rollin, the chancellor Pieter Bladelin or Lodewijk van Gruuthuse.³⁵ Features of the few examples of the collection of court officials allowed the characterization of collecting court.

The chancellor of Duke Philip the Good, Nicolas Rollin came from a middle class family from Autumn, from 1422 he took one of the most important positions in the court's structures. His artistic patronage is the most widely documented. His foundations are mainly in Burgundy, but he made orders directly in the Netherlands workshops, which can be confirmed by early an example of one of his foundation – The Madonna of Chancellor Rollin painted by Jan van Eyck. It should be noted that a court official could afford to buy works by the duke's *Valet de chambre*, which confirms the prestige of the customer. It is worth mentioning that the figure of chancellor Rollin show miniatures ordered by Philip the Good, which confirms his significant position in the court's structures. The largest of the chancellor's foundations was Hotel-Dieu in Beaune with the equipment.

Among other examples of high-ranking officials such as Pieter Bladelin or Lodewijk van Gruuthuse documented orders of the artists who worked for

³³ CHECA, Fernando. "El poder de los símbolos. La Orden del Toisón de Oro, la significación del ceremonial y los retratos de los reyes de España (siglos XVI-XVIII)". In: CHECA, Fernando (coord.); MARTÍNEZ-CORRECHER Y GIL, Joaquín (coord.). *La Orden del Toisón de Oro y sus soberanos (1430-2011)*. (Held at: Madrid, Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 1.12.2011 – 26.02.2012). Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2011, pp. 11-44.

³⁴ FAGEL, Raymond. "El mundo de Felipe el Hermoso. La política europea alrededor de 1500". In: ZALAMA, Miguel Ángel; VANDENBROECK, Paul. *Felipe I el Hermoso: la belleza y la locura*. Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2006, 51-68.

³⁵ MARTENS, Maximilian (coord.); GRYSE, Piet. *Lodewijk van Gruuthuse. Mecenas en Europees Diplomaat ca. 1427-1492* (Held at: Bruges, Gruuthusemuseum, 19.09.1992 – 19.11.1992). Bruges, 1992, pp. 14-19.



Fig. 2. *Shield of Parade*, late 15th century, The British Museum, London.

the dukes. Based on the analysis of the preserved portraits of people associated with the duke's court we should take into account people like Philip de Croy or Jean de Froimont.³⁶ Foundations of these people are mainly painted by devotional polyptychs. The artistic patronage of the merchants modelled on the court splendour characterized by lower financial effort with a few exceptions. It is worth mentioning numerous manuscripts from the collection of Lodewijk van Gruuthuse and his private library which in this case is to certify courtiers foundations equal to dukes foundation.

Special considerations deserve female's portraits. By their dresses those ladies must be associated with the court, not with the Flemish middle class as it was interpreted formerly.³⁷ Only few of them have been associated with a particular person or patron.³⁸ The fact that women in the Netherlands had the right to inherit would not exclude them from the circles of collectors, and what is more, the medieval knightly tradition dictated respecting women as heart intended and to praise them in full ceremonial splendour. Identified female portraits were ordered by men, which reduces proposing the specific hypotheses concerning the patronage of the female. Examples of visualization of a knight's love cult presenting women include a Tournament shield preserved in the British Museum, with an inscription "You or the death" (Fig. 2),³⁹ or the richly decorated brooch from Kunsthistorisches Museum with the image of a couple of lovers. None of these objects can be connected with a particular patron. Another example that could support the female patronage and collecting phenomenon among women are prayers or Book of hours. According Michael Camille, at the beginning of the fifteenth century it was the object of devotion reserved exclusively for female, in the second half of the century we can see a tendency of founding the Book of hours by male representatives of the duke's family or ordering of manuscripts as a gift for duchess.⁴⁰ The lack of proper documentation does not allow a definition of female artistic patronage, and this issue still needs proper research that would allow for fuller classification. It is essential to say that women at the court of Burgundy enjoyed an important position, despite not having official posts. Their presence is confirmed by numerous manuscripts illustrating courtly life and celebration,⁴¹ what is more court chroniclers repeatedly praised their beauty.

Typology of objects from the collection of the dukes and the court

Determining the nature of collecting and the Burgundy court required classifying objects included

³⁶ CAMPBELL, Lorne. "More on Philippe de Croy and Jean de Froimont". *Burlington Magazine*. 2005, vol. 147, n° 1223, p. 108.

³⁷ TILGHMAN, Carla. "Giovanna Cenami's Veil: A neglected Detail". *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, 2005, 1, pp. 156-172.

³⁸ BROOMHALL, Susan. "Gendering the culture of honour at the Fifteenth-Century Burgundian Court". In: TARBIN, Stephanie; BROOMHALL, Susan. *Women, identities and communities in Early Modern Europe*. Aldershot, 2008, pp. 181-194.

³⁹ KENDRICK, Thomas Downing. "A Flemish Painted Shield". *The British Museum Quarterly*, 1939, 9, 13:2, pp. 33-34.

⁴⁰ HAAG, Sabine; KIRCHWEGGER, Franz. *Treasures of the Habsburgs: The Kunstkammer at the Kunsthistorisches Museum*. London: Thames&Hudson, 2003, p. 86.

⁴¹ CAMILLE, Michael. "'For Our Devotion and Pleasure': The Sexual Objects of Jean, Duc de Berry". *Art History*, 2001, vol. 24, n° 2, pp. 169-194.

in the collection according to the hierarchy of glamor expression present in the courtly tradition. Its design is based on the value of the material from which the object was made. It was not verified by the historiography of art history very long because of the analysis relying on the Italian discourse regarding the value of representational arts. The proposed classification was based on primary studies conducted by Marina Belozerskaya, which contrasted the Italian Renaissance values with the northern Renaissance.⁴²

Five categories were distinguished when analysing, ordered by values as they represented symbols of exclusivity and according to their relevance in visual messages:

- Gold work (objects made of gold, silver and other precious metals).
- Textiles (mainly tapestries).
- Manuscripts.
- Sculpture.
- Painting.

With the development of technology and need for luxury materials Flanders became one of the most important European manufacturers of clothing, tapestries and textile decorations. Their values as objects of luxury should be placed in the lead due to the cost of production and the precious materials used.⁴³ The Burgundian court held power in the era of early modern trends in clothing at European courts, imposing a hierarchy of fabrics appropriate to the necessary role.⁴⁴ This is confirmed by numerous records of orders and chronicles, which subtly describe the position of a duke focusing mainly on his clothing.

The lord duke, according to orders given yesterday morning, had the league published in the church in the following way. His lordship came to the church dressed in a long robe, of cloth of gold lined with sable, extremely sumptuous, in which silver was substituted for silk. On his head he had a black velvet hat with a plume of gold loaded with the largest balas-rubies and diamonds and with large pearls, some good ones pendent, and

*the pearls and gems were so closely packed that one could not see the plume...*⁴⁵

The most valuable fabrics used among the courtiers were silk and velvet. Only a small group closely connected with the ruling person could afford to have this type of clothing. The next in the hierarchy were damask and taffeta destined for other officials.⁴⁶

Examples of expressive splendour and dignity were seen in interior decorations which consisted of a series of woven tapestries. They were ordered for special occasions like marriage, occasional banquets, festivals or funerals. Their value was not only noble material but also iconographic cycles associated with mythological, biblical and medieval stories. They confirmed not only the wealth of the duke but his virtues as a good and strong ruler.

Due to the cost of production, tapestries were passed-on from generation to generation and were accurately described in the documents, in the case of the Burgundian court first inventory came from 1404 and confirms the ownership of more than 100 tapestries. During the reign of John the Fearless, the request of cycle of tapestries presenting the Battle of Liege was documented to commemorate this event, emphasizing the successes of the dynasty. The same series of tapestries were described in the inventories of his son in the years 1430-1432.

One of the many series of tapestries was Gideon History; ordered in 1449 to decorate the interiors which held the Chapter of the Order of the Golden Fleece. It was made in a workshop in Tournai and completed in 1453, kept in the palace of the Burgundy Dukes Hotel d'Artois in Paris. Tapestries for the last time were documented in 1794 during their transport to Vienna, from that moment they were considered as lost.⁴⁷

Tapestry collections of Burgundian court were exposed most impressively during the wedding ceremony of Charles the Bold, the description of

⁴² BELOZERSKAYA, Marina, 2002, pp. 76-145.

⁴³ CAMPBELL, Thomas. *Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002, p. 13.

⁴⁴ MONNAS, Lisa. *Merchants, Princes and Painters: Silk Fabrics in Italian and Northern Paintings, 1300-1550*. Yale University Press, 2008, pp. 243-261.

⁴⁵ Follow: VAUGHAN, Richard. *Charles the Bold*. The Boydell Press, 2002, pp. 169-171.

⁴⁶ The example of the visual representation of the court is possible to know from the miniatures from *The Chronicles of Hainaut*.

⁴⁷ CAMPBELL, Thomas, 2002, pp. 14-18.



Fig. 3. Gerard Loyet, *Reliquary of Charles the Bold*, around 1467/71, Trésor de la Cathédrale, Liege.

which confirms numerous series. Some of them were taken over by the Swiss army after the battle of Nancy and today we can find them in *Historisches Museum* in Bern. Others were transferred to the Habsburgs court with the takeover in Burgundy by Maximilian I. The tradition of collecting was continued by his successor's courts.⁴⁸

The succession of valuable objects was concerned substantially with objects made of precious materials due to their high market price. An important fact is that they were many times gifts between the court and the duke or the duke and other royal families of Europe. The previously described brooches or cups are just a few examples; the

greatest value had complex objects, such as setting the altar, crosses or reliquaries. The most numerous came from the early sixteenth century, including the Swearing-in Cross of the Order of the Golden Fleece (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). Probably it belonged to the collection of Duke John de Berry, but it is documented at the court of Philip the Good and handed over to the treasury of the Order of the Golden Fleece.⁴⁹

The previously mentioned examples of objects were associated with court celebrations and festivals. An example of feast celebrated by the court was the Feast of the Pheasant in 1454, during which dukes and courtiers committed to organize crusades and the liberation of the Holy Land. This event had a political nature and was part of the effort of the Duke of Burgundy about papal permission for the king coronation.⁵⁰ A set of golden tableware preserved in the British Museum can be associated with this event because it represents the iconography of a small pheasant.

An example of a foundation of high status object was the reliquary of Charles the Bold offered to the Cathedral in Liege in 1467, when the duke took over and plundered the rebellious city, murdering many residents and taking away all middle class privileges. This move was considered as unethical by the church; hence the prince had to redeem his sin. Gold reliquary (Fig. 3) presented two figures: humbled duke and patron of the cities St. George. On the pedestal were the initials of Charles the Bold and his wife Margaret of York. The value of an object indicates that noble material from which was made precious reliquary and very expensive technique *email – ronde bosse*, which allows obtaining the effects of gold coloration by which statuette maintained a very high level of realism. Reliquary probably comes from the workshop of a goldsmith Gerard Loyeta, working at the time for the ducal court.⁵¹

In the hierarchy of material values, the collection of manuscripts was prized very highly. These types of luxury goods in the early fifteenth century were produced mainly in Paris, with the passage of time and the increase in demand, the Dutch workshops concentrated in Bruges were devel-

⁴⁸ FELIPE EL HERMOSO.

⁴⁹ ZIEMBA, Antoni. *Sztuka Burgundii i Niderlandów 1380-1500*. Vols. II. Warszawa: WUW, 2008, vol. I, p. 142.

⁵⁰ CARON, Marie Thérèse. "El banquete de los votos del Faisán y la fiesta de corte borgeña". DE JONGE, Krista; GARCÍA GARCÍA, Bernardo; ESTEBAN ESTRÍNGANA, Alicia. *El Legado de Borgoña. Fiesta y Ceremonia Cortesana en la Europa de los Austrias (1454-1648)*. Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2010, pp. 21-34.

⁵¹ GEORGE, Philippe. "Le reliquaire de Charles le Téméraire du Trésor de la Cathédrale de Liège. Un message à déchiffer". *Annales de Bourgogne* 2001.

Table 1

INVENTORIES OF THE BURGUNDIAN LIBRARY MADE BETWEEN
1420 AND 1504 BY HANNO WIJSMAN

Year	Place	When the inventory was made	Numbers of manuscripts	
1420	Dijon	On the death of John the Fearless	252	283
1424	Dijon	On the death of Margaret of Bavaria	31	
1469	Brugge	On the death of Philip the Good	878	878
693	Dijon	On the death of Charles the Bold	93	
Until 1504			600	

oped. The main contracting illuminated books, prayer books, missals, etc. were church dignitaries and representatives of royal families and nobility. To approximate amount of volumes that make up the collection it was necessary to examine inventories drawn up by the court and works mentioned in the documentation (Table 1).

Based on the data gathered by Hanno Wijsman⁵² an increase in the production of manuscripts ordered by the court is documented and collected by dukes theory is based on the interests hobby of collecting books by Philip the Good. It is worth noting that a large contained the translations of works from Latin into French, which certifies the development of language culture at the court.⁵³ This confirms the alternative for Italian collecting to the north of the Alps.

One of the most important writers of the court was Jean Mielot, who translated works of Aristotle, Cicero and others for the duke. His works confirm a vibrant interest in knight culture and politics at the court. Johan Huizinga noted that these codes did not contribute to the development of intellectual culture, their main value made the fact of possession and presentation during the public audiences, the argument in favour of this type of statement is the lack of comments to the works of contemporary writers⁵⁴ (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Master of the *Jardin de vertueuse consolation* and assistant, *Vasco da Lucena Giving his Work to Charles the Bold*, about 1470-1475, Ms. Ludwig XV 8, fol. 2v. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles © J. Paul Getty Trust.

⁵² WIJSMAN, Hanno. "Book Collections and their Use. The Example of the Library of the Dukes of Burgundy". *Queeste. Journal of Medieval Literature in the Low Countries*, 2013, 20, p. 83-98.

⁵³ WIJSMAN, Hanno, 2013.

⁵⁴ HUIZINGA, Johan, 1982, pp. 361-364.

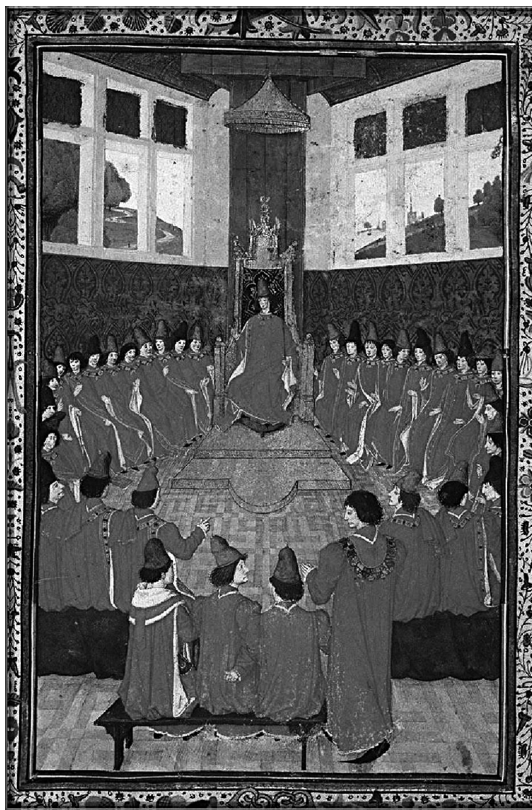


Fig. 5. *Statutes, ordonnances and armorial of the Order of the Golden Fleece*, 1473, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague. © Koninklijke Bibliotheek National Library of the Netherlands.

The development of libraries subsided after the death of Philip the Good, his successor was not focused on the acquisition of new works for the dukes's libraries. Collections gathered after 1477 were taken over by Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian I Habsburg. In the times of their reign there was a decrease of manuscripts in French, which had its origins in the conduct of anti-French policy by the Habsburgs.⁵⁵ Numerous dukes' manuscripts were in nobility libraries, among others, the previously mentioned Lodewijk van Gruuthuse who till the death of Mary of Burgundy supported the policy of the Habsburgs.

The advantage of manuscripts was not only seen in the content, but also illuminated miniatures, which are an excellent source of research into the culture of the court. They confirm the course of the court celebration or document significant events. Among the most important we should pay attention to the *Statutes, Ordonnances and armorial of the Order of the Golden Fleece* (Koninklijke

Bibliotheek, The Hague) (Fig. 5), which were developed together with the Chapters of the Order, by adding cards with images and the arms of another wealthy adopted in the congregation. They confirm not only the importance of the association but also attachment to tradition started in the time of Philip the Good by successive heirs of the Duchy. Leading the Chapter was an important element of domestic policy, and possession of manuscripts legitimized power in Burgundy and Flanders.

Sculpture collecting is the most complicated issue because of the lack of documentation that would confirm its constant presence at court. Architectural sculpture cannot be taken into account in this category because it was not an object directly belonged to collection. Moreover, in the 30s, the importance of the ducal sculpture workshop in Dijon fell, which confirms the reduction of salaries of court sculptor Claus de Werve.⁵⁶ A significant part of sculptural objects made Madonnas which were placed in churches as a result of the donation, which also cannot allow them to qualify sculpture as a collectible object.

The surviving fragments of sculptures unrelated to the cult and devotion come from dukes' graves. Due to their location in the churches, the nature of collecting sculpture cannot be specified. It is worth noting that the compositional schemes of sculptures repeatedly appear in the painting array. These imitations indicate a significant advantage of sculptures in culture and arts hierarchy. Similarly to gold jewellery, sculpture painted by the artist copied its more expensive counterpart made of wood or stone.

Ephemeral decoration prepared to celebrate festivals or celebrations that took place on the streets of Flemish cities in the second half of the fifteenth century, like sculpture cannot be qualified for the collection of dukes. Due to the lack of documentation we cannot make a conclusion about their later use, or reuse. However, it is known that their preparation was entrusted with the most expensive workshops of Flemish cities, among other things, Rogier van der Weyden and Hugo van der Goes, who worked on decoration projects for the wedding of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York.

Analysing the dukes collections it can be noted that the situation of patronage of the broader

⁵⁵ WIJSMAN, Hanno, 2013.

⁵⁶ ZIEMBA, Antoni, 2008, p. 336.

painting is very similar to the patronage of the production and collecting other objects. The death of Philip the Good completed an important era of intense ordering in local workshops. This does not mean a lack of interest on the artistic production by Charles the Bold or its successors. An important fact is that the painting had never enjoyed such interest of the Burgundian court as other artistic techniques, as it is confirmed by inventories and preserved objects. During the life of Jan van Eyck and during the role of court *valet de chambre*, duke's portraits made a small percentage of the collection. The only orders of this type were three portraits of Isabella of Portugal, commissioned for the artist during his diplomatic mission.⁵⁷ Other aspects connected with the painter workshop were the orders of the aristocracy and middle class. The expression of duke's taste and appreciation for the artists are mentioned above portraits of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold which came from the workshop of Rogier van der Weyden, it is worth noting that this artist is also the author of a portrait of Anthony the Great Bastard of Burgundy. All three present a very simple convention with uniform background and small objects held by the person portrayed. They were not devotional diptychs, but their precise function is not possible because of the lack of proper documentation.

For the second half of the fifteenth century accounts a significant development of individualized middle class and noble portraits, which were combined into polyptychs, with representations of the Madonna. The leaders in the production were Rogier van der Weyden workshops and foremost Hans Memling. This phenomenon is related to the increasing importance of the middle class position and international merchants in political structures of Flanders. Not all portraits have been identified with a particular client, which reduces the possibility of more in-depth analysis. Another issue to keep in mind is to identify people portrayed with the environment court or with middle class, such as The portrait of a man with an arrow, Rogier van der Weyden (Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp) or The Portrait of a young man, Hans Memling (Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid) (Fig. 6).

In the case of identified portraits it can be confidently stated that the ordering came from the court circle: Portrait of Edawrda Grimson (The National Gallery, London), Portrait of Jean de Froi-

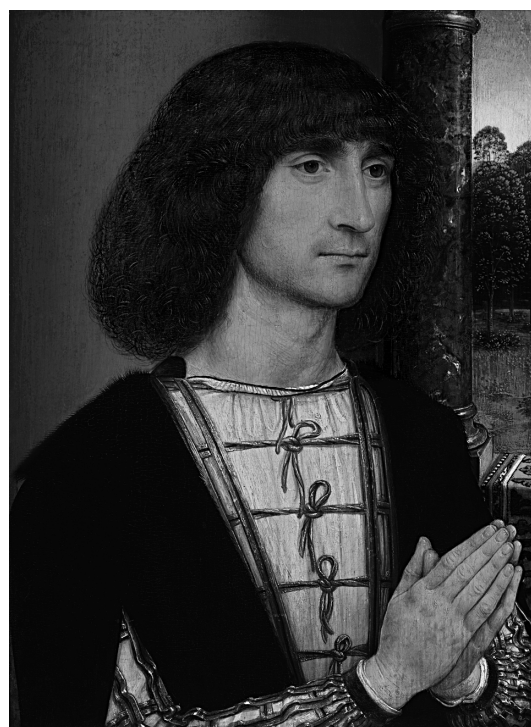


Fig. 6. Hans Memling, *Portrait of a young Man praying*, about 1485, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. © Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza. Madrid.

mont, (Royaux Musées de Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels) or Diptych of Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Groeningemuseum, Bruges). This is the basis for the confirmation of artistic patronage and the collector taste present within the courtiers and wealthy middle class, modelled directly at the royal court.

Repeatedly in the analysis of the Northern Renaissance paintings, realism and credible commitment to detail by the artists was taken into account. The analysis of details contributed to the development of hypotheses about the hidden meaning of iconography and iconology studies. Despite this, it is worth noting that the painting repeatedly shows precious objects such as home furnishings, textiles or jewellery. Understanding the value imitated by painting objects is the key to full expression in the meaning of the middle class portraits. Duke as head did not have a need to portray with his belongings, because he was the wealthiest citizen. Devotional diptychs in the middle class interiors represented not only a portrayed person but also its property, or the desire of ownership. The vision of painting in this case does not represent the material value, what is more, its goal was pri-

⁵⁷ FRANSEN, Bart. "Juan van Eyck y España. Un viaje y una obra". *Anales de Historia del Arte*, 2012, vol. 22, pp. 39-58.

vate devotion. Its main task was to visualize the aspirations of owning and closer to the duke's pattern.

Conclusions

Referring to the definition of Manfred Sommer, collecting is a widely available act, and does not require any effort, but it always repeats a set pattern:

*Many items that were previously scattered are so touched that then they are together. That common movement toward being together is done because of watching: what is here – here, stays here and can be viewed...*⁵⁸

A theoretical understanding of the phenomenon proposed in the twentieth century does not allow for a full understanding of collecting present at the court of the Dukes of Burgundy in the Early Modern Age, and therefore additional clarification is needed.

The patterns for the collection of the Dukes of Burgundy were initiated by their direct relatives associated with the French court in the late fourteenth century. The inheritance of a considerable amount of luxury goods which were reserved exclusively for social elites allowed the continuation of this phenomenon. We must not forget about the Italian impact, which did not confine itself to that period, but affected the rulers of Burgundy throughout the fifteenth century. Diplomatic contacts with the Italian dukes and merchants, who multiplied their wealth through trade with the Flemish towns, including a broad range trade with works of art.⁵⁹

We should keep in mind the intensity of artistic patronage, whose climax falls on the reign of Philip the Good, who as it was mentioned earlier, was the most active client of luxury goods workshops. Due to his aspirations of extending the territories of the Duchy Charles the Bold neglected the development of the collection. After his death the duchy inherited by Mary Burgundy, then Maximilian I Habsburg in the early years could not rise from the political crisis caused by antagonisms between the new ruler and the nobility of Flanders. The situation of the duke's patronage improved together with the stabilization of the internal situation in the takeover by Philip the Handsome,

who tried to restore the authority of mansion institution.

In the case of court patronage a trend opposite to the intensity of the duke's foundation was observed. In the second half of the fifteenth century it was significantly noted that there was a rise in courtiers and middle class orders of luxury objects. The enrichment of society and the growing importance of individual units developing careers in the court circle, and the expanding middle class resulted in a building on the duke's patronage in undertaken foundations, which confirms applying similar iconographic language.

It is important to pay attention to the proportion of the number of objects defined as textiles, goldsmith, manuscripts, sculpture and painting in orders. This allows an understanding of the hierarchy of objects as a determinant of power and symbol of belonging to social elite. In the analysis of museum collections which contain objects associated with the court of Burgundy, the most strongly represented is painting portraits and devotional polyptych. In a much smaller number preserved objects of gold jewellery or tapestries, which at the turn of the century were destroyed because of the material value they represented and possibility of secondary use of precious raw materials. To a lesser extent we can note the preserved manuscripts that belonged to the duke's collection. Despite careful analysis, 66% of the manuscripts in the directory mansion from the years 1420-1424 were not identified. In the case of records made after the death of Philip the Good the number of unidentified manuscripts fell to 55%.⁶⁰ This indicates the partial recognition of the full set collected by the Dukes of Burgundy. Finally, we should mention sculpture, of which just a few examples have survived till our times. The greatest destruction of interior decoration of properties in Burgundy and Flanders were associated with the French Revolution.

On the basis of the proposed typology, an interest can be observed in certain foundations from dukes and middle class, which indicates the existence of taste and preferences for objects included in the collection. On closer analysis, it is worth noting that the duke's collections represent the balance in the typology of orders with sparse majority of precious objects such as gold works and

⁵⁸ BLUMENBERG, Hans. *Zu den Sachen und zurück, aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von Manfred Sommer*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2002, p. 6.

⁵⁹ VERATELLI, Federica, 2014.

⁶⁰ WIJSMAN, Hanno, 2013.

tapestries over the manuscripts or paintings, these point to the wealth of the founder and the possibility of access to elite objects. Material goods served as a tool for expressing power, possession and political aspirations at the royal court. In the case of courtiers foundations and wealthy middle class the majority made painting, which imitated duke's foundations. In numerous visual performances the presence of valuable and elite objects such as jewellery or mentioned tapestries can be seen. Due to the availability of fewer resources than the dukes, the artistic patronage was limited in the media defined by a typology of materials.

In the case of an in-depth analysis of symbols and the communication of exclusive objects, we should understand the limitations in the language of iconography, due to a strong trend in determining visualization. There was no recognized hierarchy of iconographic motifs that might dominate. Among the solutions understandable for dukes and members of the court, the most numerous represent the mythological stories and the medieval ideal of chivalry. A further part was related to the topos of absolute love or adoration of women. Among the preserved objects the naturalistic portraits identified with a specific person were recognized, despite the use of other forms of composition or technique, we cannot take into account the impact of the Italian tendency for creating ancestral gallery. In the case of the middle class, personal representation was closely related with piety and private devotion, and portrait was an element of diptych.

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