# The Montpellier Parchment and the Signature of *Iustitia*

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———— The Montpellier parchment (made circa 1467–1477), now kept in the Bibliothèque Municipale de Montpellier, is an enigmatic image from Valois Burgundy. In this article, I argue that its peculiarities result from its attempt to synthesise two conceptions of authority: firstly, the virtues of rulers and of councils, and secondly, divine and feudal hierarchy. To make this synthesis, the parchment depicts *Iustitia* as a signature: a sign that translocates presence and authority between two realms. *Iustitia* translocates Christ's authority in the earthly realm, as well as extends worldly judicial hierarchy into the heavenly sphere. In depicting the duke and his councils as fulfilling divine providence, this rhetoric suited the politics and learned culture of the later Burgundian state, and the inscriptions in the Montpellier parchment as well as iconography could have been devised by the Burgundian poet and chronicler, Jean Molinet.

1.
The Montpellier Parchment, c. 1467–1477, oil on parchment, 64.8 x 34.6 cm,
Montpellier, Bibliothèque municipale, fonds Cavalier no. 216. Photo: Médiathèque
Centrale Emile Zola Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole

Monpeljė pergamentas, apie 1467–1477

Introduction

The Bibliothèque Municipale de Montpellier holds a fifteenth-century painting on parchment with a unique iconographic programme [ill. 1].[1] Made during the reign of Charles the Bold of Burgundy (1467–77), it represents a crucified Christ under a royal canopy. The blood from Christ's wounds collects in the crown of an allegorical figure of Justice (*Iustitia*) below, which itself touches the helmet atop the Burgundian coat-of-arms. This is held by four virtues, *Veritas*, *Castitas*, *Sagasitas* and *Sobrietas*, each identified by inscriptions on their costumes. These hold banderoles that read in Latin: "I conquer all" (*Veritas*), "I please God before all" (*Castitas*), "I act in time" (*Sagasitas*) and "I nurture the elderly" (*Sobrietas*).[2] Below this ensemble is a figure whose left side is a swordsman and whose right side is a lawyer. He stands on a podium inscribed with the word *consilium*. On the banderoles framing Christ is the first verse from the book of Wisdom: "Esteem justice, you who judge on earth".[3] Between Christ and *Iustitia* is a further banderole: "[I], Justice, having for a long time been expelled from the land, had moved away; [but] called by the duke Charles, I have recently returned".[4]

This is, in Werner Paravicini's words, a "troubling image".[5] Numerous possibilities for its original context and function have been suggested. Jeffrey Chipps Smith proposed that the parchment was a miniature for a collection of Charles the Bold's military ordinances.[6] However, as Paravicini points out, the scale of the parchment (64.8 x 34.6 cm) is too big for any Burgundian manuscript, and its iconography is different to that used

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1   "The Montpellier parchment", Bibliothèque municipale, Montpellier, fonds Cavalier, no. 216, in: *Mémonum - Bibliothèque numérique patrimoniale Montpellier* [online], [cited 25/10/2018], https://tinyurl.com/y88ejf2p. The most thorough examination of this object is Werner Paravicini, "Le parchemin de Montpellier, une image troublante du règne de Charles le Téméraire", in: *Journal des savants* 2, 2010, pp. 307–370. See also Wolfgang Brückle, "Political Allegory at the Court of Charles the Bold: Pageantry, an Enigmatic Portrait, and the Limits of Interpretation", in: *Staging the Court of Burgundy*, Eds. Till-Holger Borchert, Wim Blockmans, Nele Gabriëls, Johan Oosterman, Anne Van Oosterwijk, Turnhout: Brepols, 2013, pp. 121–132; and Cyriel Stroo, "Karel de Stoute als het 'Bezielde Recht' en de 'Levende Wet'", in: *Vlaanderen* 58, 2009, pp. 94–97.

2   "Omnia Vinco"; "Deo p(rae) omnib(us) placeo"; "In tempore ago"; "Longevos nutrio".

3   Diligite iusticiam / qui iudica/tis terram.

4   Justicia e terris iam/dudum eiecta recessi/Ab Karolo nuper/duce vocata veni.

5   Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*

6   Jeffrey Chipps Smith, "Margaret of York and the Burgundian Portrait Tradition", in: *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion, and The Visions of Tondal*, Ed. Thomas Kren, Malibu: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992, p. 49.

for Charles's military ordinances.[7] More credible possibilities are that the image formed a design for a *tableau vivant* performed at a civic ceremony for Charles;[8] that it was made for a legal court, most likely that of the Parliament of Mechelen (a supra-regional court for the Netherlands);[9] or that it was made for the audiences Charles would hold several times a week from 1468, during which he would dispense justice to plaintiffs who came to him.[10] Although Paravicini favours the latter possibility, there is no definitive evidence for any of these suggestions.[11]

The unclear context for the production and display of the Montpellier parchment has meant that its iconographic programme has been difficult to interpret. This problem has been compounded by the fact that there are no clear biblical or literary sources, nor iconographic precedents or antecedents, for many of the image's components, including the anointing of *Iustitia* with Christ's blood, the combination of *Veritas*, *Castitas*, *Sagasitas* and *Sobrietas*, the bipartite man, and the podium labelled *consilium*.[12]

Despite the seeming absence of direct textual or iconographic models for the Montpellier parchment, there is a consensus that the iconography of the Montpellier parchment suited Charles the Bold's political rhetoric. He and his chancellor, Guillaume Hugonet, would use the concept of justice to stress that ducal authority was assumed from God.[13] A notable example is from an ordinance of 1473 that established the Parliament of Mechelen. Its prelude declares that:

> by divine bounty and providence [*la bonté et providence divine*], through which all terrestrial affairs are regulated and governed, princes have been instituted and ordained to rule principalities and lordships in the place of God our creator, in particular so that the regions, provinces and people are joined together and organized in

7   Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, pp. 342–343.

8   *Ibid*, pp. 355–56, notably Wolfgang Brückle, *op. cit.*

9   Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, pp. 346–347.

10  *Ibid*, pp. 347–355.

11  *Ibid*, p. 358.

12  Iconographies discussed in *ibid*, pp. 324–337.

13  Cyriel Stroo, *op. cit.*, p. 94; Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, pp. 339–340. See also A. J. Vanderjagt, "Classical learning and the Building of Power at the Fifteenth-Century Burgundian Court", in: *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East,* Eds. Jan Willem Drijvers, Alasdair A. MacDonald, Leiden: Brill, 1995, pp. 276–277.

union, concord and loyal discipline. This union and public order can be maintained only by justice, which is the soul and spirit of the public good.[14]

Similar to this extract, the Montpellier parchment represents a continuum between divine and Burgundian justice. But rather than deploy abstract concepts like "divine bounty and providence" to conceptualise how God appoints princes, the parchment relies on representations of the tangible transferral of authority, such as the blood anointing *Iustitia*, and her finger touching the Burgundian arms.[15]

As well as being a representation of *Iustitia*, the Montpellier parchment is therefore also part of a corpus of fifteenth-century paintings from the Netherlands and Central Europe that situated the authority of the state and its officials within a divine hierarchy.[16] A now lost Burgundian example contemporaneous with the Montpellier parchment was from the entrance porch to the Chambre des comptes in Lille. In 1466, a poem by Georges Chastelain was displayed there alongside paintings of the Last Judgement and Dance of Death. It equated the verdicts depicted in these images with the audits undertaken by the ducal receivers.[17]

In this article, I will highlight and interpret an aspect of the Montpellier parchment's composition that is not found in these wider examples. When one looks at the points of contact between the figures in the parchment, there appears not only a downward vector of movement whereby divine authority descends into the earthly realm, but also an upward vector: the Burgundian arms are lifted to justice and the man stands on the platform of *consilium*. *Iustitia* sits at the point of contact between these two trajectories, defining the threshold between the heavenly and earthly realms. As such, I will argue that she acts as a signature. A signature translocates the

**14** Jan van Rompaey, *De Grote Raad van de hertogen van Boergondië en het Parlement van Mechelen*, Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1973, pp. 493–494.

**15** Cyriel Stroo, *op. cit.*, p. 95; Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, p. 337; Wolfgang Brückle, *op. cit.*, pp. 122–123.

**16** See the examples in Vanessa Paumen, "Whosoever sees gold gleaming in the court room shall encounter hell's mouth after the judgement", in: *Call for Justice: Art and Law in the Low Countries 1450–1650*, Mechelen: Hannibal, 2018, pp. 170–175.

**17** Graeme Small, "Visualising the state in the towns and cities of the Burgundian Netherlands: the chambre des comptes at Lille, 1466", in: *Marquer la ville: signes, traces, empreintes du pouvoir (XIIIe–XVIe siècle)*, Eds. Patrick Boucheron and Jean-Philippe Genet, Paris and Rome: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2014, pp. 483–511.

authority of the signatory. *Iustitia* does so with Christ's, arguing for his legal presence in the lower realm of the image despite his physical absence. But a signature also functions retroactively on the signatory, claiming they have authority where it is invoked. Through *Iustitia*, the upward movement of the lower figures project their sovereignty onto Christ.

Through this rhetoric of the signature, the Montpellier parchment combines concepts of the authority of virtuous rulers and councillors with those of feudal hierarchy and sacred kingship. This reading of the image will clarify how the image argues that Valois Burgundy was independent from French sovereignty (an idea already proposed by Cyriel Stroo);[18] it will evidence the growing influence of trained lawyers in Burgundy and of classical learning in its court; and it will also indicate that the programme was designed by a university-educated individual who, after a reinterpretation of the Latin text above *Iustitia*, I will suggest was Jean Molinet (1435–1507), a prolific Burgundian poet and chronicler. Taken together, these points show this image was suited to the learned culture and politics of the developing Burgundian state.

### Justice from above

Wolfgang Brückle has argued that the designer of the Montpellier parchment was unlikely to be a learned theologian. The anointment of *Iustitia* with Christ's blood [ill. 2] supposedly makes no theological sense because she does not require redemption (unlike Adam, who is often present as a skull below the Crucifixion).[19] However, I will show that this upper part of the image has iconographic and theological precedents that associated the Passion with justice. When these precedents are considered, not only does the programme become theologically coherent, but it also becomes clearer how justice is transferred from the upper to the lower realm in this image. Touched by Christ's blood, *Iustitia*, I will argue, acts as a seal of his authority.

The image directly associates the crucifixion with judicial authority by representing it in front of a blue fabric canopy. This canopy was referred to by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century chroniclers such as Eustache Deschamps, Jean Froissart and Jean (II) Juvénal des Ursins as a *lit de*

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18   Cyriel Stroo *op. cit.*, p. 94. See also Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, pp. 337–338.
19   Wolfgang Brückle, *op. cit.*, pp. 129–131.

2.
*Iustitia*, detail of The Montpellier Parchment, see ill. 1

*Iustitia*, Monpeljė pergamento detalė

*justice*, and for each it acted as a symbol of royal justice.[20] By representing Christ below a *lit de justice*, the Montpellier parchment claims that he, like a king, is a high judicial authority.

Christ's blood and its collection in *Iustitia*'s crown have been interpreted as the means through which his judicial authority is transferred. Wolfgang Brückle has compared *Iustitia*'s anointment of blood with the anointment of kings during French coronation rituals.[21] *Iustitia* does seem to imitate the iconography of kingship, especially images found on French coins and royal seals [ill. 3]. Christ's blood was also treated as a judicial power in the Burgundian lands. In Bruges, during an annual Procession from the thirteenth century, the relic of the Holy Blood was presented as a civic and spiritual authority when paraded below a baldachin around the key religious institutions of the town and the city walls.[22] This relic was sometimes directly associated with civic justice. Late fifteenth-century records show that lawbreakers could be ordered to make donations before the Holy Blood.[23]

The Montpellier parchment therefore presents Christ and his sacrificial blood as having judicial power. The association of the Passion with

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**20**  Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, pp. 312, 324, 353; Sarah Hanley, *The Lit de Justice of the Kings of France: Constitutional Ideology in Legend, Ritual and Discourse*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983, p. 29.

**21**  Wolfgang Brückle, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

**22**  Andrew Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion in Medieval Bruges c. 1300–1520*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 9, 49–50.

**23**  *Ibid*, p. 50.

3.
Impression of Louis XI's seal, 1460s,
10.7 cm diameter, wax, Bibliothèque
nationale de France, Paris. Photo:
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Liudviko XI antspaudas, XV a. 7 deš.

justice was a widespread and persistent idea found in devotional literature from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries.[24] To take one influential example, the concept of *iustitia* is central to Anselm of Canterbury's theory of atonement.[25] Humanity, being finite, cannot redeem itself of the debt it owes to God, thus making Christ's sacrifice necessary for the just satisfaction of original sin. Anselm even writes that: "it would not be out of place to say that he [Christ] had original justice [*iustitiam originalem*] instead of the original sin which all Adam's sons have from their origin".[26]

Anselm's theory can help us read the relation between Christ and *Iustitia* in the Montpellier parchment: the spilling of Christ's blood is itself an act of justice, for it redeems the debt man owes to God. This iconography is therefore comparable to three other late medieval iconographies: the Crucifixion of the Virtues, the Living Cross and Charters of Christ. Together, these iconographies demonstrate that the association between the Crucifixion and justice was a recurring visual trope across late medieval Europe, one derived from a basic theology of atonement in which the Passion was an

[24] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007, pp. 199–200.

[25] Bernard J. D. van Vreeswijk, "Interpreting Anselm's thought about divine justice: dealing with loose ends", in: *Scottish Journal of Theology* 69, 2016, pp. 426–429.

[26] Anselm of Canterbury, "De Conceptu Virginali et de Originali Peccato", in: *Opera Omnia*, Ed. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt, Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1940–61, vol. 2, p. 160. Translation from Anselm of Canterbury, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, Eds. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 377. Anselm occasionally mentions the blood of Christ as the cost of the sacrifice. See *ibid*, pp. 270 and 282.

**4.**
*Crucifixion of the Virtues*, c. 1330.
Wienhausen Abbey, Germany. Photo:
Corpus Vitrearum Deutschland/
Freiburg i. Br. (Rafael Toussaint)

*Dorybių nukryžiavimas*, apie 1330

act of justice. But they also, I argue, allow for an interpretation of the blood in the Montpellier parchment as the medium of a seal, similar to wax.

The first of these iconographies is the Crucifixion of the Virtues.[27] This iconography represented personifications of virtue alongside the crucified Christ, sometimes even actively crucifying or assaulting him. An example is an early fourteenth-century window at Wienhausen Abbey in which Christ is accompanied by five virtues, most notably *Caritas* (who embraces Christ while at the same time stabbing his side), but also *Iustitia*, who places her hand on Christ's head [ill. 4].[28] This simultaneous instance of both love and violence condenses the conviction that although Christ's death was a great injustice, it was also one that redeemed humanity, and thus was a just and charitable act of God.

The second iconography is the Living Cross. Found across northern Italy and central Europe from around the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, this image depicted the cross with arms emerging from its extremities.[29] The upper and lower arms open heaven and destroy hell respectively, while the left passes judgement on *Synagoga* and the right blesses *Ecclesia*. Achim Timmermann has argued that this is an iconography of divine justice similar to the Last Judgement, as well as one likely influenced

27 Corine Schleif, "The Crucifixion with Virtues in Stained Glass: Wounds, Violent Sexualities, and Aesthetics of Engagement in the Wienhausen Cloister", in: *Journal of Glass Studies* 56, 2014, pp. 317–343.

28 *Ibid*, p. 318. For further examples, pp. 335–337.

29 Achim Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix: Some Observations on the Iconography of the Living Cross", in: *Gesta* 40, 2001, pp. 141–160.

by the *Iustitia distributiva*, a personification of justice with a crown and sword found in Tuscany and the Veneto from the fourteenth century.[30]

The final iconography is of particular interest, as like the Montpellier parchment, it brings attention to Christ's blood. Charters of Christ were poems and images found in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English manuscripts.[31] The poems described Christ's body to be like the parchment used in a charter, a legal document that would outline the rights, property and duties of its signatories. Regularly the blood, wounds or heart of Christ are described in these poems as acting like the seal that he attached to the charter. Some manuscripts roughly contemporaneous with that of the Montpellier parchment include images of such bloody seals stamped with an image of Christ's pierced heart or the sacred wounds [ill. 5].[32]

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30 *Ibid*, p. 148.

31 Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth Century England: Three Women and their Books of Hours*, London: British Library, 2003, pp. 203–205.

32 Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England*, Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2007, p. 192. Examples include Ashmole 61 (ca. 1500), Bodleian Library, Oxford, fol. 106r; MS Additional 37049 (ca. 1460–70), British Library, London, fol. 23r.

6.
*Bleeding wound on cloth held by two kneeling angels*, c. 1440, possibly from Hainault, Ms. W 218, fol. 28v, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. Photo: The Walters Art Museum

*Kraujuojanti žaizda ant audeklo, kurį laiko du klūpantys angelai*, apie 1440

I do not know of any continental examples of Charters of Christ, although there is a Burgundian illumination of the wound of Christ held by angels which, like a Charter of Christ, compares Christ's body to a parchment [ill. 6].[33] But the description of Christ's flesh as a parchment upon which words are written was a recurring trope in Western European art and thought in the medieval period.[34] Given the Montpellier parchment's legal themes, it is possible that the blood it displays was read as a type of wax used to seal an agreement, as it is in Charters of Christ. As noted above, *Iustitia* looks like the image of the French kings used in their seals [ill. 3]. But even if not read as like wax, it nevertheless is portrayed as a medium used to transfer his authority, just as a seal would.

### Justice from below

Above, I compared *Iustitia* with a wax seal of Louis XI, rather than one of Charles the Bold. Charles did not have a royal seal; his took the traditional form of a knight.[35] By appropriating regal iconography, the image

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**33** Discussed by Corine Schleif, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

**34** Jeffrey Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997, pp. 178–180; Dieter Richter, "Die Allegorie der Pergamentbearbeitung: Beziehungen zwischen handwerklichen Vorgängen und der geistlichen Bildersprache des Mittelalters", in: *Fachliteratur des Mittelalters: Festschrift für Gerhard Eis*, Eds. Gundolf Keil, Rainer Rudolf, Wolfram Schmitt and Hans J. Vermeer, Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche and Carl Ernst Poeschel, 1968, pp. 83–92.

**35** See Charles the Bold's entry in *Sigilla: Base numérique des sceaux conservés en France* [online], [cited 25/10/2018], http://www.sigilla.org/fr/sgdb/sigillant/1245.

7.
*Sagasitas*, detail of The Montpellier
Parchment, see ill. 1

*Sagasitas*, Monpeljė pergamento
detalė

of *Iustitia* may be a claim that Burgundian authority was not dependent on the French Crown.[36] Indeed, during the reign of Charles's father, Philip the Good (1396–1467), Burgundian political rhetoric increasingly claimed that Burgundian sovereignty was derived directly from Christ rather than from the French Crown. Furthermore, Charles and Louis XI were often adversaries and Charles sought a crown for himself.[37] However, unlike a king, *Iustitia* cannot mark a high judicial authority. Rather than act as a concrete authority comparable to Christ or the Burgundian state, she instead represents an aspiration or purpose for the law, a universal form for it that accords with divine providence. By being represented between the divine authority of Christ above and the Burgundian arms below, she is presented, in scholastic terms, as a universal: an abstract essence that mediates between divine Being and material beings.[38] Therefore, in the lower half of the parchment, the movement changes from authority falling to *Iustitia* from the ideal, divine realm above, to it rising to *Iustitia* from the worldly realm below.

This bottom-up movement is most evident in the coat-of-arms, which has to be lifted to justice, even if lightly, by the four virtues, *Sagasitas*, *Castitas*, *Sobrietas* and *Veritas*, their movement and flight indicated in their flowing hair [ill. 7]. We do not know why these virtues were combined,[39]

**36**  John Dumont, "The Christ Figure in Burgundian Political Thought", in: *Cristo e il potere dal Medioevo all'Età moderna. Teologia, antropologia e politica*, Eds. Laura Andreani and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2017, p. 239.

**37**  Cyriel Stroo *op. cit.*, p. 94. See also Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, pp. 337–338.

**38**  On universals as mediators between the divine and the mundane, see Kathryn L. Lynch, *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, and Literary Form*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988, pp. 1–76.

**39**  Cyriel Stroo, *op. cit.*, p. 97; Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, pp. 325–326; Wolfgang Brückle, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

8.
The bipartite man, detail of
The Montpellier Parchment, see ill. 1

Dvipusis žmogus, Monpeljė
pergamento detalė

but their placement lower to *Iustitia*, and flanking her, shows that they are attendant virtues, with her as the supreme virtue.[40] In lifting the Burgundian arms, their collective message is the duke must have these virtues in order to achieve the higher virtue of justice.

It is also possible to interpret the bipartite man as making an upward movement [ill. 8]. Scholars have had trouble interpreting this figure. It has been argued to represent Charles the Bold.[41] The figure certainly comprises elements appropriate for a depiction of a duke as a judicial figure. In an illumination prefacing a book on Burgundian customary law Philip the Good was represented similarly to the bipartite man, with a sword and in a red mantel, thus stylising himself as "a prince of justice" [ill. 9].[42] However, Paravicini discounts the idea that the bipartite man is Charles, as he would not be represented as a small figure below his arms, and he was never represented bearded.[43] As an alternative reading, Brückle suggests that the head could be a representation of Charles as the symbolic (if not actual)

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40 Compare, for instance, with the image of *Iustitia* flanked by *Fortitudo* and *Temperance* in the tapestry of *Iusticia* from the Los Honores series, 1520–1532, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago. See Guy Delmarcel, *Los Honores: Tapisseries flamandes pour Charles Quint*, Antwerp: SDZ, Pandora, 2000, p. 115.

41 On the historiography of this argument, Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, pp. 327– 337.

42 See Jonas Braekevelt, "Un prince de justice: vorstelijke wetgeving, soevereiniteit en staatsvorming in het graafschap Vlaanderen tijdens de regering van Filips de Goede (1419-1467)", doctoral dissertation, Ghent: Ghent University, 2013, p. 52.

43 Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, pp. 332–337.

9.
Bibliothèque interuniversitaire de Montpellier,
BU historique de médecine, ms. H393 (*Coutumes
de Bourgogne*), fol. 2r. Photo: BIU Montpellier/
IRHT (CNRS)

Monpeljė tarpuniversitetinė biblioteka,
Medicinos istorijos biblioteka, rankraštis H393
(*Burgundijos paprotinė teisė*), fol. 2r

head of the body-politic, with the body of the bipartite man representing the nobility and the feet the third estate (thus explaining why they are bare).[44] However, as Brückle points out, it is a problem that the clergy seem absent from this "body politic".

The bipartite man can be more confidently identified as a personification of two distinct but unified powers, that of the law and its enforcement.[45] Paravicini has noted how the figure parallels a division of judicial power found in the introduction to the Institutions of Justinian I and quoted by the fifteenth-century French lawyer, Jean Juvénal des Ursins: "It is expedient that the Imperial Majesty not only be distinguished by arms, but also be protected by laws, so that government may be justly administered in time of both war and peace".[46] Paul van Peteghem has also studied how the concept "*justice et police*" recurs in later Burgundian political documents. Because these words are often mentioned together, he describes them as a veritable "Siamese twin".[47] Even if this rhetoric does not refer to any institutional division of powers, it shows that justice and its enforcement were closely related concepts in fifteenth-century Burgundy.[48] The same rhetorical Siamese twin also seems to be represented quite literally in the bipartite man.

This interpretation of the bipartite man is supported by its relation to the podium labelled *consilium*. This word has the connotations of consultation, deliberation or a council, and could refer to a standard directive found in Mirrors of Princes that rulers seek competent councillors and consult their subjects.[49] However, in the Montpellier parchment the word more likely refers to the virtue of actual councils rather than another virtue of the duke.[50] This interpretation would fit more easily in the hierarchical schema

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**44** Wolfgang Brückle, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

**45** Cyriel Stroo, *op. cit.*, pp. 95–96; Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, pp. 327–330.

**46** Werner Paravicini *op. cit.*, p. 330; and Jean Juvénal des Ursins, *Écrits politiques de Jean Juvénal des Ursins*, 3 vols., Eds. Peter Shervey Lewis and Anne-Marie Hayez, Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1993, vol. 2, p. 201.

**47** Paul van Peteghem, "La Justice et la Police aux anciens Pay-Bas: des jumeaux siamois?", in: *Publications du Centre Européen d'Etudes Bourguignonnes* 30, 1990, pp. 5–16. Paravicini has a similar theory: the two halves of the figure represent 'peace and justice', which he also describes as 'old twins'. Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, pp. 337–338, 358.

**48** Paul van Peteghem, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–16. See also the examples on pp. 12–13.

**49** Cyriel Stroo, *op. cit.*, p. 97; and Werner Paracini, *op. cit*., p. 335 (footnote 97). See also Rolf Strøm-Olsen, "George Chastelain and the Language of Burgundian Historiography", in: *French Studies* 68, 2013, pp. 7–10.

**50** Contra Wolfgang Brückle, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

of the image, whereby such council supports the bipartite man, rather than ducal coat-of-arms. Just as the bipartitie man is divided between arms and law, so also was the duke's council. The Great Council, a peripatetic council that preceded the Parliament of Mechelen, was composed of both noblemen and professional lawyers, similar to how the bipartite man is composed of a swordsman and a lawyer.[51] From the 1420s onwards, there was a significant increase in the number of university-trained council members in the provincial councils of the Burgundian Netherlands, a trend that increased from the 1450s.[52] As autocratic as Charles the Bold was famed to be, the word *consilium* and the lawyer's robes in the bipartite man could nevertheless still speak of the growing influence of these educated jurists.

Like the coat-of-arms, the bipartite man also represents a bottom-up movement. Just as the personified virtues are supportive of the ducal arms, the podium, *consilium*, supports the bipartite man, and his bare feet ensure that he treads softly and respectfully on this assistance. Further evidence for this conceptual relationship whereby a combined figure of *justice et police* can emerge from *consilium* can be found in Jean Molinet's *L'Arbre de Bourgonne* (1486), a *prosimetrum* reflecting on the death of Charles the Bold nearly a decade after the event. Here, Molinet describes *Force* and *Justice* as the daughters of *Conseil* with the three maintaining the Burgundian state.[53] This schema is similar to how the bipartite figure of *justice et police* results from *consilium* in the Montpellier parchment.

There are other connections that can be made between Molinet and the iconography of the parchment, particularly in the couplet above *Iustitia's* head: *Justicia e terris iam/dudum eiecta recessi/Ab Karolo nuper/duce vocata veni*. These hexameter and pentameter lines recall classical literature, and their narrative could reference that of Astraea, a Greek goddess of justice and innocence, whose return to earth and a resulting Golden Age was hoped for in Virgil's fourth Eclogue.[54] References to Virgil's fourth Eclogue

51 On the Great Council, see Robert Stein, *Magnanimous Dukes and Rising States: The Unification of the Burgundian Netherlands, 1380–1480*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 124.

52 *Ibid*, pp. 144–145.

53 Jean Molinet, "L'Arbre de Bourgonne sus la mort de duc Charles", 7.32–33, in: Jean Molinet, *Les Faictz et dictz de Jean Molinet*, 3 vols., Ed. Noël Dupire, Paris: Société des anciens textes français, 1936–1939, vol. 1, p. 245; see Jean Devaux, *Jean Molinet. Indiciaire bourguignon*, Paris: Honoré Champion, 1996, pp. 408. See also how *Conseil* rescues *Justice* in Molinet's "La Resource du petit peuple", *ibid*, vol. 1, pp. 137–161.

54 With thanks to an anonymous peer reviewer.

have often been obscure or indirect in Western art, perhaps due to how abstract the idea of a Golden Age is.[55] But Virgil's Eclogues had a considerable influence on political expression in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, including on Molinet, who drew on the pastoral genre they defined.[56] The aforementioned poem on Charles the Bold's passing, *L'Arbre de Bourgonne*, recalls the Eclogues when it describes shepherds under his rule living in a "*mode georgique*" and "*estat bucolique*".[57] Indeed, just as the Montpellier parchment seemingly references the pastoral to celebrate the return of justice with the accession of Charles, *L'Arbre de Bourgogne*, despite being critical of Charles, uses this genre to regret the chaos and destruction brought to his lands after his death.[58] Other images in Molinet's writing seem similar to the Montpellier parchment. In addition to the description made in *L'Arbre de Bourgonne* of *Force* and *Justice* as the offspring of *Conseil*, the depiction of justice in the Montpellier parchment has been compared to Molinet's description of the enthroned figure of justice in his poem, *Le Trosne d'honneur* (after 1467),[59] and Molinet also describes the exile of justice in his *Ressource du petit people* (1481).[60] Finally, the hierarchical schema of the Montpellier parchment, which seems to entirely occlude French royal sovereignty, is also one that corresponded to Molinet's politics, rather than that of his forebear as official historian at the Burgundian court, Chastelain who, while critical of the French Crown, saw Burgundy as a part of its kingdom.[61]

It therefore seems very plausible that Molinet could have supplied the couplet above *Iustitia*, if not also participated in conceiving the design for the parchment. There are several known examples from the Burgundian Netherlands of learned men collaborating in the production of an image of

**55** L.B.T. Houghton, "Virgil's Fourth Eclogue and the Visual Arts", in: *Papers of the British School of Rome* 83, 2015, pp. 175–220, pp. 179–181.

**56** Adrian Armstrong, *Technique and Technology: Script, Print, and Poetics in France, 1470-1550*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000, pp. 126–127. Alice Hulubei, *L'Eglogue en France au XVIᵉ siècle. Époque des Valois*, Paris: E. Droz, 1938, pp. 153–155.

**57** Jean Molinet, "L'Arbre de Bourgonne sus la mort de duc Charles", 5.12–13 and 5.27–28, in: Jean Molinet, *op. cit.*, pp. 240, 241. On the relationship between these passages and Virgil, see Adrian Armstrong, "Prosimètre et savoir", in: *Le prosimètre à la Renaissance*, Ed. Nathalie Dauvois, Paris: Éditions Rue d'Ulm, 2005, p. 133.

**58** Jean Devaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 254–255.

**59** Werner Paravicini, *op. cit.*, p. 314; Jean Molinet, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–52.

**60** Jean Molinet, *op. cit.*, p. 148. Pointed out to me by Adrian Armstrong.

**61** Rolf Strøm-Olsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–17.

*Iustitia* or of legal *exempla*.[62] These include the aforementioned instance of Chastelain providing a poem for the paintings at the Chambre des comptes in Lille;[63] the collaboration between Dieric Bouts and the theologian Jan van Haeght for the justice panels commissioned in 1468 by the City Hall in Leuven;[64] and the influence, if not also the involvement, of Remy du Puys on the *Los Honores* tapestry series of Charles V (completed 1523), particularly that dedicated to *Iustitia*.[65] Molinet often produced texts for courtly and civic festivities and performances, including, for instance, a morality play (now mostly lost) performed in May 1473 for the twelfth chapter of the Order of the Golden Fleece.[66] Whatever the circumstances were for the production of the Montpellier parchment, it is credible that Molinet could have been involved in designing an iconographic scheme that was used within a public or ceremonial context.

In summary, the lower half of the Montpellier parchment represents a movement towards *Iustitia* from below. Such movement comes from the virtues of the duke and of his councillors. Therefore, justice is arrived at in this image not only through divine providence, but also through the wisdom and virtues of the Burgundian dynasty, its councils and the institutions and laws through and with which it rules. These conceptualisations of authority likely emerged from the influence of classical learning at the Burgundian court, the growing influence of university-educated jurists, and possibly also the influence of the Burgundian chronicler and poet, Molinet.

## Conclusion

The Montpellier parchment depicts two types of authority as making separate trajectories towards justice – the divine one from above and the mundane one from below. The figure of *Iustitia* defines the relation between these two spheres of authority. She seems to be a universal, mediat-

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**62** Anna Rapp Buri and Monica Stucky-Schürer, *Burgundische Tapissierien*, Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2001, pp. 67–68.

**63** Graeme Small, *op. cit.*

**64** Anna Rapp Buri and Monica Stucky-Schürer, *op. cit.*, pp. 67.

**65** Guy Delmarcel, *op. cit.*, pp. 21, 155.

**66** On Molinet and performance, see Adrian Armstrong, "Jean Molinet", in: *Communication by Performance: Literary Societies and the World of Learning (1200-1700)*, Eds. Arjan van Dixhoorn and Susie Speakman Sutch (forthcoming). On the morality play performed for the twelfth chapter of the Golden Fleece, see Jean Devaux, "Molinet dramaturge: une moralité inédite jouée lors du chapitre valenciennois de la Toison d'Or (1473)", in: *Revue du Nord* 78, 1996, pp. 35–47.

ing between the divine and the worldly. In doing so, she acts as a signature. Above, I argued that *Iustitia* could be read as a seal and the blood of Christ as a type of wax. Even if this is not the case, like a seal or signature, *Iustitia* translocates the authority of the signatory from one place to another, in this case, that of Christ in the divine sphere to the earthly realm below. However, signatures do not just translocate the signatory's authority, but also retroactively define it.[67] The composition mediates authority "upwards" as well as down: Christ is conceptualised as the royal power above Burgundy, he who sits below the *lit de justice*, and thus who becomes an extension of the worldly powers represented in the lower half of the image that lift themselves towards justice.

In *The Kingdom and the Glory*, Giorgio Agamben argues that Western societies have used signatures to conceptualise secular and sacred powers in terms of their relation to each other.[68] Signatures distinguish two separate realms – that of their signatory and that where they apply – and define each through their relation to the other while maintaining their separation and difference. As such, the divine can be conceptualised as operative in the earthly sphere whilst also remaining separate from it. Through this rhetoric of the signature, the Montpellier parchment claims that Burgundian justice fulfils divine providence through its secular virtues and functionaries, whilst at the same time recognising no higher worldly authority, papal, imperial or regal. This signatory rhetoric was thus suited to the emergent Burgundian state.

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**67** Giorgio Agamben, *The Signature of All Things: On Method*, New York: Zone Books, 2009, pp. 34–35; William Watkin, *Agamben and Indifference: a critical overview*, London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014, p. 18.

**68** Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011, p. 3; William Watkin, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

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Santrauka

# Monpeljė pergamentas ir *Iustitia* signatūra

Andrew Murray

*Reikšminiai žodžiai:* Karolis Drąsusis, Burgundija valdant Valua, Jean Molinet, politinė ikonografija, teisingumas, *Iustitia*, signatūros, valdžios atvaizdai, kraujas.

Šiuo metu saugomas Monpeljė municipalinėje bibliotekoje Monpeljė pergamentas (apie 1467–1477) yra paslaptingas Valua valdymo laikotarpio Burgundijos ikonografijos pavyzdys. Pergamente nutapytoje scenoje vaizduojamas nukryžiuotas Kristus po karališkuoju baldakimu. Iš jo žaizdų besisunkiantis kraujas subėga į žemiau pavaizduotos alegorinės Teisingumo (*Iustitia*) figūros karūną, esančią virš Burgundijos herbo, kurį iškėlė laiko keturi dorybių įsikūnijimai. Žemiau esančios figūros kairė pusė yra kalavijuotis, o dešinioji – teisėjas.

Straipsnyje tvirtinama, kad šio atvaizdo kompoziją sudaro dvi judėjimo kryptys. Iš vienos pusės, teisingumas atiteka iš aukščiau, yra perleidžiamas per Jėzaus kraują, suvilgydamas *Iustitia*, o tada per jos prisilietimą tenka Burgundijos herbui. Tačiau teisingumas taip pat kyla iš apačios. Jį palaiko dviejų dalių teisėjo / kalavijuočio atvaizdas: tvirtai stovėdamas ant pagrindo, pavadinto *consilium* (taryba), jis vykdo teisingumą, o virš jo keturios dorybės iškelia herbą prie *Iustitia*.

Įsitaisiusi tarp šių dviejų trajektorijų, *Iustitia* figūra tarpininkauja tarp dieviškosios ir žemiškosios srities. Taip darydama, ji veikia kaip signatūra, perkelianti savo signataro (Kristaus) valdžią, šiuo atveju apačioje esančiam žemiškam pasauliui. Tuo pačiu ji iškelia šių dviejų žemiškų jėgų valdžią iki Kristaus, kuris yra vaizduojamas kaip karališka figūra po *lit de justice*. Vadinasi, šiame atvaizde yra pateikiama dviejų valdžios sampratų sintezė: pirma, valdžios, vykdomos valdovų ir tarybų dorybių, ir antra, per feodalinę ir dieviškąją hierarchiją. Šia retorika Monpeljė pergamentas tei-

gia, kad Burgundijos teisingumas įgyvendina dieviškąją apvaizdą per savo pasaulietines dorybes ir vykdytojus, tuo pačiu metu nepripažindamas jokios kitos aukštesnės pasaulietinės valdžios. Taigi signatūros retorika puikiai tiko kylančiai Burgundijos valstybei.