
Castellum



**Luxembourg
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President's Message

by Gary Little

Welcome to the start of the third year of *Castellum* and the Luxembourg Collectors Club. As many of you will remember, the formative meeting of the group was at Pacific 97 in San Francisco. In the two years since, we've published eight issues of *Castellum* containing as broad a range of subject matter as the contributions allow. I've done a fair amount of writing myself, but we've had many other contributors and we're always hoping for more. I'm pleased to report that Bob Danzer of New York, perhaps the best-known Luxembourg philatelist in the U.S., has just contributed some material that should appear in the September issue.

We'd like to update the list of e-mail addresses of our members so that we can more rapidly (and at minimal cost) communicate with you between *Castellum* releases. Using e-mail is very convenient when we receive an urgent request for specific information. For example, we recently obtained scanned images of mail between Luxembourg and Romania from a member within 24 hours of an inquiry. It's also a very secure method of communication. Please send a message to lcc@luxcentral.com to let us know your e-mail address and we'll add you to the list.

As usual, May was a new issue month for the Luxembourg P&T. A total of seven new stamps were issued on the following topics:

- Europa — National Parks (2 stamps)
- Luxembourg Federation of Amateur Photographers — 50th Anniversary
- Luxembourg Federation of Mutual Insurance — 75th Anniversary
- Luxembourg Gymnastics Federation — Centenary
- International Year of Older Persons
- Universal Postal Union — 125th Anniversary

For more information, visit the web address www.luxcentral.com/stamps/LuxStamps1999.html.

Has your membership expired? Your mailing envelope indicates the last issue of *Castellum* you will receive. Renew by sending \$USA 12 (in cash or by check drawn on a U.S. bank) to the Luxembourg Collectors Club, 3304 Plateau Drive, Belmont, CA 94002.

Luxembourg under Burgundian Rule (1443-1506)

by Gary Little

In the 14th century, two small western European duchies enjoyed a measure of success and influence far out of proportion to the size of their territories—Luxembourg and Burgundy. By the mid-15th century, however, Luxembourg had lost most of its luster and came to be dominated by a Burgundy whose power had continued to rise. This is the story of how this situation developed.



The Burgundian realm in the 15th century.



*Philip the Good (1396-1467).
Duke of Burgundy 1419-1467.*

The Duchy of Burgundy, located on the right bank of the Saône River around Dijon in France, began to emerge as a power in 1363. It was in this year that the territory was granted as an apanage by French King John II the Good to his fourth son Philip the Bold (*"le Hardi"*).

Over the next century, Philip the Bold and his successors would regularly add important territories to the Burgundian realm, including most of present-day Belgium and The Netherlands, either by marriage, by purchase, by alliance, or by force. The first significant expansion into the Low Countries came in 1384 when Philip's wife, Margaret of Flanders, inherited her home county in northwest Belgium upon the death of her father.

The court of Burgundy quickly gained fame across Europe for its generous support of the fine arts and other social programs. Also memorable were its colorful events organized on a grand scale, including tournaments, feasts, dances, jousting competitions, and masquerade balls.

Philip the Bold died in 1404 and was succeeded by his son John the Fearless. John's rule ended in 1419 when he was assassinated by the French in retaliation for ordering the assassination of Louis d'Orléans in 1409. The next Duke of Burgundy was his son, Philip the Good (*"le Bon"*).

Philip, born in 1396, was to become the most illustrious of all the Dukes of Burgundy. He elevated the power and influence of Burgundy in the early 15th century by continuing the lavish lifestyle of the Burgundian court as well as its policy of territorial expansion. During his reign, he acquired many new territories in the Low Countries, including Holland, Hainaut, Zealand, and Brabant.

Like his predecessors, Philip was a patron of the arts and had a love of pomp and ceremony. On the occasion of his 1430 marriage to his third wife, Isabella of Portugal, for example, he founded the chivalric Order of the Golden Fleece based on the ancient legend of Jason and the Argonauts. It had all the trappings of an elite private club.

The Duchy of Luxembourg was at the peak of its power for most of the 14th century. Four of its Dukes became Holy Roman Emperors—Henry VII, Charles IV, Wenceslas II, and Sigismund—and its territory expanded to an area of over 10,000 square kilometers, about four times as large as the Grand Duchy of today.



1937 first day cover for the stamp set honoring Duke Wenceslas II (1361-1419). His mortgaging of Luxembourg in 1388 led to Burgundian domination of the Duchy 55 years later.

The fortunes of the Duchy of Luxembourg would take a very bad turn towards the end of the 14th century during the reign of Duke Wenceslas II, the son of Emperor Charles IV. Wenceslas II was not an effective leader—he was lazy, uncompromising, and a spendthrift. By 1388 he was deep in debt and he needed cash badly. To solve his financial problems, temporarily at least, he mortgaged or pledged the Duchy in 1388 for a cash payment. He originally pledged the Duchy to Josse of Moravia but the pledge was later transferred to Louis d'Orléans, then to Antoine of Burgundy, and then to Antoine's wife, Elizabeth of Görlitz.

Wenceslas II's action was responsible for a very disruptive and troublesome period in Luxembourg history. For almost 75 years, until 1461, the subjects of the Duchy had to cope with a confusing and frustrating situation where there was not only a legal or nominal sovereign, but also a sovereign to whom the Duchy was pledged—the sovereign *engagiste*.

Wenceslas II died in 1419 without redeeming the pledge. He was succeeded by his brother Sigismund, the last great Duke of Luxembourg, who was also unable or unwilling to pay off the debt before his death in 1437.

Sigismund died without a male heir, so the Duchy passed to his daughter Elizabeth who was married to Albert II of Austria. Albert intended to pay off the debt, but he died suddenly in 1439 without doing so. After his death, Elizabeth transferred her rights to the Duchy to her son-in-law William of Saxony, but he did not have the resources to redeem the pledge either.



*Philip the Good (1396-1467).
de facto Duke of Luxembourg 1443-1467.*

By this time, Elizabeth of Görlitz had fallen on hard times and desperately needed to raise cash to pay her creditors. She turned to her nephew for help—none other than Philip the Good, the imperious Duke of Burgundy.

Philip had long coveted Luxembourg because of its proximity to his other territories in the Low Countries. So the following deal was struck in 1441: Philip received an assignment of the mortgage from Elizabeth of Görlitz and he paid her a large lump sum and a life annuity as consideration. By this transaction, Philip became *mambour* (guardian or administrator) of the Duchy of Luxembourg.

Philip positioned the acquisition of Luxembourg as simply being a benevolent act to support an old woman in need of assistance. In reality, Luxembourg was an important territory for Philip to acquire to support his goal of creating a strong intermediate state between France and the Germanic powers.

Philip the Good's intervention in the affairs of Luxembourg was met with fierce resistance by the Luxembourgers. They had enjoyed almost 500 years of independent rule since the founding of Luxembourg in 963 by Sigefroi and they were fearful of losing the special rights and privileges which they had earned. Domination by a powerful foreigner was not an appealing proposition.

William of Saxony vigorously opposed Philip in an effort to protect the hereditary rights of his in-laws. Philip responded swiftly by storming the town of Luxembourg on the evening of November 21, 1443 and seizing control of the capital the next day. This action marked the "official" start of Burgundian rule of Luxembourg.

Despite the taking of Luxembourg, it would not be until 1451, after Elizabeth of Görlitz' death, that the Duchy of Luxembourg recognized Philip the Good as the sovereign *engagiste*. Meanwhile, claims to the Duchy were being made by several individuals, including Ladislas (the son of Albert II of Austria who was born after Albert's death), Charles VII of France, William of Saxony, and Casimir of Poland. All these claims were successfully resisted by Philip or settled by monetary payments.

In 1461, Philip the Good was formally recognized as the legitimate sovereign of Luxembourg thus securing the absolute right of the Duke of Burgundy to lead the Duchy of Luxembourg. Philip's reign was to be short, however—he died six years later in 1467 at the age of 70.



*Charles the Bold (1433-1477).
Duke of Luxembourg 1467-1477.*

Philip the Good's successor was his only son, Charles, born in 1433 in Dijon, the capital of the Duchy of Burgundy. Historians usually refer to him as "the Bold," but this is a rather charitable translation of the French "*le Téméraire*" which connotes an element of recklessness and has a meaning closer to "the Rash."

"Rash" is a much more appropriate adjective to describe the ambitious and aggressive Charles who often relied on force in attempts to extend the Burgundian realm, with little regard to risks or consequences.

Charles had little direct contact with the Duchy of Luxembourg during his reign. He visited Luxembourg only once, in 1473, and upset his hosts by demanding lavish and expensive festivities that they had to pay for out of their own pockets. Charles was also very unpopular for the high taxes he imposed on his subjects so that he could maintain his extravagant lifestyle.



Louis XI of France and Charles the Bold of Burgundy were bitter rivals in the 15th century. Louis XI absorbed the Duchy of Burgundy when Charles died in 1477.

Charles' memorable act of social reform during his reign was his ratification in 1473 of the letters-patent creating the Council of Malines. This judicial body acted as the high court of Luxembourg until the end of the 18th century.

Charles' obsession during his brief reign was to build a powerful kingdom that would encompass all the territory between the southern part of the Burgundian realm—the Duchy of Burgundy and the Free County of Burgundy—and the northern part of the realm—Luxembourg and the Low Countries in the north.



Battle of Nancy (1477).

The missing link connecting these two parts of the realm were the regions of Alsace and Lorraine. Charles fought numerous battles to conquer these territories and bring them into the Burgundian fold, but was always opposed and defeated by his rival Louis XI of France, the Swiss, and the leaders of Lorraine.

On January 5, 1477, Charles' grand dream came to an abrupt end outside the walls of the fortified town of Nancy in the Lorraine region south of Luxembourg. Here his troops were soundly defeated by the Swiss and Charles himself was killed on the battlefield.

With the death of Charles the Bold, the golden age of Burgundy came to an end.



*Marie of Burgundy (1457-1482).
Duchess of Luxembourg 1477-1482.*

When Charles the Bold died, he left no male heir, only a young daughter, Marie, who was born in 1457. Her mother was Charles' second wife, Isabella of Bourbon. As a result, King Louis XI of France claimed the Duchy of Burgundy as a lapsed fief in accordance with Salic Law which does not permit female succession. This annexation was confirmed by the Treaty of Arras in 1482.

Marie received the remainder of her father's domains, including Luxembourg and the Low Countries. Louis XI was eager to usurp these domains as well, so he tried to get them the easy way — by arranging a convenient marriage between his son and Marie.

But Marie and her advisors had other thoughts. On August 19, 1477 she married Maximilian of Austria, the son of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III of the Habsburg family, thus honoring a matrimonial agreement made by her father with Frederick III the previous year.



*Maximilian of Austria (1459-1519).
Husband of Marie of Burgundy.*

This union with the Habsburg family effectively prevented Luxembourg (and other Burgundian domains in the Low Countries) from being annexed by the French either by marriage or by force. Maximilian would later succeed his father as Emperor in 1493.

As Duchess of Luxembourg, Marie of Burgundy strengthened considerably the fortress of Luxembourg City and equipped the ramparts with cannons. This was sufficient to withstand the assault in 1479 of the Duke of Amboise, the head of a French army. After this failure, serious opposition by the French to Burgundian rule of Luxembourg ceased.

Marie's benevolent acts as Duchess were instrumental in securing the loyalty of Luxembourg to Burgundian rule. The Burgundians under Philip the Good and Charles the Bold had not been well-liked because of their harshness and pomposity. Marie restored the privileges granted to many towns, monasteries, and corporations; restored the ancient seal of Luxembourg City that Philip the Good had confiscated; and returned the town hall building to Luxembourg City.



*The tombs of Marie of Burgundy
and her father Charles the Bold.*

Marie died in 1482 at the age of 25 from a fall from a horse while hunting in the forest of Wijnendaal near Bruges. Her tomb now rests next to her father's in the choir of the ancient *Onze-Lieve-Vrouwewerk* (Church of Our Lady) in Bruges. Each tomb has a magnificent sepulchral figure in gilded copper lying on top of the sarcophagus.



*Philip the Handsome (1478-1506).
Duke of Luxembourg 1482-1506.*



*Juana of Castile (1479-1555).
Wife of Philip the Handsome.*

Marie was succeeded by her son Philip who was only four years old when she died. Philip's father Maximilian acted as regent until he reached the age of majority.

Philip is known to history as Philip the Handsome or Philip the Fair ("*le Beau*").

Philip had the good fortune to marry the Spanish heiress Juana of Castile in 1496. She was the daughter of the wealthy Spanish monarchs Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile who are most famous to history for funding Columbus' voyages to the New World.

The marriage between Philip and Juana was arranged by Maximilian in order to ease the way towards a total and perpetual alliance with Spain. At time of the marriage, Juana had a brother, Juan, who was the heir apparent to the vast possessions of Ferdinand and Isabella. However, Juan, who was married to Philip's sister Margaret, was dead within a few years, and less than a year after that Juana's elder sister died. As a result, in the space of just a few years, Juana had become next in line to the throne of Spain, much to the surprise and the delight of the Habsburgs.

Juana is known as "the Mad" because of mental illness that incapacitated her for much of her long life. (She was born in 1479 and died at age 75 in 1555.) In 1504, her mother Isabella died and Juana succeeded her as Queen of Castile. Because of her condition, however, Ferdinand acted as regent. On June 27, 1506, Ferdinand agreed to withdraw in favor of Philip, who became King Philip I of Spain. But Philip was to die of a fever—some claim he was poisoned—only a few months later.

Philip's heir was his son Charles who was born in Ghent in 1500. This young child received an incredible legacy — not only his father's Burgundian territories (Luxembourg, the Low Countries, and the Free County of Burgundy), but also, in 1516 on the death of Ferdinand, the vast possessions of Spain, including Castile, Aragon, Sicily, Naples, the New World of America, and the Indies. Three years later, in 1519, upon the death of grandfather Maximilian, he added the Habsburg territories (Bohemia, Hungary, and Austrian duchies) to his realm. In the end, Charles dominated all of

central Europe, half of western Europe, and a good part of the New World.

Charles is known to Spain as King Carlos I but is better known to history as Emperor Charles V or *Charles Quint*. Under the rule of Charles, and later his son Philip II, Spain dominated Europe for most of the 16th century and accumulated incredible wealth by exploiting its possessions in North and South America. Charles' ascension marked the end of Burgundian rule in Luxembourg and the start of the period of Spanish domination that would last almost 200 years. Charles V, though technically a Burgundian, was molded by the influential court of Spain and it was this court's policies that steered Luxembourg through the 16th century and most of the 17th century.



Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy formed the chivalric Order of the Golden Fleece in 1430. Shown on this 1959 first day cover from Belgium are Philip the Good's coat-of-arms as well as five successive Grand Masters of the Order in ceremonial robes: Philip the Good, Charles the Bold, Emperor Maximilian I of Austria (husband of Marie of Burgundy), Philip the Handsome, and Emperor Charles V. All played important roles in the history of Luxembourg in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Did you know.... that Luxembourg National Day is on June 23? The biggest celebration is in Luxembourg City with a fireworks show above Pont Adolphe on the evening of June 22.