



*The Joyous Entry of Albert and
Isabella in Lille: History, Conquest
and the Making of Belgium,*

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Abstract: This article investigates the planned festivities for the Joyous Entry of Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella Eugenia, joint sovereigns of the Low Countries since 1598, when they entered their city of Lille in 1600. In particular, this article focuses on the *tableaux vivants* and triumphal arches created by city authorities to commemorate the long history of collaboration between the counts of Flanders and the urban corporation. Accounts of these arches and *tableaux vivants* have survived only in two chronicles and an intriguing set of contemporary images. These posed scenes evoked newer forms of historical writing popular in the early modern period – urban, chorographical, and cosmographical – that did the work of renewing bonds of sovereign to people in the midst of the Dutch Revolt. They also produced a version of history that effectively silenced the problematic recent past, and placed the city of Lille firmly within the larger empire of its Habsburg sovereigns.

Keywords: Joyous Entry, Lille, Belgium, Floris van der Haer, chorography, Dutch Revolt, Archduke Albert, Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia

When the new joint sovereigns of the Low Countries, Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, rode through Lille's Malades Gate on a bitterly cold February morning in 1600, they were greeted by what could only be described as an assault on their senses. From the gate itself hung a huge painting with the arms of the deceased Philip II. Lining the ramparts, which were draped with the colors black, yellow and sky blue, the colors of Flanders and Burgundy, a number of bourgeois companies stood and discharged their weapons, sending the sharp smell of gunpowder into the air. The city magistrates, attired in rich velvet and ermine costumes rode behind the sovereigns, while around them trumpets blared and oboes trilled. Albert and Isabella passed through streets lined with burning torches and covered in tapestries, paintings, even several mechanical dolls on planks suspended from the upper stories of houses, that marched out windows and showered flowers down on the royal couple as they passed beneath. While people waved and shouted from the streets, windows or market squares, the new sovereigns moved slowly past triumphal arches and makeshift theatres painted with inscriptions and containing elaborately posed scenes, some of which moved and spoke directly to them. After stepping down to warm themselves at the collegiate church of St. Peter, they

¹ This research was partially supported by a H.H. Powers Grant from Oberlin College. The author would like to thank Jennifer Mara DeSilva and the anonymous reviewers at the *Royal Studies Journal* for their valuable comments and suggestions for improving the article.

continued their stately path through the city streets and squares until, probably with relief, they arrived at their palace to dine. There the sovereigns would await the grand ceremony the next day, whereby they would graciously accept the *Magistral's* proclamation of allegiance to them and in turn agree to uphold and protect the privileges awarded by their predecessors.²

Since the medieval period, a Joyous Entry (*joyeuse entrée* in French or *blijde inkomst* or *blijde intrede* in Dutch) not only ritually marked the first time a ruler arrived to take possession of a city in the Netherlands; it also laid out the duties and obligations of rulers and their subjects.³ In ceremonial language, the Joyous Entry bound two bodies – that of the sovereign and that of the urban corporation – and it reinforced the materiality of their connection by taking place in the commercial heart of the city or before its walls. Although the exchange of vows was the necessary and central act of this political theatre, Joyous Entries usually began, like Lille's, before the city gates. Here a *tableau vivant*, literally, "a living picture", might remind the visiting monarch of the just acts of his own ancestors or the industriousness of his urban subjects, before he proceeded to other entertainments set up around the city. As scholars have noted, these events folded an innovation – the first appearance of a ruler – into a recognizable historical framework, thereby providing well-established roles for actors from city and state but also serving as a source, a font of political authority.⁴ The Joyous Entry made the city itself, by the strategic use of walls, streets and markets for these public rituals, appear to be an object that the ruler could possess by merely moving through it, but it also provided an opportunity for city residents to show who they were and to express their sense of this relationship, and on occasion, their discontents. Perhaps it is this mixture of the ahistorical or enduring nature of ritual itself, the festive, that brings something out of time, with the contingencies surrounding particular Entries, that continues to fascinate scholars.

With renewed interest in the ceremonies and pageantry of late medieval and early modern cities, urban historians of both Italy and the Low Countries have begun to re-evaluate their roles – they did not merely display political authority or reflexively represent civic religion, but, as Trexler, Arnade, Lecuppre-Desjardin and others have shown, produced them.⁵ In conjunction with the work done on all kinds of medieval and early modern festivals, such efforts have revealed a much richer and more negotiated ritual landscape in cities than scholars

² J. Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle: Lille aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles d'après des documents inédits* (Lille, 1873), 41-99.

³ R. van Bragt, ed., *De blijde inkomst van de hertogen van Brabant Johanna en Wenceslas*, Wetenschappelijke bijdragen uitgegeven door de Belgische afdeling van de internationale commissie voor de geschiedenis van standen en landen, XIII (Leuven, 1956). Because the Joyous Entry is an acknowledgment of a new political ruler, it can be differentiated from other festive moments, such as triumphal entries, marriage celebrations, peace processions or annual religious events. It is unclear exactly when this political ritual began, but the inclusion of a written agreement originated when the Duke of Brabant entered the city of Leuven and delivered a charter in 1356.

⁴ Joyous Entries have an increasingly large historiography ranging from general surveys to more specific works focusing on one Entry. See M. Thöfner, *A Common Art: Urban Ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels during and after the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle, 2007) as well as the contributions in B. Hanawalt and K. Reyerson, eds., *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis, MN, 1994); J. R. Mulryne, H. Watanabe-O'Kelly, and M. Shewring, eds., *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Aldershot, and Burlington, VT, 2004).

⁵ R. C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1980); P. J. Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, NY, 1996); P. J. Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca, NY, 2008), 31-38; A. Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion in Medieval Bruges c.1300-1520* (Cambridge and New York, 2011); Mulryne, Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Shewring, *Europa Triumphans*.

had imagined. However, the time frame of many of these urban studies (primarily medieval or late medieval) tends to inadvertently replicate a traditional historiography that envisioned decline in the health and strength of cities (and the importance of their rituals) in the later period. This declensionist narrative underlay Hugo Soly's important 1984 essay on these ceremonies in the Low Countries, in which he argued that Joyous Entries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had lost much of their original significance and were no longer a negotiation between city and prince, because power had shifted to increasingly dominant rulers, the Habsburgs.⁶ Van Bruaene and Thöfner have since modified Soly's position, instead reclaiming a political role for these ceremonies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the events themselves or the carefully crafted festival books produced afterwards. These events did not merely reflect the glory of the ruler but, they have argued, highlighted the tensions, open rebellion against the king of Spain's political legitimacy, fears of Protestant and Catholic violence and the continued insistence of these Brabantine and Flemish towns on their economic, social and political importance.⁷ Through an examination of festivities in the cities of Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp, scholarship has described these towns, and particularly the latter two, as having complicated histories of protest against policies of their rulers and the physical destruction enacted by those rulers. By turning to another city, Lille, a wealthy cloth-producing town in the French speaking part of Flanders, whose history with its rulers was largely one of accommodation and successful negotiation, this article aims to do two things: one, broaden the discussion of the ways city residents of the southern Low Countries in this period dealt with conflict and imagined new roles within a polity torn apart by war and religious division and two, confirm that the political life of these cities was not dead in the early seventeenth century, but clearly in the midst of refashioning.

This essay focuses in particular on the way history was commemorated and reenacted in the *tableaux vivants* and triumphal arches created by Lille's city authorities, particularly in a narrative of continuous collaboration between the counts of Flanders and the urban corporation. Chronicles, town accounts and the few surviving illustrations of the event, show strikingly how the planners of the event – mostly one canon of the collegiate church but also city magistrates – wanted to introduce the city through a particular vision of history that provided both a sense of recognition and a dose of exoticism. The use of history in Joyous

⁶ H. Soly, "Plechtige intochten in de steden van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de overgang van de Middeleeuwen naar Nieuwe Tijd: communicatie, propaganda, spektakel", *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, vol. 97 (1984), 341-361.

⁷ A.-L. Van Bruaene, "Spectacle and Spin for a Spurned Prince: Civil Strategies in the Entry Ceremonies of the Duke of Anjou in Antwerp, Bruges and Ghent (1582)", *Journal of Early Modern History*, vol. 11 (2007), 263-284; A.-L. Van Bruaene, "The Habsburg Theatre State: Court, City and the Performance of Identity in the Early Modern Southern Low Countries", in *Networks, Regions and Nations: Shaping Identities in the Low Countries 1300-1650*, ed. R. Stein and J. Pollmann (Leiden and Boston, 2010), 131-149; M. Thöfner, "Marrying the City, Mothering the Country: Gender and Visual Conventions in Johannes Bochi's Account of the Joyous Entry of the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella into Antwerp", *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 22 (1999), 3-27 and M. Thöfner, *A Common Art*. See also W. Blockmans and E. Donckers, "Self-Representation of Court and City in Flanders and Brabant in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries", in *Showing Status: Representations of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages*, eds. W. Blockmans and A. Janse (Turnhout, 1999), 81-111; M. P. Holt, *The Duke of Anjou and the Political Struggle during the Wars of Religion* (Cambridge and New York, 1986), 168-169 and E. J. Peters, "Printing Ritual: The Performance of Community in Christopher Plantin's *La Joyeuse & Magnifique Entrée de Monseigneur Francoys ... d'Anjou*", *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 61 (2008), 370-413 (377).

Entries of this period made sense; after all, these ceremonies occurred primarily at the beginning of someone's reign and therefore would be a moment to reflect on the passage of time. The invocation of a city's history and depictions of the ancestors of current leaders – in mythical, classical and allegorical guise – was a tried and true theme that Lille shared with many other cities, not only in the Low Countries but in France and England as well. For example, London and Paris each appeared as a new Troy, while Dijon was described as a place originally dedicated to pagan, as well as Christian, gods.⁸ These invocations, while noted by numerous scholars, have not been systematically analyzed, nor discussed as works of history. Historical writing was increasingly popular during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and putting the two in conversation both contextualizes such historical writing and places Joyous Entries in a larger scholarly framework.

Analyzing these images and texts, this article will show, first, that Lille's planners strategically brought the past into the present and placed their own institutional history in relation to that of the imagined empires of their rulers. They did so, not primarily to educate their new sovereigns, bringing them from the savage to the civilized and the uncouth to the spiritual, as Michael Wintroub so brilliantly argued for Henry II's 1555 Entry into Rouen, but rather to move away from the fraught events of the recent past and express their sense of political belonging within a larger empire. Their polity, envisioned as both a composite state and a people loyal to the Habsburgs, was legitimized by a firm connection between Lille and rulers of the past.⁹ Second, the kind of history they brought into play had less in common with the mythologizing or allegorizing history seen in earlier Joyous Entries, both in Lille and elsewhere in the Low Countries, and much more to do with new models of chorographic writing popularized in the second half of the sixteenth century in travelogues like Guicciardini's *Description of the Entire Low Countries* (1567) and in atlases of cities, that combined the visual images of place with the historical, and through the description of city after city in one volume, linked the local firmly to an imperial whole.¹⁰

Only recently have certain forms of historical writing in the early modern period (chorographic, cosmographic or universal, and urban history) been linked to development of early modern nationalism, although scholars of both the Dutch Revolt and the French Wars of Religion have long noted the importance of historical writing in the polemicization and memorialization of these conflicts.¹¹ Historians of early modern France such as Myriam

⁸ L. M. Bryant, "Configurations of the Community in Late Medieval Spectacles: Paris and London during the Dual Monarchy", in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, eds. B. Hanawalt and K. Reyerson (Minneapolis, MN, 1994), 3-33; M. P. Breen, "Addressing 'La Ville des Dieux': Entry Ceremonies and Urban Audiences in Seventeenth-Century Dijon", *Journal of Social History*, vol. 38 (2004), 341-364; S. Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power: The Triumphal Entry of Prince Philip of Spain into Antwerp* (Amsterdam and New York, 2012). For more on Trojan origins of northern European cities, see R. Waswo, *The Founding Legend of Western Civilization: From Virgil to Vietnam* (Hanover, NH, 1997), 47-66.

⁹ M. Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity, and Knowledge in Early Modern France* (Stanford, CA, 2006).

¹⁰ L. Guicciardini, *Descrittione di tutti i paesi bassi, altrimenti detti Germania inferiore ...* (Antwerp, 1567); G. Braun and F. Hogenberg, *Cities of the World: Complete Edition of the Color Plates 1572-1617 (Civitates Orbis Terrarum)*, ed. S. Fussell (Cologne and London, 2008).

¹¹ M. van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1555-1590* (Cambridge and New York, 1992); P. Arnade and H. van Nierop, "The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt", *Journal of Early Modern History*, vol. 11 (2007), 253-261; E. Kuijpers, J. Pollmann, J. Müller, J. van der Steen, eds. *Memory before Modernity. Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2013); A. Frisch, *Forgetting Differences. Tragedy, Historiography, and the French Wars of*

Yardeni, Clarisse Coulomb, Claire Dolan, and Hilary Bernstein have argued persuasively for the connections between local urban historians and the development of French national sentiment in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, noting that these historians were part of a burgeoning French republic of letters.¹² The Low Countries, an entity only officially created by the Treaty of Augsburg in 1548 (the Burgundian Circle) and united in terms of succession by the Pragmatic Sanction of 1549, posed a very different problem of political identity than did France. This problem was particularly acute in the midst of the Dutch Revolt when supporters of William of Orange and the Habsburgs battled for who best protected the newly-coined polity, whether *patrie*, *Pays-Bas*, *Nederland*, *vaterland*, the learned *Gallia Belgica*, or *Belgium*.¹³ These latter terms, invoked so frequently during Lille's Joyous Entry, do not point to the appearance of modern Belgium during this phase of the Dutch Revolt.¹⁴ Instead, their use signals that political identity was a subject of much concern, by *lillois* and others, immediately after the transition of power from Philip II to his daughter and her husband, and that the first visit of the new sovereigns provided a key moment to comment on precisely this issue. Did the arrival of the new monarchs herald an opening for reuniting the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries or did it solidify a widening and some believed, cataclysmic divide between the United Provinces and the Spanish Netherlands?¹⁵ And what did

Religion (Edinburgh, 2015); P. Benedict, "La conviction plus forte que la critique. La Réforme et les guerres de religion vues par les historiens protestants à l'époque de la Révocation", in P. Benedict, H. Daussy and P-O. Lécho, eds. *L'identité huguenote. Faire mémoire et écrire l'histoire (XVIe-XXIe siècles)* (Geneva, 2014), and P. Benedict, "Divided memories? Historical calendars, commemorative processions and the recollection of the Wars of Religion during the ancien regime", *French History*, vol. 22 (2008), 381-405.

¹² M. Yardeni, *Enquêtes sur l'identité de la "Nation France": De la Renaissance aux Lumières*, Epoques (Seysse, 2005); M. Yardeni, "Histoire de villes, histoires de provinces et naissance d'une identité française au XVIe siècle", *Journal Des Savants*, vol. 1 (1993), 111-134; C. Coulomb, "Des villes de papier: écrire l'histoire de la ville dans l'Europe moderne", *Histoire Urbaine*, vol. 2 (2010), 5-16; "C. Dolan, L'identité urbaine et les histoires locales publiées du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle en France", *Canadian Journal of History*, vol. 27 (1992), 278-298; H. Bernstein, "République urbaine et République des Lettres. André Duchesne, Jean Rogier et les significations de l'histoire locale à Reims au XVIIe siècle", *Histoire, Économie, Société*, vol. 30 (2011), 29-46.

¹³ This question of political identity has created a rich historiographical debate. See the contributions to R. Stein and J. Pollmann eds., *Networks, Regions and Nations: Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300-1650* (Leiden and Boston, 2010); A. Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Netherlands* (London, 1990); J. Stengers, *Histoire du sentiment national en Belgique des origines à 1918. Tome 1, Les racines de la Belgique, jusqu'à la révolution de 1830* (Brussels, 2000); J. Stengers, "La genèse du sentiment nationale Belge", in *'1585: Op gescheiden wegen'. Handelingen van het colloquium over de scheiding der Nederlanden, gehouden op 22-23 november 1985*, eds. J. Craeybeckx, F. Daelemans, and F. G. Scheelings (Leuven, 1988), 237-251; A. Duke, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries*, eds. J. Pollmann and A. Spicer (Farnham and Burlington, VT, 2009); Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots*. For discussion of both French and Netherlandish identities in this period, see P. Benedict et al., eds., *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands 1555-1585* (Amsterdam, 1999).

¹⁴ Stengers puts the appearance of an "incontestable Belgian identity" around 1789, although he and others argue that there was a burgeoning Netherlandish identity, sharpened by fighting for the *patria* during the 1570s and then gradually the development of two state identities, that of the United Provinces and that of the Spanish Netherlands, by the 1630s. Stengers, *Histoire du sentiment national en Belgique*, 151.

¹⁵ For a recent study of the political culture of the Low Countries in this period, see L. Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety: Archduke Albert (1598-1621) and Habsburg Political Culture in an Age of Religious Wars* (Farnham and Burlington, VT, 2012). See also W. Thomas and L. Duerloo, eds., *Albert & Isabella, 1598-1621: Essays* (Turnhout, 1998); C. Bruneel, "The Spanish and Austrian Netherlands, 1585-1780", in *History of the Low Countries*, eds. J. C. H. Blom and E. Lamberts (New York, 1999), 221-268.

loyalty, clearly a value prized in a city like Lille, mean in that moment and how should it be expressed?

Making and Recording a Joyous Entry

In the mid sixteenth century, when Guicciardini published his chorographic tour of the Netherlands, Lille was, by his account, a prosperous city of 35,000-40,000 residents, populated mostly by artisans in textile and leather industries, but also by merchants who traveled busily between Antwerp and Paris.¹⁶ Living in a French-speaking capital of a small region in Flanders, but integrated into French and Flemish networks of cities both economically and culturally, Lille's elite citizens participated in rhetorical competitions and festivals and sent delegates to the States-General to deal with taxes and other issues. Nevertheless, like their counterparts in neighboring Douai, Valenciennes, Ghent and Bruges, they maintained their own customs and, as magistrates or *échevins*, guarded their local privileges. Lille was also a city whose officers were known for loyalty to the crown whatever that crown was – French in the fourteenth century, Burgundian in the fifteenth century, and Habsburg in the sixteenth and much of the seventeenth centuries.¹⁷ And while *lillois* magistrates, like many others in European cities of the early modern period, were beginning to move from active participation in commerce to positions as titled *rentiers* with land in the countryside, they kept a close watch on social conditions and expanded their jurisdiction in economic and judicial matters and regulated production in order to protect smaller family-run businesses.¹⁸ In the heat of iconoclasm and political discontent that began in the 1550s but peaked in the period 1566-1572, Lille was one of the few cities where Protestants neither committed major acts of iconoclasm nor took over the city government. However, there were plenty of underground Calvinists who took to the fields and meadows to hear hedge preaching and who were exiled or executed during that time. After banding together with other cities to remove the hated Spanish soldiers in 1576, Lille's delegates to the States-General also quickly signed the Treaty of Arras that returned control to the Spanish Crown in 1579. Lille then became, in the words of historian Alain Lottin, a "citadel of the counter-Reformation", filled with new orders that engaged the hearts and minds of residents and provided a new religious discipline.¹⁹

¹⁶ L. Trénard, ed., *Histoire de Lille*, 2 vols. (Lille, 1970); E. Bussière, ed., *Le grand Lille* (Antwerp, 2000); R. S. DuPlessis, *Lille and the Dutch Revolt: Urban Stability in an Era of Revolution, 1500-1582* (Cambridge, 1991).

¹⁷ The civic structures that helped shape the relatively conflict free relationships between Lille's magistrates and other Burgundian officers are analyzed in P. Lantschner, *The Logic of Political Conflict in Medieval Cities: Italy and the Southern Low Countries, 1370-1440* (Oxford and New York, 2015), 169-199.

¹⁸ A. Lottin, "'Messieurs' du Magistrat de Lille: pouvoir et société dans une grande ville manufacturière (1598-1667)", in *Être et croire à Lille et en Flandre: XVIe-XVIIIe siècle: recueil d'études* (Arras, 2000), 253-268; DuPlessis, *Lille and the Dutch Revolt*; R. S. DuPlessis and M. C. Howell, "Reconsidering the Early Modern Urban Economy: The Cases of Leiden and Lille", *Past and Present*, vol. 94 (1982), 49-84.

¹⁹ A. Lottin, *La Révolte des gueux en Flandre, Artois et Hainaut: politique, religion et société au XVIe siècle* (Lillers, 2007); S. Deyon and A. Lottin, *Les "Casseurs" de l'été 1566: L'iconoclisme dans le nord* (Paris, 1981); A. Lottin, *Lille, Citadelle de la Contre-Réforme? (1598-1668)* (Dunkerque, 1984).

Fig. 1. Plan of Lille, based on an original drawing of Lille by Jacob van Deventer, in: Braun and Hogenberg, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, vol. 2.



Even with such stability, *lillois* were clearly war-weary by the end of the sixteenth century. In 1598, they celebrated the Treaty of Vervins that ended Philip II's war with France by suspending from the bell tower an effigy of a man representing war, which the crowd then tore into pieces. The population appeared to happily accept Philip II's decision to give his daughter Isabella his possessions in the Netherlands on the condition she marry her cousin Archduke Albert.²⁰ For their Joyous Entry, although still in the midst of the Dutch Revolt, an outbreak of plague and crop failure, and fearing the appearance of heretical preachers and rebellious Beggars, Lille's authorities made it clear that they were, and always would be, faithful to their rulers, and they turned resolutely away from recent events that had torn apart the provinces of the Low Countries. The promise of peace was an occasion to put on a lavish show. For the two-day affair in 1600, Lille's magistrates spent upwards of 100,000 pounds, the equivalent of the city's expenditure for a year, which they had to borrow from wealthy citizens and raise

²⁰ A. Lottin, "De l'Espagne à la France (1500-1715)", in *Le grand Lille*, ed. E. Bussière (Antwerp, 2000), 64.

extra taxes for six years to pay off.²¹ The lavish gifts, costumes, and entertainments, as well as frequent trips to Brussels to work out the details and entertainments speak to months of careful planning as well. Overall, the theatres and triumphal arches, their construction and decoration, cost approximately 23,000 pounds or around 20% of the total spending on the Joyous Entry, constituting one of the most important expenses of the Entry.²²

Lille's festivities included twenty theatres (including the main stage for the oath-swearing ceremony), four large triumphal arches and smaller entertainments. The program as a whole was organized by Floris van der Haer (1547-1634), treasurer and canon of the prestigious collegiate church of St. Peter. The process of designing the theatres and arches and writing the verses included a small but prominent group of citizens, magistrates, and ecclesiastics. Jehan Mahieu, one of the fifteen captains of the bourgeois companies, helped direct the festivities with van der Haer. Jehan Fayet, master of works for the city and builder of the new town hall, was in charge of construction. Painters Philippe de Vinq, Philippe Mesque and Jaspert Marcq did heraldic arms, paintings and designed costumes. Unlike the raucous celebrations at the Feast of Innocents or King of Idiots (*roi des Sots*) that had been suppressed during the 1550s and 1560s, this Entry was clearly an affair run by the elite connected to city government.²³

Such an event, the first of its kind in over fifty years, deserved memorialization, and there are several extant accounts of the events; two in Lille's municipal library and another, slightly different, housed in the municipal archives.²⁴ In addition, a detailed entry in the town accounts carefully recorded the services provided and expenses incurred. There is, moreover, a set of elaborate illustrations of a number of the *tableaux vivants* and triumphal arches carefully placed into in an early eighteenth-century *Chronique Lilloise*, which included descriptions of events in Lille from Albert and Isabella's visit until 1662.²⁵ According to Jules Houdoy, who printed the text of the manuscript from the municipal archives and published a special description of the Entry from the town accounts, the illustrations that were pasted in the chronicle may have been done originally for a festival book that Gilles Lebouck, a city magistrate, was paid to create and which was since lost. Or they may have been elaborate sketches created by the artists Philipp de Vinq and Jaspert Mesque prior to the event.²⁶ In

²¹ Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 30.

²² Tabulated from the town accounts in Houdoy, 101-121. The spending on triumphal arches and *tableaux vivants* was roughly equal to the 22,000 pounds spent on the six cups of solid gold fashioned by Lille's goldsmiths that were presented to their Highnesses after the oath swearing. Overall triumphal arches cost more than theatres, the one averaging 2000 pounds while the latter between 400-800 pounds.

²³ While some were reimbursed for the expense of building and decorating the theatres, others received payment for writing the verses in French and Latin that were painted onto the theatres or spoken aloud, such as van der Haer, the master of St. Peter's school, the rector of the Jesuit convent, *seigneur de Walle* (and member of the *Magistrat*), a local doctor and a few others. For a discussion of older festivities and their suppression, such as those created by rhetorical societies, see L. Lefebvre, *Fêtes lilloises du XIV^e au XV^e siècle* (Lille, 1902).

²⁴ Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 5-11. To create his published text, Houdoy used a manuscript from the Tesson collection in the Archives municipales de Lille, *livre E*. He consulted with MS 247 *Collections d'auteurs nées à Lille* (n.d) and MS 678 *Chronique de Lille* (18th century), from the Bibliothèque municipale de Lille [hereafter BML] as well. A not wholly accurate account of Lille's Entry, most likely based on the text in the Archives municipales de Lille, is found in J. Bochijs, *Historica narratio projectionis et inaugurationis...Alberti et Isabellae....* (Antwerp, 1602), 352-371.

²⁵ BML MS 678.

²⁶ Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 8-9.

either case, these illustrations and texts, as well as the recorded speeches and painted banners, cannot be viewed as accurate portrayals of the displays, people or events, but as Björn Tammen, noted, as *Fiktionsapparat* (fiction apparatus); they provide an idealized but evocative sense of the aural and visual impact planners wanted to produce.²⁷

Nor is it clear how many of the *tableaux* were actually produced as living pictures. The *lillois* chronicles and the town accounts use the word theatre (*theatre*) and the illustrations in the *Chronique* suggest that there were live people posing on some kind of stage. The author of one chronicle, in describing the first theatre representing Philip II, his wife Isabel of France and their daughter the Infanta, noted, that there was an attempt at historical veracity: "The three people who were chosen, of everyone in the town, were those who, in body and face most closely represented the represented (*representoient les représentés*), dressed in silken garments and styled from what paintings and medals taught them."²⁸ The town accounts, however, record that only two people were paid for their performance although it appears that at least four theatres included live actors.²⁹ Some of these may have been similar to the 1635 Entry of Cardinal Infante Ferdinand to Antwerp that was designed by Peter Paul Rubens, which consisted almost entirely of painted people on stages "speaking" through the words written above or below the scene.³⁰ Whether painted or live figures, however, the whole effect of these theatres should be understood as a kind of interaction between the viewer, the actor or figure and the words written on the front of the platform or hanging behind. Bussels calls them, after Foucault, *emblemata* or a relationship between language and image, display and discourse. Although perhaps in different languages of communication, both word, written or spoken, and image were signs meant to be intelligible to the audience.³¹

Unfortunately, we know little about the difference between these texts and the performances they described or the reaction of the general audience.³² The extant chronicles merely noted that Albert and Isabella requested to be led through town to each theatre and arch the following day so they could see them again. Nor did they do more than mention the neighbourhood festivities, organized by the master of each of the city's neighbourhoods who led associations like the *Empire de Jeunesse* or the *le comte Lydéric*, which also kept order in the streets.³³ These entertainments may have spoken more tellingly of the interests of a wider range

²⁷ B. R. Tammen, "A Feast of the Arts: Joanna of Castile in Brussels, 1496", *Early Music History*, vol. 30 (2011), 216, citing B. Franke, *Assuerus und Esther am Burgunderhof: Zur rezeption des Buches Esther in den Niederlanden (1450-1530)* (Berlin, 1998), 110-111.

²⁸ Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 46.

²⁹ These were noted in the town accounts explicitly. BML MS 678 also notes that for the theatre containing eleven niches for past Holy Roman Emperors and with an empty chair for Albert, the emperors were wearing golden robes, and all "were chosen [because they] looked like the paintings of the emperors".

³⁰ S. Bussels, "Making the Most of Theatre and Painting: The Power of *Tableaux Vivants* in Joyous Entries from the Southern Netherlands (1458-1635)", *Art History*, vol. 33 (2010), 243.

³¹ Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power*, 150. For an overview on the large literature on the relationship between work and image, especially in art history, see G. Alù and F. Borghese, "Introduction: World and Image, East and West", *Literature & Aesthetics*, vol. 22 (2012), 1-12.

³² P. Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), 4.

³³ Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 34. The name of each association derived from the medieval *mystères* held during Lille's annual procession of Our Lady of the Trellis.

of local residents than did those of the elite planners.³⁴ This is not to say that the grander historical displays had little resonance for those who participated as actors or witnessed the Entry. These displays were part of a long line of such didactic entertainments in Lille, as in other cities in the region, from processions and plays to other ceremonial entries that helped shape civic identity. Nevertheless we cannot say with certainty what city planners wanted the local population to grasp or how they may have reacted.³⁵

Institutions and Conquests

Writing about French King Henry II's royal Entry in the mid-sixteenth century, Michael Wintroub noted that "it was the king's role, in traveling from one *tableau vivant* to another, to link them all together – to activate them through the connecting thread of his experience – into a coherent narrative program".³⁶ If van der Haer's plan, according to Houdoy, was designed as a march through Lille's history, it was not in fact a chronological one. After viewing a theatre portraying Philip, his wife Isabella, and the Infanta, and a triumphal arch of the happy couple, the royal couple moved to two theatres containing twelfth-century counts of Flanders, and then to theatres before the convents of the Poor Clares and the Society of Jesus, the latter offering an allegorical construction. The path of the procession then moved back in time to a theatre at the Fin bridge, representing Liederich, the forester, who killed the first tyrant of Flanders, Finart, in a duel before the Merovingian king Dagobert (603-639), supposedly on that very bridge, before moving forward again to display the last ten Holy Roman Emperors, with an empty chair among them, suggesting that Albert would soon take his place there.

³⁴ Breen, "Addressing 'La Ville des Dieux'". Breen's work on seventeenth-century Dijon argues that the Joyous Entries concerned local politics as much as they did city-state ones, and city magistrates there were communicating to the popular and middling classes with the Entry itself, but especially with the *mères folles*, popular entertainments.

³⁵ For the importance of such rituals in the southern Low Countries, see É. Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La Ville des Cérémonies: Essai sur la communication politique dans les anciens Pays-Bas Bourguignons* (Turnhout, 2004).

³⁶ M. Wintroub, "Civilizing the Savage and Making a King: The Royal Entry Festival of Henri II (Rouen 1550)", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 29 (1998), 470, cited in Breen, "Addressing 'La Ville des Dieux'", 349.

Fig. 2. *Liederich battling Finart, watched by Liederich's father*, seventeenth century. Lille, Bibliothèque municipale, Chronique Lilloise, MS 678, 361 fols, fol. 45.



The placement of certain theatres, then, invoked a local history, rather than a strict chronology. Liederich's duel on the bridge provided one episode, as did the theatre containing Philip the Bold, the first Duke of Burgundy to hold Flanders, which was placed before the Chamber of Accounts that Philip had founded and installed in Lille at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The theatre representing Duke John the Fearless (1371-1419), who had saved Lille from the French danger, was placed in front of the city fortifications, not far from where Duke Charles the Bold (1433-1477) and his wife were represented, under the epithet *Carolus Bellicosus*. Count Baldwin V of Flanders (1012-1067) appeared on a theatre approaching the site of the dismantled fortress, the *Château de Courtrai*, and near the collegiate church of St. Peter, which he had founded in 1066. With this deliberate placement, the organizers linked previous counts of Flanders to institutions they had created there, thus compelling the new sovereigns to acknowledge this relationship. As Lawrence Bryant has noted in his analysis of the French king's triumphal entry into Paris in the 1430s, having *tableaux vivants* alluding to institutions founded in the city, and speaking to the king, drew him into a larger polity, a

community they all shared together.³⁷ Similarly, in Lille, theatres placed before institutions like the Chamber of Accounts made the past their collective history and brought to life these institutions, alluding to their permanence while simultaneously humanizing them through the sovereigns who founded them. In moving through the streets and passing before these displays, Albert and Isabella were stepping into their role as protectors of an ancient bond, an active engagement that would culminate in the next day's ceremony on the town square. For their part, the actors on stage both embodied their sovereigns' forbears and remained (recognizably) modern *lillois*, thereby reinforcing the ongoing and participatory character of their commitment.

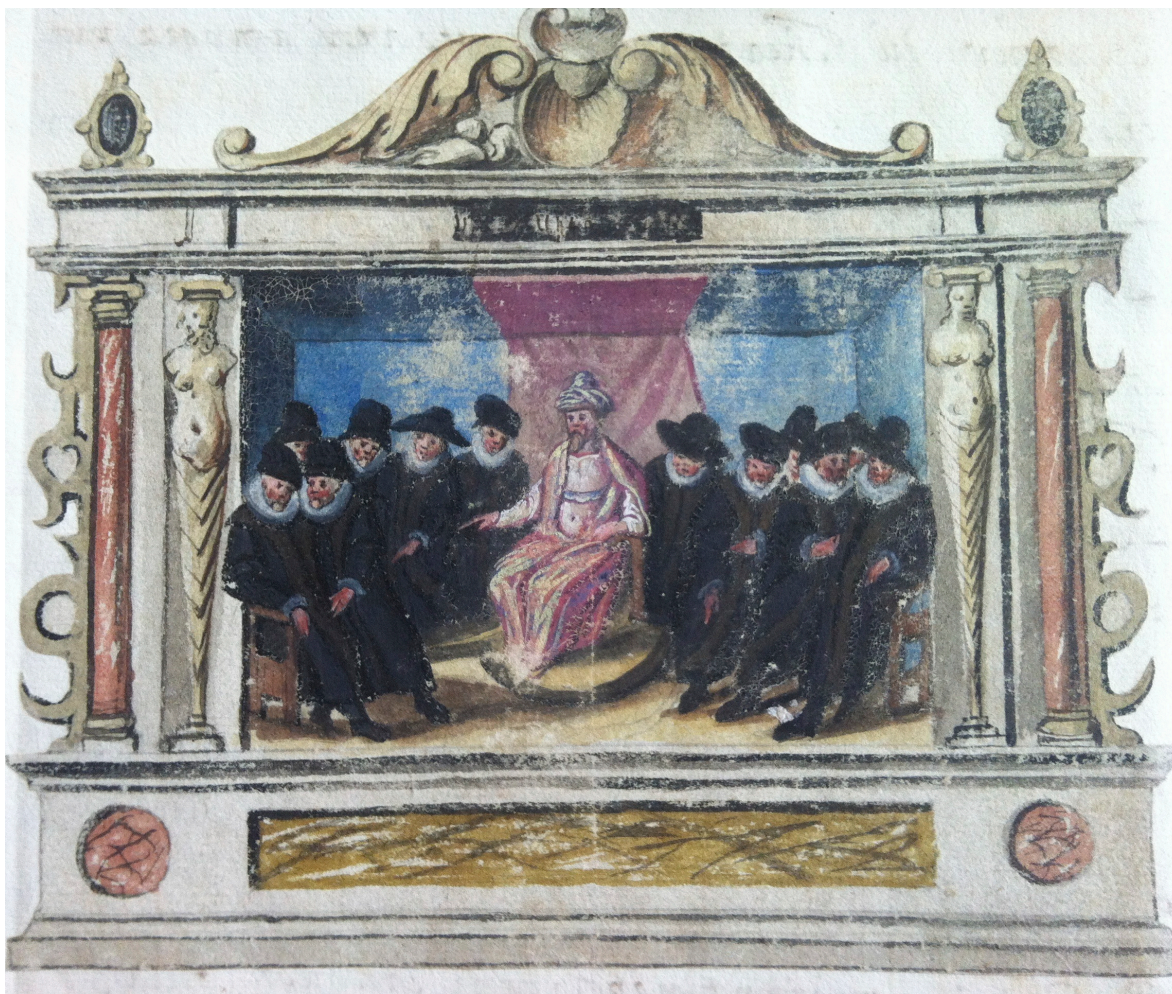
It was not only the live nature of the event that brought history into the present moment, in that particular place, but also the rather curious mixing of the antique and the modern, particularly in terms of costume. In one striking depiction of Guy of Dampierre (c.1226-1305), a rebellious count of Flanders who fought the French king (and then lost Lille to France for the next sixty years), the inscription on the theatre noted that he was the first count to swear the oath binding the city corporation to the Flemish counts and in turn recognize urban privileges. He was dressed in flowing robes and wore a turban while sitting next to men dressed as contemporary magistrates in their stiff black dress and white collars, evidently still acknowledging the current importance of this binding exchange.³⁸ In another theatre, the twelfth-century Countess Mehaut spoke directly to the Infanta while dressed in contemporary clothing; her husband, wrestling a foe to the ground next to her, wore a colorful knightly costume of a bygone era.³⁹ Such anachronism in dress seems deliberate and, particularly in Mehaut's case, directed to the visiting audience, but it was not, perhaps, for the sovereigns alone. For the local audience, just as having neighbors and friends play these historic figures provided a shock of recognition, contemporary dress likewise signaled that these events had important lessons for them in the present and may have been an inducement to civic pride. Unlike the subjects of the passion plays or rhetorical society productions that were common before the 1560s, what appeared on these theatres and triumphal arches was, in fact, Lille's story. Contemporary city magistrates were worthy of sharing the same historical stage as their erstwhile count, Guy of Dampierre.

³⁷ Bryant, "Configurations of the Community in Late Medieval Spectacles: Paris and London during the Dual Monarchy", 24.

³⁸ This image raises several questions. Is this image, too, an acknowledgement of empire, since Guy is wearing a turban, as different but still sharing the same stage with present day *lillois*, or is he wearing a turban because he too, was conquered?

³⁹ The connection between Mehaut and Isabella is reinforced by the small niche above her head containing a representation of Isabella in the same pose and wearing a very similar dress to Mehaut's.

Fig. 3 and Fig. 4. *Count Guy de Dampierre surrounded by Lille's échevins, members of the Magistrat and Count Philip of Alsace and Countess Mehaut, with King Nobilion of Albania under Philip's feet, seventeenth century. Lille, Bibliothèque municipale, Chronique Lilloise, MS 678, fols. 361, fols. 66, 33.*





But the thread that connected these different theatres was a history of conquest and empire as well as that of local institutions. While some displays alluded to the Holy Roman Empire and the hoped-for election of Albert as its emperor, empire in Lille's Joyous Entry referred more broadly to both long ago conquests in the East and the disparate collection of possessions acquired by the Habsburgs during the recent past. Eight of the nineteen theatres portrayed a series of great rulers, who were connected to the city, but who also made Lille part of a much larger world. The first triumphal arch set the tone. Dedicated to both Albert and Isabella, painted panels described the new sovereigns as descended from warrior kings who subdued the earth with their laws and their lances:

But you, undefeated Prince, [from a] race of such kings
That the earth and the sea submitted to their laws
Great in wealth, great in status and greatest in courage,
They pursued their glorious path by iron and lance.
Let your warrior praise throughout the world spread
From the River Deule to the Ganges.⁴⁰

From Lille's river to the fabled Ganges, van der Haer imagined a great contemporary empire, but one that was founded on a longer history of conquest, as subsequent *tableaux* revealed.⁴¹ Thus the theatre portraying Count Thierry d'Alsace (1100-1168), his wife Sybilla, daughter of the king of Jerusalem, and Bernard of Clairvaux contained an inscription declaring that the count took four trips on crusade with the support of those from Lille. As noted above, the next theatre portrayed his son, Philip of Alsace, accompanied by Philip's wife Mehaut, daughter of the king of Portugal. Philip spoke about his own conquest of the Turks and under his feet lay Nobilion, fabled king of Albania, who was supposedly killed during the Third Crusade. Even on the theatres of Countess Margaret and Countess Joan, thirteenth-century founders of important religious institutions in Lille, the painted inscriptions described their father's conquests as Emperor of Constantinople and the Latin Empire as much as their own acts of piety in Lille.⁴²

Interestingly, in the theatres that described the more recent past, rather than the glory days of crusading in the East, the message of abject submission was modified. References to the conquered infidel, wearing turbans, were placed in the long ago past while the immediate predecessor sovereigns of the Low Countries, Charles V and particularly Philip II, who had fought the Ottoman Turks successfully at Lepanto in 1571, did not appear primarily as conquerors. Rather they were rulers bringing together representatives of contemporary

⁴⁰ Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 51. "Mais toi, prince invaincu, race de tant de roys/Qui la terre et la mer ont soubmis à leurs loys. Grand de biens, grand de rang et plus grand de vaillance,/Poursuis leur beau sentier par le fer et la lance,/Fay que ton los guerrier par le monde espandu/Soit de la Deule avant jusqu'au Gange estendu."

⁴¹ Mention of the Ganges echoes Genoa's Entry described in Don Felipe's voyage from Spain to the Spanish Netherlands. J. C. Calvete de Estrella, *El felicissimo viaje d'el muy alto y muy poderoso Principe Don Phelippe hijo d'el Emperador Don Carols Quinto Maximo desde Espana a sus tierras de la baxa Alemana* (Antwerp, 1552), translated in Mulryne, Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Shewring, *Europa Triumphans*, vol. 1, 293.

⁴² Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 71. BML MS 678, fol. 33.

difference, the peoples of different nations and races that made up the empire of the Habsburgs in the sixteenth century.

Fig. 5 and Fig. 6. *Emperor Charles V* and *King Philip II*, seventeenth century. Lille, Bibliothèque municipale, *Chronique Lilloise*, MS 678, fols. 361, fols. 99, 104.





This history of conquest served not only to highlight the glorious past of Isabella's and Albert's ancestors, but also to provide a role for Lille – never subjected, but ever loyal. The inscription on one triumphal arch dedicated to the Archduke and Infanta noted that Lille had “a remarkable fidelity and obedience to them” (*de fidélité et obéissance remarquable vers iceulx*) and that it was “like a steadfast rock in the midst of the storm” (*comme un roc immobile au milieu de l'orage*).⁴³ Moreover, the inscription on Philip II's theatre, addressing Albert and Isabella, reads:

Dear children, or rather, half of my soul, If you care about your good vassals,
bestow your favor on this people whose zeal I have, by my own hand, attested,
[the zeal] that it has shown in opposing these mutinous furies, scorning for its
fidelity also a thousand ruins...never once was it diverted from following its
God and its king.⁴⁴

Lille, in other words, was a city that recognized and affirmed the connection between God, king and people that had long been a mainstay of the Burgundian and Habsburg theatre state.⁴⁵ Such loyalty, it was noted, also had its benefits for *lillois* residents. Addressing both the Archduke and Infanta and the assembled crowd of dignitaries and commoners on the day of the oath swearing ceremony, Jean Richardot (1540-1609), Chief-President of the Privy Council, finished his long discourse on the rise and fall of empires by noting

[t]hat the city of Lille...had survived, by the grace of God and the favors that she had received from Count Baldwin the Debonnaire or rather of Lille, and notably from good Duke Philip, and that despite the ruin of many cities in these Low Countries, and the alteration of others, this city had been the least injured, for which one should thank the Almighty and by respectable behavior this day, enjoy, make merry and show general rejoicing.⁴⁶

Richardot understood the message of the city's history: faithfulness assured survival.⁴⁷

Its loyalty set Lille apart, but van der Haer was not in fact arguing that the city was alone in relation to its rulers. In the Joyous Entry, what mediated between the local and the

⁴³ Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 50-51.

⁴⁴ Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 85. “Chers enfans, mais plustot la moitié de mon ame Si de vos bons vassaux le soucy vous entame, Favorisez ce peuple a quy j'ai, de ma main Par escript, témoigné le zèle très-certain (alluding to letters Philip had written to the *Magistrat* praising them for their fidelity) Qu'il at en s'opposant à ces fureurs mutines, Méprisant pour sa foy aussi mille ruynes; Et mesme en mon absence, oncq ne fut diverty De suyvre de son Dieu et son roy le party; Ainsy tard pour leur bien, le ciel d'eulx vous retire, Et vos fils comme vous accroissent leur empire.”

⁴⁵ See Van Bruaene, “The Habsburg Theatre State: Court, City and the Performance of Identity in the Early Modern Southern Low Countries”.

⁴⁶ Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 94. “Que la ville de Lille depuis qu'elle estoit bastie s'avoit toujours augmenté et estoit arrivée, par la grace de Dieu et faveurs qu'elle avait receu du conte Baulduin le débonnaire ou bien de Lille, et notamment du bon duc Philippes, que nonobstant les ruynes de plusieurs villes de ces pays-bas, altération d'aultres, ceste ville avoit esté le moins offensé, de quoy on devoit remercier le Tout Puissant et par honnestes comportements ce jour, s'esjouyr, faire feste et démonstration d'allégresse.”

⁴⁷ Jean Richardot was instrumental in convincing the States General to accept Philip II's cession of sovereignty to Albert and Isabella. Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety*, 53-54.

imperial was an idea of the Belgian people. Above the entrance to the court of the royal couple's palace was a large painting with verses alluding to Mount Olympus and the idealized Parnassus. One verse read: "Do you not realize that the Infanta, beloved of her Belgian people (*de son peuple Belgeois*) is linked to the great Albert by a sacred connection, who will root it deeply, with the aid of God, in this Germany?"⁴⁸ For the theatre representing twelfth-century Count Philip of Alsace and his wife Mehault, Mehault appeared to address the Infanta directly, saying: "You have Philip for father; me, I have Philip as husband. In former times, I ruled Flanders, generous province, to you, all of Belgium bends its knee" (*Jadis Flandre ai regy, province généreuse, A toy la Belge entière incline le genoux*). Philip conquers and acquires empire, while she imagines a whole Belgium. As noted above, in the illustration of the theatre, Mehaut, unlike her husband, is wearing contemporary dress, thus reinforcing the directness of the line from ancient Flanders to modern Belgium. The Latin references to Belgium (*Belgica*) were even more apparent. Belgium, or Belgian people are mentioned twenty-five times in the inscriptions painted onto both theatres and triumphal arches, often in reference to the peace that was hoped would come with the arrival of the new sovereigns. Whether they were referring to Belgian people inhabiting the whole Low Countries or only the southern provinces was not made clear, although there was one mention of Catholic Belgium by the dean of the collegiate church in his oration to the Archdukes.⁴⁹ The emphasis on Belgium, rather than the Low Countries (*les pays de pardeça* or even the singular *le pays de pardeça*) points to the increasing use of terms like *Belgica* or Belgium to refer to the whole polity beginning in the 1550s, particularly in scholarly circles, and which both writers in the north and the south were using to describe their "Netherlandishness" by 1600.⁵⁰ These terms, harking back to Caesar's description of ancient Gaul and its tribes, did double duty in Lille's Joyous Entry. If some displays expressed hopes for peace, reference to the bellicose Belgians of the past subtly acknowledged and perhaps affirmed Albert's position in continuing the fight to unite the Low Countries under Habsburg rule. It also solved the problem of how to refer to a larger political identity. Alastair Duke points out that there was no word in French to signal belonging to the Low Countries, like "Nederlander" did in Flemish, and while "*Belgica* and its erudite progeny *Belgeois*" in his view "lacked street credibility", its frequent insertion into Lille's Joyous Entry demonstrates the importance of staking out just such a position.⁵¹ These references painted a picture of unity, that Belgium as a whole had its place – a stable one, despite recent turmoil – as an intact polity within the larger empire of the Habsburgs.

⁴⁸ Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 89. "Hé! Ne savez –vous pas que l'infante chérie/De son peuple Belgeois est par un lien saint/Liée au grand Albert, qui plantera le bien/Avec l'aide de Dieu, en ceste Germanie."

⁴⁹ Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 75. "Id unum cum omnes apertent catholici Belgae,..."

⁵⁰ J. Pollmann, "No Man's Land: Reinventing Netherlandish Identities, 1585-1621", in *Networks, Regions and Nations: Shaping Identities in the Low Countries 1300-1650*, eds. J. Pollmann and R. Stein (Leiden and Boston, 2010), 250. Alastair Duke found the beginning of national awareness in the 1549 celebrations for Philip II, and in Douai's Entry the Low Countries were symbolized by a young girl called *Gallia Belgica*, which he believes is the earliest representation of its kind. J. C. Calvete de Estrella, *Le très-heureux Voyage fait par...prince Don Philippe*, ed. and trans. J. Petit, 5 vols. (Brussels, 1873-1884) for *Gallia Belgia*, vol. 3, 33 cited in A. Duke, "In Defence of the Common Fatherland. Patriotism and Liberty in the Low Countries, 1555-1576", in *Networks, Regions and Nations: Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300-1650*, ed. J. Pollmann and R. Stein (Leiden and Boston, 2010), 231.

⁵¹ Duke, "Networks, Regions and Nations", 237.

Old histories, new stories

These entertainments engaged with local and imperial history, but they were distinctly different from historical *tableaux* displayed in earlier Joyous Entries, in Lille as elsewhere, which often contained history with explicitly moral, religious or allegorical meanings. For the Joyous Entry of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I (1486), for example, chronicler Jean Molinet calculated that there were forty to fifty “hystoires bibliennes et morales”.⁵² When Joanna of Castile rode into Brussels in 1496, among the many entertainments she witnessed, including fools, fat monks, buffoons and an Ethiopian princess on a white horse, there were twelve biblical scenes with warrior queens and thirteen mythological displays including the Nine Worthies. The 1515 Joyous Entry created for Emperor Charles V in Bruges did describe the history of the city, but unlike Lille’s in 1600, its twenty-nine theatres did so in mythical, biblical and classical terms and grouped previous rulers into iron, silver and golden ages.⁵³ Antwerp’s Entry for both Charles V and his son Philip II in 1549 emphasized the mythological past of the city by placing the giant Druon Antigon, symbol of Antwerp’s founding, across the Great Market from both Charles V and Philip II, who were portrayed as Hercules and Atlas supporting the world.⁵⁴ Lille’s Joyous Entry for Charles V and Philip II in 1549 was similarly high flown. *Tableaux vivants* acted out a work of Petrarch and included allegorical figures of Fortune, Death and Fame. They also neatly paired Roman pagan and Christian history, showing how the Tiburtine Sybil revealed the coming of Jesus to Emperor Augustus while on the opposite corner of the street another theatre contained the Virgin Mary on an elevated cloud.⁵⁵ Such classical and biblical references continued even during the Dutch Revolt, when the Duke of Anjou was welcomed as the duke of Brabant in 1582. Once he entered the gates after swearing an oath of loyalty and receiving a gold key to the city, Anjou was greeted by both theatres and triumphal arches containing biblical and classical scenes linking Spanish rule to tyrants of the past and making “explicit references to the good old days under the rule of the Valois dukes, to whom Anjou was distantly related”.⁵⁶ Allegories, personifications of the city, and classicizing elements remained important elements in Entries during Albert and Isabella’s tour of the Low Countries, but Lille’s Entry indicated a new historical perspective absent in these other displays.⁵⁷

Instead, Lille’s Joyous Entry of 1600 seems much more prosaic and tied to concrete events – a history guidebook rather than a meta-narrative of transcendental significance. Indeed, it was more akin to a form of historical writing prevalent in this period, the chorography, than to a grandiose history. Not only because chorography utilized place in a way that fit well with place-based Joyous Entries, like Lille’s, but also because it encouraged *lillois* to sidestep the stickiness of rebellion, religious division and war and imagine themselves in a newly peaceful polity, as loyal Belgians.

⁵² J. Molinet, *Chroniques* (Doutrepoint and Jodogne, 1935) vol. 1, 525 cited in Tammen, “A Feast of the Arts: Joanna of Castile in Brussels, 1496”, 217.

⁵³ Blockmans and Donckers, “Self-Representation of Court and City in Flanders and Brabant in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries”, 94-95; 109-109.

⁵⁴ M. A. Meadow, “‘Met Geschickter Ordenen’: The Rhetoric of Place in Philip II’s 1549 Antwerp ‘Blijde Incompt’”, *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, vol. 57 (1999), 4.

⁵⁵ Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power*, 150.

⁵⁶ Holt, *The Duke of Anjou and the Politique Struggle during the Wars of Religion*, 168-169.

⁵⁷ Thöfner, *A Common Art*, 201-225.

History, particularly in the sixteenth century, became a popular form of scholarship and entertainment, from universal, or world histories such as Werner Rolevinck's *Fasciculus temporum omnes antiquas cronicas complectens* (1474, 1483) or the *Liber Cronicorum* of Hartman Schedel (1493), to writings explaining the origin of a people's law and even national identity, found among the French legal humanists of the Renaissance.⁵⁸ The Low Countries were no exception. Hugo Grotius and Corneliszoon Hooft crafted general histories of the Low Countries and the Dutch Revolt. Others, such as Pasquier de le Barre in Tournai or Marcus van Vaernewijck in Ghent, more locally focused (and many unpublished), wrote annals documenting the "time of troubles".⁵⁹ Some authors sought to connect ancient history to the present. Vaernewijck, for example, also wrote a four-part poem on Flemish history, *Den spiegel der Nederlandscher audtheyt* (1568), that provided a history of his province from ancient times to the 1560s, and which was popular enough to go through eight editions between 1568 and 1829.⁶⁰ These were not only written from antiquarian impulses, or for reasons of genealogical pride; some sought to depict the "very ancient union of all the lands", in Jean Stengers words, in order to legitimize the unity of the Low Countries in the present.⁶¹ One imagines that this kind of ancient history also resonated strongly in a region in which legal customs were thought to have existed, as it was written in customals like Lille's *Livre Roisin*, "since time immemorial".⁶² These attempts to find a common past (and present) remained in evidence even after all the provinces in the south were reconquered for the Spanish Habsburgs by Alexander Farnese by 1585.⁶³

Van der Haer himself was already a published historian when he designed Lille's Joyous Entry. Born in Leuven and with degrees in medicine and theology, he became a canon of the collegiate church of St. Peter at an unknown date. His first work of history, nearly 500-pages of Latin prose, was entitled *On the Origins of the Belgian Tumult...from Charles V to the Duke*

⁵⁸ C. J. Classen, "Lodovico Guicciardini's *Descrittione* and the Tradition of the Laudes and Descriptiones Urbium", in *Lodovico Guicciardini (1521-1589): Actes du colloque international des 28, 29 et 30 Mars 1990*, ed. P. Jodogne (Louvain, 1991), 99-117; D. R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law, and History in the French Renaissance* (New York, 1970). See also A. Grafton, *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge and New York, 2007).

⁵⁹ H. Grotius, *Annales et Historiae de Rebus Belgicis* (Annals and Histories of the Revolts of the Low Countries), published posthumously in 1657; C. Hooft, *Nederduytsche Historiën* (Low Countries' History) (1642-1656); M. van Vaernewijck, *Van de beroerlicke tijden in de Nederlijden: En voornamelijk in Ghendt, 1566-1568* (About the troubled times in the Netherlands: in particular in Ghent, 1566-1568) (MS. diary in 10 vols; 1566-8; Ghent University); ed. F. Vanderhaeghen (Ghent, 1872-1881); P. de le Barre, *The Time of Troubles in the Low Countries: The Chronicles and Memoirs of Pasquier de Le Barre of Tournai, 1559-1567*, trans. C. Steen (New York, 1989). A.-L. van Bruaene, J. Haemers, and F. Buylaert, Papers given at the Renaissance Society of America (New York, 2014) for the panel "Of Troubled Times: local histories, living memory and the Dutch Revolt".

⁶⁰ G. Campbell, ed., "Vaernewijck, Marcus van", *The Grove Encyclopedia of Northern Renaissance Art* (Oxford University Press, 2009), <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195334661.001.0001/acref-9780195334661-e-1897> [accessed April 8, 2016]. *Den spiegel der Nederlandscher audtheyt* (The mirror of Netherlandish antiquity) (Ghent, 1568); 2nd edn. as *Die historie Belgis* (Ghent, 1574).

⁶¹ Stengers, *Histoire du sentiment national en Belgique*, 92. "Brodée sur le thème de l'union' très ancienne de 'tout le pays', on voit se constituer une vaste fresque historique qui plaira à tous les 'bons patriotes'".

⁶² R. Monier, ed., *Le Livre Roisin: Coutumier Lillois de La Fin Du XIIIe Siècle* (Paris, 1932).

⁶³ Stengers, *Histoire du sentiment national en Belgique*, 102.

of *Alba*, and was addressed to Alexander Farnese and published in 1587.⁶⁴ Unsurprisingly for an ambitious member of the clergy, the enemies of peace and the Habsburgs were the Protestants, William of Orange, and the magistrates of northern cities like Amsterdam. In 1579 he was one of the delegates from Lille who negotiated the Union of Arras that confirmed the city's allegiance to King Philip II and his governor-general, Don Juan of Austria. Van der Haer was later sent to Spa by the city magistrates to confer with the Archduke Ernest in 1592.⁶⁵ After producing the Joyous Entry, he turned to an account of arcana of ancient liturgies (1605) before publishing the work for which he was best known in 1611, *The Castellans of Lille...with the ancient Counts of the republic and Roman Empire...and the Foresters and Ancient Counts of Flanders*.⁶⁶ Therefore, from the origins of the Dutch Revolt to the ancient counts of Flanders and castellans of Lille, van der Haer's focus as a historian moved from the overtly political to the genealogical, which, as discussed above, may have been no less political, since it sought to naturalize regional unity through invocations of a shared past.

Lille's Joyous Entry acknowledged ancient roots and relationships in the way it displayed the history of the city, but unlike written histories of either the region or other cities, it did so through performance in the streets. Thus, van der Haer and its other organizers were able to use place to tell history in which the long ago past interacted with the present. This mode of presentation closely aligns with chorography. What scholars such as Richard Helgerson, Svetlana Alpers, and Richard Kagan have noted is that with the newfound interest among Europeans for places around the globe, the importance of mapping, chorography, or local description, became popular ways of pairing history with place and in some instances, telling what happened in the past through showing what could be seen – in buildings, streets, oceans and fields. As Georg Braun wrote in volume 3 of his *Cities of the World*: “[The chorographer] describes each section of the world individually with its cities, villages, islands, rivers, lakes, mountains, springs, and so on, and tells its history, making everything so clear that the reader seems to be seeing the actual town or place before his eyes.”⁶⁷

In this way, cosmographies and chorographic descriptions began to supplement other kinds of historical writing of the sixteenth century, serving to incorporate history into a geographically diverse present. A key example of this kind of chorography, and one with which van der Haer would have been familiar, was Lodovico Guicciardini's *Description of All the Low Countries*. Published originally in 1567, the text appeared in an updated form in 1581. A French edition produced by Belleforest, the French historian and author of *Cosmographie universelle*,

⁶⁴ F. van der Haer, *De Initiis Tvmultvwm Belgicorvm Ad Serenssimvm D. D. Alexandrv Farnesivm Parmae et Placentiae Dvcem Libri Dvo: Quibus Eorum Temporum Historia Continetur, Quae à Caroli Quinti Caesaris Morte, Vsque Ad Ducis Albani Aduentum, Imperante Margareta Austria, Parmae & Placentiae Duce, per Annos Nouem in Belgio Extiterunt* (Douai, 1587).

⁶⁵ V. Derode, *Histoire de Lille* (Paris, 1848), vol. 1, 64, 78. See also Bibliothèque nationale de France. http://data.bnf.fr/12072425/floris_van_der_haer/ [accessed March 14, 2016].

⁶⁶ F. van der Haer, *Les Chastelains de Lille, Leur Ancien Estat, Office & Famille; Ensemble L'estat Des Anciens Comtes de La Republique & Empire Romain, Des Goths, Lombards, Bourguignons, François & Au Regne D'iceux Des Forestiers & Comtes Anciens de Flandre* (Lille, 1611).

⁶⁷ G. Braun and F. Hogenberg, *Civitates orbis terrarum*, vol. 3, Av, B cited in S. Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago, 1983), 156-157. See also R. Helgerson, “The Land Speaks: Cartography, Chorography, and Subversion in Renaissance England”, *Representations*, vol. 16 (1986), 50-85; R. Kagan, “Urbs and Civitas in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Spain”, in *Envisioning the City: Six Studies in Urban Cartography*, ed. D. Buisseret (Chicago, 1998), 75-108; L. Nuti, “Mapping Places: Chorography and Vision in the Renaissance”, in *Mappings*, ed. D. E. Cosgrove (London, 1999), 90-108.

appeared the following year.⁶⁸ It combines short descriptions of a number of cities and regions with maps and city views and includes their physical features, major monuments, events in history and celebrated figures. Guicciardini's chorography serves as a kind of model of the history seen in Lille's Joyous Entry. His section about Lille resonated strongly with van der Haer's program, particularly in its description of local history. He too discussed the original fortress of the city and the founding of the Chamber of Accounts and described the original inhabitants of the region. And like van der Haer, Guicciardini highlighted the close relationship between the city and the counts of Flanders. One example seems particularly closely correlated. Guicciardini wrote:

This city was founded by the Count of Flanders, Baldwin, surnamed the bearded, in the year 1007. And moreover his son Baldwin called the Debonnaire was born in this place, thus giving him the surname from the island [Lille], and which he loved and cherished and favored as his birth place and sought to augment as much as possible—and among other favors he had it enclosed and encircled with walls in the year 1066 (*clorre et ceindre de muraille l'an 1066*). He also had the magnificent church of St. Peter built there, which he enriched and gave many good possessions for the upkeep of a number of canons, whom he founded.⁶⁹

And from Lille's Joyous Entry, on the theatre of Count Baldwin:

This Baldwin, Count full of mercy, was debonnaire in name in and fact. Called of Lille, because he had it encircled with walls and moats for defense (*ceindre de murs et fosses de defense*). He founded the church of St. Peter and gave it rich and generous gifts, not desiring that a tomb shut in his pale bones anywhere but here.⁷⁰

There were some differences. Guicciardini, in discussing the early settlers in the region, the Foresters, for example, did not mention either Liederich or the duel on the bridge that was made live theatre during the Archdukes' parade through the city. One should not assume, therefore, that van der Haer simply read Guicciardini's account of the city and enacted it as theatre, although that is a possibility, and both Guicciardini and van der Haer may also have

⁶⁸ F. de Belleforest, *La Cosmographie universelle de tout le monde* (Paris, 1575). See H. Bernstein, "Cosmography, Local History, and National Sentiment: François de Belleforest and the History of Paris", *French Historical Studies*, vol. 35 (2012), 31-60.

⁶⁹ L. Guicciardini, *Description de Tout Le Pais-Bas ...* (Antwerp: Gulielmus Silvius, 1568), 213. "Ceste ville fut fondée par le Comte de Flandres Baudouin surnommé le Barbu l'an 1007. et d'autant que son fils Baudouin dict le Debonnaire nasquit en ce lieu, il porta aussi le surnom de l'Isle, lequel Payma et la cherit et favorisa pour estre son pays, et lieu de sa naissance et l'augmenta à son possible: et entre autres biens et faveurs il la fait clorre et ceindre de muraille l'an 1066. Comme encor il y fait bastir la magnifique Eglise de Saint Pierre, qu'il enrichit et dota de bons revenus pour la nourriture de certain nombre de Chanoines, qu'il y establir."

⁷⁰ Houdoy, *Joyeuse entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 70. "Ce Bauduin, comte plein de clemence, Fut debonnaire et de nom et de fait, Nommé de Lille, a cause qu'il l'a fait Ceindre de murs et fossés de defense. Il a fondé l'Eglise de Saint-Pierre Et l'a de dons largement enrichy Ne desirant, en autre lieu qu'icy, Quelque tombeau ses pales os enserre."

been working from a common source, such as the *Commentarii sive annales rerum Flandricarum* of Jacques Meyer (1561). Meyer, in fact, both wrote about the founding of Lille by Baldwin the debonnaire (*Eodem anno [1066] Balduinis Insulae quod oppidum muro ac fossa cinxerat*) and in a separate entry mentioned Liederich le Buc (the forester), although without alluding to the story of Dagobert and the Fin bridge that was enacted during the Joyous Entry.⁷¹ Guicciardini, like Meyer, apparently collected his sources from earlier chronicles and other accounts that would have been available to him in Antwerp in either Latin or Italian.⁷² Rather what is important is why chorography may have appealed to van der Haer and his collaborators.

Histories of course, always tell as much about the period in which they are written as about the period they are describing; they speak to what is fashionable or popular as a mode of expression, but also to what is relevant to the historian and the audience. The themes of Lille's Joyous Entry indicate that there were unresolved questions at this point for members of Lille's community, about their relationship to the Habsburgs and about what constituted the larger polity (the Low Countries, the Fatherland, Belgium, the Habsburg empire?) to which they belonged. Judith Pollmann and others have noted how, even in 1600, many believed that the division of provinces was not a permanent one; people were taking sides, writing polemical pieces and trying to persuade others to share in their vision of what a common *patria* looked like.⁷³ How should the residents of these cities imagine their place within it? What were the Low Countries if only ten of the seventeen provinces remained loyal to their Spanish overlords?

This Joyous Entry, therefore, in presenting history as a happy marriage between place, institutions and long ago conquests, was doing an important kind of work – finding the continuity in Lille's long history of loyalty to its rulers but also, in the present, imagining the Low Countries as a polity that connected separate provinces to each other as much as to their sovereigns. Claire Dolan's investigation of French local histories produced between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, which draws a distinction between antiquarian accounts and histories/annals, stands in contrast to this presentation.⁷⁴ Chorographies like Guicciardini's provided a way of telling local history, but they also created frameworks for forging a particular national identity through combining a number of provinces and cities into one volume.⁷⁵ The organizers of Lille's Entry were attempting to place Lille within a larger polity, in other words, just as Guicciardini and Braun and Hogenberg placed a series of city descriptions within their guides and atlases. Chorography may have provided a convenient way to "stage" Lille's history, therefore, but it did more: it provided a roadmap for the future through a skillful melding of place, rulers and a history they shared.

⁷¹ J. de Meyer and A. de Meyer, *Commentarii sive Annales rerum Flandricarum libri septendecim autore Iacobo Meyero Baliolano* (Antwerp, 1561), Book I, fol. 4r (Liederich) and Book III, fol. 26r (Baldwin of Lille). This volume is in the *Bibliothèque municipale de Lille* but its provenance, whether from the collection inherited from the collegiate church of St. Peter or otherwise, is unknown.

⁷² Classen, "Lodovico Guicciardini's *Descrittione* and the Tradition of the Laudes and Descriptiones Urbium", 99-117. For Jacques Meyer's sources, see V. Fris, *Essai d'une analyse des commentarii sive annales rerum Flandricarum (Annales Flandriae 1561) de Jacques de Meyere* (Gand, 1908), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.hnpdmy>.

⁷³ Pollmann, "Networks, Regions and Nations"; Stengers, *Histoire du sentiment national en Belgique*, 107.

⁷⁴ Dolan, "L'identité urbaine et les histoires locales publiées du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle en France".

⁷⁵ Duke, "Networks, Regions and Nations", 231. He connects Guicciardini's publication in 1567 to the beginning of national awareness in the Low Countries.

Chorographic description also provided a way of dealing with the warfare and conflict that were endemic to the area since the 1560s, mostly by ignoring it. Frank Lestringant has noted that Guicciardini's avoidance of conflict was a deliberate choice, calling his work "an optimistic, even euphoric chorography".⁷⁶ Although Guicciardini published the first edition in 1567 in Antwerp and Plantin printed a second updated one in 1581, with French and Italian editions soon following, there was no mention of iconoclasm, the Beggars, the Spanish fury of 1576, or other charged events. The emphasis on place, monuments, as well as economic activity, leaves the cities he described untouched by the devastating events that in fact were part of Lille's recent history, much as it was for Guicciardini's adopted home, Antwerp. Andrea Frisch has shown that these purposeful omissions reflected new ways of both reshaping national memory and historical practice itself in the period after the French Wars of Religion; she calls it an "'art' of forgetting, one that...requires a new art of memory".⁷⁷ For although Lille never became a Calvinist stronghold, there were repeated attempts to take it over by iconoclasts, attacks from neighboring cities and purges of hundreds of *lillois* suspected of heresy, some of whom were executed and many of whom fled, never to return. A focus on local institutions and their history in the Joyous Entry, therefore, made the city as untroubled as it appeared in a chorographic description. Moreover, while acknowledging the violence inherent in building an empire, the conquests depicted occurred outside the Low Countries, in distant lands—the conquered were recognizably different, in turbans, rather than local Reformed preachers burned in Lille, Tournai, Valenciennes, and other nearby cities. Loyalty marked the Low Countries and conquest, it appeared, was no longer needed.

Conclusion

Lille's medieval and early modern city corporation has long had the reputation of (successfully) avoiding conflict, both within the community and between the community and its territorial lords. Perhaps this is one reason its Joyous Entry has received so little notice, compared to the more politically charged Entries in Antwerp or Ghent. Lille's program praises its rulers, past and present, and reminds those rulers of city residents' constant and undying love. As such, its ceremonial entrance seems to be nothing more than confirmation of sovereign possession and its message one of acceptance and welcome. Although, as this article has shown, the Joyous Entry of 1600 was not merely a natural expression of a city elite who had always and unreflexively toed the proverbial line, but rather was a carefully crafted history, modeled on a simple description of place and past events that spoke, however obliquely, to the present uncertainty reigning in the Low Countries. The Entry was history grounded – in place and in fact – and thus it avoided the threat of multiple interpretations that allegorical or biblical representations might occasion. In this period, history, if not yet a discipline, was already becoming a welcome arbiter of truth, something sorely needed in one of the most divided and conflicted regions of the early modern period. And although history (in practice) continues to operate today on a von Rankean model, presuming the validity of facts to build a case, van der

⁷⁶ F. Lestringant, "Lodovico Guicciardini Chorographe: De la grande à la petite Belgique", in *Lodovico Guicciardini (1521-1589): Actes du colloque international Des 28, 29 et 30 Mars 1990*, ed. P. Jodogne (Louvain, 1991), 132.

⁷⁷ Frisch, *Forgetting Differences*, 12.

Haer's historical program reminds us that at its heart, it is always a theatrical display, artfully placed.

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