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# PUBLIC STATUES ACROSS TIME AND CULTURES

Edited by
CHRISTOPHER P. DICKENSON



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# Monumentalising Burghers of the Low Countries

Living Statues in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Joyous Entries

Stijn P.M. Bussels

### Introduction

Already in the fifteenth century, public statues brought local heroes into memory in Italian cities; especially Donatello and Verrocchio excelled in emulating Graeco-Roman models with their equestrian statues of condottieri, respectively Gattamelars (1453) and Colleoni (1488). Together with individual heroicness, these grand statues expressed civic self-awareness and pride.2 Whereas in the cities of the Low Countries a similar civic self-awareness and pride was flowering in the late Middle Ages and the early modern period,3 we have to wait for a hundred years to find a comparable tribute to a local hero monumentalised in public space. In 1549, Prince Philip of Hab. sburg, the future King Philip II, was ceremonially welcomed in the most important cities of the Low Countries, in so-called joyous entries. For this special occasion. the burghers of Rotterdam wanted to show off with their most celebrated son, the humanist scholar Erasmus, and constructed a hollow statue in wood in which a boy was hidden to recite a welcoming poem to the prince. This statue was only intended for temporary display, but the burghers appreciated it so much that a decade later. more precisely in 1557, they erected a stone version.5 Finally, in 1622 Rotterdam commissioned the famous architect and sculptor Hendrick de Kevzer to make a bronze statue of the humanist scholar.6

Thus, Frasmus of Rotterdam served as the subject for the first stone as well as the first bronze public statue in the Low Countries. That does not mean that before the mid-sixteenth century, Netherlandish people entirely lacked public statues. Quite to the contrary, hundreds, even thousands of statues were staged from the fifteenth until the seventeenth century most prominently in public space, but in contrast with the statue of Erasmus, temporarily. Here, the word 'staging' should be taken literally, as the statues were not made out of stone or bronze: the burghers themselves performed as statues by keeping quiet and standing in frozen poses for large audiences. These living statues often posed against a painted backdrop and could be accompanied by mannequins in papier-mâché or cloth. Moreover, several descriptions and depictions of these performances clarify that Graeco-Roman statues were emulated, especially in the poses, the clothing with rich draperies, or real or suggested nudity. We now call these performances tableaux vivants, but actually, due to their threedimensionality and their indebtedness to antique sculpture, statues vivantes is a name at least as appropriate. Modern historians have never used the term, but early modern accounts of the joyous entries did refer to sculpture to name the civic performances.7 They describe how burghers enacted statues on wagons and stages in processions and theatre performances. A famous example is the Antwerp theatre competition, the Landjuweel, where amateur players grouped in so-called Chambers of Rhetoric nerformed theatre plays but started the competition by performing as public statues on stages in streets and squares.9 The word 'public' is appropriate here, as there were more than 4,000 actors performing for an audience multiple times larger, which consisted not only of Antwerp burghers but also of Brabantines and even viewers from much further, such as the English merchant Richard Clough, who wrote in his diary that he was totally thrilled by the performances.10 This chapter, however, will focus on another kind of festivities enjoyed by similar multitudes, the joyous entries. There, the public statues were performed on dozens of stages alongside the route throughout the cities in which the entering ruler paraded. Thus, we explore the ceremonial context from which the very first permanent statues originate, a context where civic colf-awareness and pride was so clearly expressed that we could speak of an eminent tradition of 'monumentalising' burghers

In the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, iovous entries were the most important public expression of political power relations. Almost everywhere in Europe ir was a fixed and imperative diplomatic custom to welcome new rulers in the most important cities of their territories by presenting them with abundant decorations and celebrations.11 The new ruler entered the city with his/her own noble retinue and was for the occasion accompanied by the most important representatives of the city. The event gathered crowds that marvelled at the magnificently dressed noblemen and burghers, as well as at the many festivities and festive constructions that the welcoming cities had organized especially for the occasion. Moreover, tournaments were fought and firework displays were ignited. But primarily, thousands of eyes focused on the platforms, triumphal arches, and pageant wagons on which burghers posed. Many of the burghers performing and witnessing must have felt pride that their city could accomplish such marvels

Certainly in the Low Countries, joyous entries were of the highest political importance.12 The Low Countries belonged to the Burgundian and Habsburg territories which were scattered, and certainly under Philip's father, Emperor Charles V, became almost inconceivably vast. The connection between a new ruler and the Netherlandish cities had to be strengthened by all means, especially in periods of turbulence such as the Dutch Revolt, starting in 1568. Moreover, the powerful cities in the Low Countries had a strong feeling of independence and self-esteem and time and again expressed that in the joyous entries. Even more than anywhere else in Europe, in the Low Countries, the ceremonial welcoming of a new ruler was the mass medium par excellence to present that ruler straightforwardly to the burghers, as well as to give central stage to these burghers. All possible visual and textual laudations alongside the entry route had to becharm the new ruler. Similarly, in these laudations the burehers could publicly present their list of wishes to the new ruler. The burghers addressed the new ruler with a diplomatic monologue, as it were, expressed by inscriptions and paintings on a rich diversity of ephemeral constructions, but even more prominently with motionless and silent burghers on stages. That civic monologue did certainly not call into question that the new ruler would be the most ideal ruler. The precise definition of the ideal ruler, however, was strongly defined by what the burghers thought to be the best for their city.

The cities in the Low Countries spared no trouble or expense for the organization. For example, Antwerp spent for Philip's entry of 1549 about twice as much money as they would spend to build their new town hall some 15 years later.<sup>13</sup> The municipalithey would spend to build their new town hall some 15 years later.<sup>13</sup> The municipality

they would spend to build their new town half some 15 years nater." The municipali-ties entrusted the public performance of the civic diplomatic monologue to the most ties entrusted the public performance of the civic appionance monologue to the most prominent artists and scholars. In turn, the latter relied on centuries old traditions in prominent artists and scholars. In turn, the native following the moment of culmination in which the active role of the burghers was essential. The moment of culmination in which the active role of the burghers was essential loudly their oaths of loyalty the joyous entries consisted of the burghers exclaiming loudly their oaths of loyalty the joyous entries consisted of the burgers excluding sould, like cours of loyalty to the new ruler on the central square of the city (Figure 8.1). Previous to this, their to the new ruler on the central square or the Copy to good with the ruler by joining him representatives already had literally aligned themselves with the ruler by joining him representatives already had herally angoed decreases, the burghers had to present the or her in the parade that crossed the city. Moreover, the burghers had to present the or ner in the parade that crossed the City, and of the new ruler with their civic ideals by standing motionless and silent on a series of standard new ruler with their civic ideals by standing motionless and silent on a series of standard new ruler with their civic ideals by standing motionless and silent on a series of standard new ruler with their civic ideals by standing motionless and silent on a series of standard new ruler with their civic ideals by standing motionless and silent on a series of standard new ruler with their civic ideals by standing motionless and silent on a series of standard new ruler with their civic ideals by standing motionless and silent on a series of standard new ruler with their civic ideals by standing motionless and silent on a series of standard new ruler with their civic ideals by standing motionless and silent on a series of standard new ruler with their civic ideals by standing motionless and silent on a series of standard new ruler with their civic ideals by standard new ruler with their civic ideals in the standard new ruler with their civic ideals in the standard new ruler with the standard new ruler with the standard new ruler new ruler

that were erected along the entry route. nat were erected along the critis toute. In this chapter, I will focus on the question why the municipalities and the organisere in this chapter, I will focus on the question (4), the chose again and again to place their burghers on platforms, triumphal arches and paeeant wagons to let them become public statues. Why did burghers enact personifications and mythological and hiblical figures with no or with only sparse movement and words on such crucial political occasions? Since the joyous entries are well-studied. it is surprising that this question has never been put before. Political historians concentrated in the first instance at the precise message that the living statues expressed. They linked an iconographical analysis with concrete political affairs, rarely taking the specific medium into consideration.14 If they concentrated on the fact that these were men and women staging the message, this was contrasted with the paintings on the

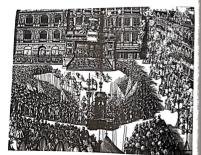


Figure 8.1 Abraham de Bruyn, 'Swearing of the Oaths at the Grand Place'. Engraving in La joyeuse & magnifique entrée de Monseigneur François, plate 21. Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1582. University Library Ghent, Res. 1373.

rriumphal arches, which became increasingly important in the sixteenth century and displaced the staging of burghers in the seventeenth century. An explanation for this was given by relying on the growing pursuit of central power by the Habsburgs.15 The burghers, as it were, were literally pushed from the stage to give the full attention to the ruler. In their turn, art and architectural historians have merely concentrated on the frames of the stages, such as George Kernodle looking at fifteenth- and sixteenthcentury examples. He saw these frames as the missing link between sculpted Gothic and Renaissance tombs and early modern theatre scenes, such as the one in Shakeeneare's Globe. 16 Kernodle presented the ephemeral decorations of the entries as the gareway of the sculptors and architects to the theatre makers.17

### Markers of Liminality

Due to their focus on the rise and fall of the living statues, historians of politics, art and architecture have never questioned why, for centuries, the cities of the Low Countries chose time and again to stage motionless and silent burghers on platforms, triumphal arches and pageant wagons for crucial public events of civic diplomacy. In order to start answering this question, we can rely on anthropology, as it is essential to see the iovous entries as rites de passage. Thanks to the anthropologists Arnold van Gennep and later Edith and Victor Turner, we can see the entering ruler in a joyous entry as a novice who has to go through a so-called liminal phase to be recognized in his or her new position. Edith and Victor Turner define liminality as follows: 'In liminality the novice enters a ritual time and space that are betwixt and between those ordered by the categories of past and future mundane existence'.18 The passage from the one situation to the other of an individual or group, to summarise the theory in a nutshell, can be generally accepted thanks to a ritual in which for a certain amount of time a distance is taken from the way people deal with each other in common life. The public acceptance of the social change stands or falls by the success in framing the change in words and/or actions that do not achieve a direct and concrete goal and therefore appear useless in the eyes of outsiders. However, these words and/or actions are essential to clearly mark the passage of the individual or group to all participants and thus to perform that passage. Therefore, the words and/or actions in a rite of passage often rely on tradition and address cultural memory.

Historians such as Edward Muir use this anthropological theory that sees (what I would like to call) 'traditional extraordinariness' as the essence of the proper functioning of rites of passage to explain how in many rituals of the late Middle Ages and the early modern period exceptional moments and places had to be created.<sup>19</sup> For Muir, this applies to a range of rituals, from religious initiations, to rituals that took place on joining a guild, to our central subject, the joyous entries. Historians such as Jesse Hurlbut further focused on the latter. More precisely, they have looked at the structure that was followed time and again to gradually accept the new ruler. 20 They studied how the liminal phase was prepared, performed and brought to a fruitful ending with the help of fixed and preconceived patterns that enabled the step from everyday life to ritual time and place and eventually the step back to everyday life, albeit in a (slightly) changed society.

Following these anthropologists and historians, we can see the burghers' enactment of statues in the joyous entries as crucial elements in the passage of the central person to becoming the new ruler. More precisely, we can say that the living statues are

'markers of liminality'. The motionless and silent burghers behave extra-ordinarily. markers of liminality. The motionies and the normal. However, precisely because in the literal sense of the word as 'beyond the normal'. in the literal sense of the word as Depoils to all parties involved—the entering rule-they do so, they visualize and accentuate for all parties involved—the entering rulethey do so, they visualize and accentuate to an analysis of the thousands of and his/her retinue, the municipality and the burghers in the parade, the thousands of and his/her retinue, the municipality and the cape of the diplomatic event, important bystanders, and even for themselves—the crucial step in a diplomatic event, important

of the city as well as the ruler.

The organising municipalities attached great importance to the fact that the livfor the city as well as the ruler. The organising municipalities attacked by the organising statues were all burghers. The days and weeks before the actual performances, ing statues were all burghers. mg statues were an burgners. The day of the transfer of the tr usey used public ordinances to remind this demand, the municipalities threatened would show up on time. To strengthen this demand, the municipalities threatened with heavy fines. 21 Of course, this can partly be related to practical matters, as it was and is problematic if an actor is missing on stage. On the other hand, however, it will also have been a factor that the burghers had to be closely involved in the support and even the creation of the passage of the ruler. The fact that burghers were performing on the stages did not go unnoticed. In their accounts, noblemen accompanying the ruler praised the elegance of the actresses and the manly poses of the actors.<sup>22</sup> One of the clearest examples is the performance of the City Maiden, a recurring figure in the entries whom the noble reporters describe in the kindest words. In the descriptions, a dozen of which have survived, we see how the beauty of the civic girl and the beauty of her city become closely intermixed.23 In his report of Philip's entry into Antwern in 1549, Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella, a Spanish nobleman who accompanied the prince during his entries in the Habsburg territories, describes the performance of Antverpia as follows:

A young girl kneeling saluted the Prince very respectfully and with a modest expression on her face. Over a long dress in crimson satin, she wore a short robe in white satin, and on her hair, instead of a garland, she had a beautiful two-foot high tower like that of the church of Our Lady: this insignia, together with the red and white colours of her dress, made her recognisable as the opulent city of Antwerp.24

In the statue vivante of a girl elaborately dressed, everyone could literally and figuratively stand still for a certain amount of time and reflect on the grandeur of the city. So besides the new identity of the central person, namely the new ruler, civic identity was also reconfirmed by this public statue in the rite of passage.

In many cities of the Low Countries, the City Maiden welcomed the new ruler on a platform, triumphal arch or pageant wagon right at one of the city gates, so directly at the moment when the ruler entered the city.25 Thanks to this specific location, we could say that the City Maiden ushered in the liminal phase. The start of the liminal phase of the joyous entries often relied strongly on tradition. For example, in Antwerp practically nothing changed in the performance of Antwerp's City Maiden Antverpia on her magnificent pageant wagon for more than half a century, that is, from the entry of François d'Anjou in 1582 till the entry of Don Ferdinand in 1635.26 Time and again the audience saw a richly dressed girl sitting silent and frozen on an impressive throne. Since the living statue of Antverpia appeared in precisely the same way in the yearly Whitsun procession, her performance was strongly embedded in the ritual customs of the city.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the Whitsun procession was not only of religious importance, it was also the traditional way to publicly present new members of the municipality.



Figure 8.2 Pieter van der Borcht, 'Antverpia Welcomes Albert and Isabella'. Engraving in Johannes Bochius, Historica narratio profectionis et inaugurationis Serenissimorum Belgii Principum Alberti et Isabellae . . ., 186-87. Antwerp: Officina Plantiniana, 1602. University Library Ghent, Acc. 1858.

thus having to find public acceptance.28 So the 'traditional extraordinariness' of the performance of the City Maiden was at least yearly used to introduce and to receive approval for political change (Figure 8.2).

The history of Antwerp between 1582 and 1635 was turbulent. The entry of the French Duke François d'Anjou in 1582 was a direct act of hostility towards the Habsburgs. Anjou's appointment as the new Duke of Brabant meant that the Spanish King Philip II was no longer recognized as sovereign, and this began an open revolt against him. 29 This atmosphere of defiance prompted an assertive performance of Antwerp's self-confidence. Subsequent entries into Antwerp were performed after the Habsburg reconquest of the southern territories by Ernest of Austria in 1594,30 by Albert and Isabella in 1599,31 and by Don Ferdinand in 1653.32 These entries served to enforce the power of the Spanish crown, so from the outset, the performed submission of Antverpia was once again crucial. Strikingly, it was Antverpia's pageant of 1582 that was reused. Calvinist strategy was thus appropriated to honor the Habsburgs-the sworn enemy.33 Thus, tradition was a crucial building stone in the functioning of the statues vivantes as public markers of liminality. Tradition surpassed in terms of importance the concrete political situation, even in one of the most turbulent periods in the history of the Low Countries. Next to tradition, however, other factors of the living statues strengthened the 'traditional extraordinariness', since the performance of public starues referred to painting, tapestry and sculpture in a most remarkable way.

## Painting and Tapestry

Let us first look at the 'picturesque' in the literal sense of the word as 'resemblino Let us first look at the 'picturesque in the local was close is famously exemplified a painting.' The fact that the link with painting was close is famously exemplified a painting. \* The fact that the link wan painting in Philip the Good's entry into Ghent in 1458. There, only two decades after in in Philip the Good's entry into Ghene in completion, burghers meticulously staged the famous alterpiece of the brothers Van completion, burghers meticulously staged use suggested into different levels. Eyek. Just like in the real polyptych, the stage was separated into different levels. On one level, the audience could admire a living statue of God sitting enthroped on one level, the audience could admit a many and angels singing and making and being accompanied by Mary, John the Baptist and angels singing and making music. On another level, the Lamb of God held the central position; whether that was an actual lamb or a model is not documented. It was approached from all directions by worshippers. By choosing to stage the altarpiece, the organisers used this festive occasion to lay the accent on one of the city's most precious possessions. but at the same time on its humility. The organizers urged Philip the Good to forgive the burghers of Ghent, as they had tried to revolt against him, just as the Lamb bears the sins of the world. " However, in contrast with modern historians discusseing the political message, we must not forget that instead of straightforwardly peins Van Eyck's altarpiece itself to publicly proclaim this message, burghers enacted it. The suggestion of three-dimensionality that Jan Van Eyck had developed to unprecedented highlights in his use of perspective and in his paragone with sculnture (most eminent in the grisailles of the Ghent altarpiece) was in 1458 emulated by publicly staging living statues.

The living statues of the joyous entries often showed a close interaction with painting. For the first frozen and silent performance in the Bruges entry of Prince Charles. the future Emperor Charles V. in 1515, a forest was painted on the backdrop of the stage. It is reproduced in the first book with prints devoted to a joyous entry, Remy Dupuys' La tryumphante et solemnelle entrée (Figure 8.3). With the arrival of the prince, a wild man opened one of the doors, revealing a scene of richly attired actors re-enacting Bruges' origin; the waldgrave Liederic divided territories, giving the city of Bruges to his son Ganymede, who became the first lord of Bruges. The second door was then opened by a wild woman, treating the audience to a scene of the biblical figure of Joshua. In this way, the Old Testament was linked with the founding story of Bruges. The comparison supplied the local history with an illustrious example. Moreover, Ganymede could be associated with the entering prince, who was seen as the successor of the legendary hero. In January of that year, the young prince was officially declared of age. From that moment on, he could fulfil his role as ruler over the Burgundian territories. Throughout the entry in 1515, the burghers of Bruges expressed their confidence that Charles would accomplish this task with great dignity, just as the young Ganymede had done before.37 It is striking to see how, in the first of Bruges's performances, the painted landscape was very dominant. Although the account mentions a painted forest, the woodcut shows a mountainous background that could have met with surprise, since it does not immediately recall the plain Bruges of Liederic or the dry Canaan landscape of Joshua. The mountainous countryside does have strong similarities, however, with the renewal of landscape painting at that time. One of the most prominent figures here was Joachim Patinir who, till 1515, lived



Figure 8.3 Remy Dupuys, 'First tableau vivant of the joyous entry of prince Charles in Brugge, 18 April 1515'. In La tryumphante entrée de Charles prince des Espagnes en Bruces 1515, Facsimile, Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1973.

184 Stijn P.M. Bussels in Bruges. In this city, he had begun to create groundbreaking landscape paintings. in Bruges. In this city, he had begun to treate ground, much like the woodcut from which presented a story, often biblical, in the foreground, much like the woodcut from

Dupuys's account.

The living statues had close affiliations with other visual arts as well, enforcing Dupuys's account. The living statues had close arminations them as markers of liminality. Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella repeatedly expresses them as markers of liminality. Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella repeatedly expresses them as markers of liminality. Juan Cristopal Carrolla by Saccount of Philip's entry into his admiration for the living statues. A passage from his account of Philip's entry into nis admiration for the living statuts. A passage that the first city into which Louvain in 1549 is exemplary. Louvain was traditionally the first city into which Louvain in 1949 is exemplary. Louvain the Burgundians and Habsburgs made their entries. About the very first performance there, Calvete de Estrella writes:

All the characters played their roles with so much majesty and truthfulness in their poses, that one could recognize at first glance which hero each representedthe bearing, the attitude, the position of the feet, the hands, the heads, the complete immobility of their eyes and their bodies, the expressions of the actors, both women and men, offered a marvellous spectacle: one could call it a living tapestru (tapiz de figuras vivas).38

By speaking of a 'tapiz de figuras vivas', Calvete de Estrella referred to the extremely expensive tapestries from the Low Countries that for centuries and centuries had been highly thought of in the whole of Europe in order to emphasize for his Spanish readers the most remarkable attractions of the entries in the Low Countries. Thus, the Spaniard acknowledges the extraordinary character of the stages with motionless acrore and makes this understandable by linking it to a prestigious medium far more familiar to his Spanish readers, Moreover, Calvete de Estrella presents several parameters to explain the success of the tapiz de figuras vivas. There is the recognisability of the representation. The viewer could see immediately which character an actor enacted. Calvete de Estrella highly esteemed the clarity with which the diplomatic message was communicated. Besides, he describes the performances as magestad (majesty) and maravillosa (marvelous). Consequently, the tabiz de figures vivas had to raise great admiration and wonder, Finally, the Spanish nobleman sees the extraordinariness of the stage, its immobility, as a basic condition for their success. As this parameter is explicitly addressed by foreign viewers only, local viewers must have taken it for granted. Nevertheless, the way the actors succeeded in being totally frozen must have been an important factor in the excitement raised by the performance, for foreign and local viewers alike.

### Statues Vinantes

Even more than to painting and tapestry, however, the sixteenth- and seventeenthcentury reporters make references to sculpture. For example, when for William of Orange's entry into Brussels in 1578 an actress enacted the Greek mythological figure of Andromeda in chains, the reporter writes that her appearance 'could have been taken for a marble statue'. 39 The practice of referencing Graeco-Roman sculpture as a means to strengthen the extraordinary character of the stages was already a century old. Even if in that period that was not explicitly indicated in the reports, clear references can be found in the visual representations of the stages, indicating that the performing burghers were 'monumentalised' into antique statues.

We can find a telling example in a stage of the 1496 entry of Ioanna of Castile, the spouse of Philip the Fair, into Brussels, where living statues publicly represented the Judgment of Paris. A clear diplomatic message was given. The three goddesses judged by Paris hold three gifts: the power of luno, the wisdom of Pallas, and the grace of Venus. The French art historian Anne-Marie Legaré writes: 'Reuniting in herself the gifts that the three imperfect goddesses only own separately, Joanna of Castile appears as the ideal and universal princess. What interests us here, however, is how this diplomatic message was staged. The drawing of the performance leads us to suppose that naked women performed in Joanna's entry (Figure 8.4). If we consider the



Figure 8.4 'Paris' judgement in the joyous entry of Joanna of Castile in Brussels, 9 Decemher 1496', Manuscript 78D5, fol. 57, Kupferstichkabinetts SMB, Bildarchiv preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, inv.no. 00049763.

Source: D bpk/ Kupferstichkabinett, photo: Jörg P. Anders.

history of late mediaeval nudity on stage, however, there are diverse possibilities. The history of late mediaeval nudity on stages, not they could also have worn closely fitting actresses could have been naked indeed, but they could also have worn closely fitting actresses could have been naked indeed, our this of the coloured suits and even could have been mannequints. Due to a lack of concrete skin-coloured suits and even could have been mannequints. skin-coloured suits and even come many was chosen in the Brussels performance. Newsources, it is hard to tell which option was chosen in the Brussels performance. Newsources, it is hard to tell which option was chosen in the Brussels performance. sources, it is hard to tell which opions have considered in late medieval and early modern cities, moral restrictions concerning the ertheless, in late medieval and early modern cities, moral restrictions concerning the ertneiss, in late medieval and early moderated during festive occasions, so actual public display of the naked body were moderated during festive occasions, so actual

nudity might not be ruled out completely.42 nucity might not be ruled out completes; Historians have never put the focus on the fact that the postures of the female nucles Historians have never put the locus of the middle of the drawing recalls the clearly refer to antique sculptures. The figure in the middle of the drawing recalls the crearry reter to antique scurptures. The open constrained and several state of Antiquity, Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Cnidus, which most famous female nude statue of Antiquity, Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Cnidus, which most tamous temale nude statue of chickensy, which was preserved in countless Roman copies and textual descriptions. 43 With one hand she holds a veil and protects her private parts. Holding the other hand before the left breast, this figure resembles a specific variant of Praxiteles' original, of which nowadays the Aphrodite of Syracuse, the Capitoline Venus and the Medici Venus are the most famous. Interestingly, despite these connections with this Aphrodite type, following the inscription on the drawing the figure in the middle was not the lovely Venus but the powerful Juno. With regard to Venus, the draughtsman chooses to represent the moment when she turns away from the viewer. Thus, the body of the goddess of love is the most obscured of the three. All the more since her back is covered by her long hair. She has put one of her hands on her buttocks rather explicitly, thus emphasising she is making a pose. Besides the fact that the Graeco-Roman statues were used as a means to evoke ancient goddesses, the specific setting heightened the statue-like character of the three goddesses. Placed in front of a sort of Swiss weather house avant la lettre, the elegant performers were moved on a rotating plate from one door to the other. Thus their well-considered poses could be totally fixed and were even more emphasised

Graeco-Roman sculpture continued to influence the stages of the joyous entries in the Low Countries and the monumentalising of the performing burghers. We already saw that the reporter of the entry of William of Orange into Brussels explicitly referred to ancient sculpture. In the very same year, in 1578, Archduke Matthias had already made his joyous entry into the city. The fact that two entries were organized so close after each other illustrates the turbulent times. Matthias came at the request of the country's States General, which no longer recognized Governor Don Juan in this position, but Philip II still supported the latter.44 However, we have to be careful not to let this political context entirely dominate our analysis of the entry, since these festivities, as we have already seen, were certainly not disconnected from the rich tradition of previous entries

A series of 24 statues vivantes offered the Archduke various symbols of power. The woodcuts from the official account by Jean Baptiste Houwaert show that each living statue was performed on a simple stage, most frequently with a single actor or actress. On one of these stages, we see Temperance offering a costly robe to the Archduke (Figure 8.5). This cardinal virtue is represented in a traditional manner, as a woman who pours water into a bowl of wine. An inscription points to the allegorical meaning of this scene: 'Temperance decorates any person far more than only with rich dresses. She offers his highness (of noble character) the robe of honour, splendid and delightful'.45 The robe, therefore, does not primarily stand for an outer sign of richness but instead was meant to encourage Matthias to use temperance. By dressing the entering ruler in symbolic articles of clothing in this series of stages, the Brussels municipality treated him as a novice who entered, to repeat Edith and Victor Turner, 'a ritual time and space that are betwixt and between those ordered by the categories of past and future mundane existence. 46 The discourse offered by the living statues was coherent and clearly communicated by a fixed format; a personification gave the Archduke a nresent that could be related to Matthias' ideal government. Most often, that personification made a gesture that referred to ancient sculpture. Temperance provides us with a clear example. Thanks to her gesture, but also her chiton-like garment and a



Figure 8.5 Jean Baptiste Houwaert, 'Tableau vivant of the joyous entry of archduke Matthias in Brussels, 18 January 1578'. In Sommare beschrijvinghe vande triumphelijcke Incomst . . . , plate XVII. Antwerp, 1579, 51. University Library Ghent, MEUL. 000334

single revealed breast, the figure of Temperance was very similar to the ancient statue single revealed breast, the figure of Temperance was very summer to the ancient statue of type that has become known as the Venus Genetrix. As with Praxiteles' statue of type that has become known as the Venus was very popular in the type that has become known as the venus General As with Craxiteles' statue of the goddess of love, this representation of Venus was very popular in the early modified from the Roman and Company of the goddess of love, this representation or venus was very popular in the early mod-em period and was known through many copies from the Roman period, as well as ern period and was known through many cupies from the redman period, as well as through representations on coins and descriptions, such as in Pliny's most influential Naturalis Historia (35.156)

Thanks to their immobility and silence, as well as their speaking resemblances to nanks to their immobility and sheller, the living statues were traditional in their painting, tanestry and especially sculpture, the living statues were traditional in their painting, tapestry and especially sculpture, in their extraordinariness and therefore figured as essential markers of liminality in the joyone extraorumariness and incretore riginto a control of passage for a new ruler. The 'traditional entries which we have seen as civic rites of passage for a new ruler. The 'traditional entries which we have seen as Civic lines of product references to the repre-extraordinariness' was essentially defined by making explicit references to the repreextraordinariness was essentially denied by the regular communication of everyday sentative status of the stages, thus clarifying that regular communication of everyday sentative status of the stages, thus claim, as the living statues 'traditional extraordilife was exceeded. A last element which gave the living statues 'traditional extraordilife was exceeded. A last element which gave the living statues 'traditional extraordilife. nariness' was theatricality, again in the strict sense of the word as 'resembling the thenariness' was theatricanty, again in the safety after the character atte. For this, we need to go back to the amateur players of the Chambers of Rhetoric mentioned in the introduction of this chapter. Their rise and decline run parallel with the history of the living statues in the joyous entries, increasingly developing their rola in the Low Countries throughout the fifteenth century and diminishing in importance throughout the seventeenth century. 47 In order to emphasise mutual influencing, the theatre historian Wim Hummelen has clarified how much the living statues of the jovous entries resembled the living statues in the theatre performances of their time, all the more since often the Chambers of Rhetoric were responsible for both.

At a decisive moment in the plot of the plays, the Chambers of Rhetoric staged a group of living statues to specify and strengthen the conclusion of the play. 48 Here, we can once again speak of 'traditional extraordinariness', and this to let the central message penetrate as strongly as possible. More precisely, these living statues served as representations within the representation. In other words, at the moment when the drama was coming to its end, the action was stopped, and a stage behind the stage was revealed by raising the curtains. On this stage, another time and place than the time and place of the theatre play was evoked. Often, the plays of the Chambers of Rhetoric were strongly defined by allegories. Therefore, they were situated in a time and place that were related to the theatregoers but which were also relying on metaphorical meaning. Issues and occurrences of the theatregoers' time and place were epresented in such a way that they eventually pointed at a deeper, often moral meanng. For example, the personage of the priest was staged in such a way that he was learly recognizable for the audience, but this personage was not just an everyday riest but a personification (we can even speak of an animation) of the abstract notion f good faith. By contrast, the living statues that were performed at the play's concluon did not work with 'allegorical presence' but evoked a time and place which was ot shared with the speaking and moving characters on the front stage and which iese characters could only observe, just as the theatregoers. Generally, the living atues' time and space is biblical or heavenly, such as the staging of the crucifixion Christ or God sitting enthroned. Whereas the speaking and moving characters of e front stage do not share time and place with the statue vivante, they do comment what they see in the stage behind them, thus making the moral of their story clear.

Thanks to the Chambers of Rhetoric, the burghers from the Low Countries were need to complex communication with the help of motionless and silent actors staged at a very specific moment in the plays that were performed regularly on the streets and squares of cities, towns and even villages. Thanks to the parallels in the staging of the living statues in the plays of the Chambers of Rhetoric, the living statues in the joyous entries, which were less frequently staged, similarly urged the viewers to thoughtfully consider what was shown on the stages and not to take these stages at face value but to read a deeper meaning. A time and place were evoked that had to be related to their own time and place, although there was certainly not always a direct connection.

The appearance of statues vivantes in the late medieval and early modern entries in the Low Countries was closely linked to many media, as they shared the same shetorical strategies. This transmediality can be related to the creation of 'traditional extraordinariness' that made the living statues successful markers of liminality. We have seen how the picturesque aspect of the living statues from the 1458 entry into Ghent, namely the duplication of the Ghent Altarpiece, was used to the fullest extent but also linked to the theatrical power of the performance of this famous polyptych by locals standing motionless and silent. The picturesque and the theatrical aspects of this group of living statues enforced each other. Similarly, the impact of the explicit statuesque postures on the scenes of the Archduke Matthias' entry in 1578 strengthened the impact of the performance of the actresses. In this case, the combined forces of sculpture and theatre ensured that the audience saw that there was more going on than the Archduke only getting new clothing. The series of living statues performed to welcome the Archduke was a powerful, transmedial marker of liminality and had to make generally known that a new and ideal ruler was in the making. Thanks to the fact that burghers were giving form to the public statues, the civic pride could be expressed fully in this ritual. As actors given central attentions, burghers had an important part in the political act. Even more, since they stood motionless and silent and often resembled sculpture, we can speak of the Netherlandish cities monumentalising their burghers.

## Acknowledgement

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### Notes

- 1. Bergstein 2002; Covi 2005; Erben 1996.
- 2. Starn 1986.
- 3. See the contributions and bibliography of Blondé, Boone, and Van Bruaene 2018.
- 4. See Bussels 2012. 5 Heesakkers 1994
- 6. Becker 1993; Scholten 2001.
- 7. In the time of the entries they were named in the Low Countries as toog (the act of showing) or vertoog (the act of viewing). Thus, the visual aspect of the performances was given central attention. Moreover, the perspective of the maker as well as the audience were given attention in those names. Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal 1993: entries 'toog' and
- 'vertoog'. 8. Hummelen 1992.
- 9. Vandommele 2012.

190 Stiin P.M. Bussels

10. Burgon 1839, 388-389.

11. See, among other publications, two large research projects published as Mulryne and Watanabe-O'Kelly 2004; and Wisch and Munshower 1990.

12. Solv 1984.

14. An early exception is Roeder-Baumbach and Evers 1943.

16. Kernodle 1943.

17. Moreover, the conviction that the ephemeral design followed the stone architecture was a . Moreover, the conviction that the ephemeral usage in bloom as a same actinecture was a clear sign. following theatre historian Wim Hummelen, of Kernodle's lack of knowledge of clear sign, following theatre historian Wim Flummeters, or Sectionals 3 1868; Or Knowledge of the theatre history of the Low Countries, Hummeter contradicted Kernodle's statement and the theatre history of the Low Countries. the theatre history of the Low Countries, runningers on the lower of the living statues of discussed a rich series of theatre performances that had to prove that the living statues of discussed a rich series of theatre performances that had to prove that the living statues of the entries originated from the theatre. Hummelen 1970.

18. Turner and Turner 1982. 202.

20. Hurlbut 2001. Cf. Lecuppre-Desjardin 2004, 135-158.

21. E.g. Bussels 2012, 35.

22. Bussels 2007.

23. Bussels and Van Oostveldt 2017.

una donzella puesta de rodillas de rostro modesto, la qual con gran acatamiento salva una donzella puesta de roquias de 10810 inclusor a qual con gran acadamiento salu-daua al Principe. . . . Traya sobre una saya larga de raso carmesi una ropa corta de raso blanco, y en lugar de guirnalda sobre sus cabellos una hermosa torre de dos pies de ales pianco, y en jugar de guirriado sobre de acestra de des pies de alto a semejança dela que está enla yglesia mayor de nuestra Señora, por la qual y por las

colores de blanco y Colorado mostraua, que era la riquissima villa de Anvers. (Calvete de Estrella, El felicissimo viaje: IV, 225 recto. Translation into English ie be-

Gijs Versteegen. I would like to thank him for his helni

25. Bussels and Van Oostveldt 2017.

26. Bussels and Van Oostveldt 2017.

27 Thofner 2007, 47.

28. Thofner 2007, 47. 29. Van Gelderen 1992. 54-55: Van Bruaene 2007

30. Facsimile with introduction: Mielke 1970. See also Vandenbroeck 1981. 38-44.

31 Geudens 1911 32. Knaap and Putnam 2013 is recently published and will hopefully put this joyous entry back on the scholarly agenda.

33. However, as I have explained elsewhere, the personifications accompanying the Maiden were adapted to the new political situation, Bussels and Van Oostveldt 2017.

34. Bussels 2010; Bussels 2014. 35. Martens 2002: Hindriks 2019, 122-127.

36. Bergmans 1907.

37. Anglo 1973.

38. Juan C. Calvete de Estrella, El felicissimo viaie del muy Alto y muy Poderoso Principe Don Phelippe, Hijo del Emperador Don Carlos Quinto Maximo, desde España a sus tierras de la baxa Alemaña: con la descripcion de todos los Estados de Brabante y Flandes, Anvers: Martin Nucio, 1552, III, 82. Briefly discussed and translated in Karimi 1977, 104-105.

39 Karimi 1977, 110

40. Réunissant à elle seule des dons que les trois déesses imparfaites ne possèdent que séparément, Jeanne de Castille apparaît comme la princesse idéale et universelle' (my translation). Legaré 2010, esp. p. 53.

41. Bussels 2007. 42. Duerr 1993

43. Pasquier and Martinez 2007.

44. Solv 1984, 355.

45. Temperantia die den persoon verciert/ Boven cieraet van cleeren hoe costelijck./ Schenckt sijn hoogheyt (edel ghemaniert)/ T'habijt van eeren, schoon en kosteliick'. Jean B. Houwaert,

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Sommare beschrijvinghe vande triumphelijcke Incomst vanden doorluchtigen ende hooghgheboren Aerts-hertoge Matthias binnen de Princelijcke stadt van Brussele in t'iaer ons Heeren MDLXXVIII, Antwerp: Plantijn, 1579, 51.

46 Turner and Turner1982, 202 47 Strictman 1991

48 Hummelen 1970: Hummelen 1992

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