

Eichberger, Dagmar H., ed. *A Spectacle for a Spanish Princess: The Festive Entry of Joanna of Castile into Brussels (1496)*. Burgundica, 35. Turnhout: Brepols, 2024. Pp. 440, 240 color illustrations. €110.00. ISBN: 978-2-503-59443-9.

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Sometimes a book lands in our mailboxes and begs to be read, re-read, looked at again and again. *A Spectacle for a Spanish Princess* is one such book. Dagmar Eichberger, a distinguished art historian and an authority on the art collections of Margaret of Austria, has assembled an impressive cohort of scholars who bring to life an illuminated manuscript, Berlin 78 D5. This “booklet” recounts the festive entry of Princess Joana (Juana) of Castile (1479-1555), into Brussels on 9 December 1496. Joana, daughter of Queen Isabel of Castile and King Fernando of Aragon, was the new wife of wife of Archduke Philip the Fair (1478-1506) and this was her first visit to Brussels. The manuscript was commissioned by the city elders as a way to show off their wealth and power encapsulated in the magnificent city hall that surely dazzled the bride.

It is an extraordinary manuscript in a number of ways. Sixty full-page miniatures--watercolor on paper--document the *Joyeuse Entreé* in the form of a festival booklet that literally recounts the procession from the three Dominican teachers carrying a processional cross through the various civic groups, burlesque groups in the procession (fols 31r-31r), twenty-eight *tableaux vivants* of the stages and performances (fols 32r-59r), to the final pages that present the heraldic emblems of Juana and Philip. The text of the booklet was written in Latin, not Dutch or French, likely out of respect for Juana who was fluent in Spanish and Latin.

Anne-Marie Legaré notes the distinctive composition and creation of the *Entry of Joana of Castile*. She considers it an “alternative type of composition,” created quickly and spontaneously to serve as a *memoria* of both a city and a dynasty. In this, it is quite different from the luxury manuscripts such as books of hours, gospel books, and choir books created on vellum or parchment, painted in dense opaque pigments with gold leaf decorations. The artist, who remains anonymous, has created a vivid display of the leading citizens of Brussels in a free and unrestrained painting style that conveys both the pomp and playfulness of Joana’s entry into the bustling city.

The sixty-three folio pages combine a page of explanatory text on the verso and a full-page illustration on the recto. The reader not only gets a rare glimpse into the social hierarchies of Brussels as clergy lead the way, followed by jesters, actors, and musicians, and then a veritable parade of the urban elites--butchers, sergeants, guild masters, city officials, tax collectors. The entire city showed up in this stately procession. Sergeants and archers, messengers and peacemakers, wool merchants, city secretaries, and Culverin Bearers from the Guild of Saint Christopher are followed by depictions of the stages erected around the city square to tell Biblical stories from Tubal (the inventor of all metalwork) to Tobias and Sara in their marriage bed. Queens have a particular pride of place in these stories--the mythical (the Amazons), Hebrew (Esther), and Christian (Isabel of Castile). Princess Joana appears with the Great Guild of Crossbow Bearers (fol. 31r), the oldest and most

privileged of the four main guilds. She sits sidesaddle on a richly adorned black mule, with a lady from her court behind her.

To guide the viewer in reading and understanding this complex array of texts and images, Dagmar Eichberger has gathered together thirteen scholars who demonstrate the richness of true interdisciplinary scholarship. Some interdisciplinary works that focus on royal travels and processions crisscross one or two disciplines, such as politics and economics, or gender and culture. Not this book. The authors link art historical analysis, semiotics, historical context, biography, household accounts, jewelry design, urban archaeology, public pageantry, religion, political theory, codicology, theatre, and literature into a brilliant series of snapshots, some in close-up and some wide-angle panorama shots, of a woman and a city.

But it is not simply about study of a book; it is the backstory of an event. It is a scholarly smorgasbord with something for everyone. Some readers might want to do what I did, start with the primary source itself. I soon was completely and happily lost in the full-page, full-color miniatures themselves. But I needed to know what exactly I was looking at. Thinking like a graduate student, I turned to Eichberger's detailed essay on codicology and Helga Kaiser-Minn's short but enormously helpful descriptions of the miniatures. At that point, I realized my paleography skills needed some help, so I turned gratefully to Verena Demoed's transcriptions and translations. As a historian of medieval Spain, I knew the story of Joana, but for those of you who don't, fear not. Raymond Fagel and Wim Blockmans are here to help sort out Joana's life before her wedding and her education at the court of Isabel of Castile. The editors missed some errors of fact, however. Joana's daughter Catherine was queen of Portugal not England (136) and King Alfonso V of Aragon died in 1458 not 1448 (137).

Eichberger links Joana's Christian education with the moral and political lessons embedded in the images, which adds depth and dimension to the illustrations. The history of Brussels was new to me, and if it is to you, too, you'll be happy to have Sascha Köhl as a guide to the Town Hall, with Claire Billen and Chloë Deligne to walk with you in this procession, filling you in on the city's history and culture. They provide rich descriptions of the people and the landscape, a bird's-eye map of Brussels, and engravings and photographs of the Town Hall. However, the authors' work would have been stronger with a street map tracing Joana's journey through the countryside and city as Mariah Proctor-Tiffany and Tracy Chapman Hamilton did in *Moving Women, Moving Objects* (Brill, 2019). A street map would allow a reader to visualize Joana's physical introduction to her new home, street by street and shop by shop, and to imagine her reactions, to experience with her the joy and recreation of an entirely different place and culture.

So, you might be wondering, who were the masterminds behind the event? Remco Sleiderink and Amber Souleymane introduce us to the city poet, Jan Smeken, and the rhetoricians who worked together to create an artistic and theatrical public spectacle. For the details of the event, Laura Weigert takes us into the way the entry functioned as entertainment that not only showed off for the newcomer to the dynasty but also a city competing for status as a capital city.

This volume is also a case study in how to study something lost. Joana's ship went aground on the journey from Spain, and she lost almost all of the rich possessions crafted by the best artisans in the realm. Annemarie Jordan Gschwend carefully

reconstructs what was lost by combing through the detailed descriptive accounts of Isabel of Castile's treasurer, Gonzalo de Baeza.

This book is, ultimately, a valuable contribution to an important new avenue of study of women in motion, across borders and cultures, bringing with her people from her court, carrying the art of her homeland, encountering new people, transferring her familiar culture to new forms of art in a new city. It is a *translatio* that recounts the story of a woman in transition from an unmarried Spanish *infanta* and *princesa* to a married archduchess and later, a queen of Spain. The city is also in motion, poised to take its place as one of the political, economic, and cultural capitals of early modern Europe. It was pure joy to be in the company of such erudite colleagues on this journey with Joana through Brussels in 1496.