

The *Tableau Vivant* – an Ephemeral Art Form in Burgundian Civic Festivities

The importance of pageantry in the life of the Burgundian court and the cities of France and the Burgundian Netherlands has long been recognized by scholars working in the field of historical and theatrical studies.¹ Only a few attempts have been made so far to relate theatrical performances and ephemeral art to art objects of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries or to investigate the role of the artist in the preparation of pageants. Emile Mâle is one of the few art historians who has tried to define the role of mystery plays for pictorial representations of various kinds.² In his chapter on "Art and the Religious Theatre" he describes the role of mystery plays mostly as a transmitter of ideas which had been developed in religious treatises of the time like the *Meditations of the life of Christ* attributed to Pseudo-Bonaventura or the *Golden Legend* by Jacopo da Voragine.³ Mâle tends to see this process of interaction as a one-way street from the literary texts via the mystery plays to the pictorial representations.⁴ Only on the last pages of this chapter does Mâle mention the *Tableau Vivant* which he characterises as being founded on the tradition of mystery plays, without further pursuing the question.⁵

¹In this context the following references proved to be useful, though this list of titles is by no means complete: E. Königson and J. Jacquot, *Les Fêtes de la Renaissance*, vol.3, Paris, 1975; E. Königson, *L'espace théâtral médiéval*, Paris, 1975; R. Jackson, *Vive le Roi* (1937), Chapel Hill, 1984; O. Cartellieri, *Das Fasanenfest. Am Hofe der Herzöge von Burgund (1454)*, *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland* 167, 1921, 65-80, 141-158; O. Cartellieri, *The Court of Burgundy*, London, 1929; G.R. Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre*, Chicago and London, 1964; R. Withington, *English Pageantry: a historical outline* (1918), New York, 1963; L.M. Bryant, *The French Royal Entry Ceremony – Politics, Society and Art in Renaissance Paris*, Iowa, 1978, repr. Ann Arbor, 1987; A.-M. Lecoq, La "Citta festiggiane", *Revue de l'Art* 33, 1976, 83-100; R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good, Apogee of Burgundy*, London, 1970; R. Vaughan, *Charles the Bold – the last Valois Duke of Burgundy*, London, 1973; J. van der Elst, *The last flowering of the Middle Ages* (1944), Port Washington, 1969.

²E. Mâle, Art and the religious theatre, in *Religious Art of the Late Middle Ages* (1949), 1986.

³*Ibid.*, 40-1.

⁴That artists did not necessarily have to go through the mystery play as an intermediate stage can be seen in the work of the Limbourg brothers. Some of the illuminations in the *Très Riches Heures* of the Duke of Berry reflect the influence of the French version of the *Meditations*. The translation had been commissioned by Jean de Berry himself in 1380 and it seems to be most likely that Jean de Berry asked the Limbourg brothers to model some of the illuminations on the French text. See D. Eichberger, *Bildkonzeption und Weltdeutung im New Yorker Diptychon des Jan van Eyck*, Wiesbaden, 1987, 74.

⁵E. Mâle, *op.cit.* Chapter 2.6, 76-8.

Although Mâle's observations have been discarded occasionally because of his rather simplistic model of explanation, the importance of ephemeral art in the daily work of the late medieval artist should not be underestimated. The question whether the *Tableau Vivant* had an impact on late medieval art similar to that of the medieval mystery plays deserves further consideration. In many ways the *Tableau Vivant* seems to have been even more apt as a model for two-dimensional art, as it can be described as an intermediate form between a stage performance and a static picture. This is only one of the reasons why the *Tableau Vivant* has to be seen as an artistic form equal in importance to the contemporary mystery play.⁶

According to the chronicles of court historians such as Olivier de la Marche and Chastelain, for example, the *Tableau Vivant* represents a dominant feature in civic festivities of French, Netherlandish and English cities of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁷ As it is the very nature of pageantry to be ephemeral, most of these spectacles are only known to us through written sources such as the chronicles of the provinces or the expense accounts of the cities, which organized the festive entry ceremonial. How transitory and perishable such decorations were can be seen in the documents which describe the preparations of Charles the Bold's entry into Dijon. As his first visit to the capital of the Duchy of Burgundy was delayed by five years many of the displays, which had already been executed in 1468, had suffered so considerably that they had to be restored substantially in 1473. According to the accounts of Dijon much of the material had already started to rot away within these five years.⁸

⁶In his study on the origins of Renaissance theatre G. Kernodle also votes for a more interdisciplinary approach. In chapter I especially he tries to establish the *Tableau Vivant* as one of the sources of Renaissance Theatre. Kernodle names this art form as one of the three main traditions from which the sixteenth-century theatre was developed; see G. Kernodle, *op.cit.*, 14-51.

⁷In his analysis of English pageantry R. Withington lists various forms of ephemeral decoration, which embellished the Royal entry from 1298 until 1558; *op.cit.*, vol. 1, 124-195. On the nuptial celebrations of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York, for example, see *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche III* and "Traicte des noces de monseigneur le duc de Bourgoigne et de Brabant" in *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche IV* published by H. Baune and J. D'Arbaumont, Paris, 1885; important source material in this context has been published by L. de Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, Paris, 1849-52.

⁸"Lesquelles representacions ont este assouvies mais pour ce que lad. venue na pas este faicte apres lesd. advis en tel temps et si prouchain que l'on esperoit, et qu'il y a eu de distance environ cinq (ans) icelles representacions avec toutes les autres choses qui avoient advisees tant de peinture comme autres ont este gardees le plus a proffit que l'on a peu jusque a icelle venue a laquelle l'on s'en est aydie. Es pour ce que pendant esd. lyon et licorne qui estoient faiz desd. oziers et de drappeaulx et paste es lieux et ainsi que la chose le requeroit, il a eu grant diminucion voir plusieurs difformitez a l'occasion de moisteurs du temps et autrement il a convenue de rechief a icelle venue y ouvrer et renfrechir tout ce qui

A second group of sources, important in this context, are texts written by Burgundian court historians such as Olivier de la Marche, Jehan de Lefevre or Remy du Puits, who were anxiously documenting the respect paid to the duke by the influential cities of the North. Only in very few cases can we find depictions of the spectacles or pageants which accompanied these festivities, and often these illustrations are less informative than the written documents. Yet with the help of both the written sources and the illustrations it is possible to reconstruct the form and content of some of these feast decorations. In some cases the accounts do not only provide us with details of the outer appearance of the tableaux, but also reveal detailed information on who devised the programme, what materials were used for the decorations, how many artists, actors and craftsmen were employed by the city and how much money they received for each single job. A good example showing the various kinds of documents that might be available is again the entry into the city of Dijon, which celebrated the new sovereign Duke, Charles the Bold, taking possession of the Duchy of Burgundy. The documents transcribed by Chabeuf consist of: 1. a description of the seven tableaux with their exact location on the way of the procession;⁹ 2. a description of the arrival of Duke Charles the Bold at the city of Dijon on October 23, 1473;¹⁰ 3. an instruction for the dignitaries from various Burgundian cities, participating in the festive entry;¹¹ 4. a description of the procession itself and the reception that followed in the residence of the Duke;¹² 5. a description of the solemn funeral for Charles' parents, Duke Philip the Good and his wife Isabella of Portugal on February 8, 1473;¹³ and finally 6. the expense accounts for the entry of Duke Charles the Bold.¹⁴ These different documents reveal the complexity of such preparations and, further, give us insight into the process of devising and executing such pageantry.

The term "Ephemeral Art" is a fairly general expression for a number of different feast decorations, produced for events like a royal coronation or a ducal wedding. Within the area of ephemeral art, the *Tableau Vivant* is one of the most common forms of decoration used in the ceremonial entry processions, which were organised by the town councils of politically important cities, such as, for example, Paris, London and Dijon. The triumphant entry of a lord or a

estoit necessaire qui a couste quant aud. mestier de vannerie.....Xfr.," published by H. Chabeuf, *Entrée de Charles le Temeraire et les Funerailles de Philippe le Bon, Mémoires de la Société Bourguignonne de Géographie et d'Histoire* 18, 1902, 316.
⁹*Ibid.*, 257-268.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 268-272.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 273-277.

¹²*Ibid.*, 278-292.

¹³*Ibid.*, 292-313.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 314-336.

king is, of course, no invention of the late Middle Ages, but is based on an unbroken medieval tradition originally derived from Roman customs, as E. Kantorowicz and W. Dotzauer have pointed out.¹⁵ In all one can say that it is more the outer form than the inner structure of such entries which changed in the course of the late Middle Ages. The introduction of decorated stages into the traditional entry ceremonial enabled the city to express its ideas in a more visual and possibly a more explicit way than before.

Until the late fourteenth century the entry of a lord consisted mainly of the delivery of the keys to the city and a ceremonial procession with relics, banners, candles and torches from the main city gate to the cathedral or to the palace. If the entry was staged on the occasion of the accession to the throne, the main function of the entry was the confirmation of civic rights and privileges by the new ruler. This act usually took place in the cathedral of the town.¹⁶

In the chronicle of Ulrich Richental two examples of a more traditional entry are recorded in words and pictures. This chronicle, which describes the council of Constance taking place between 1414-1418, deals in detail with the ceremonial entry of Pope John XXIII as well as with the entry of King Sigismund and his wife.¹⁷ The account of the entry of Pope John XXIII, for example, is accompanied by four pages of coloured drawings illustrating the order of the procession.¹⁸ The procession begins with a group of clerics carrying banners and crosses and is followed by a group of scholars. The procession is continued with a delegation of Franciscans, Augustinians, Dominicans, a group of students and a group of canons from various churches of the town of Constance. On fol.11b the procession of clerics and monks continues and finishes with a monk carrying a reliquary. The next section consists of horses with sacks, chests and barrels tied on their back. On fol.12a one can see a delegation of citizens with candles of the various guilds in their hands (fig.1). Immediately in front of the Pope a group of horses are carrying a monstrance and candles on their backs. The Pope himself rides underneath a baldachin which is carried by leading noblemen.

¹⁵E.H. Kantorowicz, The "King's Advent" and the enigmatic panels in the doors of Santa Sabina, *Art Bulletin* 26, 1944, 207-231; W. Dotzauer, Die Ankunft des Herrschers. Der fürstliche "Einzug" in die Stadt, *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 55, 1973, 245-288; see also A.M. Drabek, *Reisen und Reisezeremoniell der römisch-deutschen Herrscher*, Vienna, 1964.

¹⁶See, e.g., L. Bryant, *op.cit.*, 34; a description of the act of confirmation can also be found in the documents related to the entry of Charles the Rash into Dijon, see H. Chabeuf, *op.cit.*, 276.

¹⁷O. Feger, ed., *Ulrich Richental, Das Konzil zu Konstanz*, Starnberg, 1964, 160-2, 169-70; I would like to thank Dr. Lynette Olson for drawing my attention to this manuscript.

¹⁸O. Feger, *op.cit.*, fol.11a-12b, p.162.

In the same manuscript the account of King Sigismund and Queen Barbara's entry into Constance is not illustrated with the entry into the city itself, but with the ceremonial procession of the royal couple to the cathedral of Constance, where they participated in the Midnight Mass on the 24 December.¹⁹ The two entries mentioned by Ulrich Richenthal give a good impression of the traditional ceremonies as they were performed throughout the Middle Ages on such occasions. These entries, however, do not allude to the new kind of stage decoration mentioned earlier.

From the end of the fourteenth century onwards the French and English coronation ceremonial is accompanied by more lavish decorations, such as stages with actors and *Tableaux Vivants*, which are used by the city as a visible comment on the occasion.²⁰ R. Withington, for example, considers the coronation of Richard II in 1377 as an important event in the history of civic pageantry, as this seems to be the first documented English coronation with more elaborate pageantry.²¹ The Goldsmiths' Company, for example, had put up a castle with four towers which were each decorated with a living virgin. The castle was further crowned by a mechanical device in the form of a golden angel. On the arrival of the king the angel greeted King Richard II and offered him a crown.

In his study on the French royal entry ceremony L. Bryant describes the entry of Isabel of Bavaria in 1389 as an event of similar importance in the development of the French entry ceremony. On this occasion the Queen was greeted at the Saint Denis Gate by a representation of the Virgin with the Christ Child.²² On the stages and scaffolds put up along the way of the procession references to biblical or mythological figures as well as to historical events could express the city's respect and submission to the ruler. In some cases the pageants were used to convey specific political messages, like a plea for clemency or a plea for financial support in times of economic hardship. This second form of message could be found in the decoration of the stages which were put up when Philip the Good entered the besieged Flemish cities Bruges and Ghent. In 1458, for example, Ghent chose antique exempla of clemency

¹⁹*Ibid.*, fol. 19b-20a, pp.169-171; according to the illustration the main part of the procession was formed by the King and the Queen walking under separate baldachins again carried by noblemen, which are identifiable by the accompanying coat of arms. Fol. 20b and 21a show the King and the Pope in the celebration of the Midnight Mass.

²⁰R. Withington, *op.cit.*, 124-165; L. Bryant, *op.cit.*, 203-232; G. Kernodle, Renaissance artists in the service of the people, *Art Bulletin* 25, 1943, 59; G. Kernodle, *op.cit.* (as in note 1), 60.

²¹R. Withington, *op.cit.*, 128-9.

²²L. Bryant, *op.cit.*, 204.

such as *Pompey forgiving Tigranes* or *Julius Caesar pardoning prisoners*, in order to appease the Duke.²³

At the beginning of the fifteenth century this enriched entry ceremonial was no longer restricted to members of the royal family, but was adopted by the Burgundian princes, who tended to excel in all areas of pomp and public appearance.²⁴ The most common occasions for a triumphant entry was the accession to the throne, the taking possession of a town or province, the marriage of a ruler or the birth of a successor to the throne. The archives of the cities of Bruges, Ghent, Sluys and others give testimony of numerous entries of that kind arranged for Philip the Good, Charles the Bold and other members of this powerful family.²⁵ Strangely enough the festive entry with pageantry was not adopted by the German cities. Accounts of Emperor Frederick and his son Maximilian's entry into cities like Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Cologne and Aachen make dull reading as they follow the simpler old-fashioned forms of a ceremonial entry, which has been described earlier.²⁶

The festivities described so far were all organised by a city and therefore have to be seen in the context of civic patronage. At the same time ephemeral art also became more popular in the context of court patronage (fig.2). Similar forms of ephemeral decoration embellished the lavish feasts of the Burgundian court. The most famous example is the feast of the Pheasant, which was organized in 1454 in order to initiate a new crusade against the heathen.²⁷ During such court festivities the guests could watch theatrical as well as acrobatic and musical performances. Intricate automata, multi-storeyed showpieces and figurative tapestries would decorate the main banqueting hall. In contrast to the ceremonial entry the audience for court festivities played a less active role, as it watched the performances and showpieces from the dinner table

²³See O. Cartellieri, *Das Fasanenfest*, 66. Similar decorations were already used in Bruges in 1440. In this context see also G. Kernodle, *Renaissance artists*, 61.

²⁴In the thirteenth century the entry ceremonial was reserved for emperors, kings and the highest ecclesiastic dignitaries. From the fourteenth century onwards lords of lower social rank could also receive these honours; see W. Dotzauer, *op.cit.*, 253.

²⁵See references given in note 1; additional material has been published by I. Diegerick, *Joyeuse Entrée de Philipp-le-Bon, Duc de Bourgogne, dans sa bonne ville d'Ypres, Société d'Emulation de Bruges, Annales* 13, 1851-54, 265-286.

²⁶For documents describing these entries see: E. Schneider, *Johann Reuchlins Berichte über die Krönung Maximilians I. im Jahre 1486, Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 13, 1898, 547-559; J. Seemüller, *Friedrich III. Aachener Krönungsreise, Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 17, 1896, 584-665; see also A. Drabek, *op.cit.*, and W. Dotzauer, *op.cit.*

²⁷A detailed description of this event has been given by O. Cartellieri, *Das Fasanenfest*; see also R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 143-5.

or from the visitor's gallery.²⁸ In contrast to the festive entry the movement seemed to proceed from the actors and acrobats in the first place and not from the observers.

In the secular procession the guest of honour moved through the town and stopped at important places and street corners to watch the unveiling of the next tableau or to listen to the explanations of an orator. A *Tableau Vivant* consisted of actors on the highly decorated flat stage, who would represent a certain scene without any movement or speech. The scenes displayed would either be explained by inscriptions, which were attached to the scaffold or were written on tablets, or the scene would be elucidated by the orator.²⁹

Some of the stages put up along the way of the procession cannot be called a *Tableau Vivant* in a strict sense as they could involve the guest of honour in a symbolic gesture like the presenting of a gift. When Henry VI entered Paris in 1431, the St. Denis Gate was decorated with a "ship of state", which contained representations of the three major estates of the civic community. Each personification greeted King Henry with flowers arranged in the shape of a heart. With this gesture the city expressed its willingness to accept his rulership as a unified body.³⁰ As there are a number of variations on the many forms of pageantry available at the time, it is sometimes impossible to decide whether a representation can still be called a *Tableau Vivant* or should rather be called a theatrical performance. One of the *platforms* in the entry of Philip the Good into Mons, for example, displayed a representation of the Assumption of the Virgin, which was accompanied by: "angels singing her praises with holy songs".³¹ Although the other four stage decorations are described as silent representations, this one obviously deviated from the general pattern.³² On

²⁸In this context miniatures are a useful aid as they illustrate such events differently from literary sources. They capture the decoration as well as the arrangement of tables and galleries in the feast hall. For the visit of Emperor Charles IV at the court of Charles V see: *Grandes Chroniques de France*, Paris B.N. Ms. fr. 2813, fol.473v; for the wildman's dance of King Charles V (1394) see: *Grandes Chroniques de France*, London B.M. Ms. Harley 4380, fol.1; the Master of Wavrin portrayed the performance of a Moresca in a similar way in the *Roman de Jean de Paris and the Histoire d'Apollonius de Tyr*, Brussels B.R. 9632-3, fol.168.

²⁹G. Kernodle, *Renaissance Artists*, 59; G. Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre*, 52-3; in the guidelines issued by the city of Mons in Hainault in 1455 the role of the orator is described explicitly: "Item, on each platform there must be an eloquent man with a billet to explain to my lord as he goes past what the representation is ...", quoted by R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 336.

³⁰See L. Bryant, *op.cit.* 204.

³¹R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 336.

³²*Ibid.*, 335: "Item, it was agreed to erect a platform outside the said Havre gate on which there will be a lady holding a tablet on which will be written 'Sancta Trinitas unus Deus, miserere nobis' ... They will not have bells or anything noisy".

other occasions the wording is so ambiguous that the same source can be read in two different ways.³³

Among the courtly forms of entertainment the often spectacular showpieces, also called *entremets*, come closest to the *Tableau Vivant* of the ceremonial entry.³⁴ These showpieces usually consisted of a highly decorated stationary scaffold and could also comprise living persons such as actors or musicians.³⁵ R. Vaughan, for example, describes several showpieces, which were organised for a wedding at the court of the Duke of Savoy in 1434.³⁶ One of the presentations is reminiscent of a popular image of courtly love, familiar to the audience from secular ivory tablets and medieval romance. In this representation a horse, dressed up as an elephant, carried a wooden castle on its back, which contained a male actor representing the god of love. The motif of shooting roses among the guests as well as the idea of the elephant can be found frequently in the context of fourteenth-century ivory marriage caskets.³⁷

Although the organization of court and civic festivities was in the hands of different committees, the same artists could be involved in the execution of the programmes. As the duke was in charge of the court festivities, the committee consisted of some of the most important Burgundian courtiers. In the case of the feast of the Pheasant not only Jean de Lannoy and Olivier de la Marche, but also Nicolas Rolin and Antoine de Croy contributed to the planning of the

³³*Ibid.*, 334; during the entry of Philip the Good into Arras in 1455 the life of Gideon was represented on several platforms. The description given by the chronicler Duclerq does not reveal, whether we are dealing with a sequence of *Tableaux Vivants* or whether the various scenes were acted out silently in a similar way as the mime of the deeds of Hercules, which was performed at the wedding of Charles the Bold in 1468.

³⁴There is again a problem in respect to the terminology of these pageants, in particular with the expression *Tableau Vivant*. R. Vaughan uses this term also for the showpieces displayed at the courtly banquets. I am not sure whether it would not be better to distinguish more clearly between the *entremets*, which were mostly standing on top of tables and were not concealed behind curtains or doors and the "scaffolds" or platforms, which decorated the way of procession during a ceremonial entry. The term *Tableau Vivant* seems to be more appropriate for this second form of a pageant. In the documents I have looked at, these flat stages are named "eenen groete hoghe stellagie mit drije stagen"(1) or "ung petit chaffault en masniere de loge"(2) or "une loge la plus spacieuse" (3). For (1) see E. Dhanens, *Het retable van het Lam Gods. Inventaris van het kunstpatrimonium van Oost-Vlaanderen VI*, Gent, 1965, 96; for (2) and (3) see H. Chabeuf, *op.cit.*, 258-9.

³⁵O. Cartellieri, *Das Fasanenfest*, 68, 77-9; see also O. Cartellieri, *Theaterspiele am Hofe Herzog Karls des Kühnen von Burgund, Germanisch-romanische Monatszeitschrift* 9, 1921, 168-179.

³⁶R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 143-5.

³⁷See D.J. Ross, *Allegory and romance on a medieval French marriage casket, Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 11 1948, 112-142; also T. Husband, *The wild man, medieval myth and symbolism*, New York, 1980, 71-3.

feast.³⁸ In contrast to court festivities the civic pageants could involve different members of the civic community, as the decorations were put up by the city council and occasionally also the by different groups of foreign merchants living in the same city.³⁹ Despite the more complex structure of the planning process, the city remained responsible for carrying through the procession and distributing the scenes along the street of the town. How much organisation was required for such an event can be seen, for example, from the many instructions given by the city of Dijon in 1474.⁴⁰

In the late Middle Ages the borderlines between different forms of artistic production were not nearly as firm as they are nowadays, as can be seen from the versatility of the late medieval artist. Artists like André Beaunneveu and Jean Fouquet worked in more than one particular artistic medium and were therefore much sought after.⁴¹ In the case of Jean Fouquet we know for certain that he was involved in that kind of work. In 1461 Fouquet was employed by the city of Tours to stage "Mysteries and entertainment", which were organised in order to celebrate King Louis XI's visit to the city of Tours.⁴² Court artists of that period were sometimes also employed to produce works of more practical or decorative value, like painting shields and banners for a tournament or for the decoration of a ducal dwelling. For example, Hue de Bologne, one of Philip the Good's *valets de chambre*, was involved in painting the table decorations for a festive banquet at Lille in 1434.⁴³ As it is problematic to draw a line between "applied or decorative art" and "high art" in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, so it is equally unwise to separate ephemeral art and theatrical performances from more durable forms of art such as tomb sculpture, panel painting or book illumination. Already some examples have been given which illustrate that ephemeral art, like showpieces or the decorations prepared for mystery plays, were often executed by the artists who are known to us as panel painters or book illuminators. Also the audience which appreciated these decorations were often identical with the group of people who commissioned the better known altarpieces, portrait panels or illuminated books.

The artificial separation of these different media may explain to a certain extent why ephemeral art is such a neglected form of art in the standard art

³⁸For the organisation of the feast of the pheasant, see O. Cartellieri, *Das Fasanenfest*, 67-9.

³⁹This is well documented for the entry of the future Charles V into Bruges in 1515; see: G. Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre*, 60; G. Kernodle, *Renaissance Artists*, 61.

⁴⁰H. Chabeuf, *op.cit.*, 273-7: "Advis pour l'Entree de Monseigneur et Prinse de Possession pour son Duchie".

⁴¹D. Eichberger, *op.cit.*, 36-48.

⁴²C. Sterling and C. Schaefer, *The Hours of Etienne Chevalier*, London, 1972, 22.

⁴³R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 143.

historical handbooks of the period. The lack of regard for the *Tableau Vivant* is probably due to its ambiguous character and to the scarcity of pictorial sources which would help us in making more accurate judgements on the interrelationship between pictorial art and the so-called "living image". The *Tableau Vivant* has an ambiguous character insofar as it can be regarded as being on the borderline between the different disciplines. Yet the fact that it includes theatrical as well as pictorial elements makes it even more interesting if one considers the involvement of the fifteenth-century artist in several genres at a time as well as the cross-fertilization of the different media. The term *Tableau Vivant* itself vividly describes the intermediate position of this form of pageant, which is neither a two-dimensional image or *tableau*, nor a proper stage performance, as in most cases it lacks speech and movement. As mentioned earlier the secular processions were arranged in such a way that the guest of honour moved through the town and stopped at important places and street corners in order to watch the unveiling of the next tableau or to listen to the explanations given by an orator. Before the procession arrived at a *Tableau Vivant*, the scene would often be concealed behind closed wooden doors or behind a set of curtains. The scaffolds could either lean against the facade of a house or could be build on top of a city gate, through which the duke or the king had to enter the city.⁴⁴

Such festive entries could comprise more than twenty stopping points, consisting of the *Tableau Vivant* as well as of decorative arches and fountains.⁴⁵ In many entries the single *Tableaux Vivants* stand by themselves and do not have not to be read together. This is mostly true for those tableaux that were produced by independent groups in the community, for example the different merchants from various countries.⁴⁶ In several cases the city council decided on a series of tableaux, which would comment on a certain event, by selecting appropriate events from the bible or from classical history which would

⁴⁴H. Chabeuf, *op.cit.*, 258-9: "ung petit chaffault en masnere de loge qui sera assiz sur les caneaux du balle de la porte par laquelle mondit seigneur entrera ..." also 266-7: "La tierce en la grant rue Saint-Jean devant l'ostel de Morimont"; also see R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 334-6.

⁴⁵The first triumphal arches seem to appear in the triumphant entry of Charles into Bruges in 1515 and have attracted a lot of attention, as they have been considered as a major step in the adaptation of Italian Renaissance motifs in the Burgundian Netherlands. On this question see S. Anglo, *La tryumphantie Entree de Charles Prince des Espagnes en Bruges 1515*, Amsterdam and New York 1975, 16-8; I. Vandevivere and C. Perier d'Ieteren, *The Renaissance Art in Belgium*, Brussels, 1973, 17-36.

⁴⁶The Bruges entry of 1515 for example consisted of 27 separate structures of which 16 were provided by the foreign merchants living in the city. S. Anglo, *op.cit.*, 12.

emphasise the historical importance of the occasion.⁴⁷ Occasionally the tableaux could also be arranged in a narrative sequence which aimed at developing a certain topic in several steps. This practice seems to have been less common and probably needed a much more thorough preparation, as it aimed at conveying a more complex message than usual to the ruler.⁴⁸

Both forms of the *Tableau Vivant*, the sequential and the non-sequential, can be found in the Bruges entry of 1515 that has just been mentioned. When the future Charles V came of age in 1515 he was celebrated in a series of triumphant entries by the most important cities of the Burgundian Netherlands, namely Louvain, Brussels, Malines, Antwerp, Middleburg, Ghent and Bruges.⁴⁹ The most lavish of all was organized by the city of Bruges and is described in a illustrated report of the events, written by Charles' court chronicler Remy du Puys (fig.3). The importance attributed to the documentation of this event is reflected in the fact that two versions of Remy's account were produced, a manuscript edition for the duke himself and a printed version possibly for a wider public.⁵⁰

Most of the eleven civic pageants commissioned by the city council of Bruges consisted of the two basic elements, an architectural framework and a stage depicting the main story of the tableau. The architectural framework usually contained a reference to a particular guild, to the governing body of Bruges or to a specific monument of the city. In ten of the eleven civic pageants, the main stage was divided into two parts,⁵¹ juxtaposing a scene taken

⁴⁷O. Cartellieri, for example, describes the tableaux put up for celebrating the marriage between Charles the Bold and Margaret of York in 1468. In the various tableaux the event was related to the union of Adam and Eve, the marriage of Cleopatra and Alexander, the marriage of Joseph and the Virgin Mary, the wedding in Cana, the marriage of Moses and Tabris and the wedding of Ahasver and Esther; Cartellieri, *Theaterspiele*, 173.

⁴⁸To my knowledge the best example is again the Bruges entry of 1515, in which the city attempts to describe the rise and decline of Bruges by emphasizing the crucial role of the Burgundian rulers for the future of the city; see S. Anglo, *op.cit.*, 22-32; in this context also see the entry of Philip the Good into Arras in 1455 as described by Duclerq: "... After he entered the town he found all along the tile-works and in the Petit Marche on platforms, scenes from the life of Gideon represented by life persons, superbly dressed, who said nothing, but went through the gestures and actions of the mystery ...", quoted after R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 334.

⁴⁹S. Anglo, *op.cit.*, 6.

⁵⁰The printed version is completely reproduced in Sydney Anglo's facsimile edition; S. Anglo, *op.cit.*

⁵¹The structure deviating from the described pattern is the eighth tableau, which showed Bruges with accompanying figures seated on a golden throne within an intricate golden globe. Underneath this symbol of Bruges' former glory one could see a depiction of Jupiter and Juno surrounded by the nine Muses and the three Graces; S. Anglo, *op.cit.*, 27-8.

from the history of Bruges with an adequate story in most cases chosen from the Old Testament.⁵²

The fourth of the eleven pageants, for example, can be associated with the Guild of the Drapers (fig.4). The architectural framework of this *Tableau Vivant* resembles one of the hallmarks of the city of Bruges, the *Vieille Halle*. The two main scenes on the stage juxtapose the story of Moses bringing the Decalogue from Mount Sinai with the confirmation of civic privileges through Louis de Nevers, the Count of Flanders.⁵³ This form of creating analogies between a historical and a biblical event is a common way of heightening the importance of a portrayed scene. By imitating the composition and the lay-out of the Old Testament scene, the Count of Flanders is visually paralleled with the far more important figure of Moses.

There are a number of different questions that need to be investigated in the context of the *Tableau Vivant*. In this paper I will not try to explore fully the various iconographical traditions in civic pageantry, but I intend to investigate the role of the late medieval artist in the planning and production of the *Tableau Vivant* and I will comment on possible sources for such pageantry. In this context the interrelationship between painted panels and the *Tableau Vivant* will be addressed briefly.

In the literature published on civic pageantry most authors focus on a comparatively small number of events, as only very few of the entry ceremonials have been illustrated and described in detail. The entry of Mary Tudor (fig.5) into Paris in 1514 and Charles' entry into Bruges in 1515 have both been documented by text and image in illuminated manuscripts.⁵⁴ As the festive entry of the fifteen year old Archduke Charles into the city of Bruges has not only been described from the viewpoint of an official court chronicler, Remy du Puy, but is also documented in the archives of the city of Bruges, this entry is indeed an invaluable source for the reconstruction of the *Tableau Vivant* as an ephemeral form of art.⁵⁵ Although the procession and the decorative programme were organised by the city of Bruges, Charles V commissioned his chronicler Remy du Puy to compose an account of the extraordinary lavish entry, in order

⁵²Nine of the eleven exempla are taken from the Old Testament, one is taken from classical history and one refers to the story of Heraclius and the rediscovery of the Holy Cross.

⁵³S. Anglo, *op.cit.*, 24

⁵⁴For Mary Tudor's entry (Cotton MS, Vespasian B II, British Museum), see L.M. Bryant, *op.cit.*, 132-40; also see G. Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre*, fig.35-7; for the illuminated manuscript on Charles entry (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2591), see S. Anglo, *op.cit.*; see also *Cat. Manuscrits et livres enluminés concernant l'Histoire des Pays-Bas, 1475-1600* (Bibliothèque Nationale d'Autriche), Brussels, 1962, no.93.

⁵⁵For the accounts see L.P. Gachart, *Collections des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas*, Brussels, 1874-82, vol.2, 531-42 quoted after S. Anglo, *op.cit.*, 6.

to keep a record of this event for posterity. This account does not only describe and explain each of the twenty-seven pageants, but also provides us with twenty-seven illustrations of the many tableaux vivants, triumphal arches and fountains, displayed on this occasion.⁵⁶ On fol.7v and 8r of the illuminated version of Remy's account the young duke is shown how he approaches Bruges in order to enter the city via the Porte Sainte Croix. The gate was decorated with heraldic tapestries and rows of torches.(fig.3) The use of torches in this and in many of the other scenes confirm the accompanying text. According to Charles' chronicler the entry was held by night in order to heighten the effect of the show.⁵⁷ The jester in the foreground of fol.8r adds a more comical note to the scene as he rides his mule back to front and is dressed as a gigantic torch consisting of many lighted candles.

In addition to this manuscript made for Charles himself there existed also a printed edition of the same subject, which was decorated with a series of woodcuts.⁵⁸ Like his grandfather Emperor Maximilian, Charles V probably made use of the medium of printing for promoting the image of a successful ruler, who is celebrated by his subjects.⁵⁹ This entry was concerned with an event, which had been foreseeable and did not happen as a surprise, through, for example, the sudden death of a ruler. Therefore the entry could be planned well in advance as can be seen from some additional records concerning the Bruges entry of 1515. Apart from the records of Charles' official chronicler Remy du Puits additional information on this entry can be found in the accounts of the city of Bruges, which describe in detail how the entry was planned and executed.⁶⁰

⁵⁶The printed version of this account has the following title: *La tryumphante et solemnelle entree faite sur le nouvel joyeux advenement de treshault et trespuissant et tresexcellant prince Monsieur Charles Prince des Espagnes Archiduc daustrice ... en sa ville de Bruges lan mil.V.ces XV.le XVIIIe jour d'april apres pasches...*, Brussels, Bibl. Royale d'Albert, Shelf Mark B.1553; this incunabulum is fully reproduced in S.Anglo, *op.cit.*

⁵⁷L.M Debae, *La librairie des Marguerite d'Autriche* (exh. cat.), Brussels, 1987, 140-146.

⁵⁸The relationship between the illuminated and the printed version of Remy du Puits' account has been discussed by S. Anglo, *op.cit.*,7-9.

⁵⁹Even if Maximilian's printed arch was never turned into a three-dimensional monument, the first printed edition of this project consisted of 200 sets, which were probably commissioned for distribution. Also Maximilian's printed prayerbook, which had been embellished with drawings of the leading German artists of the time, can be seen as an attempt to make use of the efficient new technique in his patronage; for further information on these topics, see: D.C. Strickland, *Maximilian as Patron: the "Prayerbook"*, Iowa, 1980; W.L. Strauss, *The Book of Hours of Emperor Maximilian the First*, New York, 1974.

⁶⁰See S. Anglo, *op.cit.*,18-21.

Whereas the civic documents reveal the involvement of certain artists in the preparation and production of the pageants, the account of Remy du Puy contains valuable information for the understanding of the programme and for the reconstruction of such displays as the *Tableau Vivant*. As these two sources differ in their approach to the event, the sum of information contrived from these two sources provides us with a rather comprehensive image. The illustrations which accompany Remy's account are some of the earliest depictions of a *Tableau Vivant*. As mentioned earlier a number of pageants were erected by different groups of foreign merchants living in the city of Bruges. The following two tableaux may illustrate the outer appearance of a typical *Tableau Vivant* as it was used already much earlier than these fairly late representations.

The eleventh pageant described by Remy displayed the scene of *Alexander the Great on his horse Bucephalus* on a house-like stage which could be opened and closed with two wooden doors. This pageant had been put up by the Hanseatic League and was placed above one of the gates.⁶¹ Apart from Alexander and his horse, Alexander's father King Philip is represented on the same stage. The accompanying text describes the tableau in more detail and also quotes the inscriptions used in the original pageant. Alexander is explicitly identified with the young Charles whereas Philip also represents the Emperor Maximilian.⁶² Paralleling a ruler with a historic figure like Alexander the Great was a very popular and common way of flattering a visiting regent.⁶³

A more complex and a more differentiated tableau was erected by the Spanish merchants. The print of this pageant shows a tri-partite stage with allusions to the rulership of the duke over the Spanish territories. In this case the scaffold had the structure of an open facade, which could not be closed off. In the centre the young Charles was seated on a throne behind a wheel of fortune. According to the explanatory text the wheel was surrounded by six crowns which represented the six realms of Spain.⁶⁴ Next to the wheel one can see the personifications of *fortitude* and *temperance*. At the bottom three further personifications represent *fortune* chained by the cardinal virtues *prudence* and *justice*. In the same display a reference to Spain as the origin of many famous rulers is expressed through the representation of two rulers of the past,

⁶¹"... sur icelle estoit ung eschaffault moult excellant forme dune double porte sur laquelle estoient escript en latin et grosse lettre ces quatre vers en substance ... A l'ouverture de ce escharffault fut veu Alexandre le grant encore tout jeune sur bucefal le tresperilleux et cruel cheval ..."; see facsimile, C vii.

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³See, e.g., G. Kernodle, *Renaissance Artists*, 60.

⁶⁴"... au fro(n)t dune grosse maiso(n) fut esleve ung escharfaut dava(n)t lequel estoit ce tiltre escript Charles tresillustre prince des espaignes eureux par dessus tous ..." in Sydney Anglo's facsimile edition of Remy's account, page D vi; the text explains the meaning of the attribute as well as the meaning of each personifications for the tableau as a whole.

Theodosius on the left and Trajan, a Roman Emperor born in Spain, on the right.⁶⁵ In the case of the Bruges entry the basic meaning of each scene is explained by various inscription painted on the doors and the architectural framework or by scrolls with explanatory text which were held by some of the actors.⁶⁶

As mentioned earlier, there are only very few illustrations of a *Tableau Vivant* which can be used to reconstruct the appearance of the ephemeral decoration of festive entries. One of the earliest depictions of a *Tableau Vivant* can be found in a manuscript illustrating the entry of Joanna of Castile into Brussels in 1496. (fig. 6) This manuscript, which documents the civic procession as well as thirty *Tableaux Vivants* in a series of pen drawings, contains among other things the depiction of a two-storey pageant with a Trinity on the upper level and two biblical scenes on the lower level.⁶⁷ This tableau could be opened and closed, though not with wooden doors but with a set of curtains. According to the drawing from Brussels the scene was lit by torches in the same way as the scaffolds of the Bruges entry. Although these illustrations all date from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century the idea of the *Tableau Vivant* was already developed much earlier. The earliest descriptions of such decorations seem to stem from English and French accounts of the late fourteenth century.⁶⁸

In the course of the fifteenth century such decorations are used frequently, particularly in France, Burgundy and England, as the numerous chronicles and expense accounts show. Although some examples have already been given, I

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, "... dela aux arcs dessusditz estoient deux tryumpha(n)s empereurs chacun ayant son titre/dont le premier fut tel traian le tressiuste empereur des Rommains natif despagne/Et le second fut/Theodose treschrestien et tresclement empereur desrom(m)ains ... Et pour a ce myeux induire le ieune prince et le tout imprimer en son nonble cueur furent adioinctz pour exemples de perfection royale et lesquelz il puisse et doibue ensuivre traia(n) et (T)heodose deux tresvertueux empereurs et dorigine espaignole".

⁶⁶The huge stage erected by the Italians on the Place de la Bourse for example showed the young Solomon on a throne accompanied by four beautiful virgins with scrolls in their hands, which praised the success and reputation of the Solomon/Charles. Another inscription was attached to the canopy of the throne, see facsimile, E iiiiv; also see S. Anglo, *op.cit.*, p.16-7.

⁶⁷Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, ms. 78 D5, fol. 39r; according to the description given in the catalogue of the Kupferstichkabinett the lower storey shows Abraham and Elizer in the centre and Isaac and Rebecca on the left and right of the stage; P. Wescher, *Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Miniaturen - Handschriften und Einzelblätter des Kupferstichkabinetts der Staalichen Museen Berlin*, Leipzig, 1931, 179-181; see also Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre*, 65. My comments on this pageant are restricted as I received more detailed information on this important manuscript only after having completed the present paper; I intend to investigate this particular entry in a separate study.

⁶⁸See notes 19 and 20.

will list some further descriptions of entries which might elucidate the question of the appearance of such pageants. When Henry VI returned from his coronation in Paris in 1432, the city of London had erected an allegorical tower showing *Dame Sapience* with depictions of the Seven Liberal Sciences, including figures such as Aristotle, Pythagoras, Euclid and so forth.⁶⁹

Some years later the marriage between Duke Charles the Bold and his bride Margaret of York was accompanied by extraordinarily lavish decorations.⁷⁰ When Margaret arrived in Sluys on 25 June 1468, the city erected three tableaux opposite the house in which she stayed. The scenes displayed on these three stages showed Jason and the Golden Fleece, as well as King Ahasver with Queen Esther and Queen Vasti.⁷¹ According to a contemporary description of the events the stage of this pageant was furnished with tapestries and could be closed off with a curtain.⁷² More presentations of that kind were put up in Bruges, which had also prepared a number of pageants for the entry of the future Duchess.⁷³

As can be seen from the illustrations of the Bruges festivities of 1515, the organisers of the entry ceremonials often tried to vary not only the content but also the form of the various tableaux by altering the architectural setting and the decoration of the displays. One can not only find structures on top of arches and in front of facades, but also tent-like displays⁷⁴ and a tableau in the form of a chalice.⁷⁵ Remy du Puys admired in particular the technical mechanism which enabled the tent to be opened and closed by lifting and lowering a bird displayed on each side of the tent.⁷⁶(fig.7) This diversity can to a certain degree be explained by the different groups in charge of the decoration: the guilds and the foreign merchants from Italy, Spain and the Northern countries. Also, the competitive atmosphere between the different cities involved in organising such

⁶⁹R. Withington, *English Pageantry* (as in note 1), 145.

⁷⁰O. Cartellieri, *Theaterspiele*, 171-9.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, in this context Cartellieri refers to S. Bentley, *Excerpta Historica or Illustrations of English History*, London, 1842, 228-9.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 173, the "Traite des noces de monseigneur le duc de Bourgoigne et de Brabant", in: H. Beaune and J. d'Arbaumont, *op.cit.* (as in note 7), vol. 4, 95 onwards.

⁷³*Ibid.* vol.4, 95-144; see also G. Kernodle, *Renaissance Artists*, 60 and M. de Laborde, *op.cit.* (as in note 7), vol.2, 293ff.

⁷⁴This pageant had been sponsored by the Bakers' guild and showed Nebuchadnezzar's dream on the left half of the stage and Bruges as a Maiden on an iron throne on the right half of the stage; see facsimile, Fv and also S. Anglo, *op.cit.*, 30-1.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 26.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, "... la comme aux deux angeletz dicelle furent deux oiseaulx de bien estrange forme et plumage lesquelz par subtil engyn mentoient et descendoient selon que lon vouloit ouvrir et clor(?)eladicte te(n)te de laq(ue)lle iceulx oiseaux avoient ongle le pant ..." (F vi verso).

entries must have had a stimulating effect on the civic community. Sometimes neighbouring cities even sent spies to the next town, in order to be informed about the standard of pageants in other cities.⁷⁷

As cities used these pageants not only to flatter the kings and princes but also to convey political messages to the future ruler, the civic communities invested much time and money into the preparation of these processions and also looked for the most skilful artists who would be capable of transforming the designs into successful presentations. Jaques Duclerq's report of the entry of Philip the Good into Arras in 1455 stresses in particular the high costs of the pageants.⁷⁸ In this context it is particularly worthwhile to look at ceremonies which were planned well ahead of the actual event. The preparation of Charles' entry into Bruges, for example, started more than half a year in advance. At that time a committee of artists and rhetoricians met to decide upon the eleven pageants provided by the city.⁷⁹

Also in the case of courtly feasts a long phase of preparation is documented by the Burgundian chronicler Olivier de la Marche. He mentions that the committee of courtiers and dignitaries, which was to devise the programme of the feast of the Pheasant, started the preparations up to a year ahead of the event.⁸⁰ As far as this particular feast is concerned thirty five artists and craftsmen were employed for the production of the various pageants. Among the artists employed on this occasion we find people such as Jacques Daret from Tournai. He came to Lille with four of his assistants in order to produce the decorations.⁸¹ Jaques Daret seems to have been the best paid artist of the thirty five listed in the ducal accounts. In contrast to the other artists and craftsmen he is well known to art historians. He was trained in the same workshop as Rogier van der Weyden and became a master and dean of the painters' guild of Tournai.

In 1468 he was again asked to contribute to a Burgundian court festivity, this time to the decoration of the nuptial celebrations of Duke Charles the Bold and Margaret of York in Bruges.⁸² During the preparation of this feast he

⁷⁷S. Anglo, *op.cit.*, 6.

⁷⁸"It was the most elaborate thing that had been seen for a long time and extremely well done and lifelike. People said it had cost more than a thousand gold crowns. In sum, if God had descended from above, I doubt if more would have been done, for it would be impossible to do more honour than was done to the duke ...", quoted after R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good*, 334.

⁷⁹S. Anglo, *op.cit.*, 18-34.

⁸⁰O. Cartellieri, *Fasanenfest*, 67-71.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 157-8.

⁸²V.F. Vines, *The Arras Altarpiece of Jaques Daret – A Reassessment of the Artist on the basis of his only documented work (1434/5)*, (unpublished thesis) Melbourne, 1981, 17.

worked together with an even more famous artist, Hugo van der Goes.⁸³ The painted work of Hugo van der Goes has often been related to contemporary mystery plays because of its dramatic qualities. This applies, for example, to the movement and the emotion expressed by the shepherds in van der Goes' depictions of the Nativity.⁸⁴ The fact that artists such as Hugo van der Goes and Jacques Daret participated in the preparation of such pageants seems to provide us with further information about a possible interrelationship between their painted work and ephemeral art. As we could see in the drawing from Berlin a *Tableau Vivant* could also be closed off by a set of curtains which were opened when the procession arrived at the stage.

Tableaux Vivants did quite frequently display religious scenes of that kind and it is likely that artists such as van der Goes integrated dramatic devices like curtains into his pictures in order to attract the attention of the observer. Although it is tempting to explain the use of curtains in visual art by the popularity of mystery plays or the increasing importance of ephemeral art like the *Tableau Vivant*, one should not forget the pictorial tradition of placing a ruler or a saint behind a set of curtains, as it was common in early medieval book illuminations and ivories. J. Eberlein has shown that this iconography is based on late antique models and remains popular throughout the Middle Ages.⁸⁵ Hugo's contribution consists not so much in the introduction of curtains into his picture, but in the depiction of two half-length prophets who give the whole picture a new theatrical quality.⁸⁶

When talking about the interrelationship between theatrical performances and art, scholars usually assume that book illuminators and panel painters were influenced by the content or the presentation of a contemporary play but not vice versa.⁸⁷ There is, however, at least one example where the designers of a *Tableau Vivant* refer to a famous panel painting – the Ghent altarpiece by Hubert and Jan van Eyck.⁸⁸ In 1458, after having defeated the rebellious city of Ghent, the Burgundian duke Philip the Good was welcomed by the city of Ghent with lavish pageants adorning his triumphant entry.⁸⁹ In most of the various

⁸³O. Cartellieri, *Theaterspiele*, 171: "A Hugue van der Goes, paie pour X jours et demy qu'il ouvre, a XIII sols par jour", quoted after M. de Laborde, *op.cit.*, vol.2, 338.

⁸⁴J. Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, New York, 1985, 175; also see B. Lane, *The Altar and the Altarpiece – Sacramental Themes in Early Netherlandish Painting*, New York, 1984, 53-7.

⁸⁵J.K. Eberlein, *Apparitio regis – revelatio veritatis; Studien zur Darstellung des Vorhangs in der bildenden Kunst von der Spätantike bis zum Mittelalter*, Wiesbaden, 1982.

⁸⁶Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, West Berlin.

⁸⁷See, e.g., E. Mâle, *op.cit.*, chapter 2.6.

⁸⁸E. Dhanens, *Hubert and Jan Van Eyck*, New York, 1980, 88.

⁸⁹G. Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre*, 71; O. Cartellieri, *Theaterspiele*, 169.

Tableaux Vivants the citizens pleaded for clemency, reminding the duke of other lenient rulers of the past.

Also among these pageants was a two-storey reconstruction of the so-called "Ghent Altarpiece", which had been commissioned by the Ghent patrician Joos de Vijd and his wife some twenty five years earlier.⁹⁰ This pageant not only repeated the general structure of the altarpiece, with the the *Adoration of the Lamb* on the lower level and the heavenly vision of God the Father, Mary and St. John on the upper level, but also quoted in an abbreviated form several of the original inscriptions.⁹¹ The description (110 lines long) of this single *Tableau Vivant* in the chronicle of Flanders gives us a very precise account of the overall structure of the stage. In most aspects the structure of the tableau is based on the composition of the Ghent altarpiece, which was entitled *Chorum beatorum in sacrificium Agni Dei Paschalis* in the Ghent pageant.⁹² Because of a lack of space most groups represented in the *All Saints* picture are reduced to a much smaller number of actors than in the central panel of the opened polyptych.⁹³

One alteration of the original needs to be investigated in more depth. When the author of the chronicle describes the group of the *Milites Christi*, his explanations become much more accurate and detailed than the description of the other groups of Blessed in the same scene. He names all the six Christian knights who appeared on the stage: St. George, St. Victor, St. Mauritus, St. Sebastian, St. Quirin and St. Gandolf. In the case of St. Gandolf he even points out that this saint was a former duke of Burgundy and that he carries the standard and Burgundian coat of arms in his hands. This is an obvious alteration of the original, which aimed at winning the duke's favour by showing one of his ancestors as one of the six most Christian knights.⁹⁴ Also in other pageants one can observe the integration of specific saints into a scene just for the

⁹⁰A detailed description of the tableau in the chronicle of Flanders was first published in: *Kronyk van Vlaenderen (Maetschappij der Vlaemsche Bibliophilen)* Ghent, 1840, 222-5; in the following footnotes quoted after E. Dhanens, *op.cit.*, 96-99.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, most inscriptions are to be found on the frames and the panels of the original altarpiece. Apart from the added title only the two following inscriptions seem to be newly devised. The first one was written on a scroll held by the Holy Ghost dove: *Repleti sunt omnes Spiritu sancto*, the second one decorated the fountain of life: *Fluvius egrediebatur de loco voluptatis ad irrigandum paradisum*, *Genesis 2*.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 96; also this tableau was decorated with blue fabric and could be closed of with white curtains, line 3-4 "... al verdecet met blauwen lakenen voren ghesloten met witten gordinen ..."

⁹³*Ibid.*, in the case of the Blessed each group was represented by six actors dressed in the same manner.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 97, lines 47-53: "Item doe volghden daer an de selve zijde oec bet achterwaert VI gods ridders als sent Joerijns, sente Victor, sente Maurissius, sente Sebastiaen, sente Quirijn, sente Gandolf wijlen hertoghe van Bourgongnen, elc met sinen standarde van sijnder wapenen in sijn handt".

purpose of pleasing the guest of honour. The entry of Philip the Good into Mons in 1455 that has already been mentioned confirms this interpretation. In the records of the city of Mons the tableau with the Assumption of the Virgin is described in the following way: "Another platform, extending from Huart de Biaumetau's house to the hotel which belonged to Bryant de Sars, at the entry to the rue de Naast, will present paradise, with the Assumption of Our Lady ... next to God, some apostles and martyrs who were knights, such as St. George, St. Maurice, St. Victor, St. Eustache, St. Adrian and others, to please the chivalry who will see them ..."95

The representation of the Ghent Altarpiece in the entry of 1458 shows quite clearly that there is a close interrelationship between pictorial art and pageantry and that these two art forms inspired one another. The considerable length of this passage in the chronicle of Flanders proves the importance of this particular presentation and shows the pride that was taken in possessing such valuable altarpieces. Similar examples of civic pride can also be found in the triumphant entry of Charles V into Bruges. In four of the civic pageants famous buildings of the city of Bruges are depicted.⁹⁶ One of the *Tableaux Vivants* (fig.8) showed an Old Testament scene juxtaposed with another scene related to the church of St. Donation. On the right half of the stage the scene depicted Baudouin Dyserin bringing the relics of St. Donation to Bruges and on the left side David played the harp in front of the ark of God, which had been brought into Zion by himself.⁹⁷ The architectural frame for this scene had been modelled on the Church of St. Donation, in which these precious relics were kept. Another of the eleven *Tableaux Vivants* commissioned by the city council also depicted a famous monument of the city, the town hall of Bruges. On the left half of the stage Emperor Heraclius could be seen with the Holy Cross, which he had restored to Jerusalem. On the opposite half of the stage the patriarch of Jerusalem handed over the relic of the Holy Blood to Thierry d'Alsace.⁹⁸ These two tableaux fulfil a function similar to the reconstruction of the Ghent altarpiece mentioned before. Firstly, they portray two of the most representative monuments of the city of Bruges, the church of St. Donation and the town hall of Bruges. Secondly, the scenes within the architectural setting refer to important relics kept in these two buildings: the relics of St. Donation and the relic of the Holy Blood. The reconstruction of important monuments and paintings in the pageants of Bruges and Ghent show the pride the burghers took in their cultural achievements. The self esteem of the burghers was clearly

⁹⁵R. Vaughan, *Charles the Bold* (as in note 1), 336.

⁹⁶S. Anglo, *op.cit.*, 10.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 23

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

expressed in such a collective enterprise, which involved the guilds, the city council and the representatives from various nations.

That artists themselves could play an important role in executing and occasionally also in devising such pageantry could be seen in the case of Jean Fouquet, Jacques Daret and Hugo van der Goes. In the early sixteenth century artists seemed to have achieved more and more responsibility in elaborating such ephemeral representations. Albrecht Dürer, for example, was the designer-in-chief of the team which designed the complex triumphal arch for Emperor Maximilian I.⁹⁹ In this context the Bruges entry provides us again with valuable information. Thanks to Sydney Anglo's studies we know precisely who planned, financed and executed the festive entry of Charles in the years 1514/15.¹⁰⁰ While sixteen of the twenty seven pageants had been erected by wealthy merchants from different countries, the city council and the guilds commissioned a sequence of eleven pageants. The accounts of the city of Bruges, dating from 2 September 1514 until 2 September 1515, provide us with sufficient information to reconstruct the process in which these tableaux came into being.¹⁰¹ In order to develop a coherent feast decoration with an unambiguous message to the regent, the nine principal guilds of the town, called the "nine members", had selected a small committee, which was in charge of devising and organising the festivities.¹⁰² Six of the seven selected citizens belonged to the brotherhood of the rhetoricians, an institution which was in general in charge of dramatic performances and similar activities. Two members of the committee, Cornelis van Wynghene and Jan de Scheerere, belonged at the same time to the guild of the painters. It can therefore be assumed that at least two members of the committee were able of giving professional advice in respect to the artistic arrangement of the stages.¹⁰³ Jan de Scheerere, one of the two painters on the committee, must have played a central role in the invention of the programme, as he was also paid for devising the Latin verses that explained and decorated each of the eleven pageants.¹⁰⁴

The planning committee did not execute the pageants themselves but subcontracted further artists and craftsmen. One further artist, Willem d'Hollandre, was asked to draw up the designs for the eleven pageants. The

⁹⁹Johannes Stabius, one of the Emperor's humanist advisers, transformed Maximilian's original idea into a workable program. An architect, Jörg Kolderer, was commissioned to design the structural framework for the arch and Albrecht Dürer provided some of the designs for the project; see E. Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, Princeton, 1945, repr. 1971, 17.

¹⁰⁰S. Anglo, *op.cit.*, 18-34.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 21.

carpenter Cornelis van den Westhuuse was commissioned to construct the stages according to Willem's designs. Four principal painters were finally employed to do the actual paintings related to these decorations.¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately there exists no further information on the seven artists mentioned by name. Yet the detailed accounts of the city of Bruges reveal that artists at that time were not only executing the designs of the planning committee but were actively involved in devising the programme. Jan de Scheerere was paid for "having put the entry into verse"; William d'Hollandre had prepared the designs on which the final tableaux were based. In other words, artists were involved in all three stages of the preparation and execution of the decoration for the festive entry.

The success of this joint effort of the citizens of Bruges is not only noticeable in the unified structure of the single pageants but is also apparent in the coherence of the meaning conveyed through the eleven *Tableaux Vivants*. The subject of this cycle as a whole was the foundation, the rise and the decline of the city of Bruges and culminated in a fervent appeal to Charles to save the town from economic disaster.¹⁰⁶

Another problem related to the emergence of the *Tableau Vivant* in late medieval pageantry is the question of possible sources for such lavish decorations. Italy played a leading role in the revival of the classical idea of a triumphant entry and has since long been regarded as a model for other European countries such as France, the Netherlands and Spain.¹⁰⁷ Italy's leading role in the popularisation of the Triumph is particularly noticeable in Renaissance literature and in specific areas of pageantry like the introduction of the triumphal chariot and the triumphal arch into Italian art.¹⁰⁸ A. Martindale, for example, has stressed the role of Petrarch, Boccaccio and Fazio degli Uberti in the revival of the Triumph *all' antico* and has also described the first depictions of *Trionfi* on *Cassone* panels and in other representations.¹⁰⁹

Andrea Mantegna's paintings of the *Triumphs of Caesar* represent one of the best examples for a Renaissance interpretation of a lavishly decorated classical entry.¹¹⁰ In this series of ten canvases one can observe trumpeters, bearers of standards and banners, *Tabulae*, statuettes, colossal statues, carts, armours,

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 21-30.

¹⁰⁷I. Vandevivere and C. Perier-d'Ieteren, *op.cit.* (as in note 45), 9.

¹⁰⁸The triumphal chariot, for example, appears frequently in paintings of the fifteenth century such as the diptych of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino painted by Piero della Francesca; see P. Murray, *Piero della Francesca*, New York, 1967, 100; see also the *Triumphant entry of Theseus into Athens* on a mid-fifteenth century *Cassone* panel discussed in E. Callmann, *Beyond Nobility - Art for the private citizen in the early Renaissance*, Allentown, 1981, 1.

¹⁰⁹A. Martindale, *The Triumphs of Caesar by Andrea Mantegna in the collection of H.M. The Queen at Hampton Court*, Edinburgh, 1979, 47-55.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, Hampton Court, in the collection of H.M. the Queen.

horses and trophies of arms etc., all being part of the entry ceremonial.¹¹¹ As A. Martindale has pointed out correctly, all these objects were carried along by the participants of the depicted procession. The displays and trophies are therefore not static but form part of the general movement.¹¹²

Looking at representations like the *Triumphs of Caesar* by Mantegna one can say that the Italian idea of a triumphant entry is distinctively different from the northern concept of an entry, which had mainly consisted of fixed platforms or *Tableaux Vivants*. From the third decade of the fifteenth century onwards the major element of the Italian Triumph seems to be the float with stage-like presentations. These movable stages were pulled along in courtly, military or civic processions.¹¹³ From about 1429 onwards the feast of the three Magi in Florence, for example, was accompanied by a procession with floats or *edifizi*, which included various religious or secular scenes such as a group of three giants and a wild man or David killing a giant.¹¹⁴

As already mentioned earlier, most elements of the Italian Triumph can be traced back to antique sources.¹¹⁵ Like the *Tabulae* in the *Triumphs of Caesar*¹¹⁶ the floats seem also to be based rather on a literary source than on classical representation such as the reliefs of a Triumph on the surviving classical arches in Italy.¹¹⁷ In the *Jewish War* by Josephus, for example, the Triumph of Vespasian and Titus is characterised by the use of *moving stages*, which consisted of several storeys and were lavishly decorated with fabrics and precious materials.¹¹⁸

Whether such descriptions also had a certain impact on the pageantry accompanying northern triumphal entries is difficult to assess. Similar to the

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, see catalogue, 133-161.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, p.47.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, 49; one of the earlier examples is the entry of Alfonso of Aragon into Naples in 1443, which was organised by the Florentines and was accompanied by a representation of the seven virtues on a float.

¹¹⁴R. Hatfield, *The Compagnia de' Magi, Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33, 1970, 112; in the context of Italian theatrical performances also see T. Verdon, *Donatello and the Theater: Stage Space and Projected Space in the San Lorenzo Pulpits, Artibus et Historiae* 14, 1986, 29-55.

¹¹⁵A. Martindale, *op.cit.*, 56-74.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 136.

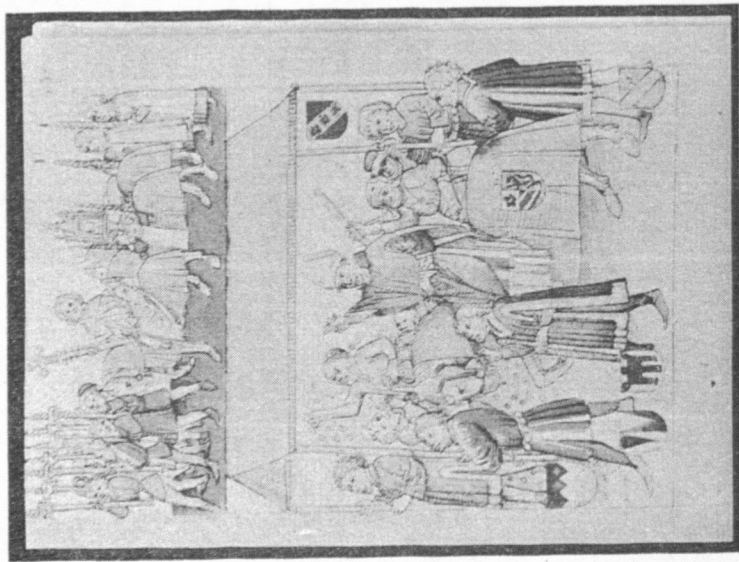
¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, fig.193-201.

¹¹⁸"... But nothing in the procession excited so much astonishment as the structure of moving stages; indeed, their massiveness afforded ground for alarm and misgiving as to their stability, many of them being three or four stories high, while the magnificence of fabric was a source at once of delight and amazement. For many were enveloped in tapestries interwoven with gold, and all framework of gold and wrought ivory ...". Josephus, *The Jewish War*, Bk VII, 139-48, in : (ed. and trans.) T.E. Page, *Loeb Classical Library*, vol. 3, London and New York, 1928, 547-549; I am very grateful to Dr.J.B. Lloyd, who pointed out this passage to me.

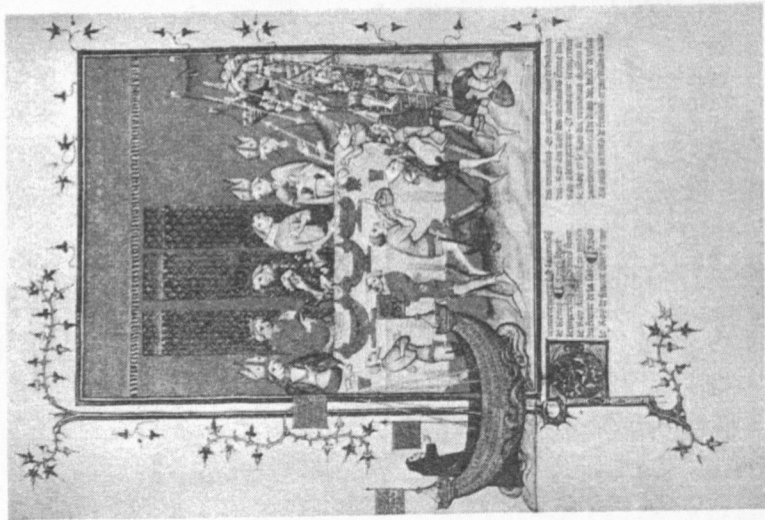
stages mentioned by Josephus a *Tableau Vivant* could also be several storeys high and was in many cases also decorated with precious fabrics. Yet unlike the movable stages mentioned in this classical Triumph the northern stages were static as they were attached to the facades of houses or to the gates and bridges of the town. The familiarity of the North with the classical triumphant entry can for example be seen from illuminated manuscripts such as a French edition of Boccaccio's *Teseida*, which contains a depiction of Theseus' entry into Athens on a triumphal chariot.¹¹⁹ Manuscripts such as the Vienna Boccaccio may show that the northern countries like France, England and the Burgundian Netherlands were also interested in classical descriptions of a Triumph. Yet despite the classical subject matter the scene looks more like a contemporary event than a historical scene. The widows of the Argive Dukes are dressed like medieval nuns, the trumpeters wear fashionable Burgundian clothes and the facades of the houses along the street give the scene a rather Flemish flavour. The Northerners did not have the as many classical representations at their disposal as their Italian counterparts; this may have led to a freer and therefore possibly also a less authentic reconstruction of antique pageantry. Despite this lack of authenticity it is nevertheless important to emphasize that the idea of the triumphant entry with ephemeral decorations such as the *Tableau Vivant* played a major role in the coronation ceremonies of the French and English kings as well as in the life of the Burgundian dukes. Given the fact that the first decorated stages had already appeared in the late fourteenth century it may even be suggested that the ceremonial entry with lavish pageantry became fashionable slightly earlier in the North than in Italy and contributed considerably to the cultural life of the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance.

D.H. Eichberger
Department of Art History
Australian National University

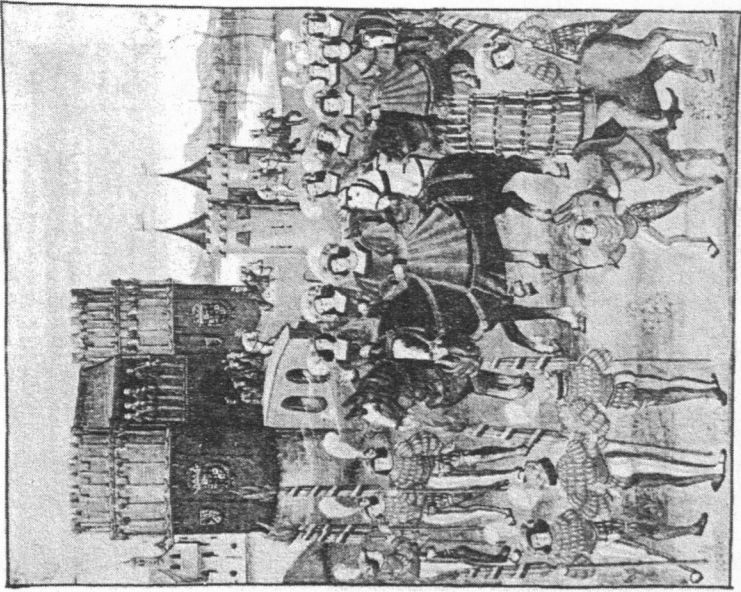
¹¹⁹Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod.2617, fol.39r; see: O. Pächt and D. Thoss, *Die illuminierten Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek - Französische Schule I*, Vienna, 1974, 32-7, fig.45.



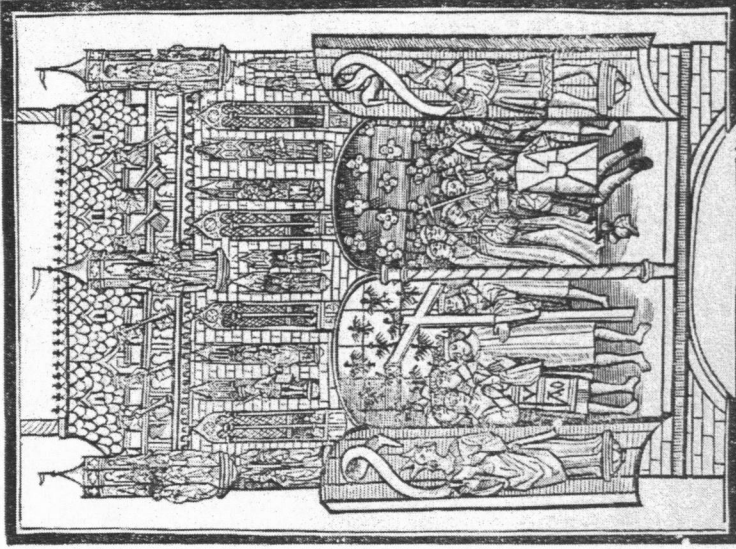
1. The entry of Pope John XXIII into Constance. U. Richental, *Das Konzil zu Konstanz*, Constance, Rosgartenmuseum, fol. 12 r (photograph taken from a facsimile edition in the National Library of Australia).



2. Banquet and theatrical performance in honour of Emperor Charles IV. *Grandes Chroniques de France*, Paris, B.N. Ms. fr. 2813, fol. 473 v.



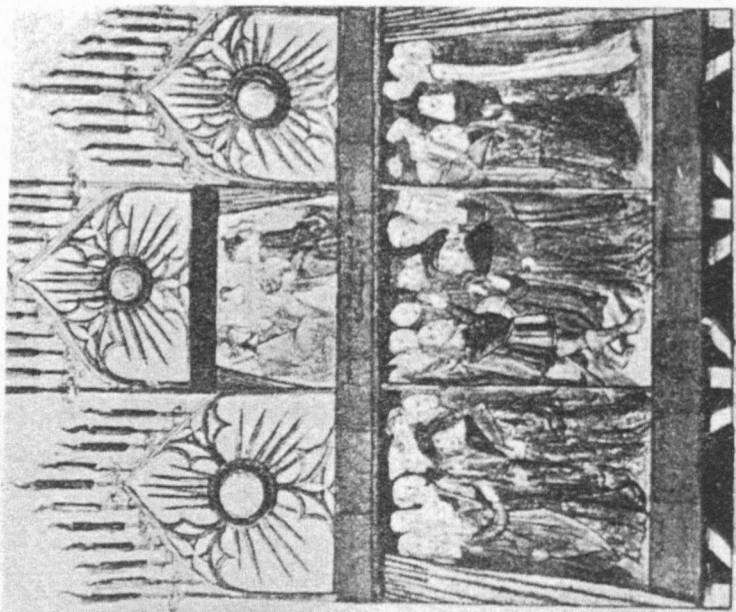
3. The triumphant entry of the future Emperor Charles V into Bruges in 1515 (right half). Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 2591, fol. 8 r.



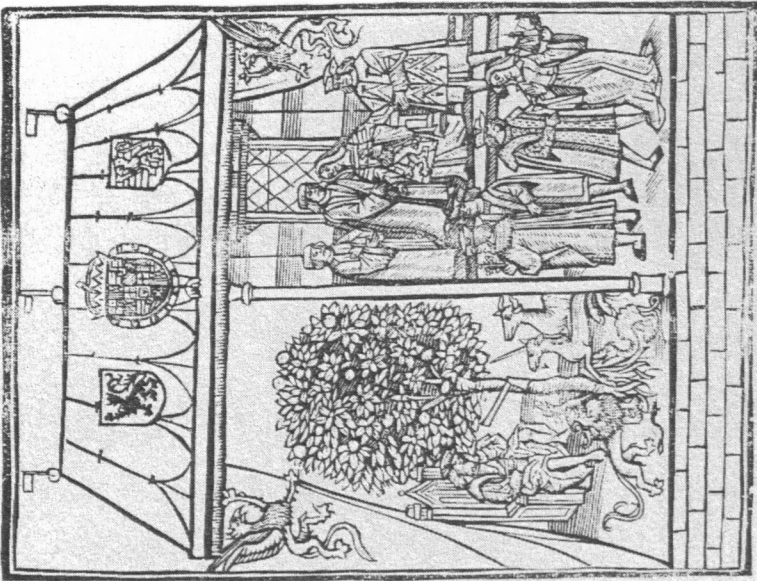
4. *Tableau Vivant* of the Drapers' Guild. Remy du Puy, *La tryumphantie Entree de Charles Princes des Espagnes en Bruges 1515*; Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale d'Albert I^{er} (Shelf mark B. 1555).



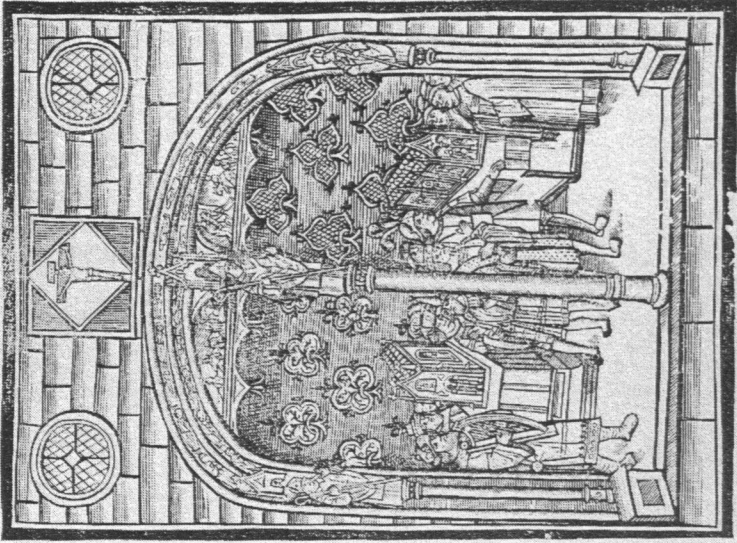
5. *Tableau* of the entry of Queen Mary Tudor into Paris in 1514. London, British Library, Cotton Ms., Vespasian B II, fol. 15.



6. *Tableau Vivant* of the entry of Joanna of Castile into Brussels in 1496, Trinity (upper level), Isaac and Rebecca, Abraham and Elizer lower level; Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, ms. 78 D5, fol. 396.



7. *Tableau Vivant* of the Bakers' Guild: The Iron Age. Entry of Prince Charles into Bruges in 1515 (see fig. 4).



8. *Tableau Vivant* representing the church of St. Donation. Entry of Prince Charles into Bruges in 1515 (see fig. 4).