

The Joyous Entry of Archduke Maximilian into Antwerp (13 January 1478). An Analysis of a most 'Elegant and Dignified' Dialogue.

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Abstract

In historiography on Joyous Entries in the medieval Low Countries, much attention has already been paid to the ways in which the iconographic programmes of these inauguration ceremonies served the dialogue between the Burgundian dukes and their subjects on the one hand, and between the urban interest groups on the other. Analyses of the various theatrical performances organised on town squares and other public urban spaces allow us a glimpse of the balance of power and of the participants' ambitions and strategies in a certain historical and geographical context. My in-depth analysis of a contemporary account of Maximilian's Joyous Entry into Antwerp (13 January 1478) adds a new perspective to historiography by showing how the public urban spaces functioned as complex social products, which gave extra meaning to the interaction between the duke and the urban groups while simultaneously reproducing the socioeconomic and political structure of urban society.