

Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



McGowan, Margaret M., and Margaret Shewring, eds. Charles V, Prince Philip, and the Politics of Succession: Imperial Festivities in Mons and Hainault, 1549

John Nassichuk

Volume 46, numéro 1, hiver 2023

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1107808ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v46i1.41760>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Nassichuk, J. (2023). Compte rendu de [McGowan, Margaret M., and Margaret Shewring, eds. Charles V, Prince Philip, and the Politics of Succession: Imperial Festivities in Mons and Hainault, 1549]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 46(1), 286–288. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v46i1.41760>

© John Nassichuk, 2023



Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

érudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

McGowan, Margaret M., and Margaret Shewring, eds.

Charles V, Prince Philip, and the Politics of Succession: Imperial Festivities in Mons and Hainault, 1549.

European Festival Studies: 1450–1700. Turnhout: Brepols, 2020. Pp. 377, 36 b/w ill. + 36 col. ill. ISBN 978-2-503-58615-1 (hardcover) 100 €.

The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V decided to nominate his son, Philip of Spain, as his successor in the Netherlands in 1549, following the young Prince's European journey that had taken place several months earlier, in the fall of 1548, after the marriage of his sister Infanta Maria to Archduke Maximilian of Austria in Barcelona. His arrival in the Netherlands was greeted by several extraordinary court festivities, among the most splendid of which were those that took place in cities and other localities of the Hainault region, such as Binche and Mariemont, under the auspices of Philip's aunt, Mary of Hungary. This circumstance of courtly festivity and international diplomacy was the subject of an international conference in Mons in 2015, the selected presentations of which form the contents of this handsome volume that takes its place in the distinguished series of editions and colloquia grouped under the title "European Festival Studies: 1450–1700."

After an introductory chapter describing the context, co-editor Margaret McGowan's opening essay, in the book's first section, contains a useful and general account of Philip II's travels across Europe, beginning in mid-October 1548 and ending in mid-June 1550, which included important stops in several Italian cities such as Genoa, Mantua, and Milan, followed by numerous festivities in the cities of the Netherlands. Her chapter is based on the first-hand accounts left for posterity by the humanist Juan Christoval Calvete de Estrilla. The remaining chapters in the first section are devoted to "setting the scene," providing an in-depth examination of the context in which the "Joyous Entries" in Flanders took place. These chapters include important analyses of the political climate in the various cities (H. Soly), the tortuous steps of Charles V's difficult decision to name Philip as his successor (M. J. Rodriguez-Salgado), and the gradual adoption of Burgundian etiquette at the Spanish Court (F. Labrador Arroyo and J. E. Hortal Munoz). Considerations such as these manifested themselves clearly, at times, in the public festivities.

The volume's second section presents three case studies examining Philip's entries into Milan (F. Bortoletti), Ghent (Y. Pauwels), and Binche and Antwerp (S. Bussels). These well-informed studies evaluate the iconography, ephemeral architecture, and related documents of each event, with a view to reconstructing the appearance and political symbolism of the public spectacles that were arranged at great cost by the municipalities. These studies reveal not only the diversity of representational, encomiastic, and diplomatic strategies that underpinned the spectacles organized by municipalities within their own local traditions but also the subtle articulation of performance and politics peculiar to each individual entry. Two essays comprise the book's third section on the "Decor" encountered by attendees at the court festivities during Prince Philip's journey to the Low Countries. These provide valuable technical descriptions of the Seven Deadly Sins Tapestries featured in Mary of Hungary's palace at Binche (J. Park) and on the construction of ephemeral sculptures for festivals, using examples from the same palace (L. Wiersma). Such contributions provide the reader with probing examples not only of the ways in which syncretic iconography offered a thematic frame for the festive occasion but also of the painstaking detail of decoration that was often achieved at great financial cost.

The remarkable final section of the book contains three substantial essays. One of these treats the tournament at Binche and its less-than-accurate portrayal in the woodcuts that appear in contemporary printed accounts (S. Anglo). Another examines, with fine technical acumen, the specific forms of combat used in the spectacle at Binche (T. Capwell). The third evaluates this spectacle, with graceful and informative erudition, in the light of the considerable tradition of such events that had developed and established itself in Europe during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (M. McGowan).

The volume is beautifully produced, and it contains a rich array of colour illustrations. Each chapter provides a useful sampling of one aspect of the many-faceted cultural events that were court festivities in sixteenth-century Europe. As such, it has much in common, in a complementary way, with Jean Jacquot's monumental and pioneering three-volume collection entitled *Fêtes de la Renaissance* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1955–1975), a reference for many of the authors featured here (some of whom figure among the original contributors to that great series). This impressive anthology will be of considerable interest to students and historians

whose curiosity in the areas of music, letters, philology, and ancient festivals leads them to consider the various modes of political symbolism and public representation during the late Middle Ages and Renaissance period.

JOHN NASSICHUK

Western University

<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v46i1.41760>