

SLIDE 1 – title page

‘Emblematic arches – contributions to reading a Hapsburg festival’

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Panel: Representations of Political Identity in Early Modern Portugal and its Empire
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On 29th June 1619 Philip III of Spain (II of Portugal) enters into Lisbon, in what was to be the culmination of a long awaited and extensively planned royal entrée into his Portuguese kingdom. Between the initial discussions nearly twenty years earlier and the journey itself, the political landscape of parts of the remainder Habsburg Empire had changed, perchance none more so than in the religious and political schisms in the Low Countries, as came to be evidenced in the Festival itself.

SLIDE 2 – two different titlepages, Lavanha

The Lisbon festival featured various arches and ephemera, described and illustrated in Lavanha’s account entitled *Viage de la Catholica Real Magestad del Rei D. Filipe III N. S. al Reino de Portugal i Relacion del Solene Recebimiento que en el se le Hizo. Su Magestad la Mandó Escribir. Por Joan Baptista Lavaña, su Cronista Mayor* (Madrid: Thomas Junti, 1622). This was also published in Portuguese, as *Viagem da Catholica Real Magestade del Rey D. Filipe III N. S. ao Reyno de Portugal e Rellação do Solene Recebimento que nelle se lhe Fez. S. Magestade a Mandou Escrever. Por João Baptista Lavanha, Seu Cronista Mayor* (Madrid: Thomas Junti, 1622). The text was originally planned to be in Spanish only, as mentioned by Lavanha in the ‘Advertencias’ and confirmed in the Spanish captions of the detailed 11 engravings used also in the Portuguese edition.¹ The decision to write a Portuguese version came to Lavanha still whilst writing the Spanish original text: the first manuscript draft of BOTH versions was approved by the inquisitorial censors already by 23rd July 1621, just over two years after the event itself. The Spanish text was fast-tracked for publication (it would likely have the engravings first, as these had captions in Spanish too) and received its subsequent approval on 26 July of the same year, whilst the Portuguese text received approval on about a week later, on 4 August. The list of privileges in both books list 1st September 1621 and 24 January 1622 – we can assume production was concomitant of both versions. Finally, the ‘tassa’ of the Spanish edition is dated 23 February 1622, after which it went on sale.

Lavanha took his time, but his text did come to be the most detailed and authoritative by far.² Some other accounts of the event with an earlier publication date already mention this great work in preparation, such was the reputation of the author and the work, as does Vasco Mousinho de

¹ The engravings were carried out by the renowned Flemish artist Jan Schorkens (1595 - 1630), active mostly in Spain.

² The quality of the account is also remarkable, as it was this edition that other authors of accounts of the event, poets, historians and scholars opted to use as a point of reference afterwards. See Jacobo Sanz Hermida exhaustive list of these accounts in ‘Un viaje conflictivo: relaciones de sucesos para La jornada del Rey N. S. Don Felipe III deste nombre, al Reyno de Portugal (1619)’, *Península: Revista de Estudios Ibéricos*, 0/2003, 289-319, Nos 21 and 22 (pp. 310-311).

Quevedo Castelo Branco's own account of the event, the *Triumpho del Monarcha Philippo Tercero en la Felicissima Entrada de Lisboa* (Lisbon: Jorge Rodrigues, 1619):

'Este pequeño parto de Minerva, fue luego en su nacimiento hadado para llegar a perfeta adolescencia (...). Pero fue parca, aunque generosa, deste Infante mío, el Chronista mayor Iuan Baptista Lavaña, a quien por razón del cargo, y merecimiento de persona, cabe solamente esta empresa. Y si offrezco imperfeto es para que sirva de Alba de su Sol, y sea estímulo al deseo, y motivo de esperança.'³

One very interesting aspect of this publication history is the feeling of utmost care of the event, and, most importantly, the feeling of immediacy of telling the world about it – even if two years later. The event had been in planning stages since at least 1605. Various dates were set and cancelled, taxes raised to over several years to pay for it, plans made and presented **SLIDE 3 – Joyeuse entree** (e.g. *Joyeuse entrée*, Unknown author, circa 1613, Weilburg Castle, Germany, image © MNAA.). Portugal felt herself to be a kingdom without a king. When Philip II left Lisbon in 1583, he left his nephew the Archduke Albert of Austria to reign in his name. Though not a king per se, Albert was still a Habsburg ruler, and that would have to do. He more or less continued his uncle's conception of a Dual Monarchy, and when Albert had to leave to the Low Countries in 1593 he received kind tributes of love from Portugal (e.g., Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo Castelo Branco's sonnet 'Na partida do serenissimo Cardeal Alberto para Madrid, *Dexas sin Gloria, y lumbre, inclyto Alberto*', undoubtedly presented to him by the poet on his stay in Setúbal, en route to Madrid).⁴ **SLIDE 4 – Quevedo sonnet to Albert**. However, after Albert the kingdom saw herself devoid of royal persons, thus embarking on a mission (mostly led by Lisbon's City Council) to plea for the return of the court to Lisbon or, in its absence, a presence of the king.

And so we come to 1619, when the king finally arrives to this his other kingdom. By now, the anxiety and expectations from the king's visit ran high. Much was at stake – the acclamation of an heir, state business, the renewal of privileges and securing of new ones. Lisbon, at centre stage of the event, played host to displays of various lobbies that wished to obtain something from the king in return for the reaffirmed allegiance. The groups were important guilds (such as the silversmiths or painters) and foreign business groups residing in Portugal, such as the Germans, the Flemish and the English. Arches were erected that showcased not only what their sponsors stood for, but also the claims these made on the king. Lavanha offers us a detailed account of all these ephemera, with sizes, location, direction, colours, various pictorial elements, mottoes and sayings (with a Portuguese or Spanish translation!), supported by lavish and detailed engravings.

We will focus our attention on one of these arches in particular, the arch of the Flemish (the 'nação flamenga'). As with other arches and other ephemera, Lavanha's account provides a detailed description of the arch and messages therein inscribed, from the perspective of the public. That is to say, he describes what the king and public would see from the ground, and provides an interpretation of some of the elements, for the benefit of readers elsewhere. **SLIDE 5 – Flemish arch**. Standing in at roughly 28m tall, it was a sight to behold, adorned with over 25 bronze-coloured statues, paintings, side arches, silk ribbons, emblems and messages. However, this particular arch sends a strong political message to Philip himself through applied devices which, when read in the context of their emblem book sources and their known readership in Portugal, Spain and, crucially, the Low Countries, reveal the full impact of the demand imposed on the king. In effect, the message

³ Quevedo, *Triumpho*, fl. 3r. See Jacobo Sans Hermida, No 21.

⁴ Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo Castelo Branco, *Discurso sobre a Vida e Morte de Santa Isabel, Rainha de Portugal, e Outras Várias Rimas*, (Lisbon : Manuel de Lira, 1596), fl. 85r.

conveyed by the arch goes well beyond the obvious Latin dedications translated by Lavanha. The interaction of the emblems with the Latin dedications and, crucially, with the mechanical apparatus of the arch, creates a strong and spectacular demand on the king, in which process he is, nonetheless, forced to participate. In effect, it will be the very own presence of the king that triggers the conclusion, with the king thus publicly acquiescing to the demands of the Flemish in Lisbon.

Various scholars have described and studied the arch in some detail, so we will present only a brief description at this time.

SLIDE 6 – Discord and the coats of arms

SLIDE 7 – detail of Discord and the coats of arms

At the centre of the arch stood 17 coats of armour, each representing one of the 19 Flemish kingdoms or nations.

SLIDE 8 – highlight of Discord and the coats of arms

These were linked by means of silk ribbons to 17 statues with the attributes of each nation, which dispersed around the front of the arch. Each small Flemish nation was important and represented. However, as Flanders was now strongly divided between the 9 Flemish Catholic nations and the 8 Protestant Dutch nations. The central case being made to the king was, in fact, first political, and secondly financial (the Flemish in Lisbon also aspired to renew their special fiscal privileges in Lisbon, which they held for over a century). But it is clear that the political is central, as these nations were represented carved onto two halves of a large 2.5 m oval disc, at the centre of which being represented Discord, to signify that these nations, once united, were still in disharmony.

SLIDE 9 – heart and Discord

There's a heart at the centre of it, and behind the two half discs are representations of Concord and Good Will (with labels to confirm their identity to the viewers). On the king's arrival, the two half discs moved and closed up, thus uniting the two halves of the hart, all the Flemish and Dutch nations, covering up Discord and replacing it by concord and Good Will, who are seen as the actors underwriting this action. As this all happened because of the arrival of the king, the king himself becomes an actor in this theatrical display, the trigger that makes all of it happen. Thus, willingly or not, he is an accomplice, he shows in public that he can resolve this matter (at least metaphorically).

SLIDE 10 – coat of arms without highlight

The message is strongly reinforced by emblems on either side of the contraption. Lavanha also describes these in detail, but there is clearly a reliance on a close familiarity of the viewer with emblem literature. The arch's emblems are found in various sources, such as Claude Paradin's *Devises heroïques* (Lyons: Jean de Tournes and Guillaume Gazeau, 1551 [no subscriptio or caption] and 1557 [with subscriptio or caption]), but also Otto Vaenius (van Veen) *Amorum emblemata* (Antwerp: Hieronymus Verdussen, 1608) and Alciato's *Emblemata* (various editions).

The tenet is set at the very top of the arch: **SLIDE 11 – Love with lion** Amor blindfolded riding a lion, under the inscription 'Sic fortia vincis' (Thus you rule over the strong). The lion, as the common theme is most Flemish and Dutch coats or arms, is being tamed and controlled by kindness, who is blind, a clear direct line to the earlier Alciato emblem 'Potentissimus affectus amor'. **SLIDE 12 – love with lion and Alciato (1531 1st ed, 1556 Lyons Portuguese edition by Stockhamer)** ('Love, the all-powerful emotion'). Standing at over 20 meters high, the familiarity of the picture would make the

message of ruling with kindness clear. The viewer is then directed to the Habsburg coat of arms **SLIDE 13 – coat of arms**, thus making clear the association of Philip III as the ruler in question.

We are then led by Lavanha to two tableaux of emblems: **SLIDE 14 – left and right tableau** on the right hand side, standing over statues of Charles V and Philip II, and on the left hand side, standing over statues of Alberto and Isabella. As expected, Lavanha begins with the right, of slight more importance.

The main tableau sets the tenet with the Golden Fleece and its inscriptio, **SLIDE 15 – fleece** (Pretium non vile laborum – Not a small price from labour) thus establishing a lineage of unquestionable authority and divine right. The motto of the order had been instituted by Philip III, Duke of Burgundy, upon his marriage to Infanta Isabel, daughter of João I of Portugal, in 1430, was inscribed inside the collar with the Golden Fleece. The authority is reinforced by the flint **SLIDE 16 – flint** (Hinc petitur lux – from hence one gets light), Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy's coat of arms, founder of the Order of the Golden Fleece, with his own inscription of 'ante ferit, quam flamma micet' ([The flint] is sent before to yield fire). The Golden Fleece under a star appears next, possibly an original design for the arch (this means I have not found a source emblem yet...) **SLIDE 17 – fleece with sun**, ('lux coeli, et terrae – Light of heaven/sky and of earth), already suggesting a divine concurrence of the Order (and their bearers, the Habsburgs of Burgundy). The two sticks rubbed together that produce a flame that rises (deorsum nunquam – never downwards) **SLIDE 18 – sticks burning**, ('Flammescit uterque. - Both of them do burn), which also remounts to the House of Burgundy. This godlike right of the king is further reinforced with the eagle, the most noble, astute and heavenly of all creatures. **SLIDE 19 – eagle and fleece**. (sic melius sursum – thus one rises better). All this over a separate tableau **SLIDE 20 – bees**. (multus in annos – for many years) with a drum with bees – praising a long peace (the Low Countries were currently at peace), promoting peace when the instruments of war are being used for domestic and productive endeavours. This is reminiscent of Alciato's old emblem 'ex bello pax' (peace succeeding to war).

So we have four emblems above, all alluding to features of the Habsburgs – its antiquity, superiority, leadership and divine right, and all concurring to the tenet set by the golden fleece at the top centre. Under it all is a supporting summary and lesson in the drum suggesting that all is kept in peace. What we have here, in fact, is an emblem proper (one might see here a good use of the term 'applied emblematics', currently of some contention). Lavanha describes each emblem, and whomever designed the tableau (a question still unanswered) knew their emblems well. The tableau works as a mosaic of meaning, in true fashion of the original conception of the emblematic genre by Alciato. In a letter from 1522, Alciato describes his concise epigrams as having great visual value, and where each visual element comes together to form a whole that generates a further meaning – he calls them 'emblema'. In fact, 16th century dictionaries still record the word 'emblema' as signifying a mosaic of small parts that together form a design/meaning. It is this precise game of articulating various text/image meanings that is being cleverly put forward here, for those in the know to understand further.

And one should not underestimate how much the public in general could actually devise. In the introduction to his edition of Alciato's Emblemata, prepared in Coimbra but printed in Lyon in 1556, Stockhamer confesses he had been urged to prepare this edition at the request of João Meneses de Sottomayor, who, says Stockhamer, carried Alciato's little book in his pocket everywhere. Thus I suggest that this arch (and others, upon closer inspection) are ripe for further dissection informed by the emblem genre.

A briefer and quicker look at the left hand side tableau **SLIDE 21 –left** **SLIDE 22 – detail** now shows that it had as its tenet a coat of arms with a lion rampant, a common theme in the Low Countries' various kingdoms and regions. The shield itself had motto, alike Paradin's *Devise Heroiques* template. To build the mosaic of meanings of this plateau, we find an imperial crown (the crown that reigned over the Low Countries), an oak tree (a divine tree) that lost some branches and leaves in a storm, but survived intact nonetheless (the Low Countries under attack from the protestant movement, having lost eight of its kingdoms), a lion (Low Countries) battling a serpent (temperance) and a pyramid with ivy and an eagle, sign of mutual understanding, dependency and help. Lest not forget that all these *pictura* had above them the inscription, or motto, which the engraving does not show.

The tableau, thus, asks (informs?) the king that these royal and ancient lands of his ancestors have survived the storms of the Reformation still standing, and will continue to grow stronger with the help of the king – by supporting their king in return. The key, perchance, is the pyramid (sometimes described as a column). Once again, we find this in Paradin, **SLIDE 23 – column** (te stante virebo – while you stand, I shall flourish), now signifying mutual help with the Habsburg eagle setting the tone.

Below we have the lute, **SLIDE 24 – lute** with a divine hand coming down to play it (re sapiens populi stabilimentum est et Concordia – the prudent king is the stability and Concordia of his subjects), a take on Alciato once again, and to the emblem Foedera – Alliances (1s appearance in 1534), about the intelligent and delicate diplomatic skills required to make peaceful music – govern in peace. Below this, the Archduke of Austria, Albert, and his wife, Infanta Isabel, daughter of Philip II, who had been brought to Flanders to secure peace. Once again, a composite product of significant that produce an emblematic mosaic to be understood from afar, as a whole.

In summary, our contribution aims to shed some light on how the readership of a festival can be multisensory and multidirectional – to the public, to the addressee, to the dedicatee, and though mostly in static displays of ephemeral art, they convey political movement. They can also convey multiple layers of readership, informed by that now-lost cultural memory provided by the emblem genre. In this arch, they empower the message. In this particular case, the king, willingly or not, but in reading together the various elements of the arch, crucially connected by emblems and mechanical contraptions, participates in a public display that, ultimately, commits him politically to resolve the schism of the Low Countries.

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