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## Chapter 6

### **Inaugurations in the Austrian Netherlands: Flexible Formats at the Interface between Constitution, Political Negotiation, and Representation\***

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*In memory of Thomas Goossens (1983–2017),  
great lover of the Austrian Netherlands.*

From 1703 until 1795, the Austrian Habsburgs reigned over (parts of) the Southern, henceforth Austrian, Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> Although contemporaries considered these lands *une masse indivisible*, each of the territories or principalities comprising this conglomerate retained its autonomy and its distinctive constitutional character until the end of the Austrian regime. As a result, every new prince needed to be invested in each territory individually.<sup>2</sup> Hence, throughout the Austrian rule, forty-five inaugurations took place (see table 1).

My aim in the following sections is to underline and explain the lasting importance of these investiture rituals. Contrary to what historians have long assumed they were extremely important in several respects.<sup>3</sup> The participants defended multiple interests and pursued a myriad of possibly contradictory goals. These can be identified by taking a closer look at both the negotiations preceding the inaugurations and the actual rituals themselves. Since I present an overview of events spanning eight decades, I will also identify developments over time. My main argument is that there were several reasons why the inaugurations in the Austrian Netherlands retained their constitutional, political and social importance: firstly, there was a strong tradition of inaugurations, which were often the focal point of hard bargaining

between prince and Estates. Secondly, the traditional format was adaptable to contemporary circumstances. Thirdly, the Netherlands were remote from the center of the monarchy and as a result the prince was usually absent. In the following discussion I will explain these arguments. I start with a brief outline of the constitutional and political relevance of the inaugurations. The subsequent sections contain analyses of their organization and the way they actually took place. Finally, in the conclusion, I briefly explain how princely inaugurations served as an inverse model for the ritual depositions of Joseph II during the revolution in the Austrian Netherlands. Once again, this demonstrates the adaptability and the recognizability of their format. In Belgium, the pictorial language of these inaugurations even survived until the mid nineteenth century, albeit in a completely different constitutional framework.

My emphasis is on the Duchy of Brabant and the County of Flanders, since these were the most important principalities, not only population-wise, but also with respect to their fiscal contributions, commercial and industrial activities, and political leverage *vis-à-vis* the prince.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Brussels, one of the three capital cities of Brabant, was the seat of the majority of the central government institutions and home to the governor-general—usually a member of the dynasty—and his or her household. Indeed, even the inaugurations reflected the predominance of Brabant and Flanders. Usually, these were the only regions in which the governor-general personally performed the reciprocal swearing of oaths. Elsewhere, aristocrats, high functionaries or military governors performed this duty in his stead. However, my emphasis on the inaugurations in Brussels (for Brabant) and Ghent (for Flanders) does not exclude brief observations on their counterparts elsewhere. It is possible that, in certain respects, the other inaugurations underwent different evolutions during the eighteenth century, but more research is needed to come to conclusions on this issue. Nevertheless, the official correspondence between Vienna and Brussels makes it clear that Vienna attached the greatest importance to what happened in Brussels and Ghent, and that the Habsburgs valued Brabantine and Flemish consent with the investitures more highly than that of other territories.

*Inaugurations in the Austrian Netherlands: An Introduction*

Whichever regional variations existed, the core of these inaugurations was always the same: the prince swore to uphold the laws and privileges of the principality and protect its inhabitants, and after he had done so, the different Estates swore obedience and loyalty to the prince as representatives of their region. The only exception to this rule was the small district of the Retroceded Lands, in which the representatives of towns and countryside swore an oath to the prince, but not the other way around. An inauguration always started with a joyous entry by the representative of the prince in the host city. On his route, he passed by a string of highly symbolic ecclesiastic and secular spaces. These buildings, squares or monuments highlighted the privileges, power or wealth of the different Estates in society and the specific corporations in the region and the host city. At other stages of the ceremony, sung masses and *Te Deums* pled for heavenly support for the new sovereign.



Figure 1 Theater on the Friday Market in Ghent for the inauguration of Joseph II as count of Flanders, 1781. Watercolor presumably by P.J. Goetghebuer based on a painting by Engelbert Lieven van Sickers (Stadsarchief Gent, Oud archief, Atlas Goetghebuer, Lade 125, no. 117)

Additionally, artillery salvos resounded and illuminations and fireworks turned the city into a spectacular festive scene. Sometimes the organizers also gave commemorative medals to the privileged invitees and threw commemorative coins over the assembled crowd. The prince or his representative pardoned a selection of delinquents, banquets and balls welcomed the distinguished guests, and popular festivities filled the streets. The wide array of celebrations thus encompassed both commoners and the privileged classes. The inaugurations themselves took place on elevated stages in public squares, which underlines their public character (see figure 15).<sup>5</sup>

Although the prince was at the heart of the ceremony, it is important to keep in mind that in the eighteenth century he personally attended only once (see table 1), namely in the very last inauguration ever to take place in the Austrian Netherlands. On 23 April 1794, Emperor Francis II participated in the joint Brabant-Limburg inauguration and personally swore to safeguard the constitutions of these regions. On all other occasions, the governor-general, the minister plenipotentiary, aristocrats or high officials represented the prince.<sup>6</sup> By the eighteenth century, the nomination of proxies for the inaugurations was a long-standing tradition. In fact, since the second half of the sixteenth century, the Southern Netherlands were used to being governed by an absent prince and by governors-general, preferably of royal blood. After the definitive departure of Philip II in 1559, Albert and Isabella were the only rulers who, from 1598 to 1621, actually resided in the Netherlands, and after 1621 this region was not visited by its sovereign again until Joseph II did so in 1781. As a result, the Estates and the subjects in the eighteenth century did not consider princely absence to be a problem, nor a sign of disrespect. Legal proxies from the higher ranks of society represented the prince in the same way that diplomats did in foreign courts. Furthermore, during the inaugurations, portraits of the prince were on display, usually under a canopy and hung above a throne, as if the prince himself were present. The role of this portrait exceeded mere representation: it was often seen as being identical to the prince himself, although it remains to be examined how these beliefs developed in the early modern Low Countries.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, precisely because of the fact that the sovereign was usually absent, his attendance at the inauguration of 1794 was a strong signal, especially after five years of extreme political turmoil, as we will see further on.

In the sources, *huldinghe* or *huldiging* (Dutch) and *inauguration* (French) appear as the common terms for the combined ritual. The terms *Blijde Inkomst* or *Joyeuse Entrée* refer to the unique constitutional situation of the Duchy of Brabant. Since the mid-fourteenth century, Brabant had a charter that contained the basic privileges of its subjects: the so-called *Blijde Inkomst/Joyeuse Entrée*. Unlike the other regions, in Brabant the prince had to swear to guarantee each of its clauses before being invested. This considerably strengthened Brabant's political leverage and turned out to be crucial in legitimizing the revolution against Joseph II.<sup>8</sup> On the contrary, the constitutions of other regions consisted of a vague set of ancient traditions, customs, statutes and privileges that the prince swore to uphold in general terms.

Eighteenth-century inaugurations drew on a long-standing tradition of princely investitures in the Netherlands—rites that had often been caught up in the rivalry between the prince and the powerful cities. The wealth of medieval Flanders and Brabant was grounded on frenzied commercial and industrial activities in a network of comparatively large and very self-confident cities, linked with a densely populated hinterland. By the late Middle Ages, the main cities in both principalities had also gained a powerful position in the respective Estates' assemblies, which they retained until the eighteenth century. This clearly set these territories apart from the rest of the Habsburg Monarchy. In Flanders, Ghent, Bruges and Ypres held a virtual monopoly: the only other actors who had a vote were (since 1385) the Franc of Bruges and (since 1596) the clergy. When Ypres lost its seat after its annexation by France in 1678, Bruges and Ghent still had half of the votes.<sup>9</sup> In Brabant, clergy, nobility and cities (since 1629 only Leuven, Brussels, and Antwerp) all had a seat in the Estates' assembly. This may not seem as impressive as their Flemish colleagues, but given the unanimity rule in the Brabant Estates, one city, and even one of the bodies comprising the city council, could stop any unfriendly resolution. They did not hesitate to threaten to use, and indeed actually use, this political weapon, which was as frustrating for the Austrian Habsburgs as it was for their predecessors.<sup>10</sup>

Since the twelfth century, the Low Countries had developed a tradition of urban revolt. The powerful burghers did not hesitate to rebel when the prince acted against their interests, or when he jeopardized their cherished autonomy and their hold on the surrounding countryside.<sup>11</sup> From the Burgundian era onwards, both the prince and the cities increasingly used joyous entries, with or without

constitutional oath swearing, as a platform from which to voice ceremonial discontent or, conversely, as a means of reconciliation. Hugo Soly correctly pointed out that princes pursued contradictory goals during these joyous entries: they wanted to create goodwill and spur loyalty among the citizens as well as demonstrate their power. The urban authorities tried to find a similar balance between glorifying the prince, emphasizing the opulence, power and prestige of their city, and convincing their fellow citizens of the righteousness of their policy. In times of tension, the ever more sophisticated iconographic messages on theaters and triumphal arches that adorned the streets and squares along the processional route served as mirrors of princes. They allegorically emphasized the duties of the new duke or count.<sup>12</sup> After the deposition of Philip II in 1581, some joyous entries and inaugurations even went one step further, visualizing the claims of pretenders to the throne and their supporters.<sup>13</sup> In sum, it is beyond doubt that, for centuries, joyous entries and inaugurations in the Low Countries were at the heart of a number of entangled bargaining processes between the prince and the subjects, as well as between groups of subjects. They were no mere end of political negotiations, but also constituted a tool in the game of give and take of the prince and the privileged classes.

During the seventeenth century, inaugurations in the Habsburg Netherlands underwent a lasting transformation. The prince no longer swore an oath in every major city. Instead, joyous entries and inaugurations were restricted to the capital of every principality. In the County of Artois in 1600 for example, the other Artesian cities sent delegates to Arras. Nevertheless, this seems to have been the exception among the acts of homage for Albert and Isabella. In that same year, the city of Douai successfully resisted a unified inauguration for Walloon Flanders in Lille.<sup>14</sup> The inaugurations for Philip III of Spain in 1616 seem to have been a turning point. They took place during the sovereign rule of Albert and Isabella. Representatives of the fourteen territories swore on four different occasions, in Mariemont and in Brussels. This was also the last time a ruling monarch in the Habsburg Netherlands had his successor sworn in during his reign, as Charles V had done for the future Philip II in 1549.<sup>15</sup> As a corollary of the transition to one act of homage for every separate territory, the Estates' assemblies took the place of the city councils as the main interlocutors of the prince and his government in preparation of his investiture. And instead of the aldermen of the city, the oath was sworn by delegates of the Estates.<sup>16</sup> It is within this changed

institutional framework that henceforth the negotiations preceding the inauguration and the inaugurations themselves took place. Moreover, when comparing sixteenth-century and eighteenth-century inaugurations, the bargaining process that preceded the actual homages seems to have gained in importance, although more research on the seventeenth-century is needed to verify and explain this transition. Nevertheless, the relationship between the prince and his privileged subjects always remained at the heart of these investitures.

### *Inaugurations and the Negotiations between Prince and Estates*

The inaugurations remained a cornerstone of the constitutions of the separate regions in the Austrian Netherlands, and both prince and subjects were indispensable for their occurrence. As a result, every inauguration was preceded by negotiations, which for Brabant and Flanders—regions with a lot of political leverage, they paid on average 73.57 % of all taxes—could last for months.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, during the start of the Austrian regime, the new ruler was facing very self-confident Estates. Decades of weakening central authority and a virtual collapse of central government during the War of the Spanish Succession had given them a strong institutional continuity. In 1715–16, at the beginning of the Austrian regime, the government was in dire need of resources. The militant Estates exploited this situation and issued their demands, cowing Emperor Charles VI by making use of their right to consent to—or decline—princely monetary demands. As a result, the negotiations preceding Charles's inaugurations proved a hard nut to crack and lasted almost two years. This close entanglement of organizing inaugurations and bargaining over princely taxes seems to be unique in the eighteenth-century Habsburg Monarchy. It certainly helps to explain the regular assiduousness of the Estates in wresting concessions before accepting to co-organize an investiture.

The first major thorn in their side was the Barrier Treaty. This international agreement, signed in November 1715, had paved the way for the Austrian take-over in the Southern Netherlands. However, it did so at a high price. Among other things, the treaty stipulated the positioning of Dutch soldiers in eight garrison towns in the Southern Netherlands, a huge annual payment to the Dutch Republic, and border changes resulting in loss of Flemish territory. Both Brabant and Flanders reacted vehemently. They sent

delegates to Vienna to plead for a renegotiation of the treaty. They also decided to postpone its implementation and threatened to stop paying the government in Brussels. Charles VI yielded and decided to renegotiate the agreement. This pleased the Estates and paved the way for the princely investitures of October 1717.<sup>18</sup>

The Barrier Treaty was not the only international treaty impeding the organization of inaugurations. In 1789, during the revolution in the Austrian Netherlands—the so-called “Brabant Revolution”—a modest patriot army succeeded in expelling the Austrian troops. Shortly after this, and based on Brabant’s constitutional charter, the Estates’ assemblies of the different regions—with the exception of Luxembourg—divested Joseph II. This led to the brief appearance of the independent *Verenigde Nederlandse Staten/Etats belgiques unis* (United Netherlandish Estates), which disappeared again after less than a year. Joseph’s successor, Leopold II, started the military recapture of the Netherlands in the autumn of 1790. As a condition, his allies—Great Britain, Prussia, and the Dutch Republic—forced him to sign the Convention of The Hague (which he did on 10 December 1790) to respect the constitutions of the Southern Netherlands, and to issue a general pardon. The Brussels’s government then considered a quick organization of the inaugurations as the best means to suppress rebellious feelings and boost pro-Austrian sentiments in a country where loyalty was divided. As a sign of deference, Governor-General Albert of Saxony-Teschen personally represented Emperor Leopold II in every region; usually the governor-general himself took part only in Brabant and Flanders. Moreover, the government recommended the emperor to design the ceremony according to the example of the 1744 inauguration of Maria Theresa instead of the 1781 inauguration for the despised Joseph II. Leopold’s inaugurations thus clearly served the government’s policy of seeking compromise.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, the Convention of The Hague caused turmoil in Brabant. Several members of the Estates feared that the treaty would not sufficiently protect Brabant’s constitution. They argued that the convention did not exclude future changes of the composition of the Estates. Moreover, it did not restore all the previous rights of the University of Leuven. Furthermore, the convention was contradictory: its first article took the constitutional order at the time of the inaugurations of Charles VI and Maria Theresa as points of reference, whereas other articles stipulated the restoration of the situation at the end of Maria

Theresa's reign. These articles thus sanctioned several of her reforms that the Estates regarded as unconstitutional. As a result, various bodies, among others the deans of the Antwerp craft guilds, only wanted to give permission for the inauguration after obtaining the explicit confirmation that the ratification of the convention did not hurt Brabant's constitution as initially accepted by Maria Theresa. Furthermore, the Antwerp city council asked the emperor to undo his reforms of the personnel structure of the Council of Brabant, reduce the number of princely prosecutors in the duchy, and cease violations to the *Blijde Inkomst*, such as illegal military arrests.<sup>20</sup> Although the government required the Estates' unconditional consent, and certainly did not want to give a written "appeasement" (as the craft guilds demanded), in the end, just as in 1717, concessions were made. Some prisoners were released and a decree was issued stating that the ratification of the convention did not in any way harm the Brabant constitution.<sup>21</sup>

The Estates of Flanders and certainly Brabant were a force that Vienna and Brussels could not neglect. Their financial strength and Brabant's constitutional charter were powerful instruments that made them a force to be reckoned with. But lesser regions also put forward their demands when the government invited them to co-organize inaugurations. In 1791, several members of the Estates of the tiny Duchy of Limburg, which paid a mere 3.27 % of the consented taxes to the government, wanted a capital vote instead of a vote per estate. The latter system was beneficial to the clergy and nobility and detrimental to the third estate. Emperor Leopold II allowed the reform. The members also demanded more representatives of the third estate within the general assembly and requested the prince to re-establish a separate princely court of justice in Limburg—such a court had shortly been set up in 1789 and released the region from a centuries-old subordination to the Council of Brabant. To these requests, however, Leopold refused to consent.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, the representatives of the Retroceded Lands lobbied heavily to have their own Estates' assembly—they were the only land in which the prince did not need the approval of the Estates in order to levy taxes—but this request as well remained unfulfilled.<sup>23</sup>

These examples (and many more that have not been mentioned here) show that inaugurations remained important and delicate political events, used by the Estates or their members to promote their interests. Nevertheless, the precise meaning of these inaugurations was a matter of debate. The Council of Brabant, traditionally an ardent defender of regional privileges, explicitly denounced the aforementioned

objections of the Antwerp craft guilds and assured the government that it should not take their grievances into account. The council stated that the permission of the Estates was not necessary for the inauguration and for legitimizing the reign of the new prince.<sup>24</sup> The government adopted a similar stance, which is much less surprising, and stated that sovereignty in Brabant was hereditary and that therefore the new duke did not need the approval of the Estates. The Council of Brabant had the right to approve or disapprove the powers of attorney of the sovereign's representative and could control the terms of the oaths that were to be sworn, but the investiture itself did not depend on its consent.<sup>25</sup> Two years later, in May 1793, Emperor Francis II even affirmed that Brabant first had to pay its outstanding taxes before he would even consider being inaugurated. In doing so, he wanted to deprive the Estates of their arguments that they only owed tax money after the new prince's inauguration as duke of Brabant. Several months later, he added that its organization should be slowed down due to the conduct of the Estates, which he clearly condemned. He even believed that the inauguration did not add any right or duty to his sovereignty.<sup>26</sup>

This question whether or not the prince could levy taxes before being inaugurated was not new. The Estates also seem to have threatened to withhold taxes during the preparations for the inaugurations of Charles VI and Leopold II, and it may also have been an argument for the quick Luxembourg inauguration in 1717.<sup>27</sup> In reality, however, stating that the prince was a full "natural" prince only after being sworn in—from this perspective the inauguration constituted the end point of a period that can be considered an interregnum—was mere bluff. For Charles VI, Maria Theresa and Francis II, it took years before they were inaugurated in all of their Southern Netherlandish territories, yet this did not prevent the Estates from granting taxes nor these monarchs from collecting them.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, the Habsburgs never seriously considered abandoning these inaugurations, in contrast with territories such as Moravia, Tyrol, Styria, and others.<sup>29</sup> The reason is that the inaugurations yielded benefits for the prince as much as for the other participants.

*Inaugurations, Order of Precedence, and the Public Sphere*

Not only the preparations of the inaugurations were politically important. In several respects, the rites themselves were highly meaningful, not in the least in the field of representation. The performance of the oath swearing and the other rituals allowed both government members and privileged orders to publicly stage their social and political position. Every new ruler promulgated that the inauguration had to be an exact copy of his predecessor's, without departing from the adopted ranking order. However, old arguments about ranking regularly arose, and new ones emerged. This was apparent in the 1744 inauguration of Maria Theresa in Flanders. Several subaltern cities and castellanies—rural districts that mainly had fiscal authority—quarreled over their position in the inauguration and the accompanying joyous entry procession. Moreover, a discussion arose about who should carry the Flemish standard in the parade. And both aldermen's benches of the city of Ghent bickered over which of them would welcome the governor-general in the city.<sup>30</sup>

The investiture in 1781 for Joseph II aroused even more discussions. In 1754, due to a financial scandal and the ensuing political crisis in the County of Flanders, the government succeeded in drastically altering the composition of the Flemish Estates. Before that year, only the clergy, the cities of Ghent and Bruges and the rural district Franc of Bruges had a vote in this body. From 1754 onwards, several towns and castellanies also obtained a seat and a vote.<sup>31</sup> As a result, in the next inauguration of 1781, some new members, among others the castellanies of Oudenaarde and Kortrijk, advocated a new ranking order and wished their new status to be ceremonially reflected. Aalst and Dendermonde, on the other hand, defended the status quo that gave them some priority. The other members of the Estates were divided. In the end, the emperor ordered the different administrations to follow the exact same order as in 1744.<sup>32</sup>

The privilege of being represented, and if so, at a high rank in the order, was not the only matter of debate. The precise number of delegates was another issue that roused the emotions. For example: whether the Land of Bornem could send one or two delegates to the Flemish inauguration was a point of discussion in 1717, 1744, and 1781.<sup>33</sup> Similar discussions took place in Brabant. In 1794, Wolfgang Guillaume d'Ursel, Duke of Hoboken, successfully argued that the ceremonial function of hereditary marshal of Brabant belonged to him and that only he and not the government had the right to appoint a replacement during the inauguration.<sup>34</sup>

As Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger argues in her book *Des Kaisers alte Kleider*, ritual-symbolic actions were of primary importance in pre-modern societies. Due to their material tangibility, performative rites such as coronations and inaugurations transformed the institutional order they embodied into an objective reality. However, different actors could ascribe different and sometimes incompatible meanings to these rites. This occurred frequently and gave way to adaptations and transformations. As a result of the importance of visual ritual-symbolic actions, the order of precedence to speak, sit, stand, or walk was anything but trivial. Furthermore, ranking order was not only the expression of a certain social or political position. The converse was true as well: its visual demonstration was indispensable for upholding status.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the fact that matters of ranking caused so much debate need not surprise us: they were the order of the day until the end of the *Ancien Régime*, even though their importance slowly diminished through the emergence of an alternative and more egalitarian public sphere. Moreover, Stollberg-Rilinger's observation that conflicts often remained unresolved and were ritually kept alive also applies to the inaugurations in the Austrian Netherlands. At every single Brabant inauguration, Leuven lobbied to host the event, based on the argument of ancient tradition. From the seventeenth century onwards, however, the central government preferred Brussels, but over and over again granted Leuven *lettres de non-préjudice*.<sup>36</sup> By doing so, competing legal claims were ceremonially solved and the stability of the body politic preserved.<sup>37</sup>

The inaugurations were not only useful for evoking and visualizing the hierarchies in early modern society. They also allowed the prince to display his authority for hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of spectators that were a cross-section of society. This was all the more relevant in composite monarchies where princes were often absent in the specific lands of their dynastic conglomerate. The Austrian Habsburg Monarchy was no exception to this rule. We can even state that the Habsburgs ruled the composite monarchy *par excellence*. As Petr Maťa points out in Chapter 1, respecting the privileges of its different lands and legitimizing power through participation in manifold acts of homage were an essential part of the Habsburg conception of rule. Moreover, these investitures, both coronations and inaugurations, often constituted the culmination of strongly mediatized travels of the prince and his court. These travels

contributed to the dissemination of the image of the ruler and helped overcome the disadvantages of princely absence.

Hugo Soly remarked that the number of joyous entries rose significantly at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Netherlands became part of the Spanish composite monarchy and experienced the increased absence of their prince.<sup>38</sup> The tradition of princely absence did not alter in the eighteenth century; the Austrian Netherlands enjoyed a princely visit only twice, with Joseph II in 1781 and Francis II in 1794. Governors-general, usually scions of the Habsburg dynasty with a proper court in Brussels, compensated for the distant sovereign.

The fact that the prince was absent did not pose problems in the Netherlands, as long as he was replaced by a proxy of royal blood with full power. However, during the first decade of the Austrian rule, there was no governor-general of royal blood in Brussels. Hence, a series of recurrent dynastic rites and ceremonies, including *Te Deums* and masses of thanksgiving on the emperor and empress's birthdays and on the days of their patron saints or on more exceptional occasions, had to enhance royalist feelings and bring the dynasty closer to the subjects.<sup>39</sup> Among the less regular events, the inaugurations were undoubtedly the most important, given their scale and splendor and their vital role in the contractual relationship between the prince and the still powerful Estates. Taken together, this series of recurrent and less recurrent dynastic ceremonies and rites was crucial for maintaining loyalty toward the dynasty and princely authority. They helped the Habsburgs make their rule in the faraway Netherlands easier. It can therefore be argued that the eccentric location of the Netherlands, aside from the long-standing tradition of inaugurations and their constitutional and political significance, was among the key arguments for the prince not to neglect the inaugurations in these territories. Urban revolts such as Brussels's in 1718, or the revolution of 1787–89, reminded Vienna that loyalty in these regions was not self-evident. The subsequent inaugurations helped Leopold II reconstruct the damaged relationship of his subjects with their lord. However, Leopold II soon died, French troops briefly occupied the country in 1792–93, and the public sphere was divided along ideological lines. In this tense context, and with a new invasion of French troops looming, Francis II decided to travel to the faraway Netherlands to help fan royalist feelings and military

fervor. Personally participating in the Brabant inauguration was the clearest message of reconciliation and desire to cooperate the prince could give.<sup>40</sup>

The above discussion indicates that the older historiographical viewpoints, which state that early modern joyous entries and inaugurations developed from ceremonial communication and negotiation into a mere spectacle for passive audiences are inaccurate.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the ways in which the subjects—or at least the representatives of the privileged classes—participated, changed. In the late Middle Ages and the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both prince and subjects sent messages through the iconographic programs that adorned the theaters and the triumphal arches built for the joyous entries and the inaugurations. Up until the sixteenth century, townspeople often made use of *tableaux vivants*—theatrical and originally mute performances of a certain scene, a stage with living statues—to express expectations toward the new prince.<sup>42</sup> Hugo Soly has shown that during the sixteenth century these iconographic messages aligned with elite culture and became more elaborate. Classical allegories replaced biblical scenery. At the same time, the host cities and later the Estates as main organizers ordered the printing of books with detailed accounts of the inauguration. Quite often these books contained woodcuts depicting the ephemeral architecture and its decorative program.<sup>43</sup> Text and image informed an elite group of readers about the precise meaning of the iconography, the specific order of the events, and the exact ranking order at every stage in the rite. This tradition continued in the eighteenth century (see appendix to this chapter).<sup>44</sup>

In the eighteenth century, however, the significance of sophisticated iconographic programs, laden with allegorical messages, waned. The theater for the inauguration of Charles VI in Brussels contained six large paintings picturing his major military successes, thus emphasizing his ability to protect the then war-torn Netherlands. Moreover, a series of portraits of twenty-two previous dukes of Brabant placed him in a long line of rulers.<sup>45</sup> In Flanders, the theater for both Charles VI and Maria Theresa contained a large allegorical painting depicting the homage of the Estates to the new count.<sup>46</sup> However, during the other inaugurations in Brabant and Flanders, the inauguration books merely mention that the theaters and triumphal arches were nicely decorated, and usually do not give any further information. The only paintings that were still there were the obligatory representative portraits of the prince.<sup>47</sup> This is in line with Tim

Blanning's analysis of the gradual weakening of courtly representation, as well as with Werner Telesko's observation that contemporary events gained importance in the monarchical representation of the second half of the eighteenth century. The image of the prince gradually acquired a stronger documentary character.<sup>48</sup>

The construction plans, prints and engravings from the inaugurations in Flanders and Brabant that are still at our disposal confirm this image. Nevertheless, there were some exceptions to this rule in the smaller regions. A triumphal arch in Namur for the inauguration of Maria Theresa referred to Austria's military successes during the War of the Austrian Succession and expressed the prosperity Namur's inhabitants expected from their new countess. The theater for the inauguration of Joseph II in Hainaut in 1781 showed, among other things, cornucopias and the coats of arms of all members of the Estates. The inauguration books explain this iconography in detail.<sup>49</sup> Even more elaborate was the iconographic program for Leopold II's inauguration in Gelderland in 1791, with several triumphal arches adorned with emblems and inscriptions expressing the hope for a bright future after several years of political instability.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, the subjects no longer participated primarily through iconography. Rather they expressed their ambitions throughout the preceding negotiations and through the order of precedence, which was all the more crucial since the books printed on the occasion of the inaugurations painstakingly recorded every seat and every position at every stage of the investiture.

### *Conclusion*

Inaugurations in the Habsburg Netherlands remained important throughout the eighteenth century for several reasons: They retained their constitutional function, they gave rise to political negotiations between prince and Estates, and they continued to be a welcome stage for different groups to express hierarchy. They were an important opportunity to simulate the faraway ruler's presence in the Netherlands and stage the relationship between ruler and subjects. At the same time, the ritual discussions gave the prince the opportunity to take the role of arbiter, albeit mainly via the governor-general, who interacted with local administrations. The inaugurations thus strengthened the authority of the new prince and the existing

channels of decision-making, and at the same time fortified the social system and body politic. These investitures thus helped stabilize the Austrian regime. However, this does not mean that the inaugurations stayed the same throughout history. On the contrary, they were perfectly adaptable to new circumstances and actual occurrences. In the 1790s, they aroused—and simultaneously were the subject of—constitutional debates. In doing so they (modestly) integrated modern discourses, first and foremost the desire to have a written constitutional charter.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, archival sources reveal that several persons and bodies raised questions about the juridical importance of the inaugurations. Francis II and his entourage form the most notable example in this respect. Nevertheless, his claims about previous accords with the Estates notwithstanding, he still authorized the inauguration; he even participated personally when the survival of Habsburg rule in the Netherlands was at stake.

Since the organizers of the inaugurations had the ability to adapt them, they did so and thus these rites remained relevant to the point that they even served as a model for a ritual staging the exact opposite: the deposition of the prince. In 1789, a widespread rebellion against Joseph II's reforms broke out, and in December 1789 and January 1790 the Southern Netherlands' principalities declared independence. The Estates' assemblies except Luxembourg assumed sovereignty from the dethroned prince, Joseph II. In every region this happened with at least some kind of ritual performance. In Ghent, there was a remarkable celebration that mirrored the inaugurations by incorporating artillery salvos, a procession through the city, and a public ritual on the Friday Market. On a stage resembling the inauguration's theaters, the manifesto containing the juridical arguments legitimizing the dethronement of Joseph II and Flanders's independence was read aloud. Finally a *Te Deum* was sung in the cathedral. The organizers even coined commemorative medals.<sup>52</sup> Thus, in many respects this deposition was fashioned after the inaugurations. This is perhaps the best evidence that inaugurations continued to be powerful instruments to visualize power and power relations for large audiences, even in the age of revolutions and burgeoning democratic ideologies. This also proves how much these investitures bore constitutional meaning in a society that lacked the modern conception of written constitutions; in addition to the legal manifestos some sort of ritual was necessary to undo the contractual bond between prince and Estates.

The imagery of the inaugurations even survived Austrian rule. The inaugurations of William I, king of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, in 1815, and of Leopold, first king of the Belgians, in 1831, took place on Brussels's *Koningsplein/Place Royale*, exactly where the eighteenth-century Brabant oath-swearing ceremonies had been staged. For both investitures, a columnar theater was erected, reminiscent of the eighteenth-century investiture theaters.<sup>53</sup> In 1856, Belgium celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the reign of Leopold I. Several impressive triumphal arches adorned the *Koningsplein/Place Royale* in Brussels and other squares in the old city center. However, the main celebrations took place outside the old city walls, without a link with previous inaugurations. The situation was different in Ghent. The king solemnly entered the city in a joyous entry-like procession. On the Friday Market, on the exact same spot where the inauguration theaters had been built, a pavilion once again resembled the theaters, albeit in a more modest size.<sup>54</sup> Although these seem to have been the last festivities where visual elements of the inaugurations for the Austrian Habsburgs were recycled, they testify to the enduring power of their pictorial language, even half a century after the last traditional inauguration had taken place.

Table 1 List of Inaugurations in the Austrian Netherlands

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Ruler</b>	<b>Territory</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Performed by</b>
1	6 Dec. 1703 <sup>55</sup>	Charles III (VI)	Limburg	Unknown	Count Sinzendorf, minister plenipotentiary of Charles III (VI)
2	21 Feb. 1717 <sup>56</sup>	Charles VI	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Count Gronsfeld, governor of Luxembourg
3	11 Oct. 1717	Charles VI	Brabant and Limburg	Brussels	Marquis of Prié, minister plenipotentiary
4	18 Oct. 1717	Charles VI	Flanders	Ghent	Idem
5	18 Oct. 1717	Charles VI	Namur	Namur	Count de Lannoy de Clervaux, administrator of Namur
6	18 Oct. 1717	Charles VI	Hainaut	Mons	Prince of Rubempré,

					councilor of state
7	18 Oct. 1717	Charles VI	Malines	Malines	De Baillet, president of the Great Council of Malines
8	6 Dec. 1719	Charles VI	Gelderland	Roermond	Hemselrode, vice-chancellor of Gelderland
9	12 and 24 Feb. 1720	Charles VI	Retroceded Lands	Ypres and Menin	Prince de Ligne, councilor of state, general
10	29 Feb. 1720	Charles VI	Tournai/Tournaisis	Tournai	Idem
11	20 April 1744	Maria Theresa	Brabant and Limburg	Brussels	Charles Alexander of Lorraine, governor-general
12	27 April 1744	Maria Theresa	Flanders	Ghent	Idem
13	4 May 1744	Maria Theresa	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Count Neipperg, field marshal, colonel, provisional commander of the city and province of Luxembourg
14	4 May 1744	Maria Theresa	Hainaut	Mons	Prince of Arenberg
15	4 May 1744	Maria Theresa	Namur	Namur	Prince of Gavere, governor of Namur
16	4 May 1744	Maria Theresa	Malines	Malines	D'Olmen, Baron of Poederlé, president of the Great Council of Malines
17	18 Mai 1744	Maria Theresa	Gelderland	Roermond	Count de Baillet, chancellor of Gelderland
18	18 May 1744	Maria Theresa	Tournai/Tournaisis	Tournai	Prince de Ligne, councilor of state, general
19	1 Oct. 1749	Maria Theresa	Retroceded Lands	Ypres	Idem

20	17 July 1781	Joseph II	Brabant and Limburg	Brussels	Albert of Saxony-Teschen, governor-general
21	31 July 1781	Joseph II	Flanders	Ghent	Idem
22	20 Aug. 1781	Joseph II	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Prince de Ligne, lieutenant-general and colonel of an infantry regiment, governor of the city of Mons
23	20 Aug. 1781	Joseph II	Gelderland	Roermond	Luytgens, chancellor of Gelderland
24	20 Aug. 1781	Joseph II	Tournai/Tournaisis	Tournai	Duke of Ursel, colonel
25	20 Aug. 1781	Joseph II	Malines	Malines	Fierlant, president of the Great Council of Malines
26	27 Aug. 1781	Joseph II	Hainaut	Mons	Duke of Arenberg, high- bailiff of Hainaut
27	27 Aug. 1781	Joseph II	Namur	Namur	Prince of Gavere, governor of Namur
28	27 Aug. 1781	Joseph II	Retroceded Lands	Ypres	D'Ursel, Duke of Hoboken, commander of the infantry regiment de Ligne
29	30 June 1791	Leopold II	Brabant and Limburg	Brussels	Albert of Saxony-Teschen, governor-general
30	6 July 1791	Leopold II	Flanders	Ghent	Idem
31	12 July 1791	Leopold II	Hainaut	Mons	Idem
32	28 July 1791	Leopold II	Malines	Malines	Idem
33	8 Aug. 1791	Leopold II	Retroceded Lands	Ypres	Idem
34	10 Aug. 1791	Leopold II	Tournai/Tournaisis	Tournai	Idem
35	22 Aug. 1791	Leopold II	Namur	Namur	Idem

36	25 Aug. 1791	Leopold II	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Idem
37	22 Sep. 1791	Leopold II	Gelderland	Roermond	Idem
38	11 June 1792	Francis II	Hainaut	Mons	Prince de Ligne, colonel
39	11 June 1792	Francis II	Namur	Namur	Prince of Gavere, sovereign-bailiff and administrator-general of Namur
40	3 July 1792	Francis II	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Marshal Bender, governor of the city and province of Luxembourg
41	31 July 1792	Francis II	Flanders	Ghent	Albert of Saxony-Teschen, governor-general
42	13 Aug. 1792	Francis II	Malines	Malines	De Fierlant, president of the Great Council of Malines
43	13 Aug. 1792	Francis II	Gelderland	Roermond	Luytgens, chancellor of Gelderland
44	13 Aug. 1792	Francis II	Tournai/Tournaisis	Tournai	Prince of Gavere, sovereign-bailiff and administrator-general of Namur
45	23 April 1794	Francis II	Brabant and Limburg	Brussels	Francis II, Roman emperor

Note: In the autumn of 1793, there were preparations for Francis II's inauguration in the Retroceded Lands. Due to French incursions in this region, however, it eventually could not take place.

Sources: Klaas Van Gelder, "The Investiture of Emperor Charles VI in Brabant and Flanders: A Test Case for the Authority of the New Austrian Government," *European Review of History/Revue européenne d'histoire* 18, no. 4 (2011): 443–63; Idem, "Revolution, Krieg und Stände. Die Reise von Kaiser Franz II. in die Österreichischen Niederlande 1794," *Frühneuzeit-Info* 28 (2017): 155–70; Eric Wychlacz, "Habsburgische Rechtspolitik im Herzogtum Luxemburg und den

Herrschaftswechsel in den Südlichen Niederlanden von 1714–1725,” *Hémecht. Zeitschrift für Luxemburger Geschichte* 63, no. 1 (2011): 288–93; Guy van Dievoet, “L’empereur Joseph II et la Joyeuse Entrée de Brabant. Les dernières années de la constitution brabançonne,” *Anciens Pays et Assemblées d’États/Standen en Landen* 16 (1958): 90–102; Reginald De Schryver, “De Oostenrijkse aanspraken op de op de Spaans-Habsburgse erfenis. De Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de Spaanse Successieoorlog, 1700–1716,” in *Oostenrijks België 1713–1794. De Zuidelijke Nederlanden onder de Oostenrijkse Habsburgers*, ed. Hervé Hasquin (Brussels, 1987), 16; Heinrich Ritter von Zeissberg, *Belgien unter der Generalstatthalterschaft Erzherzog Carls (1793, 1794). II. Theil* (Vienna, 1794), 24; Louis-Prospér Gachard, *Histoire de la Belgique au commencement du XVIIIe siècle* (Brussels, 1880), 441–43 and 496–99; inauguration books in the appendix; AR–AGR, GR/CP, 10A, 10B, 11A, 11B, 12, 13A, 13B, 14, 15, 16A and 16B; Stadsarchief Mechelen, *Stad Mechelen (ancien regime), vorstelijke inhuldigingen*, 124, 125 and 126.

#### Appendix: Printed Program Books of the Inaugurations in the Austrian Netherlands

Note: Between square brackets are the libraries and archives in which I consulted the program books (HF = AR–AGR, Heraldisch Fonds/Fonds héraldique; UL Ghent = University Library Ghent). Not included in this list are short printed leaflets containing directions for the proceedings of the rites, sometimes called “short instruction”, “order of the ceremonies” or “report of the formalities to be observed”. Several of these can be found in the aforementioned “Heraldisch Fonds/Fonds héraldique”, registers 250/2 and 286, and in the library of Ghent University.

#### Brabant-Limburg:

- Charles VI: *Relation des cérémonies et des réjouissances publiques, faites en la ville de cour de Bruxelles le 11. d’Octobre 1717, jour de la Joyeuse Entrée & Inauguration de Sa Sacrée Majesté impériale et catholique Charles VI*. Brussels: Joseph t’Serstevens, 1717. [UL Ghent]
- Maria Theresa: *Relation de l’inauguration solennelle de Sa Majesté Marie Thérèse, Reine de Hongrie et de Bohème, en qualité de Duchesse de Lothier, de Brabant, de Limbourg et de Marquise du St. Empire Romain, célébrée en la ville de Bruxelles, le 20. Avril 1744*. Brussels: François Claudinot, s.d. [UL Ghent]<sup>57</sup>
- Joseph II: *Relation des cérémonies observées à l’inauguration de Sa Majesté l’empereur Joseph II, qui a eu lieu à Bruxelles le 17 juillet 1781*. Brussels: J. Vanden Berghen, 1781. [HF, 250/2]

Flanders:

- Charles VI: *Relation de l'inauguration solennelle de Sa Sacrée Majesté impériale et catholique, Charles VI, Empereur des Romains... comme Comte de Flandres, célébrée à Gand, ville capitale de la Province, le XVIII. Octobre 1717.* Ghent: Augustin Graet, 1719. [UL Ghent]
- Maria Theresa: *Relation de l'inauguration solennelle de Sa Sacrée Majesté Marie Thérèse... comme Comtesse de Flandres, célébrée à Gand, ville capitale de la province, le XXVII. avril 1744.* Ghent: La Veuve Pierre de Goesin, 1744. [UL Ghent]
- Joseph II: *Inauguration en Flandre, Gand.* Ghent: Pierre de Gousin, s.d. [UL Ghent]
- Leopold II: *Relation de l'inauguration solennelle de sa Sacrée Majesté Léopold II, Empereur des Romains... comme Comte de Flandres, célébrée à Gand, ville capitale de la Province, le VI juillet 1791.* Ghent: Adrien Colier, 1792. [UL Ghent]

Hainaut:

- Joseph II: *Relation de l'inauguration de S.M. l'Empereur et Roi Joseph II, en qualité de Comte de Hainau, solennisée le 27 Août 1781, en la Ville de Mons.* Mons: Henri Hoyois, 1781. [UL Ghent]
- Leopold II: *Précis de la solennité de l'inauguration de Sa Majesté l'Empereur et Roi Léopold II, comme comte de Hainau, fixé au 12 juillet 1791.* Mons: N.J. Bocquet, s.d. [UL Ghent]

Namur:

- Maria Theresa: *Relation des ceremonies de l'inauguration solennelle de Sa Majesté Marie Thérèse Reine de Hongrie et de Bohème, en qualité de Comtesse de Namur, célébrée a Namur le quatrième de may 1744.* Namur: Jean François Lafontaine, 1744. [AR-AGR, GR/CP, 15]

Gelderland:

- Leopold II: *Description de la solennité inaugurale de Sa Majesté l'Empereur et Roi, Léopold II comme Duc de Gueldres célébrée à Ruremonde le 22 septembre 1791.* Roermond: G. Gruyters, s.d. [HF, 286]



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<sup>1</sup>In the autumn of 1715, Austrian troops gradually took power in the Southern Netherlands, but the official assumption of power of Charles VI in the bulk of these territories did not happen until February 1716. Up until the summer of 1794, the Habsburgs administered the Southern Netherlands, with the exception of large sections of this territory occupied by the French between 1744 and 1749. The Duchy of Limburg, however, was in Habsburg hands since 1703, and Luxembourg remained Austrian until 1795: Klaas Van Gelder, *Regime Change at a Distance: Austria and the Southern Netherlands following the War of the Spanish Succession, 1716–1725* (Leuven, 2016), 94 and 113–44.

<sup>2</sup>In the sources, these territories are usually called “provinces”, but they do not correspond to present-day Belgian provinces, either geographically or in terms of powers and competences. It is, moreover, difficult to give an indisputable list of the ancient territories, as most of the criteria to define them are not universally applicable. Limburg, for example, lacked a proper regional council or supreme court of justice, whereas Tournai and the surrounding area called *le Tournaisis* shared an Estates’ assembly. Following Edmond Poulet, ten regions can be discerned: the Duchies of Brabant, Luxembourg, Limburg, and Gelderland, the Counties of Flanders, Hainaut, and Namur, the city of Tournai and its immediate surroundings, the region called *le Tournaisis*, and finally the city of Malines and its small district. On top of that, there was one district without Estates, the so-called “Retroceded Lands” or “Western Flanders”, which had been conquered by Louis XIV of France. This district lost its representation by means of an Estates’ assembly under French rule, a situation the Austrians maintained after their return in 1719. This was the only region where the Habsburgs could freely impose taxes without the consent of their subjects: Edmond Poulet, *Les constitutions nationales belges de l’ancien régime à l’époque de l’invasion française de 1794* (Brussels, 1875), 2–3.

<sup>3</sup>Hugo Soly argued that, from the seventeenth century onwards, inaugurations and joyous entries evolved into pure spectacle, top-down events directed to passive audiences: Hugo Soly, “Plechtige intochten in de steden van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de overgang van Middeleeuwen naar Nieuwe Tijd: communicatie, propaganda,

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spektakel," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 97 (1984): 341–60. For a similar argument on the Southern German and Swiss area: André Holenstein, "Huldigung und Herrschaftszeremoniell im Zeitalter des Absolutismus und der Aufklärung," in *Zum Wandel von Zeremoniell und Gesellschaftsritualen in der Zeit der Aufklärung*, ed. Klaus Gerteis (Hamburg, 1992), 21–46.

<sup>4</sup>The Estates of Brabant and Limburg usually held a joint inauguration in Brussels, even though these bodies negotiated with the prince separately.

<sup>5</sup>In Brussels, the *Baliënplein/Place des Bailles* and later the *Koningsplein/Place Royale* was the place where oaths were sworn. In Ghent the oath swearing took place at the Friday Market (*Vrijdagmarkt*), in Malines on the central market square, the *Grote Markt*. In Namur, the St. Aubain Cathedral hosted the rite, but at least in 1744, portraits of Maria Theresa and Francis Stephen were on display under a canopy before the city hall and a triumphal arch with allegorical messages adorned Namur's city center. This public character is in contrast with many Central-European lands of the monarchy, where the acts of homage occurred behind closed doors.

<sup>6</sup>Although many of the eighteenth-century inaugurations have never been studied, a handful of journal articles and chapters have been dedicated to them. For Charles VI: Klaas Van Gelder, "The Investiture of Emperor Charles VI in Brabant and Flanders: A Test Case for the Authority of the New Austrian Government," *European Review of History/Revue européenne d'histoire* 18, no. 4 (2011): 443–63; Luc Duerloo, "Discourse of Conquest, Discourse of Contract: Competing Visions on the Nature of the Habsburg Rule in the Netherlands," in *Bündnispartner Und Konkurrenten Der Landesfürsten? Die Stände in Der Habsburgermonarchie*, ed. Gerhard Ammerer, William D. Godsey Jr., Martin Scheutz, Peter Urbanitsch and Alfred Stefan Weiß (Vienna and Munich, 2007), 463–78; Eric Wychlacz, "Habsburgische Rechtspolitik im Herzogtum Luxemburg und den Herrschaftswchsel in den Südlichen Niederlanden von 1714–1725," *Hémecht. Zeitschrift für Luxemburger Geschichte* 63, no. 1 (2011): 288–93; Louis Lebeer, "Les estampes relatives aux inaugurations de Philippe V et de Charles VI à Bruxelles," *Anciens Pays et Assemblées d'États/Standen en Landen* 16 (1958): 35–63. For Maria Theresa: Klaas Van Gelder and Bert Van Caeter, "Een publieke ceremonie in een turbulent tijdvak. De inauguratie van Maria Theresia als gravin van Vlaanderen (1744)," *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent* 67 (2013): 101–30; see also the chapter of Thomas Cambrelin. For Joseph II: Guy van Dievoet, "L'empereur Joseph II et la Joyeuse Entrée de Brabant. Les dernières années de la constitution brabançonne," *Anciens Pays et Assemblées d'États/Standen en Landen* 16 (1958): 90–102; For Francis II: Klaas Van Gelder, "Revolution, Krieg und Stände. Die Reise von Kaiser Franz II. in die Österreichischen Niederlande 1794," *Frühneuzeit-Info* 28 (2017): 155–70; A. Viaene, "Frans II, Keizer der Romeinen, als laatste Graaf

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van Vlaanderen,” *Biekorf* 76, no. 1–2 (1975–76): 5–14. Micheline Soenen published a very informative article on festivities in early modern Brussels that includes princely inaugurations: Micheline Soenen, “Fêtes et cérémonies publiques à Bruxelles aux Temps Modernes,” *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis* 68 (1985): 47–101. Brigitte d’Hainaut-Zveny adopted the same general scope in focusing on the entries and inaugurations performed by Governor-General Charles Alexander of Lorraine: Brigitte d’Hainaut-Zveny, “Feesten en vermakelijkheden onder de regering van Karel van Lotharingen,” in *Karel Alexander van Lotharingen. Gouverneur-generaal van de Oostenrijkse Nederlanden* (Brussels, 1987), 115–36.

<sup>7</sup> On the power of portraits: Philipp Zitzlsperger, “Distanz und Präsenz. Das Porträt in der Frühneuzeit zwischen Repräsentation und Realpräsenz,” in *Abwesenheit beobachten. Zu Kommunikation auf Distanz in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Mark Hengerer (Münster, 2013), 41–78, which, however, largely neglects the eighteenth century; Friedrich Polleroß, “Des abwesenden Prinzen Porträt. Zeremoniell-darstellung im Bildnis und Bildnisgebrauch im Zeremoniell,” in *Zeremoniell als höfische Ästhetik in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Jörg Jochen Berns and Thomas Rahn (Tübingen, 1995), 382–409.

<sup>8</sup> On the Brabant *Blijde Inkomst*: Van Dievoet, “L’empereur Joseph II,” 87–140; Idem, “De Blijde Inkomst. De geschreven grondwet van Brabant (1356–1794),” in *De gewestelijke en lokale overheidsinstellingen in Brabant en Mechelen tot 1795*, ed. Raymond Van Uytven, Claude Bruneel, Herman Coppens and Beatrijs Augustyn (Brussels, 2000), vol. 1, 19–31. Very recently, a monograph came out that thoroughly investigates the medieval origins and fifteenth-century adaptations of Brabant’s constitutional charter: Valerie Vrancken, *De Blijde Inkomsten van de Brabantse hertogen. Macht, opstand en privileges in de vijftiende eeuw* (Brussels, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> Michel Nuyttens and Antoine Zoete, “De vier Leden en de Staten van Vlaanderen (1127–1795),” in *De gewestelijke en lokale overheidsinstellingen in Vlaanderen tot 1795*, ed. Walter Prevenier and Beatrijs Augustyn (Brussels, 1997), 67–78.

<sup>10</sup> Beatrijs Augustyn, “Staten van Brabant (14<sup>de</sup> eeuw–1795),” in *De gewestelijke en lokale overheidsinstellingen in Brabant en Mechelen tot 1795*, ed. Raymond Van Uytven, Claude Bruneel, Herman Coppens and Beatrijs Augustyn (Brussels, 2000), vol. 1, 97–132; Herman Coppens, *Het institutioneel kader van de centrale overheidsfinanciën in de Spaanse en Oostenrijkse Nederlanden tijdens het late Ancien Régime (c. 1680–1788)* (Brussels, 1993), 148–52.

<sup>11</sup> Marc Boone and Maarten Prak, “Rulers, Patricians and Burghers: The Great and the Little Traditions of Urban Revolt in the Low Countries,” in *A Miracle Mirrored. The Dutch Republic in European Perspective*, ed. Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen (Cambridge, 1995), 99–134.

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<sup>12</sup> Offering many examples: Soly, “Plechtige intochten”.

<sup>13</sup> A small selection from the array of recent publications on inaugurations and the accompanying ritual and artistic messages as gauges of the relationship between prince and subjects: Peter Arnade, “The Emperor and the City: The Cultural Politics of the Joyous Entry in Early Sixteenth-Century Ghent and Flanders,” *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent* 54 (2000): 65–92; Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, “Spectacle and Spin for a Spurned Prince. Civic Strategies in the Entry Ceremonies of the Duke of Anjou in Antwerp, Bruges and Ghent (1582),” *Journal of Early Modern History* 11, no. 4–5 (2007): 263–84; Margit Thøfner, *A Common Art: Urban Ceremonial in Brussels and Antwerp during and after the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> François Zanatta, “Pour une relecture du serment public entre le prince et les communautés d’habitants: l’exemple des joyeuses entrées des Archiducs,” *Revue du Nord*, no. 377 (2008): 738, 742–43.

<sup>15</sup> Luc Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety: Archduke Albert (1598-1621) and Habsburg Political Culture in an Age of Religious Wars* (Farnham, 2012), 398–412.

<sup>16</sup> Idem, “Verbeelde gewesten. Zelfbeeld en zelfrepresentatie in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden,” *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 16, no. 2 (2000): 3–13.

<sup>17</sup> This calculation is based on figures for the years 1715–45 and 1749–88, in which the percentage of Flemish and Brabant taxes oscillated between 65.55 and 76.91 % of all regional taxes transferred to the Brussels’s government: Herman Coppens, *Basisstatistieken voor de reconstructie van de centrale staatsrekening der Spaanse en Oostenrijkse Nederlanden ca. 1680-1788* (Brussels, 1993), 136–41.

<sup>18</sup> Van Gelder, “The Investiture”; Idem, “The Estates of Flanders Manning the Barricades for Territorial Integrity: The Protest against the Barrier Treaty of 1715,” in *Intermediate Institutions in the County of Flanders in the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era*, ed. Georges Martyn, René Vermeir and Chantal Vancoppenolle (Brussels, 2012), 115–37.

<sup>19</sup> Heinrich Ritter von Zeissberg, *Zwei Jahre belgischer Geschichte (1791, 1792). I. Theil: Von der Convention im Haag bis zum Tode Kaiser Leopolds II.* (Vienna, 1891), 105–16.

<sup>20</sup> Count Mercy-Argenteau to (presumably) the Estates of Brabant, 13 April 1791: AR–AGR, GR/CP, 8B: fol. 170r–73v; resolutions of the members of the Antwerp city council, May and June 1791: AR–AGR, GR/CP, 8A: fol. 127r–133v; advisory note to the archdukes, 9 January 1792: AR–AGR, GR/CP, 8A: fol. 304r–17r.

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<sup>21</sup> Excerpt from the protocols, 13 April and 13 August 1791, and sketch of a resolution: AR–AGR, GR/CP, 8B: fol. 174r, 175r–76v and 177r–78r; Count Mercy-Argenteau to the Estates of Brabant, 13 April 1791, with appendices: AR–AGR, GR/CP, 8B: fol. 184–201. See also: Zeissberg, *Zwei Jahre*, 60–74 and 105–16.

<sup>22</sup> Between 1715–45 and 1749–88, Limburg's share in the taxes fluctuated between 2.47 and 4.87 %: Coppens, *Basisstatistieken*, 136–41; Bruno Dumont, "Les Etats de Limbourg et la fin de l'ancien régime," in *Het einde van het Ancien Régime in België. Colloquium van zaterdag 3 december 1988 te Brussel*, ed. Piet Lenders (Coutray-Heule, 1991), 81–139.

<sup>23</sup> E. Defoort, "De Staten van West-Vlaanderen, 1787–1791," *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis 'Société d'Emulation' te Brugge* 102 (1965): 98–104.

<sup>24</sup> Council of Brabant to Maria Christina and Albert of Saxony-Teschen, 30 November 1791: AR–AGR, GR/CP, 8A: fol. 79r–89v.

<sup>25</sup> Zeissberg, *Zwei Jahre*, 108; Poulet, *Les constitutions*, 61–77.

<sup>26</sup> Francis II to Archduke Charles, 18 May and 21 December 1793, and 4 March 1794: ÖStA, HHStA, Belgien–Depeschen, 58.

<sup>27</sup> Zeissberg, *Zwei Jahre*, 73; Van Gelder, "The Investiture," 448; Wychlacz, "Habsburgische Rechtspolitik," 293.

<sup>28</sup> Poulet, *Les constitutions*, 66–68. The request to be inaugurated was not the prince's first juridical act, as Poulet rightly pointed out. As a rule, the new prince first reinstated the personnel of his predecessor.

<sup>29</sup> These monarchs sent out the request to be inaugurated very quickly after their assumption of power. Charles VI formally assumed power in the Netherlands on 4 February 1716. He invited the Estates to co-organize the inaugurations on 23 February: AR–AGR, DB/CAPB, 316: fol. 175r–76r. Two days after Charles's death, on 22 October 1740, Maria Theresa signed a dispatch confirming all the officials of her father and ordering them to provide information on the inaugurations, thus setting their preparation in motion: ÖStA, HHStA, Belgien–Depeschen, 18. Upon his recovery of the rebellious Netherlands at the end of 1790, Leopold II dispatched orders for his inauguration on 14 February 1791. However, he died already on 1 March 1792; his son and heir to the throne Francis II signed dispatches for the inaugurations on 3 March: ÖStA, HHStA, Belgien–Depeschen, 58. Joseph II seems to have been the only ruler not to have taken this step personally. Maria Theresa died on 29 November 1780. Only when documents regarding previous inaugurations came in from Brussels, Joseph dispatched orders on 22 February 1781 to start the preparations: ÖStA, HHStA, Belgien–Depeschen, 56.

<sup>30</sup> Van Gelder and Van Caeter, "Een publieke ceremonie," 117–18 and 122–23.

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<sup>31</sup> For a detailed account: Piet Lenders, *De politieke crisis in Vlaanderen omstreeks het midden der achttiende eeuw. Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de Aufklaerung in België* (Brussels, 1956).

<sup>32</sup> Documents concerning the order of precedence during the Flemish inauguration in 1781: AR–AGR, GR/CP, 10A: fol. 22r–63v, fol. 239r–40v and fol. 253r–54v.

<sup>33</sup> Excerpt from the resolutions of the Privy Council, 19 July 1781, and decree to the Land of Bornem, 23 July 1781: AR–AGR, GR/CP, 10A: fol. 317r.

<sup>34</sup> Documents concerning this discussion can be found in: AR–AGR, GR/CP, 8A: fol. 42r–48v. See also: resolutions of the Ministerial Conference in Brussels, 3 and 17 May 1794: AR–AGR, Ministerconferentie/Conférence ministérielle, 19: fol. 59r–60v and 239r–40v; Duke of Hoboken to Trauttmansdorff, court chancellor for the Netherlands, 20 April 1794: ÖStA, AVA, Familienarchiv Trauttmansdorff, 291. The honorary title of marshal of Brabant was attached to the Baronetcy of Wezemaal, owned by the Schetz and d’Ursel families from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries: Hamoir, *Qualité princière et dignités nobiliaires. Essai comparatif sur les distinctions de dignités au sein du second ordre dans divers pays* (Brussels, 1974), 59.

<sup>35</sup> Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Des Kaisers alte Kleider: Verfassungsgeschichte und Symbolsprache des alten Reiches* (Munich, 2013), 9–21.

<sup>36</sup> See Van Gelder, “The Investiture,” 449–50; Pouillet, *Les constitutions*, 11–12; unknown sender to Privy Council, 6 March 1781: AR–AGR, GR/CP, 6: fol. 465r–65v.

<sup>37</sup> Stollberg-Rilinger, *Des Kaisers alte Kleider*, 79–84 and passim.

<sup>38</sup> Soly, “Plechtige intochten,” 346–48.

<sup>39</sup> Van Gelder, *Regime Change*, 296–98 and 303–6.

<sup>40</sup> Idem, “Revolution”.

<sup>41</sup> Soly, “Plechtige intochten,” passim.

<sup>42</sup> Gradually, banderoles, facial expression, gestures and declamation were added to their communicative capacities: Stijn Bussels and Bram van Oostveldt, “De traditie van de tableaux vivants bij de plechtige intochten in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1496–1635),” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 115, no. 2 (2002): 166–80.

<sup>43</sup> Soly, “Plechtige intochten,” passim.

<sup>44</sup> John Landwehr’s inventory of printed ceremony books is anything but complete, at least as far as the Austrian Netherlands are concerned: John Landwehr, *Splendid Ceremonies. State Entries and Royal Funerals in the Low*

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*Countries, 1515–1791. A Bibliography* (Nieuwkoop and Leiden, 1971). I have found eleven different printed inauguration books, a list of which can be found in the appendix to this chapter.

<sup>45</sup> Van Gelder, *Regime Change*, 167; Idem, “The Investiture,” 453–54; Duerloo, “Discourse,” 474–76; J.P. van Bourscheit, *Description abrégée du grand amphitheatre de l’inauguration dressé dans les Bailles de la Cour Ducale de Bruxelles le 11. Octobre 1717* (Brussels, s.d.). A copy can be found in the AR–AGR, Heraldisch Fonds/Fonds héraldique, 250/2. In the autumn of 2017, this collection was moved from the archives of the Belgian Department of Foreign Affairs, where I consulted it, to the National Archives of Belgium (AR–AGR) in Brussels.

<sup>46</sup> The engravings can be found, among others, in Stadsarchief Gent, Atlas Goetghebeur, L. 125/102 and L. 125/112. For a reproduction of the latter: Van Gelder and Van Cauter, “Een publieke ceremonie,” 105.

<sup>47</sup> An exception in this respect was the dessert table for the governors-general in 1744 in Flanders, which consisted of fifty-nine sugar figures and scenes depicting the virtues and talents of the new monarch in an allegorical fashion: *Beschryvinge van het laetste taefel-geregt (ofte) dessert, dienende op de Solemnele Huldinge van Haere Konninglyke Majesteyt Maria Theresia Koninginne van Hongarien, en Bohemen, &c. &c. &c. als gravinne van Vlaenderen, gedaen binnen Ghendt, den 27. April 1744* (Ghent, 1744). A copy can be found in AR–AGR, GR/CP, 9B.

<sup>48</sup> T.C.W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660–1789* (Oxford, 2002); Werner Telesko, *Maria Theresia. Ein Europäischer Mythos* (Vienna, Cologne and Weimar, 2012), 29–109.

<sup>49</sup> *Relation des ceremonies de l’inauguration solemnelle de Sa Majesté Marie Thérèse Reine de Hongrie et de Bohème, en qualité de Comtesse de Namur, célébrée a Namur le quatrième de may 1744* (Namur, 1744), 9–10; *Relation de l’inauguration de S.M. l’Empereur et Roi Joseph II, en qualité de Comte de Hainau, solemnisée le 27 Août 1781, en la Ville de Mons* (Mons, 1781), 35–42.

<sup>50</sup> *Description de la solemnité inaugurale de Sa Majesté l’Empereur et Roi, Léopold II comme Duc de Gueldres célébrée à Ruremonde le 22 septembre 1781* (Roermond, s.d.).

<sup>51</sup> K. Van Gelder, “The Convention of The Hague and the Constitutional Debates in the Estates of Flanders and Brabant, 1790–1794,” *Early Modern Low Countries* 1, no. 1 (2017): 156–76 [open access journal: <https://www.emlc-journal.org/articles/10.18352/emlc.6/> (last consultation: 23 August 2018)].

<sup>52</sup> This section is based on archival documents in Stadsarchief Gent, Oud Archief—reeks 107, 35: fol. 11v–39v. A brief examination of the manifesto can be found in: Georges Martyn & Luk Burgelman, “Les États de Flandres et l’absolutisme de l’Empereur Joseph II: à propos de la déclaration d’indépendance du 4 janvier 1790,” in *L’absolutisme*

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*éclairée. Actes des journées internationales tenues à Versailles du 1<sup>er</sup> au 4 juin 2000*, ed. Serge Dauchy and Catherine Lecomte (Lille, 2002), 137–50.

<sup>53</sup> For more information on the pictorial continuities in state festivities in Brussels up until the mid nineteenth century, with illustrations: Micheline Soenen, “La place, scène théâtre-politique,” in *Le Quartier Royal*, ed. Arlette Smolar-Meynart and André Vanrie (Brussels, 1998), 217–37.

<sup>54</sup> André H.C. Van Hasselt, *Cérémonies et fêtes qui ont lieu à Bruxelles, du 21 au 23 juillet 1856 à l’occasion du XXVe anniversaire de l’inauguration de Sa Majesté le Roi Léopold Ier* (Brussels, 1856), 17–21 and plates; Jean-Baptiste Lammens, *Herinnering aen de feesten te Gent. 31<sup>en</sup> van oogst- en 1<sup>en</sup> van herfstmaend 1856* (Ghent, 1857), 21.

<sup>55</sup> This act led to discussion in 1717. In spite of it, a joint Brabant-Limburg inauguration took place in October of that year (no. 3 in the table).

<sup>56</sup> Minister Plenipotentiary Prié ratified this hastily organized inauguration on 20 May 1718.

<sup>57</sup> A pocket version was printed in Flanders. It is unclear who gave the instructions to print it: *Relation de la ceremonie de l’inauguration de Sa Majesté la Reine d’Hongrie et de Boheme comme Duchesse de Lothier, de Brabant, du Limbourg & Marquise du S. Empire, faite à Bruxelles le 20. Avril 1744* (Ghent, s.d.), consulted in AR–AGR, Heraldisch Fonds/Fonds héraldique, 250/2.