

written *device* is drawn up by a group of men who meet under the aegis of the town council. It will always include councillors, but it may also include writers and clerics and perhaps even an artist. Their job is to decide the subjects of the pageants that are to be constructed for the Entry and to compile an authoritative description of these proposed pageants. This document, usually called a *device*, is intended to be the primary means for monitoring the progress of construction and production. The job of those who are placed on the committee for their literary, scholarly, or clerical talents will be to suggest the biblical, liturgical, classical, historical, or mythological topics of each pageant and to devise appropriate ‘scriptures’ to be written or posted on the pageant. Occasionally, an artist will be asked to join the committee; if so, his job will be to make preliminary sketches of what it is that the committee has decided. This document will be scrutinized and approved, of course, by the town council, who will want to know how much it costs, but it will also be read by those who are constructing the individual pageants, and it will as a matter of course be translated — not merely replicated — into carpentry, heraldry, painting, costumes, and so forth. It may also be scrutinized and approved by councillors or other representatives of the person making his or her Entry into the city. There can be very few secrets when constructing such a large-scale spectacle in the major thoroughfares of the town. Finally, the same document may also be used as the basis for a formal literary memorial of the event. The writer or poet who composes this account, however, may not have witnessed more than a part of the actual spectacle, or none at all, and he may have had nothing whatsoever to do with planning and executing the actual spectacle.

We find records of such documents being generated throughout Western Europe. One example, found among the records of the Bruges Entry of the Archduke Charles (1515), can serve as typical; it should help us to understand how all the texts we shall shortly be considering were generated and used. And we shall also return to another record of the same type at the end of our investigation to help us understand how one important artist’s work can be understood as contributing to this process.

Once the decision had been made to stage a Royal Entry for the Archduke Charles, the Bruges civic council appointed a committee of six rhetoricians to plan the Entry. This group met at an inn named ‘The Blind Ass’ near the Town Hall, where they drew up a list of pageant *devices* over dinner. They made plans for eleven *devices* illustrating ‘the history of the foundation, rise, and decline’ of Bruges.⁹ This list of eleven proposed pageants was meant to be the backbone of the show; pageants from this list