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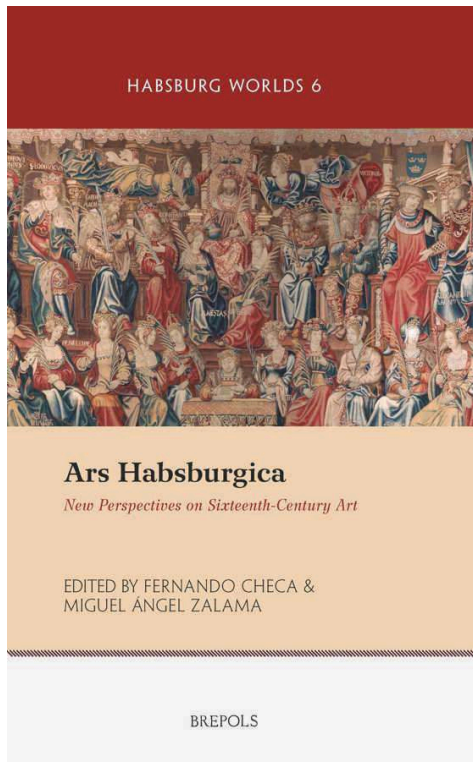
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- 1 Published as a new addition to the book series *Habsburg Worlds*, this book aims to understand art production and patronage in the Habsburg territories during the sixteenth century. By taking Habsburg patronage as a defining element of sixteenth century art, these studies aim to provide of one the many alternative views on Renaissance art, vis-à-vis the traditional Italo centric Vasarian perspective. Given the dominant political and cultural position in Europe of the vast Habsburg area (covering the Iberian Peninsula, the Low Countries, Naples, the Holy Roman Empire, as well as the New World), approaching European art of the sixteenth century from the Habsburg political perspective makes perfect sense. The book consists of an introduction and 14 essays of mostly Spanish researchers, as a result of meetings, conferences, and seminars on the broad subject of Habsburg art and patronage. The structure of the book roughly falls into two main sections.
- 2 The first five essays relate broadly to historiographical issues on early modern art in correspondence with a new Habsburg perspective. Fernando Bouza sets the broad political and cultural stage by focusing on the political mechanisms by exploring how the different territories which formed the Habsburg Empire were able to be governed by walking a tight balance between respecting local systems of government on the one hand, and tight military control on the other, which relied on efficient communication networks with local players. This reached a pinnacle in 1580 with the unification of Spain and Portugal. Fernando Checa's historiographical essay argues for alternative sources of art theory, besides the dominant Albertian and Vasarian paradigms. As such, he proposes four documents or objects that capture the essence of a Habsburg approach to art theory. This consists of Calvete de Estrella's account of Prince Philip's joyous entries in Italy and the Low Countries between 1549 and 1551; the *Conquest of Tunis* tapestry cycle after the designs of Jan Cornelisz. Vermeyen; José de Sigüenza's *Historia de la Orden Jerónima*; and finally the images and texts representing Habsburg genealogies. Together they form an art theoretical framework where magnificence and

dynastic identity were recognized as significant artistic values. In the same vein, both Miguel Ángel Zalama's and Jesús F. Pascual Molina's essay questions the focus by Vasari and Burckhardt on painting, and offers a focus on alternative media which were more relevant within the Habsburg context. Zalama stresses the importance of patronage of large tapestry cycles, while Molina links this phenomenon with the concept of luxury and magnificence as political tools at the Habsburg court, developed as a continuation of both Spanish and Burgundian traditions. As such, they expand the thesis of Marina Belozeskaya on the magnificence of Burgundian courtly art as the dominant European cultural to the Habsburg sixteenth century.¹ An interesting approach to the same historiographic issue is made by Matteo Mancini, who links the popularity of the Vasarian historiographical model to the *Risorgimento*, through a contextual analysis of Gaetano Milanesi, who wrote the first critical edition of Vasari's *Lives*. Within this political and cultural context, the dominant 19th-century anti-Habsburg sentiment heavily colored the perception and definition of Renaissance, and subsequently determined the selection of relevant art theoretical sources. Authors such as Carlo Ridolfi and Marco Boschini, who shared a more positive approach towards the Habsburg taste for magnificence and the display of colour (e.g. the works of Titian) were thus hardly included in the nineteenth-century art historical discourse.

- 3 The second section is devoted to more individual cases, which partly illustrate the Habsburg sense of aesthetics and the political function of artistic display for the Habsburg theatre state. Vanessa Quintanar Cabello's essay focusses the public display of food and banquets as a model of cultural power strategy. Taking the descriptions of Crown Prince Philip's travels through Italy and the Low Countries as basis, she distinguishes three motivators for the banquet as a political tool: to conform loyalty to the future monarch, to consolidate the Prince's political authority, and to display Habsburg power and wealth. Victor Mínguez deals with the self-representation of the Habsburg court as a thalassocracy. Particularly under the reign of Charles V, Habsburg artistic patronage had a strong focus highlighting its naval and maritime power through works of art. Maritime success such as the Battle of Tunis (1535) and the Battle of Lepanto (1571) were immortalized through the commission of public art works such as tapestry series and paintings, symbolizing the increasing importance of Habsburg as a naval military force. This importance of military victory within the Habsburg iconography is also stressed by Antonio Gozalbo Nadal. A key example is *The Battle of Pavia* as represented by Hans Schäufelein, Jörg Breu, Lancelot Blondeel or Bernard van Orley. The battlefield is one of the main recurrent themes defining Habsburg art production in function of legitimation and rulership. This tradition was continued under Philip II, whose first victory at the Battle of Saint-Quentin was represented by Anton van den Wyngaerde. Slightly more problematic is the mentioning of Frans Hogenberg's *Geschichtsblätter* in the context of Habsburg's military self-representations. Since this series took a rather critical position towards the Spanish side during the Eighty-Years War, and was published during the artist's exile in Cologne it seems strange to align this with more unequivocal images of Spanish military self-promotion. Antonio Urquizar-Herrera focusses on the growing role of *spolia* and triumphal processions within Habsburg iconography as a continuation and the redefining of antique and literary traditions. Particularly interesting in his discussion of this phenomenon is the application of *spolia*-related imagery in relation to 'the other', such as Muslim population after the Fall of Granada or within the political framework of new

and exotic objects arriving from the New World. Urquizar-Herrera treats spolia as an act of social distinction and recognition.

- 4 Christian Beaufort-Spontin focusses on the *Armamentarium Heroicum*, the magnificent collection of armour and weapons of heroes of the far and recent past of Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol displayed at Schloss Ambras, and published an a just as ambitious publication which is here regarded as the first illustrated collection catalogue in art history. Beaufort-Spontin reminds us of the original and unique historical context of many of the pieces of armour which are now part of the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Patricia Andrés González's essay treats the use of emblems and devises as crucial component in understanding literature and art of the Habsburg court. She distinguishes three different occasions for their application: as a form of political propaganda, as festive pomp, an finally as an educational instrument in 'mirros for princes'. In her analysis the dominance of emblematic representations at the Habsburg court of Charles V, is strongly related to the importance given to emblems in the public visual strategy of Maximilian I, such as the tournament miniatures in *Freydal* (1512-1515). She concludes that the combination of the humanist milieu with older chivalric values at the Habsburg Court was the perfect setting for the further development of emblematic literature and art. José Luis Gonzalo Sánchez-Morelo provides a historical overview of the formation of the Habsburg libraries and the acquisition of books by subsequent Habsburg rulers, as books became to symbolize the greatness of the dynasty. Also exploring the literary taste of the Habsburg court is María José Vega with an essay on the role of the epic genre in the representation of the sovereign's image and the legitimation of the imperial enterprise through historical genealogies. She convincingly argues that the genre reflected a historicized truth about relevant ethical, political and military values of the ruling Habsburg court, in contrast to Italian neo-Aristotelian poetics. The final essay by Lara Vilà focusses on the representation of Philip II as an advocate for pacifism, in contrast to the more belligerence image building by his father. By focusing on visual representations and epic poetry, she analyses how Philip is represented as a Solomonic King, and as a peaceful ruler.
- 5 In conclusion, this collection of essays offers a well-balanced view on both the artistic and literary image-building and representation of the Habsburg rulers in the Low Countries, the Iberian Peninsula, and the German-speaking lands. It is a welcome addition to the existing literature in the field on Habsburg patronage and offers a useable alternative model for defining the notion of Habsburg art within the framework of European Renaissance culture. Although a contrast is generated between the model of Habsburg art patronage and the traditional Italo-centric Renaissance paradigm, one cannot help wondering how the Habsburg court model differed from other dominant European court cultures, particularly the French court. Despite this remark, this book will remain a cornerstone for further art historical research on Habsburg court culture and sixteenth-century art in general.

NOTES

1. M. Belozerskaya, *Rethinking the Renaissance. Burgundian arts across Europe*, Cambridge, 2002.