Triumph in Antwerp
Rubens’s oil sketch The Triumphal Chariot of Kallo

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Introduction

The city of Antwerp boasts a long tradition of festive ceremonies, among them the Ommegang processions and the Blijde Inkomsten, state entries of new rulers. Such Joyous Entries took place as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Antwerp festival books display printed illustrations of the splendid city decorations. The annual procession, the Ommegang, a parade including both religious and secular themes, even dates back to the fourteenth century. The date of the Joyous Entry was determined by the first visit of a new ruler, while the Ommegang was organized according to the religious calendar. In short, the people of Antwerp were used to regular festive events.

In the summer of 1638, however, an unprecedented spontaneous celebration took place, caused by the news of the victory of the Spanish army against the Dutch in the nearby village of Kallo. In the atmosphere of triumph, the city government decided to commemorate this victory as well as another military success obtained a few days later at Saint-Omer by commissioning a festive float intended to ride in the Antwerp Ommegang. They assigned the task of designing a triumphal chariot to Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), who had been responsible for the city decorations three years before, in 1635, when the Antwerp government had invited Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand to make his Joyous Entry into the city. Rubens’s design – an oil sketch – for The Triumphal Chariot of Kallo, an allegory of triumph, is filled with personifications and mythological figures (fig. 1).

The triumphal chariot is designed in the shape of a ship whose mast is replaced by a huge trophy. The chariot is driven by Providentia Augusta. Behind her the city maidens of Antwerp and Saint-Omer – Antverpia and Audumarum – are kneeling. Virtus and Fortuna, the personifications of courage and fortune, can be seen at the stern of the ‘naval chariot’.
Prisoners at the base of the trophy symbolize the defeated enemy, whereas winged Victories and Fama announce the military triumph.

The iconography of Rubens’s oil sketch will be dealt with more extensively in a sequel to the present article in the next issue of the Rubens Bulletin. The present contribution discusses the commission of Rubens’s oil sketch starting from the historical context of the Eighty Years War and explains the intensity of the festivities following the victory of Kallo. Subsequently, the tradition of the Antwerp Ommegang will be analysed. And, finally, we will take a close look at the text of a seventeenth-century manuscript about the kind of parade for which Rubens’s triumphal chariot was meant.

The content of this article is partly based on chapters 2 and 4 of my thesis Rubens’s oil sketch The Triumphal Chariot of Kallo. Ancient triumph and Antwerp festive tradition. New information resulting from the preparation of an exhibition on the subject has also been included under the heading ‘Triumph in the City’.1

The Eighty Years War and the blockade of the river Scheldt

The city of Antwerp had been rich and prosperous in the sixteenth century, an era that has often been characterized as Antwerp’s Golden Age. The fact that around mid-century the size of Antwerp’s trade activity even surpassed that of Venice is telling evidence of the city’s former wealth. However, Antwerp’s fortunes changed when the Northern Netherlands began to revolt against Philip II of Spain. This revolt marked the beginning of the Eighty Years War (1568–1648), which was to separate the Protestant Northern Netherlands from the Catholic Southern Netherlands ruled by Spain. The economic situation of Antwerp changed dramatically as a consequence of the Spanish recapture of the city by Alexander Farnese in 1585. Since the ‘Fall of Antwerp’, as this episode came to be known, the Northern Provinces decided to blockade the river Scheldt as an answer to the Spanish economic embargo that was disadvantageous to Dutch trade.2 The overseas commerce that had made Antwerp the greatest port in Europe began to decline because maritime traffic was not allowed free passage to the city. From 1585 onwards the goods arriving at the mouth of the river Scheldt had to be unloaded at the Zeeland ports, which now replaced Antwerp as the primary port of discharge on the Scheldt.3 The economic decline of the city caused a huge exodus of refugees, who moved from the Southern Provinces to the North. Thousands of the many Protestant inhabitants of Antwerp, including workers, merchants and artists, settled in the cities of Haarlem, Amsterdam and Leiden. The Dutch blockade was not the only cause of Antwerp’s decline, though. The Spanish restrictions on commerce and the obligatory toll collection disadvantaged Antwerp’s trade even more than they hit the commerce of the Northern Provinces.4

The signing of the Twelve Years’ Truce (1609–21) revived the hope of reopening the Scheldt. The city government commissioned the painting Scaldis and Antverpia for the state room or Staetencamer of Antwerp’s

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1 Adriaans-van Schaik 2011. The exhibition ‘Triumph on Wheels, Rubens’s oil sketch The Triumphal Chariot of Kallo’, will take place at the Museum Rockoxhuis, Antwerp, February–May 2012.
3 Ibid., p. 30.
4 Prims et al. 1927.
city hall from Abraham Janssen (1573–1632) in 1609 (fig. 2). This painting symbolizes the value of the river Scheldt for the city’s welfare and reflects faith in the restoration of its wealth. However, the truce did not bring any improvement as Antwerp’s access to the sea remained under the control of the Dutch patrols.

The Battle of Kallo

The Dutch stranglehold on the city had been consolidated in 1585, when the Spanish troops failed to clear the Dutch from the Scheldt estuary. In 1638, however, the victory at Kallo changed the city’s perspective for a short period of time. When the Dutch troops were defeated, it looked as if Antwerp were finally ready to resume overseas trade and economic recovery were imminent. But who could have foreseen that history would take another turn for the worse and that ten years later the Peace of Münster (1648) would ratify Dutch mastery of the Scheldt estuary? A closer look at the course of the Battle of Kallo should clarify the historical context of Rubens’s design for a triumphal chariot celebrating this victory gained on the borders of the Scheldt.

After the reconquest of Breda by the Dutch in 1637, the capture of Antwerp was the primary objective of Prince Frederick Henry’s strategy in the revolt of the Northern Netherlands against Spain. In 1638, on their first campaign after retaking Breda, the Dutch armies moved in the direction of the river Scheldt (fig. 3).

Despite Frederick Henry’s objections about the moment of attack, the Dutch deputies and the French allies ordered an immediate raid on the city of Antwerp in June. As a result, Frederick Henry sent the experienced field marshal Count William of Nassau-Siegen and his six thousand men in advance to capture the left riverbank, especially the embankment at Kallo, from where the citadel of Antwerp had to be taken. It was planned that Frederick Henry and his troops would aim for Berchem and that the combined armies would besiege the city. However, the planned attack turned into a disaster for the Dutch troops (fig. 4).

William of Nassau managed to occupy the forts of Kallo and Verrebroek, though not without casualties, as he lost many of his men in the slush of the wetlands. The two Dutch armies did not meet in accordance with their military plans, because William decided to stay at Kallo and

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5 Panel, 1609, 174 × 308 cm, KMSKA, inv. 212. The Staetcamer of the city hall was the place where the peace negotiations between the Northern and Southern Netherlands were held. Nico Van Hout, in Huvenne 2003, p. 86.

Frederick Henry waited in vain to get a message from his field marshal. Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand’s strategy of obstructing the meeting of the two armies by ordering an immediate attack of the Dutch troops appears to have been a stroke of luck. The Spanish troops attacked the enemy in the back lines, while the Dutch tried in vain to withdraw to Fort Liefkenshoek. The Dutch armies took severe losses: many were killed, wounded or captured in battle, or they drowned in the wetlands. The attack on Antwerp had failed, and in the course of time Frederick Henry’s defeat (one of the few) seems to have been forgotten in favour of his victories described in the Dutch history books.

The victory at Kallo was one of Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand’s greatest military exploits. The estimated number of Dutch casualties was about two thousand, while twelve hundred had been taken prisoner. The Spanish troops under the command of the Marquis de Leede took eighteen cannon, eighty ammunition boats, two pontoon bridges and two cannon sloops. On top of this victory, Ferdinand’s troops commanded by Prince Thomas of Carignan and Count Piccolomini defeated Frederick Henry’s French allies at Saint-Omer a couple of days later.

The victory at Kallo caused unprecedented euphoria in the city of Antwerp, and the Spanish successes were celebrated as a miracle. News of the victory reached Antwerp early in the morning of 22 June 1638 and, according to a popular pamphlet describing the events, immediately brought about a pilgrimage to the battlefield. The pamphlet reports a jubilation beyond words spreading among the citizens of Antwerp. The news encouraged many of them to walk to Kallo in order to see the place of the ‘heavenly triumph’ and bring back as battlefield relics the orange garlands that had belonged to the armies of the Prince of Orange. The pilgrimage lasted for nearly eight days. After the battle, the captured Dutch ships were moored at the Scheldt docks and at the Engelse Kaai, where they were admired by the excited crowd.

Immediately, the victory at Kallo was considered a miracle due to the interference of the Holy Virgin. Rumour had it that William of Nassau-Siegen’s son Maurice had found a statuette of Our Lady in the church of Kallo, that he mocked it and burned it in a fire, while at the same time ridiculing the images of the apostles Peter and Paul. The death of Maurice and the defeat of the Dutch troops were believed to be the punishment for this mockery. The pamphlet in question is not the only source of this rumour, for the story is also referred to in a letter by Balthasar Moretus I to his nephew Theodoor, a professor in Prague, in a letter dated 25 June 1638.

The story seems to have had an impact on the emotions caused by the victory. The Cardinal-Infante in person was present at the Te Deum in Antwerp Cathedral celebrating the victory, which was attended by a huge

Triumph in the city

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7 Blok 1924, p. 212.
8 Génard 1888, p. 158. According to Sabbe (1929, p. 276; and 1933, chapter 17), three thousand troops were killed and three standards, fifty banners, twenty-six field cannons, two frigates, two pontoon bridges and eighty vessels loaded with food and ammunition were captured.
10 The issue was mentioned in the pamphlet (see note 9): ‘… want hy hadde daeghs te voren inde Kercke buyten Calloo doen op het vier smijten ende verbranden het beeldt van de weerdighe Moeder Gods Maria/ met de selve gheckende ende spottende/ waerom dat sy niet was wrekeing het onghelyck dat men haer aen ede: hadde oock doen in stucken kappen de beelden van S.S. Peeter ende Pauwels Patroonen van de selve Kercke/ met vele byghbeovghde blasphemien ende Godslandersingen: welck allegader met syne ooghien zeghsien heeft den tambour majeur van Sinte Marie…’ Sabbe 1933, p. 386.
According to Maurits Sabbe, not only the people of Antwerp but even the Cardinal-Infante himself attributed the victory to the Holy Virgin and St Aloysius Gonzaga. Cornelis Galle II’s (1615–1678) engraving *Ferdinand receiving the sword in order to defeat the Dutch Armies at Kallo* (1638) represents the religious feelings related to the victory at Kallo (fig. 5). The image depicts the governor of the Spanish Netherlands kneeling, while the Virgin and Child enthroned in heaven are surrounded by St Peter, St Paul and the angels. Ferdinand receives the sword from the hands of St Paul. In the background, the Dutch soldiers under the command of Count William of Nassau-Siegen are taking to flight after the failed attack on Fort Kallo. The engraving was made after the altarpiece by Theodoor van Thulden (1606–1669) that once adorned the Church of St Peter and St Paul at Kallo. The high altar, which was replaced by a late baroque construction designed by Cornelis Struyf, in about 1734–40, probably disappeared from the church, together with Van Thulden’s altarpiece (present whereabouts unknown), at the time of the French occupation.

A copper coin commemorating the Battle of Kallo was issued in Brussels in 1638. On the obverse is Philip IV of Spain on horseback, while the reverse shows a ship nearly capsizing in the waves. The coin was minted in honour of the sovereign, instead of representing his brother Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand, the commander of Philip’s troops, which emphasizes the political weight attached to the victory by the Spanish king. The significance of this military success is further corroborated, for that matter, by the fact that the battle was commemorated in several works of art. The painter Pieter Snayers (1592–after 1666) specialized in battle scenes, especially the historical sieges of contemporary conflicts. As court painter to the Cardinal-Infante, he made a visual report of the Spanish military success (fig. 6). The battlefield is rendered in a bird’s-eye view showing the polders and dykes, while the outline of Antwerp is vaguely visible in the upper right corner. A similar painting of the battle by the brothers Bonaventura (1614–1652) and Gillis Peeters (1612–1653) is in the Museum Vleeshuis, Antwerp.

**The Antwerp Ommegang**

From the fourteenth century onwards, religious processions had become an increasingly important part of European church rituals, but they were also prone to secularization. Italian processions at Carnival and the feast of Corpus Christi set the pattern. Starting in the quattrocento, the religious procession accompanying a popular festival soon developed into the *trionfo* (triumph; triumphal procession; also float in such a procession), consisting of groups of masked figures walking on foot or carried in chariots. Soon enough the secular *trionfo*, modelled on the parade of the Roman *Imperator*, became far more frequent than its religious counterpart. Knowledge of

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11 Sabbe 1929, p. 277.
12 *Tabula summi altaris ecclesiae parochialis in Calloo*, 1638, engraving, 259 × 179 mm; Museum Plantin-Moretus/Prentenkabinet, Antwerp, inv. PK.OP12922.
13 According to Frederik Muller, the engraving is after the altarpiece that used to be in the church of Kallo. See F. Muller, *De Nederlandsche geschiedenis in platen: beredeneerde beschrijving van Nederlandsche historieplaten, zinprenten en historische kaarten*, 4 vols., Amsterdam 1863–82, IV, pp. 187–188, no.1786B.
14 I owe this information to Dr Claire Baisier, curator of the Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp.
16 *The Battle of K allo on 2 1 June 1638, 1638–53, canvas, 262.5 × 379.5 cm, Museum Vleeshuis, Antwerp.*
17 Burckhardt (1990, p. 256) argued that the ecclesiastical nature of the Italian procession soon gave way to a secular character.
the classical *triumphus* was derived from ancient reliefs and the writings of classical authors. If there were no military victories to celebrate, the festive procession might also be organized for its own sake.

In the cities of the Southern Netherlands, the *Ommegang* had been a highlight of the festive calendar from the Middle Ages. *Tableaux vivants* on the cars of the processions commemorated religious festivals, especially that of Corpus Christi. The word *Ommegang* (walk-round) derives from the habit of carrying the relic of a saint, mostly the patron of the local church, through the parish streets, which characterized the earliest ceremonies. In Antwerp the tradition is believed to go back to the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century. The earliest account of an *Ommegang* has been found in a document from 1324 in the Antwerp city archives. The oldest known Antwerp *ordinancie*, a ceremonial booklet describing the *Ommegang*, is dated 1398. It informs us about the arrangement of the procession accompanying the relic of the Holy Circumcision. The annual procession celebrating the feast of the Holy Sacrament or Corpus Christi originated in Antwerp between 1324 and 1398. The procession in honour of Our Lady, the *Onze Lieve Vrouwe Ommegang*, which took place on the Sunday after the Assumption of the Holy Virgin, was first mentioned in the municipal accounts of 1399.

The 1398 *ordinancie* describes the procession in detail. First came the artisans, grouped according to their crafts. These were followed by *poyncten* (points or acts), performances of Old and New Testament stories and similar narratives, including Jacob’s Dream, The Twelve Apostles and St Christopher, and the Annunciation. Next to the *poyncten* came the regular and secular clergy, then the archers’ guilds, the cloth guild with the four candles, the city pipers, the burgomasters and aldermen, and the bailiff. The prelates at the end of the procession accompanied the relic of the Holy Circumcision. The carrying of the relic was the privilege of the prelate of St Michael’s Abbey; the canopy over it was carried by six ‘good boys’. The religious part of the *Onze Lieve Vrouwe Ommegang* presented six scenes related to the life of the Virgin: Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, Adoration of the Magi, Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys of the Virgin, and the Virgin’s Assumption or her Coronation. The representation of the triumph of Christ in the Last Judgement completed the religious section.

Secular influence was present from the outset in these Antwerp processions, just as in Italy. Worldly subjects, such as the representation of the sovereigns, the Dukes of Brabant, mingled with religious themes from the very beginning. The *ordinancies* of the Circumcision processions of 1398 and 1494 report the use of costumes. In the course of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, however, this secular influence gradually became more apparent. Symbolic themes and allegories inspired by humanism increasingly replaced the earlier, more realistic performances.

The *poyncten* featuring costumed players developed into dialogues and pageant plays influenced by the *camers van rhetorike* or chambers of rhetoric. Little by little biblical subjects were transformed into more worldly themes. The biblical giant Goliath turned into the city giant ‘Druon Antigon, and the ‘Whale’ that once spat out Jonah later carried a Cupid handling a water syringe. The ‘Maidens’ Car’ no longer referred to the biblical parable of the wise and foolish virgins. And the ‘Camel’ broke loose from its original group of the Adoration of the Magi.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the *Ommegang* consisted of a series of traditional secular items staged on some ten cars, followed by the religious section, but floats featuring new and topical items were added on a regular basis. These new, worldly themes often had a moralizing character, for instance ‘The Course of the World in Seven Figures’ (1561), ‘The Theatre of the World’ (1564) and ‘The Present Time’ (1566). According to the *ordinancie* of the *Onze Lieve Vrouwe Ommegang* of 1564, the secular themes started with ‘Portunus’, the Roman god of harbours, riding naked on a sea horse and presented as the servant of

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18 McGrath 1975.
19 Prims 1949, p. 7.
‘Neptune’, god of the seas, who followed him, seated on a sea monster more than thirty feet long. ‘Nereus’ and ‘Doris’, representing the meeting of the salt sea and fresh water, were accompanied by water creatures dressed in iris and reed. The ‘Elephant’ carrying ‘Fortune’ on its back was followed by a big giant accompanied by smaller giants as well as by ‘Brabon’, who carried the giant’s cut hand on his sword and the ‘Ship’ of the traders’ guild. The final secular theme was that of the ‘City Maiden of Antwerp’, who was accompanied by ‘Scaldis’, the personification of the river Scheldt; ‘Mercury’, the god of commerce; ‘Copia’, the personification of abundance; and by boys and girls carrying all kinds of jewellery. After 1564, the topics of ‘Mount Parnassus’ featuring the nine ‘Muses’ and the ‘Mountain of Maidens’ were added. New subjects were explained by means of texts on boards or in a printed booklet. The oratuer preceded the poyncte and recited verses introducing it, while boys carried text boards elucidating the subject or containing a suitable motto. The personifications or allegorical figures were identified by labels at their feet or by banderoles held by angels. Printed ordinancien that were offered for sale, described the annually recurring ‘points’ and explained the new ones.

No longer restricted to religious feasts, the Ommegang began to be used to intensify the festive spirit of a Joyous Entry or the celebration of a victory. Political motives thus also encouraged the creation of new floats. In 1609 the Twelve Years’ Truce inspired four new themes, including ‘Pax ende Iusticia’ or ‘Peace and Justice’; ‘Mercury’, symbolizing the much hoped-for restoration of commerce; and the ‘Forge’, in which the armour was reforged into household and farming equipment (braetpannen ende ploeghysers, pots and iron ploughs). The fourth new theme was a scene in which men and women were seated at a round table while a good dinner was being served. In 1619 the Truce inspired the theme ‘Alliance et confédération Belgique’, presenting the Archduke closing the Temple of Janus.

This newly-established tradition of adding topical political subjects to the traditional poyncte of the Ommegang provided the context in which Rubens was commissioned by the Antwerp city government to design a triumphal chariot commemorating the politically significant military victories at Kallo and Saint-Omer. Despite the fact that it took part in the Ommegang, Rubens’s waghen triumphael celebrated this worldly triumph that was so important to Antwerp while at the same time paying tribute to the city that commissioned it and to its conqueror, Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand.

Joyous Entries

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Italian, Spanish and French as well as Northern European cities organized triumphal celebrations. These festivals took place in such cities as Rome, Ferrara, Venice, Genoa, Nuremberg, Ghent, Bruges and Antwerp. In these magnificent entries the sovereign played the leading role, irrespective of whether he was the pope or the emperor, or a doge, duke, prince or king. The decorated cities and their ephemeral structures formed the setting in which the ceremonies were staged. Often the triumphal entry expressed the special bond between the city and the ruler. In the Southern Netherlands, a political protocol was typically part of the ritual.

Ever since the time of the dukes of Burgundy, new governors had been invited to make their Blijde Inkomst in the major cities of the Southern Netherlands, a tradition that was to last until the French Revolution. Strictly speaking, the Joyous Entry was the first ceremonial visit of a new ruler, and it often involved the granting of special rights or privileges to the city. In a solemn ceremony, the newly invested ruler was obliged to acknowledge that his power was limited by the rights and privileges of

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26 Ibid.
27 Génard 1876.
28 H. G. Evers (in Von Roeder-Baumbach 1943, p.118) refers to the oldest known Blijde Inkomst in 1354, and possibly even before 1268.
his subjects. The ritual was in essence the renewal of a social contract, in which the city acknowledged the succession and legitimate rule of the new sovereign, while the ruler in turn confirmed the traditional local privileges and agreements. The Antwerp Joyous Entries were exuberant festivities, in which theatrical performances were staged and splendid temporary arches and stages decorated the route followed by the prince and his retinue. The ritual that gave an identity to power started with a welcome at the city’s boundary, followed by the taking of the oath, the tour through the decorated streets and the honouring of the new governor – all according to the traditional rules.

In Antwerp the festive chariots built for the Ommegang were placed in the streets and squares to intensify the festivity of the Joyous Entries (figs. 7–8). The giant Druon Antigon, designed by Pieter Coecke van Aalst in 1534, was first displayed on Grote Markt, the central market square, during the Joyous Entry of Prince Philip in 1549. Although designed for the Ommegang, the Elephant on a wheeled platform figured in the streets of Antwerp during state entries beginning with the triumphal entry of François d’Alençon, Duke of Anjou, brother of Henry III of France, who was invited by William the Silent to succeed Philip II as hereditary sovereign of the Low Countries in 1582 (fig. 9).

Traditional Ommegang cars such as the ‘Whale’ and the ‘City Maiden Antverpia’ became a regular part of the state entry decorations as well. In the 1635 entry, the ‘Whale’ was placed on the Meir and a large gilt float with the enthroned Maiden of Antwerp was placed behind the Keizerspoort. In Lange Nieuwstraat, Ferdinand and his court dignitaries passed the traditional car of Mount Parnassus, featuring Apollo seated on a rock, playing his harp while the nine Muses were singing at his feet. The Ommegang imagery added lustre to the city decorations, and it most probably appealed more strongly to the imagination of the crowds than the complex iconography of the arches and stages in honour of the sovereign.

29 Van de Velde and Vlieghe 1969, p. 11.
31 McGrath 1975, p. 181. According to Von Roeder-Baumbach (1943, p. 90), not only in Antwerp but in other cities too, including Ghent, the Ommegang cars were usually placed in the streets as a decoration during the Joyous Entries.
32 Von Roeder-Baumbach (1943, p. 89) refers to an etching by Egidius Hendrickx in attributing the giant to Coecke van Aalst.
33 The unloading of a live elephant in Antwerp in 1563, a present of the King of Portugal to the Emperor Maximilian II, then king of Bohemia, resulted in an enormous scientific and artistic attention to the exotic animal, and many representations followed.
34 J. R. Martin (1972, pp. 35, 100 and 162) locates the Ommegang cars in his description of Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand’s entry.
Scenography of a festive event

The descriptions of the ceremonial entries organized for the new governors and the lists of the Ommegang poyncten discussed above can be found in the literature on Joyous Entries and Ommegangen. An interesting manuscript I found during my research in the Antwerp city archives may be added to the literature. The document has not been referred to before, and the new information it contains contributes to a better understanding of the Antwerp festive tradition. It is named ‘Ordre van den Ommeganck’ and appears to be a seventeenth-century protocol of an Ommegang event. The manuscript is not dated, but given its similarity to other seventeenth-century written texts, it could be located in Antwerp in the seventeenth century – most probably the second part of the century, although it might also be a copy of an older document. It is possible that the instructions for organizing the Ommegang were used as a guide on the occasion of (an) earlier event(s). If the manuscript is a copy, the original must date from after the Ommegang of 1599, when the Sea Chariot or the Chariot of Neptune referred to in the document made their appearance in the Joyous Entry of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella. (The Elephant, also mentioned in the text, first figured in the triumphal entry of François d’Alençon in 1582.)

The ‘Ordre van den Ommeganck’ gives a vibrant impression of an Antwerp parade as described above. Obviously the festive ceremonies were very well organized. The document offers a kind of scenography, prescribing the progress of the procession and arranging the sequence and the distance of musicians and cars, their place and movements in the streets and on Grote Markt. Musicians playing the cymbals and trumpets precede the parade of the Big Ship, the Small Ships, the Whale, the Little Dolphins and the Sea Chariot, all subjects referring to the river and the sea. Musicians playing the horn precede the Maidens’ Chariot, St Michael’s Chariot and Mount Parnassus; they are followed by the Giant, the Camel, the Lion, the Small Giants and the Elephant (all but St Michael’s Chariot representing secular themes). The majority of the subjects listed in the document participated in the Antwerp Ommegang from the earliest days and were still part of it in more recent times.

According to the ‘Ordre van den Ommeganck’, the event took place on Grote Markt, in front of the city hall. A portion of the parade was waiting in Hoogstraat, while the Maidens’ Chariot was advancing in front of the prince. The musicians and cars were positioned on the square following the instructions of the ‘directors’ or aenleijders. Some of the cars were turning in circles round the market square, while others were positioned in what seems to have been a complex pattern. An interesting note written in the margin was meant as a reminder to put a supply of water in tubs on the steps of the city hall in advance, in order to provision Mount Parnassus and the Whale. The last page stipulated that the cars, before leaving the scene, had to turn round twice in front of the prince.

Considering the seventeenth-century ‘Ordre van den Ommeganck’, it may be concluded that in 1638 the Antwerp city government commissioned a triumphal chariot to ride in a festive procession similar to the one described in the manuscript. At this time, the Antwerp Ommegang, a popular ceremony organized for and by the city and its inhabitants, was attended by the prince in person and specifically adapted to his presence. Since the manuscript is not dated, we cannot be sure to which of the seventeenth-century governors it refers, but it might be Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand if the handwriting could be dated to between 1635 and 1641. In that case, the ceremony may have been part of the festivities accompanying the Antwerp Ommegang and the urban culture of the Southern Netherlands in the seventeenth century includes: Van Bruane 2008; Thøfner 2007; Joukes 1990; Martín 1972; Van de Velde and Vlieghe 1969; Prims 1949; Von Roeder-Baumbach 1943; De Burbure 1878.

25 Literature about the Joyous Entries, the Ommegangen and the urban culture of the Southern Netherlands in the seventeenth century includes: Van Bruane 2008; Thøfner 2007; Joukes 1990; Martín 1972; Van de Velde and Vlieghe 1969; Prims 1949; Von Roeder-Baumbach 1943; De Burbure 1878.
26 Stadsarchief Antwerpen, the Antwerp City Archive; Search: Ancien Régime van de stad Antwerpen; Stadsbestuur: archief voortvloeiend uit de uitgeoefende functies; Bestuur en beleid (Privilegekamer); Dossiers van de secretarie geordend naar onderwerp; Plechtigheden; Ommegangen en Processies: file PK 1644. The ‘Ordre van den Ommeganck’ is one of the documents in the file ‘Ommegangen en Processies’, containing sixteenth- to eighteenth-century documents concerning processions in the city of Antwerp.
27 I want to thank Dr Marie Juliette Marinus, advisor for scientific work of the Antwerp Stadsarchief, for sharing her thoughts on the subject.

28 The Antwerp Museum aan de Stroom (MAS) owns a collection of traditional Ommegang bozetti and design drawings, dating from the first half of the twentieth century. The city warehouse preserves (remakes of) Ommegang cars, which were used in Wilrijk near Antwerp in 2005 and 2010.
Ferdinand’s Joyous Entry in 1635, or it may have been a celebration on the occasion of Ferdinand’s victory at Kallo. In any event, the document deserves further investigation.

**Triumph on wheels**

The Battle of Kallo was one of the major battles in the Eighty Years War between the Spanish and Dutch armies. Its outcome had been exceptionally successful for the Spanish and a great disaster for the Dutch, and Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand, who had protected the city of Antwerp on behalf of his sovereign Philip IV, was welcomed as a hero by the people of Antwerp. However, the city’s treasury was empty because of the payments for the Spanish protection of the city and the great expenses incurred in the preparation of the Joyous Entry three years earlier. Therefore the city government decided on a low-priced solution, ordering a triumphal chariot for the Ommegang. The Antwerp city accounts for the year 1638 list a payment of 84 pounds Artois to the wine merchant Christoffel van Wesel for a delivery of ‘vin de Paris ... to Peeter-Paulo Rubens ... for a drawing of a new car made by him’. How should this amount be valued? By way of comparison, the city had paid Rubens the total amount of 5,000 pounds Artois for his designs for the Joyous Entry of the Cardinal-Infante three years before. That payment, however, was for the total design of the city decorations consisting of several stages and arches, all of them fitted with paintings and most of them designed by Rubens. Caspar Gevartius received 480 pounds Artois for the inscriptions of Latin epigraphs to be placed on the structures. The artists Marten de Vos and Ambrosius Francken seem to have received 68 pounds Artois for the design of the stages and arches in 1594. According to Margit Thøfner, the Archduchess Isabella paid the court architect Francart about 5,000 guilders for designing and constructing the car of ‘Liberality’ riding in her husband Albert’s funeral procession in Brussels in 1622. Pressed for money, however, the Antwerp city government found the best possible solution for celebrating the victory on a low budget without sacrificing quality. Their strategy was to replace the victor’s parade along expensive stages and arches by the idea of riding Triumph itself through the streets of Antwerp on an Ommegang chariot. It was Peter Paul Rubens who invented a new triumphal allegory, connecting his classical knowledge to the actual political situation in Antwerp, while expressing both the joy and the triumph of the victory.

29 CCCLXX ‘... Christoffel van Wesel, wynvercooper, de somme van vierentachtentich ponden Artois, voor een stuck vin de Paris by hem geleverd aen Heer Peeter-Paulo Rubens int jayer 1638 voor sekere teekeninge van eene neuyen waghen by hem gemaakt, volgende de acte collegiael, ordonnante ende quitantie ... LXXXII £’ (Stadsrekeningen. Domeynen, 1638 à 1639, fol. 309v). See Génard 1876, p. 296.


41 Von Roeder-Baumbach 1943, p. 114.

42 Thøfner 2007, p. 314.

43 In a discussion about the oil sketch of the *Triumphal Chariot of Kallo*, Paul Huvenne drew my attention to the cleverness of replacing the victor’s triumphal ride by staging the triumph itself on wheels.
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