The re-emergence of a Sculptor: eight lifesize bronzes by Jacques Jonghelinck*

On August 17, 1585, after a famous siege, the city of Antwerp capitulated to Alexander Farnese, commander of the Spanish forces and Philip II's Governor-General of the Netherlands. The fall of Antwerp signalled the return of an important revolutionary bastion to Spanish rule and Catholicism. Ten days later the Parmesan prince and his entourage made a triumphant entry into the city, which had been decorated to celebrate the occasion. The *pièces de résistance* were eight lifesize bronze statues, which were erected on the Groote Markt (principal market square), the political and social centre of the Flemish metropolis (fig. 1). In front of Cornelis Floris' imposing northern Renaissance townhall stood personifications of the *Seven planets*, and in the middle of the square there was a fountain in the form of a *Bacchus* seated on a barrel. The artist was Jacques Jonghelinck, who was highly regarded in his day but is now too little remembered as a creator of monumental bronzes. It had always been thought that this spec-

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2 E. van Meteren, *Historie der Nederlanden ende honderd na-hare ontogen ende geschiedenissen tot den jare Mf/ICXII*, The Hague 1623, fol. 240v. Van Meteren gives the following account of this triumphal entry which, as far as I have been able to discover, is not mentioned in the *Pompa Introitus* literature. 'Daer na de 27 Augusti is de Prince van Parma't Antwerpse triumphantelijk genigere

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tacular series of bronzes had been lost, but all eight have now been traced through archival and visual documentation.

Jacques Jonghelinck (1530-1606) came from an Antwerp family of mint-masters. In 1551 the young Jonghelinck travelled to Milan, where he stayed with Leone Leoni, the official sculptor to Emperor Charles V who had visited the court at Brussels shortly before. On returning to the Low Countries Jonghelinck set up his home and studio in Brussels, where he worked regularly for the court. Today he is best known for the many medallions he produced for a succession of nobles, courtiers and other prominent figures, but he also created a number of large bronzes.

Jonghelinck started on his earliest monumental work in 1558: the tomb of Charles the Bold (fig. 2). Philip II commissioned him to make the effigies and secondary bronze elements for this tomb as a counterpart to and after the model of the 15th-century Gothic monument to Charles’ daughter, Mary of Burgundy. Both tombs are in the Onze Lieve Vrouwekerk in Bruges. It was probably as a mark of his appreciation for this work that Philip appointed Jonghelinck as his seal-maker.

After the king’s departure from the Netherlands in 1559 Jonghelinck worked for his half-sister, Regentess Margaret of Parma, the mother of Alexander Farnese. She commissioned the artist to make a number of bronzes (now lost): a Cupid, a small Neptune, and two grotesque masks for the fountain in the park of the former palace complex on Coudenburgh, the seat of the government and the court. For Margaret’s successor, the notorious Don Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alva, Jonghelinck made a more...