

EMIT abstract (OCTOBER 14-16, 2010)

The Kings of Aragon in Oil, Ink, and the Brain:
A Cognitive Intermedial Approach to the Sister Arts

Four years ago at the EMIT conference in Denver, I analyzed three portrayals of the Kings of Aragon--a collection of portraits with accompanying texts, an ekphrastic poem by Juan Francisco Andrés de Uztarroz that described those portraits, and another poetic rendering by Juan de Moncayo y Gurrea that treated the same subject without making specific reference to the paintings--from a perspective that focused on similarities between the renderings in their visual and textual manifestations and on how the works achieved their rhetorical, political aims. In the introduction to his 1996 book, *Icons--Texts--Iconotexts: Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, Peter Wagner called for what he termed an intermedial approach to coinciding visual and textual works that looks not at their complementarity, but rather at the often ignored elements peculiar to each medium that resist convergent interpretations. In this paper, I will revisit the same works, this time with the goal of casting light on those differences.

As a means of approaching the three works from such a viewpoint, I consider the visual and cognitive processes that viewers/readers must employ in order to see, read, and interpret the juxtaposed elements of textual and visual representation. Twentieth- and twenty-first-century studies in cognitive science (such as Charles G. Gross's *Brain, Vision, Memory: Tales in the History of Neuroscience* [1999], and Zenon W. Pylyshyn's *Seeing and Visualizing: It's Not What You Think* [2006]) have shed much light on the nature of human vision, visualization, cognition, and memory, and offer a theoretical framework for comprehending and comparing the processes. Understanding how the different media are encountered should provide insight into what obstacles must be overcome (or ignored) in order for poetry and painting to be considered complementary