# ANTIQUARIANISM AND LOCAL TRADITIONS IN THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS (16TH-17TH C.)

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# INTRODUCTION: EARLY MODERN ANTIQUARIANISM

- Interest in material remains of the past (esp. Antiquity) and their integration into historical research

- Antiquarianism and history:
  - Antiquarian works: focus on material remains, geographical or typological structure
  - Historical works: focus on the ancient texts, chronological stucture
  - « A pourous border »
  - Later influence of antiquarianism on history (19th c.)

# Introduction: early modern antiquarianism

- The antiquarian method:
  - Personal observation
  - Precise description
  - Serialization (other remains and texts)
  - Analysis and conclusions

# INTRODUCTION: EARLY MODERN ANTIQUARIANISM

- Emergence and spread :
  - From the 14th-15th c.: Italian peninsula
    - Petrarch, Alberti, Biondo …
    - Ligorio, Panvinio…
  - From the second half of the 16th c.: northwest Europe (France, England, Western German principalities, Southern Netherlands…)
    - William Camden, Poldo d'Albenas…

# Introduction: early modern antiquarianism

- Antiquarianism in the Early Modern Southern Netherlands
  - A space on the margins of the ancient Roman Empire
  - Few but atypical remains

  - Not really studied before my PhD thesis (2021)
  - Focus on monumental remains
    - Broader interaction with the early modern society: not only scholary studies, but also reuse (landmarks, symbols of seniority…)

# INTRODUCTION: EARLY MODERN ANTIQUARIANISM

- Plan :

  - ❖ Main Features:
    - Geographical and chronological scopes
    - Which vestiges ?
    - Who were the scholars interested in Roman remains ?
    - Chronology of that interest
  - ❖ Objectives and methods
  - ❖ Antiquarianism and local traditions

# GEOGRAPHICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL SCOPES




- The southern Netherlands (present-day Belgium, Luxembourg and northern France)
- Partition of the Netherlands (1568-1648)
- Religion: catholic Church

Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Burgundian-Low-Countries-map-from-Marco-Zanoli_fig1_307696605

# The Roman Remains

## Monumental remains

- Barrows / tumuli
  - Dozens of tumuli
  - Up to 15 m. high
  - Hesbaye region (Hainaut, Namur, Brabant, Liège)
  - Used as landmarks
  - Mainly perceived as Romans



Roman tumulus in Glimes [author, 2015]

# The Roman Remains

## Monumental remains

- Roman roads
  - Carac.
  - The road between Bavay and Tongeren
  - Other roads from Bavay
  - Roads in the Duchy of Luxembourg



The Roman road between Bavay and Tongeren (with the tumulus in Hottomont) [author, 2021]

# THE ROMAN REMAINS

## Monumental remains

- Urban vestiges
  - Mainly Roman walls
  - Late Antiquity
  - Bavay (Hainaut)
  - Arlon (Luxembourg)
  - Tongeren (Liège)



Roman Walls in Tongeren [author, 2020].

# THE ROMAN REMAINS

## Monumental remains

- Other vestiges:
  - Mausoleum in Igel (23 meters high)
  - *Oppida* and *vici* (Dalheim/Ricciacum, Titelberg, Velzeke…)
  - Some non Roman vestiges associated with the Romans (prehistoric monoliths, medieval remains…)



The mausoluem in Igel [author, 2017]

# ANTIQUARIANISM IN THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS

## Chronology and main authors

- Middle Ages and the first half of the 16th, mainly local traditions:
  - Trojans
  - Magic / Devil
- Ex.: Bavay
- Early interest: the excavation of the tumulus of Zaventem (1507)

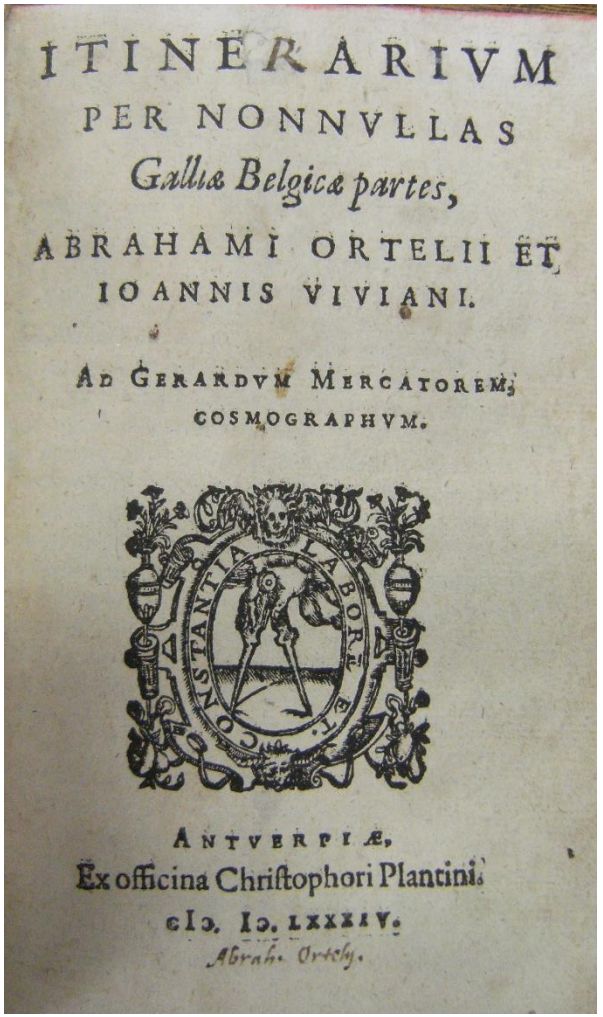


Drawing presenting the Roman tumulus of Zaventem (1507). © ÖNB/Wien, Cod. 3324, fol. 8 v.

# ANTIQUARIANISM IN THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS

## Chronology and main authors

- Last third of the century :
  - Petrus Divaeus
  - Lodovico Guicciardini (*Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi*, 1567)
  - Justus Lipsius
  - Abraham Ortelius and Jean Vivianus (*Itinerarium per nonnullas Galliae Belgicae partes*, 1584)
- Mainly in Leuven and Antwerp


ITINERARIVM
PER NONNVLLAS
Galliæ Belgicæ partes,
ABRAHAMI ORTELII ET
IOANNIS VIVIANI.
AD GERARDVM MERCATOREM,
COSMOGRAPHVM.
CONSTANTIA LABORE
ANTVERPIÆ,
Ex officina Christophori Plantini.
CIↃ. IↃ. LXXXIV.
Abrah. Ortely.

*The Itinerarium per nonnullas Galliae Belgicae partes* by Ortelius and Vivianus (1584). © BUMP, Namur

# ANTIQUARIANISM IN THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS

## Chronology and main authors

- 17th century: « clerical turn » & « regional turn »
- Clerical turn: most authors were religious (esp. Jesuits)
  - Ex.: A. Wiltheim, A. Bucherius, J. Malbrancq, J. Buzelin, Fr. Gautran….
- « Regional / urban » histories and investigations
  - Ex. : *Annales de la province et comté d'Haynau* (Fr. Vinchant), *Histoire de Valentiennes* (H. d'Outreman), *Luxemburgum Romanum* (A. Wiltheim), *Tornacum Nerviorum* (A. Catullus), *De morinis et morinorum rebus* (J. Malbrancq)…
- Mainly historical works, more than antiquarian, but:
  - Influence of the antiquarian method on historical writing
  - Some antiquarians: A. Wiltheim, J.-J. Chifflet…

# ANTIQUARIANISM IN THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS




Portrait of Miraeus (between 1616 and 1657)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Portret_van_Aubertus_Miraeus,_RP-P-OB-16.466.jpg

- Some more "global" studies :
  - Miraeus, *Rerum Belgicarum Annales* (1624)
  - Gilles Bouchier (Bucherius), *Belgium romanum ecclesiasticum et civile* (1655)
- Some interesting travel accounts
  - Ex.: Ph. de Hurges (1615), P. Bergeron (1619)…

# ANTIQUARIANISM IN THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS

Objectives and methods

- Understanding the vestiges:
  - What was the function of the remains?
  - What could the remains tell us about the region's past?

- Establishing a correspondance between ancient and modern geography:
  - The remains as evidences (compared with literary sources, toponymy and topography)
  - Political dimension

- Fighting against the local traditions :
  - The Trojan legend / magic
  - The myth of the famous founder (Caesar, Bennus…)
  - The false etymologies

# ANTIQUARIANISM IN THE EARLY MODERN SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS

## Objectives and method

- An example: the mausoleum in Igel
  - The local tradition
    - Constantius Chlorus and Helena / Caligula
  - Ortelius and Vivianus (1575)
    - Reading the inscription (the Secundini)
  - Alexandre Wiltheim (mid-17th c.)
    - Interpreting the data



View of the mausoleum. A. Ortelius, J. Vivianus, *Itinerarium…,* Antwerp, 1584, p. A53. [BUMP - UNamur]

# ANTIQUARIANISM IN THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS

Objectives and methods

- Description

- The Ancient sources:
  - The nature of site (ancient geography)
    - Itineraries, Peutinger Table, Ptolemy, Caesar…
    - Comparing texts with material remains, etymology and local topography
  - The analysis of an ancient vestige
    - Literary sources: Pliny, Cicero, Varro, Vitruvius, Martial…

# ANTIQUARIANISM IN THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS



Objectives and methods

- The comparison

- Ex. : the « ara Lunae » in Arlon
  - The local tradition
  - The written ancient sources (Orolaunum)
  - The form of an altar in Roman times

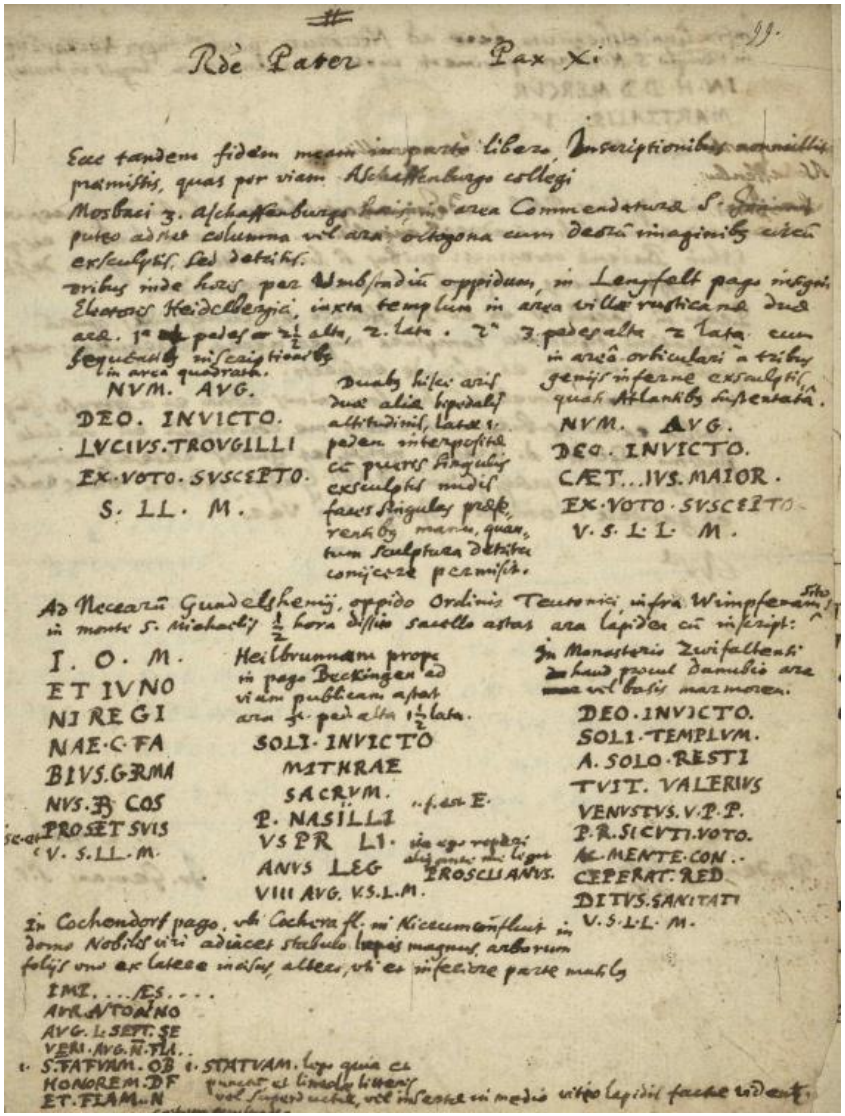



The *Ara Lunae* (up) and two votive altars from Mainz (down). A. Wiltheim, *Luciliburgensia sive Luxemburgum romanum*, s. d., VI, ch. VIII, fol. 58 and 56 [ANL, SHL Abt. 15, 380].

# ANTIQUARIANISM IN THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS

## Objectives and methods

- The use of an intellectual and social network:
  - Familial and local network
  - International network (correspondence)

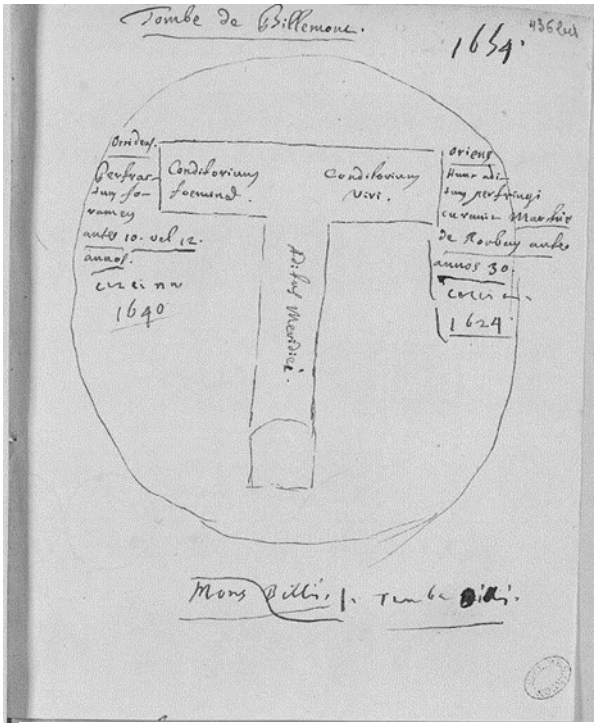

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Letter from J. Gamans to A. Wiltheim (4 juillet 1660). [ANL, SHL Abt. 15, 381, fol. 99].

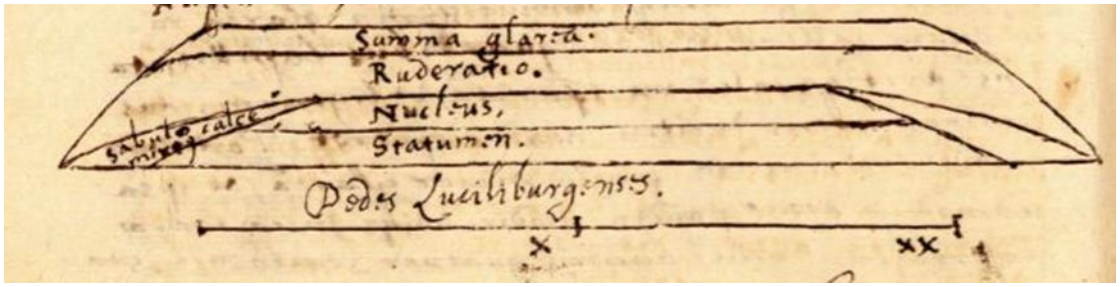
# ANTIQUARIANISM IN THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS

## Objectives and methods

- Further investigations:
  - Interviewing local inhabitants
  - Field survey (topography and excavations)




Plan of an excavated tumulus near Antoing (1653).
© Bibliothèque municipale de Besançon, Fonds Chifflet, ms. 176, fol. 436 bis.




Sectional view of the road between Reims and Trier (c. 1665). A. Wiltheim, *Luciliburgensia sive Luxemburgum romanum*, III, chap. I, fol. 161 [ANL, SHL Abt. 15, 380].

# ANTIQUARIANISM AND LOCAL TRADITIONS

## A complex relationship

- Contesting local traditions:
  - Criticism against these traditions and the local reactions
  - One of the main purpose of some research (Wiltheim)
  - A way to stand out from the rest of the population (*vulgus*)

- Conflicts with supporters of local traditions. Examples:
  - The *Ara Lunae* (Arlon)
  - The *civitas Nerviorum* (Tournai and Bavay)

# ANTIQUARIANISM AND LOCAL TRADITIONS

## A complex relationship

- The *civitas Nerviorum*
  - Tradition (Middle Ages-middle of the 16th c.): Tournai
  - Scholarly research (17th c.): Bavay
    - The Ancient sources: *Bagacum Nerviorum*
    - The ruins: « Circus », aqueduct, « thermae », « sewer system »…

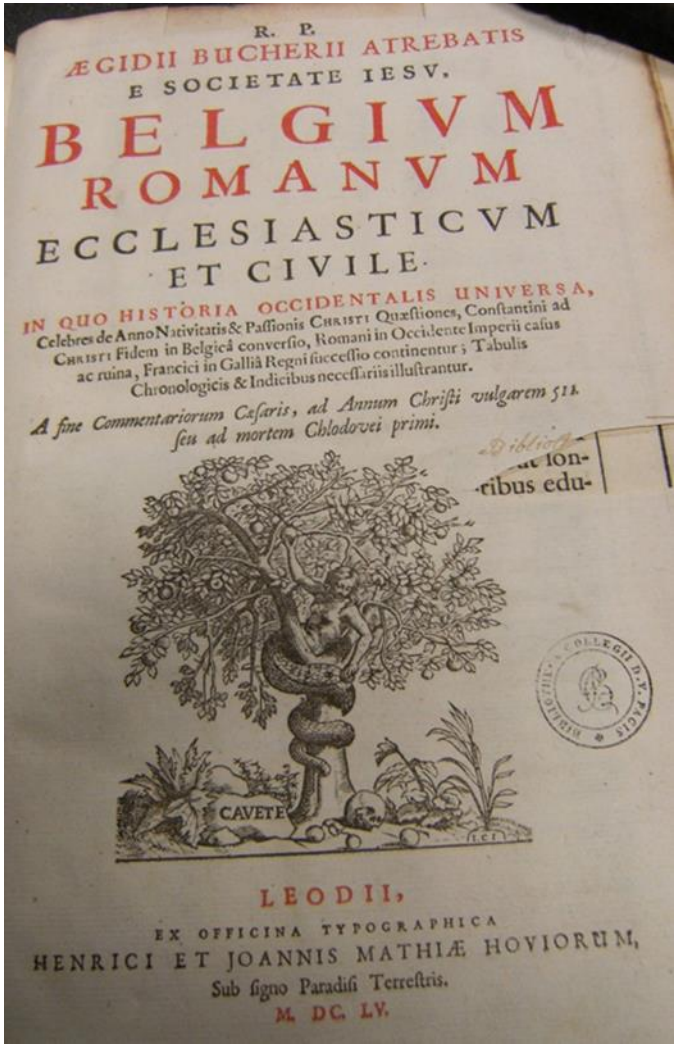


The "Circus" (Roman walls) of Bavay [author, 2019]

# ANTIQUARIANISM AND LOCAL TRADITIONS

## A complex relationship

- Contesting local traditions: Bucherius' thesis (mid. 17th c.):
  - The written sources
  - The ruins
  - Consequence : questioning the history of the diocese of Tournai ⇨ Superior, bishop of the Nervians = bishop of Bavay rather than Tournai?


R. P.
ÆGIDII BUCHERII ATREBATIS
E SOCIETATE IESV.
BELGIVM
ROMANVM
ECCLESIASTICVM
ET CIVILE.
IN QUO HISTORIA OCCIDENTALIS UNIVERSA,
Celebres de Anno Nativitatis & Passionis CHRISTI Quæstiones, Constantini ad
CHRISTI Fidem in Belgicâ conversio, Romani in Occidente Imperii casus
ac ruina, Francici in Galliâ Regni successio continentur; Tabulis
Chronologicis & Indicibus necessariis illustrantur.
A fine Commentariorum Cæsaris, ad Annum Christi vulgarem 511.
seu ad mortem Chlodovei primi.
CAVETE
LEODII,
EX OFFICINA TYPOGRAPHICA
HENRICI ET JOANNIS MATHIÆ HOVIORUM,
Sub signo Paradisi Terrestris.
M. DC. LV.

Bucherius Aegidius, *Belgium ecclesiasticum et civile*, Liège, 1655 [BUMP – UNamur]

# ANTIQUARIANISM AND LOCAL TRADITIONS



The “pierre Brunehaut” (Brunhilda’s stone) in Hollain, near Tournai [author, 2019]

## A complex relationship

- The supporters of the local tradition (Gautran and Catullus):
  - Relationship with the *patria* in the early modern Europe
  - The problem of the material remains :
    - Tournai: the “Roman trophy” (pierre Brunehaut)

# ANTIQUARIANISM AND LOCAL TRADITIONS

## A complex relationship

- Fighting against local traditions
  - Arguing against the traditions
  - Silencing the tradition that is not worth writing about: « lesquels je ne veux autrement refuter que par mon silence », d'Outreman (1639)
- Adopt or support the local tradition
- Reconciling tradition and scholarly research:
  - Example: Brunheaut and the Roman road between Bavay and Tongeren

# ANTIQUARIANISM AND LOCAL TRADITIONS

## A complex relationship

- A complex relationship:

« *qui prend pour argent contant tout ce qui se treuve escrit ou receu par la tradition du vulgaire, est sujet à estre pris pour une duppe, & leger d'esprit ; & au contraire, celuy qui est si sobre à croire, & mesnager sa foi qu'il ne veut rien recevoir, que ce qui est attesté & verifié par des aucteurs irrefragables, ou tesmoings oculaires, est oblige de bannir des bibliotheques, & releguer entre les fables, la plupart des contes que font les meilleurs historiens, qui ne parlent le plus souvent que par ouy dire* » (d'Outreman, 1639)

# Conclusion

- The spread of antiquarianism throughout Europe
  - Even in rural regions or with only a few Roman ruins
- A new understanding of the past:
  - The emergence of the material sources
  - The confrontation of sources (literary sources, ruins, topography, iconography, etymology…)
- A complex relationship with the local traditions: opposition, adoption, conciliation

*Thank you for your attention!*