

Georges-Joseph Gérard (1734-1814). Fragments of his  
*Monumenta Historiae Belgicae* in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in  
The Hague

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# Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Historical Background	3
2.1 The Royal Academy	3
2.2 A Short History of Libraries in the Southern Netherlands	5
2.3 Unrest in Brabant	9
2.4 The French Move In	10
2.5 The Dutch Take Over	11
2.6 The Birth of a Belgian Royal Library	13
2.7 The Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague	13
3. Gérard the Bibliophile	16
4. Book Collectors and Their Collections in the Netherlands from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century	18
4.1 A Seventeenth-Century Collector: Laurens van der Hem	21
4.2 Collecting in the Eighteenth Century	26
4.3 Collecting in the Nineteenth Century	28
4.4 Collecting in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: The Collection of Gérard	29
5. Gérard's Collection of Prints and Maps	31
5.1 KB Shelf-Mark 1705 a 21	34
5.2 KB Shelf-Mark 374 A 20	39
5.3 KB Shelf-Mark 374 A 21	40
5.4 KB Shelf-Mark 374 A 22	43
5.5 KB Shelf-Mark 374 A 25	43
5.6 KB Shelf-Mark 591 K 33	47
5.7 KB Shelf-Mark 3101 C 4	49
5.8 KB Shelf-Mark 344 G 19	52
6. Conclusion	55
7. Bibliography	58

## 1. Introduction

During an internship project at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (the National Library of the Netherlands; KB) in The Hague the library's Special Collections' department requested a project be set up to examine the catalogue objects then described only as 'collections'. Previous digitization projects had shown that these collections often contained prints or Plano's that had remained uncatalogued as individual objects. The goal for this Plano project was to find and identify the objects in these collections and add them to the library's catalogue as new, individual entities.

During the first stages of the project over 2500 individual prints were discovered to be part of these 'collection' catalogue objects. Among these were eight folders of collected materials accompanied by handwritten notes and indexes. The objects almost immediately presented themselves as a coherent collection brought together by the same collector; all of them containing handwritten indexes, notes and title-pages in the same handwriting. KB Manuscript curator and paleography expert Ed van der Vlist identified the handwriting as that of Georges-Joseph Gérard (1734-1814). This conclusion offered the opportunity to discover more about the origins of his collection, their origins, and the historic context.

Gérard was a historian, scholar and bibliophile. He was also one of the founders of the *Royal Académie des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique* in Brussels. After he died he left behind a collection of documents, work, books and manuscripts that was sold to King Willem I in 1819 and stored in the Dutch state archives. Thanks to the efforts of KB librarian Charles Flament (1758-1855) a large part of Gérard's collection was transferred to the Library's collection in 1832. Flament selected only the most important objects for the library. What remained was transferred to what, after the Brabant revolt, was to become the Royal Library of Belgium in Brussels. All objects in the KB catalogue represent Gérard's interest in the history of the Southern Netherlands. Among it are works such as Jacques Du Clerq's (1424-ca.1475) *Histoire de la rebellion des Gantois contre Philippe dit le Bon, duc de Bourgogne* (Antwerp, 1451) and Jan François Foppens' (1689-1761) *Histoire du Grand Conseil établi a Malines 1503-1759*, which Gérard annotated with new information up to 1794. The collection also contains original documents and copies of

archival documents on subjects like the financial and religious history of Brussels and Antwerp. Also present in the KB are handwritten research notes, such as a list of topographical names that includes the original and Latin place-names of the Low Countries, along with their earliest bibliographical reference. But these eight folders of collected materials have not been included in the KB's Gérard collection. Were they simply not discovered before as his property, or were they filed away as 'collections' and not considered for further examination up to the start of the Plano project?

The eight folders are clearly a part of Gérard's historiographical work. They consist of illustrations and maps which were once meant for, or cut out of, secondary sources. These sources are often important historical and geographical works of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. In total these eight volumes contain 229 individual prints and maps. The folders are arranged by subject, and some contain many images originating from the same source. For example, in the *Verzameling afbeeldingen van Brugge en zijn Omgeving* ('Collection of images of Bruges and its surroundings') 25 out of 42 illustrations are taken from Antonius Sanderus' *Flandria Illustrata* (Amsterdam, 1641), and in the *Verzameling Portretten van Nederlandse en Vlaamse Geleerden* ('Collection of Portraits Depicting Dutch and Flemish Scholars'), 27 out of 76 portraits are taken from Aubertus Miraeus' *Illustrium Galliae Belgicae Scriptorum Icones et Elogia* (Antwerp, 1604).

This thesis argues that the eight folders are a part of Gérard's planned *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae* project, a large-scale project with the intention of collecting all available source material on the history of the Southern Netherlands. Was the project important enough for Gérard to cut prints out of undamaged books, or did he acquire the source materials through other methods? The folders from the KB show that Gérard was not only an avid note-taker, but also a collector of prints. His interest in the history of the Southern Netherlands was both personal and professional, as is demonstrated by these collections. What can be said about Gérard's collections and the collecting of prints in this period (eighteenth and early nineteenth century); what parallels and which conclusions can be drawn from looking at his work and life in light of the eight folders found in the KB?

In order to answer these questions it is important to first examine the events of Gérard's time that are relevant to his life and work.

## 2. Historical Background

### 2.1 The Royal Academy

The Academy tradition can be traced back to Italy in the mid-fifteenth century. These Italian academies were founded on Platonic traditions and aimed to create new ideas on philosophy, religion, arts and science.<sup>1</sup> The first examples of similar movements outside of Italy can be found in France in the sixteenth century. The most important examples of the seventeenth century Academy outside of Italy are the *Royal Society* in London (1662) and the French *Académie des Sciences* (1666).<sup>2</sup>

The first Dutch Academy, the *Eerste Nederdutsche Academie* was established in Amsterdam in 1617 as a chamber or rhetoric (a dramatic society performing plays and poetry). In the Southern Netherlands the first academy originated in Leuven in 1610. An academy of science and literature in the Southern Netherlands was founded comparatively late at the end of eighteenth century, when Habsburg empress Maria-Theresia (1717-1780) modernized politics in the Southern Netherlands to ‘profit the general good.’<sup>3</sup> Led by plenipotentiary of the empress Karl Johann Philipp von Cobenzl (1741-1810), new policies and politics on culture were forged.

One such project was instigated by Cornelis Franciscus De Nelis (1736-1798). He proposed to collect all available sources on history of the Southern Netherlands. This project would later become one of core goals of the Académie. De Nelis also founded the *Société Littéraire* in Brussels in 1769. He intended for the *Société* to busy itself with physics, morals, mathematics and (national) history. The *Société* would meet at the Burgundian Library in Brussels.<sup>4</sup> In 1772 the *Société Littéraire* officially became the *Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*. Georges-Joseph Gérard became its permanent secretary. One of the aims of the *Académie* was to

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<sup>1</sup> J. Roegiers, ‘De Academie van Maria-Theresia in Historisch Perspectief’, in G. Verbeke (ed.), *De Weg naar Eigen Academiën. Acta van het Colloquium der Koninklijke Academiën van België Brussel, 18-20 November 1982* (Brussels: Koninklijke Academiën van België, 1983), p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.37-38.

'banish ignorance' and raise enthusiasm for 'noble', scientific topics. To realize these plans established intellectuals were recruited and encouraged to discuss and publish treatises. The *Académie* also wanted to engage the wider public by offering them a chance to enter into contests. They could submit their research based on scientific questions and were rewarded for good work with the publication of their paper.<sup>5</sup>

But the main focus of the *Académie Royale des Sciences* was to stimulate the study of the national history of the Southern Netherlands, both scientific and literary, with the ultimate goal to publish an all-compassing historic work on the subject. In 1779 the *Académie* began researching the possibility of publishing documents and papers of great historical and national importance on a larger scale.<sup>6</sup> Gérard was appointed member of the committee that had to examine the options, and he proposed the idea of producing a series entitled *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae*.<sup>7</sup>

This project was inspired by the work of De Nelis and idea to publish a collection of works by Belgian historians, entitled *Belgicarum rerum Prodrumus, sive de Historiâ Belgicâ Jusque Scriptoribus Praecipuis Commentatio* ('Events collected in the Low Countries, or about the history of Belgium and its writers' particular history').<sup>8</sup> Gérard's plans were similar in nature, but he planned to also include the work of former Belgian historians, all passages regarding the Low Countries from historic works, inscriptions, antiquities, commemorative extracts and lives of saints by medieval authors, unpublished historical texts, reprints of rare historical texts, relevant historical works from the Middle Ages, old laws and charters, and documents originating from governing bodies.<sup>9</sup> Gérard presented his plan to the *Académie* on the seventeenth of January 1780. In the *Académie's* journal, *Mémoires de l'Académie*, it is described as 'un plan vaste, qui embrasse la publication de tous les historiens & de tous les monuments qui peuvent illustrer l'histoire Belgique' ('A large plan,

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<sup>5</sup> T. Verschaffel, *De Hoed en de Hond: Geschiedschrijving in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, 1715-1794* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1988), p. 69.

<sup>6</sup> A. Korteweg, 'G.J. Gérard', in M. van Delft, A. Leerintveld, R. Storm, T. Vermeulen and C. de Wolf (eds.), *Verzamelaars en Verzamelingen Koninklijke Bibliotheek 1798-1998* (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 1998), p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> Verschaffel, *De Hoed en de Hond*, p. 74.

<sup>8</sup> <[http://www.kcgeschiedenis.be/en/commission/histoire\\_en.html](http://www.kcgeschiedenis.be/en/commission/histoire_en.html)> (26 June 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Korteweg, 'G.J. Gérard', in *Verzamelaars en Verzamelingen*, p. 44.

spanning all publications of all historians and of all the monumental works illustrating the history of Belgium’).<sup>10</sup>

In fact, the plan was so ambitious that it was simply too large to execute. However, Gérard had already started to amass many literary manuscripts and historical documents that he had planned to include in the project. These documents, archival pieces, books, manuscripts and notes, form a large part of the collection that entered the KB in 1832 via the National Archives.<sup>11</sup> This Georges-Joseph Gérard collection in the KB also includes a four-page excerpt of a proposal written by Académie members Corneille François de Nelis (1736-1798), Georges-Joseph Gérard and Baron Frédéric Auguste Ferdinand Thomas de Reiffenberg (1795-1850) from around 1790, which describes their plans for the previously described project on the history of the Southern Netherlands.

The execution of this Gérard’s own part of this project, the *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae*, was disturbed by his lively competition with fellow *Académie* member Joseph Hippolyte Ghesquière (1731-1802).<sup>12</sup> Ghesquière had proposed to publish a similar collection of historical documents, chronicles and manuscripts regarding the history of the Netherlands.<sup>13</sup> But whereas Gérard’s plans were never fully realized, Ghesquière did manage to complete a part of his project. His *Acta Sanctorum Belgii Selecta* was published in 6 volumes between 1783 and 1794 but ultimately remained uncompleted.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2 A Short History of Libraries in the Southern Netherlands

Philip II of Spain, king of the Seventeen provinces of the Netherlands, founded the Royal library in Brussels in 1559. He had inherited the collection from Maria of Hungary (1505-

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<sup>10</sup> Verschaffel, *De Hoed en de Hond*, p. 171.

<sup>11</sup> A. Korteweg, *Guide to The French-Language Medieval Manuscripts in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek [The National Library of the Netherlands], The Hague on 35 mm Microfilm* (Amsterdam: Moran Micropublications, 2006), p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Verschaffel, *De Hoed en de Hond*, p. 74.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

1558, Governor of the Netherlands). It also included the manuscripts of the Burgundian Library. At the time, the preservation of the books was part of the 'garde des joyaux' (the guarding of the jewels), as both books and jewels were part of the royal treasury. After this function had disappeared the Board of Finance became responsible for the office of Royal Librarian from 1647 to 1748.<sup>15</sup> The first royal librarian, appointed by Philip II, was the renowned Humanist scholar Viglius van Aytta (1507-1577).<sup>16</sup> Aubertus Miraeus (1573-1640) was appointed librarian in 1617.<sup>17</sup> Miraeus' efforts to restore educational and scientific practice make him an important figure in history of Belgian libraries. He was also the founder and first librarian of the public library in Antwerp (1608), to which he contributed parts of his own collection.<sup>18</sup>

The Royal Library in 1731 was a collection of manuscripts owned by Philip II, brought together in the Palace of Coudenberg in Brussels, which also served as a seat of government. The collection of the Royal Library suffered great losses in the eighteenth century. First, a devastating fire broke out in the Palace in 1731. Most manuscripts were saved but many other parts of the collection perished. Second, during the French occupation of Brussels between 1746 and 1748, parts of the collection were looted and transported to Paris. Some of these books and manuscripts were later returned to Brussels by Karel van Hulthem (1764-1832), librarian at the Ghent University library.

Karl Johann Philipp von Cobenzl took notice of the neglected state of the library and decided to move the remaining parts of the collection to a new building: the House of Isabella.<sup>19</sup> Cobenzl appointed Pierre Wouters (1702-1792) as librarian and assigned him the task of creating a complete inventory and descriptive catalogue of the library.<sup>20</sup> Wouters was a great lover of books, which turned out to be his biggest flaw. Most of the books he bought at auction were meant to enter the library, but ended up in his personal collection.

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<sup>15</sup> C. Lemaire and M. Debae, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Liber Memorialis 1559-1696* (Brussel: Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I, 1969), pp. 3-4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>19</sup> Verschaffel, *De Hoed en de Hond*, p. 140.

<sup>20</sup> Lemaire and Dabae, *Liber Memorialis*, p. 29.



The catalogue Cobenzl had ordered was never completed and the library remained untouched and chaotic.

Cobenzl subsequently requested the lawyer Jouen to write a report on the state of the library and Pierre Wouter's work. The report, dated 21 June, 1766, returned a crushing verdict. Books were not arranged by any standard and often multiple copies of the same works were present. Some 1200 books were lying on the floor and the only inventory Jouen could find was written before Wouter's time. Jouen's report also included an inventory of around 9000 works. He noted that some of these works were present in as much as 30 duplicate copies. Following this result, Jouen was appointed acting librarian in 1768.<sup>21</sup>

After his death in 1770 Cobenzl was succeeded by Prince Starhemberg (1724-1807) as plenipotentiary. Starhemberg requested Georges-Joseph Gérard to arrange the acquisition of new books.<sup>22</sup> At this time the *Académie* had also noted the importance of the expansion of the Royal Library. Their intention was for the library to function as a positive influence in scientific and intellectual life on a national level. In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the cultural and intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment inspired many similar new ideas that promoted philosophical and scientific changes. To create a collection that suited these ideas, Gérard began to sift through the collection Wouters had brought together and disposed of or sold 7000 works. The revenue was put towards the acquisition of new and better books that contributed to the improvement of the Royal Library.<sup>23</sup> Having completed these duties, Gérard submitted a report to Starhemberg in 1770, including a complete catalogue of objects present in the Royal Library. Gérard had organized the holdings according to their subject: theology, law, philosophy, science, history and the arts.<sup>24</sup>

The histories of the Royal Library and the *Académie* from here on out remain entwined for a long time. Not only did the *Académie* meet in the Burgundian Library until 1839, it also closely observed the expansion of the catalogue and contributed its own

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<sup>21</sup> Verschaffel, *De Hoed en de Hond*, p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>24</sup> Lemaire and Debae, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Liber Memorialis 1559-1696*, p. 33.

books and funds to improve the library and its building.<sup>25</sup> The *Académie* and its members donated parts of their own libraries and acquired funding to buy the collections of Karl Johann Philipp von Cobenzl and Jean Baptiste Verdussen. Verdussen (1698-1773) had been one of the first members of the *Académie*. Gérard and his colleagues Cornelis Franciscus De Nelis and Jean Des Roches (1740-1787) were assigned to select the manuscripts most relevant and close the deal on their purchase.<sup>26</sup> At first the *Société Littéraire*, and from 1773 onwards the *Académie*, also decided which of the gifted works were selected for the library's catalogue. Preference was given to books covering the subject of the Netherlandish history and to scientific work from the sixteenth or seventeenth century.<sup>27</sup>

On 26 June 1772 a Royal decree confirmed that the library would be open to a wider public, albeit only for a selection of scholars.<sup>28</sup> Jean Baptiste Chevalier (1722-1801) was appointed as librarian. Chevalier had been a corresponding member of the *Académie des Sciences* in Paris since 1753 and *the Royal Society* in London since 1754. In 1770 he became a member of the *Société Littéraire* in Brussels. His duties were to list and sell all superfluous books to the public in order to buy new works, and to compose both an alphabetic and a systematic catalogue. Despite his efforts it was mostly thanks to the continued work of Gérard that the library's catalogue expanded during the early 1770s.<sup>29</sup>

In 1773 the Jesuit order was dissolved. This led to a series of public auctions of its libraries' contents which took place between 1777 and 1780. The *Académie* had requested - and obtained - preferential treatment during these sales in order to pick out the most valuable and relevant books which could be included in the Royal Library collection.<sup>30</sup> Until June 1775 nothing official happened with the more or less sealed Jesuit libraries. Disorder ruled and books were scattered over the floors, covered by dust and damaged by moisture and mold. Moreover, numerous books had disappeared, apparently being stolen

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<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>26</sup> C.P. Serrure (ed.), *Vaderlandsch Museum voor Nederduitsche Letterkunde, Oudheid en Geschiedenis*, vol. III (Gent: Hoste, 1859).

<sup>27</sup> Lemaire and Dabae, *Liber Memorialis*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>30</sup> Verschaffel, *De Hoed en de Hond*, p. 142.

from the shelves and replaced by less valuable books. Gérard was charged with inventORIZATION of the Jesuit libraries and disposing of damaged works such as incomplete books, unbound or loose-leaf documents, copies damaged by moisture, and books worn by use. He also donated books to teachers and schools. Everything else he disposed of was sold as waste paper. Because no details were recorded about the number of works disposed in total, it remains a guess how much was gotten rid of. It is, however, a safe guess to say that numbers were large.<sup>31</sup>

The acquisition of so many new works from Jesuit collections caused some problems for the Royal Library. There was no space to accommodate their placement. The subsequent quest for a new, larger location proved long and difficult. Because of these problems many of the Jesuits' books remained in their old libraries. Despite these obstacles Gérard kept buying new works like the manuscripts of Charles, Duke of Lorraine (1712-1780). A total of 40,000 to 50,000 books were now stored in the library.<sup>32</sup> Because of the placement issues, works Gérard were stored on wooden shelves in the Jesuit church in Brussels. He estimated that a total of 25,000 to 30,000 books were stored this way.<sup>33</sup> Starhemberg intended to transform the Jesuit church into a library and the Académie supported these plans so strongly that they planned to spend almost all of their funds on the project. But the Austrian Government suffered financial difficulties, and the remaining funding they had promised was never provided, so the project ultimately failed.<sup>34</sup>

### 2.3 Unrest in Brabant

The Austrians had ruled over the Southern Netherlands since the end of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1714. Brussels and the Belgian provinces enjoyed relative economic prosperity and political freedom until the accession of Emperor Joseph II (1741-1790) in 1780. His efforts to bring the reforms of the Enlightenment to the country sparked

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<sup>31</sup> J. Machiels, *Van Religieuze naar Openbare Bibliotheek* (Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 2000), pp. 13-14.

<sup>32</sup> Verschaffel, *De Hoed en de Hond*, p. 142.

<sup>33</sup> Lemaire and Dabae, *Liber Memorialis*, p. 40.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

much resistance. Encouraged by the outbreak of the French Revolution in July 1789, the Brabant revolt broke out in November 1789.<sup>35</sup>

During this period conflict also broke out between Gérard and Jan Frans Van de Velde (1743-1823), librarian of the Leuven university library. This war of books was the result of Van de Velde entering the Jesuit church without permission and taking books belonging to the Royal Library, which he then transferred to Leuven. On the request of Gérard and Chevalier the Jesuit church was consequently sealed. It remains unclear if all stolen works were ever returned to Brussels. The church was finally closed in late 1790, after which part of the collection was moved to the ministry of Foreign Affairs where an archive department supervised by Gérard was already located. Another part was moved to the Birgittinessen church and the library in the House of Isabella in 1792.<sup>36</sup>

## 2.4 The French Move In

From November 1792 until April 1793 the Southern Netherlands were occupied by French troops. Chevalier had to swear loyalty to France on 8 July, 1793. A second French invasion followed in June 1794, but this time Chevalier chose to move to Prague. Libraries all over the Southern Netherlands suffered from plundering, but thanks to the efforts of Gérard and the Spanish bibliophile Carlos Antonio La Serna Santander (1752-1813), the library in Brussels was spared any damage. The pair managed to save many books and manuscripts from disappearing. They also acquired works from secular and political institutions closed by Joseph II at the end of the Brabant revolution.<sup>37</sup>

In November 1794 a central government was formed in Belgium. Among their goals was to end all forms of plunder, including that of the Royal Library in Brussels. Gérard wrote a report on the French plundering sessions of September and October 1794 which included the theft of more than 24 chests full of manuscripts and valuable books. To prevent more manuscripts and books from disappearing, the library was sealed. The

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<sup>35</sup> P.J.H. Ubachs, *Handboek voor de Geschiedenis van Limburg* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2000), pp. 266-267.

<sup>36</sup> Lemaire and Dabae, *Liber Memorialis*, p. 42.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

Belgian central government, concerned with the learning opportunities of its people, removed the seals on 3 January 1795 and reopened the library to the public on 6 June, 1795.<sup>38</sup> This also marks the first time the name ‘Bibliothèque Publique de Bruxelles’ appears.

Gérard wrote a three-volume inventory of the manuscripts of the library’s possessions between 1795 and 1799.<sup>39</sup> After completing this catalogue, Gérard felt that he had amply fulfilled his librarian duties and asked to be relieved from his post. He was succeeded by Santander, who remained in his position until 27 September 1811, when Karel van Hulthem replaced him.<sup>40</sup>

## 2.5 The Dutch Take Over

The outcome of the Battle of Waterloo and the subsequent Congress of Vienna in 1815 changed the course of the history of the Southern Netherlands, but it did not change the library system. However, it did allow for Karel van Hulthem to travel to France to return art, books and manuscripts from Paris which were looted during the French occupation of Brussels. Another effort by van Hulthem to reclaim more valuable objects from the French was requested by King William I of the Netherlands (1772-1843), ruler of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. Van Hulthem declined the assignment, which was then taken over by Pierre Lammens (1762–1836). Lammens had succeeded Van Hulthem as librarian at the Ghent University library.<sup>41</sup> An important part of his task was to retrieve the manuscripts once belonging to the Burgundian Library. Eventually these were returned to Van Hulthem to be stored in what was still the public city library of Brussels. Up until then, the Burgundian Library was seen as state property and officially separated from the city library and closed to the public. On 19 March, 1818, however, it was decided that the public city library and the Burgundian Library would be merged.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-45.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

Gérard's was bought by King William I after his death in 1817 and half of the books were moved to the Royal Library in Brussels in 1819. Specialists have determined that this half was the least interesting part of the collection, as the KB in The Hague had already selected the most interesting works for its own collection. This was another blow for the library in Brussels, as in the years following its holdings would shrink from an estimated 60.000 to 100.000 works in the early nineteenth century to a total of 47.464 works in 1841.<sup>43</sup>

The merge of the Brussels public library and the Burgundian Library created a paradoxical situation in which the balance between public access and the preservation of valuable manuscripts in the Burgundian Library would prove hard to maintain. Both Van Hulthem and the adjunct-curator Baron Frédéric Auguste Ferdinand Thomas de Reiffenberg (1795-1850), who had been appointed in 1821, therefore requested to be released from their duties as librarians of the public library in 1824. Sylvain Van de Weyer (1804-1874) took over their role. Van Hulthem remained curator of manuscripts at the Burgundian Library until 1827, after a fire had threatened the destruction of large parts of the incunabula and manuscript collection. Van de Weyer again succeeded him.<sup>44</sup>

Van de Weyer's career as a librarian was short lived. He is now better known as a politician and as a member of the Provisional Government of Belgium during the Brabant Revolution of 1830. The Revolution started in August 1830 when the first anti-Dutch protests took place. Van der Weyer wasted no time in taking measures to protect the collections of both the public library collection and the Burgundian Library. His efforts paid off, and despite the unrest, both libraries were spared any damage during the revolution.<sup>45</sup> After the revolution Joseph Marchal (1780-1858) became curator of the manuscripts in the Burgundian Library, while van der Weyer remained at work in the public library. Marchal was also tasked with the research of archives throughout Belgium in order to acquire works concerning the history of the Southern Netherlands. The Burgundian Library was reopened to the public in July 1831. Between 1831 and 1837 the only documented

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. 68-69.

changes in the library are that of the growth of the number of manuscripts, which doubled in those six years.<sup>46</sup>

## 2.6 The Birth of a Belgian Royal Library

The Belgian Revolution of 1830-1831 led to the separation of the Southern Provinces from the Netherlands. The end of the revolution also marked the beginning of the Belgian Monarchy. Institutions began to work on a national level, and the same transformation was intended for scientific and cultural institutions like universities. Scientific research on a national level also required the existence of a national library in the nation's capital. The public library in Brussels, however, lacked the facilities and funding to transform itself into a library that suited these new needs.

Therefore the Royal Library was founded on June 19, 1837, with the goal of becoming the general and public storage facility for all printed works, prints and maps that were property of the state. The library was opened to the public in May 1839.<sup>47</sup> At the heart of the new catalogue was the collection of Van Hulthem which contained important works on history, literature, science and scholarship in the Netherlands. The Burgundian Library and its manuscripts were merged with the inventory on 30 June 1838, and the collection of the public library in Brussels followed in 1842.<sup>48</sup> De Reiffenberg became head conservator of Printed Works and Marchal adjunct-conservator of the Manuscript department.<sup>49</sup>

## 2.7 The Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague

The KB was founded as the National Library of the Netherlands in 1798. It received its royal title from King Lodewijk Napoleon in 1806. Before becoming a National or Royal library, the collection had been in the possession of the princely Orange-Nassau family.<sup>50</sup> Willem V (1748-1806) Prince of Orange had fled to England in 1795 after the French revolutionaries

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>50</sup> Brummel, *Geschiedenis*, p. 1.

had brought the French revolution to the Netherlands. He left behind the library, which fell prey to the plundering French just like the library in Brussels had. Precious manuscripts, printed books and prints were taken and transported to Paris.<sup>51</sup>

Frenchman Charles Sulpice Flament (1758-1855) became the head librarian in 1798 and royal librarian in 1807, when he was also appointed secretary to King Lodewijk Napoleon. Lodewijk Napoleon was forced to step down in 1810 by order of his brother Napoleon Bonaparte (Emperor of France), Lodewijk II took reign and the Netherlands became a part of the French empire. In 1812 the library was handed over to the city of The Hague and became a city library. Flament would remain as city librarian. The royal title returned in 1814 when the library was offered to the new king of the Netherlands, Willem I (1772-1843), who accepted and transformed the library into state property.<sup>52</sup>

The library received a steady stream of new acquisitions, partly thanks to a law of 1817 that assigned the library the role of national depot. This meant that a copy of each printed work published would be transferred into the collection. William I also occasionally contributed to the library's holdings. One such occasion was the collection of Gérard, offered to the king by Gérard's widow in 1819. Flament determined that collection was of great value to the library because of its extensive covering of the history of the Southern Netherlands.<sup>53</sup> As Flament lacked funding it was William I who used 9,000 guilders out of his own funds to buy the collection. Part of the collection was later transferred to Southern Netherlands, but not before Flament had selected the most valuable works to remain in the Netherlands.<sup>54</sup> These parts of the Gérard collection were stored in the state archives.<sup>55</sup>

The Brabant revolution also influenced the Dutch library's collection. During the unrest, the Abbey of Tongerlo was used to house troops and weapons. After peace had returned the abbey was used to house the library of the Bollandists.<sup>56</sup> The KB in The Hague

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> A.J. Flament, 'Flament (Charles Sulpice)', in P.C. Molhuysen and P.J. Blok (eds.), *Nieuw Nederlansch Biografisch Woordenboek*, vol. I (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1911), pp. 404-405.

<sup>53</sup> Brummel, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>56</sup> <[http://www.tongerlo.org/abdij/adb\\_gesch\\_index.htm](http://www.tongerlo.org/abdij/adb_gesch_index.htm)> (1 November 2013).



bought this library's book collection in 1828, while the manuscripts ended up in the library in Brussels.<sup>57</sup>

In 1832 the decision to store the remains of Gérard's collection in the state archives was revised. While the collection did contain some archival pieces from government institutions, it was determined that the many manuscripts in the same collection made it more suited for a library.<sup>58</sup> This meant that 437 of the 578 manuscripts from the collection were transferred to the KB in The Hague.<sup>59</sup> Eventually some 100 manuscripts were transferred from the State Archives into the Royal Library in Brussels. A disadvantage of all these divisions and transfers so typical of the nineteenth century is that Gérard's collection, brought together with great care and effort, was now divided over three institutions in two separate countries.<sup>60</sup>

Flament remained head librarian in The Hague until his death in 1837, although it became apparent during his last years on the job that he had become too old to fulfil his duties properly. Cataloguing efforts were delayed and inventories remained incomplete. No new works were acquired and contact with other libraries and institutions was non-existent.<sup>61</sup> His successor, Johannes Willem Holtrop (1806-1870), was charged with the task to end this state of disarray and create new inventories and catalogues.<sup>62</sup> In his following thirty years as a librarian Holtrop introduced a new, more scientific and systematic way of acquiring and describing manuscripts and incunabula. He also ended the institution's isolation by either visiting or corresponding with colleagues abroad.

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<sup>57</sup> Brummel, *Geschiedenis* p. 94.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>59</sup> Brummel, *Geschiedenis*, p. 95.

<sup>60</sup> Korteweg, 'G.J. Gérard', in *Verzamelaars en Verzamelingen*, p. 47.

<sup>61</sup> Brummel, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 113-114.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

### 3. Gérard the Bibliophile

Georges-Joseph Gérard (1734-1814) was born in Brussels on 2 June, 1734. His father, Gérard Gilles Joseph, belonged to one of the oldest families in the province of Brabant. He had married his wife Jeanne Ansems in 1733. Gérard had received a good education and completed his Humanities degree in 1759, after which he started his career in the civil service as an employee at the ministry of state and war in Brussels.<sup>63</sup> There, his talents soon drew the attention of Karl Johann Philipp von Cobenzl, diplomat of Empress Maria-Theresia. The Empress founded the *Société Littéraire* in Brussels in 1769 and appointed Gérard as secretary. In 1769 Gérard wrote to Cobenzl to discuss his wish to reorganize the Burgundian Library for the benefit and use of the members of the *Société*, and as a first step towards the founding of the *Académie Royale*.<sup>64</sup> His request was honored.

One of Gérard's main tasks was to prepare the Burgundian Library for its transformation into a public library, with the aim of increasing the cultural and intellectual level of the population. This preparatory work required the organization and selection of the most important works in the library, the disposal of redundant works, and the acquisition of new ones. After completing these first duties, Gérard submitted a report to Cobenzl. This document, entitled *Catalogue des livres Imprimés qui composaient la Bibliothèque Publique dite de Bourgogne à Bruxelles lorsqu'elle fut rendue publique en 1770*, is the first of many library inventories Gérard compiled in his career. It can now be found in the KB in The Hague.<sup>65</sup> Gérard organized the manuscripts and printed books according to their subject: theology, law, philosophy, science, history and the arts.<sup>66</sup> The catalogue is a typical example of Gérard's working method. The handwritten index and page numbers and the organization into categories are also found in the eight folders preserved in the KB.

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<sup>63</sup> M. Hayez, 'Notice sur Joseph Gérard', in *Annuaire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences et Belles-Lettres de Bruxelles* (Brussels: Académie Royale, 1837), p. 85.

<sup>64</sup> E. Varenbergh, 'Gérard (Georges-Joseph)', in *Biographie Nationale de Belgique*, vol. VII (Brussels, 1883), p. 654.

<sup>65</sup> The Hague, KB: KW 71 D 35-36.

<sup>66</sup> Lemaire and Debae, *Liber Memorialis*, p. 33.

The time and effort Gérard devoted to his librarian duties prevented him from continuing as secretary of the *Académie*. Along with the *Académie*'s opinion that he lacked experience and possessed limited historical knowledge, this was reason enough to release him from his duties on March 23, 1776. While he was no longer officially attached to the *Académie* Gérard nonetheless continued to work closely with the institution and continued to purchase books and manuscripts for the Burgundian library's benefit. In 1776 Gérard was appointed archivist at the newly erected Archival Bureau of the Austrian Netherlands.<sup>67</sup>

Besides his busy career, Gérard also found time for family life. On April 1, 1777 he married Marie Johanna Raepsaet, with whom he would have four children. Ten years after submitting his plan for the *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae* political developments brought about great changes in Gérard's life. After the outbreak of the Brabant Revolution he was dismissed from his post at the archives by Jean-Baptiste Goswin de Wynants (1726-1796), director general of the archives. From then on Gérard chose to live his life in private, preferring to spend his days among his books. Government would later offer him a job as librarian to Emperor Napoleon at the castle of Laeken, on the condition that he would move out of Brussels and sell his library. Gérard declined this offer. In the final years of his life he was an associate member of the Zeeland Society of Sciences, the Académie des Sciences of Besancon, the Society of Dutch Literature in Leiden and the Institute of Holland.<sup>68</sup> After his death Gérard was buried at the old cemetery of the church of Saint-Jacques sur Coudenberg in Brussels.

Among the collection he left behind are the eight folders of maps, prints, and handwritten notes and indexes. What more can be said about Gérard and the times he lived in, looking at this collection?

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<sup>67</sup> Verschaffel, *De Hoed en de Hond*, p. 165.

<sup>68</sup> Varenbergh, 'Gérard (Georges-Joseph)', p. 655.

#### 4. Book Collectors and Their Collections in the Netherlands from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century

The sixteenth century saw an increase of Netherlandish trade with other parts of the world, broadening the common view of Europe and other continents. There was a growing interest in and demand for geographical knowledge, as expressed in books and maps. Numerous authors, printers and publishers were active in this new field. The production of maps and atlases in the Southern Netherlands was of particular importance during this period, following the great prosperity of industry, trade and shipping and industry in this region. Famous geographers were Gemma Frisius (1508-1555) and Gerardus Mercator (1512-1594) and their books and maps were printed by the best publishers of the period, most of them working at Antwerp, such as Christopher Plantin (1520-1589) and Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598).<sup>69</sup>

After the fall of Antwerp in 1585 the center of economic activity shifted towards the Northern Netherlands and in particular to the province of Holland. Among the cities in this province Amsterdam soon took pride of place. Consequently, many map collectors and collections emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. How did these collections come to be, and why did these collectors start collecting? Van Veen and Van Gelder have distinguished five main motives for collecting: 'curiositas', religion, investment, aesthetic pleasure and status.<sup>70</sup>

##### *Curiositas*

The term 'curiositas' in the seventeenth century related to scientific purpose and the quest for knowledge, based on the humanist ideals that highly valued the universal interest in

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<sup>69</sup> C. Koeman, *Collections of Maps and Atlases in the Netherlands* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1961), p. 14.

<sup>70</sup> J. van der Veen and R. van Gelder in *De Wereld binnen Handbereik, Nederlandse kunst- en rariteitenverzamelingen, 1585-1735* (Amsterdam: Amsterdams Historisch Museum, 1992), pp. 137-247.

natural, supernatural and exotic phenomena. Someone who displayed this type of interest was called a 'curieux'.<sup>71</sup>

### *Religion*

Many seventeenth-century collectors of natural objects had religious motives. God's manifestation through nature is a major theme in several biblical stories and these objects were considered to be natural representations of Him. Christians believed that nature had to be studied as if it was a book of God and a reflection of His wisdom and power. Collecting and studying these natural objects in this context was a means of getting closer to God.<sup>72</sup> Maps and atlases were regarded as representations of God's creation of heaven and earth and were often included in the Bible to provide the reader with representations of the Holy Land.<sup>73</sup>

### *Investment*

Collecting would be almost impossible without some form of financial support that allowed collectors to acquire expensive objects like exotic seashells or antique sculptures. Some collectors relied on the investment of others to help them bring together their desired objects, while others would collect with the intent of eventually selling the entire collection at a profit.

### *Aesthetic Pleasure*

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<sup>71</sup> E. de Groot, *De Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem. De Verzamelde Wereld van een 17<sup>e</sup>-eeuwse Liefhebber* (Houten-'t Goy: Hes & De Graaf Publishers, 2001), p. 312.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

Early-modern collections were often presented in aesthetically pleasing ways. This is not only the case for the objects themselves (like sculptures or paintings), but also to the way in which these collections were stored and displayed. Many objects were mounted onto precious metals or artfully arranged. Prints and books, like the 'Composite Atlas' that was assembled by the Amsterdam collector Laurens van der Hem (see below), were colored and decorated with real gold, or fitted with a decorative binding. For storage, highly ornamental and expensive bookcases were created.<sup>74</sup>

### *Status*

Most collectors of the period belonged to the higher classes who already enjoyed some level of status, and used their collections as a display of their wealth and resources. For less wealthy collectors the role of status is linked to the seventeenth-century interpretation of the ideal man: *l'honnête homme*.<sup>75</sup> This concept was first described in *The Book of the Courtier*, an Italian Renaissance courtesy book describing the manners and characteristics that make the 'perfect' gentleman and lady. Written by the diplomat and military man count Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529) it was first published in 1528. Castiglione's ideal courtier was transformed into *l'honnête homme* in the Paris salons during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The concept of *l'honnête homme* describes the ideal gentleman and courtier. He is well educated, has refined taste and manners, speaks and dresses well, and is humble. This perfect gentleman strives to gain knowledge of art and to possess good taste. Collecting was a way of developing such honorable characteristics, which is why it was considered a useful way of spending one's time. These ideas made collecting an increasingly popular hobby.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 336.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 345.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 349.

#### 4.1 A Seventeenth-Century Collector: Laurens van der Hem

Laurens van der Hem (1621-1678) was an Amsterdam lawyer and avid collector of maps and prints. Amsterdam was the perfect place to live for book and map lovers like Van der Hem in the seventeenth century. Art auctions in the city were the most important sales in Europe, and print makers, booksellers, cartographers and publishers in the city supplied the whole of Europe with high quality printed works.<sup>77</sup>

Van der Hem was particularly interested in history and geography and his collection focused mainly on prints and drawings. He also possessed a library of books related to his collection which included works on historical, genealogical and heraldic and literary subjects.<sup>78</sup> The catalogue of his library contains a total of 192 illustrated books, albums and folders, each containing up to several hundred prints and drawings by important Italian, French and Dutch artists. After his death his library and collection fell apart. The only remaining part of the collection that is still all in one place is his Atlas: the *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*, now part of the collection of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna. At the heart of his Atlas is Van der Hem's copy of Blaeu's eleven-volume *Atlas Maior*, published between 1662 and 1672. This major Atlas was the highlight of Blaeu's oeuvre and of the art of cartographic printing of the time.

In the seventeenth century books were often sold as unbound copies, leaving buyers and collectors free to determine the order of the text and add other images. Van der Hem bought the *Atlas Maior* in such a state and expanded the work into fifty volumes and a box containing twenty-eight large drawings.<sup>79</sup> He added modern and historical maps, topographic and architectural illustrations and portraits, all related to his interests and involvement in political, military and religious events of his lifetime. All this material, 2400

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<sup>77</sup> J. Van der Waals, *Een Wereldreiziger op Papier: De Atlas van Laurens van der Hem (1621-1678)* (Amsterdam: Stichting Koninklijk Paleis, 1992), p. 11.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

prints and maps in total, were colored by the best illuminators of the period. Sometimes this was done to distinguish details, sometimes purely for aesthetic reasons.<sup>80</sup>

The origins of the additional prints can be traced back to several sources. Van der Hem used his own collection of single prints, but also had prints and fragments cut out from books in his library whenever he owned multiple copies. When he did not own the book from which he wished to take the text he wanted to add to his Atlas, he would copy them into the Atlas by hand. Newly produced maps that were not in the *Atlas Maior* he would buy in print and map stores, at auctions, or directly from the artist. If he could not buy the original he would have the artist himself copy the drawing on atlas paper. Before all parts of his Atlas were bound together Van der Hem had his collection stored in to separate folders, geographically ordered and classified.

In order for all material to have the same size, prints were pasted onto sheets of large atlas paper and cut or enlarged by adding new pieces at the top and bottom. These 'collages' were then colored to create cohesion. After Van der Hem's death the work on the Atlas continued, and several more parts were added. Some of these were compiled from the ready prepared folders and others from the paper collection in his library.<sup>81</sup> What can be said about the Atlas when considering the five main motives for collecting?

### *Curiositas*

Van der Hem's collection displays a thirst for knowledge, but also the desire to collect as much material as possible for the sake of completing his Atlas. The organization of his collection shows his knowledge of geographic and historic topics, but the contents sometimes prove otherwise. The need to complete and collect occasionally overshadowed the need to create an exact, scientific representation of reality. A good example of this is the story about a portrait: Van der Hem lacked a portrait of the king of Makassar and

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-16.



replaced it with a portrait of the king of Mongolia, Jahangird, without caring for accuracy. He also added some descriptions to prints -without checking if the text correctly described the pictures they accompanied.<sup>82</sup>

Despite some inconsistencies, the descriptions Van der Hem added to the Atlas are a good representation of the role *curiositas* plays in this collection. Despite the occasional inaccuracy, modern scholars are impressed by the level of knowledge displayed in the texts Van der Hem himself provided. The texts vary from longer descriptions copied from his travel journal with additional texts copied from relevant books, to legends added to maps containing topographical and historical pieces.

Van der Hem's texts demonstrate his interest in diverse and 'curious' matters of the time, like volcanoes, a phenomenon that in his time was yet to be properly explained. He added a new explanation of the phenomenon by the German Jesuit Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680), accompanied by several prints of volcanoes.<sup>83</sup>

### *Religion*

There is no concrete evidence that Van der Hem had any religious motives for collecting, despite his Catholic upbringing. The religious images he does include are the result of his need to complete the collection. The Atlas therefore also included imagery of religious wars like the Thirty Years' War, during which the Christians fought the Turks, and maps of the Holy Land. Although he was a Catholic, Van der Hem did not let his religious beliefs play a large part in his collection. For example, he did not include any imagery on the conflicts of the Eighty Years' War between the Protestants and Catholics in his own country.<sup>84</sup>

Of particular interest are the images of abbeys he included in the *Belgica Regia* volume of the Atlas, of which a few were originally part of Blaeu's editions of the works of

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<sup>82</sup> De Groot, *De Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*, pp. 319-320.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 323-325.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336.

Antonius Sanderus.<sup>85</sup> Most of these prints originate from Sanderus' *Chorographia Sacra Brabantiae* (Brussels, 1659-1663) and are the work engraver Lucas Vosterman (1595-1675). The Atlas van der Hem also contains images (in)directly related to *the Flandria Illustrata*. Van der Hem's library contained copies of both books and also owned prints that were meant to be published in the third, unpublished volume of the *Flandria Illustrata*, which he most likely acquired directly from Blaeu. The Blaeu brothers Jan and Cornelis published the first Latin editions of the *Flandria* in Amsterdam between 1641 and 1644. They were published under a fictional address of one Cornelius van Egmond residing in Cologne, Germany. This kind of deceit was often practiced by Dutch printers to avoid difficulties with Catholic censorship. The Catholic Church was quick to censor books which might have spread the Protestant Faith. Instead of revealing that the book was published in Protestant Amsterdam a catholic city, in this case Cologne was chosen as a cover address.<sup>86</sup>

### *Investment*

Investment for profit does not appear to have been a motive for Van der Hem, as he was a wealthy man and had denied several offers for his collection during his lifetime.<sup>87</sup> However, he did invest a large amount of money in his collection. There are no exact figures about the total sum he spent on his collection, especially on the coloring. The most expensive book in his library would have cost about three hundred guilders, and coloring its pages about 100 guilders per volume.<sup>88</sup>

Van der Hem also invested his time and efforts into his collection. The hours he spent on collecting and compiling his Atlas seem no less important to him than his work as a lawyer would have been.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>86</sup> C. de Vleeschauwer, 'De Flandria Illustrata van Antonius Sanderus', in *Archief- en Bibliotheekwezen in België*, 49 (1978), p. 17.

<sup>87</sup> De Groot, *De Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*, p. 313.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 339.

### *Aesthetic Pleasure*

It remains uncertain how van der Hem displayed his Atlas in his home, but it is certain that he had an interest in beautiful objects. Not only did he collect art and books, he also improved the aesthetic qualities of his collection by adding color and luxury bindings. Every page of the Atlas displays this love for his collection and is beautifully composed and designed to form one complete, aesthetically pleasing form. As De Groot states: “the beauty of the Atlas appears to be the consequence of, rather than the reason for his preoccupations.”<sup>89</sup> Van der Hem spent large sums on decoration and hired one of the most important illuminators of the period, Dirk Jansz van Santen (1638-1708). Van Santen lived with Van der Hem for several years, coloring prints and maps and using the finest materials Van der Hem could provide him with.<sup>90</sup>

### *Status*

As a collector of exclusive and exotic knowledge who spent great amounts of time, effort and money into his collection, Van der Hem directly related his hobby to his status. The Atlas became a reflection of his wealth, his aesthetic desires and his status as a wealthy man with a great deal of knowledge about the world.

His passions also reveal the qualities of the *l'honnête homme* Van der Hem possessed. He himself called collecting a ‘completely honorable way to relax’<sup>91</sup>. His large library shows that he was well educated, but if he possessed any other *l'honnête homme* qualities, such as ..., can only be speculated on since little is known about this personality and character.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 343.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 339.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 347

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 349.

## 4.2 Collecting in the Eighteenth Century

In this century Dutch artists continued to excel in the art of engraving. But production in terms of quality was not as successful as it had been in the previous century. Despite this, maps underwent an improvement in detail and topographical description and many atlases were published. According to Koeman, the large quantity of atlas editions can be largely attributed to the widespread mania for collecting. Eighteenth-century collectors differentiated themselves from their predecessors by describing and studying their possessions as scientific objects. The catalogues of Leiden publisher Pieter van der Aa (1659-1733) display the growing number of collectors and their interests in the eighteenth century. Apart from the general category of 'Geographica', similar to what one would find in the seventeenth century, they also include specialist topics like 'Topographica', 'Architecture', and 'Iconographica'.<sup>93</sup>

Frederik Muller (1817-1881), a prominent bookseller and bibliographer from Amsterdam, called the print collecting mania a typically Dutch phenomenon.<sup>94</sup> Nowhere else in the world was there such a drive for collecting found, nor was there any country where the quality of printing was as high as it was in the Netherlands. Muller himself was an important figure for the development of print collecting and antiquarian bookselling in the Netherlands. He was the first Dutch figure to stress the scholarly importance of these old maps and atlases.<sup>95</sup> It was only after 1850 that any historical value was attributed to old maps and atlases. Before that, maps were only regarded as tools. They became obsolete as soon as a newer, improved version would be available.

Muller was also a passionate collector who tried to assemble as many works as possible on many different subjects like pamphlets, portraits, historical prints and the book trade in general. No doubt Muller's greatest achievement are the catalogues he produced

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<sup>93</sup> Koeman, *Collections of Maps and Atlases in the Netherlands*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

of his own collections, which often present the first overviews of Dutch pamphlets, portraits and historical prints in the Netherlands, totaling over 200,000 items.<sup>96</sup>

### *Composite Atlases*

Eighteenth-century collections are composed like those of Gérard and the earlier stages of Van der Hem's Atlas. Single maps were compiled into uniformly bound books and accompanied by a succinct description of their contents. Koeman defines these collections as *Atlas Factices*, also known as *Composite Atlases*.

One of the greatest and largest examples of an eighteenth-century composite atlas is only known by description. It is the Atlas of Theodorus Boendermaker (1682-1720). Boendermaker was a wealthy merchant from Amsterdam who traded in wine and salt, just like his father. He was born in La Rochelle, France, and move to Amsterdam with his family 1686. He was a well-traveled man, which no doubt would have made it possible for him to collect maps and information from all over Europe.<sup>97</sup> His Composite Atlas contained around 5,000 maps, mostly dating from the period between 1680 and 1720. A surviving note from Boendermaker found between his papers, reveals his intention to bring together a large-scale collection containing modern maps of the whole of Europe. The collection was sold during auction. An advertisement in the *Amsterdamse Courant* described the collection as follows: "The Atlas consists of 103 pieces, and is collection of maps, city plans, portraits, (naval) battles, sieges, summer houses and palaces, and other remarkable things, from the best artists and printers; all pasted on to paper of a large format."<sup>98</sup> The collection was sold to a Portuguese Ambassador on March 30 1722, where it perished in a house fire in 1725. What remains is the Auction catalogue by Joannis Boom.<sup>99</sup> What can be

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>97</sup> H.J. van Es, 'Muur- en Wegresten nabij de Vecht, tussen Boom en Bosch en Vreedenoort, te Breukelen', *Tijdschrift Historische Kring Breukelen*, 4 (2000), pp. 235-244.

<sup>98</sup> <<http://www.geo-info.nl/download/?id=17670093>> (16 August 2014).

<sup>99</sup> *Catalogus bibliothecae selectae van de veiling van Theodorus Boendermaker* (Amsterdam: Joannes Boom, 1722).

determined from the remaining information is that the collection largely consisted of contemporary maps. Of the 5,000 maps 90% dated from the years 1680-1720.<sup>100</sup>

### 4.3 Collecting in the Nineteenth Century

The beginning of the nineteenth century was a troubling time for collectors. During the French occupation many collections had fallen into disorder and enormous quantities of old books and maps were destroyed and dispersed. Particularly English collectors profited from this by buying up and exporting what was left, taking advantage of the low prices for manuscripts, books and collections in the Netherlands. These were the two main reasons why the mania of collecting came to an end in this century.<sup>101</sup>

But there were also positive developments in this period like the introduction of a scientific approach to historical cartography. In 1838, J.T. Bodel Nijenhuis (1797-1872) compiled the first bibliography in the history of cartography in the Netherlands; *Beredeneerde Lijst van de Kaarten der Provincie Utrecht in het Algemeen* ('Discursive List of the Maps of the General Province of Utrecht'). In 1850 Frederik Muller published the first antiquarian booksellers' catalogue which was an untitled catalogue of a book auction that took place on the fourteenth and fifteenth of January 1850. Soon after, the first major studies of sixteenth and seventeenth-century cartographers appeared.<sup>102</sup>

By examining the surviving auction catalogues of the nineteenth century, Koeman has been able to determine that the number of private collections had reached its peak, and that material was slowly passing over from smaller collections into major ones.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Koeman, *Collections of Maps and Atlases in the Netherlands*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>102</sup> Examples of this are J. Van Raemdonck's book on Mercator: *Gérard Mercator, Sa Vie et Ses Oeuvres* (St. Nicolaas, 1869), and P.J.H. Baudet's book on the life and works of Willem Jansz, *Leven en Werken van Willem Jansz. Blaeu* (Utrecht, 1871).

<sup>103</sup> Koeman, *Collections of Maps and Atlases in the Netherlands*, p. 81.

#### 4.4 Collecting in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: The Collection of Gérard

The Belgian historian Tom Verschaffel has described the historiography of the Southern Netherlands in the eighteenth century as ‘essentially compilatory’.<sup>104</sup> Historians were seen as architects who created new historical works by collecting and compiling the essence of the work of other historians. Historical works were expected to bring together as much information as possible and historians were expected to include all the information already available on their particular topic. This form of historiography is clearly influenced by the ideas of the humble man: *l’honnête homme*. Historical writers of the period, like Jean Bertholet (1688-1757) and Beaucort (1720-1796) often described themselves as ‘but a simple collector’, a humble amateur leaving the job of ‘true historiography’ to the ‘actual, big historians’ who would be able to use their work to create true historical works.<sup>105</sup>

Gérard’s plans for the *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae* were also compilatory in nature and aimed to create a large-scale historical overview covering the entire history of the Southern Netherlands up to the nineteenth century. There is no information available about Gérard’s intentions for these folders, but it appears that the collection represents a part of the work that Gérard executed for the *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae* project.

What can be said about this Gérard collection when applying the five main motives Van der Veen and Van Gelder define?

##### *Curiositas*

Like the collectors before him, Gérard was on a quest for knowledge. His collection, however, is not focused on the exotic or curious but on the creation of a complete, compilatory history. Gérard can be characterized as well educated, humble and well

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<sup>104</sup> Verschaffel, *De Hoed en de Hond*, p. 239.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

mannered, and as such an example of the ideal gentleman. During his Jesuit library project he had donated books not intended for the Burgundian library to local schools and teachers.<sup>106</sup>

### *Religion*

The folders do not show any religious motives for collecting, but they do contain religious material. Gérard intended to bring together all available information on the subject of the Southern Netherlands, and this had to include prints of monasteries and churches in the region, the more so as the Southern Netherlands were predominantly catholic.

### *Investment*

The work executed by Gérard was an investment in the aims of the Royal Académie: compiling, studying and describing the general history of the Austrian Netherlands. His plans for the *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae* never saw completion, but they would have been a major step for the Académie towards achieving the ultimate goal of a national historiography. Gérard was somewhat of a privileged collector, whose occupation allowed him to use materials and books without having to buy any necessary sources. There is however little evidence available on his possessions and their origins. His work in libraries would have involved many, if not all of the books that are a source for this collection.

### *Aesthetic pleasure*

Gérard organized his collection of prints by subject or geographical location and provided them with custom-made bindings made with decorative marbled paper. The folders include

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<sup>106</sup> Machiels, *Van Religieuze naar Openbare Bibliotheek*, p. 14.



pages of different formats, sometimes bound together with pieces of rope. Based on the appearance of the folders and what is known about Gérard's intentions for collecting, it is clear that aesthetic pleasure was not a relevant motive. Not much is known about the aesthetic intentions of the final intention for this collection, the *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae*, but considering these folders as small beginnings of the project means that they are bound for a practical rather than an aesthetic purpose. The form in which these folders exist is only for the purpose of systematical collecting and storing all relevant prints and maps to one subject in a specified binding.

### *Status*

Gérard's status as a scholar of the *Académie* had been established by his highly effective work on projects like the Jesuit Library and catalogue of the Brussels library. His position within the *Académie* allowed him the freedom to propose and execute large-scale collection plans like the *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae*. The execution of the project, however, was handicapped by Gérard's fierce competition with fellow *Académie* member Joseph Hippolyte Ghesquière (1731-1802).<sup>107</sup> Both scholars proposed plans for compiling histories regarding the history of the Netherlands.<sup>108</sup> No doubt status within the *Académie* played a role in such matters. These scholars were not only driven by personal interests, but also by their position in the *Académie* and their ultimate goals regarding national history.<sup>109</sup>

## 5. The Eight Folders' Contents and Their Origins

Gérard was a compilatory historian who set out to collect manuscripts and prints that suited his selected subject of the History of the Southern Netherlands. Among other

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<sup>107</sup> Verschaffel, *De Hoed en de Hond*, p. 74.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

sources, he used existing works like Sanderus' *Flandria Illustrata* or Foppens' *Bibliotheca Belgicae*, which were also compilatory works on the history of the Southern Netherlands. He also collected archival documents and other writings from governmental or ecclesiastical institutions. He organized the materials much like Van der Hem did: in separate folders organized by subject. However, where Van der Hem had managed to use his material to create a more final form of his Atlas, in Gérard's case only the source material remains. His *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae* project never saw its final form.

The eight folders are all organized by subcategories of the main theme (the history of the Southern Netherlands). They are sorted by regions (like Bruges or Ypres and their surroundings), subjects (like images of city halls and portraits of scholars), or historical events (like the Brabant Revolt). Most prints are engravings, but Gérard also included maps that are relevant to the subject matter. An important question is what the origins of these prints are, and if anything can be said about Gérard's relation to these works. The following chapter presents a description of some of the contents of the folders.

Portrait de Adolphe Ayrault	_____	1
D'Alard, D'Amsterdam	_____	2
De Baltazar Ayala	_____	3
De Pierre Baugerius	_____	4
De Francois Baldouinus	_____	5
De Amolo Bacc	_____	6
De Francois Baectius	_____	7
De Jean Berius	_____	8
De Louis Blossius	_____	10
De Jean Collardus	_____	11
De Pierre Bossigius	_____	12
D'Auger Jostain Busbequius	_____	12
De Pierre Carisius	_____	13
De Guillaume Carcerus	_____	14
De Jacques Cato	_____	15
D'Abrien Van Cattenbroeck	_____	16
De Pierre Cluis	_____	17
De Philippe De Comines	_____	18
De Laurent Costerus	_____	19
De Guillaume Cuperus	_____	20
De Josa Dangonderius	_____	21
De meme	_____	22
De Claude Desquins	_____	23
D'Andre Delvaux	_____	24
D'Edmond Dincrus	_____	25

Fig. 1. An example of an index handwritten by Gérard. KB Shelf-Mark 1705 A 21.

## 5.1 KB Shelf-Mark 1705 a 21 – Collection of Portraits of Dutch and Flemish Scholars

Sources: *Philip Galle*, *Illustrium Scriptorum Icones (Antwerp, 1604)*, *Aubertus Miraeus*, *Illustrium Galliae Belgicae scriptorum Icones et elogi (Antwerp, 1604; Jan François Foppens*, *Bibliotheca Belgica (Brussels, 1739)*.

This folder is a collection of portraits of Dutch and Belgian authors, scholars, and other prominent figures. Gérard's handwritten index reveals that some portraits that were originally included are no longer present. From the original total of 90 portraits fourteen are missing, among which a portrait of Justus Lipsius and one depicting Thyl Uylenspiegel. The collection has been given a new, modern binding. It can be assumed that previously this collection of portraits would have been bound together much like the other folders that are to this day held together by delicate pieces of string. It is impossible to say of this amateur style of binding is the work of Gérard, who required only a quick fix to keep the prints together for future reference, or if this was the work of somebody else.

### *Aubertus Miraeus (1573-1640)*

Miraeus was born in Brussels. After studying at Douai and Leuven he became canon of Antwerp cathedral in 1608 and secretary to his uncle, Joannes Miraeus, who was then Bishop of Antwerp. In 1611 he was appointed almoner and librarian to Archduke Albert of Austria, and in 1624 he became dean of Antwerp cathedral. He remained in Antwerp until his death.<sup>110</sup> During his lifetime he wrote numerous works in the fields of (ecclesiastical) history and related disciplines, among which the *Illustrium Galliae Belgicae scriptorum icones et elogi*, first published as an un-illustrated edition (Antwerp, 1602).

### *Philip Galle (1532-1612)*

Philip Galle was an engraver and publisher in Haarlem and Antwerp who published over 2500 prints in his lifetime, becoming one of the most productive and successful print publishers in Europe in the second half of the sixteenth century. As he had already published several portraits fitting for the descriptions in *Illustrium Galliae Belgicae*

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<sup>110</sup> M. Ott, 'Aubert Miraeus', in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. X (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913), n.pag. <[http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic\\_Encyclopedia\\_\(1913\)/Aubert\\_Miraeus](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_(1913)/Aubert_Miraeus)> (16 January 2014).

*scriptorum icones et elogi*, a collaboration was formed between him and Miraeus. As a result, a new, illustrated edition of the work was published in Antwerp in 1604, containing an engraved title-page and 52 numbered portraits by Galle. Miraeus had been the one who took the initiative and probably also determined the selection to a large extent. The title-page states that the portraits and the accompanying verses came from the 'museum' of Miraeus, which according to Sellink could refer to Miraeus as both the author of the verses and the brains behind the selection, or to a collection of portraits the scholar had in his possession. For this publication, Galle was able to re-use seventeen portraits from his earlier works: eleven from the *Virorum doctorum effigies* (Antwerp, 1572), five from the *Imagines doctorum virorum* (Antwerp, 1587) and the second state of Torrentius's portrait from the 1595-re-issue of this last volume.

Sometimes the existing verses were kept, other times they were replaced by new descriptions. Many of these texts were written by Miraeus, others were laudatory poems by Antwerp authors. At the top of every portrait the age and the year of death of the depicted was added. Although all prints were engraved in the Galle workshop, there is now way to determine who the exact artist is.<sup>111</sup> The *Illustrium scriptorum imagines* is a eulogy of scholars exclusively from the Northern and Southern Netherlands, while also being a compilatory historiographical work portraying figures of the past. Only after their death were scholars included and they are arranged by occupation.

Galle's son Theodore took charge of the family workshop in 1600 and published a revised and enlarged edition of the *Illustrium scriptorum* in 1608. In most cases the inscriptions from the earlier editions were replaced by verses written by Miraeus and some other authors. This edition also has six added portraits, among which a portrait of Justus Lipsius drawn and engraved by Theodore.<sup>112</sup> The handwritten index in de folder confirms that there was once a print of Lipsius present in the collection of Gérard. As this portrait only appears from 1608 on, it can be confirmed that Gérard must have owned or used a copy of the 1608 edition.

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<sup>111</sup> M.S. Sellink, *Phillips Galle (1537-1612): Engraver and Print Publisher in Haarlem and Antwerp*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 1997), vol. I, Text, p. 61.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

*Joannes Franciscus Foppens (1689-1761), Bibliotheca Belgica*

Foppens was born in Brussels in 1689 as the son of the well-known publisher François Foppens. He obtained his MA in Leuven in 1706 and taught philosophy there. In 1732 he became archpriest in Mechelen, ultimately becoming archdeacon in 1740. He died in Mechelen in 1761. He was a well-known bibliographer and historian, mostly known for his histories of the bishoprics of Antwerp, 's-Hertogenbosch (Bois-le-Duc), Mechelen, the Council of Flanders and of the Church of the Netherlands. His *Bibliotheca Belgica* was published in two parts (Brussels, 1739) and was unfinished when he died. It is a compilatory historical catalogue, containing an alphabetical list of nearly 3,000 authors and their works. Foppens' notes provide biographical information about the authors and the titles of their published and unpublished works. He introduced his *Bibliotheca* as a new and improved version of biographical work by his predecessors and publications like Aubertus Miraeus' *Illustrium scriptorum*.

The work was illustrated with old and worn impressions of original copperplates from the Galle workshop, as well as numerous copies in reverse image, from portraits which then were no longer available in their original state.<sup>113</sup> It is unknown how Foppens obtained the original copperplates, perhaps through the book trade connections of his father. In 1636 the list of copperplates in the death estate of Theodore Galle's widow Catharina Moerentorf (a daughter of Jan Moretus) included *Geleerde van Neederlant tweentsestich platen* (Dutch scholars, 62 plates). The reversed copies in Foppens' study were originally engraved for Isaac Bullart's (1599-1672) two-volume study on important figures in European history, entitled *Académie des sciences et des arts, contenant les vies, & les éloges historiques des hommes illustres* (Brussels: Foppens, 1682).

The bibliography includes not only authors from the Southern Netherlands, but also political figures like Charles the Great (742/48-814) and artists like Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640). Most of the author's biographies are short, but some were given more space (like Miraeus and Erasmus). The descriptions contain biographical as well as bibliographical information. The work became an important work tool for historians, but was also criticized. Foppens intended to publish a third edition with corrections, but died before it was

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<sup>113</sup> Sellink, *Philips Galle (1537-1612)*, vol. II, *Notes/Appendices*, p. 42.

published. He left his work in the hand of Jacob Goyers (1719-1809), a bibliographer and theologian from Anderlecht, but he too failed to publish this improved version. There are fourteen copies of the *Bibliotheca Belgica* listed in the catalogue of the Burgundian Library, of which some have supplements by the likes of De Nelis and van Hulthem.

*Portrait of Laurens Janszoon Coster (ca. 1370-1440)*

One of the most interesting prints in this collection is a rare portrait of Laurens Janszoon Coster, engraved by Nicolas de Larmessin (1640-1725) after a drawing by Jacob van Campen (1596-1657) (See fig. 2). Coster was once believed to be the inventor of printing, a story immortalized as 'the Coster Legend'. It is still a popular tale in Haarlem to this day, even though it is now widely accepted that Johann Gutenberg of Mainz was in fact the true inventor of printing.<sup>114</sup> Frederik Muller still refers to Coster as the 'inventor of book printing' in his *Beschrijvende Catalogus van 7000 Portretten* (Amsterdam, 1853).<sup>115</sup> However, he does not describe this particular print and its origins remain unknown.

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<sup>114</sup> <<http://www.psymon.com/koster/>> (3 June 2014).

<sup>115</sup> F. Muller, *Beschrijvende catalogus van 7000 portretten, van Nederlanders, en van buitenlanders, tot Nederland in betrekking staande* (Amsterdam: F. Muller, 1853), p. 44.



Fig. 2. Portrait of Laurens Janszoon Coster by J. van Campen, after a painting by Nicolas de L'Armessin. KB Shelf-Mark 1705 A 21 [19].



## 5.2 KB Shelf-Mark 374 A 20 – Collection of 36 Images of Bruges and Its Surroundings

*Sources: Largely taken from Antonius Sanderus, Flandria Illustrata. Includes engravings by Jacobus Harrewijn and Gabriel Bodenehr.*

*Antonius Sanderus, Flandria Illustrata*

Antonius Sanderus (Antoon Sanders, 1586-1664) was a historian, theologian and poet in Latin and Dutch. He was born in Antwerp, but grew up in Ghent, where he studied at the Jesuit College. Afterwards, he studied philosophy at Douai and theology at Leuven. From 1615 to 1618 he was pastor in Sleidinge. In 1625 he became canon of the cathedral of Ypres, and in 1637 he was appointed librarian and teacher at the church. In 1654 he laid down his religious functions and became book inspector (an ecclesiastical censor approving books for print) in Brussels. During his entire life he studied the history of the Low Countries.

His early work consists mainly of Latin poetry, numerous odes dedicated to dukes, kings, emperors and other influential people. Among his many theological, historical and bibliographical works are *Gandavum* (on the history of Ghent, 1624) and *Bibliotheca Belgica manuscripta* (a two-volume work published in 1641 on Flemish libraries, both private and ecclesiastical and monastical). But without a doubt his greatest achievement is the two-volume *Flandria Illustrata* (1641-1644). Part I of this work contains the history of the counties of Flanders, including descriptions of Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres. Part 2 covers the remaining areas of Flanders. For the accompanying illustrations (engravings, portraits and maps) Sanderus appealed to different artists.

*Flandria Illustrata* was a successful publication; later Latin editions appeared in 1732 and 1753 (The Hague, Christiaan van Lom). A Dutch translation, *Verheerlijkt Vlaandre*, was published in Leiden, Rotterdam and The Hague in 1735 in a supplemented three-volume edition. The content of *Flandria Illustrata* is largely compilation work. Its value lies not so much in the historical information, but in the meticulously drawn prints.

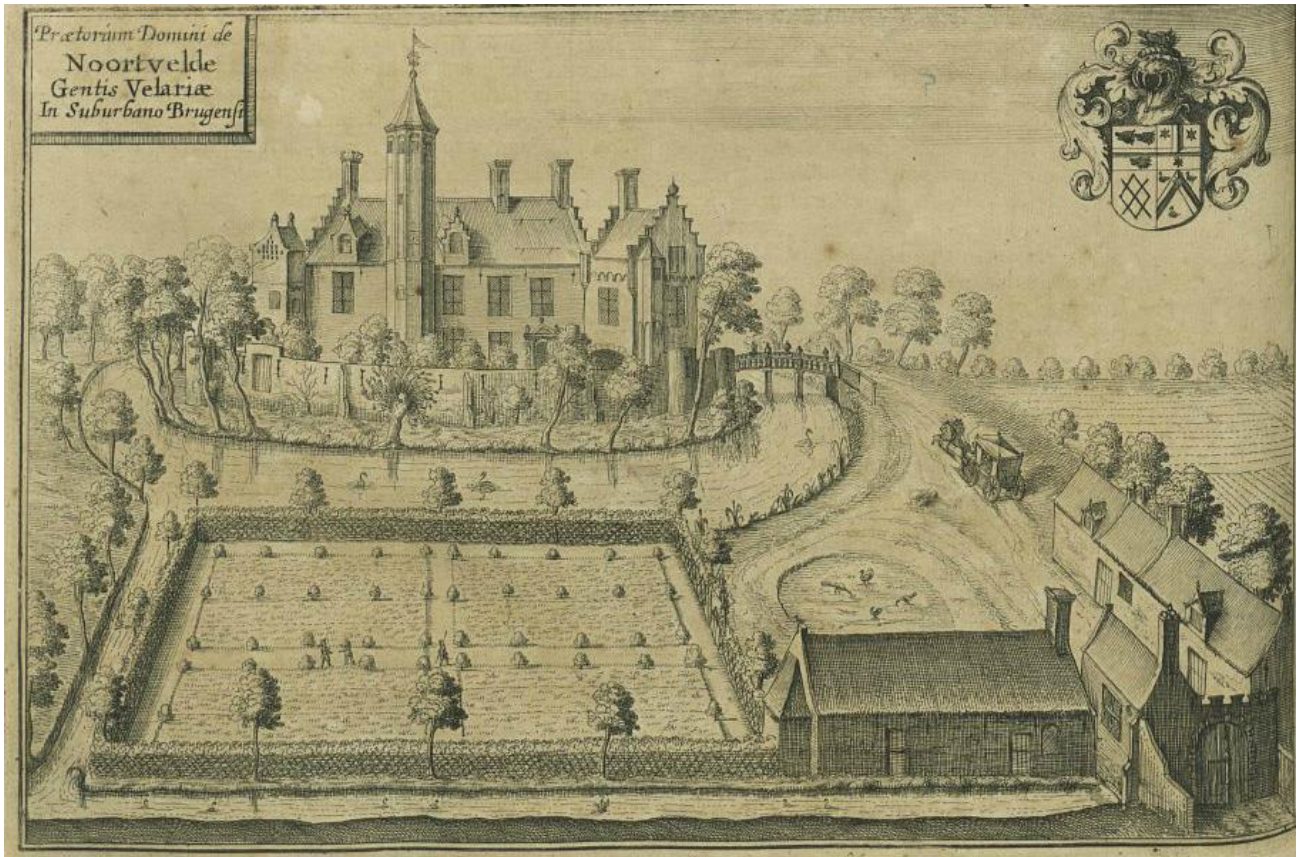


Fig. 3. 'Praetorium Domini de Noortvelde Gentis Valariae In Suburbano Brugensi', from Sanderus, *Flandria Illustrata*, part I, p. 294.

Two folders own their contents largely to *Flandria Illustrata*: KB shelf-mark 374 A 20 and 374 A 21. Each folder is organized by region: one depicting Bruges and its surroundings, the other Ghent and Ypres and surroundings.

### 5.3 KB Shelf-Mark 374 A 21 – Collection of 24 Maps and Images of Ghent and Ypres

*Sources: Largely taken from Antonius Sanderus' Flandria Illustrata. Includes engravings by Jacobus Harrewijn and Gabriel Bodenehr.*

This collection not only includes prints, but also maps. The map of Ypres is not only a good example of this, but is also included in a different state than the original in Sanderus' *Flandria Illustrata*.

The map in this folder lacks both the view and the legend, which appear to have been cut out. The map is folded into the folder and as Gérard often included large images (which he also folded to fit the rest of the collection), it cannot be said with any certainty that he cut out these parts to fit the rest of his collection.

More likely is the assumption that Gérard encountered several copies of the popular *Flandria Illustrata* during his work as a librarian or de-selecting the Jesuit libraries. At least one complete copy from a Jesuit collection is kept in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in Brussels. It once belonged to the Jesuit College of Brussels. In his description of Gérard's work on the Jesuit libraries Machiels mentions visits to Brussels on several occasions, although not specifically for the purpose of organizing the library of the Brussels College.<sup>116</sup> If Gérard could dispose of multiple copies of the same map, it is likely that he used already damaged copies for his own collection, reserving the complete copies for libraries.

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<sup>116</sup> Machiels, *Van Religieuze naar Openbare Bibliotheek*.



Fig. 4. The original map of Ypres as it appears in Sanderus' *Flandria Illustrata* (Part I, pp. 334-335). Includes a panorama of the city at the top and a legend to the right.

#### 5.4 KB Shelf-Mark 374 A 22 – Collection of 35 Images of Cities, Villages and Castles of Brabant

*Sources: Largely taken from Jean-Baptiste Gramaye's Antiquitates Illustrissimi Ducatus Brabantiae (Brussels: Johannes Mommaert, c. 1610). Anonymous engravers.*

*Jean-Baptiste Gramaye, Antiquitates Illustrissimi Ducatus Brabantiae.*

Jean-Baptiste Gramaye (1579-1635) was born in Antwerp, but grew up in Arnhem. He studied the humanist trivium, civic and canon law in Leuven, and also taught history there. He was appointed successor to Justus Lipsius as Historiographer Royal in 1606. He was given (financial) support by the Archdukes to facilitate research in the archives of the Southern Netherlands to complete the history of Brabant Lipsius had intended to write.<sup>117</sup>

#### 5.5 KB Shelf-Mark 374 A 25 – Collection of Eighteen Images and Maps of Cities in the Netherlands and Belgium

*Sources: Some images taken from Philippe de Cantillon's Delices du Brabant et de ses campagnes, largely from anonymous sources. Includes engravings by Jacobus Harrewijn, Gabriel Bodenehr and Gaspar Huybrechts.*

*Philippe de Cantillon (?-1733)*

The French economist Philippe de Cantillon (?-1733) based his *Délices de Brabant et de ses Campagnes* (Amsterdam, 1757) on Jacques Le Roy's *Grand Theatre Profane du Duché de Brabant* (1730) and *Castella et Praetoria nobilium Brabantiae* (Antwerp, 1694-99).<sup>118</sup> Jacques Le Roy (1633-1719), a historian from Antwerp, wrote several valuable historical works, based on thorough archival research into the histories of buildings, monasteries and castles. He also enlisted some of the most talented engravers of the era, Jacobus

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<sup>117</sup> R. Esser, *The Politics of Memory: The Writing of Partition in the Seventeenth-Century Low Countries* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 182.

<sup>118</sup> Verschaffel, *De Hoed en de Hond*, p. 49.

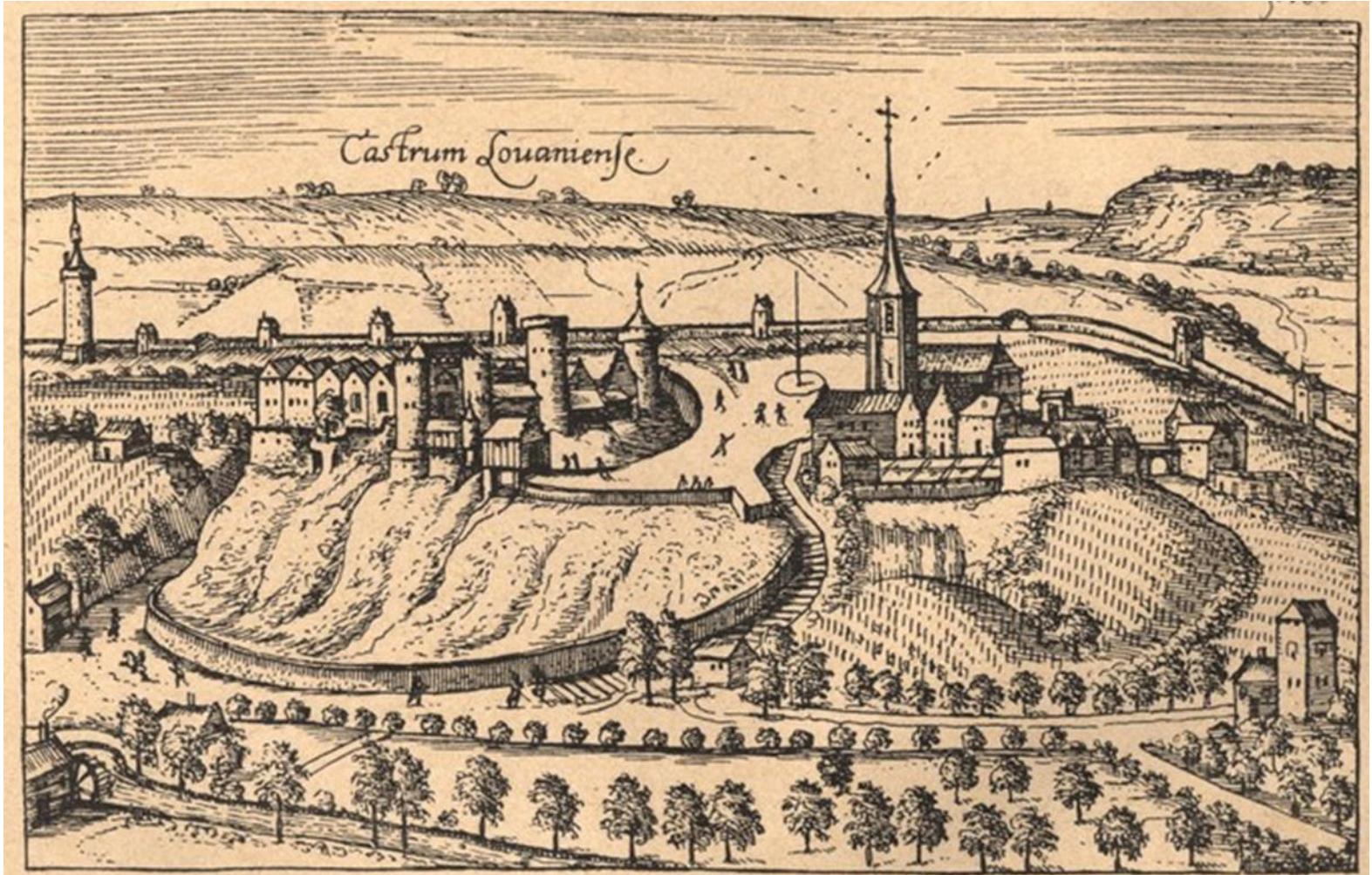


Fig. 5. 'Castrum Lovaniense'. From Gramaye's *Antiquitates* (Brussels, 1610).

Figure 5 first appeared in Gramaye's *Antiquitates* (Brussels, 1610) and depicts the old castle of the dukes of Brabant in Leuven. The castle on the Keizersberg (Imperial mountain), close to the abbey, is the third castle of the Dukes, built in the sixteenth century when Charles V made it his home. The enclosing wall was demolished in the seventeenth century; the entire castle was raised to the ground in 1783.<sup>119</sup>

A similar print appears in Cantillon's *Délices de Brabant et de ses campagnes* and in Le Roy's *Grand theatre profane du Duché de Brabant*, now with a banner and two coats of arms. (fig. 6) These images have the signature of Jacobus Harrewijn (1660-1727), a prominent artist and engraver of the seventeenth century. He also worked on other important historical works like Sanderus' *Flandria Illustrata* and Le Roy's *Castella et praetoria nobilium Brabantiae* (Antwerp, 1694). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries engraving was still expensive, and old copperplates could still deliver good results at a low cost, as copper was very expensive. This is why very few original plates from the seventeenth century have survived; they were usually re-used until they were completely worn out and then melted down.

Although the two images are strikingly similar they are not printed from the same plate. It is more likely that Harrewijn used the image to create his own, free interpretation of the image, supported by the fact that Harrewijn is credited for the images in Gramaye's *Antiquitates Illustrissimi Comitatus Flandriae* (Leuven/Brussels, 1708).<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> <<http://www.erfgoedplus.be/erfgoedplus/detail.jsp?artefactid=24062A51.priref.1212>> (2 May 2014).

<sup>120</sup> <<http://cisne.sim.ucm.es/record=b2418867>> (26 May 2014).

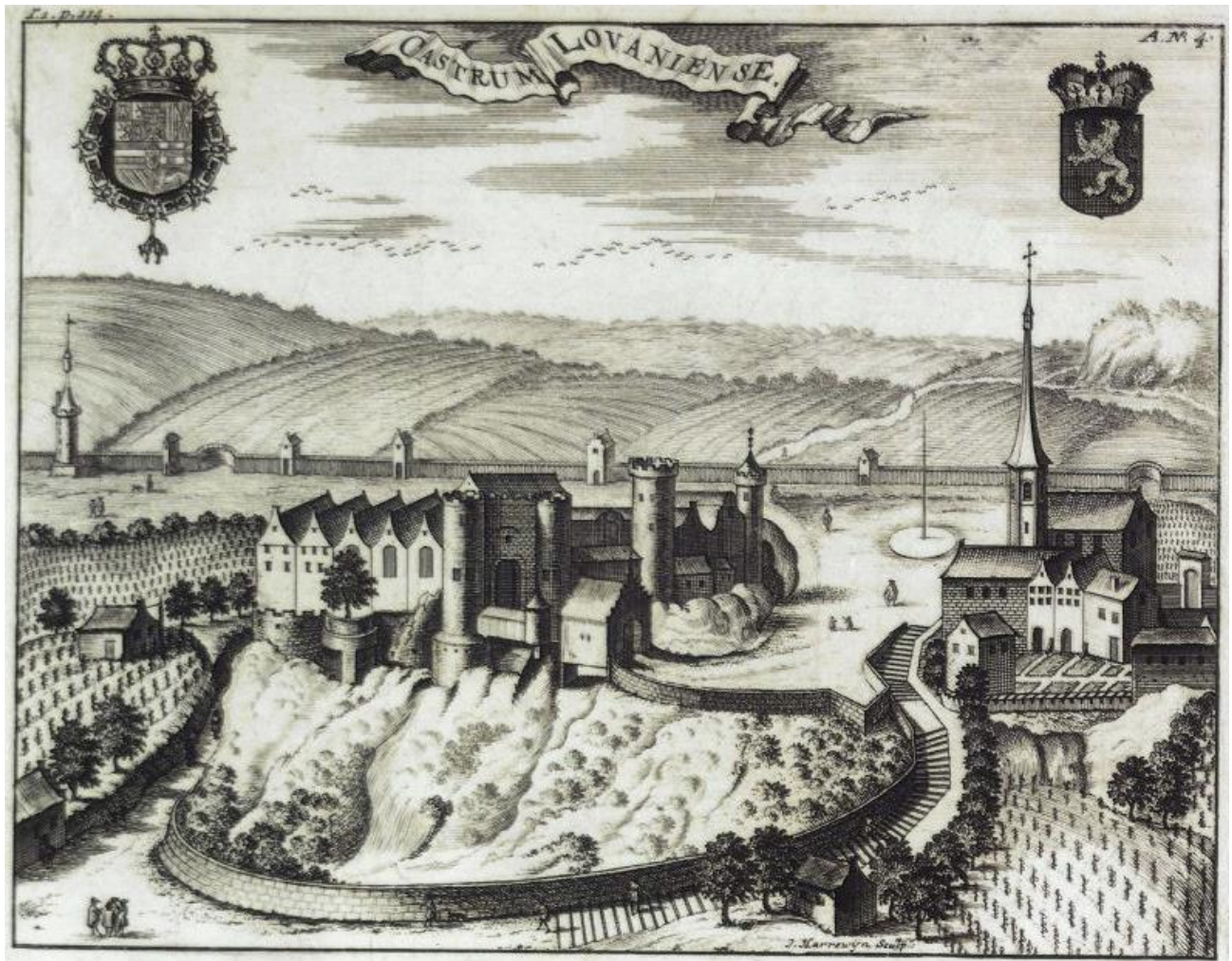


Fig.6. 'Castrum Lovaniense', taken from Cantillon's *Délices de Brabant et de ses Campagnes* (Amsterdam, 1757). Signed by Jacobus Harrewijn.



## 5.6 KB Shelf-Mark 591 K 33 – Collection of Ten Engravings Depicting Events of the Reign of Archduchess Maria Elisabeth Josepha of Austria

*Source:* Recueil des dévotions et divertissemens de son altesse serenissime Marie Elisabeth Archiduchesse d’Aûtriche, &c, Gouvernante Generale des Pays-Bas Aûtrichiens, &c. &c. Dans sa résidence à Bruxelles représentées en tailles douces (*Bruxelles: George Fricx, 1736*).

A collection of eight plates, some of which are colored, depicting events in the life of Archduchess Maria Elisabeth of Austria, published by ‘printer to her majesty’ George Fricx. This collection originally contained ten plates, printed on larger paper with decorative borders. This suggests that this copy owned by Gérard was possibly a proof copy.

Archduchess Maria Elisabeth (1680-1741) was governor of the Austrian Netherlands from 1725 to 1741. She had been appointed by her brother, Charles VI (1685-1740, Holy Roman Emperor and Archduke of Austria). She died at Mariemont and was first buried in Brussels; in 1749 her body was moved to Vienna, where was put to rest in the Imperial Crypt, next to her brother Charles.<sup>121</sup>

### *Jan-Baptist Berterham (1687-1722)*

Jan-Baptist Berterham is an engraver mostly known for his illustrations in books like *Miraeus’ Opera Diplomatica et Historica* (Leuven, 1723).<sup>122</sup>

<sup>121</sup> B. Hamann, ‘Mary Elizabeth’, in *New German Biography*, 16 (1990), n.pag. <<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118927426.html>>.

<sup>122</sup> U. Thieme and F. Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildender Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Seemann, 1909), pp. 488-489.



Fig. 7. 'S.A.S. a la Chasse du Sanglier'. Depicting the Archduchess attending a boar hunt.

## 5.7 KB Shelf-Mark 3101 C 4 – Collection of Four Plates and a Manuscript on the Revolt in Brussels during September 1787

*Source: Revolte des Brabançons (1790), with a handwritten index and notes by Gérard. Anonymous engraver and printer.*<sup>123</sup>

### *The Brabant Revolt*

The Austrian Habsburg dynasty had ruled over the Southern Netherlands since the end of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1714. In the eighteenth century Brussels and the Southern Netherlands enjoyed economic prosperity and political freedom. This changed at the accession to the throne of Emperor Joseph II (1741-1790) in 1780. His efforts to bring reforms to the country sparked much resistance. Encouraged by the outbreak of the French Revolution in July 1789, the ‘Brabant revolt’ broke out in November 1789.<sup>124</sup>

In May 1787 pamphlets had already been spread in Brussels with a declaration that the States-General would take over power as the people’s representatives, unless Joseph would promise to keep their rights and privileges intact. These pamphlets, along with the rumors that Joseph was planning on imposing higher taxes and mandatory military service, led to much unrest. A fight on the night of September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1787 between guardsmen and Austrian troops led to an attack on the church by Austrian soldiers and fighting in the streets. General d’Alton, who is depicted in one of the prints in the collection, became the new military commander of the Austrian troops. He was responsible for the death of several people by firing into a group on the Grand Place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 1788. The United States of Belgium was proclaimed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1790, but peace only returned to Brussels after French troops arrived in 1792 and the country was taken over by the French Regime.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>123</sup> The handwritten title on the binding reads: ‘Journée du 21 sept: 1787 a Bru.’

<sup>124</sup> P.J.H. Ubachs, *Handboek voor de geschiedenis van Limburg* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2000), pp. 266-267.

<sup>125</sup> F.P. State, *Historical Dictionary of Brussels* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2004), pp. 44-46.



Fig. 8. The carriage of General d'Alton is attacked by angry volunteers on the Grand Place in Brussels, September 20, 1787. With a French caption of ten lines. Part of a group of prints related to the events of the Brabant Revolution and the period 1787-1790 entitled 'Revolte des Brabançons 1790'.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>126</sup> KB Shelf-Mark 3101 C4 [3].



Fig. 9. The Austrian army fires at protesters during the uprising in Brussels in 1787. Below the print is a French caption of five lines.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>127</sup> KB Shelf-Mark 3101 C4 [4].

These two collections of prints on the Brabant revolution and the reign of Archduchess Maria Elisabeth of Austria are different from the other folders. They are images compiled from one source (in the case of Shelf-Mark 3101 C 4), or form one coherent source on their own (in the case of Shelf-Mark 591 K 33). They are also much smaller in size, have a different binding and contain fewer images. Considering their purpose as a contribution to the *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae* project it can be said that these two sources are not compilation atlases, but they are a necessary addition to the project as historic sources on the history of the Southern Netherlands. The rule of the Hapsburg monarchy and the protests against the reforms of Emperor Joseph II are two important themes in Gérard's own life and time, and would form an important part of any work on the history of the Southern Netherlands.

#### 5.8 KB Shelf-Mark 344 G 19 Vues des Plus des Hotels de Ville des Pays Bas

*Sources: Various. Images published by Blaeu (Amsterdam), after Sanderus' Flandria Illustrata. Engravings by Jacobus Harrewijn and Gaspar Bouttats.*

This folder contains seventeen prints taken from various sources. There is no coherence in the source material, but all prints depict city halls in the Southern Netherlands. Gaspar Bouttats (1634-1695) was an Antwerp engraver and painter who worked mainly for booksellers.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> M. Bryan, *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1886), p. 173.

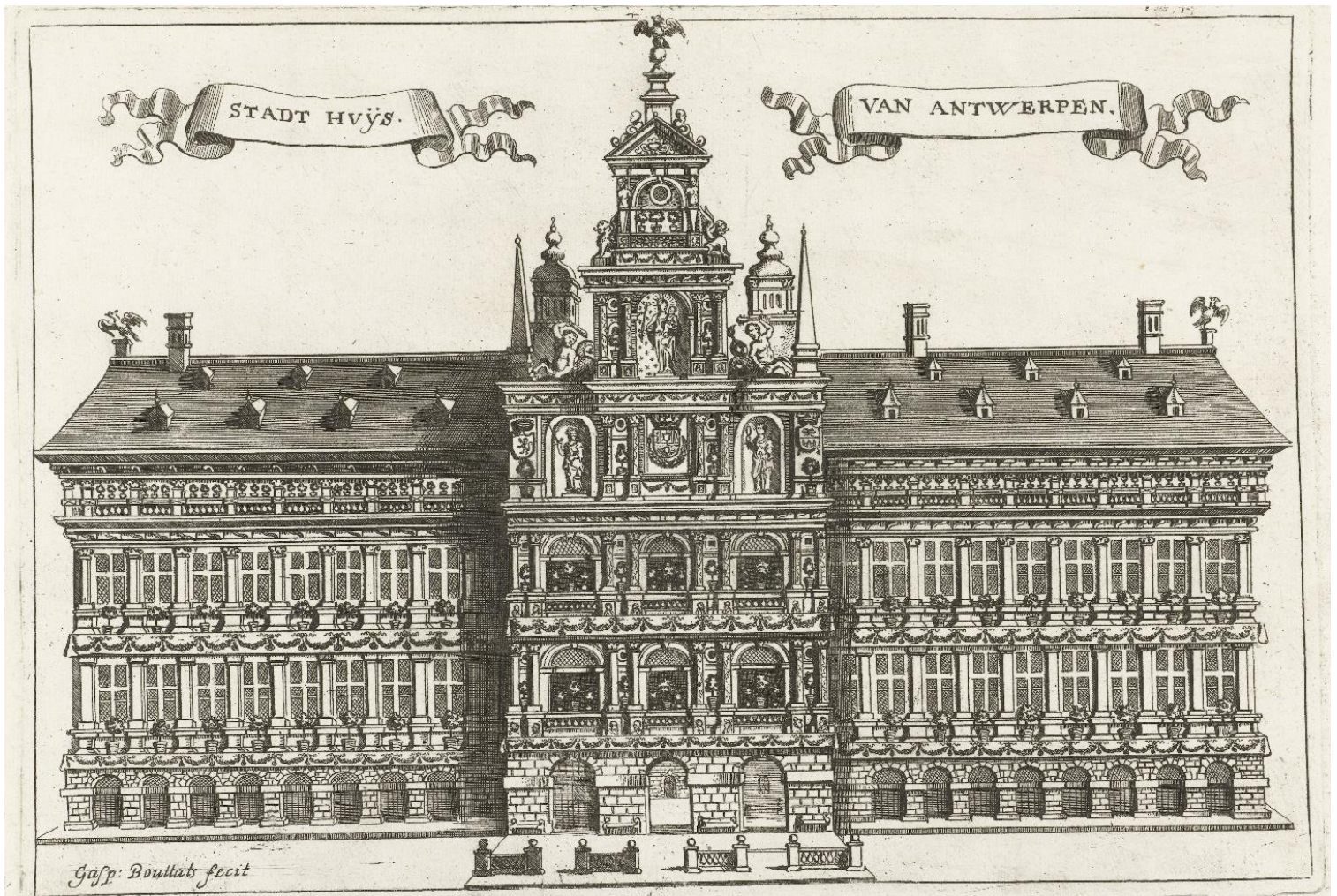


Fig. 10. 'Stadthuis van Antwerpen' (1685) by Gaspar Bouttats.

The Antwerp city hall. Part of the illustrations on the decorations added in 1685, at the celebration of the centenary of the liberation of the town by the Duke of Parma in 1585, with the title in two banners at the top of picture. The print originally comes from Peter Frans de Smidt, *Hondert-jaerigh jubile-vreught bewesen in dese stad Antwerpen* (Antwerp, 1685).

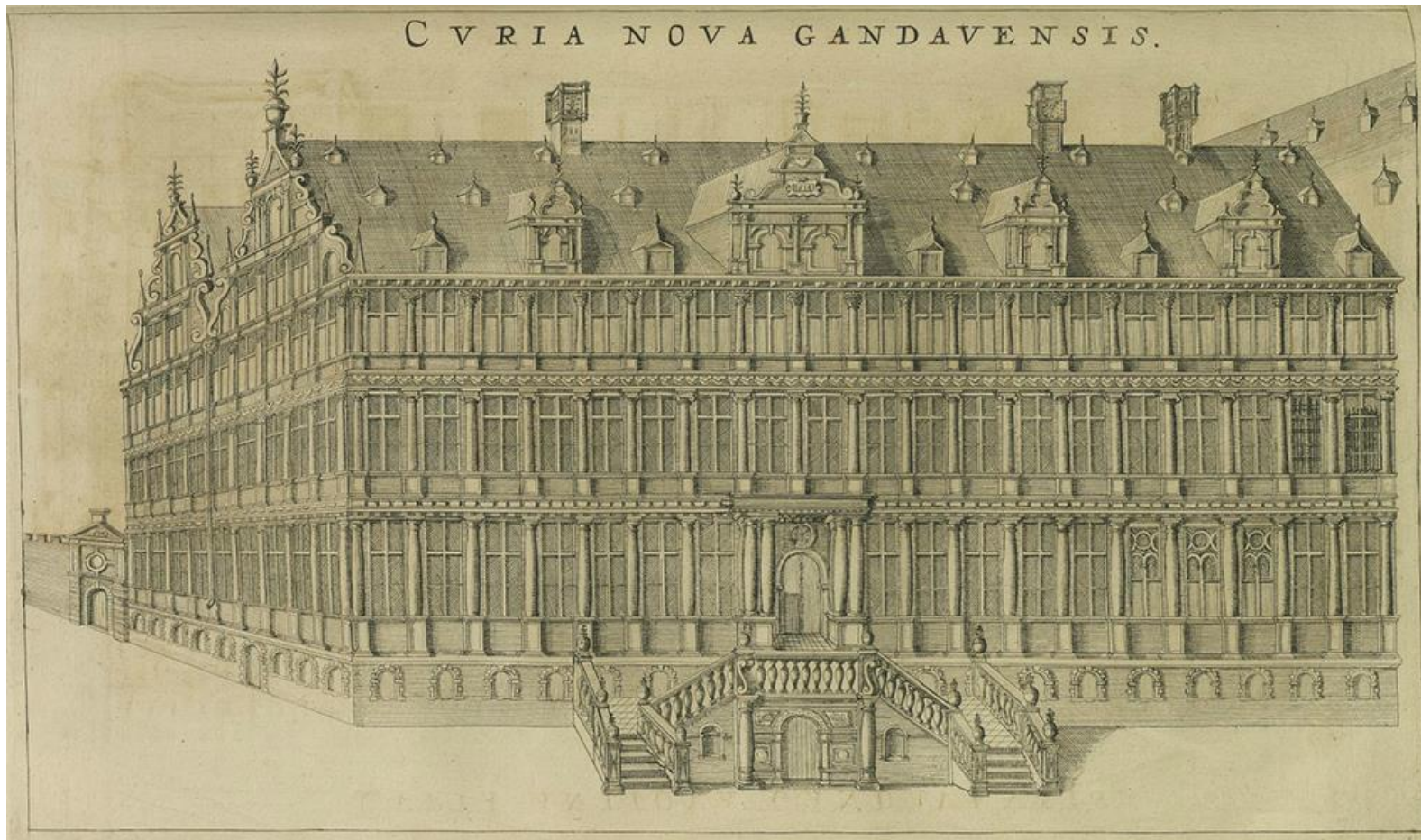


Fig. 11. 'Curia Nova Gandavensis'. The city hall in Ghent, from Sanderus' *Flandria Illustrata* (Part I, p. 96b).



## 6. Conclusion

As is noted before, these eight folders were only listed as 'collections' in the KB catalogue before the Plano project had been started. At this moment, all folders have been examined and all items have been individually identified and catalogued. Each item is now explicitly listed as being part of the Gérard collection brought to the KB by Flament. There is no evidence to say with certainty 1819 is indeed when these folders would have entered the library, but when they are understood to be a part of the *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae* project then it can be assumed that they were a part of the work Gérard left behind when he died. Consequently, they would have been a part of the collection his widow had sold to king Willem I in 1819, which was first stored in the state archives and later transferred to the KB by Charles Flament.

In this light, the folders are a part of the preparations of the *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae* project, a large-scale project with the intention of collecting all available source material on the history of the Southern Netherlands. To organize his sources, Gérard organized his folders by subject and bound them together with paper and string. The plans for this multi-volume historiographical works about a particular country or region were part of the historic mindset of the period, in which historians were looking to practice a more systematic and organized form of historic research within the constraints of national identity. Compilatory historiographical work like that of Gérard was a common practice in the eighteenth century. When examining the other objects of the Gérard collection in the KB it becomes clear that he had already collected many manuscripts, notes, excerpts, letters and books as a contribution to his project. There is also proof of this compilatory way of working in these other objects of the collection in the KB. It contains works like Sanderus' *Bibliotheca Belgica Manuscripta* (Rijssel, 1641-43) in which Gérard's handwritten annotations are included. All of the 262 items form the Gérard collection present in the library concern the history of the Southern Netherlands.

There is no evidence to determine how Gérard would have acquired these prints and their sources. It can only be speculated where he may have acquired these works.

Because of this, it also remains unclear if he would have had access to incomplete or damaged copies, or if he deconstructed any sources himself. It is known that the Jesuit libraries Gérard re-organized contained many incomplete books and works. These libraries certainly would have included important historic works of the time, like Sanderus' *Flandria Illustrata* and Gramaye's *Antiquitates Illustrissimi Ducatus Brabantiae*, but there is no evidence to reconstruct which copies Gérard may have used as source material for these folders.

There is some tangible evidence that Gérard worked with the books by Sanderus, Miraeus and Gramaye. In the 1770 catalogue of the Brussels public library, Gérard had entered several titles that were also used as a source for his print collection. He lists three copies of two editions of the *Flandria Illustrata* (one from 1610 and two from 1642) and one copy of the 1730 edition of Jacobus Le Roy's *Grand theatre profane du Duché de Brabant*. The fact that Gérard knew these works is confirmed by these entries, but it can be said with some certainty that Gérard already as important sources of information for his work and interests. Which specific copies or prints he used to complete this collection still remains unknown.

While these individual prints can be dated and traced, there is no direct information available on the folders as a whole. On the basis of Gérard's bibliographical information and the collection of sources and work he left behind, a few things can be said with certainty. Gérard was a dedicated historian working mostly on a compilatory basis. His main interest was the history of the Southern Netherlands, on which subject he collected many books, documents and manuscripts which often include his own handwritten notes. Collecting was a popular and serious pastime of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Gérard's folders share many similarities with other collections, such as the Atlas van der Hem or the Boendermaker composite atlas.

What can be concluded on these folders from the available information is (1), they were composed by Georges-Joseph Gérard; (2), they all contain information on the history of the Southern Netherlands taken from well-known historic works; (3), they were a part of the preparations Gérard made for his *Monumenta Historiae Belgicae* project. These eight folders present a previously unknown source on the life and work of Gérard. They are a

reflection of his organizational skills and his work as a historian. As an example of a Composite Atlas, they are also a new representation of the collecting mania and methods of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century collectors.

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