

BETWEEN OBSERVATION AND TRADITION: PHILIPPE DE HURGES AND THE ROMAN ANTIQUITIES (1615)

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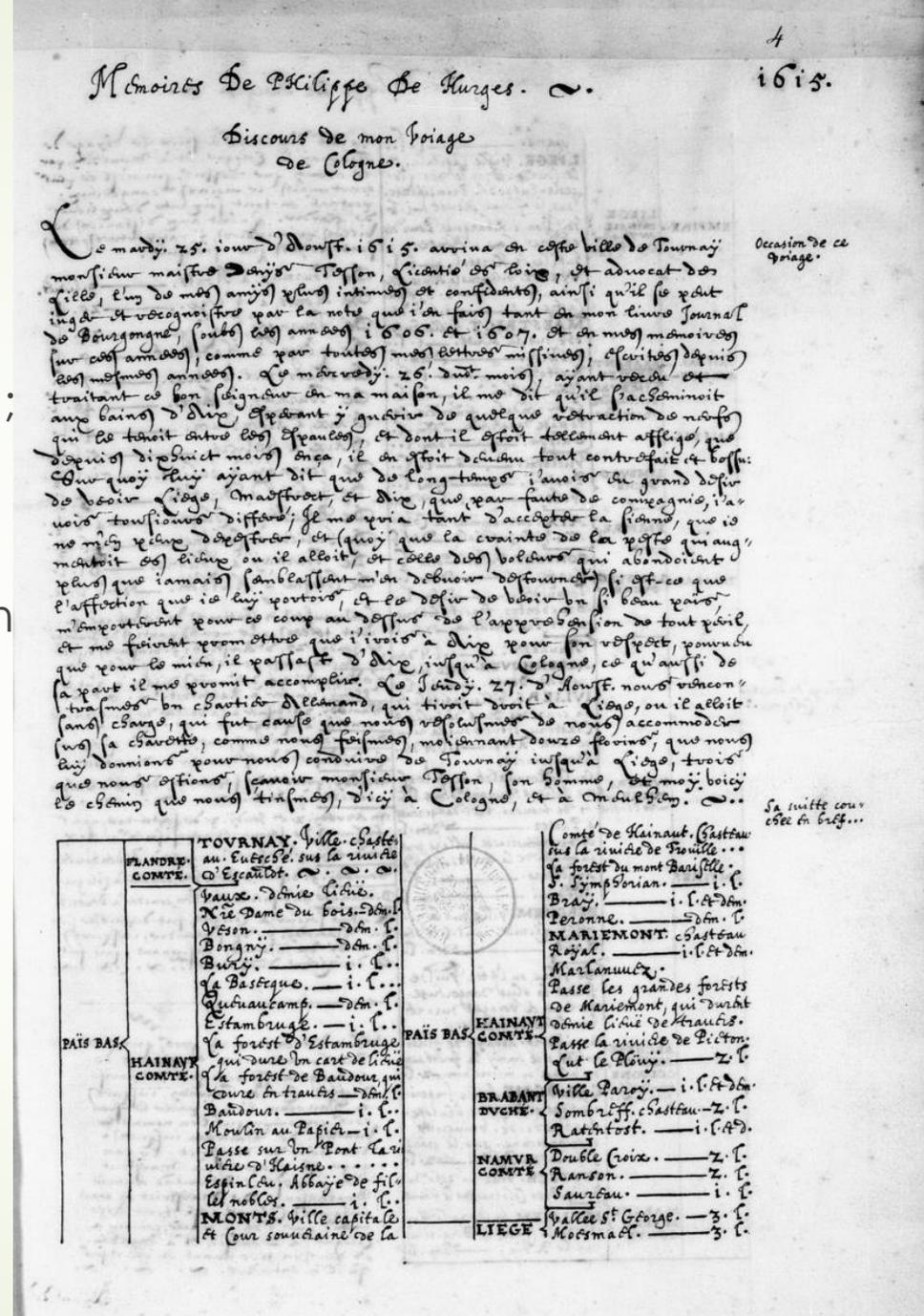
Introduction

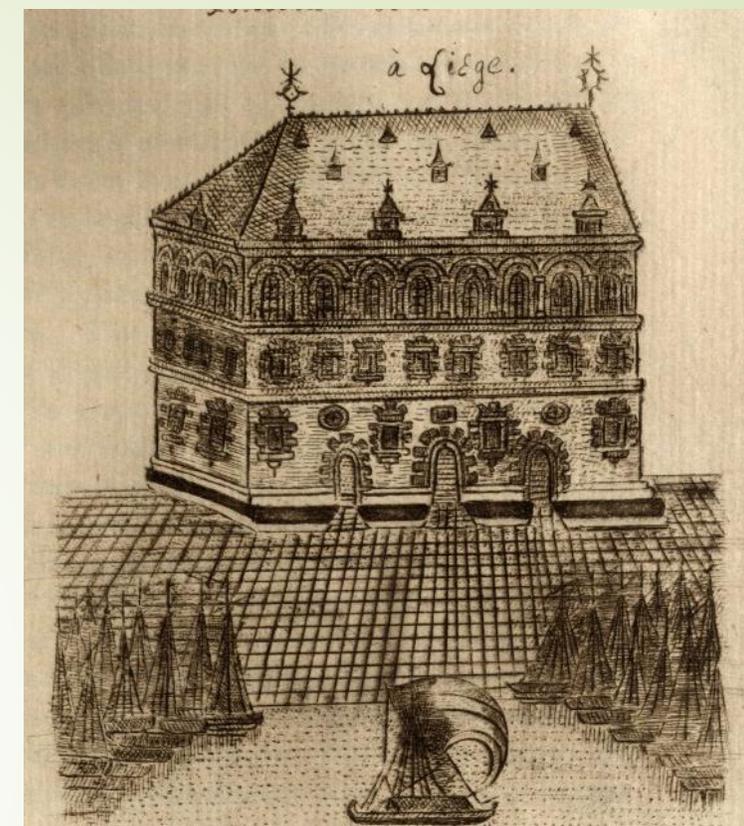
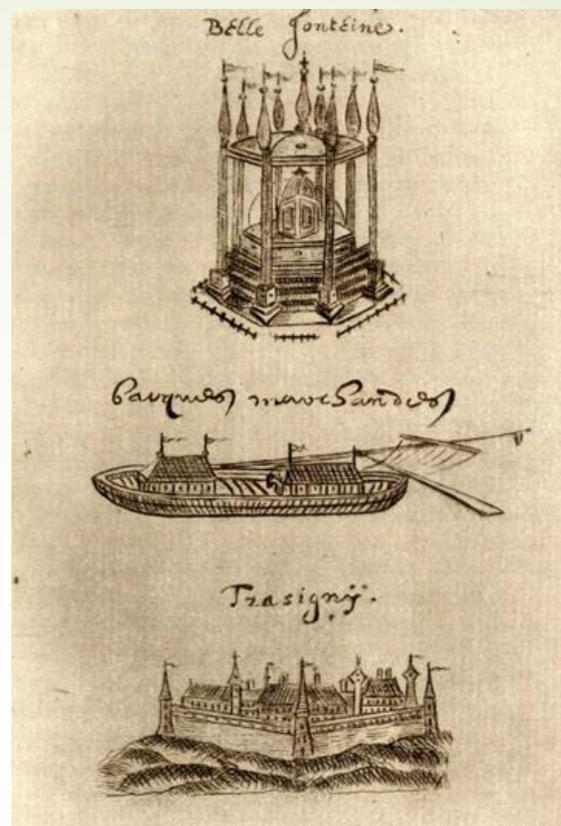
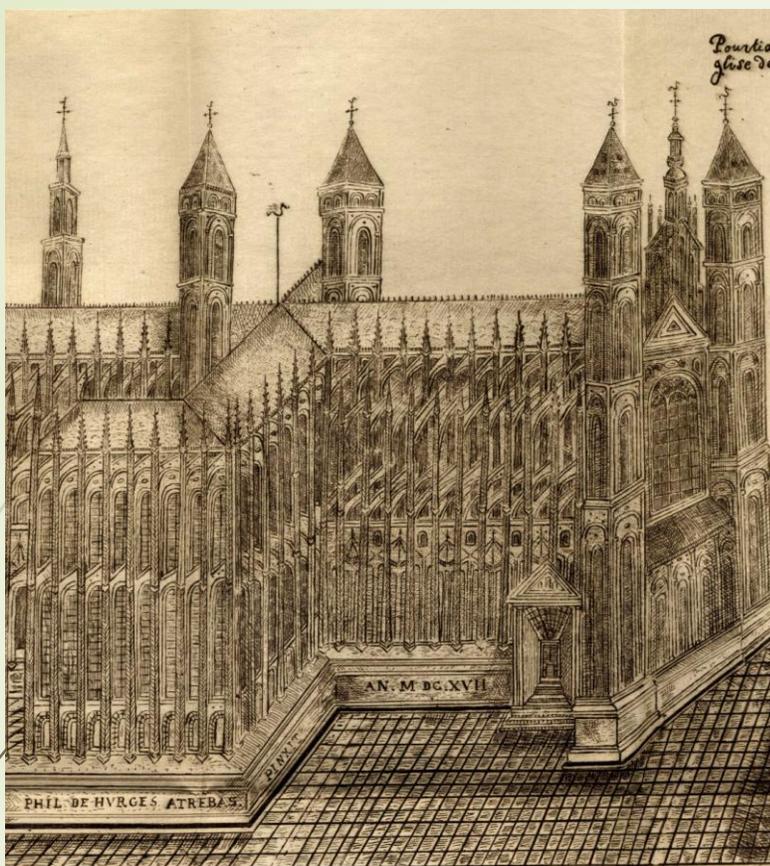


- ▶ Early modern travel literature: long neglected, but interesting (cultural history, history of architecture, travel writing...)
- ▶ Philippe de Hurges' travel account (1615):
 - ▶ Numerous descriptions of monuments
 - ▶ Particular interest in the ancient monuments and their interpretation
 - ▶ Context: fascination for classical antiquity

de Hurges: travel and antiquities

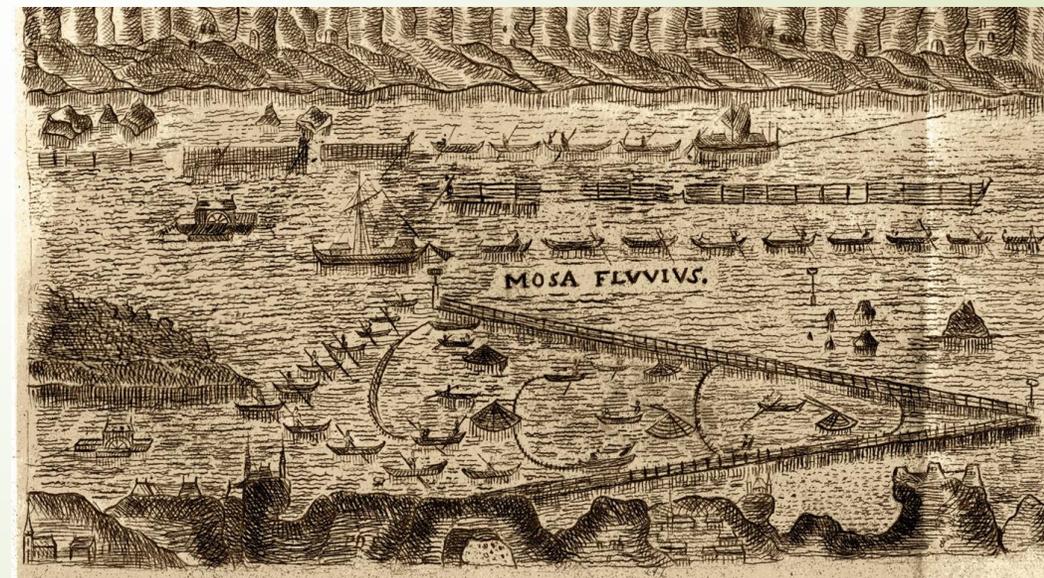
- Manuscript (BNF, *Manuscripts, Français*, n° 9025) ; edition by H. V. Michelant (1872)
- The journey of Philippe de Hurges (1585-1643) in 1615:
 - From Tournai (Southern Netherlands) to Aachen
 - Leisure travel (with Denys Tesson): a desire to visit Liege, Maastricht and Aachen
 - A rich traveler: wealthy bourgeois of Tournai, husband of the daughter of an adviser of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella
 - Numerous previous trips: Loire, Burgundy, Italian peninsula, cities of the Southern Netherlands...
 - Original descriptions and drawings





Some views of Liège and its region

Ph. de Hurgès, *Voyage de Philippe de Hurgès à Liège et à Maestrecht en 1615*, H. Michelant (ed.), Liège, 1872, p. 116, 126, 146 and 336.



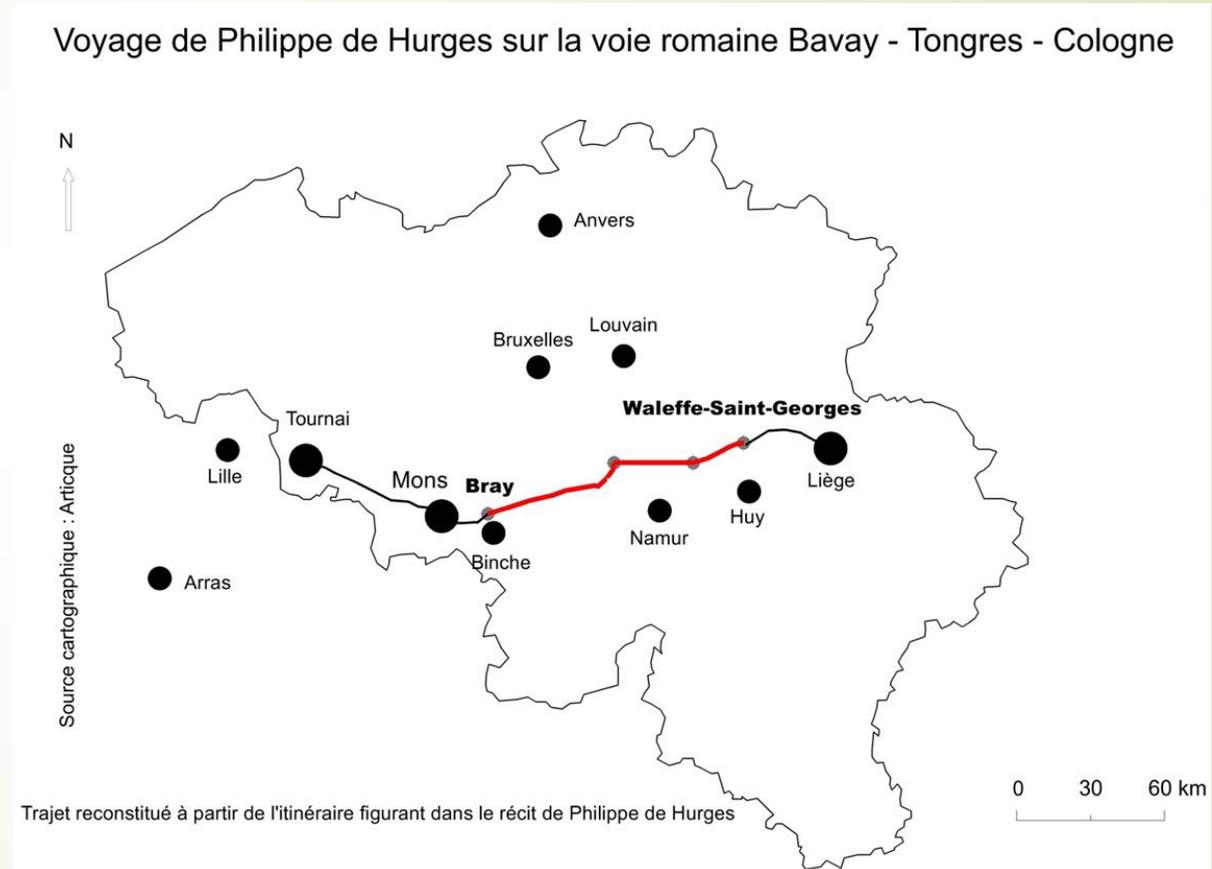


de Hurgés: travel and antiquities

- ▶ Philippe de Hurgés and History:
 - ▶ *Histoire des évêques de Tournai*
 - ▶ Fascination for classical antiquity
 - ▶ Advanced education: universities of Louvain, then Pont-à-Mousson (Lorraine)
 - ▶ Readings: Blaise de Vigenère (1523-1596), Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598)...

Observation

- The (Roman) road from Bavay to Tongeren:
 - First descriptions : Guicciardini (1567), Ortelius and Vivianus (1584)
 - de Hurges: more accurate description
 - Precise itinerary (Bray – Waleffe Saint-Georges): almost 100 km (60 miles)
 - Traffic volume ; customs taxes...
 - Description:
 - Dimensions
 - Pavement
 - Elevation from the surrounding fields (rainwater drainage)



Observation

- ▶ The (Roman) tumuli:
 - ▶ Large concentration in the Hesbaye region: landmarks
 - ▶ Description:
 - ▶ Concentration (sometimes on the same site)
 - ▶ Vegetation cover
- ▶ A landscape ensemble with the Ancient road
 - ▶ Drawing: "Modele des chaussees de Brunehault"

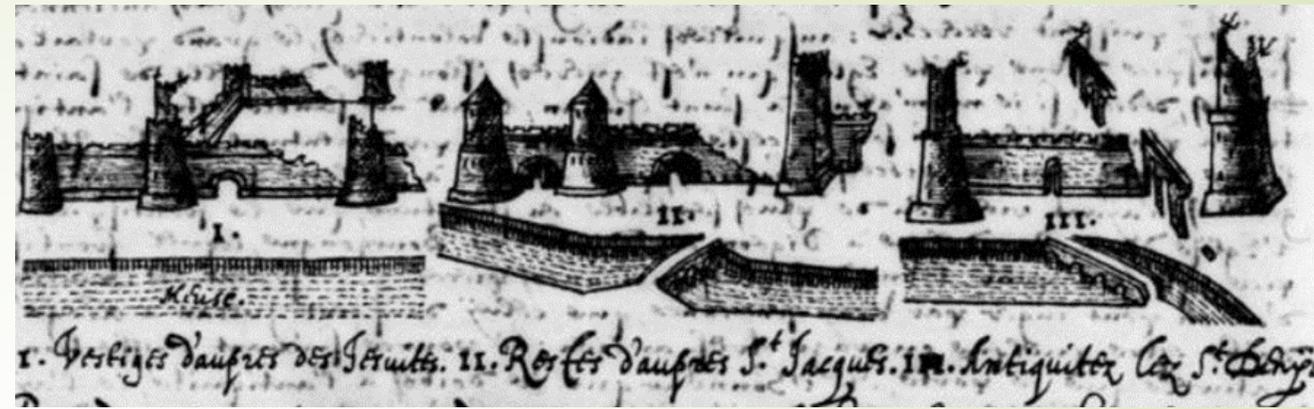


The tumulus of Hottomont today [author]

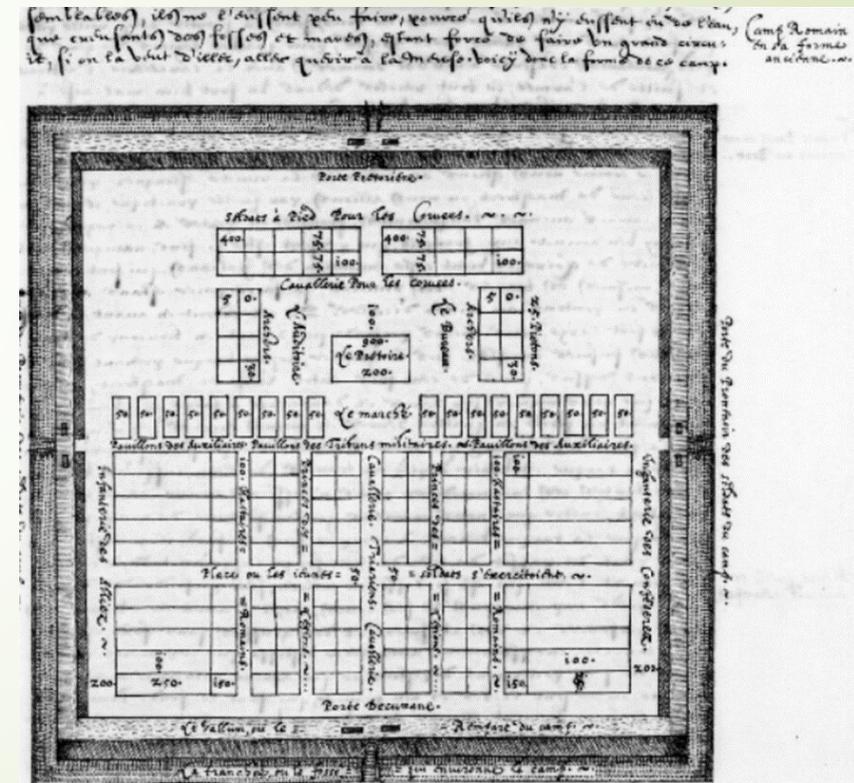


BNF, Manuscrits, Français, n° 9025, fol. 10 r. [Gallica]

Observation



- A Roman or Gallic wall in Liege ?
 - Description
 - Drawing (above)
- A Roman fort in Caestert ?
 - Description
 - Toponymy: Caesar/Caestert
 - Regular shape; drawing of a typical Roman camp (below)



BNF, Manuscrits, Français, n° 9025, fol. 40 r. and 53 r. [Gallica]



Traditions



- ▶ Medieval remains perceived as Roman (Caestert and Liège)
 - ▶ Difficulties in differentiating Roman, Carolingian and Romanesque styles
 - ▶ Local traditions ("*quelques hommes doctes de ce pays*")
 - ▶ Denunciation of the association with Julius Caesar; Caesar as a title of Roman emperors
 - ▶ Popularity of Caesar as founder of the cities of the Southern Netherlands



Traditions



- ▶ Roman remains perceived as Medieval (Roman road and tumuli)
- ▶ The Roman road: association with Brunehaut
 - ▶ Local traditions; toponymy ("*chaussées Brunehaut*")
 - ▶ A Trojan or Gallic King from Bavay (with magic)
 - ▶ A Frankish Queen (6th c.), sometimes with magic or the Devil
 - ▶ The interpretation of Philippe de Hurgès
 - ▶ Rejecting the use of magic
 - ▶ The importance of local traditions (the "*bones gens des champs, aux environs*")



Traditions



- ▶ Roman remains perceived as Medieval remains (Roman road and tumuli)
 - ▶ The tumuli: association with Brunehaut
 - ▶ The barrows as landmarks for travelers (esp. in winter)
 - ▶ Concrete reuse of tumuli as landscape markers in the early modern period, but not their original function (funerary monuments)
 - ▶ The local tradition: the "feminine" shape of the tumuli
- ▶ Philippe de Hurgès and the local traditions
 - ▶ Collected local traditions and interviewed peasants
 - ▶ Valued these traditions
 - ▶ Rejected some of these traditions:
 - ▶ Magic
 - ▶ Trojan foundations



Conclusion



- Precise observations:
 - Aspect of the remains (descriptions and drawings)
 - Their impact on the landscape
 - Their reuse in the early modern period
- Despite the quality of the descriptions:
 - Misunderstanding of the nature of the remains
 - Incorrect dating
 - Limitations of the *autopsia* process (antiquarianism)



Conclusion

- ▶ Hypotheses:
 - ▶ Not a lack of education
 - ▶ Difficulties in identifying architectural styles
 - ▶ Insufficient knowledge of the sources used by antiquarians (Tacitus, Ancient Itineraries, Peutinger Table) ?
 - ▶ Consequence of the teaching of history in the early modern period ?
- ▶ Observation did not always allow for criticism of local traditions; they retained great authority among some early modern scholars



Thank you for your attention !