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FROM ANTIQUARIANISM TO SCHOLARSHIP

Classical Archaeology in the Netherlands, 1600–1840

Abstract

The early collecting of classical antiquities in the Netherlands was inspired by Italian examples. Peter Paul Rubens acquired a taste for antiquities during his stay in Italy between 1600-1608 and acquired an important collection of sculptures from Sir Dudley Carleton, the British ambassador in The Hague. In Amsterdam, the brothers Gerard and Jan Reijnst recreated the atmosphere of a Venetian palazzo after their purchase of the classical antiquities and paintings of Andrea Vendramin in 1629. Parts of these collections came into the possession of Gerard van Papenbroek in the 18th century. Papenbroek's bequest to Leiden University marked the start of academic interest in antiquities, which culminated in 1818 in the creation of a Chair of Archaeology in Leiden with Caspar Reuvens as its first professor.

Keywords: history of collecting, cultural policies, museum history, archival research

The history of classical archaeology in The Netherlands can be divided into two parts. On 13 June 1818, an academic Chair of Archaeology was created at the University of Leiden.[1] Its first professor was Caspar J.C. Reuvens (1793–1835), who was also responsible for the 'Archaeological Cabinet' of the university. In the long period before this appointment there had been, of course, activities

1 About this Chair of Archaeology and the early history of the National Museum of Antiquities: Halbertsma (2003) and Hoijtink (2012).

by scholars and amateurs, which could be defined as 'archaeological,' but the scientific approach to the discipline was initiated by Reuvens, and supported by the Dutch government. In this article I intend to describe the periods before and after Reuvens' appointment and the important changes in the scholarly and cultural world, which were initiated by the new discipline of archaeology and the transition of an 'archaeological cabinet' to the National Museum of Antiquities.

COLLECTING ANTIQUITIES IN THE LOW COUNTRIES, 17TH–18TH CENTURIES

Antwerp: Peter Paul Rubens

The first collection of classical antiquities in the Low Countries was assembled by the Flemish painter Peter-Paul Rubens (1577–1640).[2] On his *Grand Tour* to Italy he became impressed by the lavish decoration of the Italian palazzi, consisting of paintings and fine antiquities. Between 1600 and 1608, he visited Venice, Mantova, Florence, Genova and Rome. His sketches show the famous masterpieces of the period: the Laocoon, the Apollo Belvedere, the Hercules Farnese, and so on. In Italy, he bought his first archaeological object: a portrait of an old man, with wrinkles and a pained expression on his face. This type of portrait was said to represent the Roman philosopher Seneca (Vickers 1977). Rubens portrayed the head on his well-known painting 'The four philosophers' (ca. 1612, now in the Palazzo Pitti, Florence, Fig. 1). This acquisition was in line with the humanistic ideas of his teacher Justus Lipsius, who advised to fill libraries and studies with portraits of the great ancient authors: 'We could study the writings of Homer, Hippocrates, Aristotle, Pindar, Virgil, Cicero and others, and at the same time enjoying with our eyes their portraits' (Muller 2004: 43). In 1618 Rubens enlarged his collection spectacularly by buying the antiquities of Sir Dudley Carleton, the British ambassador to The Hague. Carleton had been ambassador to Venice, where he acquired these objects for Robert Carr, 1st Earl of Somerset. When Carr was arrested on suspicion of murder, Carleton was left with the antiquities (about hundred sculptures), for which he was not

2 See for Rubens' interest in antiquities: Alpers (1995), Haskell and Penny (1981), Jaffé (1969), Jaffé (1977), Muller (1977) and Muller (1989).

able to find a buyer in England. He took them with him from Venice to his next assignment in The Hague. Rubens heard of the collection, and offered to acquire them, in exchange for 12 of his paintings. Rubens wrote to Carleton:

> The paintings have cost me next to nothing, because usually one is more generous with fruit from his own garden, than with things one buys on the market. And in exchange for marbles to decorate only *one* room, Your Excellency will receive paintings, with which you can decorate a *whole* house. (Muller 2004: 34)

The room to which Rubens refers might well be the famous 'Rotonda' in his Antwerp *palazzo*, which is mentioned in many descriptions of the place (Muller 2004: 30). Just like the Pantheon in Rome, the 'Rotonda' had an opening in the ceiling, from which the sunlight descended on the statues with varying effects during the day. The wall had niches in two tiers, and could house around 30 sculptures. The rest of Carleton's collection was placed in other rooms of the house, and the larger sculptures will have found a place in the Italianate gardens. Rubens was not overly attached to his collection. His need of money and his growing interest in English politics led to the sale of many antiquities, gemstones and paintings to Georges Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. Villiers was one of the mightiest men in England, and this purchase secured Rubens' entrance into the world of the British Court. The transaction earned him the enormous sum of 84,000 Dutch guilders and knighthood granted to him by King Charles I. Plaster casts were made to fill the gaps in the now emptied 'Rotonda'.

The sale of antiquities to the Duke of Buckingham marked the beginning of the dispersal of Rubens' collection. After Rubens' death in 1640, parts of his collection were auctioned in Antwerp, and ended up in the hands of other Dutch collectors.

Amsterdam: Jan and Gerard Reijnst

The brothers Jan and Gerard Reijnst belonged to the municipal elite of the merchant city of Amsterdam (Fig. 2).[3] Their father had been Governor-General of the Dutch Indies, and together they conducted one of the biggest trade firms of Amsterdam. Gerard Reijnst took care of the firm's interests in Amsterdam, while his brother Jan resided in the Republic of Venice, which had many ties with

3 See for the history of the Reijnst family and their collections: Halbertsma (2003: 6–10) and Logan (1979).

the Netherlands. In Venice, Jan encountered the enormous luxury with which the Venetians surrounded themselves: their *palazzi* were loaded with fine paintings and classical sculptures. Inspired by these surroundings, Jan conceived the idea of creating the interior of a Venetian *palazzo* in Amsterdam: a unique opportunity to enhance the stature of the Reijnst brothers and to create the image of the *mercator sapiens*, who is not only interested in profit and riches, but also in the fine arts and antiquities. The opportunity to realise this dream presented itself in 1629, when the Venetian collection of Andrea Vendramin (1556–1629) was sold. After consulting his brother Gerard, Jan was able to buy around 200 paintings and 300 sculptures, which were then transported to the Reijnst mansion on the Keizersgracht.

The impact of this collection was huge. Here Rembrandt encountered the highlights of Italian painting for the first time. Every important visitor to Amsterdam saw the collection and commented on its beauty. Among the visitors we encounter the names of Amalia van Solms, Cosimo de'Medici and Christian Knorr von Rosenroth. The pearls in the crown of the Reijnst brothers were two illustrated catalogues of their collection. In 1665, a selection of the finest paintings was published in the *Caelaturae* (edited by Clement de Jonghe, paintings by e.g. Titian, Veronese and Tintoretto), followed around 1670 by the publication by Nicolaes Visscher of the ancient sculptures in the *Signorum Veterum Icones*. A closer look at the latter catalogue makes it clear that the publication was meant to impress and cannot be considered as a work of scholarly endeavour. The engravings show beautiful sculptures (with impressive names like e.g. 'Cleopatra', 'Germanicus' or 'Agrippina'), which are complete, without any indication of fractures or restorations. A comparison with still existing statues makes it clear that the engravings are embellished versions of the sculptures.

After the death of Gerard Reijnst in 1658 (his brother had died earlier), the whole collection was sold. Twenty-four paintings and twelve sculptures were acquired by the Dutch Republic and offered as part of an important diplomatic gift to the British monarch King Charles II in 1660. The other paintings and sculptures ended up in various Dutch and European collections.

Nijmegen: father and son Smetius

As we have seen above, the collections of Rubens and Reijnst were meant to impress. The classical sculptures, which were expertly restored, showed the perfection of the ancient artists and had to bear impressive names taken from ancient history. They served as 'conversation pieces' in the houses of their collectors. An archaeological collection of quite a different nature was to be found in the eastern part of the Netherlands, in the city of Nijmegen. It was here that Johannes Smetius (1591–1651) worked as a Calvinist clergyman, with huge scholarly interests, especially in the history of the city of Nijmegen (Halbertsma 2003: 10–11). His conviction was that Nijmegen (the Roman city of *Noviomagus*) could be identified with the *Oppidum Batavorum*, mentioned in Tacitus as the centre of the courageous tribe of the Batavians, who rebelled against Roman domination in 69 AD. To substantiate his claims, he started to collect local antiquities, which were found in and around the city of Nijmegen. These were not the shining marble remains of ancient art, as shown in Antwerp and Amsterdam, but more mundane artefacts like oil lamps, terracotta statuettes, tableware, small bronzes and glasswork. He published his collection in his book *Oppidum Batavorum seu Noviomagum* (Amsterdam, 1644). His endeavour was continued by his son Johannes Smetius junior (1636–1704), also a protestant clergyman in Nijmegen and curator of the important collection. He wrote the illustrated catalogue *Antiquitates Neomagenses* (1678), in which we encounter around 4,500 Roman artefacts and around 10,000 coins. His collection attracted more than 3,000 visitors, which makes it more of a modern museum than the Antwerp and Amsterdam collections, which were only open to invited guests. When his health declined, Smetius tried to sell his collection to the city of Nijmegen, but to no avail. The antiquities remained together, but in the possession of Johann Wilhelm, Elector of the Paltz, residing in Düsseldorf. This is the last known location. At the moment only a few objects in Mannheim and Munich can be traced back to a provenance in the Smetius collection. Four inscriptions remained in Nijmegen as silent witnesses of the great endeavours of the two scholarly clergymen.

THE 18TH CENTURY: GERARD VAN PAPENBROEK

Calvinistic approaches to antiquity

Some of the antiquities of Rubens and Reijnst remained in the Netherlands, in the possession of collectors like Nicolaes Witsen, Gerrit Uylenburgh and Jan Six. Many of these antiquities were acquired by Gerard van Papenbroek, a very wealthy 18th century collector (Halbertsma 2003: 14–20). His collection grew to a total of ca. 150 Greek and Roman antiquities. His motives for collecting antique sculpture are to my knowledge unique and need some further consideration. Gerard van Papenbroek (1673–1743) was a descendant of a wealthy Flemish family, which fled to the Netherlands in the 16th century, due to the persecution of protestants in the Spanish part of the Netherlands. The family prospered in Amsterdam. Van Papenbroek was so rich that he could live the life of a 'gentleman of leisure,' although he did perform some administrative duties at the city's council. Like other members of the Amsterdam elite, he owned two houses: one on the Herengracht in the city centre, and one in the countryside in Velsen, near the North Sea. He was an avid collector, with a special interest in portraits of famous scholars, manuscripts and classical antiquities. His portraits and manuscripts were kept in Amsterdam, while his antiquities were displayed in his country house 'De Papenburgh' in Velsen. Van Papenbroek was not a traveller. He never went on a *Grand Tour* to Italy, and collected objects mainly by buying them at auctions or acquiring from other antiquarians. The first mention of his collection of antiquities dates from 1725 and is to be found in a publication by David van Hoogstraten and Jan Lodewijk Schuur. In this description of his country house we encounter:

> Greek and Latin inscriptions, altars, gravestones, funeral urns, sublime sculpture, statues and busts, which were found and excavated in various parts of Asia, in Greece, in Rome, and in the surrounding neighbourhoods, also in the Dutch Republic, and which were brought hither. (Regteren Altena/Thiel 1964: 29–30)

The collection of antiquities was placed in a gallery next to the mansion. When entering the gallery, the visitor saw a Latin inscription 'on the left hand side' with a clear admonition to the visitor: 'All ye who enter, pay attention!' Then followed a list of all the objects the visitor would encounter: portraits of mighty men and women, gods and goddesses, inscriptions and altars… The ad-

monition continued with: 'Be mindful of human frailty, vanity and instability, remember that all worldly things die, perish, collapse and change, and that nothing is permanent and stable. That only the word and the name of Jehova the Lord remain to all eternity.'

Obviously, it was of great importance to Van Papenbroek to admonish the visitors of his collection with this lesson: ancient empires have fallen, ancient gods are not worshipped anymore, inscriptions in praise of mere mortals have lost their meaning – all this in great contrast to the one and only true religion: Christianity.

Antiquities in Leiden: the Papenbroek Bequest

Van Papenbroek was attached to his collections. He tried very hard to publicize his antiquities, but due to various reasons this project never materialised. When his health began to fail, he looked for a safe haven for his precious belongings. Due to his excellent contacts with some curators of Leiden University, he decided to bequeath his entire collection to this institute. Opposition from some influential inhabitants of Amsterdam led to a division of the portrait gallery: part of it was donated to the *Athenaeum Illustre*, the predecessor of the University of Amsterdam. Van Papenbroek died on 12 October 1743. His collections arrived in Leiden in the early months of 1744. The paintings and manuscripts were placed in the Academy Building and the Library, but there was no room available for the collection of 150 antiquities. It was decided to alter a building project which was already underway: the construction of a new orangery in the Botanical Garden of the University. The central room of this building was embellished with classical pilasters, a stuccoed ceiling and pink marbled niches. The white marble contrasted very pleasantly with the pink background and the overall effect was a tribute to the generosity of Gerard van Papenbroek.[4]

On 27 September 1745 an official inauguration was celebrated in honour of the bequest. Keynote speaker was Franciscus Oudendorp, professor of ancient history and rhetoric, who was preparing a catalogue of the antiquities. In his speech we encounter the feelings of uneasiness, which were provoked by the pagan world of antiquity: the statues of gods and goddesses were naked, inscriptions praised emperors as if they were gods and the representations of the

4 Leiden University wanted to honour Van Papenbroek with a portrait, but he answered that an inscription with his name was enough.

pleasures of human life far surpassed the observance of austere religious behaviour (Halbertsma in Eck 2017: 103–114). The following quotation gives an idea of the general attitude of Oudendorp towards antiquity:

> If you would like to admire, or to ridicule, the over-ambitious titles of the Emperors, on equal footing with the gods, with which citizens, allies and provincials have idolized those lords and rulers of the world; titles heaved upon each other to a boring limit, the stones will give you as much arguments as books and coins. (Halbertsma in Eck 2017: 111)

Of course, from an academic point of view the collection was very interesting, because it offered, for example, representations of gods, which were formerly unknown to classical scholars, like the indigenous goddess Nehalennia or the Batavian god Magusanus. But a warning was in place: students had to defend themselves 'with a superior smile' against these 'wrong opinions about the divine'. Better objects of study were the early Christian monuments and the inscriptions from the catacombs in Rome.

And so, the first large collection of antiquities entered the academy of Leiden. Apart from Oudendorp, the objects did not receive much attention. They belonged to the curiosities in the Botanical Garden, together with the stuffed alligators, precious stones and tortoise shells. Moreover, the damp conditions in the orangery caused the deterioration of many statues. Joints had been repaired with iron clamps, which began to rust. Parts of statues broke off, or were taken away by visitors. The once so glorious 'salon' became a sore sight, as we can read in many travel accounts of the period.

THE 19TH CENTURY: THE CHAIR OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN LEIDEN

Caspar Reuvens: inspiration from Paris

The presence of the Papenbroek bequest in Leiden was the main reason to make a choice for this city when, in 1818, a chair of archaeology was created by Royal Decree (Halbertsma 2003: 24–25). The first scholar to be appointed Professor of Archaeology was Dr Caspar J.C. Reuvens, who, at the age of 25, had already proven to be a genius (Fig. 3). He had read Law and Classics at the universities of Amsterdam, Leiden and Paris. In the latter city he had obtained his doctor-

ate in Law. During his stay in Paris (1811–1814), he had witnessed the enormous impact of neoclassicism on all aspects of life: architecture, applied arts, fashion… Apart from reading classics, he had also studied the huge collections of the Musée Napoléon, filled with art from all over Europe. It was here that his fascination for the material culture of Greece and Rome took shape. Filled with these ideas, he returned to the Netherlands, where he became Professor of Classics at the small university of Harderwijk. This university was closed in 1818. As there were no vacancies at other universities in the field of Classics, a new chair by special appointment was created for the promising scholar, in view of his fascination for 'the moveable objects from antiquity,' as it was described in his recommendation. In order to gain more knowledge about collections and to meet colleagues abroad, he made travels to England and the German States, and worked intensely to create a network of like-minded scholars and influential high ranking civil servants and politicians. During his travel to London, Oxford and Cambridge he desired to acquire plaster casts of the Parthenon Marbles, recently acquired by the British Museum. The University responded negatively to his request for funds, but the Ministry of the Interior did see the importance of enlarging the collections in Leiden, and financed the transactions. Now Reuvens experienced with which connections he could realise his ambitions, with far reaching results.

Collecting Antiquities: an affair of state

Reuvens' first concern was to find an adequate housing for the sculptures, which were decaying in the orangery of the university. Six rooms were made available for him, in a building next to the Museum of Natural History. His second concern was to take an inventory of all the antiquities, which were scattered among various institutions in the Netherlands. For this reason he made a clear description of what kind of objects should be placed in a Museum of Antiquities. Being a classicist, the ancient cultures of Greece and Rome were his point of departure. Consequently, the material remains of all the cultures which were known by or influenced by Greece or Rome had to be placed in the archaeological museum: Egypt, Carthage, Persia, the Germanic and Celtic worlds (Halbertsma 2003: 31–42). And even India and the East Indies, as the Buddhist art of the East Indies was derived from Indian examples. This system excluded the Americas and the Far East (the Americas were included later in the 19th century). And

so the collections in Leiden began to grow: apart from the Papenbroek statues and busts, you could find in Leiden plaster casts, European prehistoric artefacts from various countries, Provincial Roman finds and East-Indian statues and reliefs. Not all the institutions were willing to cede their antiquities to Leiden. The Museum of Natural History refused to part with prehistoric axes 'because of the type of stone'. The Cabinet of Curiosities in The Hague denied Reuvens their East-Indian antiquities 'because the director had bought them with his own money' and the Royal Cabinet of Coins and Carved Stones (The Hague) considered Egyptian scarabs as 'carved stones' and refused to give them to Leiden.

The collections of B.E.A. Rottiers

In the meantime, word had spread that a new museum was created in the Netherlands. Collectors with a special interest in archaeology found their way to Leiden with the result that important collections were offered to the museum. One of these collectors was the Flemish Colonel Bernard E.A. Rottiers (1771–1858, Fig. 4).[5] Rottiers was born in Antwerp and had pursued an adventurous military career, which had brought him to Russia in service to the Tsar. In 1819, he was granted an honourable discharge with a huge bonus, and set off on his homeward journey from Tiflis via Constantinople, Athens and Rome to Antwerp.[6] All his life he had been an avid collector of paintings and 'objets de vertu,' but in Turkey and Greece he became interested in ancient coins and antiquities. He arrived in Athens in 1819 and became acquainted with the prominent French diplomat-cum-collector, Louis-François-Sébastien Fauvel. With the financial resources of Rottiers and the political influence of Fauvel, excavations were started around Athens, aided by other members of the Athenian *corps diplomatique*. The excavating teams were successful. In the cemeteries along the ancient roads of Athens they discovered grave markers like marble lekythoi and beautiful stelae dating from the 4th century BC. The finds were divided between the excavators, and the impression is that Rottiers, as the main financer, got the best of the results. Of course, this practice had nothing to do with archaeology, but it was rather a common 'quest for antiquities,' already going on for centuries. Rottiers arrived with his treasures in Antwerp in 1820 and came in

5 See about Rottiers: Bastet (1987); Halbertsma (2003: 49–70).

6 Rottiers later published an account of this travel: Rottiers, B.E.A. 1829, Itinéraire de Tiflis à Constantinople, Bruxelles.

contact with Reuvens about the possibilities to sell his objects to the new museum. With the financial aid from the Ministry of the Interior, the antiquities were bought and the museum in Leiden came into possession of original classical sculptures dating from the 4th century BC. The enterprising Colonel did not stop with this sale. A collection of Greek ceramics, acquired by his son in 1821, was sold to the museum (Halbertsma 2003: 54–55) and an idea developed in the mind of the Colonel. During a number of talks with the Ministry of the Interior he sketched a project, with the aim to start excavations in Greece and collecting antiquities in the Mediterranean. For this project, he needed the help of the Dutch Navy, which had a fleet in the Mediterranean Sea, based at Cap Mahon. From the fact that Professor Reuvens was not invited to these talks, it is clear that archaeology (and archaeological collecting) had become part of the cultural policy of the Netherlands and was planned at the Ministries in The Hague, and not in the halls of the university in Leiden.

Colonel Rottiers received permission and funding for an archaeological expedition to the Mediterranean which would last two years (1824–1826). Only after this permission had been granted, Reuvens was informed about the decision. The professor was not amused, to say the least. He had come to know Rottiers as an adventurous man, and a skilled organiser, but not as a scholarly investigator. Rottiers' ideas about archaeology did not go beyond the stage of digging for treasures, and for him the pecuniary aspects of the objects far surpassed their value for the scholarly world. In the meantime, Reuvens did what he could to train the Colonel in the basics of archaeology: he compiled a reading list and wrote a long memorandum about the most important aspects of the archaeological mission in Greece. The mission was not successful. After the completion of the expedition in 1826, even the Ministry had to agree they had been wrong to support the Colonel's ideas. The amount and quality of the acquired objects were not impressive, Rottiers had totally ignored Reuvens' wish list and he had managed to instigate serious diplomatic incidents with the Greek government during his activities on the island of Melos and in Athens, as will be described later. In retrospect, it becomes clear that the main incentive to travel to Greece had been Rottiers' wish to stay six months on the island of Rhodes, where he ordered his painter P.J. Witdoeck to draw in detail the medieval architecture of the Knights Templar. After the expedition, these drawings were engraved and published, with a travel account by Rottiers, in 'Les Monumens de Rhodes' (1830). Apart from his time-consuming activities on Rhodes (where in the words of Reuvens 'he managed not to buy one single archaeological object'), the

Colonel did some collecting and digging for a few days on the island of Melos, but as a whole, the expedition had failed. After 1826, Rottiers tried a few times to ingratiate himself with Reuvens, but to no avail, especially after Reuvens had discovered that Rottiers had cheated him about the provenance of an important object from the collection which Revuens had acquired from Rottiers in 1822.[7]

Jean Emile Humbert: Carthage, Etruria and Egypt

As sketched above, in the newly established Kingdom of the Netherlands archaeology had become part of the country's national policy. It was through these channels that Reuvens came into contact, in 1821, with a Dutch expatriate, who had lived for more than twenty years in Tunisia. Jean-Emile Humbert (Fig. 5), a major-engineer, had been part of a diplomatic mission to Tunisia in 1796, which was organised to build a modern harbour at La Goulette, the canal that gave access to the Lake of Tunis.[8] After the end of this mission in 1806, he was invited to remain in Tunisia as head-engineer of the Regency. In this function he modernised the citadel of Tunis and built various fortifications in the interior of the country. In his free time he learned Arabic, studied the history of the country and started collecting ancient coins. He became especially interested in the history of Carthage and the interpretation of its ancient ruins, which were lying in the neighbourhood of La Goulette. He made detailed plans of the Carthaginian peninsula and even started excavations, during which he found the first remains of the Punic city, which was destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC. When he returned to the Netherlands in 1821, he took his drawings and collections of coins and Punic material with him. Through the Ministry he came into contact with Reuvens, whom he met in Leiden, with important consequences to the history of archaeology.

7 A bronze bust, allegedly acquired on the island of Egina in 1821, but in reality purchased by Rottiers in 1819 in Italy, on his voyage back from Russia to Antwerp. His demeanour in general reflects this thought: 'It should also be recalled that the international scholarly environment at the time was largely populated by "amateurs," princes and prelates, senior civil servants, aristocrats and officers – a socially inhomogenous group of enthusiasts. But these men were the pioneers behind many of the great European collections of today. The sciences and arts […] were at that time only just starting on the road to professionalism.' Møller in Bundgaard Rasmussen (e.a.) (2000: 98).

8 See about this mission and the archaeological activities of Jean-Emile Humbert: Halbertsma (1995) and Halbertsma (2003: 71–111).

Reuvens was thrilled with the maps of the Carthaginian peninsula, which were drawn with military precision. He considered them the best plans of Carthage ever made. The location of the Punic settlement still remained a mystery, as no Punic remains had been unearthed. The finds of Humbert, four stelae and some fragments, most of them with inscriptions, provided a starting point for solving the topographical mysteries of the peninsula and for shedding light on the Punic language. On one of the detailed maps of Carthage, Humbert had indicated the findspot of the Punic stelae.[9] Reuvens realised that with this material and the topographical knowledge of Humbert, he could publish a monograph on Carthage, with which he would make his name in the archaeological world. The maps and stelae were bought for the archaeological cabinet, the coins were acquired by the Royal Coin Cabinet in The Hague and Reuvens suggested to Humbert an archaeological expedition to Tunisia, in order to acquire more Punic and Roman material and to study the topography of Carthage, in view of the forthcoming publication. Because of the national prestige of such an enterprise, the Ministry decided in favour of the expedition. Humbert was elevated to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, received a military order for his earlier achievements in Tunisia, and left the Netherlands early in the year 1822. He remained in Tunisia till 1824 and sailed home with a shipload of Punic and Roman antiquities, and notebooks full of topographical sketches and drawings of the excavations he had conducted in Carthage and in other places. Humbert's most important acquisition was a collection of eight imperial statues from Utica. They were bought from a high ranking official at the Tunisian court, who provided detailed information about the spot where the statues had been found more than twenty years earlier. Reuvens and the Ministry were very pleased with the outcome of this expedition, but the topographical material was still not enough for the final publication. Moreover, Reuvens had started to aim higher than Carthage alone; he wanted to incorporate the topography of Carthage in a broader context of the history of the whole North African coast. For the sake of this endeavour, a second exhibition to North-Africa was organised, which would last four years (1826–1830). But the political circumstances had changed: the War of Independence in Greece had provoked hostile

9 A comparison of Humbert's plan with the modern excavations of Carthage makes it clear that his finds had been part of the Tophet of the city, dedicated to Ba'al and Tanit. The stelae were grave markers for sacrificed children. Reuvens and his colleague Hendrik Hamaker published the stelae in 1822 (Hamaker 1822; Reuvens 1822).

sentiments towards Christians. The safety of Humbert outside of Tunis could not be guaranteed. Humbert asked permission to remain in Italy, at least for the summer of 1826. This permission was granted, provided that Humbert would be active in buying antiquities for the museum in Leiden. This provision led to unforeseen results. In 1826, Humbert bought an important collection of Etruscan decorated urns from Volterra and a big collection of Etruscan antiquities from Cortona (Collection Corazzi). The funds were provided by the Ministry, in view of the 'great honour' it would give to the museum in Leiden, which was to house the first Etruscan collection outside of Italy. Following the acquisition of the Corazzi collection, Humbert bought an important collection of Egyptian antiquities, which had belonged to Dr Cimba, a physician of the well-known collector of Egyptian antiquities, Henry Salt (see Manley, Ree 2001). In 1827, busy with packing and shipping the Etruscan and Egyptian antiquities to Leiden, Humbert was informed that a very large collection of Egyptian antiquities was on its way to Leghorn. These objects, more than 5,600 in total, belonged to Jean d'Anastasy, consul-general of the Scandinavian States in Alexandria, and, along with the diplomats Salt and Drovetti, the most active collector of Egyptian antiquities. Humbert got permission to enter talks with the representatives of d'Anastasy, and after a year of difficult negotiations the collection became the property of the Dutch government. With this acquisition Leiden was on equal footing with the most important collections of *Aegyptiaca* in Europe: Paris, London and Turin. A new task lay ahead of Reuvens: the publication of the Egyptian monuments of the Leiden Museum. Moreover, he had started excavations on the site of the Roman city *Forum Hadriani*, near The Hague. These excavations and their publication weighed heavily on his shoulders. In these circumstances it became very hard to work on three publications at the same time, apart from his duties as museum director, excavation supervisor and university professor. The d'Anastasy collection was the last big acquisition in these pioneer years of the museum. Humbert remained in Italy till 1830 and had been able to buy a huge vase collection in Naples[10] and a collection of fine statuary in Venice,[11] but the Ministry decided that enough had been spend on archaeology, much to the displeasure of Reuvens. The important acquisitions of Punic, Etruscan and Egyptian antiquities left the classical department behind, both in numbers and

10 More than 2000 vases from the collection of Raffaele Gargiulo: see about this collection Milanese (2014: 201–255).

11 Collection Nani-Tiepolo.

in quality. The end of these prosperous pioneer years is marked by the political turmoil following the Belgian insurrection in 1830 and the subsequent partition of the Kingdom of the Netherlands into two separate states. Cultural expeditions to the Mediterranean were cancelled due to the dire financial situation in the Netherlands. Humbert went back to Italy, where he died in 1839. Four years earlier, Reuvens had met an untimely death, following a stroke. This event thwarted all his ambitious projects. Colonel Rottiers survived both Reuvens and Humbert, and died in 1857 in Brussels, at the age of 86 years. He was buried with military honours. With the death of these three protagonists there came an end to the eventful pioneer period of the Leiden Museum.

EPILOGUE: TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

So far I have sketched a story of collecting classical antiquities in the Netherlands, from the 17th century till the birth of the official study of archaeology in the first half of the 19th century. This story has been told from a Dutch point of view. But we must not forget that archaeology and the trade in antiquities have been practised on an international scale. In order to comprehend the provenance and the history of objects, it is of paramount importance to look at every aspect of the object (or collection) in question. Let us take, for example, an early Christian sarcophagus, which belonged to Peter-Paul Rubens in the 17th century.[12] As described above, Rubens acquired a large part of his collection in 1618 from Sir Dudley Carleton. Carleton had bought these antiquities in Venice, from the collection of Cardinal Giovanni Grimani, Patriarch of Aquileia. On the plinth of the sarcophagus, there is an inscription dedicating the object to the eternal memory of Pope Marcellus, Bishop of Rome in the years 308–309. The inscription is not from the 4th century AD, but leads us to Rome, where a church in honour of Marcellus was built in the 8th century AD. The mortal remains of Saint Marcellus were transported to this church on the Via del Corso from the catacombs of Santa Priscilla.

In 1527, Pope Clemens VII appointed Marino Grimani as Cardinal, with the *San Marcello al Corso* as his titular church. In order to add some

12 Now in Leiden, inv. Pb 35.

glamour to his new status, he planned to rebuild the San Marcello, burned down in 1519. Maybe on this occasion, Grimani removed the damaged remains of the sarcophagus and placed them among his own collection of antiquities, which were bequeathed in 1546 to his nephew Giovanni Grimani in Venice. The sarcophagus is heavily restored and shows traces of black soot, probably the traces of the fire in 1519. This history of only one piece in Rubens' collection shows the necessity to study various archives related to its previous owners, in the Vatican, Venice, Antwerp and England in order to get a complete picture of the object.

A second example may be taken from the expedition of Rottiers during the years 1824–1826. In August 1825, Rottiers started excavations on the island of Melos. He bought a piece of land next to the findspot of the Venus of Milo, and according to a common practice he was allowed to dig the terrain. He unearthed a mosaic floor, of which he lifted the main panels. According to his report, he also found an altar decorated with *boukrania*, which he took aboard his ship. He had just ended his activities on Melos when he was informed about new laws concerning the acquisition of ancient objects. In his own words:

> My activities were disrupted by the archon of Milo. This magistrate informed me of a decree by the Greek government, which forbade every foreigner, from every country, to carry out excavations and appropriate pieces of antique monuments. All these objects belong to the state. Once the Greeks have finished a heavier task, they want to place them in a Hellenic Museum. With pride they will show the foreigners what is left of their ancestors, of those men who gave Europe its art and civilization. I obeyed the orders of the archon, although I myself had bought the terrain of the excavations. It meant taking leave of grand projects. I sacrificed my sincere hopes to the young legislation of a suffering country and I do not believe that I should feel sorry for that. (Rottiers 1830: 10)

The real reason, however, was the arrival of the Dutch ambassador on his way to Smyrna and the departure of Rottiers' ship the *Diana*. And from Greek archival sources, it becomes clear that Rottiers' relationship with the Greek authorities was far from ideal. From the archives it transpires that the altar decorated with bull's heads was *not* found on the land bought by Rottiers, but on an adjacent patch of land, which did not belong to the Colonel. The archon of the island wrote to Rottiers:

> To our great amazement we have seen that you have lifted from the earth a marble, which does not belong to you at all. We, representatives of our government, have told you in person […] that it is not permitted to excavate on any other

> property than the land of which you have ownership. And now you confiscate a marble discovered by another person on a different field […]. If you proceed to take it by force, we admonish you that it is worth 5000 *collonati*, which will be fined to you on behalf of our government.[13]

Rottiers totally disregarded the threats, produced a Turkish *firman* which he considered 'as more important than the Greek legislation,' and threatened to come back to do more excavations. This behaviour was reported to the authorities on the Greek mainland. Articles appeared in Greek journals about his conduct, and when Rottiers arrived in Athens to measure architectural remains and to buy antiquities, his reputation had preceded him:

> he was caught by the police, and was forced to return all the ancient items he had collected. Then, the enraged good Dutchman, not only did he not pay the expenses he had made at the hotel, but he also refused to pay the people who had served him, and while leaving the place, he threatened *that he would guide the Turks how to conquer Athens*. (General Newspaper of Greece 1825: 76)[14]

Here we see the necessity not to put one's thrust in official reports and memoirs alone. Other archival sources may shed a totally different light on the events in Greece.

The third and last example can be taken from the travels of Jean Emile Humbert. In Tunisia, he was not the only antiquarian trying to buy antiquities. As sketched above, Humbert was interested in acquiring the imperial statues, which had been found (around 1800) in Utica. They were in the possession of a high ranking minister of the Bey. When Humbert arrived in Tunis in 1822, he learned that one of the finest statues, probably representing Plotina, the wife of emperor Trajan, had been bought by the Danish consul Andreas Christian Gierlew (now in Copenhagen, see Lund 2000). Gierlew's successor as consul was Christian Tuxen Falbe, who was also interested in the history of Tunisia. Falbe had started excavations in Carthage, which were disrupted by Humbert

13 Letter by Mr. Emanuel to Rottiers, August 1825, cited in: E.G. Protopsaltes (ed.), *Historika eggrafa, peri archaeotiton kai leipon mnimeion tes historias kata tous chronous tes Epanastaseos kai tou Kapodistria* [Historical documents on antiquities and other monuments of history during the years of the Revolution and of Kapodistrias] (Athens: Archaeological Society, 1967), pp. 20–21. The document is to be published in: Charalampos Maliopoulos, *Chasing the imaginary – The classical past of ancient Greece: colonial and national fantasies* (Leiden University MA Thesis, forthcoming).

14 To be published in Maliopoulos, *op. cit.*, note 14.

in a most ungentlemanly manner (Halbertsma 2003: 84). Humbert had spread a rumour that somewhere beneath a Roman mosaic floor in Falbe's excavation a chest with golden coins laid buried. The result was that Falbe saw his excavation totally ruined, a fact that he never forgave Humbert. None of these international conflicts ever reached the ears of Reuvens or the Ministry. During his stay in Italy, Humbert came into contact with different other European collectors: for example Jean-François Champollion, who was acquiring antiquities for the Louvre, and Johann-Martin von Wagner, who was active for the Court of Munich. At various moments, he was ahead or behind one of these players in acquiring objects. He stood also in close contact with Eduard Gerhard, the founding director of the *Instituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica* and visited with him in 1829 an exhibition of Greek vases excavated on the premises of Lucien Bonaparte near Viterbo.

For a complete picture of the history of classical archaeology in Europe, it is therefore of paramount importance to include various archives in one's research. The availability of searchable archival sources, which are kept in museums and State Archives, is essential for understanding this period of dynamic collecting, international competition and governmental involvement. Moreover, only the archives can give answers to the very important questions concerning the legality, the motives and the practicalities of 19th century collectionism. Archaeological coherent complexes, such as the tomb contents of Volterra, the Bonaparte vases from Vulci or the imperial statues from Utica, which are now scattered over various museums, may in the future be united in a digital format, and many questions about the 'the whole' (which cannot be answered by 'the separate parts') may be posed and, perhaps, be answered. It would allow us to recreate the original archaeological environment existing before the activities of the antiquarian adventurers of the 19th century.

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Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 5