Travelling Antiquaries (16th-19th centuries) - Antiquaires voyageurs (XVIe-XIXe s.)

(Academia Belgica and École française de Rome)

Rome, 26-28 June 2024

The travel narratives are arousing the interest to a large academic community. The travel sources document the history of the gaze and the constitution of taste, as well as the history of knowledge, from the natural sciences to archaeology, including ethnology and the history of texts. They also provide archaeologists, art historians and historians with evidence of lost works and texts, as well as precious documents on the constitution of collections.

The conference “Travelling Antiquaries” ("Antiquaires voyageurs") intends to focus on the links between the travels of European antiquarians between the Renaissance and the 19th century, and the development of knowledge about the ancient and medieval past through its material remains. The aim is to question the relevance of a separation that is sometimes established between the "man of the cabinet" and the "man of the field", and to reflect on the insertion of the journey into a material, intellectual, but also imaginary horizon. The relations maintained by the antiquarian with travel are diverse, whether he went on the road himself, whether he brought objects that had travelled into his cabinet, or whether he exchanged with distant correspondents. Research and writing are ultimately a form of mental travel in time and space.

All destinations will be considered, with the exception of journeys within a state, which are part of the birth of heritage institutions and learned societies. In this respect, the notions of proximity and distance, and even the articulation between the two, will be questioned. In this sense, the links that antiquarians maintained with correspondents abroad could be considered. The value attached to local and distant antiquities, the methods applied in each case, the development and changes in artistic standards, the similarities and differences between the antiquarian and the connoisseur will be examined. The travellers who became antiquarians, although not the focus of the project, can be studied in the light of the travelling antiquaries.

The celebration in 2024 of the tercentenary of the publication of the supplement to the book *L’Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* by Bernard de Montfaucon offers an invitation to reflect on the place of travel in the constitution of antiquarian knowledge. Montfaucon was not a great traveller, but his stay in Italy between 1698 and 1701, motivated by the search for manuscripts for the edition of the Greek Fathers, had a decisive impact on his later publications, and certainly on his way of understanding the past.

The term “antiquarian” will be at the heart of the discussion. How did scholarly travellers define themselves? How did they see the complementarity of fieldwork and cabinet work? What “antiquities” did they seek and look for?
Papers may focus on a particular antiquarian. While several figures have been the subject of monographic approaches, many personalities have yet to be studied. They may also focus on a group of scholars, for example the antiquarian studies developed by certain religious orders (Mauritians, Jesuits, etc.), thus considering the conditions of scholarly work that are partly linked to membership. Speakers are also encouraged to consider the reception of a particular object or monument in particular, the "journey" of an object between collections and publications, in the vein of "object biographies". Although the organisers expect papers on travel in Europe and beyond, the question of exoticism will not be considered as such. The chronological field is limited to the 16th-19th centuries, but the continuity and rupture between the earlier and later periods may be addressed in order to question the notion of "modernity". The organisers invite the participants to reflect on three axes in particular:

1- **The conditions of the antiquarian journey.** The motivations for travel, official or not, among which erudition was not necessarily the most important, led to destinations and itineraries. Scholars prepared their journeys, in particular by reading ancient or early modern texts, sometimes accompanied by illustrations, which helped to shape their imagination. Through this reading, how did the travelling antiquarians follow in the footsteps of their predecessors, from Pausanias to their contemporaries? How was their knowledge nourished by exchanges with local people, whether scholars or not? Does the documentation shed light on the many forgotten intermediaries (ambassadors, interpreters, workers, bazaar merchants, sellers, draughtsmen, etc.) or on the way the natives viewed these travelling antiquarians? What was their relationship with the different levels of power? To what extent were these antiquarian journeys sources of legitimisation and contributed to a form of representation?

2- **The relationship to objects and monuments.** What characteristics of the objects and monuments conditioned the interest of the antiquarian? Age? Beauty? The integrity or the state of ruin? Was the mobile object sought after for its market value, to be taken away, collected, exhibited in a cabinet or museum? Were objects and monuments contextualised more widely in a landscape? What techniques and instruments were used in the field (stamping for inscriptions, topographical surveys, calculation of distances and measurements, sketches, etc.)? How did they go from field notes to publication?

3- **Networks and careers.** Contrary to the image of the scholar confined to his "ivory tower", the antiquarian did not evolve alone and must therefore be understood in his networks, at different geographical scales. The field of study was the place of meetings and collaborations, but also of rivalries and competitions. The role of travel in careers and in the constitution of networks will thus be studied. How was the travelling antiquarian perceived in his milieu? How were they represented (in individual or group portraits, such as Joshua Reynolds' Society of Dilettanti)?
Submission of a paper

Paper proposals (25 minutes) should give an overview of the proposed contribution (200-300 words), together with a title, a short bibliography and a brief biographical note. They should be sent by 31 July 2023 to haude.morvan@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr and veronique.krings@univ-tlse2.fr.

The scientific committee will favour complete and diversified dossiers that allow for a better understanding of the "materiality" of knowledge and the management of data by the antiquarian. Feedback on the proposal will be given by 30 September 2023.

Languages of the conference: French, Italian, English, Spanish, German (a substantial summary will be requested in advance to facilitate understanding).

Scientific Committee and organisation

Marco Cavalieri, University of Louvain
Claudia D'Alberto, Università degli Studi 'G. d'Annunzio' Chieti-Pescara and University of Liège
Véronique Krings, University of Toulouse - Jean Jaurès
Olivier Latteur, University of Louvain and University of Namur
Haude Morvan, University of Bordeaux Montaigne
Renaud Robert, University of Bordeaux Montaigne

Practical details

The conference will start on Wednesday afternoon, 26 June 2024 and end, for its academic part, on Friday 28 June 2024 at noon. Friday afternoon and Saturday morning will be devoted to visits.

Lunches on Thursday and Friday and the gala dinner will be provided. Accommodation is provided for up to three nights. Each participant is responsible for his or her own travel expenses. Financial support may be provided to doctoral students and young researchers who are not covered by their laboratories for one or other of these expenses.