

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE JESUITS IN THE SOUTHERN LOW COUNTRIES. A STATE OF THE ART

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The Southern Low Countries were one of the earliest regions the Jesuits managed to settle themselves in. Hardly two years after the Order's foundation in 1540, a group of eight Spanish Jesuits started a small community in the University town of Leuven, after being expelled from Paris. In 1553 Jesuit also managed to set up a house in Tournai. Three years later, Philip II granted the Society legal recognition in the Low Countries which the Jesuits made part of the province of *Germania*. Soon new colleges were installed at Cologne (1556), Antwerp (1563), Dinant (1563) and Cambrai (1563) while the Tournai residence was transformed into a college in 1562. In 1564 the *Provincia Germanica Inferior*, later *Provincia Belgica* was created, which included the Prince Bishopric of Liège and which Everard Mercurianus became the first provincial superior of. In 1569, the future cardinal Robertus Bellarminus was sent to Leuven where he taught until 1576. Following the foundation of the *Provincia* new residencies were soon installed in Douai (1566), Saint-Omer (1567), Liège (1569), Bruges (1570), and in Maastricht (1575).¹ In today's terms, the early Jesuit settlements are located in Belgium, the southern part of the actual Netherlands, the Grand-Duché of Luxemburg, and Northern France.

From 1578 onwards, when religious troubles and civil wars ravaged the country, the Jesuits fled or were expelled from most of these towns. In 1584, however, they returned in the wake of the Spanish army commanded by Alexander Farnese, who strongly favoured the Order. New residencies were soon established at Courtrai (1583), Ypres (1585), Ghent (1585), Brussels (1586),

¹ For the history of the Jesuit order in the Southern Low Countries, see PONCELET, A., *Nécrologe des jésuites de la Province gallo-belge*, Leuven, Extrait des Analectes pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique de la Belgique, 3e série, 3, 4 et 5, 1908; PONCELET, A., *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus dans les anciens Pays-Bas, établissement de la Compagnie de Jésus en Belgique et ses développements jusqu'à la fin du règne d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, Brussels, Mémoires de l'Académie royale des Sciences, Lettres et Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 21, 2 vols., 1927-1928; PONCELET, A., *Nécrologe des jésuites de la Province flandro-belge*, Wetteren, 1931 and more recently: *Les jésuites belges 1542-1992: 450 ans de Compagnie de Jésus dans les Provinces belgiques*, Brussels, Association Royale des Anciens Elèves du collège Saint-Michel, 1992.

Mons (1583 which became a college in 1598), Valenciennes (1582, which became a college in 1591), Lille (1590, which became a college in 1592) and Luxemburg (1583). Favoured by the Archdukes, the Order knew great prosperity from the turn of the century onwards.² Again, many new residencies and colleges saw the light, amongst others at Arras (1599, which became a college in 1603), Bergues Saint-Winoc (1599), Roermond (1609), 's-Hertogenbosch (1610), Namur (1610) and Mechelen (1611 with a Noviciate House). In Tournai, a separate noviciate house was constructed from 1607 onwards, while a Professed House was set up in Antwerp in 1616. Four years before, the Belgian province had been split into a Walloon French-speaking part, named *Gallo-Belgica*, and a Flemish Dutch-speaking part, named *Flandro-Belgica*. In the latter Province, also the naval mission (*Missio Navalis*), the military mission (*Missio Castrensis*) as well as the mission of the Northern Protestant Provinces, the so-called *Missio Hollandica* founded in 1592, were organised. In 1640, 20 colleges could be counted in the Flemish province and 22 in the Walloon one (of which three in the Prince Bishopric of Liège, not actually a part of the Spanish Low Countries). Around that time, the Order counted more than 1600 members in the two Belgian provinces together. The colleges of 's-Hertogenbosch, Breda and Maastricht, however, were lost after these cities were captured by Protestant troops, respectively in 1629, 1637 and 1632.

THE ARCHITECTURAL OEUVRE OF THE JESUITS IN THE LOW COUNTRIES: A SURVEY

Most residencies of the Jesuits were originally installed in existing houses, often bought with limited financial means or offered by sponsors. These houses were slowly transformed into college buildings, and enlarged when neighbouring houses could be purchased. In Liège, Courtrai, Bruges and Brussels, amongst others, the Jesuits had small, previously existing chapels at their disposal. We also know that already before 1578, in some of the residencies new chapels were installed, for example at Saint-Omer (1569-1570), Antwerp (1574-1575), Maastricht (1575), Cambrai (1574, enlarged in 1595), and Leuven (inaugurated on 30 September 1571).³ For the latter a cross-shaped plan with four free-standing pillars and a short three-aisled nave was made after 1595, but is not sure whether it was executed or not.⁴ Also in Tournai (1582), Ypres (1593),

² DUERLOO, L. L. "Archducal Piety and Habsburg Power", in THOMAS, W. and DUERLOO, L., (ed.), *Albert & Isabella 1598-1621. Essays*, Turnhout, 1998, pp. 267-283.

³ PONCELET, A., *Nécrologe des jésuites...*, *op. cit.*, p. XI, see also PONCELET, A., *Histoire de la Compagnie...*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 552-554.

⁴ VALLERY-RADOT, J., *Le recueil de plans d'édifices de la Compagnie de Jésus conservé à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris*, Rome, Bibliotheca Institutii Historici S.I., 15, 1960, p. 295.

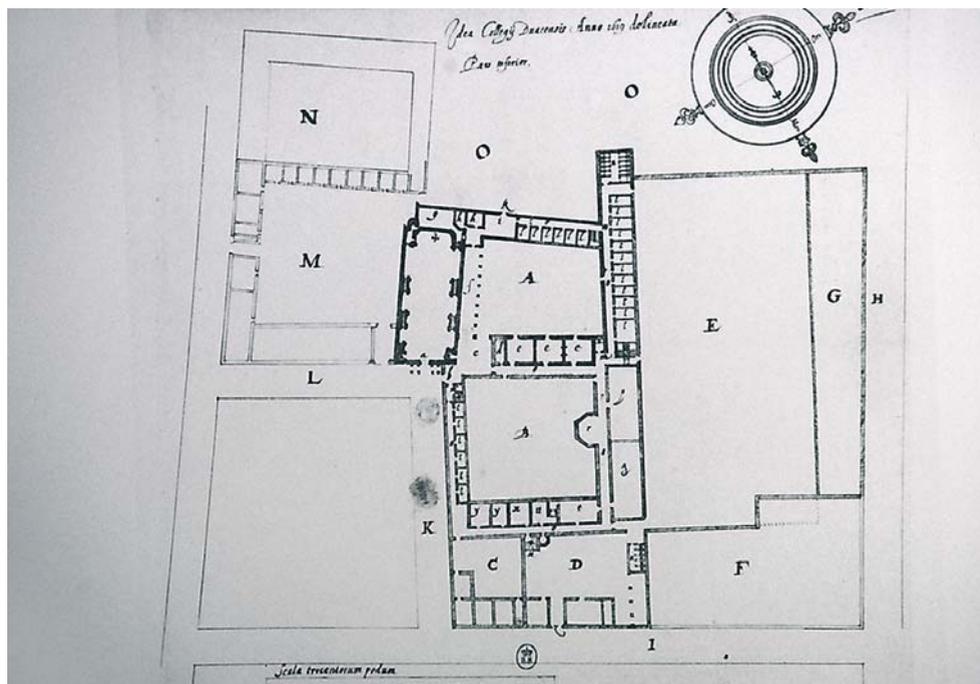


Fig. 1. Plan of the Jesuit college of Douai, washed pen drawing, 31,9 x 33,3 cm, 1619. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Hd-4c, 36 (Photo Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale).

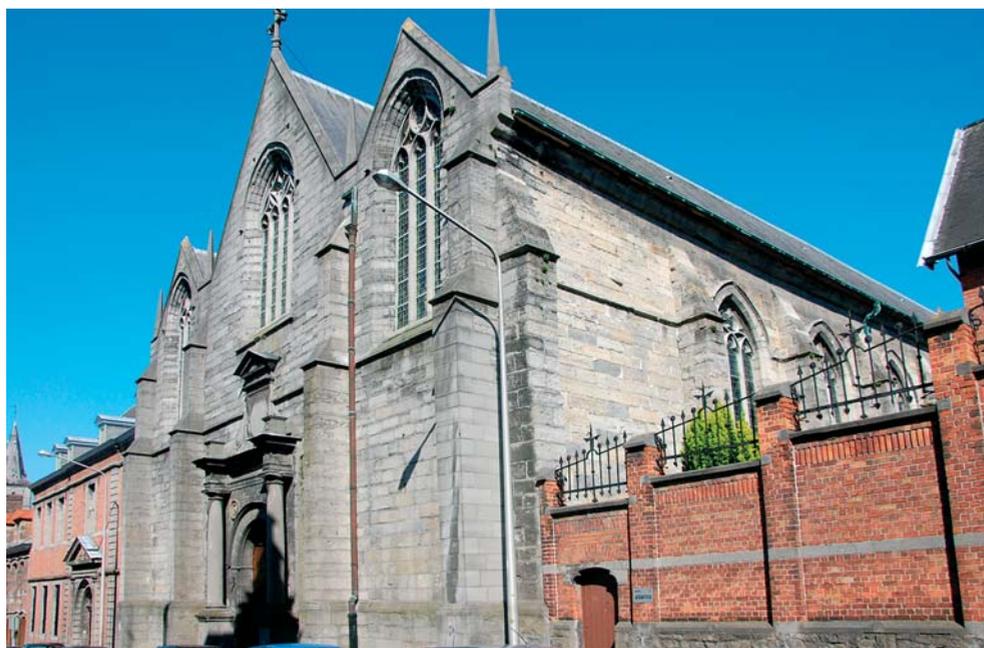


Fig. 2. Tournai, Jesuit church (1601-1604), exterior (Photo JS).

Ghent (1591), Lille (1593) and Mons (1596) small ‘oratories’ accessible to the public were installed at the end of the sixteenth century. In Mechelen, where the Jesuits installed themselves in the former court residence called the *Keizershof* in 1611, a church was set up in the kitchen space. The church was enlarged between 1632 and 1633, and became the Sodality church later on.

Between 1583 and 1591, the Jesuits constructed a large college church at Douai.⁵ It had a wide shallow choir, a large crossing and an oblong nave with four chapels oriented towards the interior and connected by small corridors for the priests, as well as *oratoria* at both sides of the choir and a rood loft placed at the entrance side [fig. 1]. The building kept a rather traditional appearance because of the two towers with pointed roof flanking the choir and the flat, minimally decorated façade with triangular gable. Many other churches erected by the Jesuits during the first two decades of the seventeenth century had a similar outlook because they were built in tune with local building traditions and finished with Gothic lancet windows with tracery. These were the ones at Tournai (1601-1604) [fig. 2], Valenciennes (1601-1613), Lille (1606-1610), Ghent (1606-1618), Courtrai (1607-1611) [fig. 3], Mons (1608-1617), Bergues (1610-1612), Arras (1612-1617), Luxemburg (1613-1621), Maubeuge (1620-1624) as well as the Noviciate church at Tournai (1609-1612) and the Tertiare church at Armentières (1623). With the exception of the single-naved churches of Maubeuge, Armentières and the novitiate church at Tournai, these Gothic churches all had a three-aisled basilica plan with free-standing columns and pointed arches. The ones at Tournai, Valenciennes, Lille, Arras and Luxemburg adopted the scheme of a *Hallenkirche* (with nave and aisles having the same height), a type of church which had a long pedigree within the Low Countries. Although these churches were built following older patterns, antique elements often were integrated into the architectural design, for example into the finishing of the entrance porches and of rood lofts. It must be noted that these Gothic Jesuit churches presented many similarities with the Douai case: The rood loft was always placed at the entrance side, so that churchgoers had a clear view of the main altar in the wide and shallow choir, and most of them also had *oratoria* in the choir.

The churches of Maastricht (1606-1614) [fig. 4] and of Saint-Omer (1615-1634) were the first Jesuit churches in the Low Countries where a more prominent use of antique ornaments can be noted. The (single-naved) church of Maastricht had windows with pointed arches and a star vault above the choir

⁵ The most complete overview of the churches of the Jesuits built within the Southern Low Countries, is still offered by the publication of brother Joseph Braun: BRAUN, J., *Die belgischen Jesuitenkirche. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kampfes zwischen Gotik und Renaissance*, Freiburg im Bressgau, 1907. More detailed references will be presented in this article later on.

apse, but its façade was finished with superposed antique pilasters, scroll work and a broken pediment on top. The church of Saint-Omer, which has a three-aisled plan, was similarly provided with a façade richly ornamented with superposed pilasters and antique ornaments, while its windows kept to the familiar lancet shape and were finished with tracery work.

In 1615, work begun on the church of the Antwerp Professed House [figs. 5, 6]. Its magnificent three-tiered screen façade with projecting middle part was obviously inspired by Italian examples. The interior of the church, which was built on a three-aisled basilica plan with galleries above the side aisles, was finished with round headed arches with columns in white marble imported from Italy, a coffered barrel vault and an apse decorated

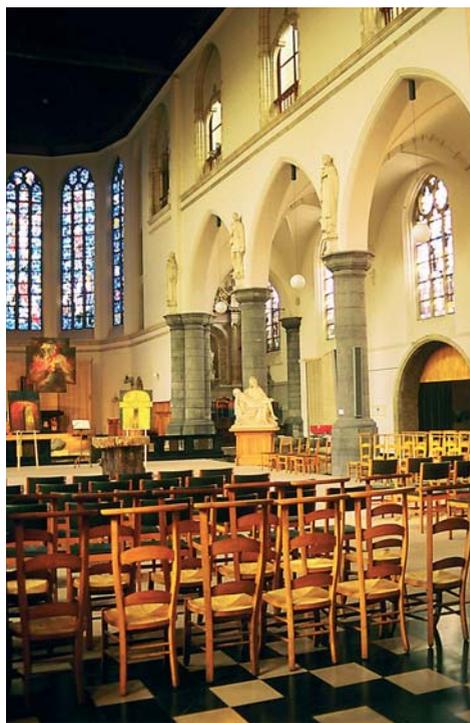


Fig. 3. Courtrai, Jesuit church (1607-1611), interior (Photo Annemie De Vos).



Fig. 4. Maastricht, Jesuit church (1606-1614), preserved fragment of the exterior (Photo JS).



Fig. 5. Antwerp, Jesuit church (1615-1621), façade (Photo JS).



Fig. 6. Antwerp, Jesuit church, interior (Photo JS).

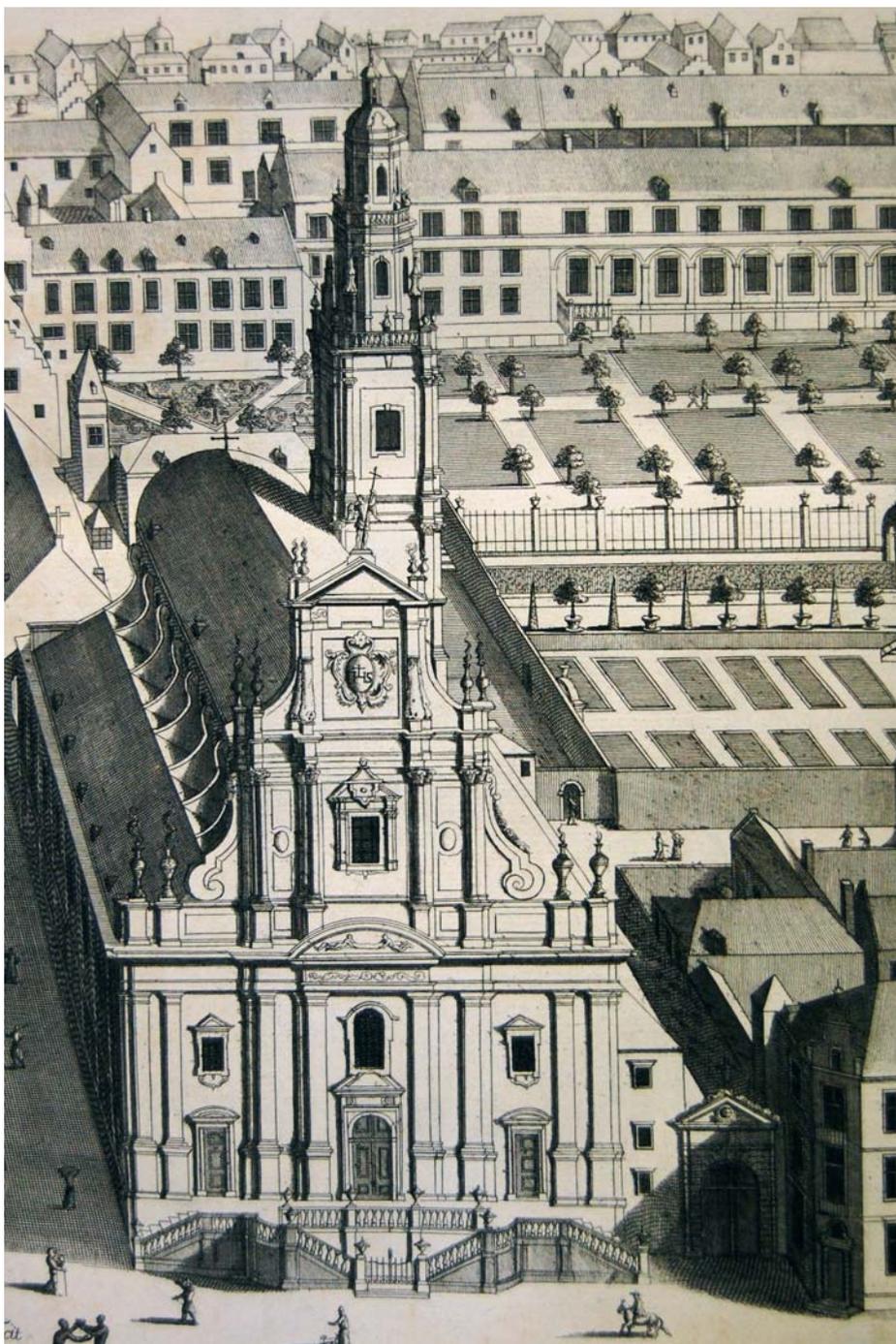


Fig. 7. Renier Blokhuysse, *The Brussels Jesuit church and college* (detail), engraving, 46,4 x 35,2 cm.
Antonius Sanderus, *Chorographia sacra Brabantiae*, 's-Gravenhage, 1727 (Private collection).



Fig. 8. Bruges, Jesuit church (1619-1642), façade (Photo JS).



Fig. 9. Bruges, Jesuit church, interior (Photo JS).

with antique ornament. Also in 1615, work started anew on the church of the Brussels College, the foundations and lower wall parts of which had been realized shortly after 1607 [fig. 7]. This church, too, was provided with a richly decorated, Italian looking façade of three stories and an interior arcade with Doric columns and round-headed arcades supporting an antique entablature decorated with large cartouches; but the nave was covered with rib-vaults, and there were no galleries.

The churches at Bruges (1619-1642) [figs. 8, 9] and Namur (1621-1645) closely followed the example set by Brussels. The Ypres church (1628-1644) was built as a *Hallenkirche*, but with ornament in the antique manner. Other churches erected in the latest antique style were the ones at Huy (1618-1623), Dunkerque (1632-1635), Bailleul (1632-1637) and Cassel (1634 and completed after 1686). However, the church of Béthune (1637), which is contemporary to the one of Nivelles (1640), was probably still built in the traditional way. Nivelles remains unknown as to the style of its ornament and even its plan



Fig. 10. Leuven, Jesuit church (1650-1666), façade (Photo JS).

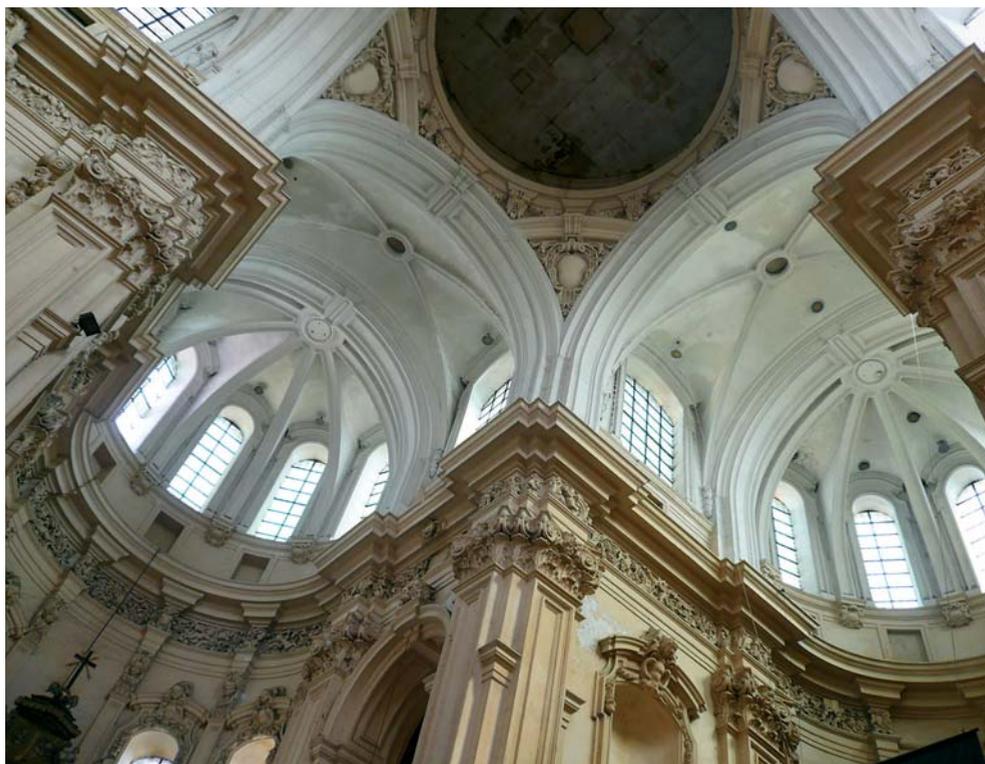


Fig. 11. Leuven, Jesuit church, interior (Photo KDJ).

type. Surviving drawings interestingly show both the centralized plan (a rotunda) and the traditional alternative (three-aisled variants).⁶

During the second half of the seventeenth century, churches were built at Leuven (1650-1666) [figs. 10, 11], Dinant (1661), Roermond (1666-1670), Mechelen (1670-1677), Liège (1669-1701), Cassel (1687), Aire-sur-la-Lys (1682-1687) and Cambrai (1679-1693). The Leuven church followed the example of Brussels, but here a transept with rounded arms with a dome over the crossing transformed the eastern part of the basilica into a clover-leaf centralised plan. In Liège also, where the Jesuits disposed of an older church enlarged in 1589, a church with a three-aisled basilica plan and a transept with a dome on the crossing were used. Both the Mechelen and Cambrai churches were copied after the example of the Ypres church.

⁶ SNAET, J., «De bouwprojecten voor de Antwerpse jezùietenkerk», in DE JONGE, K., DE VOS, A. and SNAET, J. (ed.), *Bellissimi ingegni, grandissimo splendore. Studies over de religieuze architectuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de 17de eeuw*, Leuven, Symbolæ Facultatis Litterarum Lovaniensis, series B, 15, 2000, pp. 43-66.



Fig. 12. Aalst, Jesuit church (1729-1730) and College (Photo JS).

The Jesuit building boom ended in the last years of the seventeenth century. The church of the Tertiary House at Lier (1740-1754) and the one of Aalst (1729-1730) [fig. 12] are the only churches erected during the eighteenth century. The former was built to replace an older church dating from 1617 and had a single nave with a transept. The church at Aalst, also single-naved, replaced an older chapel built in 1637.

Compared with churches of other religious orders and congregations in the Southern Low Countries, a remarkably high number of Jesuit churches have been preserved until today. Most of them had indeed become parish churches after the abolition of the Order in 1773, and were therefore spared during the occupation of the Low Countries by the French after 1794. These were the ones at Courtrai, Luxemburg, Saint-Omer, Cambrai, Aire-sur-la-Lys, Bruges, Namur, Leuven, Aalst, Lier and both the churches in Tournai. In Mechelen both the college church, erected from 1670 onwards, and the Sodality church have been preserved. Substantial parts of the many college buildings have similarly survived. In Ghent [fig. 13], Antwerp, Leuven and Liège the college buildings ultimately became part of the university facilities, while in Namur they house the State lycée erected after the closing of 1773; this is also the case for the novi-



Fig. 13. Ghent, Jesuit college (Photo JS).



Fig. 14. Tournai, Jesuit college (Photo JS).

ciate buildings of Tournai. Also at Tournai the former college buildings and its church actually host the Episcopal Seminary [fig. 14].

However, there are significant losses, too. The interior of the church of the Antwerp Professed House was heavily ravaged during a fire in 1714, causing the loss of the marble columns and the ceiling paintings in the side aisles. In Maastricht the church was deconsecrated and transformed; only parts of the façade have been partially preserved in today's Theatre House [fig. 4]. For the churches located in the actual North of France, losses may be noted at Lille, where the church was hit by a fire in 1740 and almost entirely reconstructed;⁷ at the church of Valenciennes, which was heavily transformed shortly after 1773 and where only the outer walls of the seventeenth-century building have been preserved; at Cassel, where only the façade remains, and at Maubeuge, which was heavily damaged during the first World War, and afterwards completely modernised in its interior.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY HISTORIANS ON JESUIT ARCHITECTURE IN BELGIUM AND ITS STYLE

From the founding of the Belgian Kingdom in 1831 and the birth of a national architectural historiography, studies on seventeenth-century Jesuit architecture in the Southern Low Countries have paid a lot of attention to the stylistic difference between Gothic and Baroque Jesuit churches. One of the first monographs, A. G. B. Schayes's *Histoire de l'architecture en Belgique* which was published shortly after 1847, with an augmented edition in 1853, introduced the note of ambivalence that also permeates later literature. Schayes considered the Belgian Jesuit churches in a 'modern' style as some of the most splendid examples of the seventeenth-century architectural realisations of the Order, but limited himself to a bare mention of the Gothic ones without comment on their stylistic features.⁸

In 1879, Auguste Schoy (1838-1885), a historian, professor of architecture and conservation architect, published his *Histoire de l'influence italienne sur l'architecture dans les Pays-Bas*, in which he presented an extensive historical overview of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century architecture.⁹ Schoy promoted

⁷ PARENT, P., *L'architecture des Pays-Bas méridionaux (Belgique et nord de la France) aux XVI^e, XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*, Paris, Brussel, 1926, p. 74.

⁸ (...) *celles de Bruxelles, d'Anvers, et de Bruges, dont nous venons de parler, puis celles de Louvain, de Namur, de Malines et de Liege sont les plus splendides et les seules dont nous ferons une mention spéciale, bien que d'autres construites sur une moindre échelle, telles que celles de Huy, de Lierre, d'Alost, de Tongres, de Gand, de Courtrai, etc., ne soient pas non plus dénuées de mérite.* SCHAYES, A. G. B., *Histoire de l'Architecture en Belgique*, Brussels, s.d. (augmented edition of 1853), vol. 4, p. 186.

⁹ SCHOY, A., *Histoire de l'influence italienne sur l'architecture dans les Pays-Bas, Mémoire couronné par la Classe des Beaux-arts de l'Académie royale de Belgique*, Brussels, 1879.

Flemish Renaissance architecture as the most ideal style for the construction of contemporary buildings in the young Belgian nation. He saw the Jesuits, together with Rubens, as the most important propagators of the «decadent Italian style»¹⁰ or «Loyolite style»¹¹ within the Southern Low Countries; this style would soon gain a distinctive national character, and become widely accepted in contemporary practice. Although the author knew the names of the Jesuit brothers François Aguilon (one of the designers of the church of the Antwerp Professed House) and Willem Hesius (the architect of the Leuven Jesuit church),¹² he considered the court architect and painter Jacques Francart (1583-1651), to whom he ascribed the design of the Brussels Jesuit church, as the artist who made possible the stylistic revolution –the transition from Gothic to «Renaissance»– within the Order.¹³

In the influential work of the German architect and art historian Cornelius Gurlitt (1850-1938), *Geschichte des Barockstiles des rococo und des klassicismus in Belgien, Holland, Frankreich, England*, which was published in 1888, only the «Baroque» Jesuit churches were portrayed. The author devoted a lot of attention to the Antwerp church especially, and did not hesitate to link the Belgian taste for Baroque splendour with the national character or inherent nature. In this publication, the author did not yet use the term 'Jesuit style', but he would do so only a year later his book on German Baroque and Rococo architecture.¹⁴

LOUIS SERBAT AND THE JESUIT GOTHIC

Between 1902 and 1903 the factory owner and art lover Louis Serbat (1875-1953) published two articles on the Belgian and Northern French Jesuit churches built in the Gothic style.¹⁵ The author wanted to prove that the Jesuits –at that moment generally known as the successful propagators of the Italian style, which he paradoxically called *le style jésuite*, most probably after Gurlitt– on the

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 239.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 243.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 244.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 247.

¹⁴ GURLITT, C., *Geschichte der Barockstiles, des Rococo und des Klassizismus*, 3 vols., Stuttgart, 1889. During World War I Gurlitt published together with Paul Clemen a book on the Belgian Cistercian Ruines of Villers-la-Ville, Aulne and Orval, which is still considered being a highly important reference work for the study of these cases. CLEMEN, P. and GURLITT, C., *Die Klosterbauten der Cistercienser in Belgien. Im Auftrage des Kaiserlich Deutschen Generalgouvernements in Belgien*, Berlin, 1916.

¹⁵ SERBAT, L., «L'Architecture gothique des Jésuites au XVIIe siècle», *Bulletin Monumental*, 66, 1902, pp. 315-370; SERBAT, L., «L'Architecture gothique des Jésuites au XVIIe siècle», *Bulletin Monumental*, 67, 1903, pp. 84-134.

contrary favoured and defended the Gothic style.¹⁶ Serbat suggested that the diffusion of the Jesuit style was comparable to that of Burgundian Cistercian architecture in the Middle Ages; i.e. it spread by means of precise instructions rather than through the transmission of complete church models. Therefore, it resulted in different local schools.¹⁷ The Jesuit Gothic thus being subsumed into the broader Gothic phenomenon, it logically followed that Serbat pleaded to restore the Jesuit church of Valenciennes following neo-Gothic concepts.¹⁸

In his studies, the author made use of a great number of archival documents (of which many are preserved in the Municipal Archives of the North of France). Still, it is noticeable that the author hardly mentioned any architect which had designed a Gothic Jesuit church by name. Only for the Courtrai church he found that the church had been designed by Jean Persijn (1530-1616), a local craftsman who was not a member of the Order.¹⁹ He also mentioned that the design of the church at Ghent had been ascribed to *les frères Hoemaker* by the Ghent professor Louis Cloquet²⁰ and that the signature of the Jesuit mathematician François Aguilon (1567-1617) could be found on a plan for the Tournai Noviciate church of 1608 conserved in Paris.²¹ The church of Arras was attributed by him to brother Bidau, *coadjuteur de la Compagnie de Jésus*.²²

Two important sources the author made use of were the *Recueil des plans* preserved at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris and the book with preparatory sketches and drawings for the Jesuit church in Ghent,²³ nowadays attributed to Hendrik Hoemaker (1559-1626) [fig. 15]. It contains several pages with Gothic tracery work and stone moulds, and shows how closely Hoemaker still adhered to Gothic design practice.²⁴ Still, the book also contains a page with a drawing and design instructions for a Ionic capital, as well as a design for a rood loft in the antique style combined with a window with Gothic tracery work.

¹⁶ *Lors de la Renaissance religieuse, favorisée par le règne des archiducs Albert et Isabelle, ... les jésuites se placent au nombre des derniers et plus fermes partisans du style gothique*, SERBAT, L., «L'Architecture gothique...», *op. cit.*, 1902, p. 317.

¹⁷ SERBAT, L., «L'Architecture gothique...», *op. cit.*, 1903, p. 125.

¹⁸ SERBAT, L., «L'Architecture gothique...», *op. cit.*, 1902, p. 335.

¹⁹ SERBAT, L., «L'Architecture gothique...», *op. cit.*, 1903, p. 89.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

²¹ (...) *a qui l'on doit la grande église d'Anvers* (...) SERBAT, L., «L'Architecture gothique...», *op. cit.*, 1903, p. 133; VALLERY-RADOT, J., *Le recueil...*, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

²² SERBAT, L., «L'Architecture gothique...», *op. cit.*, 1903, p. 360.

²³ This sketchbook was formerly in the Ghent University Library (and before that in the Municipal Library, see Braun 1907, p. VII), but has unfortunately been lost during an exhibition in Paris in the 1970s. A series of copies are still preserved in Ghent, University Library, Hs. G. 6075. See also LENAERTS, T., «Broeder Hoemaker en de Gentse collegekerk», in De Block, J. and Polfliet, L. (ed.), *400 jaar jezuïtencollege te Gent*, (Exhibition catalogue), Ghent, Museum Arnold Vander Haeghen, 1992, pp. 63-70.

²⁴ DE JONGE, K., «Scientie” et “experientie” dans le gothique moderne des anciens Pays-Bas», in CHATENET, M., DE JONGE, K. and KAVALER, E. M., *Le gothique de la Renaissance* (De Architectura), Paris, 2011, in press.

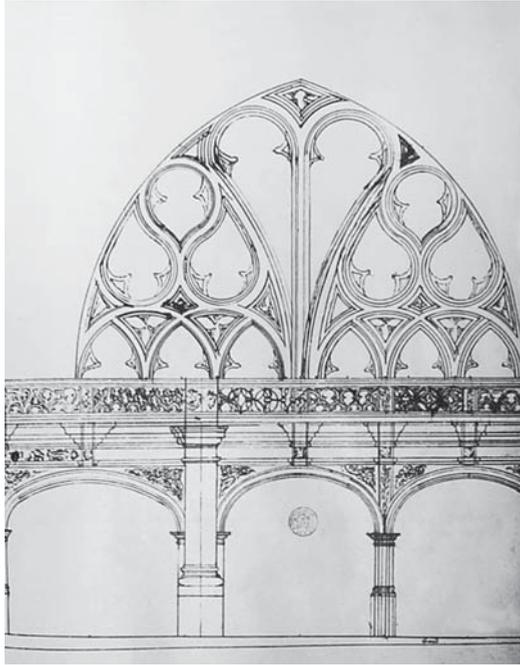


Fig. 15. Hendrik Hoemaker,
The roof loft and window tracery of the Ghent Jesuit church,
 from the sketchbook formerly in the Ghent University Library
 (copy of the lost original, Ghent University Library).

JOSEPH BRAUN, OR GOTHIC VERSUS BAROQUE

The Jesuit Joseph Braun († 1947) was the first to have studied together the churches erected in the Gothic style and the ones erected in the «Baroque» style.²⁵ He was also the first to have listed the names of the most important architects of the Order active within the Southern Low Countries, chiefly based on an extensive study of the archival material preserved at the Order's headquarters in Rome.²⁶ He found that almost all Gothic churches were designed by two members of the Order, Hoemaker and Johannes Du Blocq (1583-1656). To Hoemaker, a mason's son who had studied Latin and philosophy after entering the Order in 1585, Braun attributed the churches of Tournai, Valenciennes, Mons, Gent and Lille. Du Blocq, who trained as a carpenter before entering the Order in 1606, designed the college churches of Luxemburg, Arras, Maubeuge,

²⁵ BRAUN, J., *Die belgischen Jesuitenkirchen. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kampfes zwischen Gotik und Renaissance*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1907.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. VII.

Saint-Omer and the church of the noviciate at Tournai.²⁷ In Braun's view, the use of innovative Baroque architectural features could only be based on first-hand knowledge of Italian architecture. The earliest architects of the Order in the Southern Low Countries, Du Blocq and Hoeymaker, were only locally trained and thus incapable of designing churches in the modern way. The introduction of the new Baroque, architectural forms naturally coincided with a new generation of architects; i.e. Jacques Francart who made the design for the Jesuit church at Brussels and the Jesuit François Aguilon who designed the Antwerp church, together with the Jesuit lay brother Pieter Huysens (1577-1637). Until that moment, Huysens had hardly been noticed by art historians,²⁸ although his name was already connected with the design of two churches that do not belong to the Jesuits; i.e. the Ghent Benedictine church²⁹ –attributed earlier to Jan van Santen, alias Giovanni Vasanzio (†1621)– and the Mechelen Beguinage church attributed before to Jacques Francart.³⁰ According to Braun, Huysens also designed the churches of Maastricht, Bruges and Namur. In a collection of copies of letters preserved at the headquarters in Rome (*Regestum epistolarum Patrum Generalium, Flandro-Belgica*),³¹ Braun discovered that Huysens was dismissed as architect after being accused of having caused the enormous debts that the Professed House in Antwerp incurred in order to finish the church. The same letters also relate how the year after, Huysens was asked by the Infanta Isabella, regent of the Spanish Low Countries, to go to Rome to study Roman examples for the design of her chapel at the Coudenberg Palace in Brussels: a voyage strongly opposed by his Roman superiors.³²

Apart from the plans preserved at Paris and apart from Hoeymaeker's sketchbook, Braun also studied the collection of plans called the *Promptuarium Pictorum*, of which one part, unfortunately dismantled, is nowadays preserved in the archives of the Jesuit church at Antwerp (now St Charles Borromeus) [figs. 16, 17]; two volumes, still bound, are in the Order's archives at Heverlee

²⁷ Jacob Bidault was identified by Braun as a *praefectus aedificii* or *praefectum operum* and henceforth no longer considered as the architect of the Arras church.

²⁸ A short description of the life of Huysens had already been published in 1867, but remained unnoticed, probably because it was written in Latin. WALDACK, C. F., *Historia Provinciae Flandro-Belgicae Societatis Jesu, quam a veteribus documentis colligit, Annus Unus, Speciminis causa 1638^{us}*, Ghent, Brussels, 1867.

²⁹ VAN LOKEREN, A., «Note», *Messenger des Sciences historiques...*, November, 1864, p. 585 and VAN LOKEREN, A., *Chartres et Documents de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre au Mont Blandin à Gand*, Gent, 1871.

³⁰ SCHOEFFER, J., *Historische aantekeningen rakende de kerken, de kloosters, de ambachten en de andere stichten der stad Mechelen*, 3 delen, Mechelen, 1879, vol. 1, p. 290.

³¹ Today these copies of letters of the general superiors to the provincial superiors of the Flemish Province, are kept within the collection Rome, Archivum Romanum, S.I., FL. Belg.

³² BRAUN, J., *Die belgischen...*, *op. cit.*, 1907, pp. 105-112.

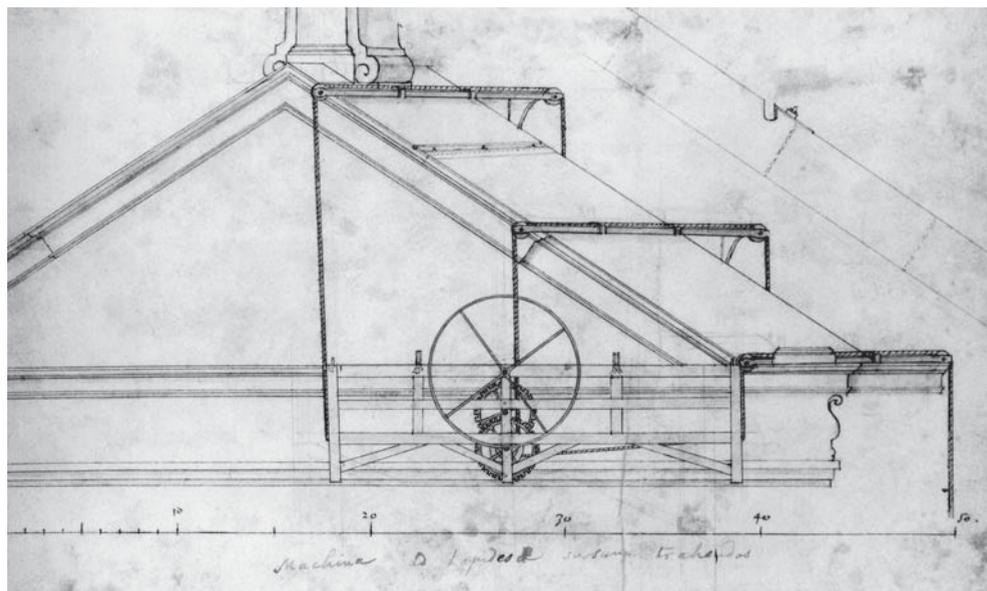


Fig. 16. Pieter Huyssens, *Machine for lifting stones*, washed pen drawing, 28,5 x 32,5 cm, around 1621 (Antwerp, *Promptuarium Pictorum*, 12. Photo KIK M 179305).

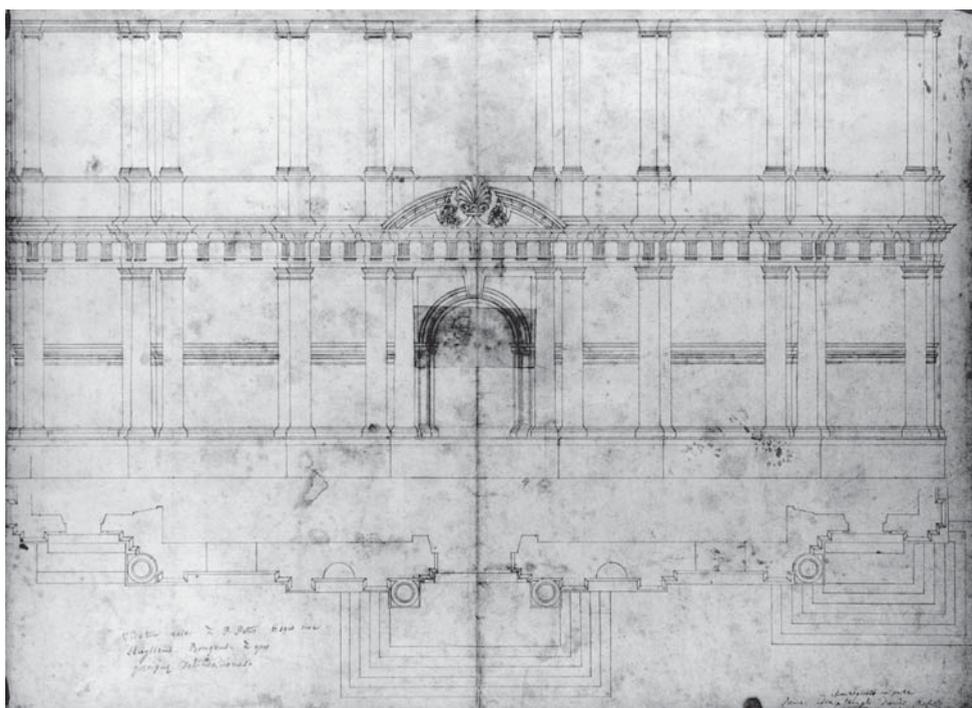


Fig. 17. Pieter Huyssens, *Design for the façade of the Antwerp Jesuit church*, washed pen drawing, 44 x 62 cm, around 1621 (Antwerp, *Promptuarium Pictorum*, 15. Photo KIK M 179306).

(at the time of Braun in the Library of the Bollandists in Antwerp) [figs. 18, 19, 20], and one volume survives in the Print Room of the Royal Library of Belgium at Brussels. The Antwerp set contains mainly plans and elevation drawings of the church and buildings of the Professed House. Before Braun, it was already known to Alfred Hamy³³ and studied by Max Rooses.³⁴ In 1948, an inventory of this volume was published by the Antwerp archivist Adolph Jansen and the noted collector Charles Van Herck.³⁵ Braun reproduced several drawings from the Antwerp collection as well as some of the first volume preserved at Heverlee, which contains plans, elevations, interiors and architectural details of a great number of the churches and colleges of the two Belgian provinces.³⁶ However, Braun paid no attention to the second volume preserved at Heverlee, which contains architectural drawings with a more general character, such as designs for portals and windows (some copied from the publications of Sebastiano Serlio and Bernardino Radi), altars and other church furniture, as well as engravings of Roman churches.³⁷

Another important source for Braun were the letters and administrative documents confiscated after the abolition of the Order, which were conserved together in the National Archive in Brussels at the time Braun consulted them.³⁸ Braun also knew about the set of plans of churches and college buildings located in the Flemish Province which had been sorted out of these documents and preserved as a separate collection in the same Archive.³⁹ Nowadays, these documents have been dispersed to the different local departments of the State Archives; for example, documents related to the Brussels College may be found at the State Archive in Anderlecht and those of the Flemish Province at the State Archive in Antwerp. Only the documents generated by the so-called *Comité*

³³ HAMY, A., *Documents pour servir à l'histoire des documents de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Paris, 1892.

³⁴ ROOSES, M., *L'Oeuvre de Rubens*, Antwerp, 1892, vol 5, pp. 181-182.

³⁵ JANSEN, A. and VAN HERCK, C., «Archief in Beeld: Inventaris van de tekeningen bewaard op het Archief van de S. Caroluskerk te Antwerpen», *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis en Folklore*, 11, 1948, pp. 45-91.

³⁶ LEMMENS, S., *Catalogue raisonné van het 'Promptuarium Pictorum'*, Master's Thesis directed by K. De Jonge, Catholic University of Leuven, 1996.

³⁷ DAELEMANS, B., *Het 'Promptuarium Pictorum' volume II. Catalogoog*, Master's Thesis dir. by K. De Jonge, Catholic University of Leuven, 1998; DAELEMANS, B., «Het *Promptuarium Pictorum* als spiegel van de ontwerppraktijk der Vlaamse Jezuïetenarchitecten in de 17^{de} eeuw», in DE JONGE, K., DE VOS, A. and SNAET, J., (ed.), *Bellissimi ingegni...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-198.

³⁸ GAILLARD, A., *Inventaire sommaire des Archives de la Compagnie de Jésus conservées aux Archives Générales du Royaume A Bruxelles*, Brussels, s.d.

³⁹ Formally known as A.G.R., *Jés. Fl.-Belg.*, n.º 1445, today in the Antwerp State Archives and dispersed over several numbers. See CALLEWIER, H., *Inventaris van het Archief van de Nederduitse Provincie der Jezuïeten (Provincia Belgica, vervolgens Provincia Flandro-Belgica) en van het Archief van het Professenbuis te Antwerpen, (1388) 1564-1773*, Brussel, 2006, p. 550.

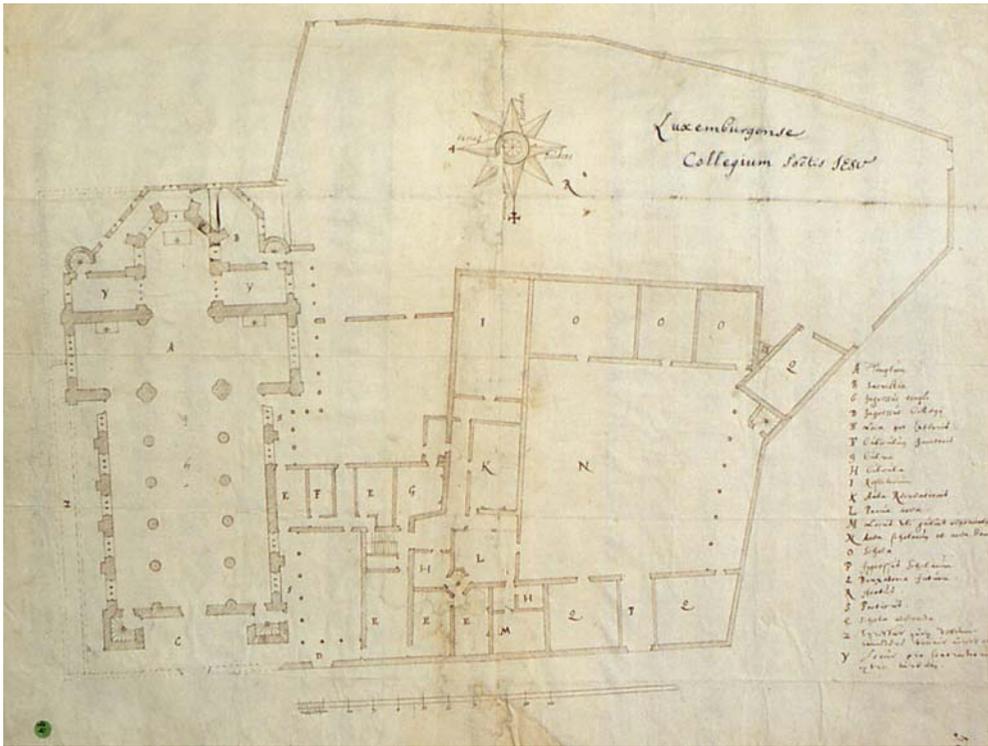


Fig. 18. Plan of the Luxembourg college, washed pen drawing, 46,4 x 36,4 cm.

pour la suppression des jésuites aux Pays-Bas (1773-1776) is still preserved at the central National Archive in Brussels.⁴⁰

In his book, Braun stated that the Gothic churches repeated traditional typologies –*eine Wiederholung der traditionellen Bauweise*–⁴¹ while the Baroque churches were innovative. Nevertheless, these could hardly be called truly «Baroque» because their architectural structure was identical to the Gothic ones: they were simply dressed up in baroque dress, while plan and elevation remained traditional. To illustrate his point, he drew a number of parallels, for instance between the Maastricht church and the noviciate church in Tournai, or the one at Maubeuge; between the Antwerp church and the college churches at Tournai and Valenciennes; and between the churches in Bruges and Brussels,

⁴⁰ GAILLARD, A., *Inventaire sommaire des archives du comitè jesuitique. Registres*, Algemeen Rijksarchief – Archives générales du Royaume, [1907], 1991; GAILLARD, A., *Inventaire sommaire des archives du comitè jesuitique. Portefeuilles*, Algemeen Rijksarchief – Archives générales du Royaume, [1907], 1991.

⁴¹ BRAUN, J., *Die belgischen...*, *op. cit.*, 1907, p. 203.



Fig. 19. Willem Hesius, *Project of the Leuven Jesuit church, detail with cross section*, washed pen drawing, 133,0 x 37,4 cm (Heverlee, *Promptuarium Pictorum*, I, 7-10. Photo JS).

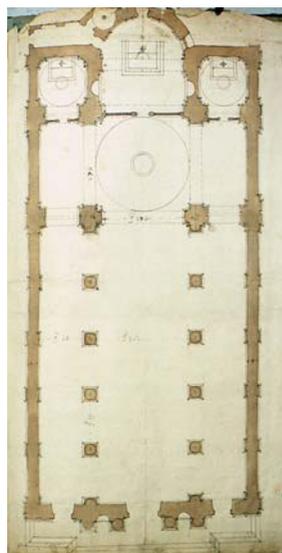


Fig. 20. Pieter Huyssens (?), *Plan of the Namur Jesuit church*, washed pen drawing, 55,8 x 32,8 cm (Heverlee, *Promptuarium Pictorum*, I, 61. Photo JS).

and the Ghent church.⁴² The author also stressed that neither one of these styles was specific to the Jesuit Order exclusively; rather, the Jesuits adhered to the dominant architectural idiom of the country.⁴³

Braun recognised only one exception; i.e. the church of Douai which he considered a true Baroque church because of its ground plan [fig. 1]. This is all the more remarkable if we consider that Braun had no detailed iconographical sources showing the exterior of the church. A view of the church included in the *Albums de Croÿ*⁴⁴ and the representation of the church in the town model,

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 192: *Allein es ist auch nu rein Barockkloid, welches der bau angezogen hat, das entem der Grundisdisposition und des Aufbaues halt unentwegt an den alten Traditionem fest, gleichviel, ob es sich um ein- oder dreischiffige Kirchen, um basilikale Anlagen oder Hallenkirchen um Bauten mit Tonnengewölben oder um solche mit Rippengewölben handelt. Die Kirche zu Maastricht ist konstruktiv und in der Anordnung des Grundrisses das Gegenstück etwa des Noviciatskirche zu Tournai oder der Kollegskirche zu Maubeuge; die Antwerpener Professbauskirche hat ihr Pendant in den Kollegskirchen zu Tournai und Valenciennes, die Kirche zu Cambrai mit ihren Kopien gibt in ihrem Bauskelett die Jesuitenkirchen zu Mons und Luxemburg wieder, die Kirchen zu Brügge und namentlich Brüssel wandelten in den Bahnen der genter Kirche.*

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 203: *Ob also gotisch oder barock, stets war der Stil, in dem die belgischen Jesuiten ihre Kirchen aufführten, der Stil welcher gerade in Belgien für die Architektur tonangebend war.*

⁴⁴ This part of the *Albums de Croÿ* (dated around 1596-1598) is preserved at the State Library at Prague, ms. XXIII/A9/2. See SNAET, J., «De bouwprojecten voor...», *op. cit.*

made between 1697 and 1710, and preserved at the City Archive,⁴⁵ show a building with a ostensibly traditional appearance. It had a flat, minimally decorated façade with triangular gable, and only the entrance portico was executed in the antique manner. The church probably also had tracery in the bottommost windows of the side walls as well as flying buttresses, added to relieve the pressure of a stone vault that was never executed. From a stylistic point of view this church can therefore be classified amongst the «Gothic» churches. Vallery-Radot connected the plan of the Douai church in relation with a specific period of the Order's building policy under Everardus Mercurianus (1514-1580): For a short period (1573-1580), model plans were sent from Rome to the provinces, but the practice was abolished soon afterwards under Claudius Aquaviva (1543-1615).⁴⁶

Braun was in fact very selective in his discussion of Baroque churches, mentioning only summarily the more simple buildings of the first half of the century.⁴⁷ Moreover, the precise roles of the late-seventeenth century architects of the Order, such as Willem Hesius (1601-1690), Johannes Begrand (1623- after 1693)⁴⁸ and Johannes Verbessum (1631-?), were equally briefly dealt with.⁴⁹ Guillaume Cornely (1587-?), who became the architect of the Flemish Province after Huysens had been fired in 1625,⁵⁰ and who designed the Dunkerque church amongst others,⁵¹ was unknown to Braun, as was the Jesuit brother Jérôme of Ghent, who designed the church of Bailleul.⁵²

PARENT AND PLANTENGA, OR CONSOLIDATING THE PARADIGM

In the year 1926, both the French professor Paul Parent and the Dutch engineer-architect Jan Hendrik Plantenga published independently from each other a hefty tome on the Baroque architecture of the Southern Low Countries.

⁴⁵ Already known by Parent, see PARENT, P., *L'architecture des Pays-Bas méridionaux...*, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

⁴⁶ VALLERY-RADOT, J., *Le recueil de...*, *op. cit.*, 1960, p. 56, 120.

⁴⁷ BRAUN, J., *Die belgischen...*, *op. cit.*, 1907, p. 104: *Was sonst noch bis zur Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts entstand, waren Bauten von minder bedeutenden Abmessungen und grösserer Schlichtheit, so die Kollegskirchen zu Alost (Aelst), Bergues (St-Winocsbergen), Dünkirchen, Bailleul, Kassel und Huy.*

⁴⁸ Of which Braun mentions he went to Loyola after 1693. *Ibidem*, p. 116.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 304-308.

⁵⁰ GILISSEN, J., «Le Père Guillaume Hesius. Architecte du XVII^e siècle», *Annales de la Société royale d'Archéologie de Bruxelles: mémoires, rapports et documents*, 42, 1938, p. 227.

⁵¹ LEMAIRE, L. and DELATTRE, P., «Dunkerque», in *Les établissements des Jésuites en France depuis quatre siècles*, tome deuxième, Dammartin-Lyon, Enghien, Wetteren, 1953, p. 295.

⁵² DÉTREZ, L., «Bailleul», in *Les établissements des Jésuites en France depuis quatre siècles*, Tome premier, Abbeville-Cyriacum, Enghien, Wetteren, 1949, pp. 510-520.

Almost half of Parent's work –which narrates the history of both the civil and religious architecture of the sixteenth–, seventeenth –and eighteenth-century Low Countries– dealt with the church architecture of the Jesuits.⁵³ The author paid attention to both the Gothic and the Baroque churches of the Order, each of them analysed in detail and abundantly illustrated with plan, elevation and a large number of photographs. His main focus was the role of the different architects of the Order, particularly of the Order's superiors and college rectors, such as Aguilon and Hesius. At the end of his book, he argued that the influence of Italian architecture was stronger than Braun had assumed: *D'ailleurs, obligés de faire souvent le voyage d'Italie, de poursuivre au Collège Romain de l'ordre leurs études de théologie, d'assister aux Comitia Romana qui réunissaient souvent les Provinciaux et leurs socii, les Pères Recteurs avaient subi peu à peu le charme de l'art italien modern, connu tous les sanctuaires les plus récemment fondés, comme les plus anciens de la ville Papale. Une fois revenus dans leurs Provinces belgiques, ne devaient-ils pas chercher à prolonger, par la vue d'un décor qui réveillât leurs souvenirs, les joies esthétiques qu'ils avaient éprouvées pendant leur séjour en Italie?*⁵⁴ According to Parent, Italian influence can, for instance, be noticed in the interior elevation of the Antwerp church, which resembles strongly a Roman Early Christian church and a «Vitruvian basilica»⁵⁵ (*sic*), and in the dome above the crossing of the Leuven church, never executed but depicted in Hesius's presentation plans in the *Promptuarium Pictorum*. The taste for rich sculptural decoration on the façades and in the interiors was also considered to be directly inspired by Italian examples.⁵⁶

Plantenga's main subject, on the other hand, were all the Baroque churches built from around 1600 until the beginning of the eighteenth century in the Duchy of Brabant, the central part of the Southern Low Countries. The author strongly focused on the role of the architects, and identified two main centres where the Italian way of building was developed. The first one was the Brussels Court with court architects Wensel Cobergher, who designed the pilgrimage church at Scherpenheuvel, the church of the Discalced Carmelites next to the Brussels palace and the Augustinian church at Antwerp; and Jacques Francart to whom he ascribed amongst others the design of the Brussels Jesuit church, the Brussels Augustinian church and the Beguinage church at Mechelen. The other centre of innovation could be found at Antwerp, specifically in the Jesuit church designed by Aguilon and Huysens.

⁵³ PARENT, P., *L'architecture des Pays-Bas méridionaux...*, *op. cit.* Interesting review by Marcel Laurent in the *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 6 (1927) 1-2, pp. 471-472.

⁵⁴ PARENT, P., *L'architecture des Pays-Bas méridionaux...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-165.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 124, 165.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 169.

Plantenga demonstrated that many of the Baroque churches built by the other religious orders in the Southern Low Countries, such as the Beguines, the Augustinians and the Premonstratensians (also called the Norbertines), show architectural solutions applied for the first time in the Jesuit churches, especially when it comes to their interior and façade elevations.⁵⁷ For Plantenga, the development of the Baroque architecture of the Southern Low Countries should be understood as a process whereby late-sixteenth century Italian forms were integrated within the indigenous building tradition of the Duchy of Brabant, resulting in an architecture of high quality and with a proper «personality» and «charm».⁵⁸ The Jesuits, together with the court, played a key role in the spread of this new architecture throughout the Southern Low Countries. Although Plantenga only dedicated scant space to the Gothic churches of the Jesuits (most of which were indeed built outside Brabant, in the County of Flanders), he agreed with Braun on the assimilation of Gothic tradition into the Netherlandish Baroque.

Plantenga's book contains a great number of photographs of drawings from the *Promptuarium Pictorum*, specifically of the part still preserved in Antwerp. We know that at that moment the two other volumes, now at Heverlee, were missing. However, Plantenga was able to use existing photographs to illustrate the main set of drawings made by Hesius for the Leuven Jesuit church, from the first volume [fig. 19].⁵⁹

IN PLANTENGA'S WAKE: TWENTIETH-CENTURY SCHOLARS ON JESUIT ARCHITECTURE

Plantenga's book gave rise to what we could almost call a «school», as it served time and again as the most important source for overviews of seventeenth-century architecture of the Southern Low Countries. We might mention the books of Maurice Marie Thibaut de Maisières published in 1943,⁶⁰ of Jules Van Ackere from 1972,⁶¹ and Rutger Tijs from 1999,⁶² as well as the chapters on

⁵⁷ PLANTENGA, J. H., *L'architecture religieuse dans l'ancien Duché de Brabant depuis le règne des archiducs jusqu'au gouvernement autrichien (1596-1713)*, Den Haag, 1926.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 275.

⁵⁹ *Ces plans sont reliés dans le premier volume du Promptuarium Pictorum, qui se trouvait dans la Bibliothèque du collège Saint-Michel de Bruxelles; depuis une dizaine des années ce volume est perdu (malgré ses dimensions!). Heureusement, le Père A. Poncelet S.J., avait fait photographeur, avant 1914, les plans de Louvain, établis par Hesius. (Communication due à l'amabilité du Père Poncelet S.J.)* Ce sont ces photographies que Plantenga a reproduites dans son ouvrage. Gillissen 1938, p. 225.

⁶⁰ THIBAUT DE MAISIÈRES, M. M., *L'architecture religieuse à l'époque de Rubens*, Brussels, 1943.

⁶¹ VAN ACKERE, J. and BOUCHER, H., *Belgique baroque et classique (1600-1789), architecture, art monumental*, Brussels, Histoire de l'architecture en Belgique, 1972.

⁶² TIJS, R., *Renaissance-en barokarchitectuur in België: Vitruvius' erfenis en de ontwikkeling van de bouwkunst in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden van renaissance tot barok*, Tielt, Architectuur in België, 1999.

architecture included in the seminal overview of the Flemish Baroque published by Hans Vlieghe in 1998,⁶³ and in the monumental tome of 2003 by Paul Philippot, Denis Coekelberghs, Pierre Loze and Dominique Vautier.⁶⁴ These still widely available, and frequently used, surveys hardly offered any fundamentally new insights concerning the architecture of the Jesuits, however. Vlieghe in fact apologized for not having been able to give more attention to seventeenth-century Flemish architecture (only one of his twelve chapters dealt with architecture). According to the author, writing in 1998, this was due to the lack of recent research in the field.⁶⁵

After 1926, progress was in fact incremental. It chiefly concerned data-gathering, new elements appearing in a limited number of articles. An example may be found in the biographical study on the Jesuit architect Willem Hesius, published by John Gilissen (1912-1988) in 1938.⁶⁶ Hesius, a mathematician, writer, poet, professor at Leuven University, and preacher of repute, held several important executive posts within the Order during his career. He drew up the first project for the Leuven Jesuit church, depicted in a series of presentation drawings which are preserved in the first volume of the *Promptuarium Pictorum*, but which were known to the author only by means of photographs. Gilissen demonstrated, however, that many features of this design such as the façade and interior elevation were executed in a different way; these changes were due to the Jesuit lay brothers responsible for the construction site, and were largely inspired by the Brussels Jesuit church [figs. 10, 11, 19].

In addition, several historical studies on Jesuit colleges and some monographs on Jesuit foremen of the Belgian provinces offered valuable new information. In his book on the history of the Jesuit Order in the Southern Low Countries (1927), the Jesuit Alfred Poncelet, for instance, not only gave a brief but precise overview of the architectural realisations of the Order, but also disclosed that the cost of the Antwerp church had nearly bankrupted the entire Province. For this fact he had used the *Fonds Droeshout*, a collection of 42 manuscripts with texts and annotations dealing with the history of the Jesuit Order in the Southern Low Countries. The Jesuit Charles Droeshout (1824-1908) excerpted these from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century archival sources, many of which are lost now-

⁶³ Vlieghe, H., *Flemish Art and Architecture 1585-1700*, New haven-Londen, Pelican History of Art, 1998.

⁶⁴ Philippot, P., Coekelberghs, D., Loze, P. and Vautier, D., *L'architecture religieuse et la sculpture baroques dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux et la Principauté de Liège 1600-1770*, Luik, 2003.

⁶⁵ Vlieghe, H., «Flemish art, does it really exist?», *Simiolus, Netherlands quarterly for the history of art*, 26, 3, 1998, pp. 187-200.

⁶⁶ Gilissen, J., «Le Père Guillaume Hesius...», *op. cit.*, pp. 216-255.

days or remain unidentified.⁶⁷ New facts on the Jesuit colleges that were formerly part of the Southern Low Countries but actually belong to Département du Nord or the Region of the Pas-de-Calais in France, on the other hand, could be found in *Les établissements des Jésuites en France* edited by the Jesuit Pierre Delattre in 1949. Each chapter of this extensive work devotes ample space to the history of the church and college buildings, amongst others at Aire-sur-la-Lys,⁶⁸ Armentières,⁶⁹ Arras,⁷⁰ Bailleul,⁷¹ Bergues,⁷² Béthune,⁷³ Cambrai,⁷⁴ Cassel,⁷⁵ Douai,⁷⁶ Dunkerque,⁷⁷ Lille,⁷⁸ Maubeuge,⁷⁹ Saint-Omer,⁸⁰ and Valenciennes.⁸¹

In the latter half of the century, the histories of the colleges of Antwerp, Mechelen, Brussel, Gent, Lier and Bruges were studied anew by the Jesuit Louis Brouwers. Each work offers detailed and precise information on the construction history of the college and church buildings.⁸² Brouwers's monograph on the life of Carolus Scribanus, too, reproduced new historical data on the college buildings at Brussels.⁸³ An extensive study on the college of Namur was

⁶⁷ Brussels, *Archivum Historicum Provinciae Belgicae Societatis Iesu, Fonds Charles Droeshout*. Poncelet made amongst use of *Volume 11, Bouw der Kercke van Professen S.J. Antwerpen/ Oncostboeck 1614-1628*. See PONCELET, A., *Histoire de la Compagnie...*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 452- 484,

⁶⁸ LEPRINCE, L., «Aire-sur-la-Lys», in *Les établissements des Jésuites en France depuis quatre siècles*, Tome premier, Abbeville-Cyriacum, Enghien, Wetteren, 1949, pp. 24-53.

⁶⁹ DELATTRE, P., «Armentières», *ibidem*, pp. 323-340.

⁷⁰ LESTOQUOY, J., «Arras», *ibidem*, pp. 342-362.

⁷¹ DÉTREZ, L., «Bailleul», *ibidem*, pp. 510-520.

⁷² CROCOQ, CH. DE, «Bergues-saint-Winoc», *ibidem*, pp. 608-634.

⁷³ DELATTRE, P., «Béthune», *ibidem*, 1949, pp. 672-696. Delattre mentions the church had nothing to do with the «Jesuit style».

⁷⁴ DELATTRE, P., «Cambrai», *ibidem*, pp. 1.031-1.055.

⁷⁵ DELATTRE, P., «Cassel», *ibidem*, pp. 1.127-1158.

⁷⁶ BEYLARD, H., «Douai», in *Les établissements des Jésuites en France depuis quatre siècles*, Tome deuxième, Dammartin-Lyon, Enghien, Wetteren, 1953, pp. 173-278.

⁷⁷ LEMAIRE, L., DELATTRE, P., «Dunkerque», *ibidem*, pp. 287-326.

⁷⁸ DELATTRE, P., «Lille», *ibidem*, pp. 1.175-1.363.

⁷⁹ DELATTRE, P., «Maubeuge», in *Les établissements des Jésuites en France depuis quatre siècles*, Tome troisième, Macheville-Pinel, Enghien, Wetteren, 1955, pp. 122-142.

⁸⁰ CHADWICK, H., «Saint-Omer», in *Les établissements des Jésuites en France depuis quatre siècles*, Tome troisième, Poitiers-Valenciennes, Enghien, Wetteren, 1956, pp. 793-913.

⁸¹ DELATTRE, P., «Valenciennes», *ibidem*, pp. 1525-1628.

⁸² BROUWERS, L., *Het Hof van Liere: van patriciërswooning tot universitaire instelling te Antwerpen, 1516-1975*, Antwerp, 1976; BROUWERS, L., *De jezuieten te Mechelen in de 17de en 18de eeuw en hun Xaveriuskerk, de huidige parochiekerk S.S. Petrus en Paulus*, Mechelen, 1977; L. Brouwers, *De jezuieten te Brussel: 1585-1773, 1833*, Mechelen, 1979; BROUWERS, L., *De jezuieten te Gent: 1585-1773, 1823-beden*, Ghent, 1980; BROUWERS, L., *De jezuieten te Lier: 1616-1773, 1841-1981*, Mechelen, 1981; BROUWERS, L., *De jezuieten te Brugge: 1570-1773, 1840-beden*, Mechelen, 1986.

⁸³ BROUWERS, L., *Carolus Scribani S.J. 1561-1629: Een groot man van de Contra-Reformatie in de Nederlanden*, Antwerp, Ons Geestelijk Erf, Antwerp Ruusbroec-Genootschap, 14, 1961.

published in 1991, in which great attention was given to the history and architectural features of the church and the remaining college buildings.⁸⁴ The construction history of the Brussels church, now lost, has been studied more recently by Annemie De Vos⁸⁵ as well as by the Jesuit M. Hermans.⁸⁶ The Tournai college buildings, its church and its art have been the subject of an elaborate study undertaken in collaboration with the Koninklijk Instituut voor Kunstpatrimonium / Institut royal du Patrimoine artistique at Brussels and directed by Monique Maillard-Luypaert.⁸⁷

The last decades of the twentieth century and the first years of the new century also saw the publication of an important number of studies related to the Antwerp Professed House, its church and its designers. The collection of essays on the history of the Antwerp Jesuit communities in Antwerp, published in 2002 and edited by Herman Van Goethem, includes an important study by Marie-Juliette Marinus on the history of the Order in Antwerp during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This essay discusses anew the construction of the church, and is illustrated with a great number of drawings of the *Promptuarium Pictorum*, preserved at the church of St Charles Borromeus.⁸⁸ However, this study was not the first to raise again the question of the church's early history. In his 1981 biography of François Aguilon, Rector of the Professed House to whom the initial designs of its church are attributed, the Jesuit François Ziggelaar⁸⁹ gave a detailed overview of Aguilon's career in science and philosophy; his architectural activities –such as the work on the Antwerp church and the design of the church of the Noviciate House at Tournai–⁹⁰ must be considered as a sideline only. Aguilon is indeed better known as the author of the

⁸⁴ BERLEUR, J. and VANDEN BEMDEN, Y. (ed.), *Les jésuites à Namur 1610-1773 : mélanges d'histoire et d'art à l'occasion des anniversaires ignatiens*, Namur, 1991.

⁸⁵ DE VOS, A., «Hofarchitect Jacques Francart en de Brusselse jezuietenkerk. Tussen traditie en vernieuwing», *De zeventiende eeuw, Cultuur in de Nederlanden in interdisciplinair perspectief, «Ad maiorem Dei gloriam», jezuieten in de Nederlanden*, 14, 1, 1998, pp. 65-80.

⁸⁶ HERMANS, M., «De la fondation à la suppression», in STENUIT, B. (ed.), *Les Collèges jésuites de Bruxelles: histoire et pédagogie, 1604-1835. 1905-2005*, Brussels, 2005, pp. 53-83.

⁸⁷ MAILLARD-LUYPAERT, M. (ed.), *Séminaire de Tournai, Histoire-Bâtiments-Collections*, Leuven, 2008.

⁸⁸ MARINUS, M. J., «Kampioenen van de contrareformatie, 1562-1773», in VAN GOETHEM, H. (ed.), *Antwerpen en de jezuieten, 1562-2002* (Ed. H. Van Goethem), Antwerp, 2002, pp. 7-70.

⁸⁹ ZIGGELAAR, A., *François de Aguilon S.J. (1567-1617), scientist and architect*, Rome, Bibliotheca Instituti Historici S.I., XLIV, 1983.

⁹⁰ Ad Meskens suggests Aguilon might have participated in the design of the Antwerp city fortifications. MESKENS, A., «The Jesuit mathematics School in Antwerp in the early seventeenth century», *The Seventeenth Century, Volume XII, n.° 1*, 1997, p. 15. Noteworthy is also the fact the Jesuit brother and famous mathematician-architect Christoph Grienberger (1564-1636) also made a plan of the Antwerp Professed House in 1621 VALLERY-RADOT, J., *Le recueil de...*, *op. cit.*, 1960, p. 290, see also SERBAT, L., «L'Architecture gothique...», *op. cit.*, 1903, p. 120.

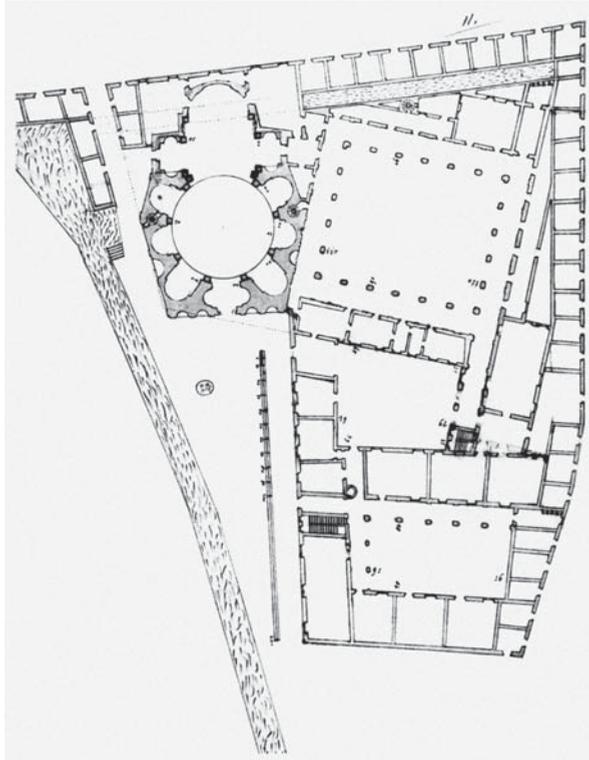


Fig. 21. Plan of the Antwerp Professed House with church design, around 1613. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Hd-4c, 11 (Photo Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale).

treatise *Opticorum Libri Sex* on geometrical optics, published in 1613;⁹¹ Peter Paul Rubens himself designed the engravings of the front page of each chapter, and some of the texts, especially the ones on colour, are believed to have been influenced by the famous painter.⁹² During his research, however, Ziggelaar discovered letters explaining why the centrally planned designs for the Antwerp church, made around 1613, had been abandoned. Some of the surviving drawings show the most innovative church concepts of the era, including one with a domed rotunda and one inspired by the Roman Gesù [fig. 21]. It appears they were rejected by the Roman superiors of the Order on the grounds that «simple

⁹¹ D'AGUILON, F., *Opticorum libri sex philosophis iuxta ac mathematicis utiles*, Antwerpen, 1613, see also DUPRÉ, S., «Aguilón, Vitruvianism and his *Opticorum Libri Sex*», in LOMBAERDE, P. (ed.), *Innovation and Experience in the Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands. The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp* (Architectura Moderna, 6), Turnhout, 2008, pp. 53-66.

⁹² PARKHURST, C., «Aguilón's Optics and Rubens' Colour», *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 12, 1961, pp. 35-49.

and solid architecture» should be preferred. Ziggelaar found these letters in the same archive Braun had explored when charting the trip HuysSENS made to Rome in 1626 (see above). Sadly, he did not realize their true significance.

A closely related issue had strongly marked the research done within the field of Jesuit architecture of the Southern Low Countries in the second half of the twentieth century; i.e. the debate on Rubens's possible role in the design of the Antwerp church. In 1879, Schoy had in fact already suggested that Rubens had had a strong hand in its design, but this had been rather harshly denounced by Braun⁹³ and Plantenga.⁹⁴ The debate gained a new momentum in 1977 thanks to the essay by Anthony Blunt in the *Burlington Magazine*.⁹⁵ Frans Baudouin (1920-2005), the distinguished connoisseur of Rubens who served as curator of the Antwerp art museums between 1952 and 1981, dedicated several articles to the matter, adducing Rubens's preparatory sketches for the high altar as evidence and relating several architectural elements of the Antwerp Jesuit church, such as the tower, to the artist.⁹⁶ In 2002 Baudouin published an article in preparation of a new volume of the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* on «Rubens and architecture». In it he presented Rubens as an «architect-painter» similar to court artists Wensel Cobergher and Jacques Francart, and put the artist forward as the chief designer of the church of the Antwerp Professed House: (...) *it is most likely that Rubens only was able to design the Antwerp Jesuit Church and to convey to that building the early Baroque splendour that marks its appearance*.⁹⁷

JEFFREY MULLER, OR RESHUFFLING THE CARDS

Most of the art historical scholarly work we have hitherto analysed focused on the designer as the main driving force behind the stylistic development of Jesuit architecture in the Southern Low Countries. The quest for the «artist» and

⁹³ *Eine solche Meinung konnte nur zu einer Zeit aufkommen, wo man bereits alles Grosse, was zu Antwerpen in den ersten Jahrzehnten des 17. Jahrhunderts entstand mit den Namen Rubens zu verbinden sich gewöhnt hatte.* BRAUN, J., *Die belgischen...*, *op. cit.*, 1907, p. 167.

⁹⁴ PLANTENGA, J. H., *L'architecture religieuse...*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁹⁵ BLUNT, A., «Rubens and Architecture», *The Burlington Magazine*, 1977, pp. 609-621.

⁹⁶ BAUDOUIN, F., *Rubens en de Antwerpse jezuitenklerk*, Antwerpen, 1972; BAUDOUIN, F., «De Toren van de Sint-Carolus-Borromeusklerk te Antwerpen», *Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Schone Kunsten*, 44, 3, 1983, pp. 13-56.

⁹⁷ BAUDOUIN, F., *Peter Paul Rubens and the Notion «Painter-architect»*, in LOMBAERDE, P. (ed.), *The reception of P.P. Rubens's Palazzi di Genova during the 17th century in Europe: Questions and Problems*, (Architectura Moderna, I), Turnhout, 2002, p. 32.

his personal handwriting in fact obscured many other, equally relevant questions; the new data provided by archival records were not exploited as they could have been. This state of affairs was roundly denounced in 2006. Jeffrey Muller did not hesitate to condemn the essential narrowness of vision of Belgian art historians where it came to the visual arts –including the architectural production– of the Jesuits in the Southern Low Countries in the following terms: *After Rome, Antwerp was the second great centre of the Jesuits during the early modern period... Given the extraordinary significance of this development, it seems necessary first to ask why it has been so neglected in comparison with what happened in other European countries and now, remarkably, in Latin America, India, and East Asia. Art history in Belgium is the product of tangled historiography and politics that have rigorously excluded truly interdisciplinary methods and innovative questions.*⁹⁸ According to the author, the only truly new, recent contributions to the field were due, on the one hand, to noted scholars such as Alfons Thijs, Herman van der Wee, Jan Materné, Peter van Dael, and Karel Porteman⁹⁹ who were not art historians, and to art historian Rudi Mannaerts;¹⁰⁰ and on the other hand, to a team of graduate students of architectural history who published several articles in 2000 as a result of seminar work directed by the authors of this essay.¹⁰¹ The latter studies confirmed (as has been stated before by Braun) that by the end of the sixteenth century already the Jesuits had developed a highly modern type of church; i.e. from a functional point of view, and that these modern functional features could be found both in the Gothic as well as in the Baroque churches of the Order.

⁹⁸ MULLER, J., «Jesuit uses of art in the province of Flanders», in O'MALLEY, J. W., BAILEY, G. A., HARRIS, S. J. and KENNEDY, T. F. (ed.), *The Jesuits II. Cultures, sciences and the arts 1540-1773*, Toronto, Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press, 2006, pp. 113-156.

⁹⁹ See amongst THIJS, A. K. L., *Van Geuzenstad tot Katholiek Bolwerk: Maatschappelijke betekenis van de Kerk in contrareformatorisch Antwerpen*, Turnhout, 1990; THIJS, A. K. L., *Antwerpen Internationaal Uitgeverscentrum van Devotieprenten 17de-18de Eeuw*, Leuven, 1993; VAN DER WEE, H. and MARTENÉ, J., «De Antwerpse wereldmarkt tijdens de 16de en 17de eeuw», VAN DER STOCK, J. (ed.), *Antwerpen verhaal van een metropool 16de-17de eeuw*, Antwerp, 1993; VAN DAEL, P., «Geïllustreerde boeken van jezuiteten uit de 16de en 17de eeuw», *Jezuiteten in Nederland* (exhibition catalogue, Utrecht, Rijksmuseum Het Catarijneconvent), Utrecht, 1991, pp. 30-40; PORTEMAN, K., *Emblematic Exhibitions (affixiones) at the Brussels Jesuit College (1630-1685): A Study of the Commemorative Manuscripts* (Royal Library, Brussels), Brussels, 1996.

¹⁰⁰ MANNAERTS, R., *De artistieke expressie van de mariale devotie der Jezuiteten te Antwerpen (1562 - 1773): een iconografisch onderzoek*, Master's Thesis, Catholic University of Leuven, 1983.

¹⁰¹ At Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, during the academic year of 1998-1999; some of these addressed the use of *oratoria* and others the place of towers in Jesuit churches. Co-directed by Annemie De Vos and Joris Snaet, with valuable advice by Konrad Ottenheim (Utrecht University) and Christoph Jobst (University of Zürich, Socrates visiting fellow). DAELEMANS, B., KONINCKX, J., VAN LOO, S., «De verplaatsing van de klokkentorens in de 17^{de}-eeuwse kerkarchitectuur», in DE JONGE, K., DE VOS, A. and SNAET, J., (ed.), *Bellissimi ingegni... op. cit.*, pp. 67-78; DE MESMAECKER, PH., HAGHENBEEK, L., VAN OPSTAL, G., «Oratoria in de jezuitenkerken van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden. Een fenomeen eigen aan de Contrareformatie», *ibidem*, 2000, pp. 79-89.

In his text, which mainly focuses on the Antwerp context and is structured around the twelve daily labours of the Order as presented in the sixth book of the *Imago primi saeculi*, Muller gave other pointers for further research. For instance, he reproached art historians their lack of interest in the Antwerp Sodality House, the buildings of which still stand in front of the church of the Antwerp professed House and the complete archive of which has been preserved. On the urban level, he pointed to the strong promotion of the cult of the Virgin by the Antwerp Jesuits as having had an impact on the sacralisation of the whole urban environment.¹⁰²

Muller also was surprised to find that no further research had been undertaken on the issue of luxury, already noted by Poncelet in 1927. The Order's superiors had strongly condemned the luxury displayed by their members in cities like Antwerp and Brussels. This sumptuousness, which was demonstrated in the use of frivolous emblems and the practice of music as well as in the building of churches, was considered to be in violation of the Order's vow of poverty: *I think this dialectic between actual practice and stated ideal in the use of arts is key to understanding the Jesuit accommodation in Flanders.*¹⁰³ Referring to observations made by Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann on the Italianate churches of the Order in Poland, Muller suggested that patronage should be considered as a decisive factor in the introduction of innovative, modern architectural features. Apart from Antwerp, Muller referred also to the Brussels Jesuit church: both had indeed been mentioned in the introduction of Rubens' *Palazzi di Genova* (1622). Muller particularly stressed the role of the Archdukes, Albert of Austria and the Infanta Isabella, who *aggressively promoted the adoption of Italian style in ecclesiastical architecture, not only that of the Jesuits, but that of other orders as well.*¹⁰⁴

RECENT RESEARCH, OR NEGOTIATING THE TURN

These rather harsh, but just criticisms have been overtaken by recent publications, to some extent at least. Muller was acquainted with a part, but not with the whole of the studies undertaken by half a dozen young Belgian master students since the 1990s on the Jesuit colleges at Leuven, Ghent, Bruges and Saint-Omer, on the *Promptuarium Pictorum*, on the design process of Jesuit architecture, and on various typological questions, since the results were not altogether ripe for publication at the time.¹⁰⁵ (One particular aspect; i.e. the

¹⁰² MULLER, J., 'Jesuit uses...', *op. cit.*, pp. 124-129.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, p. 124.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 131.

¹⁰⁵ The following (unpublished) Master Theses in Art History, Architecture and Conservation on Jesuit architecture in the Low Countries were directed at the time by K. De Jonge at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven: DE Vos, B., *De St.-Michielskerk te Leuven*, 1989; LEMMENS, S., *Catalogue raisonné van*

school buildings in Jesuit colleges, has been further developed since that time by Krista De Jonge, and recently published in a survey article).¹⁰⁶ Moreover, on the doctoral level several promising studies were already underway. A number of these concerned the Antwerp Jesuits, yet again.

For instance, Bert Timmermans, who defended his Ph.D. in 2006¹⁰⁷ and published it in 2008,¹⁰⁸ studied the social networks and art patronage in Antwerp during the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century. Timmermans devoted a lot of attention to the building activities of the many religious orders in the city and to the way they created identity within the public space. He meticulously demonstrated that the Jesuits focused specifically on the wealthy top layers of the Antwerp merchant class, and that the exceptional splendour of the Antwerp church should be considered an integral part of the strategy to attract these patrons. This suggests that the Jesuits' choice to construct their church in the latest architectural idiom was not merely a matter of knowing Italian architecture, but of particular social and economical conditions. In his book Timmermans also put forward the idea that the debts incurred by the Jesuits during construction were part of this strategy; i.e. the objective was to convince believers to give more money and to attract new sponsors.¹⁰⁹ That the Jesuits were not the only ones to have used this strategy –also known as «deficit spending»– in Antwerp, was demonstrated earlier by Muller, who studied how the completion of the monumental choir of St Jacob's at Antwerp had been subsidised.¹¹⁰

Claire Baisier's doctoral research, undertaken around the same time and defended in 2008, also shed new light on the history of the Jesuit church at

het Promptuarium Pictorum, 1996; CORNILY, J., *The former Jesuit college in Bruges. Past – Present – Future*, 1998; DAELEMANS, B., *Het Promptuarium Pictorum volume II. Catalogo*, 1998; DE MESMAECKER, PH., *De Waalse Jezüitenkerk te Sint-Omaars: contrareformatrische architectuur tussen Bergen en Antwerpen*, 1999; HENDRICKX, R., *Jezüitenarchitectuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden 1585-1648. Typologische studie van jezüitencolleges en onderzoek van hun Italiaanse bronnen*, 2000; MISSIAEN, H., *Preparatory architectural investigation for the restoration of the former Jesuit gymnasium in Ghent*, 2003. Apart from Daelemans's work, these studies were not included in *Bellissimi ingegni*, see footnote 6.

¹⁰⁶ DE JONGE, K., «The First Jesuit Schools in the Southern Low Countries 1585-1648», in OTTENHEYM, K., DE JONGE, K. and CHATENET, M. (ed.), *Public Buildings in Early Modern Europe* (Architectura Moderna 9), Turnhout, 2010, pp. 307-324 (with ref. to older literature).

¹⁰⁷ TIMMERMANS, B., *Een elite als actor binnen een kunstwereld. Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen*, Ph. D. Thesis directed by K. Van der Stighelen, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2007.

¹⁰⁸ TIMMERMANS, B., *Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen. Een elite als actor binnen een kunstwereld*, Amsterdam, Studies Stadsgeschiedenis, 2008.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 138.

¹¹⁰ MULLER, J. M., «Confraternity and Art in the St Jacob's Church, Antwerp. A Case study of the Altar of the Brotherhood of St Rochus», in Vlieghe, H., Balis, A., Van de Velde, C. (ed.), *Concept, Design & Execution in Flemish Painting (1550-1700)*, Turnhout, 2000, pp. 97-106.

Antwerp.¹¹¹ Baisier managed to reconstruct the history of its interior finishing in a very detailed way, based on the many paintings that exist of the church interior and on archival research, amongst others in the aforementioned *Fonds Droeshout*. Her research led to some interesting conclusions. For instance, the only pieces of (ecclesiastical) furniture that were definitely present in the church at the time of its consecration in 1621 were the main altar (in an unfinished state) and some of the confessionals, a choice which can be related to the reputation the Jesuits already had at that time of being the great propagators of the sacrament of the Holy Communion. Baisier also closely analysed the purchase of relics of Early Christian martyrs, an intriguing fact since it can be connected with the idea (already asserted by Parent) that the interior of the church was made after the model of an Early Christian basilica.

Work in progress on the Antwerp church also includes Ph. D. research by Nathalie Poppe, begun in 2006. Poppe examined the way the interior was lighted, and sought to establish a connection with the specific knowledge Aguilon had of optics and perspective.¹¹² For this, she made use of a digital tool called *Ecotect* used for building design. Poppe figured out that a play of diffuse and directional light altogether reminiscent of the theatre was indeed present within the church, so that the main altar especially received a brighter diffusion of light. The windows in the side-aisles and the lantern admitting daylight above the choir [fig. 22], hidden to the visitor when entering the church, are part of the Baroque toolbox, and contributed, thus Poppe, to the «Baroque spirit» of the church.

The first results of Poppe's research were published in 2008 in the proceedings of the symposium on the relationship between architecture and science in the Antwerp Jesuit church, directed by Piet Lombaerde.¹¹³ One of the most innovative essays in the book does not in fact concern the church but rather the libraries of the Professed House, shedding new light on the «paper architecture» Jesuits worked with.¹¹⁴ Naturally, the role of Rubens in the design of the

¹¹¹ BAISIER, C., *De documentaire waarde van de kerkinterieurs van de Antwerpse school in de Spaanse tijd (1585-1713)*, Ph. D. Thesis directed by Hans Vlieghe, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2008.

¹¹² Ph. D. undertaken at the Higher Institute of Architectural Sciences Henry van de Velde at Antwerp under the aegis of the University of Antwerp; directed by Piet Lombaerde. POPPE, N., «The Phenomenon of Day-light in the Interior of the Antwerp Jesuit Church: towards a New Interpretation», in LOMBAERDE, P. (ed.), *Innovation and Experience in the Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands. The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp*, (Architectura Moderna, VI), Turnhout, 2007, pp. 141-153.

¹¹³ LOMBAERDE, P. (ed.), *Innovation and Experience in the Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands. The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp*, (Architectura Moderna, VI), Turnhout, 2007.

¹¹⁴ FABRI, R. and LOMBAERDE, P., «Architectural Treatises, Books and Prints in the Libraries of the Jesuits in Antwerp», in LOMBAERDE, P. (ed.), *Innovation and Experience in the Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands. The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp* (Architectura Moderna, VI), Turnhout, 2008, pp. 187-200.



Fig. 22. Antwerp, Jesuit church, Choir Apse
(Photo JS).



Fig. 23. Antwerp, Jesuit church, Houtappel Chapel
(Photo JS).

church was the subject of further enquiry, amongst others by Barbara Haeger¹¹⁵ and Léon Lock.¹¹⁶ The latter did not hesitate to consider Rubens as the sole «master of art» capable of designing the modern church façade and interior, thus firmly aligning himself with the late Frans Baudouin. Only one author, the young Jesuit brother and engineer-architect Bert Daelemans, stressed the importance of Huyssens in the design process of the church.¹¹⁷ Huyssens's role in Antwerp and Brussels –the churches which heralded, in Rubens's words of 1622, a new, truly antique architecture– had been discussed by Joris Snaet in two earlier articles (2000 and 2002): Both played in fact a crucial part in his career as the most important Jesuit architect of the era.¹¹⁸ The last word on the ques-

¹¹⁵ HAEGER, B., «The Façade of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp: Representing the Church Militant and Triumphant», in LOMBAERDE, P. (ed.), *Innovation and Experience in the Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands. The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp*, (Architectura Moderna, VI), Turnhout, 2007, pp. 97-124.

¹¹⁶ LOCK, L., «Rubens and the Sculpture and Marble Decoration», *ibidem*, pp. 155-174.

¹¹⁷ DAELEMANS, B., «Pieter Huyssens S.J. (1577-1637), an Underestimated Architect and Engineer», *ibidem*, pp. 41-52.

¹¹⁸ SNAET, J., «De bouwprojecten voor...», *op. cit.*; SNAET, J., «Rubens's 'Palazzi di Genova' and the Jesuit churches of Antwerp and Brussels», in Lombaerde, P. (ed.), *The reception of P.P. Rubens's Palazzi di*

tion has not been written, obviously. It has not yet been noticed, for instance, that the innovative lighting device in the apse of the Houtappel chapel at the Antwerp church might very well be due to a design of Huyssens, who was in Rome in the year 1626 when the church of Santa Bibiana was inaugurated. In the apse of the latter, Lorenzo Bernini's first architectural commission of note, we find the earliest hidden light source Bernini created, with constructional resemblances to the one in Antwerp [fig. 23].

The research programme *Unity and Discontinuity. Architectural Relations between the Southern and Northern Low Countries* set up in 1997 by Krista De Jonge and Konrad Ottenheim took in a lot more territory –the whole of the Low Countries, before and after the separation into the Northern Protestant Republic and the Southern Catholic Provinces, in fact.¹¹⁹ Its results, published in 2007, also comprised a new survey on the religious architecture of these regions; they underpin the overview included in the first part of the present article.¹²⁰ The programme indeed included Ph. D. research, undertaken by Joris Snaet, on the architectural realisations of the religious entities in both the North and South, defended in 2008.¹²¹ Within this broader perspective, the Jesuit Order evidently deserved special attention because of their important building activity, not only in the Catholic Southern Low Countries, but also in the Northern Protestant Provinces where they set up great number of way stations with Catholic «schuilkerken» (hidden churches).¹²²

Snaet studied the typological evolution and the ornamentation of the churches of the Jesuits in the Southern Low Countries anew, and compared them with contemporary churches of other champions of the Counter-Reformation: most particularly, the churches of the Discalced Carmelites and the Capuchins, two orders whose architectural realisations had been almost completely neglected.

Genova during the 17th century in Europe: Questions and Problems (*Architectura Moderna*, 1), Turnhout, 2002, pp. 161-182.

¹¹⁹ Programme sponsored by the Research Foundation Flanders and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and at Utrecht University, 1997-2000.

¹²⁰ SNAET, J., «For the Greater Glory of God. Religious Architecture in the Low Countries 1560-1700», in DE JONGE, K. and OTTENHEYM, K. (ed.), *Unity and Discontinuity. Architectural Relationships between the Southern and Northern Low Countries (1530-1700)*, (*Architectura Moderna*, V), Turnhout, 2007, pp. 251-298. See also SNAET, J. and BAISIER, C., «Contrareformatie en barok. Traditie en vernieuwing in de 17de-eeuwse kerkarchitectuur in de Nederlanden», *Gentse Bijdragen tot de Interieurgeschiedenis*, 33, Leuven, 2004, pp. 9-38.

¹²¹ SNAET, J., *Reformatie versus contrareformatie. De religieuze architectuur in de Noordelijke en Zuidelijke Nederlanden gedurende de 16^{de} en 17^{de} eeuw*, Ph. D. thesis directed by Krista De Jonge, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2008.

¹²² VAN ECK, A., *Kunst, twist en devotie. Goudse katholieke schuilkerken, 1572-1795* (Academisch profefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), 1994; VAN ECK, A., «De jezuiteten en het wervende wisselaltaarstuk», *De zeventiende eeuw, Cultuur in de Nederlanden in interdisciplinair perspectief, «Ad maiorem Dei gloriam», jezuiteten in de Nederlanden*, 14, 1, 1998, pp. 81-94.

ted by Belgian art historians. It is noteworthy that the number of churches built by the Capuchins within the Southern Low Countries between the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century largely surpassed that of the Jesuits. The churches of both orders featured innovative functional elements similar to the ones of the Jesuits, such as oratories and a wide open choir apses directly connected to the nave; moreover, both orders had a similar, normative building policy favouring a «proper way» of constructing churches and monastery buildings. From a stylistic point of view also the churches of the Capuchins and Discalced Carmelites were found to show similarities with the Gothic Jesuit churches, not only because antique and Gothic forms were used together but also because of their rather austere appearance.

To return to the case of Antwerp, Snaet's typological study clearly showed that the three-aisled basilica plans of the Brussels and Antwerp Jesuit churches were similar to the ones used for the earlier Gothic Jesuit churches. In one of the letters preserved at the National Library of Malta, the Roman superiors indeed state that the plan of the Antwerp church should be copied after the ones of Brussels and 's-Hertogenbosch. The foundations and lower wall parts of the Brussels church were realised around 1607 following a three-aisled, standard Gothic basilica plan.¹²³ Construction of the church of 's-Hertogenbosch started from 1615 onwards, but little is known of its appearance since the Jesuits were forced to leave the town already in 1629, and the building was transformed afterwards. In his inventory of the plans preserved at the Bibliothèque nationale of Paris, Vallery-Radot had already noticed that the plans of the church of 's-Hertogenbosch and of Brussels were almost identical.¹²⁴ It thus seems that the Antwerp and Brussels churches were innovative chiefly because of their ornamental finishing, which contrasted strongly with the plain character of earlier Jesuit architecture in the Low Countries. Nowhere else in Europe the rupture between the sobriety of the earlier generations of Jesuits and the Baroque splendour of their successors was that distinct. All this is even more surprising if we know that the rich appearance of both churches was only achieved after successfully countering the critiques of the Roman superiors. This outspoken resistance to opulence clearly shows that Jesuit building policy –outside Italy at least– was not directed towards promoting the Baroque architectural style, contrary to current views.

¹²³ Malta, National Library, Volume 156, fol. 228. This volume contains (a part of) the letters that accompanied the ground plan now preserved at the National Library at Paris, see IAPPELLI, F., «Una nuova fonte di documenti: I 311 manoscritti del volume 156 della National Library di Malta», in Patteta, L. and DELLA TORRE, S. (ed.), *L'architettura della Compagnia di Gesù in Italia XVI-XVIII secolo, Atti del convegno*, Milano, Centro Culturale S. Fedele, 24-27 ottobre, 1990, Genova, Casa Editrice Marietti, 1992, pp. 35-40.

¹²⁴ VALLERY-RADOT, J., *Le recueil...*, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

Another recent line of research connecting the Jesuits with their contemporaries addresses both a typological and a technical issue. Hesius's first design for the Leuven Jesuit church comprised a ribbed cupola over the crossing of the clover-leaf, which opened up into a tall window in each of its eight sections, thus mirroring the windows of the drum underneath; above this vault, a wooden dome with a tall lantern would receive the bells [fig. 19]. This revolutionary design not only shows affinity with domes constructed during the preceding decades in Paris, but would also be developed further in later wooden dome constructions and crossing towers in the Southern Low Countries, built by other religious orders such as the Norbertines.¹²⁵ In the second half of the century, the other orders apparently gained the necessary know-how to achieve what the Jesuits could not. The Leuven vault was indeed never executed because of stability problems.¹²⁶ While this case raises the interesting question of the interaction between the Jesuits of the Low Countries and the French milieu,¹²⁷ it cannot be excluded either that Hesius had access to some of the non-executed projects for the dome of the St Ignatius at Rome, which show some similarity.¹²⁸ This analysis needs to be extended to other cases such as the lost Jesuit church at Liège, which also seems to have had a transept with dome on the crossing. On a more general plane, the drawings in the *Promptuarium Pictorum*, extant documents such as the correspondence between the rector of the Leuven college with his superiors in Brussels on the dome dated in the month of June 1652, and the technical information produced by recent restoration works should be exploited further.¹²⁹

TO CONCLUDE

The study of Jesuit architecture in the Southern Low Countries has shown some recent successes, which will certainly be of interest within an interna-

¹²⁵ DE JONGE, K., SNAET, J., «Innovation and Tradition in Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century Vaulting Techniques in the Southern Low Countries: A First Assessment», in *Proceedings of the Third International Congress on Construction History, Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus, Germany 20th-24th May 2009*, ed. Karl-Eugen Kurrer, Werner Lorenz, Volker Wetzck, Cottbus, 2009, vol. I, pp. 445-452.

¹²⁶ DE JONGE, K., DE VOS, A., VAN LANGENDONCK, L. and VAN RIET, S., «Lucas Faydherbe als architect», in DE NIJN, H., Vlieghe, H., DEVISSCHER, H. (ed.), *Lucas Faydherbe, 1617-1697, Mechels beeldhouwer & architect* (exhibition catalogue), Mechelen, Stedelijk Museum Hof van Busleyden, 1997, pp. 71-122, especially pp. 78-81.

¹²⁷ DE JONGE, K., «Echanges architecturaux entre la France et les anciens Pays-Bas dans le domaine religieux: coupôles et dômes», MAES, G. and BLANG, J. (ed.), *Les échanges artistiques entre les anciens Pays-Bas et la France, 1482-1814*, Turnhout, 2010, pp. 269-278.

¹²⁸ FREY, D., «Beitrage zur Geschichte der romischen Barockarchitektur», *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 3, 1924, pp. 11-43.

¹²⁹ STYNEN, T., *Koepelstructuren in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden in de 17^{de} en vroege 18^{de} eeuw*, unpublished Master's Thesis dir. by K. De Jonge, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2006.

tional context once they have been published more extensively in internationally accessible *fora*. The «book» on the question still remains to be written, however. The popularity of the Antwerp Professed House and church as a subject cannot obscure the important gaps where other Jesuit foundations, especially outside the Belgian territory proper, are concerned; the lack of typological and functional studies on the college buildings; on Jesuit building techniques; *etcetera*. Much work needs to be done before a new synthesis can be attempted.