

Simiolus
Netherlands
quarterly
for the history
of art

The Count of Boussu's Genoese fountain: a work by Niccolò da Corte, Gian Giacomo and Guglielmo della Porta rediscovered in Brussels*

Géraldine Patigny and Grégoire Extermann

During the Ancien Régime, the erection of richly decorated fountains was a popular means of advertising the power of those responsible for commissioning them, over and above the utilitarian function of bringing water to the local population. From the thirteenth century onwards, the towns of northern and central Italy competed to build fountains that would proclaim the power and prosperity of a community and its magistracy.¹ In the Low Countries this practice can be observed in Huy and Liège.² Brussels had its own fountain on the Grand Place, the appearance of which in the sixteenth century is known from a drawing.³ The scholarly attention to such works in the Low Countries has, however, been relatively scant, and focused mainly on public commissions. What, then, about private fountains, erected in the courtyards and gardens of castles and palaces? They are sometimes mentioned in publications devoted to architecture, to garden design or to the analysis of a particular iconographic type,⁴ but there is no study of the subject as a whole, no general

survey of the erection, origin and development of this type of artwork. Like the public fountains, those erected privately served a utilitarian role, but they were also the outward expression of power, social class and taste, and conformed to a specific iconography. The following essay is an attempt to shine a light on the case of a fountain that was generally assumed to have been a public commission, but which in fact appears to have been created to adorn the courtyard of one of the most important sixteenth-century Netherlandish castles.

The artist of the fountain of the Three Graces, now in the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles, has remained anonymous, none of the preceding attributions having been found convincing.⁵ The fountain is 263 cm high, and appears to have lost various parts over the course of time (figs. 1–3). Today it consists of a three-sided plinth decorated with reliefs and surmounted by three female figures arranged around a column with a smooth shaft. The handling of the upper part of the column suggests that there

* The contribution to this article by Géraldine Patigny and ΚΙΚ-ΙΡΡΑ stems from the preliminary study for the restoration of the fountain, which enabled us to reassess its history, attribution and provenance. It was financed by the Fondation Périer-D'eteren. Grégoire Extermann's contribution to this article stems from his research financed by the Swiss National Foundation, titled *Les routes du marbre: la sculpture entre Gènes et l'Espagne à la première moitié du xvie siècle*. The translation from the French is by Caroline Beamish.

1 J. Van Leeuwen, "Van dagelijks water tot feestelijk geklater: bronnen, putten en fonteinen in de middeleeuwse Vlaamse stad," in B. Baert and V. Fraeters (eds.), *Het wellende water: de bron in tekst en beeld in de middeleeuwse Nederlanden en het Rijnland*, Leuven 2005, pp. 233–53, esp. p. 241.

2 The earliest fountain in Liège had a tower, which was replaced in the fourteenth century by a flight of steps representing seigniorial power. See C. Deligne, "Édilité et politique: les fontaines urbaines dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux au Moyen Âge," *Société Française d'Histoire Urbaine* 2 (2008), pp. 77–96, esp. pp. 81–82.

3 The drawing is now in the Archives Générales du Royaume in

Brussels. See P. Anagnostopoulos, "Deux fontaines sur la Grand-Place de Bruxelles (xive-xvii siècles)," *Archaeologia Mediaevalis. Chronique* 42 (2019), pp. 6–7.

4 Without laying any claim to being exhaustive, mention must be made of the many contributions to the subject made by Krista De Jonge, specifically "L'environnement des châteaux dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux au xvii siècle et au début du xviii siècle," in J. Guillaume (ed.), *Architecture, jardin, paysage: l'environnement du château et de la villa aux xve et xvii siècles*, Paris 1999, pp. 185–206, and idem, "Ein Netz von Grotten und Springbrunnen: die 'Warande' zu Brüssel," in U. Härting (ed.), *Gärten und Höfe der Rubenszeit im Spiegel der Malerfamilie Brueghel und der Künstler um Peter Paul Rubens*, Munich 2000, pp. 89–105. See also G. De Schoutheete de Tervarent, "L'origine des fontaines anthropomorphes," *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts. Académie Royale de Belgique* 38 (1956), pp. 122–28.

5 The authors warmly thank the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles, in particular Marieke De Baerdemaeker, for providing access to the fountain and for supplying information. See Brussels, Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles — Maison du Roi, documentation files, inv. no. B.1889.1.



1–3 Niccolò da Corte, Gian Giacomo della Porta and Guglielmo della Porta (attributed to), *Fountain of the Three Graces*, c. 1531–37. Carrara marble, height 263 cm. Brussels, Musée de la ville de Bruxelles, inv. no. B.1889.1 (photo © KIK-IRPA, Brussels)

was originally a basin, which would have been accompanied by other figurative elements (fig. 4). The fountain was at first associated with that of the *Three goddesses* by Jérôme Duquesnoy the Elder (c. 1570–1650), now lost.⁶ That, though, was of different design altogether, with the three statues housed in separate niches. At a lecture given in 1937, Marguerite Devigne described it as “the work of a northern artist,” probably inspired “by the monument he had before him, as well as by a classical group.”⁷ The

⁶ The fountain is known from an engraving by Jean-Laurent Krafft (1694–1768), an impression of which is in the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles — Maison du Roi. See G. Patigny, *L'Atelier bruxellois des du Quesnoy: catalogue raisonné et pratiques d'atelier*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Université Libre de Bruxelles 2020.

⁷ “L'œuvre d'un septentrional” and “... du monument ancien qu'il avait sous les yeux, mais aussi de quelque groupe antique.” The text of the lecture given by Marguerite Devigne is in the object's documentation files in the museum. See note 5.



4 Niccolò da Corte, Gian Giacomo della Porta and Guglielmo della Porta (attributed to), *Fountain of the Three Graces*, view of the upper part (photo © Marieke De Baerdemaeker)

monument she referred to was none other than the *Fountain of the three goddesses*, which had no formal connection with the fountain of the Graces. Since then, the latter has aroused only limited interest, mainly because of its critical state of conservation. However, in 2019, the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK/IRPA) in Brussels was asked to undertake a study preliminary to the restoration of the fountain, which enabled new hypotheses to be put forward and broader historical perspectives to be developed.⁸

Thanks to a date inscribed on the base that was seen by Alexandre Henne and Alphonse Wauters before it disappeared, the fountain is usually dated to 1545.⁹ It joined the collections of the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles in 1889, having been donated by the Vin family,¹⁰ who acquired it at the auction of the property of the Établissement Géographique de Bruxelles on 16 November 1880.¹¹ The circumstances of its arrival at that institution founded by Philippe Vandermaelen in 1830 are unknown, but it was there by 1845 at the latest, the date of the publication by Henne and Wauters.¹² It has been suggested that it may have come from one of the city corporations.¹³ It is known that similar professional associations adorned their headquarters with prestigious objects of this kind, as witnessed by the marble *Fountain of the sea gods*, executed in 1675 by Gabriel Grupello for the Fishmongers'

Guild,¹⁴ but none of the Brussels corporations seems to have possessed a work such as this one.

At this stage of the research, the technical and material study has led to a reappraisal of our current knowledge of the fountain. The analysis has been carried out in two stages. The first involved the mapping of damage and alterations, and also of the internal metal structure.¹⁵ Several samples were taken of the brownish patina, the stone (base and sculptures) and the mortar. The second stage focused on cleaning tests required to draw up a restoration timetable. Petrographic and isotopic analysis has shown that, contrary to what the surface dirt and oxidized artificial patina might suggest, the fountain was carved in white Carrara marble.

GENOA This new information has altered our approach to the fountain. The presence of Carrara marble is in fact rare in the Low Countries in the sixteenth century, artists there almost always using alabaster for prestigious commissions.¹⁶ Sculptures of white marble were mainly imported from Italy, and with a few exceptions most of them came from Genoa.¹⁷ At the beginning of the sixteenth century the Ligurian capital actually became one of the most important European centers for the distribution of Carrara sculptures.¹⁸ Several factors, geographical, social and cultural, contributed to this primacy. The proximity

8 This interdisciplinary study was carried out jointly by the conservation-restoration workshop for stone materials (Judy De Roy, Sam Huysmans, Claudia Aerts), the monuments laboratory (Laurent Fontaine), the history of art and inventory department and the imagery department (Stéphane Bazzo), directed by Judy De Roy. See Brussels, Royal Institute for Culture Heritage (IRPA/KIK), file number 2019.14048. It was financed by the Fondation Périer-D'Ieteren. At the KIK/IRPA we are also grateful to Bernard Petit, who provided the illustrations for this contribution.

9 No further information has been unearthed about this date. It was probably a kind of label applied to the base, as the six small holes forming a rectangle on the central upper part of the relief illustrating a naiad on the back of a sea monster might suggest (fig. 15). See A. Henne and A. Wauters, *Histoire de la ville de Bruxelles*, 3 vols., Brussels 1845, vol. 3, p. 120; De Tervarent, op. cit. (note 4), p. 135; J. Maldague, "Les statues et fontaines anciennes de la ville de Bruxelles," *Le Folklore Brabançon* 230 (1981), pp. 99–191, esp. p. 134; B. Dieu, *La Fontaine des Trois Grâces conservée au musée communal de la ville de Bruxelles*, unpublished student paper, "Question d'histoire de la sculpture dans un contexte européen en Belgique," Université Libre de Bruxelles 2007–08, p. 2.

10 See the object's documentation files, cit. (note 5).

11 Nevertheless, the fountain does not appear in the catalogue of this sale. See A. Bluff (ed.), *Catalogue de la bibliothèque et des objets scientifiques, etc. de l'Établissement Géographique à Bruxelles*, Brussels 1880.

The Établissement Géographique de Bruxelles was a private scientific organization devoted to geography and cartography, see M. Silvestre, "Philippe Vandermaelen, Mercator de la jeune Belgique," *Brussels studies* 106 (2016), online at <https://journals.openedition.org/brussels/1435>.

12 Henne and Wauters, op. cit. (note 9), p. 120.

13 Dieu, op. cit. (note 9), p. 4.

14 This fountain was transferred to the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles in 1808, then moved to the Palais des Académies and finally to the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (MRBAB) in 1879 (inv. 459).

15 Brussels, IRPA/KIK, file no. 2019.14048.

16 Patigny, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 139–45.

17 The situation appears to have changed a century later when Carrara marble was imported undressed, in particular to Amsterdam for the execution of funeral monuments. See F. Scholten, *Sumptuous memories: studies in seventeenth-century Dutch tomb sculpture*, Zwolle 2003, pp. 9–72; idem, "De Nederlandse handel in Italiaans marmar in de 17de eeuw," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 44 (1993), pp. 197–214.

18 The role of Genoa in the marble trade in the first half of the sixteenth century is the subject of a research project led by Grégoire Extermann. For a general overview of the marble industry in Genoa see R. Santamaria, "L'arte dei marmorari lombardi a Genova: cultura figurativa e conflitti corporativi fra Cinquecento e Settecento," *Studi di Storia delle Arti* 10 (2003), pp. 63–76; idem, "Il marmo di Carrara e il porto di Genova nei secoli XVII e XVIII," *La Casana* 46 (2004), pp. 28–39.

to the marble quarries of Carrara was one obvious factor, but the commercial network of Genoese merchants and their financial skill, which were useful for entering into long-distance agreements, were also important.¹⁹

They, though, would have not been sufficient without the presence of the sculptors from the area around Lake Lugano, who had been active in Genoa since the twelfth century.²⁰ With their near monopoly of the stone-carving trade, they developed a dense and wide-ranging professional network, first in Italy and then throughout the continent, turning Genoa into a very successful business hub in the process.²¹ Professionally, they were able to work on an interdisciplinary basis, creating temporary associations that were able to fill large orders in a short space of time.²² This type of challenge occurred more often after 1528, when the Republic of Genoa concluded a perpetual alliance with Charles v, abandoning the French sphere of influence in favor of that of the Habsburgs. The geographical implications of this alliance are well known.²³ It guaranteed Genoa's political independence and imperial

protection on the one hand, while providing Charles v with a base from which to exercise control over the entire western Mediterranean, as well as a strategic hub for relations between the courts of Madrid, Vienna and Brussels on the other.²⁴ As far as sculpture was concerned, this alliance increased the number of orders from Spain and opened new markets, notably in the Low Countries.²⁵

The marble pieces consisted mainly of a set of clearly defined types such as fireplaces, doorways, fountains and architectural components. They were modeled on those in the *palazzi* of Genoa, above all the residence of Andrea Doria (1466–1560), which welcomed Charles v in the spring of 1533.²⁶ For instance, Jean v de Hennin-Liétard (1499–1562), grand equerry to the emperor, commissioned two fireplaces for his castle in Boussu in Hainaut that were to be modeled on the fireplace of the *Salone dei giganti* in Palazzo Doria. He also commissioned a monumental portal with columns, pediment and statues, that was evidently inspired by the one adorning the north facade of the same building.²⁷ The contract was signed

¹⁹ See, among others, C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Maîtres du marbre: Carrare 1300–1600*, Paris 1969, pp. 183–97, 203–30; J. Palomero Paramo, "Ars marmoris," in G. Airdali et al., exhib. cat. *Genova e Siviglia, l'avventura dell'occidente*, Genoa (Loggia della Mercanzia) 1988, pp. 69–112.

²⁰ See C. di Fabio, "I magistri Antelami a Genova fino al primo Duecento: origini ed esiti artistici di un fenomeno storico e di un monopolio," in A. Quintavalle (ed.), *Storia di Parma: la storia dell'arte, secoli XI–XV*, Parma 2019, pp. 75–93; R. Santamaria, "Transiti temporanei e trasferimenti definitive: la plurisecolare presenza dei maestri della regione dei Laghi a Genova," in S.W. Lynch (ed.), *Interpreting Italians abroad: the migration of Ticinese architects across Europe in the early modern era*, in press.

²¹ The professional expansion of Lughanese families in the sixteenth century has a vast bibliography, but see above all S. della Torre (ed.), *Magistri d'Europa: eventi, relazioni, strutture della migrazione di artisti e costruttori dai laghi Lombardi*, Como 1996; V. Zani, "Sulle tracce dei Sanmicheli a Brescia e Mantova, tra Quattro e Cinquecento," in M. Ceriana (ed.), *Tullio Lombardo scultore e architetto nella Venezia del Rinascimento*, Verona 2007, pp. 427–48, as well as G. Extermann, "Les décorations sculptées de la chapelle Lomellini à Gênes par Tamagnino et Pace Gaggini," in F. Elsig and M. Natale (eds.), *Le Duché de Milan et les commanditaires français (1499–1521)*, Rome 2013, pp. 41–78.

²² Lughanese craftsmen regularly had recourse to relatives of fellow citizens when a commission required extra hands. The creation of the Della Porta-da Corte workshop in 1531 was prompted by the demand for the urgent completion of the St John the Baptist *baldachino* in the cathedral, see H.-W. Kruff and A. Roth, "The della Porta workshop in Genoa," *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa: lettere, storia e filosofia* 32, 3 (1973), pp. 893–954, esp. pp. 926–27.

²³ On the political details of the treaty of 1528 see E. Grendi, *La repubblica aristocratica dei genovesi: politica, carità e commercio fra Cinque*

e Seicento, Bologna 1987, and A. Pacini, *La Genova di Andrea Doria nell'impero di Carlo V*, Florence 1999.

²⁴ The gifts exchanged between the courts of Vienna, Prague, Madrid and Brussels were systematically registered in Genoa, which confirms the centrality of the Ligurian capital within the communications system of the Habsburg Empire.

²⁵ The export of Genoese sculpture to Spain began before the treaty of 1528, as evidenced by the commissions for the Pedro Enriquez and Catalina de Ribera tombs for the charterhouse of Seville in 1520. Exports to the Low Countries, however, began after that date and were fostered by the visits to Genoa of Charles v (see note 28).

²⁶ On the palace of Andrea Doria see A. Merli and L.T. Belgrano, *Il palazzo del principe d'Oria in Genova*, Genoa 1874; G.L. Gorse, *The Villa Doria in Fassolo, Genoa*, Providence 1980; P. Boccardo, *Andrea Doria e le arti*, Rome 1989, pp. 25–75; C. Altavista, *La residenza di Andrea Doria a Fassolo: il cantiere di un palazzo di villa Genovese nel Rinascimento*, Milan 2013. On the sculpture in Palazzo Doria see M. Campigli, "Silvio Cosini, Niccolò da Corte e la scultura a Palazzo Doria," *Nuovi Studi* 20 (2014), pp. 83–104, and G. Extermann, "Santo Varni e la dinastia del Della Porta," in L. Damiani Cabrini, G. Extermann and R. Fontanarossa (eds.), *Santo Varni: conoscitore, erudite e artista tra Genova e l'Europa*, Chiavari 2018, pp. 150–72, esp. pp. 164–66.

²⁷ F. Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno in Liguria*, 6 vols., Genoa 1870–80, vol. 5, pp. 165–66 (commissioning of the portal), and 196–98 (commissioning of the two fireplaces). Krista De Jonge had already posited the derivation of the Bousso portal from that of the Palazzo Doria in K. De Jonge, "Le langage architectural de Jacques du Broeucq," in M. Capouille et al. (eds), exhib. cat. *Jacques du Broeucq de Mons (1505–1584): maître artiste de l'empereur Charles Quint*, Mons (Collégiale Sainte-Waudru) 2005, pp. 95–112, esp. p. 104. On Hennin-Liétard see note 59 below.

on 7 April 1533, when Charles v was actually residing in Palazzo Doria.²⁸ The works were entrusted to Antonio di Novo da Lanzo and Giovanni Maria da Passallo for the fireplaces, Niccolò da Corte (c. 1500–52) and Gian Giacomo della Porta (c. 1485–1555) for the portal. The last two formed a professional partnership with Guglielmo della Porta (c. 1510–77) that was able to take on the largest commissions awarded by Genoa until it was dissolved in 1537.²⁹

Given the importance of the partnership, it is worth focusing attention on a contract signed one day after Hennin-Liétard's commission, on 8 April 1533, for a fountain that displays many points in common with the one in the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles. Ordered in "white marble without veins" ("marmis albis sine venis") for the considerable sum of 450 ducats,³⁰ it comprised a basin 12 palms in diameter (298 cm), three female figures "nude and clothed" ("nude et vestite") supporting a first bowl 7 palms in diameter (174 cm), four *putti* supporting a second bowl 3.5 palms in diameter (86 cm), and a statue of a wild man ("figura unius hominis salvatici [sic, silvatici]") to crown the structure.³¹ The Brussels fountain also has three female figures, and its height (263 cm) could correspond to the Genoese commission, the total height of which was 22 palms (546 cm). The theory that the fountain in Brussels could have been executed by the Della Porta-da Corte partnership in 1533 is therefore

worth investigating, first from the patron's perspective and then from the artists'.

THE DUKE OF AARSCHOT'S COMMISSION The patron is named in the contract as "Philippus de Roi dux Ascoti," but the latter word was transcribed by Federigo Alizeri as "Ascoli," perhaps suggesting a link with the town of Ascoli Satriano in Puglia, a place that Charles v raised to the dignity of a principality rather than a duchy.³² By contrast, Yasmine Helfer recently drew attention to the Low Countries, identifying the patron as Philippe II de Croÿ (1496–1549), Duke of Aarschot, the toponym being Latinized and transformed into "Ascoti" in the contract.³³ A nephew of Guillaume II de Croÿ (1458–1521), who was Grand Chamberlain and tutor to Charles v, Philippe II de Croÿ played a leading part in the Italian wars with his comrade in arms Jean de Hennin-Liétard. Accompanying the emperor on his return to Vienna, he stopped with him in Genoa from 29 March to 26 April 1533, and it was during this stay that the marquise of Aarschot inherited from Guillaume II was elevated to the status of a duchy on 1 April.³⁴ The contract is therefore one of the first documents in which Philippe II is mentioned with his new title. It can be assumed that the fountain was destined for the palace in Heverlee, near Leuven, construction of which was begun by Guillaume II and completed by Philippe II.³⁵ In fact, an anonymous plan of

²⁸ On Charles V's visits to Genoa see L. Stagno, "Sovrani spagnoli a Genova: entrate trionfali e hospitaggi in casa Doria," in P. Boccardo, J.L. Colomer and C. Di Fabio (eds.), *Genova e la Spagna: opere, artisti, committenti, collezionisti*, Genoa 2002, pp. 73–88, and M.J. Redondo Cantera, "An Italian fountain for the emperor: the Fuente del Águila (1539)," in K. Helmstutler Di Dio and T. Mozzati (eds.), *Artistic circulation between early modern Spain and Italy*, New York & London 2020, pp. 78–99, esp. pp. 79–83.

²⁹ On Gian Giacomo della Porta see Y. Helfer, "Guglielmo della Porta: dal Duomo di Genova al Duomo di Milano," *Prospettiva* 132 (2008), pp. 61–77, and G. Extermann, "Tra Milano e Genova: la prima maturità di Gian Giacomo della Porta (1513–1530)," in M. Moizi and A. Spiriti (eds.), *Scultori dello Stato di Milano (1395–1535)*, in press. Guglielmo della Porta is the subject of a forthcoming monograph by G. Extermann, *Guglielmo Della Porta (1510–1577): Roman sculptor, founder and restorer*.

³⁰ For comparison, the fireplaces for the palace of Boussu cost 110 ducats and the portal 260 ducats, see note 27.

³¹ Genoa, Archivio di Stato, Notai antichi, 1781, Giacomo Villamarino, no. 323. Published in Alizeri, op. cit. (note 27), pp. 158–59. There is a full transcription in F. Loffredo, "Nomen omen: la Fuente de Génova di Malaga, i suoi possibili viaggi e la bottega di Gian Giacomo e Guglielmo della Porta," in A. Galli and A. Bartelletti (eds.), *Nelle terre del marmo: scultori e lapidici da Nicola Pisano a Michelangelo*, Pisa 2018, pp.

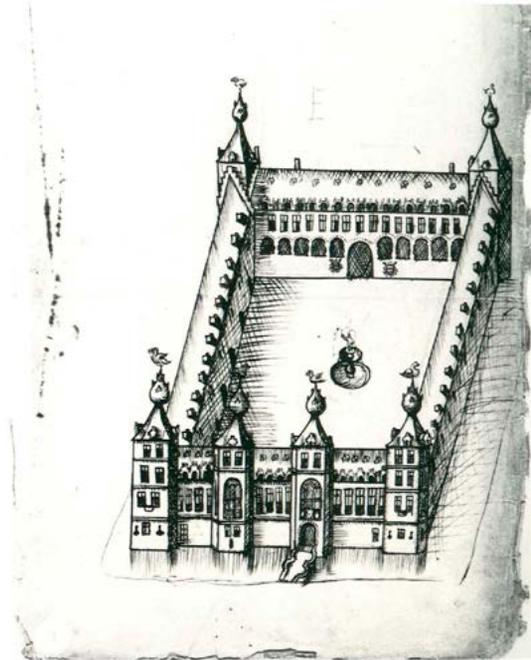
215–33, esp. p. 227, doc. 1.

³² Alizeri, op. cit. (note 27), p. 158. The name of the client is translated as "Felipe del Rio" in the index (p. 376), which led Estella Marcos to identify him as a relative of Baldassare del Rio, Bishop of Scala, who commissioned a Genoese marble tomb for Seville Cathedral. See M. Estella Marcos, "La importación de escultura italiana: obras en España del taller de los Della Porta, de Giambologna y del Naccherino," in M.J. Redondo Cantera (ed.), *El modelo italiano en las artes plásticas de la Península Ibérica durante el renacimiento*, Valladolid 2004, pp. 423–54, esp. p. 432.

³³ Y. Helfer, *Unum omnia contra. Guglielmo della Porta scultore Milanese: dagli esordi genovesi alla committenza Farnese*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II 2007–08, p. 9, note 1. See Loffredo, op. cit. (note 31), pp. 220–22.

³⁴ J.-M. Duvosquel, "La fortune foncière du duc Charles de Croÿ et les Albums de Croÿ," in R. Gahide (ed.), *Albums de Croÿ: villes et villages de la Belgique espagnole (1596–1612)*, Brussels 1996, pp. 13–56, esp. pp. 30–31.

³⁵ On the palace of Heverlee see K. De Jonge, "Schloss Heverlee bei Löwen (Leuven) und die Residenzbildung in den südlichen Niederlanden um 1500," *Forschungen zu Burgen und Schlössern* 8 (2004), pp. 69–80. The theory that the fountain of Philippe II could have been destined for Heverlee was already proposed in Loffredo, op. cit. (note 31), p. 210.



5 Anonymous, *The palace of Heverlee from the reconstruction plan (bird's-eye view)*, 1600. Pen and ink, 430 × 295 mm. Leuven, Katholieke Universiteit, Arenbergarchief, no. 2421. From J.-M. Duvosquel (ed.), exhib. cat. *Een stad en een geslacht: Leuven & Croÿ*, Leuven (Museum Vander Kelen-Mertens) 1987, pp. 76–77, no. 49

the castle depicting its idealized completion and dating from about 1600 shows a fountain in the main courtyard that appears to have two bowls and a statue at the top, probably the *homo silvaticus* mentioned in the 1533 contract (fig. 5).³⁶ Another drawing, dating from 1615–16 and depicting the castle seen from the north, has the same fountain but in a more cursory rendering because of the distance (fig. 6).³⁷ That important work disappeared dur-

³⁶ J.-M. Duvosquel (ed.), exhib. cat. *Een stad en een geslacht: Leuven & Croÿ*, Leuven (Museum Vander Kelen-Mertens) 1987, pp. 76–77, no. 49.

³⁷ See De Jonge, “L’environnement,” cit. (note 4). Our thanks to her for bringing this drawing to our attention. It is worth noting that another fountain appeared to the south of the square on the site of the former *basse-cour* (ibid., p. 204). The castles of Gaillon and Bousso had marble fountains in the garden too, in addition to the ones in the central courtyard.

³⁸ A study of the *besognés* of Charles III de Croÿ (1560–1612) on the palace of Heverlee in the archives in Leuven might allow us to retrace the whereabouts of the Duke of Aarschot’s fountain (Krista De Jonge,



6 Anonymous, *The palace of Heverlee from the north*, 1615–16. © KBR, Brussels, ms. II 2123, fol. 103

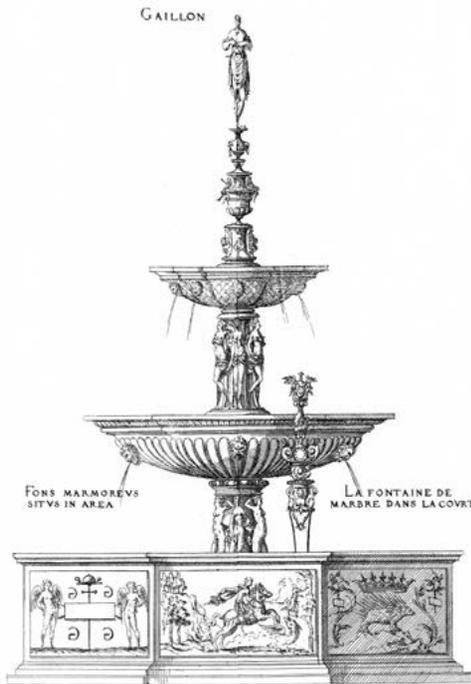
ing the seventeenth century, although a search through the archives might perhaps throw some light on its whereabouts.³⁸

Even if Palazzo Doria was a model for marble furniture, the contract reveals that the fountain does not closely follow the pattern of the one in Doria’s garden executed by Silvio Cosini before 1533.³⁹ Both have two bowls above an octagonal basin, but Doria’s has no statue on the top and the proportions are stubbier. At this stage of the analysis, it can be assumed that the Duke of Aarschot’s fountain derives from an earlier Genoese work made by Antonio della Porta (active 1489–1519) and Pace Gagini (active 1499–1521) for Charles d’Amboise in 1506–08 for the castle of Gaillon (fig. 7). That masterly work had an octagonal basin and two bowls supported by female figures crowned with a delicate candelabra and a statue of St

written communication, 6 July 2021).

³⁹ For Andrea Doria’s fountain see Boccardo, op. cit. (note 26), pp. 32 and 40, notes 60–63; and Extermann, op. cit. (note 26), p. 166. It was taken as a model by Alvaro de Bazán for his palace in Granada in 1536 (Alizeri, op. cit. (note 27), pp. 228–31) and by Andrea Doria for a gift to Charles V in 1540. See S. Ramiro Ramirez, “Montorsoli and the Habsburg court,” in A. Chong and L. Principi (eds.), exhib. cat. *The sculpture of Giovan Angelo Montorsoli and his circle: myth and faith in Renaissance Florence*, Manchester, New Hampshire (The Currier Museum of Art) 2018, pp. 62–77, esp. pp. 68–72; Redondo Cantera, op. cit. (note 28).

⁴⁰ For the Gaillon fountain see H.W. Kruff, “Antonio della Porta, gen. Tamagnino,” *Pantheon* 28 (1970), pp. 401–14, esp. pp. 403–04;



7 Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, Elevation of the marble fountain at Gaillon Castle, in idem, *Le premier volume des plus excellents bastiments de France*, Paris 1576. Engraving, 41.2 × 29.1 cm (photo © Wikimedia Commons)

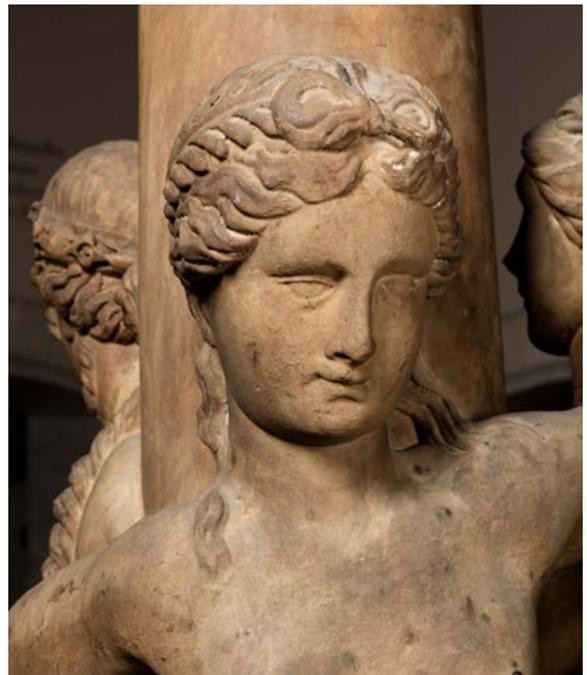
John the Baptist at the top.⁴⁰ Gian Giacomo della Porta was trained by his uncle Antonio della Porta in Genoa, so he could have worked on the execution of the Gaillon fountain. He could also have inherited studio models, contractual drawings or *bozzetti* in clay, which would make a repetition of the model more logical.⁴¹ Even without this studio input, though, Gaillon Castle, with its Carrara marble ornaments, was an inescapable reference for noble residences in the early sixteenth century in northern Europe.⁴²

The typology, dimensions and use of Carrara marble could therefore all be clues to identifying the Brussels fountain as the one belonging to the Duke of Aarschot.

F. Bardati, *Il bel palatio in forma di castello: Gaillon tra flamboyant e Rinascimento*, Rome 2009, pp. 50, 88–89 and 103, notes 34, 117 and 173; Extermann, op. cit. (note 21), p. 55, notes 73 and 77.

⁴¹ On the training of Gian Giacomo in Genoa see Extermann, op. cit. (note 29).

⁴² See Bardati, op. cit. (note 40), pp. 125–40, for the white marble sculptures at Gaillon.



8–9 Niccolò da Corte, Gian Giacomo della Porta and Guglielmo della Porta (attributed to), *Fountain of the Three Graces*, details (photo © KIK-IRPA, Brussels)



10 Niccolò da Corte (attributed to), *Allegory of strength*, detail of the tomb of Giuliano Cibo, 1533–37. Marble. Genoa, Cathedral of San Lorenzo (photo © Grégoire Extermann)



12 Niccolò da Corte, Gian Giacomo della Porta and Guglielmo della Porta (attributed to), *Fountain of the Three Graces*, detail of the restituted face. Anonymous Netherlandish, late sixteenth century (photo © KIK-IRPA, Brussels)



11 Guglielmo della Porta, *Caryatid* (detail), c. 1565. Marble, 160 cm. Rome, Palazzo Farnese, salon (photo © Grégoire Extermann)

The stylistic details remain to be investigated to see whether they correspond to those of works produced by the Della Porta-da Corte workshop. This is complicated by wear and tear to the surface and some losses, in particular from the reliefs on the base, but one can still make some tentative observations. The faces of the two female figures seen from the front are heavily influenced by classical models, with straight noses, high foreheads, broadly arched eyebrows and hair arranged in parallel lines on the scalp (figs. 8–9). These are physiognomic types that can be found, for example, in the *Allegory of strength* carved by Niccolò da Corte on the left-hand pedestal of the tomb of Giuliano Cibo in Genoa (fig. 10).⁴³ In Rome, Guglielmo della Porta was also faithful to this type of physiognomy, as shown by the caryatids beside the fireplaces in the Palazzo Farnese (fig. 11).⁴⁴ These observations make it possible to exclude the head of the figure seen from behind, whose stylized haircut, fleshy features

⁴³ Krufft and Roth, op. cit. (note 22), p. 923.

⁴⁴ For the caryatids beside the fireplaces in the Palazzo Farnese see R. Riebesell, "L'arredo architettonico di Palazzo Farnese, Rome: Vigno-

la e Guglielmo della Porta," in C.L. Frommel, M. Ricci and R.J. Tuttle (eds.), *Vignola e i Farnese*, Rome 2003, pp. 35–59, esp. p. 55.



13 Anonymous, *The Three Graces*, second century. Marble. Siena, Museo dell'opera Metropolitana del Duomo

and large eyeballs display a break from the style and suggest a later substitution that was probably executed by a seventeenth-century Netherlandish artist (fig. 12). In general, the figures demonstrate mastery of the female nude and of compositional rhythm, which could be said

45 Other later fountains with the Three Graces, such as those by Jean Del Cour in Liège (1699), Etienne Dantoine in Montpellier (1793) and Charles Gumery in Bordeaux (1863), invariably have the goddesses facing outwards. That is also the case with structural elements supported by caryatids, such as the monument for the heart of Henri II (Germain Pilon, 1561), or the altar cross of St Peter's in Rome (Guglielmo della Porta, c. 1565–75).

46 Guglielmo della Porta alludes to a journey to Rome made by Gian Giacomo della Porta with Cristoforo Solari (d. 1524) in a letter of 1568 to Bartolomeo Ammannati, see W. Gramberg, *Die Düsseldorfer Skizzenbuch des Guglielmo della Porta*, Berlin 1964, p. 122, note 228. This journey, and another one by Guglielmo and Niccolò da Corte, must logically have taken place before the company was formed in 1531, as the

to suggest familiarity with classical sculpture. One is reminded in particular of the *Piccolomini Graces* in the Library of Pius II in Siena, whose straight noses and hair styled with wavy parallel lines are comparable (fig. 13). In addition, the alternation of figures seen from the front and from behind in the antique group is also visible in the Brussels fountain but is very rare in other candelabra-shaped structures, where the figures all face outwards.⁴⁵ The Siene group, placed on a marble support comparable to that of a fountain, was the focal point of a prestigious display with a fresco cycle by Pinturicchio. Any artist going to Rome, as Niccolò da Corte and both Della Porta may have done, would have had every reason to see this group when passing through Siena.⁴⁶

The reliefs on the triangular base (figs. 14–16), with female figures riding a bull, a sea horse and a sea monster, offer even closer parallels with Genoese sculpture. The peremptory manner in which the outstretched arm occupies the space is echoed in some of the prophets decorating the pedestals of the *baldacchino* in the Chapel of St John the Baptist in the cathedral, a commission executed by the Della Porta-da Corte workshop in 1531–32 (fig. 17).⁴⁷ The rendering of hands in flat relief is also a characteristic frequently encountered in Da Corte's works.⁴⁸ Finally, the floating drapery with undulating borders and broad pleats can be seen in the prophets of the *baldacchino*, and even more so in the *putti* supporters on the portal of the Palazzo Lamba Doria executed by Niccolò da Corte in 1529 (fig. 18).⁴⁹ The most frequent comparisons are therefore to be made with this itinerant artist, who still needs adequate study.⁵⁰

Objections to our analysis might nevertheless be raised. First, the date 1545 recorded by Henne and Wauters does not tally with the execution of the fountain for Philippe de Croÿ in 1533. Secondly, the smooth

commissions became so numerous that it would have been impossible for one member to leave Genoa.

47 Krufft and Roth, op. cit. (note 22), pp. 932–33.

48 Ibid., pp. 909–12.

49 E. Rosenthal, "Niccolò da Corte and the portal of the palace of Andrea Doria in Genoa," in A. Middeldorf Kosegarten and P. Tigler (eds.), *Festschrift für Ulrich Middeldorf*, Berlin 1968, pp. 358–63.

50 As yet there is no full study of Niccolò da Corte. On his activity in Genoa see Campigli, op. cit. (note 26), pp. 87–92, and Extermann, op. cit. (note 26), pp. 160–67. For his work in Granada see C.L. Frommel, "Il palazzo di Carlo V a Granada e Pedro Machuca," in P. Galera Andreu and S. Frommel (eds.), *El patio circular en la arquitectura del Rinacimiento*, Seville 2018, pp. 77–120, esp. pp. 102–11.



14–16 Niccolò da Corte, Gian Giacomo della Porta and Guglielmo della Porta (attributed to), *Fountain of the Three Graces*, details of the reliefs (photos © KIK-IRPA, Brussels, and Géraldine Patigny)

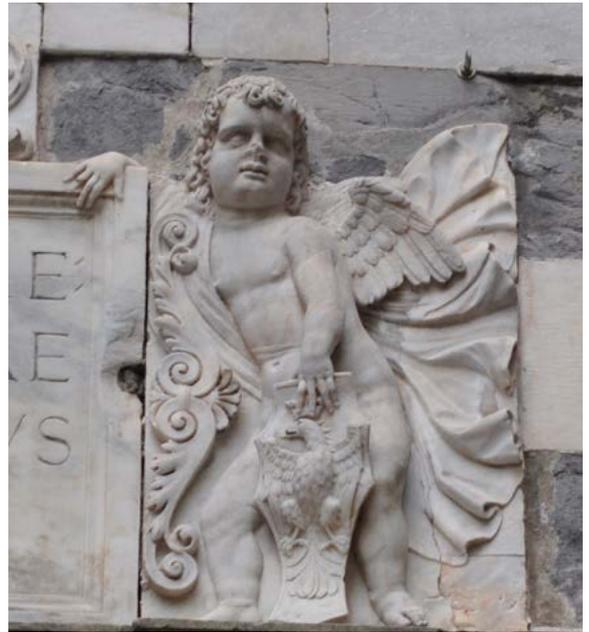
column as a structural support differs from the baluster or candelabra shape in other fountains (at Gaillon or Gaasbeek, to be discussed below). Finally, in the fountain executed to a similar design by Gian Giacomo della Porta for the Spanish city of Málaga 15 years later, the female figures holding the first bowl strike jerky, angular, unstable poses that are very different from the classical poise of the Brussels figures (fig. 19).⁵¹ These objections are not definitive, however, as the date 1545 could easily refer to the final erection of the fountain or to some later event — an alteration, a change of location or a repair. Smooth marble columns are a recurring form in Genoese architecture, and their use in a fountain could simply emphasize the architectonic dimension of the work.⁵² The

⁵¹ On the Málaga fountain see Loffredo, *op. cit.* (note 31), with an attribution to Gian Giacomo della Porta, which had already been suggested by Estella Marcos, *op. cit.* (note 32), p. 440. The former's hypothesis, pp. 213–14, that the Málaga fountain was the one belonging to Philippe de Croÿ that was turned back by pirates and shipwrecked in Spain, is not very convincing, and is anyway contradicted by documents that date it to the end of the 1540s.

⁵² The transition from an architecture covered in ornamental reliefs to a sparer one based on the classical orders is clearly perceptible in the development of Genoese portals during the 1530s. See Alizeri, *op. cit.* (note 27), p. 47.



17 Niccolò da Corte, Gian Giacomo della Porta and Guglielmo della Porta, *Prophet*, detail of the baldacchino of St John the Baptist, 1531–32. Marble. Genoa, Cathedral of San Lorenzo (photo © Grégoire Extermann)



18 Niccolò da Corte, *Putto*, detail of the portal, 1529. Marble. Genoa, Palazzo Lamba Doria (photo © Grégoire Extermann)

female figures of the Málaga fountain were executed ten years after the disbanding of the Della Porta-da Corte workshop, when Gian Giacomo left without the support of his more discerning collaborators, and from then on produced hastily carved pieces.⁵³ We can finally suggest that the example of classical statuary, above all the *Piccolomini Graces*, may have led to more classical and less eccentric results than those that came from the Genoese workshop at the same date.

NOT AARSCHOT BUT BOUSSU There is a fourth objection to the identification of the Duke of Aarschot's fountain. The contract mentions "tres mulieres nude et vestite," suggesting that the female figures were partially clad, or held pieces of flimsy fabric, as at Gaillon or Málaga. This is clearly not the case with the Brussels fountain, as the figures are completely naked. In reality, Philippe

⁵³ A clear example of Gian Giacomo della Porta's qualitative decline compared to his works of the 1530s can be seen in the tomb of Pedro Portocarrero and Maria Osorio in the convent of Santa Clara de Moguer (Huelva), c. 1549. See M. Estella Marcos, "El sepulcro del Marqués de Villanueva, en Santa Clara de Moguer, obra de Gian Giacomo della Porta, con la colaboración de Giovanni Maria Pasallo," *Archivo*

Español de Arte 52 (1979), pp. 440–51. Loffredo, op. cit. (note 31), pp. 207–08 and 214, proposes the intervention of Guglielmo della Porta in one of the *putti* in the Málaga fountain, but the stylistic relationship with Guglielmo's works is not very convincing, and anyway the fountain was made more than a decade after he left Genoa.



19 Gian Giacomo della Porta and workshop, Genoese fountain, before 1551. Marble. Málaga, Plaza de la Constitucìon (photo © Grégoire Extermann)

de Croÿ was not the first nobleman to commission Genoese fountains in the 1530s, and we may now consider another piece, similar in structure and executed by the same artists for Jean v de Hennin-Liétard, who as noted above commissioned a portal and two fireplaces from the Della Porta-da Corte workshop. No contract for a fountain has survived, but in a passage devoted to Guglielmo della Porta, Giorgio Vasari mentions “three Graces with

four marble putti, which were sent to the Low Countries to the great equerry of Charles v [i.e. Jean de Hennin-Liétard], together with another Ceres as large as life.”⁵⁴ Krista De Jonge viewed these statues as the components of a monumental fountain with two bowls of decreasing size supported by female figures, *putti* and surmounted by a figure of Ceres.⁵⁵ Also still extant is a contract for a marble basin of 12 palms in diameter — the same size as Philippe de Croÿ’s fountain — commissioned from Niccolò da Corte for Hennin-Liétard on 26 March 1535.⁵⁶ This might be a part of the fountain mentioned by Vasari, but equally of another one, for we know that Hennin-Liétard ordered many for his castle.⁵⁷ It is worth noting, though, that the count passed the management of the commission to a certain Gregorio Pallavicino, probably a member of the upper merchant class who, according to Genoese practice, took on the role of intermediary for international commissions, mediating between the patron and the artists.⁵⁸

The Count of Bousso, a military leader of exceptional stamina, was present at the Battle of Pavia (1525), the Sack of Rome (1527), the capture of Tunis (1535) and the victory of Saint-Quentin (1557).⁵⁹ By its sheer size, the

54 G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. G. Milanesi, 9 vols, Florence 1878–85, vol. 7, p. 545: “... tre Grazie con quattro putti di marmo, che furono mandate in Fiandra al gran scudiero di Carlo v imperatore, insieme con un'altra Cerere grande quanto il vivo.” The works that Vasari attributed to Guglielmo della Porta obviously belonged to the Della Porta-da Corte partnership as a whole.

55 K. De Jonge, “Restitution d'un château disparu,” in idem and M. Capouillez (eds.), *Le château de Bousso: études et documents (Monuments et sites 8)*, Namur 1998, pp. 138–41 and 179–80. On the Bousso fountain see also K. De Jonge, “Les jardins de Jacques du Broeucq et de Jacques Hollebecque à Binche, Mariemont et Bousso,” in C. Añon Feliú (ed.), *Felipe II, el Rey íntimo: jardín y naturaleza en el siglo XVI*, Aranjuez 1998, pp. 211–13.

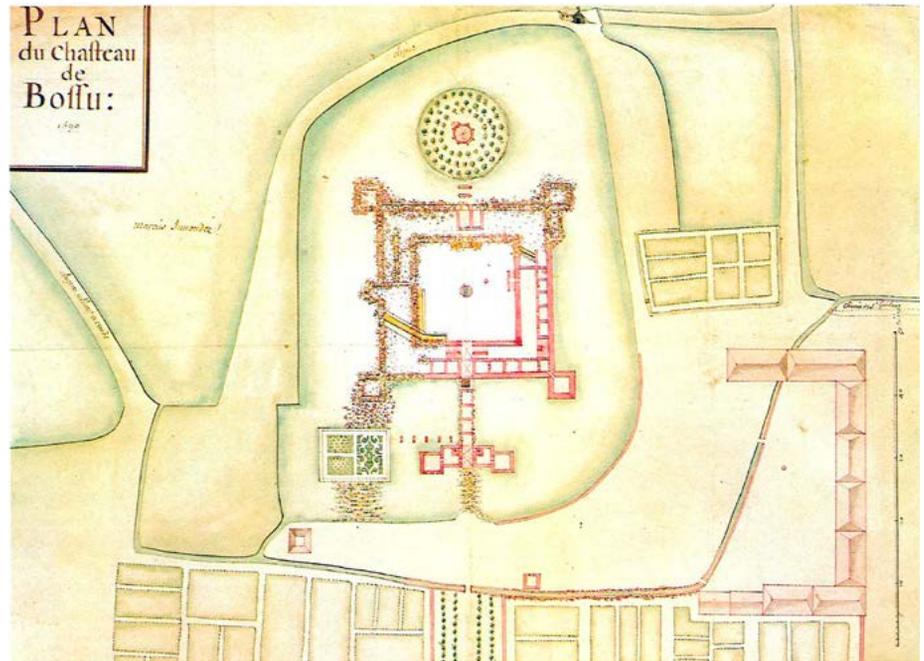
56 Alizeri, op. cit. (note 27), pp. 185–86.

57 The palace of Bousso had at least one more fountain, which is now in the garden of Gaasbeek Castle (fig. 22). The same arrangement of one fountain in the courtyard and another in the garden was found at Gaillon and Heverlee (see fig. 6).

58 Since Gregorio Pallavicini acted as guarantor between the Della Porta workshop and the Count of Bousso, the hypothesis that Jacques du Broeucq went to Genoa in order to supervise the execution of sculptures, as stated in De Jonge, op. cit. (note 27), p. 104, is scarcely tenable, but his presence in the Ligurian capital is not in any doubt.

59 On Hennin-Liétard see M. Capouillez, *Deux grands seigneurs du XVII^e siècle: Jean et Maximilien de Hennin Liétard, comtes de Bousso*, n.p. 1977, pp. 13–30; K. De Jonge, “A model court architect: Mary of Hungary and Jacques du Broeucq (1545–1556),” in H. Vlieghe and K. van der Stighelen (eds.), *Sponsors of the past: Flemish art and patronage 1550–1700*, Turnhout 2004, pp. 1–15, esp. pp. 2–3.

20 Anonymous, *Plan of Boussu Castle*, 1690. Watercolour and ink. Vincennes, Service historique de la défense, Archives du Génie, art. 14. From K. De Jonge and M. Capouillez (eds.), *Le château de Boussu: études et documents (Monuments et sites 8)*, Namur 1998, p. 46



21 Adrien de Montigny, *Boussu, south wing, courtyard facade*, 1607. Gouache. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. From K. De Jonge and M. Capouillez (eds.), *Le château de Boussu: études et documents (Monuments et sites 8)*, Namur 1998, p. 75



castle that he ordered to be built to the designs of Jacques Du Broeucq (c. 1505–84) in 1540 illustrates the honors he had accumulated during a very long career. Scholars have viewed this edifice, with its four wings built around a square courtyard, as a combination of features borrowed from the Low Countries, Italy and France (particularly from Fontainebleau and Gaillon), fostered by the diffusion of the architectural treatises of Sebastiano Serlio.⁶⁰ The centralized, symmetrical plan, the continuous inner portico on the four sides of the courtyard and the double staircase are among the most innovative elements of the building. It received a very admiring review from Gaspar de Vega in a *mémoire* addressed to Philippe II in 1546, who called it “the best designed and best constructed building seen during his travels.”⁶¹ This is even more remarkable when we consider that Vega had traveled all over France, and to the Low Countries and England, visiting the Louvre and the château at Gaillon in particular. Although it was never completed and was even partially destroyed by Henri II of France in 1554, Bousso Castle received visits from Charles V in 1545 and Philippe II in 1549 and 1558. Its reputation extended far beyond the frontiers of the Low Countries, and several elements characteristic of its architecture were incorporated in the palace of El Pardo near Madrid.⁶²

The fountain mentioned by Vasari stood in the center of the castle courtyard — much as it did at Heverlee and Gaillon — as illustrated by an engineer's plan which features an octagonal basin in that position (fig. 20).⁶³ Clues to its shape are supplied by a series of gouaches by Adrien de Montigny dating from 1607 and showing the palace in an ideal state of completion. One of the paintings shows the south side of the courtyard strewn with pieces of marble, amongst which one can recognize the elements of a fountain: a basin, a base, a triangular pedestal, anthropomorphic supports and a basin with gadroons (fig.

21). Although it is difficult to recognize the Three Graces amongst the anthropomorphic supports, the triangular base with concave edges and simple moldings is identical in every detail to the base now in the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles (fig. 3).

If we agree, then, that the latter is a piece made in Genoa in the 1530s by the Della Porta-da Corte workshop, should we identify it as a commission by the Duke of Aarschot or by the Count of Bousso? Although no definitive proof survives, we firmly suggest Bousso. In fact, all trace of the Heverlee fountain was lost during the seventeenth century, whereas at Bousso a piece comprising “three naked maidens” was still being mentioned by Constantijn Huygens the Younger (1628–97) as late as 1676.⁶⁴ The nudity is a determining factor, for it is at variance with the contract for the Duke of Aarschot. Additionally, the term “Graces” used by Vasari for the Bousso fountain could have a precise iconographic significance if it is a reference to the traditional representations of the subject, with the figures being seen alternately from in front and behind, as in the Siena group and contemporary paintings.⁶⁵ Last but not least, as noted above, the marble base is close to the one depicted in Adrien de Montigny's gouache. All that now remains is to retrace the journey of the Bousso fountain to its entry into the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles, or at least to produce a convincing account of its wanderings.

RECONSTRUCTING THE PROVENANCE In 1610, Maximilien II de Hennin-Liétard, son of Jean V, planned the restoration of Bousso Castle, which was in a very bad state of repair at the time, and with this in mind salvaged all the stone materials that had not been used.⁶⁶ Work ceased after his death in December 1625 and his widow, Alexandrine-Françoise de Gavre, later decided to sell all the marble in her possession.⁶⁷ Columns came to the

60 On the Château de Bousso see De Jonge and Capouillez, op. cit. (note 55); K. De Jonge, “Aktuelle Probleme der Renaissanceforschung in den Niederlanden: Hof und Hofarchitekten – der Casus Jacques du Broeucq,” in G. Bers and C. Doose (eds.), *“Italiensche” Renaissancebaukunst an Schelde, Maas und Niederrhein*, Jülich 1999, pp. 55–56, 59–68; De Jonge, op. cit. (note 35), pp. 1–6.

61 “Yo estuve en la casa de Bosu en Flandes medio día, y yo prometo a vuestra Magestad ques un pedaço de edificio, el major labrado y tratado que yo acá ni allá hasta agora e visto.” See R. Dominguez Casas, “Carlos V y la introducción del sistema administrativo y estético del ducado de Brabante en los palacios reales españoles,” in F. Daelemans and A. Vanrie (eds.), *Bruxelles et la vie urbaine, archives – art – histoire: re-*

cueil d'articles dédiés à la mémoire d'Arlette Smolar-Meynard (1938–2000), 2 vols., Brussels 2001, vol. 2, pp. 766–67.

62 Dominguez Casas, op. cit. (note 61), pp. 765–67.

63 De Jonge and Capouillez, op. cit. (note 55), p. 46.

64 See note 72 below.

65 Artists who painted the Graces according to this outline include Francesco del Cossa (*April*, 1468–70, Ferrara, Palazzo Schifanoia), Botticelli (*Spring*, 1477–82, Florence, Uffizi), and Raphael (*The Three Graces*, 1507, Chantilly, Musée Condé).

66 M. Capouillez, “Historique,” in De Jonge and Capouillez, op. cit. (note 55), p. 33.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 34.



22 Genoese workshop, *Fountain with putti*, sixteenth century. Marble. Gaasbeek, castle park (photo © Géraldine Patigny)

68 *Ibid.*, p. 33; P. Anagnostopoulos, “Un décor sculpté en marbre de Carrare du château renaissance de Boussu (xvi^e siècle) et une clôture conservée dans l’église Saint-Martin d’Alost,” *Annales d’Histoire de l’Art et d’Archéologie* 37 (2015), pp. 103–27.

69 On the castle of Gaasbeek and the furnishings by René de Renesse see H. Vandormael, *Château de Gaasbeek*, Ghent 2003, pp. 25–26. This fountain appears, in a photograph dated 1957, with a double basin, decorated in the lower part with three *putti* arranged around a column and surmounted by a *putto* and a goose (balat.kikirpa.be, no. A114254). Currently, the fountain only has one bowl plus the *putto* and the goose; the three *putti* from around the column are on display inside the castle. On the sale see also De Jonge, “Les jardins,” cit. (note 55), p. 213.

70 Lille, Archives départementales du Nord, Chambre des comptes de Lille, register B.2979, fol. 708r: “... des bassins, figures et autres pièces de fontaine de marbre blancq reposans au chasteau de Gaesbeke.” Our warmest thanks to Hervé Passot, in charge of the collection, who provided us with a photograph of the document. It is referred to

collegiate church of Sainte-Waudru in Mons, and other spolia to the Abbey of the Dunes and the church of St Martin in Aalst.⁶⁸ First and foremost among the purchasers was René de Renesse, Count of Warfusée, who was restoring the castle of Gaasbeek of which he had become the owner in 1615.⁶⁹ In the castle grounds today there is a fountain in Carrara marble bearing the Boussu arms that is very clearly of Genoese manufacture (fig. 22). Following the count’s fall from grace, “basins, figures and other pieces of white marble for a fountain now at the castle of Gaasbeek” were sold to Archduchess Isabella in 1633.⁷⁰ They were probably used to adorn Coudenberg palace in Brussels, but were dispersed again after the building burned down in 1731.⁷¹ The idea that the Boussu fountain was transferred to Gaasbeek then to the Coudenberg palace, and from there to the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles via the Établissement Géographique is obviously a tempting one. But it is gainsaid by the testimony referred to above of Constantijn Huygens the Younger, who describes the fountain in the courtyard of Boussu Castle on 23 May 1676 in the following terms: “in the middle of the courtyard there is a marble fountain whose basin is supported by three naked maidens, not too well sculpted.”⁷² The fountain could already have been deprived of some of its parts, which may explain why Huygens limited himself to “three naked maidens.” Thus, the hypothesis regarding marble spolia being taken to the castle of Gaasbeek then to the Coudenberg palace could be maintained, but further research is still needed. As regards the Boussu estate, it continued to be depleted of its marbles, as Huygens also informs us about a sale at Mons on 24 May 1676 of “antique statues” coming from there.⁷³ The

in J. Finot, *Inventaire sommaire des archives départementales antérieures à 1790. Nord. Archives civiles – série B. Chambre des comptes de Lille*, vi: nos. 2788 à 3228, Lille 1888, p. 136.

71 De Jonge, “Les jardins,” cit. (note 55), p. 213.

72 C. Huygens Jr, *Journal gedurende de veldtochten der Jaren 1673, 1675, 1676, 1677 en 1678*, Utrecht 1881, p. 94, quoted in De Jonge, “Les jardins,” cit. (note 55), pp. 211–12: “Au milieu de la cour il y a une fontaine de marbre dont le bassin est soustenu par trois filles nues, mais pas trop bien faites.” For the diary see R. Dekker, *Family culture and society in the diary of Constantijn Huygens Jr, Secretary to Stadholder-King William of Orange*, Leiden 2013.

73 Huygens, op. cit. (note 72), p. 94. See also K. De Jonge, “Hieronymus Cock’s antiquity: archaeology and architecture from Italy to the Low Countries,” in J. Van Grieken, G. Luijten and J. Van der Stock (eds.), exhib. cat. *Hieronymus Cock: the Renaissance in print*, Brussels (Royal Library of Belgium) & Paris (Fondation Custodia) 2013, pp. 42–51, esp. p. 48.

castle was thus progressively stripped of the elements of its architecture and decor that had contributed to its fame. What remained of the *Three Graces* may have been sold during the eighteenth century, before reappearing, by unknown routes at the *Établissement Géographique de Bruxelles*.

THE POSSIBLE IMPACT Although there is still research to be done, the identification of the fountain in the *Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles* not as a Netherlandish piece dating from the 1540s but as Genoese from the 1530s, and created at one of the most productive workshops in the city is a considerable achievement. The theory that it was commissioned by a general close to Charles V for one of the largest palaces in the Low Countries is equally interesting. Now we can consider the impact such a fountain would have had in its new destination, especially on Jacques Du Broeucq, architect of Bousso Castle and a prominent sculptor. It is possible that the Genoese pieces acquired by Hennin-Liétard played a role in his formation and on the genesis of a sculpted ensemble of such European importance as the *Sainte-Waudru* rood screen in Mons.⁷⁴ To this should be added the experience of a journey to Italy, probably at the end of the 1530s.⁷⁵ Rome undoubtedly beckoned as the primary destination, but Genoa could have been a staging post, if only because

of its artistic interchanges with the Low Countries. Du Broeucq would have seen the *Palazzo Doria*, which served as a model for some residences of the imperial nobility, and he may have arrived there in time to meet Perino del Vaga and the members of the *Della Porta-da Corte* workshop. As he admired their work *in situ* — the *baldacchino* for the chapel of St John the Baptist and the tomb of Giuliano Cibo in the cathedral — he could compare them with the work commissioned by Hennin-Liétard. They included not only a portal and two fireplaces, but also a magnificent fountain, part of which seems to have surfaced in the collections of the *Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles*. At the end of the day, it would be a good outcome if this initial consideration of private fountains led to a more systematic study of the Carrara marble furnishings in the houses of the nobility in the sixteenth-century Low Countries. This would enable an evaluation of the impact of Italian sculpture in general, and Genoese in particular, on this part of Europe under the Habsburgs.

ROYAL INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE
BRUSSELS
AND
ART HISTORY DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY OF SEVILLE

⁷⁴ On the *Sainte-Waudru* rood screen see R. Didier, "Les oeuvres du sculpteur Jacques Du Broeucq à Sainte Waudru de Mons," in M. Capouillez *et al.*, *op. cit.* (note 27), pp. 113–49.

⁷⁵ For Du Broeucq's journey to Italy see K. De Jonge, "Exemplum di progettazione rinascimentale nei Paesi Bassi: l'opera di Jacques du Broeucq," *Annali di Architettura* 9 (1998), pp. 218–32, esp. p. 225; K. De

Jonge, *op. cit.* (note 27), pp. 101–05. The impact of the milieu of Fontainebleau and Rouen, the home town of Jean Goujon, is emphasized by E.M. Kavalier, "La sculpture de Jacques Du Broeucq: de l'Italie à la France," in Capouillez *et al.*, *op. cit.* (note 27), pp. 158–62. The conjunction of these two currents, Rouen-Fontainebleau and Rome-Genoa could be at the heart of Du Broeucq's original sculptural language.