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Material Memories of the Dutch Revolt

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Conclusion

On 25 March 1696, Franco Dias wrote to the burgomasters and aldermen of Antwerp to tell them he had seen the relic of the Holy Circumcision in a castle near Rome. This relic, one of the most important in Antwerp, had been lost during the iconoclasm. Dias, writing from the Italian town Pitigliano, had an interesting offer for the city council. If they would provide the necessary financial support, he would be able to recapture the relic by organizing a raid on the castle.¹ Although any official correspondence between the city council and Dias is missing, this letter is exemplary for the way the Dutch Revolt was integrated into urban memory cultures in the Low Countries. Dias' questionable proposal, the letter's authenticity, its late date and the fact that it mentions a relic that had been lost for more than a century prove that memories of the Revolt not only circulated but still inspired people to take action. Moreover, the letter and its content demonstrate an ongoing interest in material memories of the Revolt.

On an urban level, memories of the Dutch Revolt were usually expressed via a rich material memory culture. Stories about the past survived within the existing memory landscape and often had a material component as proof of their authenticity. As we have seen, this memory landscape was built upon the civic memories of previous eras, in which relics took a special position. Traditional relics had been present since the early Middle Ages but could gain new meaning during the Revolt. The relic of the Holy Circumcision was such a relic. Throughout the sixteenth century it held a special place amongst Antwerp's civic elite and the nobility who were members of the brotherhood of the Holy Circumcision.² The Circumcision had its own annual procession in the beginning of June, and was the most important relic in Antwerp. During the iconoclasm in Antwerp the cathedral of Our Lady, which also held the Circumcision chapel, had been hit the hardest.³ The violence added another layer of memory to both the cathedral and the relics.

Considering the importance of the Holy Circumcision for Antwerp we can now put the letter in perspective. Dias wrote that while he was on a boar hunt with a 'certain prince' the man told him that he held 'the greatest relic of all the world, the circumcision of Jesus Christ, stolen in our fatherland during the iconoclasm [...] brought there by a certain Englishman on

¹ FAA, Private Archieven, Archieven van kerken en kloosters, inv nr KK210 Onze Lieve Vrouw sermoenen en hoogmissen, brief 1696; R. van Uytven et al. (eds.), *Geschiedenis van Brabant. Van het hertogdom tot heden* (Zwolle 2004) 258.

² Guido Marnef, *Antwerpen in de tijd van de Reformatie. Ondergronds protestantisme in een handelsmetropool 1550-1577* (Antwerp 1996) 88.

³ Peter Arnade, *Beggars, iconoclasts, and civic patriots. The political culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca 2008) 142–146.

his way to Rome'.⁴ What stands out here is the amount of detail Dias included in his letter. More than one hundred years after the episode took place he knew about the relic, he knew about its importance for the 'fatherland', and he knew that it had been stolen during the iconoclasm. While these details may well have been a trick to convince the city council of the letter's authenticity, they are also an indication of the impact of an urban memory culture. Even if the story about the prince and the Englishman in Italy was a deception, Dias did know the story of the relic and what happened to it, which implies that an urban memory culture, and the stories that were part of it, took root in people who could then act upon these memories.

The fact that the letter was not part of the official archive of the town council, its sometimes questionable content and that the relic never returned to Antwerp suggest that it was a scam, which in the context of my research this makes the letter even more interesting. First and foremost it reveals how Dias situated the relic of the Holy Circumcision as part of the heritage of the fatherland. Not only did he know the story, but he offered an interpretation of the relic's value for Antwerp to impress and persuade the town council. In addition, even though the relic had been missing for one hundred and thirty years Dias also knew that the Holy Circumcision still held an important place in Antwerp's religious life. In 1685, during the celebrations of the restoration of Catholicism, a new altar had been erected, and its brotherhood was still one of the most prestigious in the city during the seventeenth century.⁵ In his letter Dias thus revealed his knowledge of the commemorative value of the object as part of Antwerp's urban memory culture.

The relic of the Holy Circumcision in Antwerp is just one example of how urban, material memories of the Revolt circulated in cities in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Low Countries. Until this dissertation, however, the urban and the material component of memory had not yet been studied systematically. Historians Willem Frijhoff, Judith Pollmann, Raingard Esser and Peter Arnade, for instance, each studied elements of both the urban and the material but limited themselves to a single urban community, a single medium or a short time period. What this study has shown is that the comparison between different cities and different media is essential to understand how the Revolt was remembered in both the Northern and Southern Netherlands and why. Not only were urban memories also deployed to tell a story about the 'national' past, but many of the material memories employed by propagandists on a national level originated and existed in an urban setting.

⁴ 'de aldergrooste relique van gants de weirelt de besnijdenisse van onsens Jesu Christi gestolen in ons vaderlandt ten tijde van de belt stormerije [...] daar gebrocht door sekere engelsche die near Roma reijdsde' FAA, inv nr KK210, f.1.

⁵ Felixarchief Antwerp, Private Archieven, Archieven van kerken en kloosters, inv nr KK210, resolution 23 July 1685 (taken from resolutionbook 1686); Bert Timmermans, *Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen* (Amsterdam 2008) 115–116.

Since the Dutch Revolt was a civil war and was fought in sieges rather than open battles, the 'national' narratives that developed in the seventeenth century were inspired by local developments. Recent research by Jasper van der Steen has demonstrated that some of local episodes such as the siege of Leiden in the North and the siege of Ostend in the South were included in the national narratives of the Revolt that developed in the early seventeenth century. Moreover, as Van der Steen observed, the role of the cities in the 'national' memory culture should not be underestimated since 'the federal and decentralized nature of the polity required propagandists to invoke a wide variety of events that could appeal to Netherlanders from different cities and regions'. Because religion was a divisive issue in the Dutch Republic, such appeals to memory usually focused on a secular history of the Revolt. In the Habsburg Netherlands memory on the 'national' level was less complicated since both church and state centered their memory culture of the rebellion on the evils of Protestantism. Many Southern cities, however, had a complicated relationship to memories of the Revolt because they had participated in the rebellion.⁶ On an urban level, as we have seen in this study, it seems that memories of the Revolt in the South were more often reinterpreted than left out of urban history. Even in cities such as Antwerp, which was known for its rebellion, the history of the Revolt was not forgotten.

The practices of memory and oblivion which came into being on the national level not only built on local episodes but also relied on the fact that urban communities were much more active in the practices of memory than national governments. The States General in the Dutch Republic awarded medals, put banners on display in its meeting place, and paid for general histories of the Revolt but did not actively participate in advocating a distinctive story about the Revolt. Individual cities did far more to commemorate Revolt episodes. National memories of the Revolt recurred in political debate, but it was left to urban communities themselves to find a way to deal with their past. In the Habsburg Netherlands the Archdukes were more active in propagating their message of dynastic traditions and piety history to the public, but they also relied on local governments to amplify their message during Joyous Entries, pilgrimages and shooting contests. Even though the Archdukes commissioned art, collected (new) relics and propagated the Counterreformation, they could not compete with the impact of memory on an urban level. It was at this level where memories of the bond with the dynasty and the message of piety and loyalty to the crown, for example, were propagated during festivities throughout the seventeenth century, such as the celebration of the restoration of Catholicism in Antwerp in 1685.

⁶ Jasper van der Steen, 'The politics of memory in the Low Countries, 1566-1700' (Dissertation Leiden University 2014) 273-274.

While national memories were usually spread in cities via temporary displays, local memories of the Revolt could be displayed permanently in the city. An urban memory landscape reflected the variety of media that propagated memories of the Revolt, whereas 'national' memories usually existed in written form such as general histories or pamphlets. Of course, there are some exceptions. In the Habsburg Netherlands the Duke of Alva erected a column to remember the destruction of the Culemborg palace in Brussels. Yet, even these material memories were often also part of an urban memory landscape and to be found in the local churches or on urban public buildings. In the Dutch Republic national memories of the Revolt were sometimes created, such as the lavish tomb for William of Orange. Yet, this funerary monument was situated in the New Church in Delft which ensured that it also became part of the urban memory landscape of that city. Finally, art was an important instrument by which the Archdukes displayed the historic role of their dynasty and exemplary piety. The early stadholders were less involved in creating this type of memory in art. This did not mean there was no national interest in Revolt memorabilia. As we have seen, for instance, the States General did prevent a silver replica of the peat barge that had captured Breda in 1590 from being melted down in 1611. Their acquisition of this material memory demonstrates that the States General were aware of the commemorative value of such items and that urban and national memory cultures were intertwined.

In addition to demonstrating how urban memory cultures had an impact on the national memory culture that emerged in the Dutch Republic as well as in the Habsburg Netherlands, this dissertation is the first to offer a comparative study of several urban communities, the way they remembered their recent experiences with war in the early modern period, and how these memories became part of the city's identity. By focusing on material culture as a source, as well as studying several cities over the long term, this study has revealed that urban memory cultures resulted from a dynamic interaction between different stakeholders, the message they propagated and the media they used. Without downplaying the role of less material memories such as sermons and plays, the material approach has given us the opportunity to integrate sources that had so far been left untouched by historians, such as cannonballs, clothing, and street names. In combination with elite media such as paintings and gable stones, material memories have provided a solid foundation to understand urban memory cultures and their stakeholders.

Through the analogy with an urban memory landscape this study has demonstrated that different stakeholders and media interacted within and beyond the urban community. Instead of a magistrate that imposed its will on the population and decided which stories should become part of an urban memory culture, a variety of different stakeholders was involved in a constantly changing memory culture. This comparative study has uncovered that an urban memory culture was based on a complicated set of memories and counter-memories that

relied on stakeholders to be heard. Furthermore, it has revealed that material memories were accessible to many, and an intrinsic part of the way people remembered, or rather forgot, the Revolt within the urban community.

The presence of different stakeholders, such as the magistrate, the church, and the militia but also individual men and women who wanted to remember their own experiences ensured that an urban memory culture was dynamic and subject to change. In Haarlem, for instance, the first memories of the Revolt centered around the lost siege of 1572-1573. From 1577 onwards the churchwardens, the militia companies and individual citizens publicly remembered their suffering both from hunger and cannon fire but also their local heroine Kenau. This story about the siege was later joined by another memory from civic history, the medieval siege of Damietta. Unlike the lost siege during the Revolt, this episode had been successful, had earned Haarlem its coat of arms, and had shown an innate sense of bravery in Haarlem's citizens. After the regime change of 1618 these characteristics were propagated enthusiastically by the magistrate, especially in its civic representation towards other cities in Holland. But within Haarlem the memories of 1572-1573 were still in place and continued to live on in chorographies, manuscripts, and other media such as plays, cannonballs, and paintings. The focus on Damietta, however, added an extra layer to Haarlem's urban memory culture, and it reflects how different memories could exist alongside each other.

Moreover, changes in memory could occur when the political situation called for them. Indeed, memories of the Revolt could become political symbols for the urban community. In Breda, for instance, the successful attack on the city in 1590 with a peat barge started an urban memory culture which centered around this particular barge. In fact, the magistrate decided to put it prominently on display on the market square. In 1625, however, when the city was captured by the Habsburg army, the new regime wanted to eradicate this memory by burning the barge almost immediately. Twelve years later, in 1637, the city was taken by the Dutch stadholder Frederik Hendrik. In the aftermath of this siege the rudder of the peat barge miraculously resurfaced.⁷ Changes of the political situation could thus inspire an additional memory culture, as we have seen in Haarlem, but also the renewal of older memory cultures, such as in Breda. This shows the dynamic nature of an urban memory culture and the influence different stakeholders could have on the development of certain memories within the city.

The influence of stakeholders on urban memory cultures was thus visible within the urban landscape. Sometimes different stakeholders worked together in advocating certain memories within the community. In 's-Hertogenbosch after the Calvinist defeat on the market

⁷ Marianne Eekhout, 'Celebrating a Trojan horse. Memories of the Dutch Revolt in Breda, 1590-1650', in: Erika Kuijpers et al. (eds.), *Memory before Modernity. The practices of memory in early modern Europe* (Leiden 2013) 129–147.

square in 1579 Catholic stakeholders such as the new magistrate, the church and the militia joined hands to create a local memory culture, including an annual procession to celebrate the expulsion of the Calvinists. They deployed memories of this episode to rebuild the city's identity as staunchly Catholic and loyal. Sometimes the magistrate offered a new version of an event which other stakeholders appropriated. In Leiden the population had been divided and had suffered from plague during the siege of 1574, but after the city's relief the magistrate focused on a different element in the existing memories: starvation. Not only did this story divert attention from what the city would rather forget, but it created a new story in which everyone had suffered. Sometimes different stakeholders did not agree completely on the course of action and responded to each other in an urban memory landscape. The Marian sodality in Antwerp, for example, convinced the magistrate to replace the statue of the city's founding father Brabo in the façade of the town hall with a statue of the city's patron saint the Virgin. Yet, instead of removing Brabo from the public eye the statue received a new place on the gate which led to the economic heart of the city. While this replacement is not necessarily a statement by the magistrate, the local government was known for its attempts to create a profitable economic climate which included the many Protestants that still lived in Antwerp.

Stakeholders also marked urban memory landscapes by advocating counter-memories that were not part of the 'official' urban memory culture. Both Northern and Southern cities provided memory climates that accommodated memories other than the ones propagated by the magistrate. This invites us to revisit arguments about the effectiveness of the politics of oblivion which has often been suggested for Southern cities in the Low Countries. When cities such as Antwerp, Brussels and Mechelen reconciled with the Habsburg regime, they each signed a treaty containing an oblivion clause. According to this clause everything would be forgiven and forgotten, and the city would start again with a clean slate: offers for legal amnesty were made and disagreements about property were solved. These clauses were not limited to the Southern provinces since the Pacification of Ghent also included an article to forgive and forget. In practice, however, the Revolt was far from forgotten. In the Southern Netherlands there were many people who could benefit from invoking the Revolt when claiming rewards for their contribution to the struggle against the rebels or when wanting to demonstrate their loyalty to the Habsburgs. In order to make this happen the past needed to be commemorated.⁸ Therefore even when oblivion was part of the city's history of the Revolt, the past did not just disappear. Both in the Northern and Southern Netherlands, urban

⁸ Judith Pollmann, 'Acts of oblivion. The virtues of forgetting in early modern Europe', Lecture Dahlem Humanities Center, Berlin 7 November 2013.

memory cultures remained an environment in which some people would rather forget the recent past, while others saw the benefits of remembering,

In this context, the role of the magistrate and the strategy it employed to either remember or forget the past has also been considered. Especially on a regional level it is possible to see how the magistrates profiled the city and its memories of the Revolt. As historians have shown before for the Dutch Republic, cities used the Dutch Revolt on a supralocal level as part of the rivalry that existed between cities. As we have seen in this study, cities such as Alkmaar and Leiden exploited their successful sieges to win arguments to gain economic or political privileges. A Southern city like Leuven, however, deployed the same tactic and advocated its position as a city loyal to the crown. Since the Revolt had become important in regional politics, magistrates took their self-representation very seriously and invested large sums of money in media such as stained-glass windows with Revolt themes which were visible in many local churches. Yet, on the regional level oblivion also played its part and was not limited to the Southern Netherlands. For instance, in Brussels and Amsterdam, both cities with a past that was marked by choosing the enemy side for too long, the city's role during the Revolt was carefully omitted or avoided by emphasizing the more distant past or the present. This demonstrates that stakeholders such as the magistrate, but also admiralties and other representatives on a regional level, gave careful consideration as to how they wanted to relate to the recent past. Oblivion did exist because there are cities such as Zutphen in Gelre and Aalst in Flanders in which memories of the Revolt seem to have disappeared.⁹ Whether this absence is the result of the serious nature of the massacres these cities encountered, a lack of source material, and/or an act of oblivion remains unclear.

Even when new regimes wanted to look forward, however, counter-memories existed within the urban community as long as stakeholders were willing to find ways to commemorate what they had been through during the Revolt. Many of these counter-memories can be connected to religious differences within the community. In the Habsburg Netherlands mainstream memory practices embraced the Habsburg dynasty and the Catholic Church while piety and religious unity were propagated. Protestant memories, however, still resurfaced after 1585, such as the demolition of the citadel in Antwerp in 1577. Even though the commissions for the paintings of this demolition may well have been given during the Calvinist regime, the works resurface in Antwerp inventories in the seventeenth century, suggesting that after the Catholic restoration this subject still circulated in Antwerp's households. In the Dutch Republic religions other than Calvinism were tolerated to a certain

⁹ Judith Pollmann en Erika Kuijpers, 'Why remember terror? Memories of violence in the Dutch Revolt', in: *Ireland 1641. Contexts and Reactions* (Manchester 2010) 176–196, there 181.

extent, but Catholics could no longer fit their own stories into the 'official' memory culture. Much clearer than in the Habsburg Netherlands, traces of clandestine churches, (old) pilgrimage sites, and individual achievements of members of this group survived in urban memory landscapes in the Dutch Republic since Catholics were tolerated to a certain degree.

The existence of different stories and stakeholders within the urban community cannot be separated from the availability of media in the seventeenth-century city. In the melting pot of stories out of which an urban memory culture could emerge, memories and media became intertwined. And, as this study has argued, the city provided an excellent environment in which material memories could circulate and have an impact on a large audience ranging from the urban magistrate to individual citizens such as helbardier Antoine Creel who visited the celebration of the restoration of Catholicism in Antwerp in 1585. This interaction between stakeholders, their audience and the media was crucial for an urban memory culture to develop because the choice of medium reflected its (potential) audience.

In order to share memories each stakeholder selected one or more media. On an individual level, people could tell stories to family members, neighbors or at a local inn, they could write about the war in a journal, could keep a relic such as an emergency coin or could decide to capture a memory in an object such as a painting, medal or piece of silver. Indeed, sometimes a commemorative object could even become a collection of material memories. For instance, to remember the siege of Leiden an individual combined a dried out piece of peat with a silver clasp, a chain, and a copper emergency coin. To the clasp he added an inscription that the peat had been found in 1574 (fig.56).¹⁰



Fig.56 Piece of peat with a copper emergency coin and a clasp with an inscription referring to the siege of Leiden in 1574 attached to it (Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden).

¹⁰ Anonymous, Turf gevat in een zilveren beugel met een koperen noedmuntje aan een ketting, ca. 1574, peat, silver, copper, Museum De Lakenhal, inv nr 3350.

On a corporate level, groups of people decided to commission objects which represented a certain episode from the Revolt. These memories could be paintings, tapestries, and gable stones but also less material forms of commemoration such as sermons, plays, and street names. How many people each medium could reach varied, of course. Journals could remain private, but they could also be circulated in manuscript, be published in print or turn up in family archives in the seventeenth century. Relics could be on display in the church or in private homes. Paintings could be hung in private or in reception rooms in individual homes, but also in public rooms in the town hall, militia headquarters or at the church. Gable stones and street names were even more publicly accessible because these were available on street level.

Stakeholders thus had many options at their disposal when deciding which material form their memory should take. The memory itself, which had at first been only a story, now received a material component. Unfortunately the source material often leaves us in the dark about these decisions regarding medium, but sometimes there are indications that it was an important decision. In Bruges, for example, citizen Everard Tristram applied to the magistrate for money to adorn the façade of his home with several ornaments depicting the relief of the city from the States army in 1631. Since the magistrate agreed, they obviously approved of the medium Tristram had selected. In general, however, the medium also depended on tradition. Medals, for example, had been used to reward people before the Revolt while paintings depicting sieges had hung in town halls and churches and written accounts had been published during earlier wars.

Not only was the shape in which a memory was presented to its audience often inspired by what people knew, but this was also true for the words or images that were selected for the medium. Biblical and/or mythological episodes were remediated in the representation of the Revolt. In Venlo in Limburg, for example, images of biblical episodes were literally flanked by episodes of the Revolt which drew attention to the analogy between the past and the present. During the Habsburg regime two contemporary sieges, in 1597 and 1606, were presented respectively as the story of Esther and that of Judith and Holofernes. The siege of Leiden in 1574 in the Northern Netherlands inspired people to use two biblical scenes to explain the siege and the city's relief from hunger. In this case the Calvinist regime referred to the siege of Samaria as well as the siege of Jerusalem to explain the hardship amongst the population on a medal which was presented to contributors to Leiden's relief and a stained-glass window for the church in Gouda in 1601. The capture of Breda in 1590 was immediately compared to the Trojan horse since seventy soldiers hid in a peat barge before successfully taking the city's castle. Even in the imagery of the event the peat barge is always shown as lying in front of the gate, much as the Trojan horse would be presented.

While tradition thus played a part in the selection of media, there were several other factors which determined which objects would become material memories of the Revolt, such as the amount of money someone had available and the period in which the (material) memory was created. Especially during and after the Twelve Years' Truce, for example, the economy allowed for an increase in luxury items in the Low Countries which made more lavish material memories of the Revolt available to more people. Therefore we see the largest number of Revolt memorabilia in the period roughly between 1620 and 1640, even if the end of the war in 1648 served as inspiration for another peak until the 1660s. As this study has shown, however, money was not always necessary to commemorate the Revolt or to partake in forms of commemoration. Anyone could transmit a memory orally, save a skirt or pick up a relic from the street to keep at home, and tell stories about it. Moreover, street names changed, inscriptions were placed, and festivals celebrated the victories of the Revolt. People could see paintings and relics in public buildings such as the church. Therefore the Revolt was literally out there on the streets.

In addition to the variety and availability of memorabilia that were present in the city, it is also important to distinguish between two types of material memories. Some relics had 'witnessed' the episode they referred to. This aspect of their 'life' made them worthwhile to keep, collect and pass on to new generations and provided a sense of authenticity. It was therefore the story in combination with the actual object it described that gave the relic its meaning. The other type of memories comprises everything that has been made to remember the Revolt from tapestries to clay pipes. Unlike the relics, which usually had little aesthetic appeal, these objects were subject to issues of style, how much could be spent on them and how the patron wanted them to look. The story or episode these objects represented was also often included visually or in writing which made them easier to connect to a time and place than relics. Nevertheless, it was still the combination of the story and the object that ensured the material memory would survive.

The sum of all the available memories created an urban memory landscape which could reflect several sets of memories. Of course, not each memory was visible for everyone, but it is remarkable how many individual achievements can still be traced in the public memory culture. By placing a gable stone referring to this event on his home's façade, tailor's assistant Pieter Janssen from Vlissingen, for example, ensured that everyone would remember the way he put the Orange banner on the tower of the St Jan church in 's-Hertogenbosch in 1629. There was no necessity to do so, but pride played an important role in people's needs to materialize their memories. In this way even personal memories could become part of an urban memory landscape which already integrated so many stories, and material memories, of the Revolt. Simultaneously, urban memory landscapes became a basis for national memories.

Urban memory cultures that emerged were unique to each city but, as the comparison between cities has proven, they were also influenced by what surrounding cities had experienced. Because cities largely operated in an urban network, the Revolt could become an important asset in a city's identity and the rivalry between cities. Not only the experience with war, such as a siege, attack, or massacre therefore determined the actual memory culture but also how this experience fitted into regional and national politics. In the Dutch Republic victorious cities such as Alkmaar and Leiden used the Revolt, but since the conflict more and more became a war of independence against Spain, other cities also deployed Revolt memories whenever they could. One of the first cities to do so was Naarden, which had suffered a massacre; it quickly appealed to the national story of suffering Spanish cruelties that surfaced in the beginning of the seventeenth century. In its turn Amsterdam, by emphasizing its role as merchant capital of the world, tried to cover up the fact that it had supported the Habsburg regime for a long time. Even a city like Hoorn, which did not really have an episode to celebrate or commemorate, tried its best to claim a sea battle as its own contribution to the Revolt. On a supralocal level it was therefore not so much the experience itself but how it was integrated into the national / regional story as well as a city's reputation in the urban network that was at stake.

In the Habsburg Netherlands the situation was different because the central government and particularly the archdukes were more active in memory practices than their equivalent in the Dutch Republic, the States General. While it was still left to the cities themselves to find suitable memory cultures, these communities often first turned to the Habsburg government before considering (existing) urban rivalries. In general, Southern cities emphasized their loyalty to the crown as well as their (newly found) Catholic identity. The first city that successfully built such a reputation of Catholicism out of its war memories was 's-Hertogenbosch. Even after the city was conquered by the Dutch Republic in 1629, this reputation never left 's-Hertogenbosch. Other cities that became known for their loyalty were Leuven and Lille, while Antwerp propagated its new Catholic identity. That city made a remarkable turnaround after it capitulated to the Habsburg regime in 1585. Returning families from exile in Cologne, Jesuits and the Catholic Church started a process of recatholization that was very successful. In the story about the Revolt that still survived in Antwerp, the city had, only temporarily, lost its way but had refound its true nature.

Despite the similarities and differences between urban memory cultures, what this study has revealed is that it is worthwhile to look at multiple cities at the same time not only to discover material memories and a diversity of stakeholders but also to see how at an urban level memory cultures could be dynamic and complex. The development of memory cultures on an urban level is, of course, not unique to the Low Countries or the early modern period. Warfare and disasters had inspired governments as well as individuals to commission art

and memorabilia since antiquity.¹¹ In the Middle Ages there are numerous examples of sieges and battles which were depicted for town halls and churches.¹² Moreover, in the early modern period the wars of religion in France and the Thirty Years' War also inspired individuals and communities to commission art, to keep relics as material memories, and to use the past in civic representation.¹³ Yet, what makes the Low Countries stand out is the high rate of urbanization, the proximity of cities to each other, and the governmental structure of the Dutch Republic which meant that they depended on each other economically and politically. In turn this fueled a competition between cities in which the Revolt continued to play a significant part.

Because of the role which material memories played in civic representation there are perhaps more memorabilia available in the Low Countries than elsewhere in Europe. Urban rivalry, especially, served as a catalyst for a large variety of material culture. We need to further explore material memorabilia in locations such as the Holy Roman Empire, England and France. A comparative study between these areas of Europe should be undertaken to understand how material memories of war such as the wars of religion and the English civil war were commemorated and whether and how the way these events were remembered differed from the memory processes of the Low Countries. There is also more to be learned about the Low Countries. I have not tried to provide a comprehensive overview of material memories in the Low Countries. Moreover, as the digitization of archives, libraries and museum collections continues, the accessibility of various sources will increase, allowing scholars to investigate individual cities not explored in this study due to the selected focus on Holland and Brabant.

Nevertheless, we can already conclude that the material memories of the Dutch Revolt were plentiful and their role remarkable. The objects told stories, were depositories of memories, and connected storytellers to their audience. Without these material memories many stakeholders would not have been able to spread their stories and to locate them within the existing urban memory culture. The objects not only authenticated a story or message, but they provided it with a physical shape in which it could survive until the

¹¹ Martin van Creveld, *Oorlogscultuur* (Houten 2009) 221–319.

¹² See for example, Meester van Rhenen, *Inname van Rhenen in 1499*, sixteenth century, town hall Rhenen; Anonymous, *Buitenzijde van de rechter vleugel van een altaarstuk met de Sint Elisabethsvloed*, 18-19 november 1421, met de dijkbreuk bij Wieldrecht, ca 1490-1495, oil on panel, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv nr SK-A-3147-B; Marc Boone en Maarten Prak, 'Rulers, patricians and burghers. The great and little traditions of urban revolt in the Low Countries', in: Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen (eds.) *A Miracle Mirrored. The Dutch Republic in European Perspective* (Cambridge 1995) 99–134, there 108, 110.

¹³ Creveld, *Oorlogscultuur*, 279–280; Klaus Bussmann and Heinz Schilling, (eds.), *1648. War and peace in Europe* (Munich 1998); Hilary Bernstein, *Between crown and community. Politics and civic culture in sixteenth-century Poitiers* (Ithaca 2004).

present. Each object therefore made its own contribution to the history and memory of the Dutch Revolt. Alone these objects represent the memory of an individual stakeholder, but together they represent the memories of a variety of stakeholders in the urban community who were concerned with their own and / or their city's representation and identity. Whether a document, painting, gable stone, jug, print, or cannonball, each of the material memories discussed above has left its permanent mark on an urban memory landscape somewhere in the Low Countries.

