



# Collecting Uncollectables: Joachim Du Bellay

By Gro Bjørnerud Mo

## Abstract

Lists of wonders have circulated for millennia. Over and over, such inventories of spectacular man made constructions have been rewritten, re-edited and reimagined. Both the wonders and the lists of wonders, preferably of the seven, have had a profound and long-lasting effect, and have been abundantly imitated, copied and reworked. Renaissance creative thinking was obsessed with the seven wonders of the ancient world, and early-modern Europe experienced a surge of visual and verbal depictions of wonders.

This article is about a remarkable list of seven wonders, included in one of Joachim Du Bellay's canonical poems on Roman antiquities (*Antiquités de Rome*), published in Paris in 1558. Du Bellay shapes his list of wonders by exploring patterns of both repetition and mutability. Almost imperceptibly, he starts suggesting connections between 16th-century Rome and distant civilizations. Through the eyes of a fictive traveller and collector, the poet venerates the greatness and laments the loss of ancient buildings, sites and works of art, slowly developing a verbal, visual and open-ended gallery, creating a collection of crumbling or vanished, mainly Roman, architecture. This poetic display of ruins and dust in the Eternal City is nourished by the attraction of the inevitable destruction of past splendour and beauty. In the sonnets, Du Bellay imitates classical models and patterns. While compiling powerful images and stories of destruction, he combines techniques associated with both a modern concept of copy and more ancient theories of copia. In this context, this article also explores whether Pliny's *Natural History* might be a source for the imaginary collection of lost sites and wonders in Du Bellay's *Antiquités*.

**Keywords:** Du Bellay, Wonders of the world, Roman Antiquities, Pliny the Elder, Copiousness

Mo, Gro Bjørnerud: "Collecting Uncollectables: Joachim Du Bellay", *Culture Unbound*, Volume 9, Issue 1, 2017: 23–37. Published by Linköping University Electronic Press: <http://www.cultureunbound.ep.liu.se>

## Introduction

Joachim Du Bellay (1522–1560) was a major figure in the French Renaissance. He was one of the most distinguished members of the famous Pléiade, a group of seven poets, who promoted the French vernacular by imitating Italian and classical writings. In the mid-16th century, the Pléiade poets were fervently fleshing out new solutions for French culture and politics through skilful appropriations of past events, texts and monuments. Rome in the 16th century was an important model for and a vibrant centre of attraction to French humanists in the process of renewal they were engaged in. Even though there is no explicit mention of Roman art or architecture on the Renaissance list of seven wonders, we shall see that in its close vicinity sites and monuments from the city lie in wait. Humanists were drawn towards the city in both a literal and a metaphorical sense; they admired and copied writings depicting ancient Rome, but they were simultaneously driven by the desire to see the city and observe its monuments with their own eyes, “the voyage was both a rhetorical figure and a cultural paradigm for the French Renaissance, which sent some of its best minds to Rome” (MacPhail 1990: 2). Both words and things (*verba* and *res*) triggered this attention.

In his seminal manifest promoting the French language, the *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise* from 1549, Du Bellay metaphorically encourages his readers to march towards Rome, which in this context represents an incitement to copy the masterpieces produced by their neighbours on the Italian peninsula. Only a few years later, Du Bellay opted for the literal meaning of his own advice and travelled to Rome. In 1553, he accompanied his patron and relative, Cardinal Du Bellay, to Rome as his secretary on a diplomatic mission, a stay that lasted until 1557. These were difficult times. Rome was engaged in a series of European conflicts. French diplomacy at the papal court was a demanding task, because France was participating in several of the ongoing Italian wars. Du Bellay frequented the most powerful political milieus and found himself near the major historical events of the time. During the same period, he was writing relentlessly. Back in France, he published four collections of poetry, three in French and one in Latin: *Les Regrets*, *Divers Jeux rustiques*, *Proemata*, *Antiquités de Rome*. In his writings, he explores territories where the bonds between literary and political culture are tight. Du Bellay depicts journeys and itineraries; he excels in border-crossing activities, between secular and religious space, between life at the courts of France and Italy and between poetry and politics. He launches a movement where a “universal” Latin culture gradually is replaced by a powerful search for a new national French language and community (Hampton 2001).

## Traveller — collector — writer

Du Bellay's canonical poems on Roman antiquities (*Antiquités de Rome*) were written in Rome and published in Paris in 1558. It is a collection of 32 sonnets, describing the greatness and lamenting the ruins of Rome.<sup>1</sup> The *Antiquités* opens with a sonnet to the king, presenting the collection of poetry as paintings to the French monarch, Henri II, and then the poet slowly starts developing an imaginary gallery exhibiting lost and mainly Roman architecture.<sup>2</sup> Rome is observed through the eyes of a staged newcomer, guided around the city and responding to a commanding voice who urges him to *see*.<sup>3</sup> The spatial explorations of urban landscapes are striking and at the centre of attention in the *Antiquités de Rome*, "because the map of Rome is the map of the world," the poet famously states.<sup>4</sup>

Roman art and architecture are at display in the sonnets. They are clearly witnessed by a connoisseur. The figure of a collector might be glimpsed in these poems, and observed next to that of the traveller. My argument is that Du Bellay's *poeta viator* (Tucker 2003) also should be seen as a *poeta collector*. The travelling writer who pens down observations of sites, buildings and objects inevitably starts editing a catalogue of the sights he chooses to depict. The affinities between the writer, the geographer and the antiquarian collector will serve as a point of departure for the reading of the poems (Momigliano 1990: 67).

The connections between displacement and imitation in Du Bellay's *oeuvre* are sophisticated and complex. Movements between geographical, allegorical or emblematic space characterize most of his texts. The roles of the traveller and of the voyage have become a central topic in Du Bellay scholarship for the last three decades (MacPhail 1990; Tucker 1990, 2003; Melehy 2010). The poetic persona created by the French Renaissance writer clearly is a traveller and the connections between movements and texts are amply and imaginatively explored. In early-modern imagination, however, collections of ancient sculpture were associated with establishing empire (Christian 2010). Such an allegorical connection between the role of the collector and the appropriation of power opens for a new kind of reading. It defines a wonderfully ambiguous display for the political and antiquarian project Du Bellay sets out to explore in his "paper collection", his verbal descriptions of magnificent and vulnerable Roman architecture.

In his classical study *The Light in Troy* Thomas Greene identifies an archaeological drive in humanist activity, an urge to dig and see characterizes the Renaissance exploration of the past (Greene 1982). A similar perspective can be found in Momigliano's 1990 historiographical study, where he stresses the role of archaeology as a precursor of antiquarian studies (Momigliano 1990). Traces of archaeological ambitions can be observed in the *Antiquités*, but Du Bellay stresses the less visible and tangible results of such a quest. Even though he chooses to deal with an antiquarian subject in his sonnets, systematically listing important monuments of

the ancient world, the poet deliberately details the precarious nature of the collections he chooses to display. His approach is different from that of the prototypical antiquarian Peiresc (1580–1637), who belongs to the next generation, and as Momigliano has pointed out, distinguishes between the task of the collector and that of the historian.

Du Bellay's portrait of the traveller to Rome differs from both the early humanist archaeological figure and the later antiquarian collectors and writers. The poetic persona he chooses to depict is an early-modern practitioner of a slightly different kind of antiquarianism. Whereas the archetypical collectors of the next generation were "convinced that they could examine the material objects of the past in a positive scientific manner" (Momigliano 1990: 57), Du Bellay's displays of Roman ruins and of the wonders are less fixed, and the metaphorical affinities of the geographer, the traveller and the collector are more open to investigations and contradictions.

#### *Variation and visibility*

In *The Cornucopian Text*, Terence Cave explores theories and practices of imitation and focuses on their reciprocity in 16th-century writings (Cave 1979).<sup>5</sup> Du Bellay is one of the writers Cave discusses in his book. The Renaissance writer is admired for his copious style. Within an early-modern culture of imitation, the art of copying is based on what is already written; it is clearly linked to the modern copy as we know it. But it is also connected to *copia* (lat. meaning forces, plenty, abundance, resources, supplies, wealth), its positive and rich connotations, and thereby to more ancient theories on how to create a varied, abundant and powerful discourse. The copiousness of Du Bellay's writing fluctuates between and explores resources both from the "organic" (rich harvests, flowering gardens, orchards filled with fruit) and the "architectural" (Cave 1979: 72). The latter (columns, arches, walls) plays a major role in the sonnets exploring Roman space, but images of organic growth also appear. As we shall see, a theory and a practice of a highly elaborate, creative and even paradoxical *copia* unfold in Du Bellay's poems, allowing the writer to craft and exhibit emptiness and plenitude, and to imagine displays of words and things connecting and disconnecting with the past.

In the *Antiquités de Rome*, the poet imitates classical sources. Because meditations on ruins of Rome are a humanist topos, Du Bellay follows classical models and patterns closely. He copies and quotes both ancient and contemporary humanist texts, but in the imitations, he chooses to amplify the influence of the inevitable destruction of all things. These modifications are politically motivated. The Italian humanists in the previous generation dreamt of ancient glory while depicting the ruined state of the modern city; their aim was a *renovatio* (i.e. renewal, renovation, restoration) of ancient Rome. Du Bellay's ideal is different. His

goal is inspired by the *translatio studii et imperii* (i.e. the transfer of culture and political power from one civilization to the next), and more specifically to rebuild the ancient city under French dominion. In this context, “rebuilding necessarily implies ruining” (MacPhail 1990: 12). The specific kind of *copia* he develops serves to connect with lost objects from the past, but also to imagine impressive constructions of the future.<sup>6</sup>

When his poetic fashioning of the lost city explicitly addresses the future, the purpose of Du Bellay’s narrative becomes overtly political. In describing the agony of the Eternal City, Du Bellay aggressively borrows from a large variety of sources and verbally seeks to destroy them. The sonnet XXX describes how Roman ruins are searched for relics and robbed. Stories of uncontrollable fire, ravages of harsh seasons and of a series of ecological disasters dominate one poem after another, but towards the end of the *Antiquités*, these violent images serve to suggest the possibilities of a cyclical resurrection. Ancient Rome must be lost for a new Rome to be constructed in France. The translation from ancient Rome to modern France, as Du Bellay perceives it, happens through a paradoxical series of fertile metaphorical destructions.

It is against this backdrop that Du Bellay chooses to accelerate and intensify the role of decay. His portrayal focuses on the memory of works of art that are unforgettable and, yet, non-existent. He explores and abundantly copies what is lost. The absence or uncertainty of materiality leaves more space for a writer eager to reuse and recycle ancient materials, their immateriality made easily adaptable and transportable; they are smoothly moved and displayed in new realms. The fertility of lost material may explain why the seven wonders of the world occupy an emblematic position in the shaping and sharpening of the dichotomies unfolding in *Les Antiquités de Rome*. The copious inclusion of such organic and architectural resources allows for a veneration of works of art and even of whole civilizations that have disappeared.

The practice of imitation and more specifically of *copia* (positively connected to images of plenty) in Early Modern Europe is developed in a broader intellectual and cultural context where imagination was believed to mediate between an inner and an outer world, between intellect and body. It operates within a framework of sense-based thought, allowing for words and things to be collected in the mind – a capacity shared by humans, and that can be trained and cultivated (Lyons 2005).

An important model, in this context, is Quintilian, who advises on how to create attractive and vivid narratives addressing this cognitive and emotional plenitude in the mind of a listener or spectator. Quintilian proposes a theory linking imagination and emotion; he favours imaginative processes that allow for navigations between true and false, past and present, fiction and reality:

The person who will show the greatest power in the expression of emotions will be the person who has most properly formed what the Greeks call *phantasiai* (let us call them “visions”), by which the images of absent things are presented to the mind in such a way that we seem actually to see them with our own eyes and have them physically present to us, they will be imprinted on my mind. The result will be *enargeia*, what Cicero calls *illustratio* and *evidentia*, a quality which makes us seem not so much to be talking about something as exhibiting it. Emotions will ensue just as if we were present at the act itself. (Quintilian, 2001: 6.2. 29-32)

This famous passage in Quintilian on the power of expressing emotion offers an understanding of how lost wonders may survive, precisely as an act of the imagination. Even though he mainly deals with generations of French writers following that of Du Bellay, I particularly enjoy reading John Lyons’s presentation of these imaginative practices. He explains how imagination has “the power to overcome limitations of time and space” (Lyons 2005: 37). These discussions in late antiquity and early-modern culture propose a powerful theory of intense imaginative processes allowing for absent objects to be perceived as visible and present. In a context of early-modern “inter-art” and cross-media theories, anachronistically speaking, Du Bellay’s poems offer access to the corresponding practices.

Du Bellay’s writings include sophisticated temporal complexities, allowing for playful and innovative imitations of earlier models. He laments and rejoices when confronted with objects of the past that are lost or disappearing. This point of departure, simultaneously venerating the beauty and fragility of ancient marvels, is transformed into a high-end verbal *copia* and depends highly on the imaginative mindscape of the reader-spectator.

## Irresistibly lost

Lists of wonders have circulated for millennia. Over and over, such inventories of *mirabilia* (i.e. marvels, miracles) have been rewritten, re-edited and reimagined. Both the wonders and the lists of wonders, preferably of the seven, have had a profound and long-lasting influence. In Du Bellay’s case, the seven wonders of the ancient world are included in the territorial explorations unfolding within the body of sonnet II in the *Antiquités* (quite an achievement as the poet has only 14 lines at his disposal).

Catalogues of what might be the most marvellous things in the world are of course subject to change. Across the centuries, different collections of monuments, sites and sculptures have been ranked on the list of seven. Renaissance

creative thinking, obsessed with the seven wonders of the ancient world, saw a surge of both verbal and visual depictions of wonders. And one might argue that the list was fixed in the Renaissance: “The list as we know it today only became fixed in the Renaissance, at a time when scholars were looking back in admiration at the world of the Roman Empire a thousand years before” (Clayton & Price 1991: 5). The Renaissance list quoted by these two scholars builds on a series of engravings by Maerten van Heemskerck. It contains the Colossus of Rhodes, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Great Pyramids of Egypt, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Temple of Artemis and the Pharos.

Du Bellay’s collection of wonders resembles, but is not identical to this “fixed renaissance list”. The first thing we learn from comparing the list in the sonnet with that of the prints is that the poet does not include the same sites and edifices as van Heemskerck.<sup>7</sup> This tells us that the list of seven wonders in the Renaissance is not as stable as scholars have assumed. Du Bellay chooses not to mention the Lighthouse in Alexandria, but includes the Labyrinth at Crete. The French poet starts his list describing the Hanging Gardens, continues with Artemis’s Temple, proceeds with the Pyramids, goes on to describe the Statue at Olympia, followed by the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus. The last monument Du Bellay mentions is the Colossus of Rhodes.

The poet, however, also emphasizes that he is quoting verbal performances. Rather theatrically he pretends to copy appreciative accounts from people who have actually been on site and seen the ancient miracles by their own eyes. In Babylon, they boast; in Egypt, they sing; in Greece, they describe and publish; on Crete, they remember; on Rhodes, they commemorate (my translations).<sup>8</sup> The next thing we can learn from comparing sonnets and prints is that there is more to the number of seven than what immediately meets the eye. The second sonnet of the *Antiquités* launches a movement of geographical expansion and starts moving beyond the limits of list. In the last lines of the sonnet, the poet metonymically continues to work with the number seven and transfers it to a Roman context. He praises the Seven Hills of Rome and then chooses to associate the hills with the seven wonders of the world. In fact, at the very end of the sonnets, the seven hills simply replace the seven wonders; the seven hills have actually become the seven wonders.<sup>9</sup> In the context of the *Antiquités*, the comparison and / or replacement serve as an introduction to imagine the seven Roman hills as tombs surrounding the city (sonnets IV and XXVII). The remaining thirty sonnets are about how ancient Rome is destroyed, how it is reduced to ashes, and how it has become nothing but dust and an empty name (sonnets VII and XXVII).

This discursive approach to the seven wonders subtly conveys images of things and places, but overtly demonstrates that the transmissions of such inventories of past greatness depend heavily on verbal representations and reports. They come

from afar, from ancient civilizations, and they are, for different reasons, largely inaccessible. This inaccessibility explains why they are mostly collected in writing.

### **And then they were eight...**

Several Latin authors created lists of seven wonders. One of their earliest models is Herodotus who, without mentioning lists or numbers, speaks of wonders and who mentions the pyramids and the city of Babylon. But when it comes to more canonical lists, three Greek sources are often mentioned: Philo of Byzantium, who lived during the latter half of the 3rd century BC; Antipater of Sidon, who lived in the second half of the 2nd century BC; and Stabo, who lived from 64 or 63 BC–c. 24 AD (Clayton & Price 1991). And as we have already seen the lists of the seven wonders, as they have been handed down, and as we know them today, do not include any Roman monuments or sculptures.

Discussions on how to compensate for this lacuna, however, have been going on since antiquity (Clayton & Price 1991). Some of the most important efforts of including Rome amongst the *mirabilia* argue that more memorable works of art should be added to the first seven. In the *Natural History*, completed in AD 77, the Roman author and naturalist Pliny the Elder (AD 23 – AD 79) presents detailed descriptions of the seven wonders of the ancient world, but then, suggestively adds elaborated portraits of Roman art and architecture explicitly connecting their magnificence to that of the seven wonders previously displayed in the text. Pliny opts for an expanding 7 + 1 solution when presenting the wonders. Conspicuously, he makes this solution serve to amplify the role and presence of Rome in the context of ancient marvels. A closer scrutiny, however, reveals that this, in fact, is a very common pattern. Many lists convey a model of seven wonders + one (the latter being Rome herself). When examining the Renaissance list based on Maerten van Heemskerck's prints of seven wonders, I discovered that even Heemskerck actually adds one print. He includes a representation of the Colosseum in Rome, with a self-portrait of himself figuring confidently in the front.<sup>10</sup>

Du Bellay seems to be fully aware of a more prolific and expansive model as he skilfully responds to it by developing the open-ended potential offered by the 7+ pattern. "I want to sing," he writes emphatically in the last lines of the second sonnet "The Seven Hills of Rome / the seven wonders of the world."<sup>11</sup> And we must note that after all, he writes *one* sonnet on the seven wonders, using the final line to simply replace the seven wonders of the world by the Seven Hills of Rome, explicitly ending in the 7+ model. In this way, he not only insists on a plurality of lists, but also constructs a playful bridge to a different spatial and temporal potential, and a more uncertain number of wonders, because almost all the remaining sonnets in the *Antiquités* are dealing with Rome. Swiftly his focus has shifted from

an architectural cityscape to the natural landscape of the seven hills.

Some of the most canonical lists of wonders do not follow the patterns of a rigorously delimited model and keep changing and growing, featuring abundance and fecundity in a distinct cornucopian shape. The multiform shape of the lists was new to me, and I started to study the *Natural History* more closely, because this was where I first discovered the 7 + 1 display of wonders. In fact, Pliny's work seems to be deeply involved and embedded in processes of creating variety that resemble those we find in the *Antiquités*.<sup>12</sup> In Pliny, there is a rather abruptly constructed bridge between the seven wonders and Rome. He suddenly chooses to stop writing about the wonders of the past and expresses a desire to deal with the wonders of his own city (Rome, that is). Du Bellay chooses a similar and swift transition in the final two lines of his second sonnet: "I want to sing / about the Seven Hills of Rome." The orientation towards the past is replaced by a sense for the present.

When Pliny insists on how Rome harbours and represents collectables, this choice make him stand out as a potential model for Du Bellay. The Renaissance poet might even have found a model for the twofold representation of Rome (magnificent and lost) in the *Natural History*. Du Bellay might even have taken Pliny's text as a point of departure for the emphasis on destruction. As Sorcha Carey has shown, Pliny evocatively makes his readers understand that the very moment Rome triumphs, and his own inventory of the world is complete, its decline begins.

The image of Rome as the world, luxury, theatres and all, embodies precisely the paradox that has dominated Pliny's inventory of the world – that in trying to catalogue the glorious totality of the Roman Empire, one inevitably includes luxury, the substance directly responsible for Rome's decline (Carey 2000: 10).

This problem in Pliny is, as we have seen, the very point Du Bellay chooses to dramatize when shaping his own images of Roman decay. The figure of his *poeta collector* is warned. He does not opt for Pliny's dream of the complete collection. Du Bellay inverts the order of the display. He chooses to focus on the vast powers of destruction. Fragments, ruins and dust allow him to communicate a long visual history of lost objects and, simultaneously, exhibit the rich variety of changing, and yet surviving patterns.

In the Renaissance, five of the seven admired wonders were definitely lost and had been lost for quite some time. Phidias's statue of Olympian Zeus, the Temple of Artemis, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes, the Pharos of Alexandria were all destroyed long ago. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

might never have existed. The pyramids at Giza are the only surviving marvel. Even though the Cheops Pyramid and the ones adjacent to it still could – and can – be admired, Egyptian pyramids also include structures that were robbed, ruined and destroyed. The focus on destruction saturating Du Bellay's aesthetics in the *Antiquités* is supported by strong material evidence.

A more detailed reading of the *Natural History* led me to the discovery of yet another striking parallel between Pliny and Du Bellay. As we have seen, Du Bellay's poems on Rome have a clear rhetorical underpinning and explore the visual and spatial qualities of memory organised as a building. His representation of Roman architecture in ruins is not as straight forward as it might seem, because it also opens for an allegorical questioning of the organisation not only of space, but of memory as places (Yates 1966; Dauvois 1992). In this context, the rhetorical figure of *antonomasia* stands out as a phenomenon worth some attention (Notz 1994; Mo 2013). The antonomasia allows for a proper name to replace a phrase and launches a movement where the proper name loses its singularity. In "the search for Rome in Rome," it captures the mutability of Roman art and architecture and expresses disorientation. In "there is nothing left of Rome in Rome," it portrays the ancient city as entirely lost. The singular site is nowhere to be found. Rome is reduced to an empty name.<sup>13</sup>

The antonomasia also has had a strong effect on Pliny's list of the seven wonders. It literally abounds with proper names transformed into nouns. Some of which have become so familiar that we tend to use them without even noticing. Pharos lends its name to all light houses. The Tomb of Mausollos, his mausoleum, has become the common denominator for any magnificent tomb. The Colossus has given its name to anything gigantic or very powerful. The Temple in Ephesus is involved in events connected to Herostratus and Croesus. Both these protagonists are immortalized to such an extent that their names now characterize humans who gain global fame either for a criminal act, or for being extremely wealthy. When the antonomasia allows *proper* names to figure as *common* nouns, they are no longer site-specific or fenced-in, but cut loose of the confinement of singularity. The figure of the antonomasia is in the service of *copia*, open to a plurality of spaces, timelines and endless new situations. The seven wonders in their different shapes have become shared and varied resources that can be composed and recomposed in a cornucopian movement. They have disappeared, but are vividly remembered and a productive plurality has replaced a magnificent, but lost singularity.

## Display of absent things

Pliny's effort was to create a complete catalogue of the world. He inventoried and collected his world in writing, and it is well known that he became an important model for early-modern collectors (Impey & MacGregor 1985). The *Natural History* also seems to be a model for shaping both the verbal and the visual qualities of the *Antiquités de Rome*. Words and things are connected and interrelated in ways that Du Bellay knows to develop allegorically. As we have already seen, he speaks of his poems as paintings. The use of the word antiquities in the title launches a corresponding ambivalence and allows for a simultaneous presentation of the *Antiquités* as a collection of poetry and a collection of lost architecture: "These old palaces, these old arches that you see / These old walls, are what we call Rome."<sup>14</sup> In these lines, Du Bellay deploys *copia* by verbally displaying a series of uncollectable antiquities. They are lost and visible, *phantasiai* at work, according to Quintilian. The paradoxical qualities come as the result of powerful rhetorical techniques, focusing on highly visual scenes, deliberately addressing the eye of the reader. In the sonnet, the poet includes a visitor and invites him as a newcomer to an imaginary exposition of Roman ruins. He insists on deictic references, by accumulating demonstrative pronouns, "these old palaces, these old arches." An important aim is to transform the reader into a spectator: "See here! Watch this!" The prolixity of persuasive visual invitations in the sonnets is striking.

The *mirabilia* are constantly re-imagined and re-invented. Because of their almost exclusively phantasmagorical survival, the changing canon of the seven wonders of the ancient world represents some real curatorial challenges. Du Bellay plays with them all and suggests that poetry may triumph. Words may conquer marble. By copying and recycling this old saying, the Renaissance poet starts exploring the outcome of his staged victory. The sonnets offer preservation and / or conservation of antiquities by proxy.

There is both a copy history and a copy theory at play in this movement where past splendour is simultaneously imitated and annihilated. Du Bellay is copying from within a culture practicing ideals of vivid, energetic discourse. He is detailing the visual qualities of absent things and develops a panoramic view of a disappearing and crumbling city: "These walls, these arches, these baths and these temples / Judge when you see such vast ruins."<sup>15</sup> The inclusion of the seven wonders epitomizes the destructive potential he discovers in Pliny and that he radicalizes and amplifies. However, it simultaneously transmits persuasive images ensuring that ancient miracles will be remembered and can be brought back on display in the present.

The art of collecting in the *Antiquités* is concerned with objects that are lost. The observer staged in Du Bellay's sonnets has an eye for things that may never have existed, for the creative potential of uncollectable and lost beauty. The poet

conveys a celebratory lament demonstrating that there is no need for originals or origins for works of art to survive. There are other effective ways of protecting the past from negligence and oblivion. Materiality is not needed for absent things to become physically present, but the forces of *phantasiai* must be activated. Du Bellay explores destruction and loss as sources of plenty. The survival of the seven wonders of the ancient world depends almost exclusively on a forceful transmission in different media such as coins, ruins, inscriptions, fragments, accounts, lists, and not least sonnets. Their long and changing history builds on techniques presenting the wonders as irresistible, serving as imaginative triggers for the creation of new high-quality copies. As they are “imprinted in the mind,” they can be shared, ready to be copied again and again. Things that are lost can be recomposed in the mind of the reader. The past can be carved out in the present and sonnets become a site for collecting uncollectables.

**Gro Bjørnerud Mo** is a Professor of French Literature at the University of Oslo, and an early modern scholar. A majority of her publications deals with the connections between history and literature. She has written extensively on French poetry in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Recently she has published articles on François de Malherbe, Joachim du Bellay and Tristan l’Hermite. She has also worked on modernist literature and has currently a chapter in press on Marcel Proust’s novel *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*. E-mail: [g.b.mo@ilos.uio.no](mailto:g.b.mo@ilos.uio.no)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> “Une générale description de sa grandeur et comme une déploration de sa ruine,” frontpage in Joachim Du Bellay, *Antiquitez de Rome* in the Chamard edition of the *Cœuvres Poétiques*. All further references to Du Bellay in this article are taken from the Roudaut edition. The translations of Du Bellay’s sonnets in the article are mine. An online translation into English of the *Antiquités* exists. See Du Bellay, *The Ruins of Rome*, translated by A. S. Kline 2009. <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasru-ins.htm>, accessed 10.05.2017.

<sup>2</sup> “Je les vous donne (Sire) en ce petit tableau.” “I give them to you (Sire) in this small painting,” my translation.

<sup>3</sup> Sonnet III urges the newcomer to Rome to see and to discover the city. I have highlighted the visual verbs in lines 2, 3 and 5). “Nouveau venu qui cherches Rome en Rome, / Et rien de Rome en Rome *n’aperçois*, / Ces vieux palais, ces vieux arcs que tu vois, / Et ces vieux murs, c’est ce que Rome on nomme. / Vois quel orgueil, quelle ruine [...]”

<sup>4</sup> Sonnet XXVI, “Puisque le plan de Rome est la carte du monde”, my translation.

<sup>5</sup> Cave presents a culture where copia is associated with abundance, verbal and well

as figurative. He shows how copia was a positive concept and how it has bonds to plenitude, proliferation and affluence. The cornucopian text figures prominently in 21st-century re-evaluations of copies and subsequent efforts to reassert the early-modern meanings of copia (Boone 2010). It is as if Cave's work on copia and cornucopia keeps on transferring some of rhetorical powers and richness it analyses. It is still not only quoted, but frequently copied by scholars in different disciplines. A careful comparison of Boone's introduction to copia and Cave's presentation of the concept reveals striking parallels. My own description of copia in this article borrows all its major elements from Cave.

<sup>6</sup> For an interesting study of a different kind of links between copious discourse, collections and restauration, see Angus Vine, "Copiousness, conjecture and collaboration in William Camden's Britannia" (Vine 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Sonnet II. "Le Babylonien ses hauts murs vantera, / Et ses vergers en l'air, de son Ephésienne / La Grèce décrira la fabrique ancienne, / Et le peuple du Nil ses pointes chantera: / La même Grèce encore vanteuse publiera / De son grand Jupiter l'image Olympienne, / Le Mausole sera la gloire Carienne, / Et son vieux labyrinthe la Crète n'oubliera : / L'antique Rhodien élèvera la gloire / De son fameux Colosse, au temple de Mémoire : / Et si quelques œuvre encore digne peut se vanter / De marcher en ce rang, quelque plus grand' faconde / Le dira : quant à moi, pour tous je veux chanter / Les sept coteaux Romains, sept miracles du monde."

<sup>8</sup> Sonnet II, "vantera, décrira, chantera, publiera, n'oubliera, élèvera la gloire à."

<sup>9</sup> Sonnet II, "pour tous je veux chanter / Les sept coteaux Romains, sept miracles du monde."

<sup>10</sup> Copies of the prints are easily accessible here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maarten\\_van\\_Heemskerck](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maarten_van_Heemskerck), accessed 03.05.2016. In Dresden the prints were recently exhibited and presented as the eight wonders of the world, see <http://www.skd.museum/en/special-exhibitions/archive/the-eight-wonders-of-the-world-by-maarten-van-heemskerck/>, accessed 12.05.2017.

<sup>11</sup> Sonnet II, "Je veux chanter / Les sept coteaux Romains, sept miracles du monde," my translation.

<sup>12</sup> Pliny's *Natural History* is not quoted in Hassan Melehy's recent book on Du Bellay and Rome, nor is he quoted in this context by leading Du Bellay scholars like George Hugo Tucker or Eric McPhail. Pliny is not mentioned in the elaborated annotations to the *Antiquités* in the Chamard edition. He is not among the 13 classical writers quoted as the most important sources for Du Bellay's poems in the more recent François Roudaut edition, and Pliny's name is not mentioned in the footnotes to the *Antiquités* in this last edition.

<sup>13</sup> Sonnet III, "Nouveau venu, qui cherches Rome en Rome / Et rien de Rome en Rome n'apperçois," my translation. For a rich and interesting study of the role of proper names in Du Bellay, see (Mathieu-Castellani 1980).

<sup>14</sup> Sonnet III, “Nouveau venu [...] Ces vieux palais, ces vieux arcs que tu vois,” my translation.

<sup>15</sup> Sonnet XXVII, “Ces murs, ces arcs, ces thermes et ces temples,” my translation.

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