The essays brought together in this volume consider the reuse of antiquities and conceptions of the classical past in local communities across early modern Europe. Arising from a conference held at the Warburg Institute in November 2014, the volume brings together essays by speakers, as well as new additions by invited contributors. It unites work by historians of art and architecture, historians and literary scholars that complicates the notion of a unitary, Greco-Roman past revived in a single European ‘Renaissance’, broadening the scope of research in the light of recent interest in regional histories and local antiquarianisms. Adopting an interdisciplinary and comparative method, these essays investigate how communities and individuals from the fifteenth century, guided by local concerns, were engaged with the invention of the past through the strategic, creative use of texts and images. Contributions consider the revival of the antique not only in the so-called centres of Italy that have long been the focus of study, but also in cities and regions regarded as peripheral, examining diverse political contexts in both Protestant and Catholic Europe – Milan, Ancona, southern Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Britain, the Low Countries and elsewhere. As interdisciplinary studies, the essays explore a range of related cultural phenomena: antiquarianism, civic histories, excavations, artistic and architectural projects, collections of antiquities, or the reuse of classical literary models in vernacular poetry.

In the early modern era, local antiquaries studied material remains, which were thought to be living testaments to distant origins, whether real or fictive. Cities and regions shaped their own sense of the past from a variety of ancient histories available to them – primarily, the different eras of Roman antiquity, but also pre-Roman, indigenous antiquities, or an imagined prehistoric era when giants populated the earth. Observers believed that medieval objects or texts were ancient, or that deliberate falsifications were antique, and in Spain, antiquaries sometimes understood Islamic monuments as antiquities. In keeping with the meaning of the Latin verb invenire – to discover by chance, or to invent – antiquities could be made up, found by accident, or unearthed in organised excavations. Such methods were used increasingly from the fifteenth century to construct arguments in support of particular myths of origins, representing
Local antiquities, local identities

history in a way that bolstered familial or civic status. The essays gathered here address the notion of competing claims to the past, the character and priorities of local conceptions of the antique, and parallels or divergences between antiquarianism in different regions. Close studies investigate works of art and architecture that reused spolia of recognisable local provenance, or were otherwise characterised by regional concepts of antiquity, whether accurate, confused or deliberately manipulated.

Beginning in the fifteenth century, the volume traces the evolution of several different trends that can be said to originate in the 1400s: the perfection of humanist methods (put to use not only to recover the past but also, as Anthony Grafton has emphasised, to falsify it), the growth of antiquities collecting, and a burgeoning interest in civic histories and local antiquarianism generally. In the fifteenth century Ptolemy’s *Geographia* became widely known, kindling interest in the art of chorography – the study of a local place – and encouraging historians, antiquaries, epigraphers and artists to focus their attention on local conditions as well as the historical layers visible on or underneath the ground. It was also a time when the printing press offered a new tool for communicating and comparing local versions of the ancient past. In the late fifteenth century, the Dominican friar Giovanni Nanni (Annius) of Viterbo played up the Etruscan origins of his home town with fictive histories and images, staging the discovery of forged inscriptions alluding to Viterbo’s foundation by Janus, and publishing an inventive antiquarian treatise that was influential in many parts of Europe.

The foundations for an interdisciplinary analysis of local antiquities were laid in the 1950s by Roberto Weiss, in his survey of classical revival in Italy, and by Arnaldo Momigliano, in a famous article that made ‘antiquarianism’ a topic of academic research. In recent decades interest in municipal histories and local antiquarianisms in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries has produced important studies, often with a focus on Italian contexts in the earlier part of this period, and northern European contexts in the later. To consider the case of Italy, in the 1980s Eric Cochrane’s attention to the topic in *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* was followed by Christopher Ligota’s article on the historical methods of Annius, who became an index case for an expanding study of creative antiquarianism. The study of diverse antiquarianisms in Italy was also encouraged by the three-volume *Memoria dell’antico nell’arte italiana*, edited by Salvatore Settis (1984–86), which laid out the state of research in the topics of archaeology, spolia and reuse not only in the Italian centres, but in local and regional contexts. In 1992 an article on northern Italian antiquarianism by the architectural historian Richard Schofield (one of the contributors to this volume) challenged the notion that a normative early modern antiquity – one evoked in Florence and Rome in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries – served as a universal reference point for Italian artists and architects. His
conclusion was that in Lombardy, artists worked according to a local vision of the antique that was ‘entirely independent of a direct knowledge of Roman antiquities’. Other studies of local Italian contexts followed, notably Patricia Brown’s *Venice and Antiquity* (1996) and Andreas Beyer’s *Parthenope* (2000) on Naples, further broadening the scope of interest beyond Rome and Florence. New insights into the local character of southern Italy have emerged from Bianca de Divitiis’s ERC-funded project on antiquities in this region in the medieval and early modern era. The opportunity to expand this regional perspective and to compare and confront it with models of collecting and antiquarianism in the Roman centre studied by Kathleen Christian provided the initial impetus for the Warburg conference, and for this volume.

Since the 1990s there has been a steady and ever-increasing body of research on diverse representations of the past in local communities throughout Europe during the Renaissance. In 1992 Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich published *The Renaissance in National Context*, making the case for a European Renaissance that was ‘more than the rediscovery of Livy and Cicero and the export of art and rhetoric from Italy’, sparking fresh debate about regional concepts of the Renaissance in different parts of Italy and across Europe. Attention has turned to France, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and other places where genuine antiquities were often lacking, where forgeries or pastiches were abundant, or where antiquarian and archaeological activities diverged from Italian models. Christopher Wood’s work on antiquarianism in early modern Germany is exemplary in its consideration of forgery, copying and fiction as means of historiographic expression and self-representation in a regional context. Other studies of collections of antiquities in Fontainebleau under François I and in Spain have taken account of the free intermingling of classical remains with pastiches and copies, the sorts of objects that have traditionally been marginalised in histories of antiquarian collecting. Many of the contributors to this volume have expanded the discussion with recent publications on local concepts of antiquity in Spain (Katrina Olds), on municipal antiquities collections in Italy and France (William Stenhouse), on the antique as imagined by Netherlandish artists, collectors and architects (Edward Wouk, Krista De Jonge and Konrad Ottenheyrm), and other topics.

The present volume follows upon this and other recent work that has opened up new approaches. *Ab urbe condita*, edited by Véronique Lamazou-Duplan and published in 2001, considered foundation myths in many different European cities, shedding light on the rise of civic histories in late medieval Europe and the seemingly ubiquitous effort to invent antique origins. These essays clarified how communities seeking foundation myths, or mythical founders, chose from a variety of distant pasts – classical, biblical or Carolingian – depending upon local concerns, rivalries or alliances. In an article of 2003 Peter Burke
called attention to early modern interest not only in Greco-Roman antiquity and early Christianity, but also the ‘alternative antiquities’ of the Egyptian past or the Jewish tradition, as well as the so-called barbarian antiquities of the Gauls, Franks, Goths and Batavians. Recent scholarship has done much to recognise and re-evaluate the Renaissance revival of these pasts, while the expansion of Momigliano’s concept of ‘antiquarianism’ has called attention to the sheer variety of antiquarian practices in the early modern era. Recent publications that have broken new ground include the two-volume collection of essays Welche Antike?, which examines antiquarianism across seventeenth-century Europe, and the volume World Antiquarianism published by the Getty in 2014, which considers antiquarianism in Europe, Asia and the Americas, adopting a global and comparative method. Another recent contribution, Antiquarianisms: Contact, Conflict, Comparison (2017), is concerned with colonial societies and interactions between the antiquarian methods of European elites and those of local, indigenous populations. The two-volume Architettura e Identità locali published in 2013 brings together essays on Italy and other parts of Europe, questioning from many different perspectives the relationship between architecture and local identity from the Renaissance to the twentieth century.

Just as it has become increasingly clear that different notions of antiquity were adapted in a variety of regional contexts, recent studies of Renaissance temporality have challenged the notion of a unitary concept of rebirth or revival in this era. An essay by Anne-Marie Sankovich of 2006 on anachronism in Renaissance architectural theory posited that multiple temporalities inform even the most concerted efforts at the revival of the antique in the early modern era. Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood’s Anachronic Renaissance of 2010 developed a broad case for complicating the prevailing model of a well-ordered succession of historical periods, from antique, to medieval, to Renaissance, articulated with increasing clarity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Temporality in the early modern era was instead a matter of confusion, diversity and creative manipulation. Traditional notions of the geography of the Renaissance have shifted as well: in recent decades attention has focused on global perspectives that have questioned the model of centre and periphery, taking account of regions that have long been overlooked. Even when looking within the boundaries of Europe, attention to the ‘margins’ raises important questions when local models do not fit prevailing methods developed long ago for the study of centres, leading to the re-examination of preconceptions and long-standing hierarchies.

This volume expands recent challenges to centre–periphery models, monolithic concepts of antiquity, or the notion of an archaeologically ‘correct’ recovery of the antique in the early modern era. It considers instead the diversity of antiquity, questioning categories such as antique and medieval, authentic, copy and fake that were long understood in black-and-white or value-laden terms.
Case studies offer new readings of the traditional centres of Rome and Florence, or call attention to traditions in regions such as Poland and Portugal, which have themselves been discussed largely within local contexts, and have not been sufficiently integrated into broader conceptions of the period. Closer examination of these and other sites expands the scope of interest beyond the authentic Greek and Roman antiquities visible in central Italy between c. 1400 and 1520, which have been particularly well studied thanks in part to the Census of Antiquities Known to the Renaissance. Contributions question the privileging of genuinely antique points of origin, or the notion of a gradually more ‘accurate’ understanding of an authentic ancient Roman past, once understood as a normative European antiquity, which began in central Italy in the fifteenth century. Instead the focus is on inventive antiquarianism, understood not as a deceptive act of forgery, but as a creative, multivalent and meaningful historiographic and artistic method. Although the approach is interdisciplinary, architecture plays a particularly important role in this volume; its significance, traced in several of the essays, can be attributed to the prominence of built ruins in the landscape, the fluidity with which early modern viewers identified the dates and founders of buildings, the continued use of architectural spaces, or the reuse of antique and medieval materials in new constructions.

A recent review of antiquarian studies has stressed how ‘the particularities of individual cultural regions led to antiquarian studies in one part of Europe often looking very different from those in another’. As the contributions to this volume clarify, local approaches could vary depending upon the type and quantity of physical remains found in different cities and regions, as well as local customs regarding their conservation. The Roman ruins often of monumental or colossal scale visible in Rome, Verona, Ancona, in cities in southern Italy and southern France, or in Tarragona, Toledo and Córdoba in Spain had a notable impact on local antiquarian discourse. They could be the subject of literary or historical texts composed either in vernacular languages for a local audience, or in Latin in printed treatises that were more widely disseminated. Even in places where material remains were abundant they were reinterpreted or creatively reinvented with the help of new texts and images, as Kathleen Christian’s essay on Rome describes (Chapter 3). In parts of Europe with scattered material evidence of the past, often limited to scant remains, inventions and fictions that replaced ‘real’ antiquities were entirely within the norm.

Often the aim of antiquarian activity was to identify the city’s foundation with a chosen moment in the ancient past, as a way of supporting or contesting a particular political or social situation in the present, or of suggesting that God had bestowed divine favour on one place or another because of a certain providential order of history. This is seen for example in the case of the prehistoric mounds near Crakow discussed by Barbara Arciszewska in Chapter 13. These
were interpreted as the tombs of Krakus and Wanda, legendary founders of the Polish capital, which historians tied to the Romans as well as the Sarmatians, ancient Iranians whom the local Polish nobility claimed as ancestors. At around the same time in Antwerp, interest focused on a relief of the pagan god Semini displayed on a city gate, as is discussed in the essay by Edward Wouk (Chapter 10). This Gallo-Roman relief of a hybrid figure with a man’s torso and a serpent-like lower body was deployed strategically, in the absence of other, more substantial forms of ancient material evidence, to reinforce Antwerp’s power as a new global mercantile capital. The antiquarian and popular discourse surrounding this small image is paralleled by the reception of monumental remains in other parts of the Low Countries, such as the megalithic ruins in Frisia. As Konrad Ottenheym discusses, these were interpreted as the Pillars of Hercules and vestiges of the giants (Chapter 12).

Giants were a pan-European phenomenon and stories about them circulated throughout Europe. The appeal of these heroic figures helps to explain why the fossilised bones of prehistoric, gigantic animals discovered in different parts of Europe were believed to belong to giants, and also why giants were invoked in literary works. João Figueiredo’s essay (Chapter 9) on the Portuguese poet Luís de Camões’s epic poem Os Lusíadas (The Lusiads, 1572) analyses the complex figure of the giant Adamastor, described as an antique speaking statue whom the Portuguese encounter as they round the tip of Africa. As Figueiredo discusses, Adamastor was a new type of Colossus: he warns the Portuguese explorers of the moral dangers of overseas conquests, even as contemporaries praised them for piecing together and restoring a fragmented world, in a way comparable to the editing of classical texts or the restoration of ancient statues.

The evocation of a colossal ancient statue in poetry is a reminder of how literary and material remains worked in coordination in the invention of local identities. Searching for traces of the past, in the ground, in textual sources and in inscriptions, inspired novel types of historical and antiquarian writing which could be used to justify political and diplomatic regimes. Textual evidence could be joined up with material remains or, conversely, remains could be used to question the authority of pre-existing texts for those wishing to rewrite history. Physical traces of the past were woven together with historical arguments, for example, in the search for Ovid’s tomb by Polish antiquaries (Chapter 13), or the efforts to interpret Hadrian’s Wall by English scholars, explored by Jenna Schultz (Chapter 14). Similarly, as Francesco Benelli describes, the unequal rivalry between Venice and Ancona inspired the promotion of the monumental Arch of Trajan in Ancona as a civic symbol and a reminder of Ancona’s antique importance by Ciriaco d’Ancona and others (Chapter 2).

Several essays in this volume address the problem of the interaction or competition between authentic, Roman ruins and other types of material remains. Some
cities and regions proudly looked back to their origins in a pre-Roman period, as is seen in the reception of Italic and Messapic remains in Apulia in southern Italy. Bianca de Divitiis discusses how these were thought to be traces of indigenous peoples who, because of their refined culture, could be associated with an ancient past more glorious than that of the Romans (Chapter 4). A similar case is found in Poland, where close attention was paid to the supposed antiquities of the Sarmatians (Chapter 13) and in the Netherlands where Batavian antiquities were rediscovered (Chapter 12). Collectively, these case studies broaden the perspective on the increasing use of images and archaeological remains for artistic, evidential or historical purposes. The close examination of a local place and its material context as a way of proving a particular theory of origins became a widespread methodology. Finding the supposed physical or geographical traces of identity connected the past to the present in a manner that seemed natural and credible. Place names, as well, were favoured points of discussion in local antiquarianism, which, together with inscriptions and the names of local families, could offer ‘proof’ of foundation myths or ancestral claims. Annius of Viterbo believed inscriptions were more trustworthy (certior) than any author or text, and the names of places and people inscribed in stone seemed highly convincing historical evidence.

Research into pre-Roman origins as a source of local pride also led to the creation of all’antica styles in Renaissance architecture, as is suggested in Richard Schofield’s reading of the rustication of Palazzo Medici in Florence (Chapter 1). Here the building’s masonry is interpreted as a version of local types and possibly as a reference to the Etruscan origins of the city, rather than a feature meant to emphasise the palace’s Roman character. This notion in itself shows that only in a broader, relational perspective can one interpret monuments that have long have been the focus of art historical discussion. This is evident in the case of fifteenth-century palaces in Florence: the historiographic construction of the Florentine Renaissance has led to a misunderstanding of the impact of works that have been presented as pervasive models, overlooking the real consistency and inertia of a local medieval tradition, which often made the introduction of all’antica styles unnecessary.

In the history of architecture, the existence of a Renaissance style can no longer be identified exclusively with the use of classical orders. Likewise, responses to all’antica culture varied widely across Europe as a result of specific political conditions of cities and regions, local conceptions of the ancient past as well as the strength of medieval traditions. In southern Italy in the fifteenth century, antiquarian culture drew upon not only the large quantity of ancient remains visible throughout the region, but also numerous buildings from the glorious medieval past of the Kingdom of Naples, which could be just as authoritative as the ancient monuments (Chapter 4). As Fernando Marias analyses in
Chapter 7, medieval *mudejar* monuments from the Islamic past in Córdoba and Seville were visual sources subject to constant reinterpretation, alongside the classical idiom, in works of art and architecture produced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A type of regional antiquarianism flourished in Spain which has long been overlooked in broader historical accounts: Katrina Olds considers the case of the ecclesiastical historians and *curiosos* of Jaén in Andalusia, who developed a form of antiquarianism characterised by a practical yet scholarly brand of connoisseurship (Chapter 8). In their research into the local past they did not limit themselves to Greco-Roman antiquities, but also drew upon ecclesiastical, etymological, heraldic, toponymical and genealogical sources.

In addition to the interaction of *all’antica* styles and medieval legacies, the essays in this volume reconsider the self-conscious and strategic use of spolia in Renaissance collections, works of art, architecture and urban planning. The reuse, collection and display of antiquities connected local and individual identities, integrated with cultural and political programmes, as can be seen in the display of antiquities in the collections in Rome, or at the Orsini Palace in Nola in southern Italy (Chapters 3 and 4). As Krista De Jonge’s essay (Chapter 11) illuminates, the governor of Luxemburg, Peter Ernst von Mansfeld, assembled a specifically local collection of Gallo-Roman antiquities which he proudly displayed at his residence in Clausen. In so doing, he bolstered the international standing of Luxemburg, identified as Belgica Romana, while suggesting that his political authority over this territory was equal to that of a princely ruler.

Local humanists, historians and antiquaries reinterpreted textual sources and invented new historical narratives to suit their particular vision of the past. As Oren Margolis’s essay (Chapter 5) illuminates, interest in the Gaulish origins of Lombardy can be traced among historians and other writers trying to join up the histories of Milan and France during the Sforza regime and then, after the French invasion of Italy, during the Italian Wars. The creative manipulation of history is also seen in the search for the origins of the English and the Scots, as Schultz describes in Chapter 14. In a crucial moment of Anglo-Scottish relations, James V1/1’s ascent to the throne brought about the need to fit Scotland into the history of England, while at the same time maintaining English superiority and a sense that the Scots were ‘others’. A broad network of humanists across Europe acted either in cooperation or independently to develop local historical narratives, as when Smetius made claims for the Batavian origin of Nijmegen (Chapter 12).

As these essays illuminate, a diversity of local actors were engaged in the strategic reuse of the past. These protagonists were not only kings, but also members of religious institutions, the local nobility or lords, merchants and non-noble elites. In local contexts individuals – even those who were foreigners rather than natives – could play multiple roles as humanists, antiquities dealers, collectors of antique sculpture or agents, as is seen in the case of the Maffei in Rome.
(Chapter 3). Municipal governments proudly displayed small, civic collections of antiquities in public and semi-public buildings, to show off their artistic qualities and their historical importance, or to resist the trends of voracious collecting and the appropriation of antique monuments by rulers and elite individuals. Spolia were used to emphasise the authority of local governments when civic buildings became privileged sites for the preservation and display of antiquities, as in the cases of the Hôtel de ville in Arles (Chapter 6) and the Palazzo Giudici in Capua (Chapter 4). Ancient monuments were also sometimes subject to municipal legislation that guaranteed their preservation by local authorities, as William Stenhouse’s essay on southern France describes (Chapter 6). In southern Italy, city councils and governmental bodies took responsibility not only for preserving antique monuments, but also for commissioning new works of art and literature that engaged with them (Chapter 4).

Studies of the local reception of antiquities could certainly be broadened further to other contexts, and the present volume is by necessity selective in its discussion of topics which are multivalent and wide-ranging; while it offers an overview of many different regions in Europe, a regrettable but unforeseen gap in this collection has been the exclusion of the Holy Roman Empire. Collectively, the essays challenge the enduring notion of a unitary, pan-European antique past accurately revived by antiquaries in the Renaissance, raising questions that have broader implications for the field of early modern studies, such as, what effects have historical periodisation, and enduring concepts of centre and periphery, had on the state of research into the art and literature of this era? How do neoclassical conceptions of the antique continue to shape our understanding of an earlier era in the reception of antiquity? How should research on early modern antiquarianism move forward in a way that integrates local, regional and national identities, and how should traditional approaches and methods be revised as a result? It is hoped that these contributions will open up these and other directions of research by reconsidering antiquarian reuse in a broader perspective and extending further the analysis of local contexts.

Notes

Local antiquities, local identities


9 For the ERC-funded project, ‘Historical Memory, Antiquarian Culture, Artistic Patronage: Social Identities in the Centres of Southern Italy between the Medieval and Early Modern Period’, including a list of recent publications, see www.histantartsi.eu/index.php.


August, 2016 (accessed 6 September 2017); Jackson Williams, 'Antiquarianism: A Reinterpretation'.


24 Jackson Williams, 'Antiquarianism: A Reinterpretation', 84–6.


27 Ligota, ‘Annius of Viterbo’.
