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Les voyages de Seyfried Rybisch, étudiant silésien.

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Published in:
Daphnis

DOI:
[10.1163/18796583-04703003](https://doi.org/10.1163/18796583-04703003)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2019

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

de Jong, J. L. (2019). Les voyages de Seyfried Rybisch, étudiant silésien. Itinéraire (1548–1554), edited by Jean Hiernard. *Daphnis*, 679-687. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18796583-04703003>

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Jean Hiernard (ed.). Les voyages de Seyfried Rybisch, étudiant silésien. Itinéraire (1548–1554). Pessac: Ausonius Éditions 2017 (= Scripta Receptoria 9). 506 p. IBL 9782356131911; published as Open Edition Book on 22 January 2019, IBL 9782356133199.

Between 1548 and 1555, Seyfried Rybisch (1530–84) from Wrocław (Breslau), Poland, traveled through large parts of Europe, covering the present day countries of Poland (obviously), Germany, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Austria, Czechia and Italy. He sometimes traveled along with merchants, but most of the time he journeyed together with friends or fellow students. During his travels he presumably made notes of where he had gone and what had seemed special to him. Afterwards he refashioned these observations into a travel account, written in Latin. When exactly he did so is not known: in any case after 1555, when he was back in Poland, but as he was still adding details in the 1570's, it is possible that he wrote the final version then. Rybisch's itinerary should therefore not be read as a spontaneous eye witness report, but like most 16th century travel accounts, as a backward-looking description, supplemented with all kinds of information copied from printed guides and books that the author may not even have been familiar with during his journey. Rybisch's text is known in two manuscripts, both are housed in the Wrocław University Library (M 1375 and R 2174: neither of them is an autograph). A third, incomplete copy (not autograph either), formerly in Fürstenstein (now Książ), is lost. It is not known if the text of the itinerary was meant for publication, but it is certain that it never appeared in print. Yet it did not remain completely unknown; there are several indications that it circulated among learned friends and acquaintances. In 1574 it was an important source of information for Tobias Fendt's *Monumenta sepulcrorum cum epigraphis ingenio et doctrina excellentium virorum*.

After nearly 450 years, Rybisch's text has now been transcribed, translated, annotated and published by Jean Hiernard, honorary professor of ancient history at the University of Poitiers, with a foreword by Professor Willem Frijhoff (Erasmus University, Rotterdam). The printed edition has only the French translation of the text, with an extensive commentary; the original Latin, with notes on the transcription and the variations in the texts of the two manuscripts, is available as a PDF file on the internet. (Unfortunately, the internet address given in the printed edition on 69 is not (no longer?) correct; it should be: <http://ausoniuseditions.u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr/aloha/OA/978-2-35613-191-1.pdf>). This may be unsatisfactory for readers who want to compare the Latin text and the French translation closely, but given the size of the book it makes sense. Moreover, Rybisch's text is more important for its content than

for the exact nuances of his words, and passages where his Latin is obscure and difficult to translate are duly mentioned in the notes to the French text (as on 88 n.136 and 107 n.99). For easier reference, Hiernard has subdivided Rybisch's text into five parts, corresponding to the various phases of his travels. Reproductions of several engravings from Tobias Fendt's *Monumenta sepulcrorum* have been included to illustrate the text.

Rybisch's travel account is basically a catalogue of the places he visited and the distances between them, with brief reports on what he enjoyed about most places and mentions of such particulars as special or famous buildings, and other monuments. Obviously, large cities such as Paris, Venice, Rome and Naples receive more attention than smaller towns, while many places are only mentioned as stop-overs. In general, Rybisch is quite non-committal. As a Lutheran traveling through mostly Roman Catholic countries, he does not indulge in comments or complaints about the Church of Rome, although he occasionally lets slip a qualification as 'superstition', 'childishness', 'ridiculous' or 'who could find the reason for this?' (resp. 122, 293, 372, 300). Perhaps because he did not stay long in most places, he barely mentions political issues, local habits, food and drinks, etc., and even when he does – for instance when he observes the Neapolitan nobility's passion for horses (334) – he hardly comments on them, or not at all. His preference and main focus are clearly inscriptions and monuments for famous people, particularly those with juridical credentials.

All this may not make readers poise on the edge of their chair, but Hiernard's introduction and extensive annotations add welcome layers of clarifying and useful information. The Introduction (19–57) gives contextual information on Rybisch's descent, life and career, his voyages and the history of his travel report. Moreover, it contains useful charts of the classical authors he refers to in his text (42–45) and the relics and ex-voto's he mentions (47–48). It is followed by a map and a detailed list of all the places he visited and the dates when he was there (59–68). Rybisch's text (*i.e.* the French translation in the printed edition, not the Latin text on the internet) is extensively annotated and explained in long and well-researched footnotes which contain wide-ranging information on Rybisch's words, the places and monuments he mentions, the sources he quotes and uses, etc. (see, for instance, 79 n.77, 97 n.178, and 119 n.292). Two appendices of all the inscriptions (383–94) and tomb monuments (395–99) Rybisch mentions, a long bibliography (401–50) and a detailed index (451–503) conclude the book. You cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs, and so it may seem petty to point out mistakes and shortcomings. However, readers may find it useful to know that the publications of 'Kubíková 2010' and 'Kubíková 2010a', which are often referred to in Appendix II (395–99, esp.

395) but somehow did not make it into the bibliography, are: Blanka Kubíková, 'Monumenta sepulcrorum – Transformations and Corrections of a Silesian Album', in *Ars linearis* 11, ed. Alena Volrábová, Prague 2010, 30–37, and *eadem*, *Monumenta sepulcrorum* (exh. cat.), Prague 2010. The somewhat mysterious listing in the bibliography of 'Fichard, J. (1536/37): *Italia, autore Iohanne Fichardo*, Francfurt/Main', refers to: Johan Fichard (1512–81), *Itinerarium earum urbium et oppidorum, per quae in Italia iter feci. Anno 1536*, of which the original text was lost after it had been published by J.K. von Fichard, gen. Baur von Eyseneck, in the *Frankfurtisches Archiv für ältere deutsche Litteratur und Geschichte* 3 (1815), 3–130. Parts of it were later published by August Schmarsow in *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 14 (2) (1891), 130–39, and 14 (5) (1891), 375–83. A recent edition of the part in which Fichard describes Rome, translated into Italian with an extensive commentary, was published in 2011: *Roma 1536. Le "Observationes" di Johann Fichard*, Agnese Fantozzi ed. (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato).

Despite its interesting material, Rybisch's *Itinerary* is not unique: neither in its general set-up and descriptive, backward-looking character, nor in its 'recycling' of large amounts of information extracted from printed guides and books. This leads to the question: what makes it worth editing and publishing? Clearly, Hiernard also struggled with that question (20–21). But even if the information itself is hardly new or interesting, it is still relevant and informative when studied within the broader context of contemporaneous travel reports. This, however, is an aspect that Hiernard – with all due respect to his enormous amount of research – has paid (too) little attention to. He does occasionally refer to earlier itineraries, such as the one by Johan Fichard from 1536, but he does not bring up later ones.¹ Reading Rybisch's itinerary

1 Discussing the tomb monument of Filippo Decio in Pisa, Hiernard does refer to the *Voyage d'Italie* of Germain Audebert from around 1585, but unfortunately this does not contribute much. It would have been more interesting to refer to the critical remarks on Decio's tomb by Paolo Giovio, in his *Elogia veris clarorum virorum imaginibus apposita. Quae in musaeo Iouiano Comi spectantur* (Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1546), 56.

A number of 16th century German travel accounts are listed in Ulrich Seelbach. "Humanistische Bildungsreise in die Antike Welt: Roland von Waldenburg in Italien (1566–1567)." In *Erkundung und Beschreibung der Welt: zur Poetik der Reise- und Länderberichte* (Vorträge eines interdisziplinären Symposiums vom 19. bis 24. Juni 2000 an der Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen), ed. by Xenja von Ertzdorff and Gerhard Giesemann (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), 135–62, esp. 144. Relevant non-German itineraries include Michel de Montaigne's *Journal de voyage* from 1581 (F. Rigolot ed. [Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1992]) and the *Iter Italicum* by the Dutchman Aernout van Buchel (Arnoldus Buchelius), from 1587–88 (R.A. Lanciani ed. [Rome: R. Soc. Romana di storia patria, 1901]; the manuscript is now accessible

in comparison to other travel accounts, however, may illustrate how Rybisch noted things that other travelers missed (or the other way round), or can make seemingly insignificant details more relevant. Thus he interestingly starts his report on Rome with the remark that he will not even try to be extensive and scrupulous (223: *longa et scrupulosa rerum narratione omissa*), as various authors have already sufficiently listed and described the many antique and modern attractions. Instead, he will try to see things that usually receive less or no attention, such as the interiors and the decorations of the houses and palaces of citizens, cardinals and bishops, which contemporary authors rarely mention, or not at all (223: *cum scriptores nostro saeculo exiguam vel nullam de iis mentionem faciant*). That this observation was relevant is confirmed by the concluding words of Georgius Fabricius's chapter on 'Those things, which should now especially be seen in the city', at the end of his 1550 guide to the antiquities in Rome: 'About the houses of the nobility and the palaces of the cardinals, I will say nothing. For although they are splendid and sumptuous, it seems that this modern magnificence can hardly stand the comparison with the ruins of antiquity.'² An apparent lack of interest, however, is not the only explanation for the small amount of contemporaneous information on the 'interior treasures' of Roman houses and palaces. A more practical reason is that it was difficult for outsiders without good contacts to obtain access to privately owned dwellings.³ Thus Michel de Montaigne, who stayed in Rome in 1581, complained at the end of his visit: 'As a matter of fact, in spite of the adeptness and care I employed, I have only become acquainted with the public face of Rome, the one she shows to the most insignificant stranger.'⁴ Judging from his report, Rybisch was hardly more successful in his attempts to visit private houses and palaces, but his mention of the gardens on the right bank of the

via the internet: <http://objects.library.uu.nl/reader/index.php?obj=1874-237685&lan=nl#page/96/18/01/96180144680480274627580099799835632090.jpg/mode/1up>.

- 2 G. Fabricius. *Roma* (Basel: Johann Oporinus, 1550), 188: 'De domibus nobilium, & purpuratorum palatiis nihil dicam: quae ut splendida & sumptuosa sint, tamen cum veteribus ruinis haec nova magnificentia vix videtur comparanda.' The complete chapter XXI, *De iis, quae nunc in urbe sunt praecipue visenda*, is on 180–88.
- 3 E.S. Sünderhauf. "Wissenstransfer zwischen Deutschland und Italien am Beispiel des Frankfurter Italienreisenden Johann Fichard (1536/37)." In *Zentren und Wirkungsräume der Antike-rezeption. Zur Bedeutung von Raum und Kommunikation für die neuzeitliche Transformation der griechisch-römischen Antike*, ed. by Kathrin Schade and Detlef Rößler (Münster: Scriptorium, 2007), 99–109.
- 4 Montaigne, *Journal de Voyage* (op. cit. in n. 1), 126: 'Car, en vérité, quoy que j'aye employé d'art et de soin, je ne l'ay cognue que par son visage publique, et qu'elle offre au plus chetif estrangier'.

Tiber (235) is still interesting, because these *vigne* were all privately owned by cardinals and therefore not easily accessible. It even sounds as if he personally visited the garden of the Villa Farnese (not to be confused with the neighboring villa that later passed into Farnese possession as well and is now known as Villa Farnesina).⁵ Additionally, his extensive description of the Villa of Pope Julius III (1550–55) in Rome (both the garden and the building, 252–53) is very special, and even more so as the construction of this complex was not begun until 1551 and had barely been finished when Rybisch visited it in 1554. Praising all of its beauties lavishly, he cuts off his description without any further comments for reasons of means and time (253: *si omnia visu digna eo in loco mihi narranda essent, profecto nec stylus nec plurimi dies sufficerent*). This reaction is completely different from the way Aernout van Buchel (Arnoldus Buchellius) from Utrecht responded to the equally splendid villa of Pope Sixtus V (1585–90) on the Esquiline hill, after his visit in December 1587. Van Buchel was still a Catholic when he visited the villa, but may have been a Protestant like Rybisch by the time he wrote his *Iter Italicum*. Van Buchel lashed out in a tirade against papal extravagance: ‘But if there are persons who for themselves approve of this ostentation of the popes, they should read what Cyprian wrote against Novatianus about the simplicity of prelates. Together with me, they would not just disapprove, but utterly condemn the arrogance of all our pontiffs, whose lifestyle is closer to that of a king, yes indeed a tyrant, than that of a true pope.’⁶

As he had announced, Rybisch did not just follow directions from the various guidebooks but used his own observational skills during his visit to Rome. Accordingly, he noted in the church of S. Maria dell’Anima the beautiful tomb monument of Pope Adrian VI (1522–23), which Johann Fichard in 1536 had described as ‘the most sumptuous monument of all in Rome’ (*sumptuosissimum*

5 D.R. Coffin. *The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 87–90.

6 *Iter Italicum* (op.cit. in n. 1), 102: ‘Verum siqui sibi hac pontificiorum pompa plaudunt, Cyprianum adversus Novatianum [Lanciani wrongly has ‘Nonatianum’] scribentem de simplicitate praelatorum legissent, me cum [mecum?] non tam improbarent quam prorsus damnarent omnium nostrorum antistitum fastum, regiae vitae imo tyrannidi [Lanciani wrongly has ‘tyrannide’] quam pontificiae verae proximiorum’. The letter referred to is no longer attributed to Cyprian. It is included as a letter by an unknown author *Ad Novatianum in Novatiani opera quae supersunt* [...], ed. in *Corpus Christianorum*, series Latina, vol. IV, G.F. Diercks ed. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1972) 129–52. Curiously, however, the author of this letter is not writing about pomp and wealth.

omnium Romae monumentum Hadriani Sexti).⁷ In 1577, Hilarius Pyrckmair also praised it in his *Commentariolus de Arte Apodemica*, immediately after the mention of the mausoleum of the Roman Emperor Hadrian (*regn.* 117–38; the building is now known as Castel Sant'Angelo), calling it one of the few modern attractions of Rome.⁸ As far as I know, Rybisch was the only one to note that Pope Adrian's tomb monument should not be seen in isolation, but in relation to the sepulchral monument of Willem Cardinal van Enckenvoirt, that originally faced it on the opposite wall. Cardinal van Enckenvoirt had been responsible for erecting the tomb monument of Pope Adrian, and as soon as it was finished in 1533, he drew up instructions for his own (less lavish) sepulcher. Within a year, however, he died (1534), but his tomb was executed according to his wishes and finished in 1540. It did not stand opposite the tomb of Pope Adrian for long. Shortly after 1575 it was moved to make place for the tomb monument of the hereditary prince Karl Friedrich of Jülich-Cleves-Berg, who had unexpectedly died in Rome in 1575.⁹ All this means that Johann Fichard never saw the cardinal's tomb, but that Hilarius Pyrckmair did – and either ignored it or did not notice it. Rybisch, however, perceptively noted (242–43): '... the tomb of Adrian VI, remarkable for its marble and its architecture, erected owing to the care of Willem van Enckenvoirt, Cardinal of Tortosa, whose own tomb, not lacking in elegance, is also visible there.' (... *marmore et structura conspicuum Hadriani VI sepulchrum, Guilhelmus Enckenfort cardinalis Derthusensis faciundum curavit, cujus et sepulchrum non inelegans ibi videtur.*)

In the church of St John Lateran in Rome, Rybisch (probably unconsciously) supplied interesting information on the tomb of 'the very learned Lorenzo Valla' (290), which was later used by Tobias Fendt when he included a (not particularly accurate) engraving of Valla's tombstone in his *Monumenta sepulcrorum* (pl. 25). Fendt reproduced Valla's epitaph with the wrong year of death (1465 instead of 1457), probably based on incorrect information from Rybisch, who in his turn may have derived this information not from the tomb slab itself, but from the inaccurate transcription of the epitaph on the title

7 Agnese Fantozzi ed., *Roma 1536. Le "Observationes" di Johann Fichard* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato 2011), 172.

8 H. Pyrckmair. *Commentariolus de Arte Apodemica, seu Vera Peregrinandi Ratione* (Ingolstadt: David Sartorius, 1577), 52–53.

9 G. Knopp and W. Hansmann. *S. Maria dell'Anima. Die deutsche Nationalkirche in Rom* (Mönchengladbach: Kühlen, 1979), 38–42; J. Götzmann. "Das Grabmal des Erbherzogs Karl Friedrich von Jülich-Kleve-Berg in S. Maria dell'Anima in Roma." In *Docta Manus. Studien zur italienischen Skulptur für Joachim Poeschke*, ed. by J. Myssok and J. Wiener (Münster: Rhema-Verlag, 2007), 323–335.

page of the 1540 edition of Valla's *Opera*.¹⁰ It is not this mistake, however, which makes Rybisch's information on Valla's tomb so interesting, but the fact that he clearly stated that the floor slab (the one reproduced by Fendt) was situated under 'a quite old bronze tablet with a long inscription of various decrees from that time period, inserted into the wall.' (290: *Tabula aenea perantiqua bene longam inscriptionem quorundam decretorum ejus temporis continens muro inserta visitur. Subtus ea sepultus est doctissimus vir Laurentius Valla.*) This tablet can easily be identified as the so-called *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*. Other descriptions do mention that Valla's tomb slab was situated near the bronze tablet, but none of them is so explicit in saying that the former was placed right under the latter. In February 1588, Aernout van Buchel went looking for Lorenzo Valla's grave but could no longer find it. In his *Iter Italicum* he noted that he twice went to the church of St John Lateran and was finally told that, 'Valla was exhumed from his tomb because of his book on the forged Donation of Constantine.' This means that Valla's tomb was removed before 1588 but after 1570, when it was recorded for the last time. This lends further support to the assumption that Valla's tomb was, secretly but deliberately, destroyed in 1576, when Pope Gregory XIII ordered the bronze tablet with the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* to be taken out of St John Lateran and re-erected in the Conservators' Palace on the Capitoline hill. Pope Gregory was a staunch defender of the authenticity of the *Donation of Constantine* and must have been seriously displeased with the fact that Lorenzo Valla's body was buried (of all places!) behind the main altar of St John Lateran. Thanks to Rybisch we now know for sure that Valla's tomb was lying right under the bronze tablet with the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*, and so we can assume with even more certainty that Pope Gregory used the opportunity of the removal of the bronze tablet to simultaneously have Valla's tomb removed– and also destroyed! A tiny piece of the floor slab may have survived, though, plastered onto the west wall of the church's *chiostro*. The monument to Lorenzo Valla that now stands in the Chapel of the Crucifixion in the right transept of the church is actually just a cenotaph from 1825, inserted into the south wall above a sarcophagus topped with the statue of an unknown person. Fully erroneous, this ensemble is usually taken for the tomb monument of Lorenzo Valla.¹¹

10 For this and all the following information on the tomb of Lorenzo Valla, see my article "De sepulcro Laurentii Vallae quid veri habeat". Tracing the Tomb Monument of Lorenzo Valla in St. John Lateran, Rome." *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 94 (2015), 94–128.

11 Hiernard, 290 n. 500, also seems to be quite confused about the tomb of Lorenzo Valla.

Observations such as these are neither world-shattering nor exhaustive (as they regard only fragments of the description of Rome), but they may help to better understand the position and value of Rybisch's report in relation to other travel accounts, and to assess what it contributes to our knowledge of how European cities, their monuments and their history were perceived, studied and handled. Jean Hiernard is to be praised for his careful and very well annotated edition and translation of Rybisch's itinerary, making it possible for others to study it in connection to, and in the context of, contemporaneous travel accounts and guidebooks. Hopefully, we will not have to wait long for this follow up!

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