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## **“Ex nihilo fortification on the Brabant-Namur Frontier in the High Middle Ages,” Walhain Research Project<sup>1</sup>**

**By Bailey K. Young, Eastern Illinois University and  
 Laurent Verslype, Université Catholique de Louvain**

On the south side of the village of Walhain-Saint-Paul in Walloon Brabant a round *donjon* tower stands looking over the cultivated fields southwest toward Gembloux, once the site of a renowned Benedictine abbey that, according to a charter of 946, owned the land on which the tower would later be built (**Figure 1**).<sup>2</sup> Presumably its construction took place around 1200, the moment when the vogue for this circular form, called *tour philippienne* after the prototype that the French King Philip II had erected in Paris and elsewhere in his domains, was spreading. Perhaps it was Arnold II, Lord of Walhain, known for some time as an important vassal of the Dukes of Brabant, who commanded the work. His name appears in charters in the 1160s and in 1184 he is

<sup>1</sup> The authors would like to thank the many students, Belgian and American, whose efforts have made excavation possible, and to acknowledge in particular the contributions of Ms. Inès Leroy (archival research), Dr. William I. Woods (soils and stratigraphy), Ms. Dana Best-Mitzak (ceramics), and Christine Merllié-Young (proofreading) to this article.

<sup>2</sup> For the toponym *Walhain* and its variant spellings, M. Gysseling, *Toponimisch woordenboek van België, Nederland, Luxemburg, Noord-Frankrijk en West Duitsland (voor 1226)* t. II, N-Z (Bruxelles, 1960); for the earliest reference (*villae walaham*) in the charter of the Abbey of Gembloux dated 946, C.-G. Roland, *Recueil des chartes de l'abbaye de Gembloux* (Gembloux, 1921), 1-8. For a presentation of the architectural remains of the surviving monument, and basic bibliography, see the notice “Walhain–Ancien Chateau–Walhain-Saint-Paul” in *Donjons médiévaux de Wallonie. Vol 1: Province de Brabant, Arrondissement de Nivelles*, notices by C. d’Ursel, L.-F. Genicot, R. Spède, Ph. Weber (Namur: Ministère de la Région wallonne (Division du Patrimoine), 2000), 98-101 (Walhain-Saint-Paul), 92-97 (Tour d’Alvaux).

qualified *ministralis* and ducal counselor; he is still attested in a charter of 1205. Perhaps it was his nephew Arnold III, who appears in the charters in 1210, and is attested as late as 1235.<sup>3</sup>

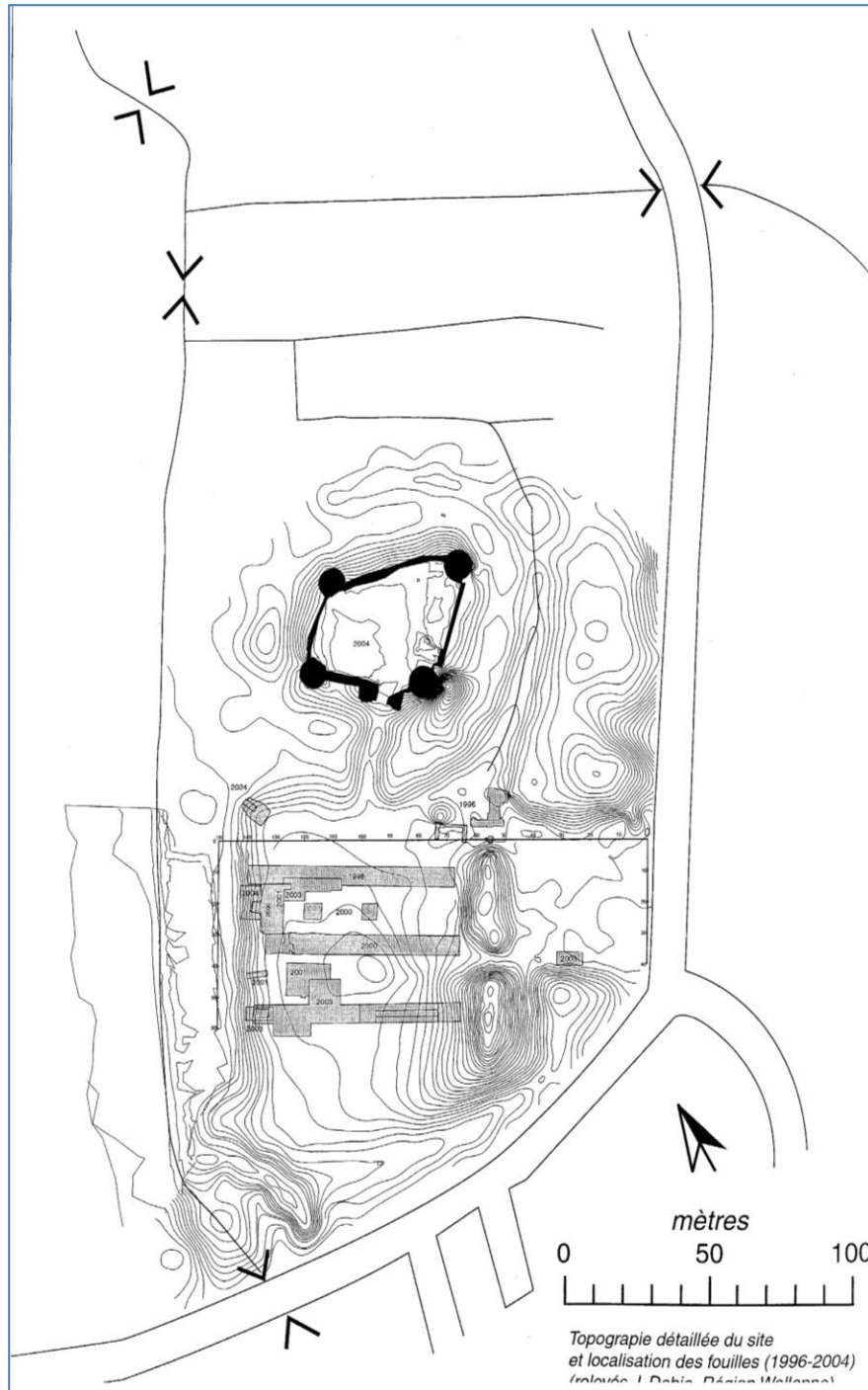


**Figure 1** *Donjon* of Walhain. Photo: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/johanbakker/>.

It is clear from the architectural evidence that originally this stone donjon stood alone. Over the next century an enclosed courtyard was added, its corners anchored by three smaller round towers (leaving the original donjon at the southwest corner) and a double-towered fortified entrance accessible via a drawbridge over the moat. (**Figure 2a-2b**) But was this the earliest articulation of fortification on the site? The excavations of Pierre Demolon in Douai have demonstrated that the stone castle which once stood

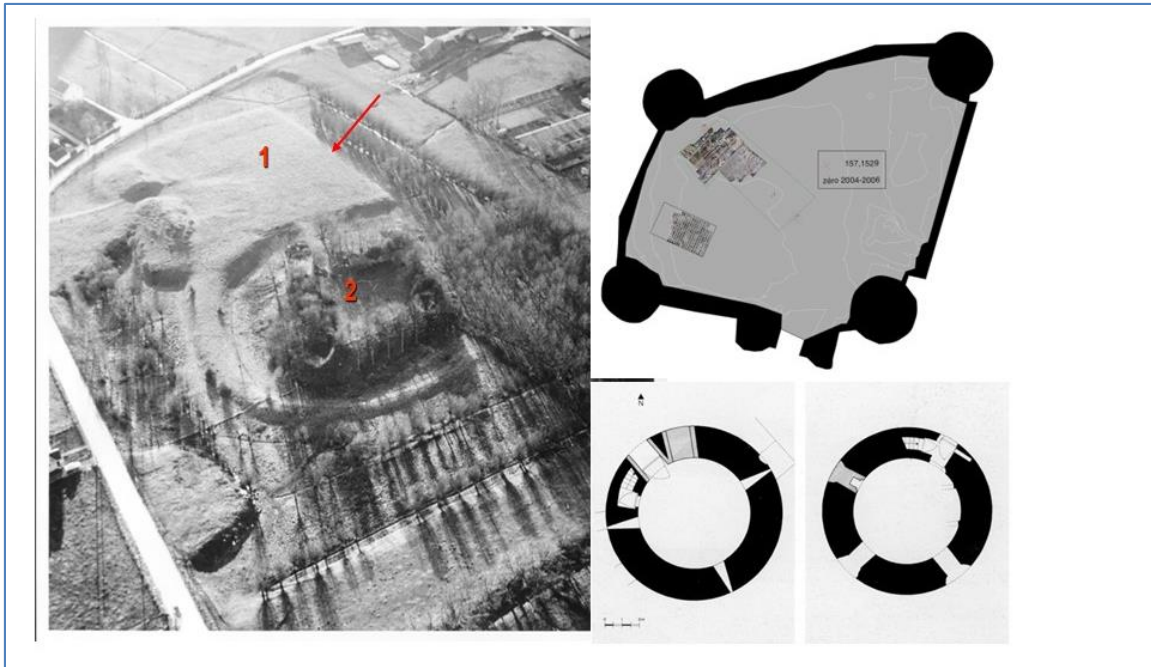
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<sup>3</sup> For Arnold II and Arnold III, see A.-J. Bijterveld and D. Guillardian, “La formation du duché (843-1106)” in *Histoire du Brabant du duché à nos jours*, R. Van Uytven, et al., eds. (Zwolle, 2004), 55. Also A. Verkooren, *Chartes et cartulaires des duchés de Brabant et de Limbourg et des pays d’Outre-Meuse*. 3. *Chartes originales et cartulaires*, 4 t. (Brussels, 1981-1988). For the reference to Arnold II on the 1205 charter, see G. Despy, *Inventaire des archives de l’abbaye de Villers* (Brussels, 1959), 47.



**Figure 2a**  
Topographic plan  
of the site,  
including the  
location of the  
trenches dug into  
the outer bailey  
1998-2004 (100 m  
scale). Photo:  
CRAN  
document, 2004  
*Report.*





**Figure 2b** Aerial view of Walhain site from the northeast, by Charles Léva, before any excavation; the flat outer bailey terrace is to the south of the moated *castrum* visible in the middle of the photograph. Photo: CRAN document, 2004 Report, 9.

on the *fonderie* site, the core of the medieval town, had been preceded by earlier phases of Merovingian settlement, replaced during the later tenth century by a lordly residence featuring a wooden tower atop an earthen *motte*.<sup>4</sup> Could the Walhain lordship have at its origins a local castellan lineage, which had gained control of the villa cited in the Gembloux charter?

When our excavations began, in July 1998, the moat had long been dry, its grassy slopes and bottom offering excellent grazing for horses, and the circuit walls were much

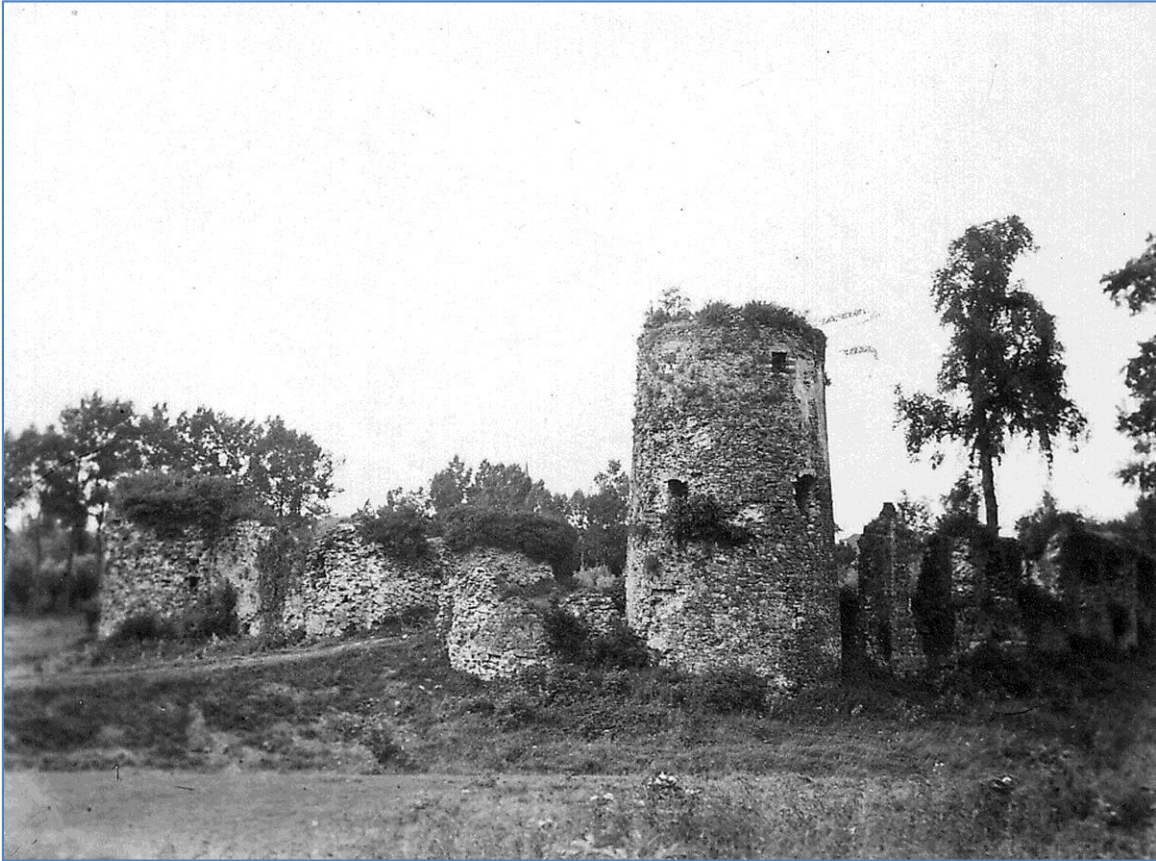
<sup>4</sup> For the excavations of Pierre Demolon and Etienne Louis at the Fonderie in Douai, see P. Demolon and J. Barbieux, "Les origines médiévales de la ville de Douai. Rapport provisoire de fouille de la 'fonderie de canons,'" *Revue du Nord* 241 (1979): 301-327; P. Demolon and E. Louis, *Douai, une ville face à son passé* (Douai: Société archéologique de Douai, 1982); P. Demolon and E. Louis, "Naissance d'une cité médiévale flamande. L'exemple de Douai" in *Actes du IVe Congrès International d'Archéologie Médiévales*, Archéologie des villes dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Europe (VIIe-XIIIe siècle) (Douai: Actes des congrès de la Société d'archéologie médiévale, 1991, 1994), 47-58.

dilapidated by many decades of serving as a quarry for good building stone.<sup>5</sup> **(Figure 3)** The stability of the ruins was further threatened by vegetation, particularly the great trees whose roots had penetrated deep into the foundations. The donjon was the best-preserved structure overall, its walls still rising to a height of some 16 meters, although it had lost the roof which is still visible in an 1870 photograph.<sup>6</sup> **(Figure 4)** By that time one of the gatehouse towers was already a collapsed heap of stones; its twin, intact with its roof in the photograph, survives today only to the height of its vaulted ceiling. The ruins were then privately owned. In 2010, thanks in part to the attention drawn to the interest of the site by our excavations, the Institut du Patrimoine wallon (IPW) was able to acquire the property, conduct a study of measures necessary for its preservation, and reach an agreement with the Walhain town government which has assumed management responsibilities for the site.

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<sup>5</sup> For historical and archaeological background after the first two campaigns of the ongoing research program, see D. Verzwymelen and B.K. Young, "Recherches sur le site du chateau de Walhain," *Wavriensia, Bulletin du cercle historique et archéologique de Wavre et de la région LI-3* (2002): 66-90. Brief notices reflecting the results of annual campaigns have appeared since 1998 in the *Chronique de l'archéologie wallonne*, published annually by the *Département du Patrimoine (Service public de Wallonie)*, in Namur. In 2004 a preliminary synthesis of excavation and related research and data analysis up to that time, authored by Laurent Verslype and collaborators, was submitted as a report to the Direction de l'Archéologie of the Walloon Region. See Verslype (coord.), *Etude archéologique du chateau de Walhain-saint-Paul: La transformation du paysage et le chateau. Programme pluriannuel de recherches archéologiques. Rapport final de fouilles. Campagnes 2001 et 2003* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2004). The excavation report is archived at the *Centre de recherche d'archéologie nationale (CRAN)* (Ave. de Marathon, 2, B-1242 Louvain-la-Neuve), henceforth *2004 Report*. This report also draws upon the archival sources, edited and unpublished, upon which this paper relies. Below are particular references cited in evidence.

<sup>6</sup> Several engravings bear witness to the post-medieval appearance of the castle. See J. B. Gramaye, *Antiquitates illustrissimi ducatus Brabantiae, dans quibus singularum urbium initia, incrementor, republicae...; coenobium foundationes, propagationes...: ecclesiam patronatus, monumenta...; pagorum dominia...descriptio*, (Louvain-Bruxelles, 1708), and J. Harrewijn (1695): re-edition by J. Le Roy, *Chateaux et maisons de campagne de gentilshommes du Brabant et les monastères les plus remarquables* (Brussels, 1982). See Figure 10, *infra*.



**Figure 3** Ruins of Walhain site. Photo: Commissariat général à la Protection aérienne passive, 1943, courtesy Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, Brussels, Belgium.

**Figure 4** Ruins of Walhain  
chateau, c. 1870. Photo: L. Hoc,  
cercle *Art et Histoire de*  
*Gembloux*; CRAN document, 2004  
*Report*, 33.



The *Centre de Recherche d'Archéologie* (CRAN) of the *Université catholique de Louvain* (UCL) directs the research project. The CRAN was directed until 2011 by Dr. Raymond Brulet and currently by Dr. Laurent Verslype, with the excavations also serving as a field school for UCL students as well as for American students under the direction of Dr. Bailey K. Young of Eastern Illinois University. Before 1998 Walhain had never been the object of serious archaeological research. A stratigraphic diagnosis of the site was thus a primary concern: what evidence survives, and how does it date? Two particular questions guided our initial approach to the site: the origins of the medieval lordship and their relation to the standing ruins just described, and the recovery of evidence concerning its functioning as the center of an agricultural estate within the pre-industrial landscape. Both of these helped shape our initial strategy of excavation not in the fortified enclosure described above but on the terrace over the moat to the southwest where the outer bailey (*la basse-cour*) would have stood. After evaluation of the results of the 1998-2004 campaigns we shifted the principal focus to the inner bailey. The recent change in status of the castle ruins to a publically-owned and managed site, the imminence of consolidation and preservation measures to make it accessible to visitors, and the way it will be interpreted for them, all give a new urgency to research concerning the stratigraphic history of the site. Our research also raises broader questions regarding the relationship between the concept of lordship that historians derive from the study of medieval documents and its material manifestations, in structures, artifacts, and now the “ecofacts” that archaeologists are able to recover.

The outer bailey terrace was the original focus of our excavations. If the sequence from farm (possibly within an enclosure) to defended farm (possibly with a wooden



tower atop a motte) preceding a motte-with-stone tower (the sequence documented at Douai) was also true at Walhain, it was reasonable to assume that here was the location of the *basse-cour* in the days of the moat-enclosed and fortified upper courtyard (*haute-cour*). It was clear from the relative chronology of the surviving architectural features that this enclosed courtyard had to postdate the construction of the donjon, the oldest standing structure, which subsequently became the southwest tower of the *castrum*. This meant that there was a gap of more than two centuries between the earliest mention of the *villa walaham* in the documents connected with Gembloux, and the construction of that symbol of lordship, the stone donjon. But might a wooden tower have preceded this? This was a plausible hypothesis. Archaeologists have excavated a number of examples, often erected on artificial mounds (mottes), some dating as early as the tenth century. The motte of Grimbosq near Caen in Lower Normandy offers a possible model of development which might apply to Walhain.<sup>7</sup> In a region where Charles the Bald had possessed a large villa in the ninth century and the Dukes of Normandy had considerable holdings in the early eleventh century a minor lineage, the Taisson, became established between 1017 and 1025. Excavation has demonstrated that by the middle of the century (the years of weakened ducal power during the minority of William the Bastard) an earthen motte was constructed with a wooden watchtower atop it; the lord's residence, too, was a timber-frame building with dry stone foundations. The same type of wooden fortifications atop mottes famously depicted in the Bayeux tapestry in western Normandy and Brittany (Dol, Rennes, Dinan are identified) and brought to England by William the

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<sup>7</sup> For the excavations of the Grimbosq site see, J. Decaens, "La motte d'Olivet à Grimbosq (Calvados). Résidence seigneuriale du Xe siècle," *Archéologie Médiévale* XI (1981): 167-201. The same issue of this journal includes a summary of an international colloquium held in Caen (October 2-5, 1980) on the theme, "Les fortifications de terre en Europe occidentale du Xe au XIIe siècles," 6-123.

Conqueror might have been common in Brabant and the Low Countries as well.<sup>8</sup>

Closer to Brabant, the meticulous 1976-81 excavations of Pierre Demolon at the *fonderie* site as first published suggested a possible model: a late Merovingian farmstead transformed during the mid-tenth century into a fortified elite residence. Excavation offered a sequence whereby the alto-medieval rural structures were replaced by a substantial timber-frame house and barns within a perimeter defined by a ditch, datable by dendrochronology to 945/946. After a further elaboration a few years later, the whole area was covered by a substantial earthen motte topped by a five-meter square *donjon de bois*, linked to a defended *basse-cour* at its base.<sup>9</sup> Although further excavation and a major re-interpretation by Etienne Louis have now challenged the original notion of a gradual, seamless transition from rural to lordly site, the scenario featuring a motte-with-wooden tower erected in the later 10th century (plausibly built by Count Arnold II around 987), with the wooden tower later replaced by a larger one in stone, still holds. **(Figure 5)** The later stone tower is associated with Count Philip of Alsace and mentioned as *Nova Turris* in a document of 1187.<sup>10</sup> This sequence of a farm fortified by a local lord in late Carolingian times with earthworks, palisade and wooden tower (sometimes with a moat)

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<sup>8</sup> For a well-excavated and well-illustrated motte-and-bailey castle with wooden features in England, see G. Beresford, *et al.*, *Goltho: the development of an early medieval manor c 850-1150*, English Heritage Archaeological Report no. 4 (Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England, 1987). For the Bayeux Tapestry see Michel Parisse, *La tapisserie de Bayeux. Un documentaire du Xe siècle* (Denoël, 1983), 116-117. Scenes 18 and 19 show wooden fortifications atop mottes in western France (Dol, Rennes, and Dinan); scene 45 shows Count Robert directing the construction of a motte at Hastings. See also David McKenzie Wilson, ed., *The Bayeux Tapestry: The Complete Tapestry in Color*, rev. ed. (Thames & Hudson, NY, 2004), and Shirley Ann Brown, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, Bayeux Médiathèque Municipale, *MS I: A Sourcebook*, Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> The original interpretation of the 1976-1981 excavations views the town as developing from a Merovingian rural settlement. See Demolon and Barbieux, “Les origines médiévales de la ville de Douai,” 301-327.

<sup>10</sup> Etienne Louis, “Les origines urbaines de Douai: un réexamen” in *Chateau, ville et pouvoir au Moyen Age*, A.-M. Héricher-Flambard and J. LeMaho, eds. (Caen: Publications du CRAHM, 2012), 215-254, especially 217-225.

preceding a stone castle of the High Middle Ages-- though now challenged for proto-urban Douai-- could still provide a plausible model for rural Walhain. We have written evidence of a farming estate (*villa walaham*) in the mid-tenth century and a lordship centered there at the end of the eleventh (Aldericus of Walhain signed a charter in 1099),



**Figure 5** Maquette reconstruction of motte topped by a wooden tower with the stockaded outer bailey below, no doubt for Count Arnold II of Flanders, late 10<sup>th</sup> century. Photo: Stéphane Rogge © "Art du Petit."

a century before our round donjon went up.<sup>11</sup> If material evidence survived of a

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<sup>11</sup>"In comitatu darnuensi medietatem villae curtis dictae ac medietatem villae walaham dictae." See Roland, *Recueil des chartes*, 1-8. For the Afflighem charter witnessed by Aldericus, the first lord cited in association with the toponym in a charter of the Abbey of Afflighem dated 1099, see E. De Marneffe, *Cartulaire d'Afflighem* (reprint Brussels, 1997), 17-19. On the Abbey's relationship to its noble patrons, see Bijterveld and Guillardian, "La formation du duché," 55.

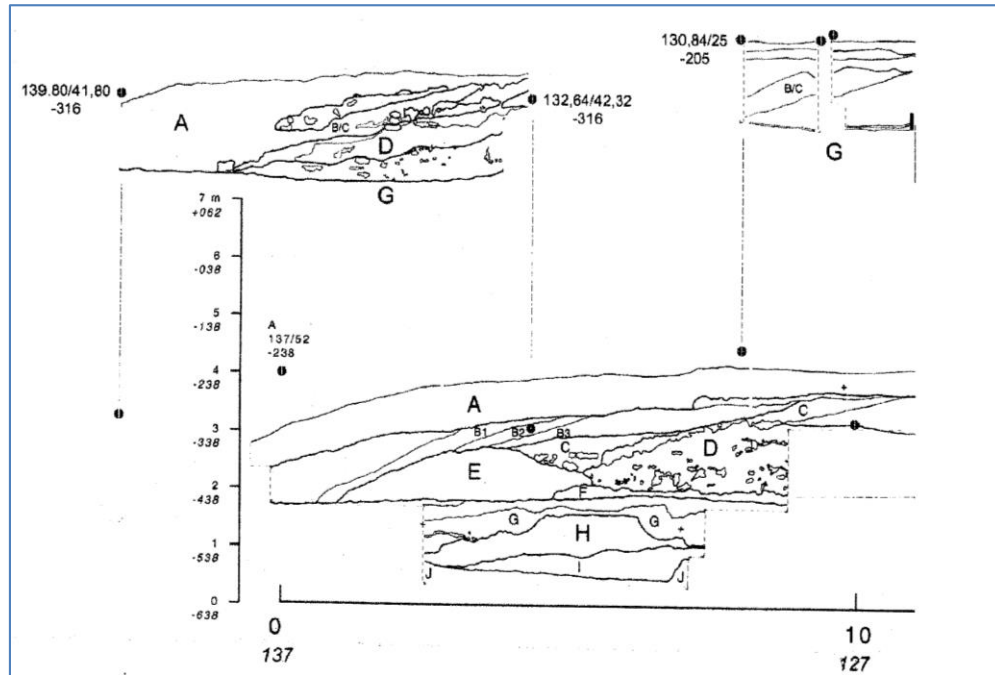
settlement and fortifications from those earlier centuries, a likely place to find it was under the pasture, which presumably covers the vestiges of the *basse-cour*, the center of the medieval (and post-medieval) farming estate. Excavation there would provide the basis for a first stratigraphic diagnosis of the site and also offer evidence regarding the structure of this farming estate and the environmental history of the site, our second major research goal.

The outer bailey terrace is itself, excavation has revealed, a major medieval artefact, largely created in the early part of the thirteenth century. **(Figure 6)** Two streams converge to form the *ru de Chêvequeue* tributary to the Hain and then the Dyle Rivers. Pollen analysis confirms a low-lying, marshy environment characterized by willow and alder trees, with associated undergrowth (including sedge and bur reed) near the water and oak forest (including hornbeam, hazel, and ash) beyond. Stratigraphically it is signaled by Stratum I, a black organic-rich sediment, including wood roots and decomposed aquatic plant remains but no artefacts, deposited slowly over the years upon

**Figure 6** The *basse-cour*. The mounds on the left side of the picture cover the ruins of early modern farm buildings which have not been excavated. The break between them corresponds to the passage of the cobblestone roadway crossing the terrace, parts of which have been excavated. Photo: B. K. Young.



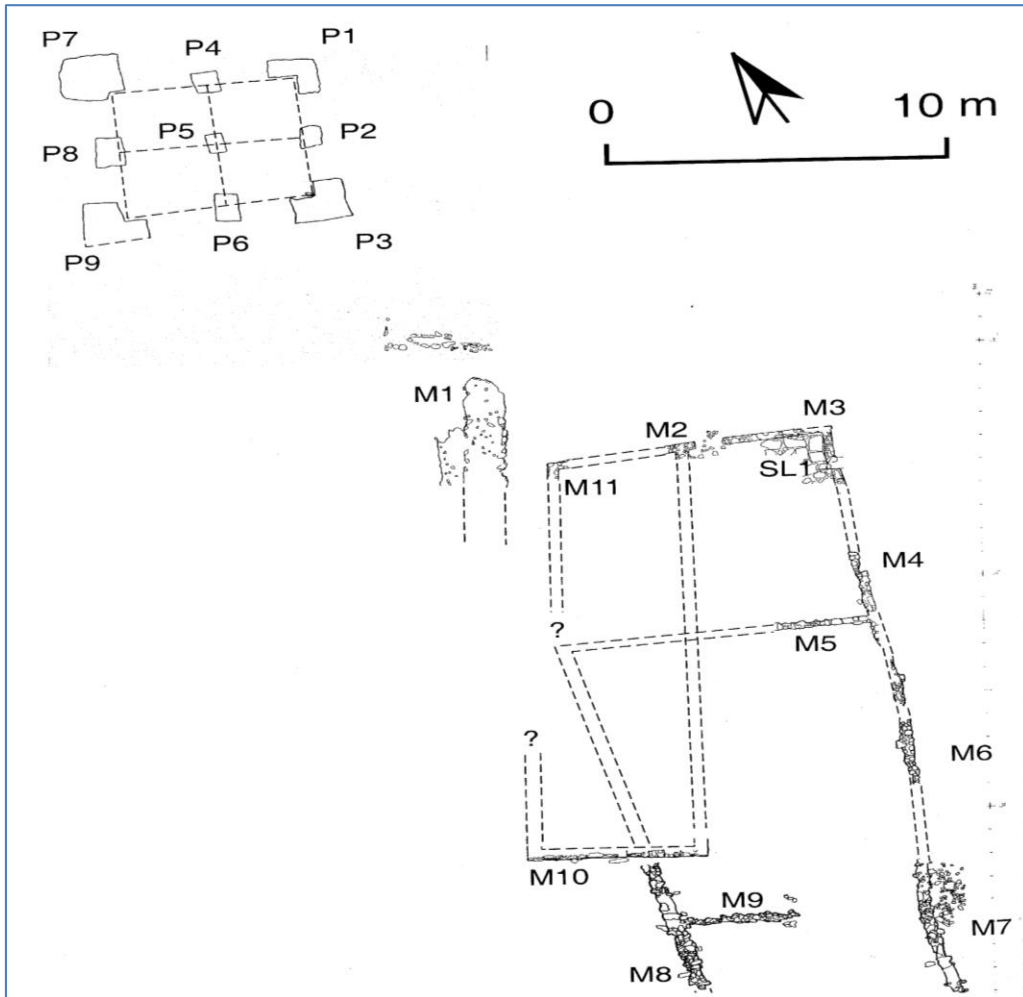
the white clay (marl–Stratum J) deriving from a Late Pleistocene lake. (**Figure 7**)



**Figure 7** Stratigraphy in the outer bailey. I and J: pre-anthropogenic levels (white clay, marl, and subsequent marsh fill); H: earliest constructed levels so far attested (bank and ditch) covered by the dark earth G signifying occupation; F, E and D: construction phases of the medieval terrace into which the medieval farm buildings were founded; C and B: phases of demolition of the farm buildings, early modern period; A: humus which covers the site today. Photo: CRAN document, 2004 Report.

The earliest evidence of human settlement is provided by a ditch cut through a level of dark greyish-brown alluvial earth (stratum H) deposited atop the black clay. The ditch was filled by the earliest man-made (anthropogenic) stratigraphic level identified on the site, a very dark, silty, grey-brown clay rich in charcoal and oxidized inclusions (stratum G). The formation of this “dark earth,” a phenomenon often noted on Late Antique and medieval sites in Europe, can result from a variety of specific causes, but most often signifies residues of human activities that intensified the organic content of the soil. Chemical analysis of Walhain samples showed them to be rich in organic carbon,





**Figure 8** Plan of the medieval farm structures (10 m scale). Note the nine stone pillars (P1-P9) of the foundation for the lord's granary. Photo: CRAN document, 2004 Report.

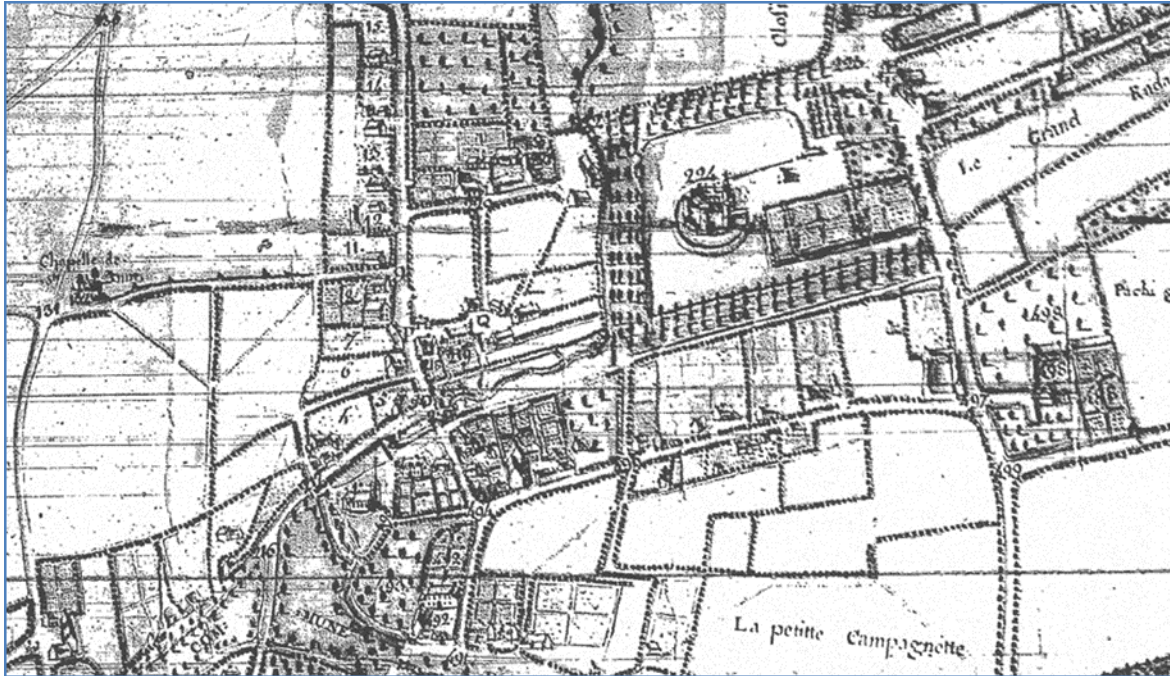
copper, and zinc; a likely origin here would be decayed and recycled wattle and daub structures from a first settlement which must date, from the ceramics associated with these early levels, to the thirteenth century. This rather primitive



early phase of settlement may have been short-lived, for not only have no older ceramics

in stratigraphic contexts so far been found anywhere on the site, but also these first occupation levels (Strata H, G and F) were soon buried under a massive build-up of re-deposited occupation soils (Stratum E) augmented by large quantities clay and silt dug directly out of the pre-human horizon in the valley bottom and dumped to create a flat terrace extending eastwards (Stratum D). Into this terrace towards its center, two meters above the level of the early settlement, were set the stone foundations of farm buildings dating to the later Middle Ages, and to the sixteenth century, when considerable new building on the site is attested by both archaeology and written documents. **(Figure 8)**

On the west side of the terrace, where the talus slopes sharply down to the stream, we uncovered the vestiges of an impressive building resting on nine monumental stone pillars, their foundations sealed in places with the dark earth. **(Figure 9)** This is interpreted as the lord's barn, a wooden frame structure resting on the stone pillars where the grain renders owed by peasants were stored. Ceramics and stratigraphy both date its construction in the thirteenth century, either preceding or contemporary with the massive terrace construction. The presence of pollens for wheat and rye, of plants associated with intensive husbandry such as sorrel, rough hawk's beard, buttercup, and new kinds of trees with nutritional or ornamental value like maple provide corroborative evidence of the progressive anthropogenic impact on the landscape, and link it to the lord's power made manifest in the barn. The marshy environment, which had prevailed for the many centuries that the black clay of Stratum I was slowly accumulating atop the marl retreated rapidly in the face of human enterprise.



**Figure 9** The early-modern farm and its landscape. Aerial plan dating to 1781 (2004 Report, 13. Photo: drawn from C. Piot, *Inventaire divers. I. Troisième supplément à l'inventaire des cartes et plans*, Bruxelles, 1879, #2399).

Ongoing excavation of the inner bailey (*haute-cour*) has so far found that continuous use of this area for a variety of purposes until 1789, when the castle itself was abandoned and left to decay in the aftermath of the French Revolution's abolition of feudalism, has left very little of the original medieval structures and stratigraphic levels in place below ground. A series of core samples, conducted under the general supervision of soils archaeologist, Dr. William Woods, and drilled down into the deepest strata across both the outer and inner bailey and the moat, however, supports the hypothesis that the entire site was cleared and landscaped before the inner and outer bailey were built up. If this can be confirmed by stratigraphic observation of the foundations of the donjon, it would rule out our earlier hypothesis that the surviving stone castle replaces an earlier wooden fortification on the same site. That original hypothesis would be consistent with a

model of lordship resembling that outlined in Georges Duby's classic study of the development of lordship in the Macon region.<sup>12</sup> In this model an ambitious local lineage emerges during the disintegration of Carolingian authority in the tenth century and materializes its claims to local power through fortifications updated and strengthened in an evolutionary manner, over time. How then does the current thrust of the archaeological evidence affect, in regard to this model, our understanding of lordship at Walhain?

The earliest mentions of Walhain refer to a villa belonging to the Abbey of Gembloux. Aldericus of Walhain appears, in 1099, only as a signature on one charter, as witness to a charter that donates a priory to the Abbey of Afflighem.<sup>13</sup> It is true that other witnesses to this charter are distinguished figures like Henry, Count of Grez and Francon, castellan of Brussels, and more important, that it is one of the greatest of the emerging regional lords who is making the donation to what will become a monastery particularly favored by the Dukes of Brabant. Whether he is or not the direct ancestor of Arnold I of Walhain who appears on a charter in 1159, which is likely enough, it is clear that the site was of strategic importance in the sharpening struggle during the later twelfth century between the emerging regional powers of Brabant and Namur.<sup>14</sup> This is dramatically illustrated by the sack in 1185 of Gembloux by Count Henry the Blind of Namur. At this date Arnold II is already well-attested as *ministralis* in the entourage of the Dukes of

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<sup>12</sup> For the Duby thesis, often called *la mutation féodale*, as originally presented: Georges Duby, *La Société aux XIe et XIIe siècles dans la région mâconnaise* (Paris, 1953), portions translated in *The Chivalrous Society* (1978; repr. 1981). This has spawned an immense scholarly literature. A useful introduction: Jean-Pierre Poly and Eric Bournazel, *The Feudal Transformation*, trans. Caroline Higgitt (New York and London, 1991).

<sup>13</sup> See note 11.

<sup>14</sup> Bijterveld and Guillardian, "La formation du duché," 55. Arnold I is mentioned in a charter of 1159 of Gembloux Abbey now lost, cited in C. Butkens, *Les trophées tant sacrés que profanes du duché de Brabant*, t. II (The Hague, 1724-1746), 191.

Brabant, and it is quite likely that our round donjon was erected for him. In 1199 Abbess Berthe of Nivelles ceded him land a few miles to the northwest on which a square stone tower, still standing today, was later built.<sup>15</sup> He must have died by 1210, when Arnold III, probably his nephew, appears in the charter record. Under this Arnold the family status continued to improve: he is signaled as *chevalier* in 1217 and doubtless by 1228 acknowledged as Lord of Walhain, that is, of noble status, one of seven *ministralis* families in Brabant thought to have gained this rank in the first half of the thirteenth century. Arnold III was still alive in 1235, with an adult son and heir, Jacques (attested since 1225) who holds the lordship in 1248. Thus the ambitious building campaigns documented by our excavations, involving extensive landscaping, the erection of a donjon of the *tour philippienne* type and the first phase of work to create a strongly fortified enclosure (*castrum*) anchored by it, and very probably the construction at the same time of the nine-pillar barn and the raising of an earthen terrace (or its first phase) for the *basse-cour*, coincide with the rise of a lineage closely linked to a rising regional power. The considerable material investment required to create the *castrum* and outer bailey in the course of the thirteenth century must reflect, then, not only or even primarily the resources and interests of a local lineage of castellans, but also the strategic priorities of a major regional overlord and his confidence in a family of trusted vassals.

The fortification of the *haute-cour* was carried out over two building stages. Under the lords cited above walls were extended east and north of the donjon to terminate in round corner towers, and the twin-towered gateway giving onto the moat was

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<sup>15</sup> For the rectangular stone tower known as “la tour des sarrasins” at Alvaux, see W. Ubregts, “La tour des Sarrasins à Alvaux,” *Wavriensia* XXII-2 (1973): 21. This charter is now Archives Générales du Royaume, Archives ecclésiastiques, #1417 *Liber Grossus*.



completed in the latter. Had this plan been followed as originally conceived the result would have been a square enclosure. But construction had paused by mid-century; it was resumed under Arnold V, attested as lord in 1264 and deceased by 1310, not long after the redaction of his testament, a document rediscovered by happy chance in the 1980s.<sup>16</sup> It includes the considerable sum of nearly 5000 *lv* to purge his debts, which are likely to include expenses connected with finishing the enclosure of the *castrum*. Nevertheless this was done following a truncated plan. Although our excavations are incomplete in this area, they indicate that much more terrace construction would have been needed to complete the original plan, which further suggests that the decision to reduce the scale of the project may reflect the fact that the generous ducal support that we have hypothesized for its earlier stages was not forthcoming. Further archival research and further



**Figure 10** Walhain Castle, Harrewijn (1695). Photo: after re-edition by J. Le Roy, *Chateaux et maisons de campagne de gentilhommes du Brabant et les monastères les plus remarquables* (Bruxelles, 1982).

<sup>16</sup> For Arnold V and his testament, see P. Godding, “Pléthore d’enfants, fin de race. Le testament d’Arnould de Walhain (1304),” *Wavriensia* XXXVIII-4 (1989): 105-136. A seal of Arnold V also survives attached to a charter of the Abbey of Affligem (1298) *Bruxelles, Archives Générales du Royaume, Fonds d’Archives ecclésiastiques, Chartier de l’abbaye d’Affligem, #4611, charte 229*.

excavation should allow us to develop and test this theory. Ironically the completion of the *castrum* coincides with the extinction of the Arnold lineage and the beginning of a period of apparent disinterest in and neglect of Walhain castle. Both Arnold's brother, Otto, and his son and heir, Godfrey, had died of wounds sustained in battle--Arnold was also wounded, but survived--and the lordship passed to a granddaughter, Mathilde, who married John of Looz, lord of Agimont. For over a century it passed from family to family until its purchase in 1435 by the Glimes lineage, a family closely connected with the new Burgundian ducal power in the region, revived its importance and brought new investments, which are evident in the seventeenth-century engravings.<sup>17</sup> **(Figure 10)**

There is, as we have seen, evidence of human activity involving a bank and ditch. Our revised hypothesis, then, is that the still-impressive-if-much-dilapidated medieval structures at Walhain are the visible remains of an ambitious, carefully conceived and well-executed *ex nihilo* construction project perhaps beginning in the last years of the twelfth century and certainly continuing during the first part of the thirteenth century. Wattle-and-daub structures in the valley bottom existed before the outer bailey terrace was built, but the associated ceramics **(Figure 11)** suggest that it does not date much before that time, and it may have been associated with an early phase of the project. Aside from this there is no evidence of the material nature of human occupation connected with the *villa walaham* signaled in tenth and eleventh century documents, or with the lords attested in documents from 1099 onward. Does such evidence survive

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<sup>17</sup> For the acquisition of the castle and lordship by Antoine de Glimes in 1435, see D. Verzwymelen and B. K. Young, "Recherches sur le site du chateau de Walhain," *Wavriensia* LI-3 (2002): 74, for the description of the domain drawn up for the new lord.



**Figure 11** Upper Left: Ceramic base, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century. Found above possible medieval wall (M3034, 2008). Upper Right: 15<sup>th</sup>-century ceramic base, displaced (2012). Lower Right: Possible hand-thrown medieval ceramic base. Found in inner bailey, under 16<sup>th</sup> century yellow mortar level (2005). Lower Left: Possible 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century, simple decoration around edge of base. Found in inner bailey under cobblestone level (2006).

elsewhere, perhaps in the area to the north of the castle where the village center is now located? Further research will allow us to answer these questions, and add new, more detailed data to the story of the relationship between lordship and landscape and the development of its agricultural resources that our excavations have so far revealed. 🍷