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The mapped views by Georg Hoefnagel: the merchant's eye, the humanist's eye

LUCIA NUTI

'Antverpianus mercator': when we come across the name of Georg Hoefnagel for the first time in the *Civitates orbis terrarum*¹, we find it linked with these two words. In the preface of the first volume, the editor, Georg Braun, is officially thanking the owners of images who provided his books with views of towns: a group of merchants, scholars, and local politicians whose names will increase volume after volume, but also change around as occasional contributors. The name of Georg Hoefnagel² immediately stands out among the others, because he is not only the owner, but also the author of the views he provided; moreover, in the following volumes he will become a permanent contributor, closely following the making of the book and playing a lot of different roles in it: he goes on providing drawings of his own, some of which are drawn on purpose, but he also provided others' images, some of which he reproduces himself and some he only acquires and sends to the engraver's workshop.

But that editor's introduction to the *Civitates* also helps us to understand the context in which Hoefnagel's views are located. The launching of a huge, pioneering work like the *Civitates* demanded of course a detailed explanation, which Braun contrived in the language and the custom of learned literature, with a long prelude filled with celebratory poems and quotations from classical authors; nevertheless, in a much more modern style, as in a journal, he used this space for opening a dialogue with his potential public, attributing acknowledgements, explaining the aim and scope and also the limits and failures of the book and inviting others to contribute to it.

The *Civitates* thus announces itself from the beginning as an open collection of town views, a work in progress: the images which poured into Cologne from every part of Europe were not selected or drawn again before passing through the hands of the engravers and reaching the stage of the atlas. More than one image of the same town can be found then on display even in the same volume, provided that two conditions are satisfied; the truthfulness of the contents – a drawing drafted from life – and the final outcome, mainly due to the skill of the engravers: not flat images of towns, but towns themselves, springing out of the sheet in a tridimensional, lifelike appearance.³

Product of the Renaissance, this work appeals to the eye as the keenest sense, asserting that information held in a verbal description could never equal that passing through an image. Views of towns will speak for themselves, in a self-sufficient way; therefore the narration that Braun will put on the back of the page is meant to be taken as a fund, often historical and learned, of information about the town. Of course, such an image has to be perfectly made for an eye – the scientific eye – that, being

¹ – G. Braun and F. Hogenberg, *Civitates orbis terrarum* (Cologne, 1572–1617). For detailed information about the *Civitates* and the problems concerning dates and features of the different issues, see F. Bachmann, *Die alten Städtebilder* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1965); see also A. Popham, 'Georg Hoefnagel and the *Civitates orbis terrarum*', *Mosa Finiguerra*, I (1936), pp. 183–201; R. A. Skelton's introduction in the reprint of the *Civitates* (Cleveland and New York, 1966) and J. Kozák, 'Civitates orbis terrarum', *Umení*, 31 (1983), pp. 381–390. For the relationship with urban history, see L. Nuti, 'Alle origini del Grand Tour: immagini e cultura della città italiana negli atlanti e cosmografie del secolo xvi', *Storia urbana*, 27 (1984), pp. 3–54.

² – The literature about Georg Hoefnagel is extensive. For basic information and bibliography, I refer to S. Killermann, 'Georg Hoefnagel', *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, ed. U. Thieme and F. Becker (Leipzig 1907–50; 17: 1934), pp. 292–293 and F. W. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, ca. 1450–1700* (Amsterdam 1949). They both omit E. Kriss, 'Georg Hoefnagel und der wissenschaftliche Naturalismus', *Festschrift für Julius von Schlosser zum 60 Geburtstag*, eds A. Weixlgärtner and L. Planiscig (Zurich, Leipzig and Wien, 1927), pp. 244–253.

In addition to Popham, quoted above, a survey of more recent works concerning Hoefnagel's production of town and landscape views is: F. Kelly, 'A Horselydown Wedding', *The Burlington Magazine* 174 (1917), pp. 89–91; C. Beard, 'Georg Hoefnagel's visit to England in 1568', *The Connoisseur*, 83 (1929), p. 167; A. G. B. Russell *Joris Hoefnagel Progress of Queen Elisabeth to Nonsuch Palace, Old Masters Drawings*, 1937, 11, pp. 31–32; E. Schilling, 'Zwei Landschaftszeichnungen des Georg Hoefnagel', *Kunstgeschichtliche Studien für Hans Kaufmann* (Berlin, 1956), p. 237; F. Yates, *The Valois Tapestries* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1959); I. Bergström, 'Georg Hoefnagel, le dernier des grands

miniaturistes flamands', *L'Oeil*, 101 (1963), pp. 3–9, H. Franz, *Niederländische Landschaftsmalerei im Zeitalter des Manierismus* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u Verlagsanstalt 1969); Th. Wilberg Vignau-Schuurman, *Die Emblematischen Elemente in Werke Joris Hoefnagels* (Leiden, 1969); M. Russel, *Vision of the Sea* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1983); M. Biddle, 'The stuccoes of Nonsuch', *The Burlington Magazine* (1984), pp. 411–416; T. Colletta, *Atlanti di città del Cinquecento* (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1984).

Views by Hoefnagel appear in the following catalogues of exhibitions or collections: *The Origins of Italian Veduta* (Providence: Brown University, 1978); *Recent Acquisitions and Promised Gifts: Sculpture, Drawings, Prints* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1974); *Bruegel d.A. als Zeichner: Herkunft und Nachfolge* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, 1975); *Zeichnung in Deutschland: Deutsche Zeichner 1540–1640* (Stuttgart: Staatsgalerie, Graphische Sammlung, 1979–80); *German Drawings from a Private Collection* (London: The British Museum, 1984); *The Renaissance at Sutton Place* (Sutton Place; Sutton Place Heritage, 1983).

For the equally wide bibliography about Hoefnagel's production of plants and animals I refer to T. DaCosta Kaufmann, *Drawings from the Holy Roman Empire 1540–1680* (Princeton: The Art Museum, Princeton University, 1982).

Finally, I am indebted to E. M.

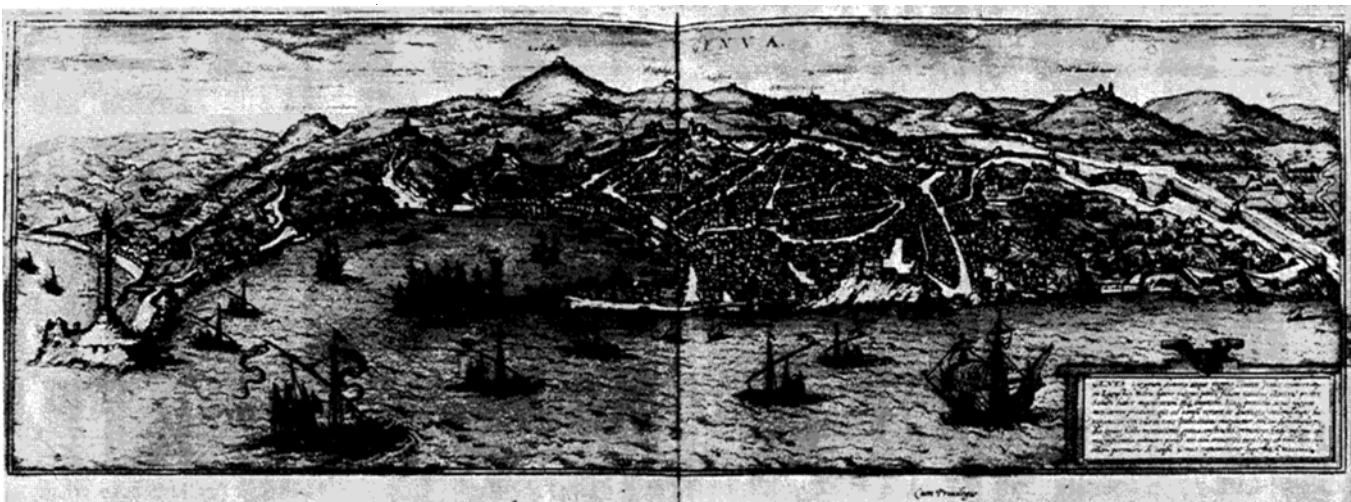
Figure 1. *Genua* (Genova), a bird's eye view from the *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, I. A short portrait of the city is inscribed in the cartouche at bottom right. The final words 'Genua cognominetur superba' (Genoa is called the Superb) refer to the city's popular reputation.

the main arbiter of knowledge, needs to grasp the subject and go as deeply as possible into it.⁴ The lifelike appearance, to attract and satisfy the physical eye that likes to look at and recognize a real object, should not be confused with the realism of the picture, a piece of reality recorded from one actual point of view. The image created by and for the scientific eye is a kind of abstraction – and it could not be otherwise – built by two different representative modes. The geometrical mode, or 'geometrica ratio', makes the vision go through urban spatial plots, outlining the balance between building blocks and open spaces – roads, squares, green areas – even suggesting the process and stages of urban development; the pictorial mode, or 'perspectiva ratio', approaching the objects from different points of view, lets us distinguish the features of emergent landmarks like churches, private or public buildings and other, ordinary common buildings (figure 1).

In the end, those partial and dynamic views will be sewn up again on the sheet in one static shape that is well defined most of the time, with a high degree of proportion, by the net line of the urban walls (a regular geometric shape) or an odd one, sometimes looking like a ship, a heart, a sickle. To that shape anyway, the idea of the town will be, from then on, indissolubly linked. Travellers visiting a town will seldom leave it without trying to catch it, even if they have to face a hard climb up to the highest tower or a long ride up the surrounding hills: the identification process of knowledge will then take place upside down, starting from the shape they were familiar with on the paper to the one they are able to embrace in reality. When the eye takes the lion's share of the experience, a minimum space of course is granted to words. We can say that words are removed to that point beyond which the whole operation of mapping would lose sense.

It must be granted, in the end, that the association of graphic signs with linguistic signs, of shapes with names, allows the identification process and the input of the data in the memory. Blank maps do not exist, other than those made blank just to enable students to learn.

The name of the town and the name of the landmarks are recorded



directly over the objects, but if the paper is too crammed with words or too little sky left free, they are pointed out by a code, a number or a letter, and the explanations are grouped in a legend inscribed in a framed space or simply where there is sufficient free space. Sometimes, and mostly when big cities are on display, the identification process passes through a double process: a very rich legend on one side and on the other, in a framed space, a few lines describing the most impressive features of the town (as in a stereotyped portrait), probably derived from oral traditions' inventory of prejudices, rumours, sayings and epithets. In Italy those portraits of the main towns were joined in nonsense rhymes that became a literary *topos* in descriptions of the country.⁵

Braun, detailing the optimum for the city views of his book, appears more than conscious of what is expected of a good mapper at that moment: to rise from the ground, just as Daedalus did, and render that view from above, in a way that could be legible to the eye. For that purpose the flight was stopped not far from its beginning and the land was surveyed from an angle-shot of about 30 to 60 degrees. In the following centuries that flight continues, but when the mapper reaches a 90 degree angle (the zenith), the eye will loose its power again. An extremely poor image, resulting in a game of flat surfaces, where single features can no longer be distinguished, will find its key only in the abstraction of measuring instruments – compasses and scales will appear at the bottom of the map. All around a long list of explanations will assert again the supremacy of words. However, in 1572, when the book of cities was initiated, the process of mapping was not everywhere developed in the same way. A great deal of local production, which was far from the big printing workshops and could not count on skilled surveyors, kept following different approaches: the most common of all was the man's eye view, that is to say, a town laid on the horizon line and gazed at as a profile figure from offshore or across a river, out of which a wood of vertical landmarks emerges. Such a view cannot really allow an investigation of spatial plot and global shape. On the contrary, surveys taken for military purposes outline walls and fortification lines very clearly but do not care so much for the features of the buildings.

Even if such partial views were not completely satisfactory, they were in any case a precious step forward in the knowledge of towns never represented before. Hunger for and jealousy of maps were widespread in the sixteenth century. The account of the Russian, protesting that his life would have been in serious danger, if it had been known that he had given a drawing of Moscow to a foreigner, clearly mirrors those feelings.⁶ One century later Van der Hem, the owner of a great atlas, was still extremely reluctant 'to show the volumes concerning the Dutch East Indies to anyone, as they contained maps belonging to the secret atlas of the Dutch East Indies Company, given to him by certain unnamed friends whom he wished to protect'.⁷

The views by Georg Hoefnagel definitely do not follow the up-to-date mode of town-mapping that Braun points out in his preface and in a lot of cases they do not even represent towns, but rather landscapes or parts of the countryside. There are two reasons to explain the great fortune and the wider space that they got in the *Civitates*: first, the trustworthiness and

Zacchetti, 'Naturalismo e simbologia in Georg Hoefnagel', Ph.D thesis, Pisa (1985–86), for the most accurate and up to date researches about the artist.

3 – Braun uses the expression 'ad vivum'. A misinterpretation of that puzzles Popham, 'Georg Hofnagel', p. 192, who tries to explain the inscription in the view of Bilbao. The expression does not mean the starting point – to draw from life – but the final outcome – the lifelike appearance. Another striking example of that is in the text inscribed in the view 'Prospectus amoenis vallis Oeniponticae' (fifth volume).

4 – For the history of urban imagery, see the perceptive remarks of L. Gambi, 'La città da immagine simbolica a proiezione urbanistica', *Storia d'Italia: Atlante*, 6 (Torino: Einaudi, 1976), pp. 217–228, and also his *Milano* (Bari: Laterza, 1982).

On the birth of Italian bird's-eye city views, see G. Fanelli, *Firenze* (Bari: Laterza, 1980); J. A. Pinto, 'Origins and development of the ichnographic City Plan', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 35 (1976), pp. 35–50.

5 – G. Ricci, 'Cataloghi di città, stereotipi etnici e gerarchie urbane nell'Italia di antico regime', *Storia urbana*, 18 (1982), pp. 3–33.

6 – S. Alpers, *The Art of Describing* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), p. 133.

7 – W. Schellinks, *Viaggio al Sud*, 1664–5, ed. B. Aikema (Roma: Edizioni dell' Elefante 1983), p. 17.

richness of information recorded directly by such a keen observer; second, the high quality of picturing that Braun never fails to outline. ‘Accuratissimus depictor’, ‘manu sua artificiosa’, and ‘hic elegans et venusta . . . miniatoris praestantissimi manus’ are some of the expressions with which the skill of the designer is acknowledged, with some little amazement at the beginning, because the artist is a self-taught man: ‘cuius quidem industriam vehementer demiror atque exoculor quod in hac arte numquam sit usus magistro’, an opinion expressed for the last time in the third book; after that date the memory of a different activity was probably supposed to throw a shadow on Hoefnagel’s court artist employment.

There is anyway no doubt that his views – both those born before and independently from the launching of the *Civitates*, and those drafted on commission – are not the simple unqualified sketches that any traveller takes on the spot, just to record his own perception of the landscape. They all have the unmistakable mark of mapping, they are reports of the journeys located in time and space and are strictly motivated by the will to record and transmit information to be utilised concretely in the future.⁸

It is on that basis that the identification process has to take place, and a liaison between names and shapes is immediately set up. As this liaison is a dynamic one and changes through time, we can try to use it as a barometer of the changing sign in mapping.

If we approach Hoefnagel’s views looking for a thread of sequence, different possibilities of grouping or organizing are offered: the first is, of course, to keep the division based on the publication date, as they came out in six different issues. This can be used as a basis for assessing some chronological achievements, but we must keep account of the fact that it depended on editors’ choices: for example, the need not to fill a volume with too many views of the same country. The drawings or even the engravings ready for printing and ruled out of one issue could be kept suspended for years in the engravers’ workshop. Another track is the geographical division, country by country; but except for Spain and Italy, which account for a large stock of views, it has little significance.

The relationship between words and images suggests its own division. Let us develop this. From that standpoint two groups are set up: the first includes views of European countries visited before 1576 – Spain, France and England; the second of those coming after that date, not by chance the less numerous.⁹ The date 1576 has a historical meaning – the sack of Antwerp – but it signals a particular meaning in the artist’s own life, marking a breaking point, a turning point with no return. The loss of his personal goods, the bankruptcy of his father’s firm and the loss of his merchant fortunes forced him to look for a job, which he found, out of his family range of interest, only resorting to his personal talent; he became, as is well known, an artist permanently employed at court. The values of his life and culture were turned almost upside down; his subordinate activity, drawing and picturing, became primary, and if his merchant activity continued in some way, it was limited to art dealing.¹⁰

That key date in the end, appears also as a division inside the first group. Many images, as the nucleus in the Albertina collection testifies, were in fact redrawn for the engraving from the first sketches after the

8 – Popham, ‘Georg Hoefnagel’, pp. 199–200, comparing Hoefnagel’s production with that of his Flemish predecessors, Patinir, Cornelius Matys and Peter Bruegel, notes that his ‘irrepressible passion for anecdote [. . .] spoils the dignity’ of the landscape. It is ‘out of harmony with the sublime’, and this is ‘one of his weaknessess’. But in fact Hoefnagel’s views are not to be considered as mere landscape compositions. The topographical – you can consider it as a weakness – is in the drawer’s mind from the beginning. The will to map, to give detailed information, not the will to compose an unqualified landscape view, is his goal. For this issue, the relationship with landscape painting, see Zucchini, ‘Naturalismo’, pp. 125–195.

9 – Views included in the first group are: Rouen, Ecija, S. Sebastian, Granada (1); Oxonium, Vindesorium, Blanmont, Alhama, Antequera, Vegel, Velis Malaga, Conil, Xerex de la Frontera, Loxa, Orleans, Bourges (2); Lebrixia, Settenil (3); Marchena, Orchuna (4); Gades, Thynnorum piscatio apud Gades, Cabecas, Alganerilla, Palacios, Hardales, Cartama, Zahara, Bornnes, Hispalis, La Sierra de S. Adrian, Poitiers, Montherry, La pierre levée, Turris Hispalensis, Nonciutz, Castrum Granadensis, Granada, Tours, Angiers, Archidona, La penna de los enamorados (5). In the second group are: Landshutum, Pezaro, Blitri, Terracina, Tivoli, Mola, Campaniae felicis delitiae, Lacus Agnanus, Antrum Sibyllae, Solfataria (6); München (7); Vallis Oeniponticae, Palatiu Senatorum apud Venetos conflagratio, Augusti apud Venetos templi S. Marci descriptio, Fundi, Nocera, Castelnovo, Elegantissimus ad

changing of their author's status. Though the subjects and the recording belong to the merchant world, the making up of the final image and of the whole page are to be referred to the artist's new culture.

During the first part of his life, however, Hoefnagel travelled throughout Europe attending to his family's business. The places he passed by, and the people he met, belong to this merchant world. While travelling, his merchant mental map focused his attention upon a lot of signs in the range of those offered by reality: he was interested in observing and recording the features of the main ports and towns, but cared little about towns as spatial objects.

Curiosity for the extraordinary, for the particular more than the whole, attention to dangers or difficulties *en route*, interest in human customs and activities, mostly those dealing with livelihood – harvesting, fishing, preserving products or trade – handcrafts, export goods – that could some way stand as a feature or attraction of the site: all elements of the sprightly culture that passed through Marco Polo's reports or sailors *portolani*, or that we can trace one century later in the wide range of interested drawings by William Schellinks, who was engaged in taking a rich merchant's son on the Grand Tour and to many important trading stations.¹¹

In *The Art of Describing* Svetlana Alpers correctly recalls attention to the roots of the term 'descriptio', going back to the Greek root 'γραφ-' as the equivalent of the Latin 'scrib-'.¹²

They both mean a double-faced action of recording: the sign produced may belong to a system of figurative signs and compose an image; or to a system of linguistic signs and produce a text. The Greek noun γραφή keeps both meanings. At that moment, in its passage to Latin, something occurs that slips Alpers' attention and makes it difficult for her to follow the route of the term. The root 'scrib-' splits up and generates two nouns: the word 'scriptura' is used to mean only the making up of a text, the word 'descriptio' is used mostly for the figurative side; so that the expression 'descriptio orbis terrarum' commonly means a representation of the known world through an image, that is a geographical map.

There is nothing to wonder about, or no intentional hidden meaning, in the fact that the map introduced by Vermeer in the picture bears the inscription 'descriptio orbis terrarum'. That is the current Latin expression for that, already available in seventeenth-century Latin. However, it is worth considering when and how the derived term in vulgar modern languages – the English 'description', the French 'description', the Italian 'descrizione' – crossed the boundaries and was captured by the linguistic system, becoming the equivalent of the Latin 'narratio'. In the modern languages, moreover, the duplicity of the original meaning is definitively lost.

We can look back now at Hoefnagel's views. Given that they can be referred to as 'decriptiones', neither geographical, nor chorographical but simply topographical ones, how far are words discounted and information entrusted to images?

His recording follows both tracks, the verbal and the figurative, like the two sides of a mountain, keeping a constant and close connection between them. While travelling, he filled his sheets with sketches and his notebook

mare Tyrrhenum ex monte Pausillipo
Neapolis montisque Vesuvii prospectus
(v). I have deliberately omitted those
views redrawn by Hoefnagel after others'
archetypes, as I consider them simply
witness to his skilful hand: Lugdunum,
Vienna (iii); Gmunden, Rab, Castrum
Ambræ, Lintz, Aquapendente,
Tarfusium (v); Prospectum Freti Siculis
(vi).

I have also omitted one very large view
signed by him, Antverpia (v) that seems
to be the exception, a city bird's-eye view.
I believe it required a long and accurate
survey that was not Hoefnagel's remit. As
a homage to his home town he probably
traced the final drawing following the
survey draftings: this is not to be
considered a drawing of his own. The
name of Georg Hoefnagel appears in
many *Civitates* views preceded by the
word 'communicavit': meaning he only
communicated; he saw the drawing and
passed it to the engravers' workshop in
Cologne. His role of connoisseur and art
dealer is testified to by the *Civitates*, not
his role of artist. A misinterpretation of
the expression 'communicavit' led to the
mistaken attribution of two views of
Esztergom, now in the Fogg Art
Museum, dep. Seiden and De Cuevas.,
that were drawn by his son Jacob.

Finally, Popham formulates the
possibility that 'a certain number of views
which are unsigned are also by
Hoefnagel' ('Georg Hoefnagel', p. 199).
The possibility, of course, cannot be ruled
out, but I think it is weak, because from
the beginning there is an explicit
acknowledgment to him in the preface
and he pays a lot of attention in exactly
defining his role in each view. It is hard
to believe that something evaded him.
For example, the two views of Marchena
and Orchuna are unsigned in one of the
editions I saw. The name, simply 'Georg
Hoefnagel', is roughly inscribed on the
others.

10 – Hoefnagel's activity as a collector
and dealer of drawings is well known. I
can only recall the letter that he wrote to
a patron of art in Florence, Niccolò
Gaddi, first published in G. Bottari and
S. Ticozzi *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura,*
scultura e architettura, 3/156 (Milano,
1822–1825), p. 324. What I want to point
out here is how it influenced him, as a
drawer of towns. From the third book on,
he began to redraw views after others'
archetypes. Among his models we find
Lucas van Valckenburg, Alexander
Colynis, Ludwig Toeput or Pozzoserrato,
Peter Bruegel, and his own son, Jacob.
For Hoefnagel's relationship with another
Italian collector, Vincenzo Gonzaga,

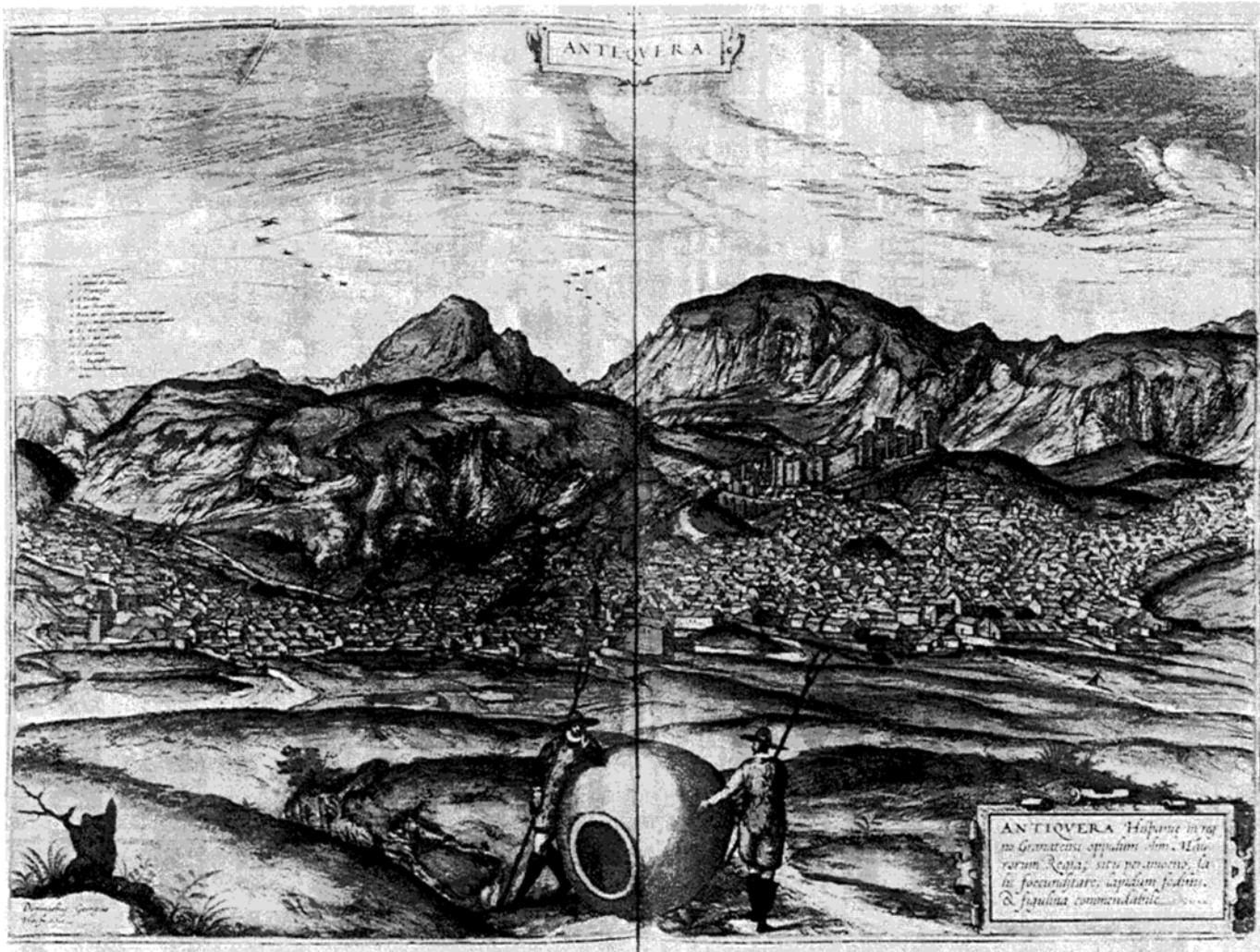


Figure 2. Hoefnagel, *Antequera*, engraving from the *Civitates*, II.

duke of Mantua, see Zucchetti, 'Naturalismo', pp. 16–17.
 11 – Schellinks, *Vicaggio al Sud*, pp. 18–19.
 For the contribution of merchants and sailors to mapping, see M. Quaini, 'L'Italia dei cartografi', *Storia d'Italia: Atlante*, 6 (Torino: Einaudi, 1976), pp. 5–24 and U. Tucci, 'Atlante', *Encyclopædia* (Torino: Einaudi, 1977).
 12 – Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, p. 136.

with notes, which he considered so essential to give to the editor together with his drawings. This Braun takes care to let us know, remarking that it was written not in the international scholarly language, but in the author's current language, Flemish, and had to be translated. We can look at the image first, read the *legenda*, notice the scene in the foreground and refer to the text on the back page for a detailed explanation, and we find an exhaustive and intelligent one.

In the view of Antequera (figure 2) we see two figures in the foreground leaning on an enormous earthware pot like a jar; the town is lying low between the mountains in the background. The explanation says that people in Antequera used to preserve food – water, oil, liqueurs – in pots of such an exceptional capacity that one only is sufficient for a family throughout the year. Or, we can read the text first, and after a quotation of the learned literature, find a vivacious and up-to-date description of the landscape. Sometimes the words themselves send us to the image, just to grasp the shape of what is being talked about. At Conil (figure 3) every year from May to the middle of June, they have a great tuna fishing season. Detailing the mode and the keypoints of that fishing, at one point Braun – but they are Hoefnagel's words – refers to a little

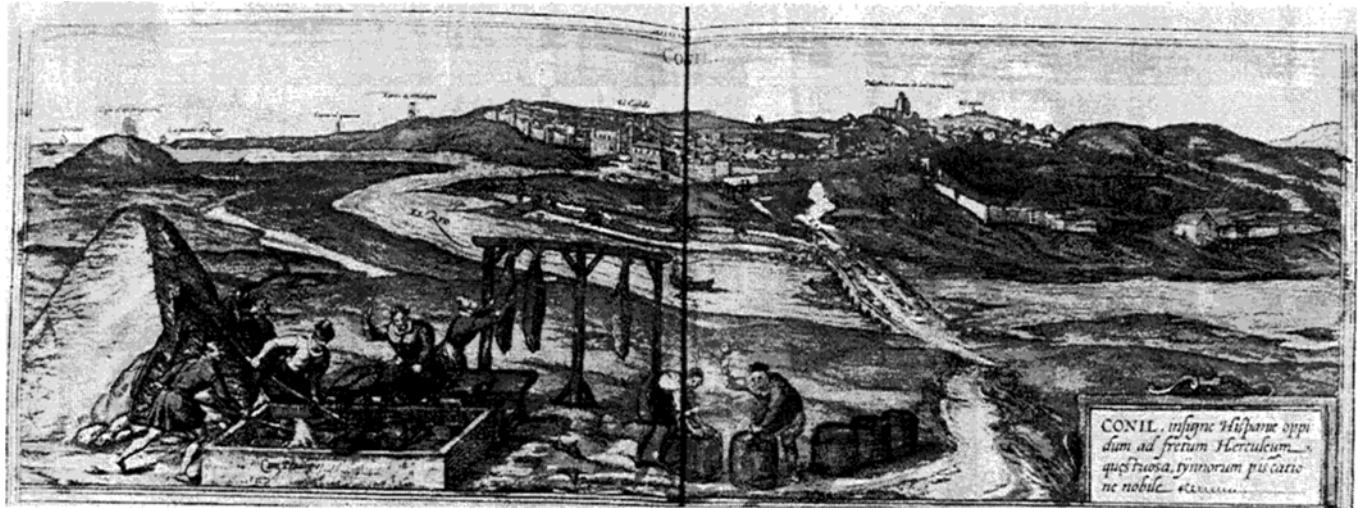


Figure 3. Hoefnagel, *Conil*, engraving from the *Civitates*, II.

river as 'rivulum quem in iconē conspicitur'. Reading about Cadiz, at the bottom of the text, we find the number 22, followed by a long explanation, too long to be included in a legend on the front page. The scene marked with number 22 is in the square at the bottom left: Spanish and Dutch merchants, as they could not understand each other's language, evolved a clever way of trading, showing prices of the goods and haggling about them, using the fingers.

Some words of course manage to win a space in the picture: the names of the geographical objects first, such as mountains, rivers, headlands, straits, seas or landmarks, as commonly happens in a map; but there is something more. Most times, at the edges of the pictures, the cardinal points are inscribed just to show that it is not an unqualified view, but one that is anchored to well fixed data and in whose space you can find your bearings.

Some more precise details help you in that purpose. On the roads that cross the pictures and disappear in the distance, marking the landscape with their whitish signs, an inscription answers your question 'Where?': 'Camino de . . .', 'Chemin de . . .' [Route from]; or 'Camino para . . .', 'Chemin for . . .' [Route to]. It is not a still space, but a mobile tape; and if you get into it and follow its track, like the small figures pushing animals or bearing goods, you'll certainly be carried to the destination and catch the key of the whole view. You can find your bearings and move in that space.

The will to point out things can go even further. In the foreground of the view of Ecija (figure 4), a flock of sheep is grouped within a net enclosure set up in a meadow. Further on a tower overhangs the end of a bridge that crosses a river and leads into the town. The purifying water of the river is valuable for washing the wool and treating the sheep's diseases. It's too important and the drawer cannot help calling the attention to that, writing on the water 'Aqui se lava la lana' (Here the wool is washed).

In any case, the link between the two poles of description is so close that, when one fails, we really feel that something is missing. We look at the views of Marchena and Orchuna and, after enjoying them, we refer to



Figure 4. Hoefnagel, *Ecija*, engraving from the *Civitates*, 1.

the text, as usual, for the explanation. But probably Hoefnagel's notes got lost in these cases and no explanation about the views is supplied. In vain we look again at the pictures. They will remain somewhat dumb, because the figures in the foreground harvesting or riveting nails do not tell enough about themselves.

That method of recording is very far from Braun's declared aims. The town itself is not mapped as a spatial object, to be deeply looked into, inside well defined limits. For to see from above is to operate with a political or planning authority: neither one was Hoefnagel's attitude.

His towns – though it must be stressed again that the attention is not always focused upon a town – are the main landmarks of a journey, the focal points of a country, from which they are never separated. Surrounded by mountains or cultivated fields, they are always described as keeping a vital link with their hinterland. They are ever recognizable; but most of the time they reach out on the page as long, indented, reddish strips, almost at the level of the observer's eye. The ends of the strip are often cut out of the page or, when held in the page, they are hidden by an obstacle – a hill, a group of trees – that arrests the sight. Your final impression is not to gaze at a shape: you cannot grasp it, and often neither the beginning nor the end of the object. You are given only the approach and have to go through it by yourself.

Towns and landscapes are inscribed on the sheet, but most of the time their description does not occupy the whole surface. If we kept the comparison with a lens, as Alpers does,¹³ we might say that the image is made up by putting together two visions passed through two different-sized lens; the more powerful one is used to bring into the foreground an action or a feature straight out of the background. A link between the two images will be immediately set up in the mind of the observer and he will certainly remember Antequera as the town of enormous earthen pots, or Conil as the town of tuna smoking, and so on.

The question to address now is what happens to Hoefnagel's merchant-eye views after 1576, when he became a full-time artist. We can suppose that at that time he had already given his whole earlier production to the editors and the drawings lay in the engraver's workshop ready to be used and distributed in the forthcoming volumes.¹⁴ But, even

¹³ – Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, chapter 2.

¹⁴ – The preparatory drawing of Cadiz (Oesterreichische National Bibliotek, Wien, Cod. Min. 41, fol. 46) is in the same sheet of another strip view of the town that was published in the first volume. 'Gades ab occiduis insulae partibus', on the contrary, was published only in the fifth, in a final version very different from this one.

so, he decided to get his hands on them again and work them up with a more skilled hand and a more refined eye.¹⁵

The artist could no more, of course, replace the merchant in the choice of the subject or the meaning of the views, but he could in fact add something of his own, modify the building of the image, and attend to the make-up of the whole page. He no longer wanted to be only the author of views, but of images which are more complex in their construction.

The first, most obvious witness of the artist's presence in the picture is the signature. The name, as between learned men, is latinized now to Georgius Hoefnaglius; the specification 'antverpianus' disappears: the home town, stage of another life, has been abandoned and citizenship has been lost. As an artist, Hoefnagel also begins to pay attention to the position of the signature in the painted space; it cannot be casual or insignificant. A special space – a tablet, a cartouche, or even a free space at the bottom of the page, or the blank surface of a stone – brings it out of the pictorial matter; or better still, if the page is composed of two or three strip views, the signature stands out, between them, out of the painted space, as a distinctive mark of the whole engraved page.

At the same time, the presence of the artist in the picture is recorded and doubled by another sign, also claiming a figurative evidence. In the views of the second volume we can sometimes meet on the stage of the foreground travellers reaching town. In the rich merchant approaching Loxa with his servant we can recognize, with a little margin of doubt, Hoefnagel himself. In the views of the fifth, roads are still crowded with travellers, but a more significant figure is introduced. A draughtsman, sometimes a traveller, intent on sketching with pen and sheet sits on a stone, or rides a horse, or leans on a chimney and in all cases he looks sufficiently like Hoefnagel.

The presence of a working artist is one of the most frequent conventions in sixteenth-century town-mapping. Far from being a merely decorative presence, it serves to give us a lot of information and keys to the whole view. First, that the object (that is the town) is surveyed from a direct observation and the main standpoint is approximatively marked by the position of the drawer. Second, as you have got to encounter him, when you go in or out of the picture, you must take into account that the image on the sheet is not simply reality on display for your eyes, but that it is filtered through his special eyes; and consequently that is the key to the whole image, its reason for being, as later it will be the compasses and the measuring scale. Are any of these intentions attributable to Hoefnagel's will to introduce the drawer in the picture? I think the first is, with a particular meaning.

Hoefnagel's drawer is not in fact an unqualified drawer, but himself. He has really been there and he wants to mark his presence by his small but recognizable figure. Once he saw himself as a merchant and his figure was dressed in merchant's clothes; now he sees himself as an artist and he mirrors himself in artist attitudes.

There is much evidence of this in the fact that, while his written explanations are still used in the fifth volume, Braun does not refer anymore to him as the author of the text but only as the author of the images. On the other side Hoefnagel's draughtsmen cannot exercise a

¹⁵ – A conspicuous nucleus of drawings in the Albertina Graphische Sammlung Collection (Wien, Niederländischen Schule, Bd. XIII), is witness to the artist's working for the *Civitates*. It concerns views that were published from the third volume. We find in it the final, worked-up version of the view of Cadiz, referred to above. Another final version is the drawing of Masmoros, whose first sketch is published in *German Drawings*, p. 156.



Figure 5. Hoefnagel, *La Sierra de Sant Adrian*, engraving from the *Civitates*, v.

filter function because they are not really out of the picture. In the view 'La Sierra de Saint Adrian' (figure 5) a little figure, standing on a stone between a traveller entering the cave and another going away from it, is drawing sketches. Put in the middle of the picture under the vault of the cave, he is an integral part of the picture.

The making up of an image, as already noted, is a more complex work than drawing a view. The choice of format is the first act of the artist. The sheets engraved before 1576 show only two alternatives: the strip or the full page view. On the contrary, in the second group a great variety of formats is offered – squares, different thicknesses of strips, vertical strips, full page – that are put together to make up the whole page like a jigsaw puzzle.

The first and simplest kind of composition is the coupling of a larger strip describing the sight, and a narrower one below detailing people dressed in local clothes. Around the Sierra de Saint Adrian, located at the boundaries between France and Spain, rich ladies move about and young country girls on both sides go to the markets:¹⁶ under Nonsuch Palace we find British ladies, and small traders selling their fish in a particular way.

¹⁶ – Yates notes the relationship between the figures of this plate and some that can be found in the works of Lucas de Heere (*Valois Tapestries*, p. 15, 20; pl. 9b, 15a, b, c). For the friendship between the two artists see Zucchetti, 'Naturalismo', pp. 347–350.



Figure 6. Hoefnagel, *La Penna de los enamorados and Archidona*, engraving from the *Civitates*, v.

The view of Nonsuch dates to 1568, but the date actually engraved evidently refers to the whole composition as a new image.¹⁷ A second solution is the combination of two strip-views above and two squares below with the zooming of an area from above. The tuna fishing near Cadiz is dominated by a narrow strip zooming the end of the promontory where it takes place and the castle; Penna and Archidona (figure 6), like two little photographic trials on the bottom, are blown up above by two strips showing the same landmarks. The third solution of composing is a temporal succession of the images that seems to suggest the lapse of time passing between them. Zahara is mirrored by both sides; Braun says that Hoefnagel, attracted by the beauty of the sight, paused to describe it very carefully; the sun that is high above the left view is going down on the right.

The sheet with the three views of Palacios, Alganerilla and Cabecas (figure 7) details a relatively short but very difficult stretch of the route. The succession is to be read this way: leaving Seville that is visible far away on the right, we find the small town of Palacios (first strip). Going on toward Cabecas visible on the left (second strip), a critical point is

¹⁷ – There are two views of Nonsuch palace by Georg Hoefnagel, bearing the date 1568: a drawing kept in the British Museum and a watercolour, in a private collection. The interrelationship of the three versions is discussed in *The Renaissance*, pp. 92–96. For the fineness of Hoefnagel's description, see Biddle, 'The stuccoes', pp. 411–412. I think that the figures in the lower strips have been drafted by the artist during his stay in England, and then taken from his sketchbook and composed for the engraving in 1581.

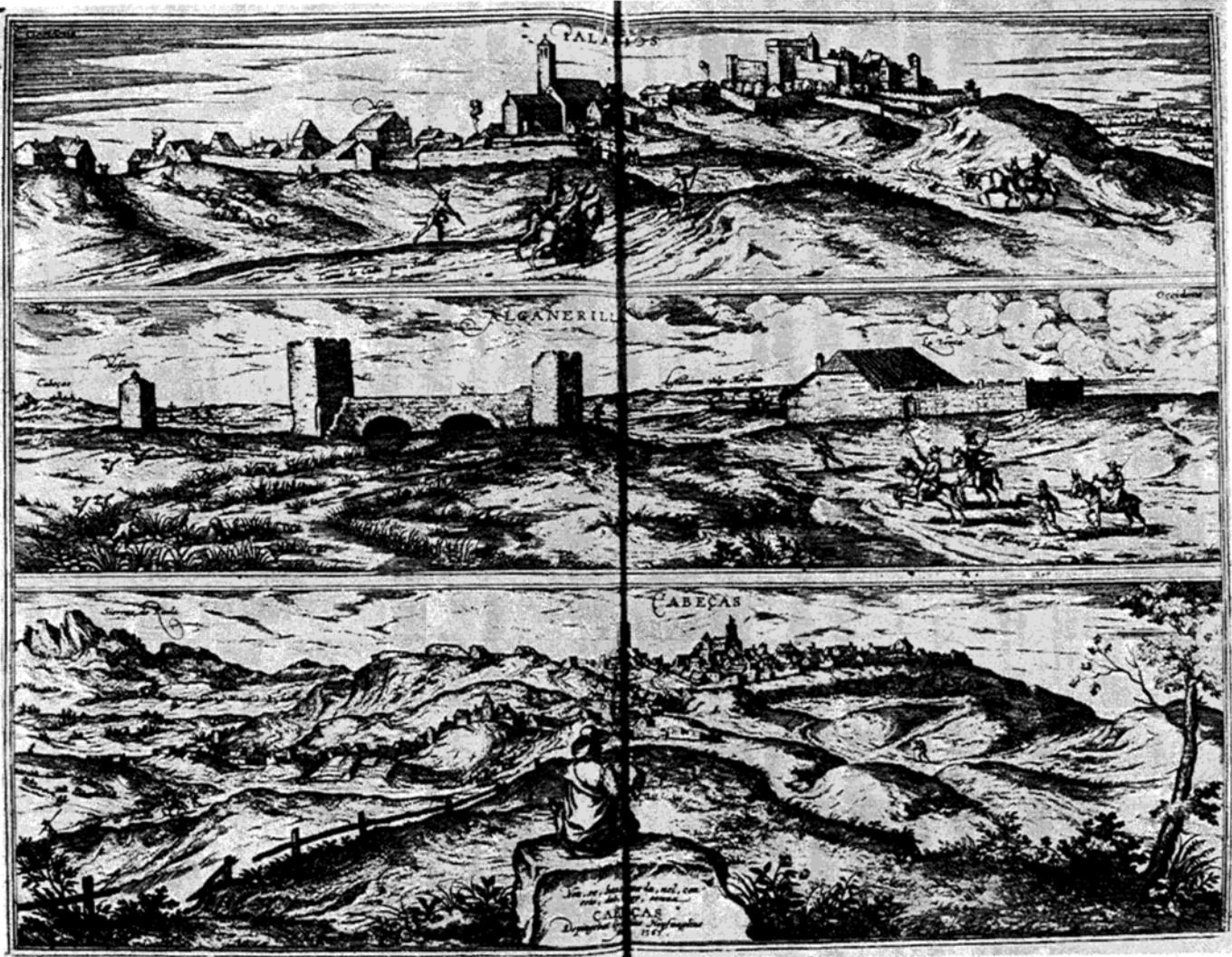


Figure 7. Hoefnagel, *Palacios, Alganerilla, Cabecas*, engraving from the *Civitates*, v.

arrived at where there are two possible routes to take: one traveller points out one way, another points to the other. A marshy and quite deserted land stretches before your eyes, populated by wild animals and traces of dead things: a Roman bridge, an Arabian temple, a tomb. Only one building seems to await travellers, a hut with a walled-up courtyard. The text says that the lower route, called Marisma, is to be ruled out because of the marshes; mainly during the summer it is like a water way and you cannot find your bearings without a compass. More than one traveller struck by thirst or the heat of the sun fell dead. La Venta is the only kind of traveller's resort you can find in Castille, where no villages and towns exist for miles and miles. The hosts of these ventas made an assistance pact: should any bandit infest the routes, they immediately inform each other and take up their arms to kill him. At the end, taking the upper way you reach Cabecas (third strip): the traveller, draped in his wide cloak, sits on a stone to design the town from a distance.

The last and most complex solution of composing is the one combining a big view and more small ones referring to it or to some remarkable

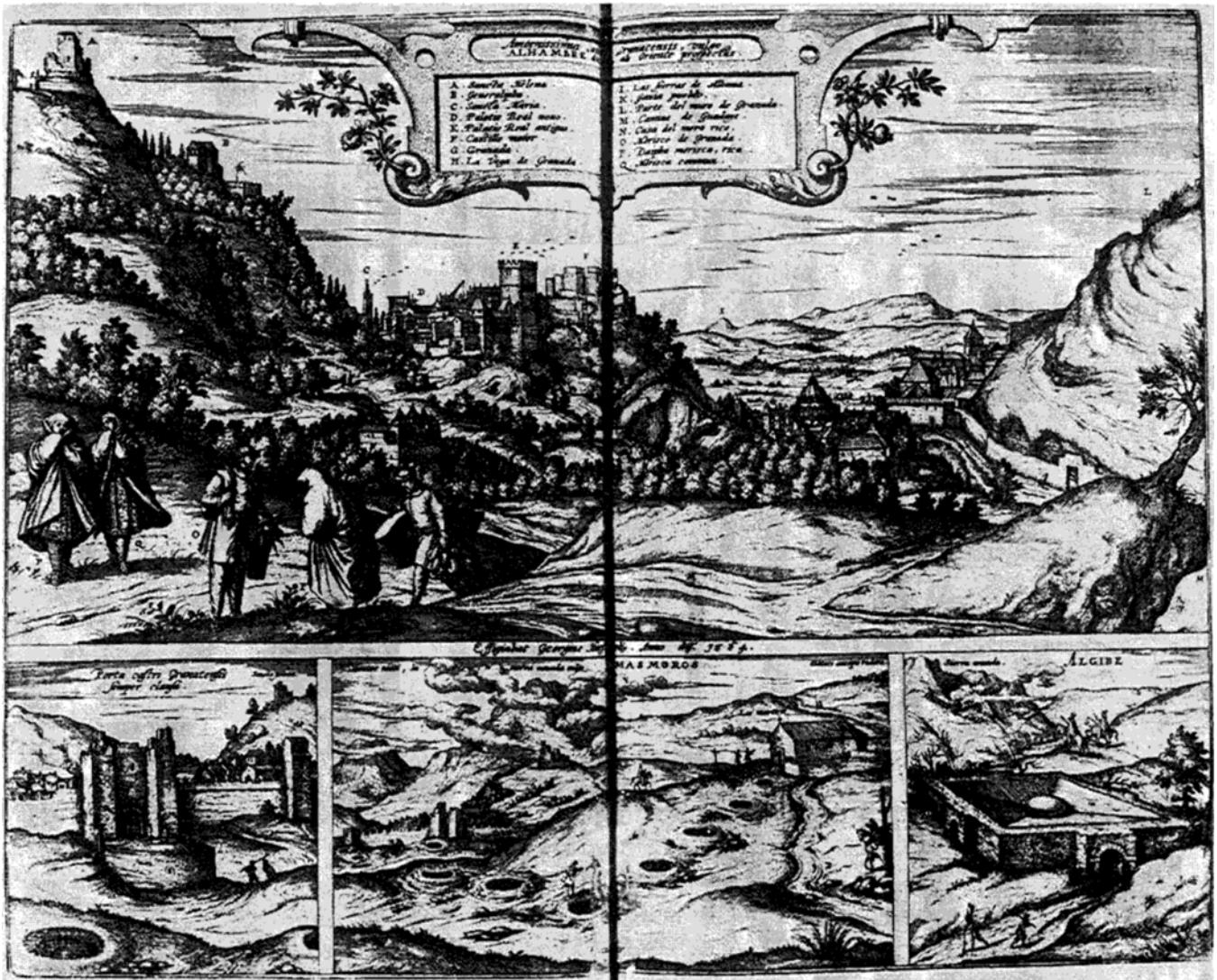


Figure 8. Hoefnagel, *Alhambra*, engraving from the *Civitates*, v. The composition allows us to take a complete view of the object, the castle. The link between the upper and the lower views is provided by the landmark A, that appears in the first square with its name, 'Sancta Helena'. A new changing of view point between the second and the third square rotates on the Sierra Nevada.

things in the surroundings. We have already considered the view of Cadiz and the way of trading. The castle of Granada (figures 8 and 9) is followed by the representation of what you can see beyond the door that is now seen as closed. The tower of Seville is mirrored as a wondrous revolving object: you look at the front prospect first, in a vertical strip on the left; then a pause, almost a suspense, three small squares where different kinds of architectonic wonders in the surroundings are shown: a Gothic castle, a lot of special stones, archeological remains found in a field by a Dutch merchant. At the end in the vertical strip on the right, the tower, seen from behind, reveals its secret – a wide flight of stairs that a man on horseback can easily ride to the top. At that stage the verbal and the figurative sides of the description continued to be closely connected. So much for the subject. But at the same time other kinds of words and writings come up to crowd the picture. Titles are expressed in more complex formulations: not the simple name of the town but a short presentation of what is in the picture, for example, 'Almodrana de Cadiz

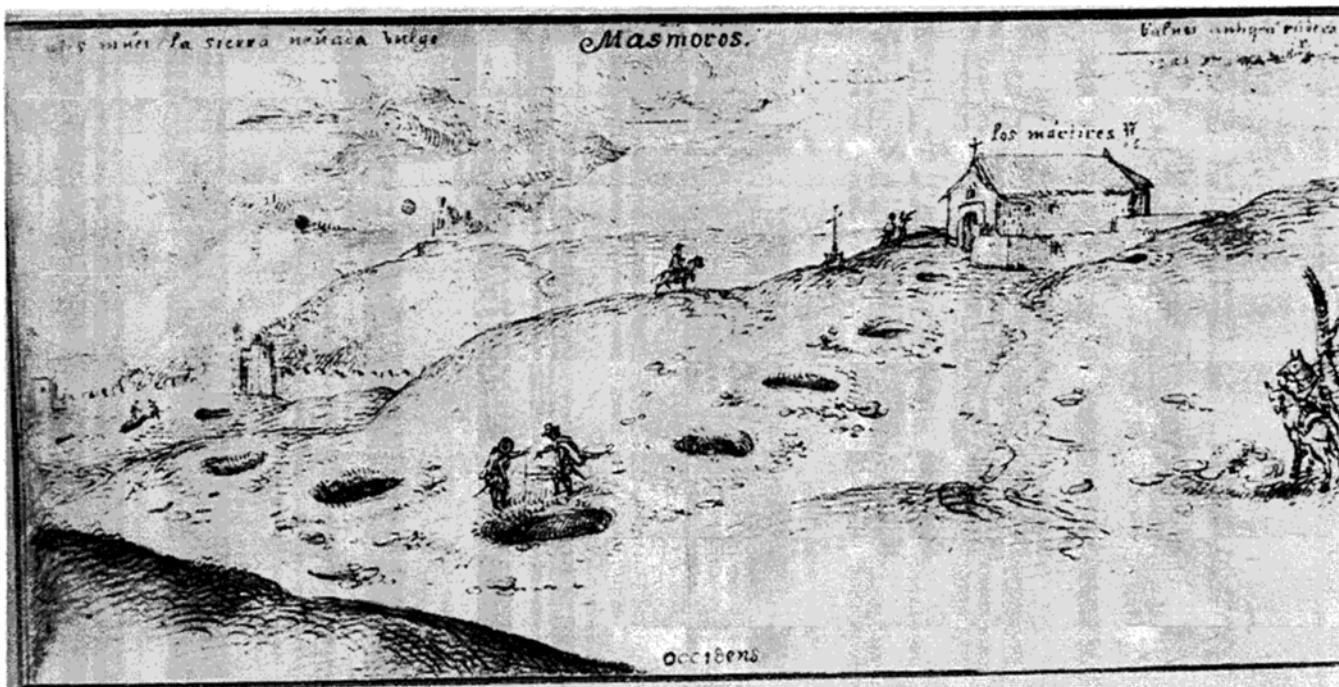


Figure 9. Hoefnagel, *Masmoros*, drawing (Vienna: Albertina Graphische Sammlung). This view, drawn separately, was used to compose a more complex image.

sive thynnorum piscatio apud Gades', or 'Palatium Regium in Angliae Regno appellatum Nonciutz Hoc est nusquam simile', or 'Amoenissimus castrum Granatensis vulgo Alhambre dicitur ab Oriente prospectus', etc.

Dedications, a widespread custom among learned men, can now be included and are accorded a special space. From Frankfurt in 1593 an image is composed as a 'monumentum memoriae' to an old friend and travelling companion. The town of Seville and its Latin name, Hispalis, are displaced out of immediate perception into memory by an elaborate border of branches and drapes, on which the *legenda* tablets are hanging, with the Spanish name and the refrain commonly linked to it. The dedication is inscribed in a blank strip, at the bottom. Similar blank strips or some between the engravings are filled in more and more with different graphic signs, such as Roman numbers, or Greek characters, composing dates, words or learned quotations.

A very impressive and significant way of inscribing words in the picture and entrusting them with a lot of information can be seen in the square 'La pierre levée demie lieue de Poitiers'. First, it is important to give the location: the title tells us and the view details it. Two travellers on the route to Berry point out the stone and from it another character points out the town of Poitiers that appears in the distance (figure 10). Following this direction, it can easily be found. The stone is probably a sort of dolmen; it was, however, this kind of wonder that attracted common and learned travellers to engrave their names on the stone, simply to leave the trace of their presence and a message to later travellers. A figure on the left in fact has climbed up and is engraving something. All of this Hoefnagel could surely draft during his long stay in Poitiers when he attended the University courses with a group of merchants' sons.¹⁸

Now, the first remarkable thing on the upper surface of the big stone is

¹⁸ – The fact is confirmed by a document, edited by A. Monballieu, 'Joris Hoefnagel bij Obertus Gyfanius te Orleans en te Bourges (1560–1562)', *Jaarboek van Het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1980), pp. 99–112. We know the names of the students and the tutor, and how they were called back to Antwerp after the Huguenot Wars.

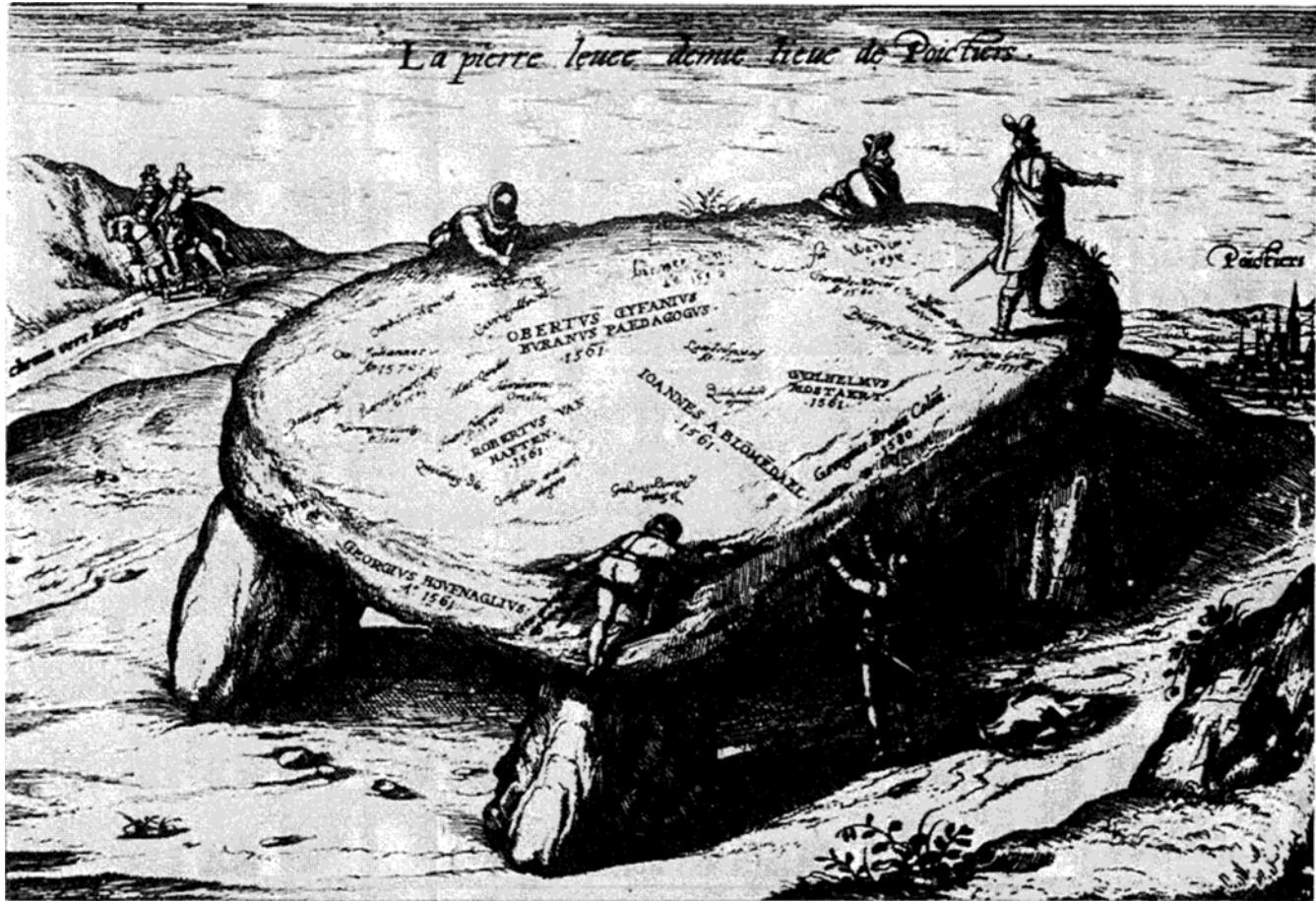


Figure 10. Hoefnagel, *La pierre levée*, engraving from the *Civitates*, v.

a lot of mostly readable names, engraved in different hands. The first one, almost unreadable but probably in current Northern characters, belongs to an ordinary person like the one who has climbed up and is writing. The second, a clear cursive script with a readable date, groups some Latinized names of learned men belonging to Antwerp's cultural circles, all interested in making maps and printing. The third writing, with bigger, capital letters, links some names – including the artist's own – with only one date, 1561. In that way he wants to remember his school friends in Poitiers and to let us know their names, as well as that of the tutor 'Gypfanus pedagogus'. A fourth piece of writing, a very clear and bigger cursive, contains only one name, 'Georgius Braun Colon. 1580'. The view is signed as taken in 1561. Shall we take this addition as a tribute to the editor or as a suggestion for the engraver from the editor himself? Anyway it is a last-moment addition during the actual printing of the *Civitates*.

The view 'Gades ab occiduis insulae partibus' (figures 11 and 12) is one of the most worked-up, as the preparatory drawing for the engraving testifies. The big fish hanging from the top is the kind of wonder that Hoefnagel could take note of, in his sketchbook at the place, during his stay in Cadiz. Fishing was one of the most important activities in the town – people are fishing on the left and on the right side of the picture – and the big tuna was caught probably there, in 1564, as the inscription tells

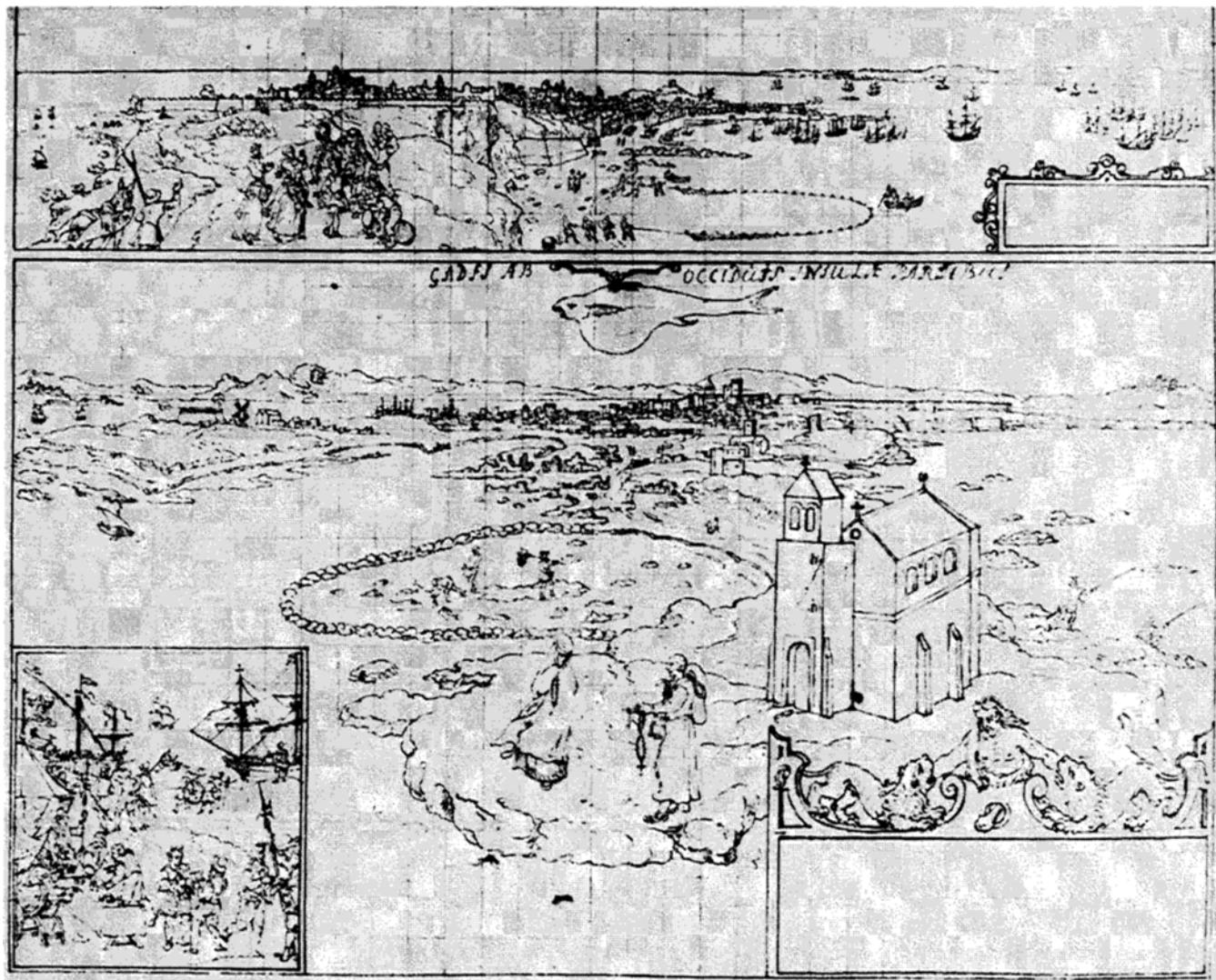


Figure 11. *Gades*, the first outline drawing for the engraving after Hoefnagel (Vienna: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek).

19 – As Alpers remarks on an image recording a giant radish, found in Fredrickstaat: ‘Objects come with their own verbal documentation. They make themselves visible in image and in word and the picture documents them by visibly naming the object . . . word and image combine to document the claim the object has on our attention without any recourse to narrative entanglements’ (*The Art of Describing*, pp. 181–183).

us. Two other animals are perched on the small squares: a greyhound and a tucan, each with an inscription recording their home countries and the date of their landfall, 1565 and 1578.¹⁹ They are also objects worth noting. But what is the link with Cadiz? It is not that the artist saw them there, at least not the second since he had already left at that date. I think they are drawn out of his note book and presented for our attention as objects of the new world, inscribed at the point that for a long time was believed to be the end of the world (see number 20 in the picture).

At that stage of making up images, Hoefnagel was at ease with words. Words not only views, in fact, had become an important part of the images. To understand to what extent and how they did, we can refer to the other group, of extensively Italian views. Italy is not the only country represented, but all the images were composed after the journey to Italy and that experience seems to have left a deep impression on him.

The first remarkable thing about them is that they were drawn on commission or were born as images for a special purpose. The artist was

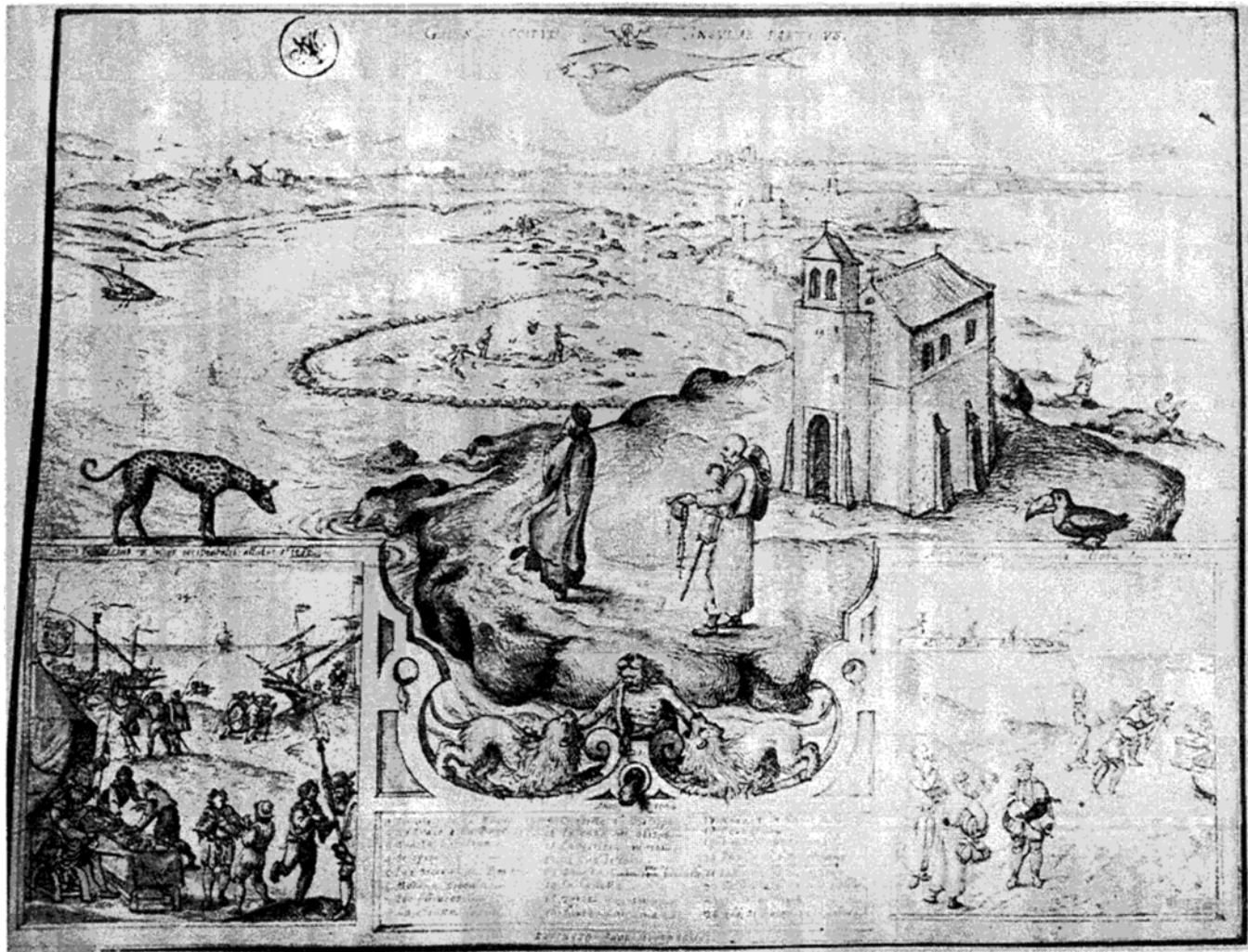
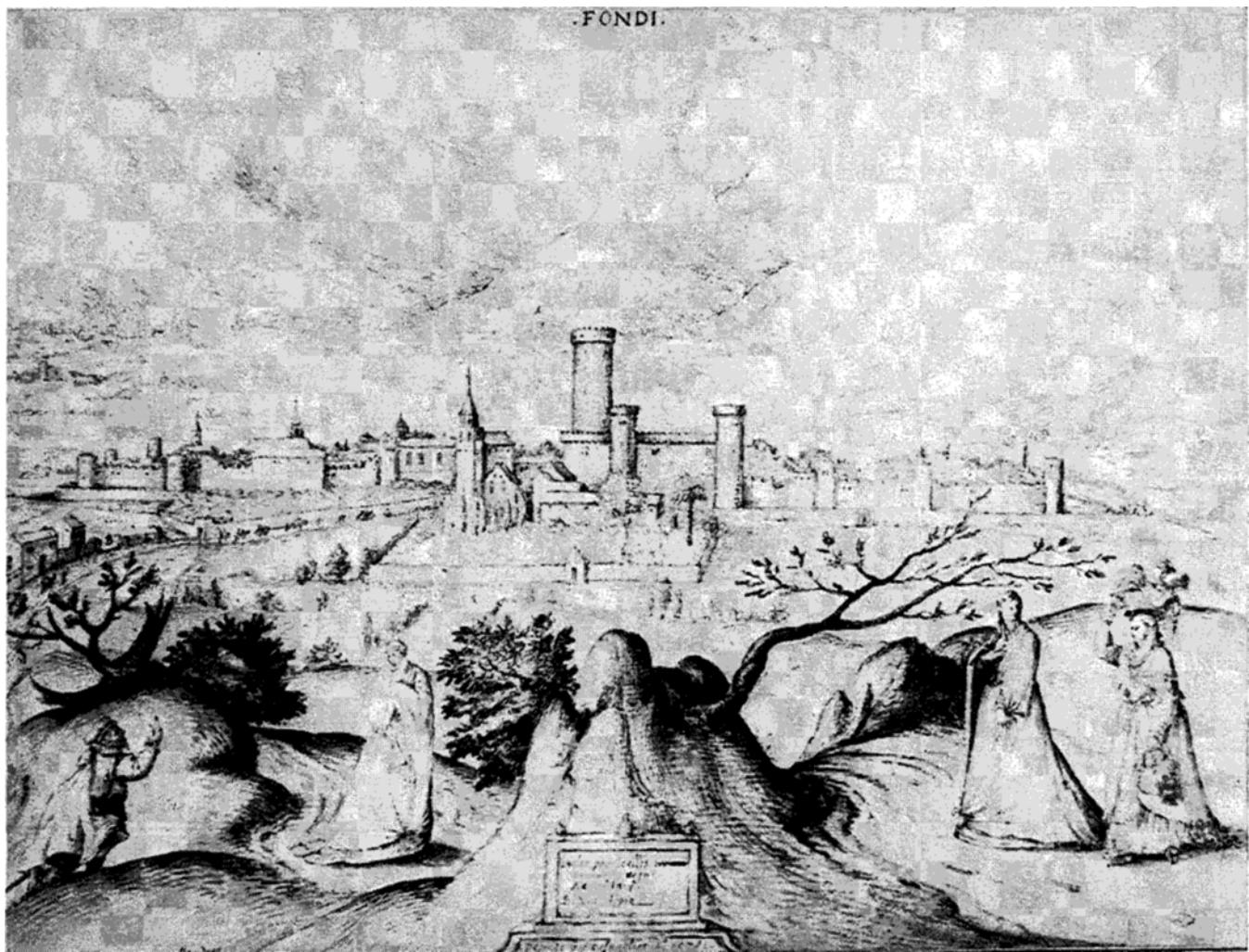


Figure 12. Hoefnagel, *Gades*, drawing (Albertina Graphische Sammlung).

more than conscious of their destination from the beginning, before drafting them, and for a few of them the subjects also seem to have been previously arranged. The culture of the learned men whom he was in touch with at court, the feeling of belonging to the cultural group which was sustained and supported by patrons, were the impulses that were bound to overcome the personal culture of a merchant such as he.

The dedication, that in such a view as that of Seville turned out to be a mere addition, is now the *raison d'être* and cause of two views: Landsuth, dated 1578 in the third, and München, dated 1586, in the fourth. They are to be read together and, in fact, in the interval between their printing Hoefnagel himself put them together in a miniature.²⁰ Their link is in the fact that both were residences of the Princes of Bavaria, Albert and William, at whose courts the artist had been employed. Celebratory words are not spared in the representations of those cities chosen as a symbol of power. Landsuth is peopled only by staffage figures and is rather accurately described, but München, probably conceived as a miniature, lacks the presence of people, and is quite a rough view, overlain by words – the dedication at the bottom, two columns of legenda at the top and key letters over the landmarks.

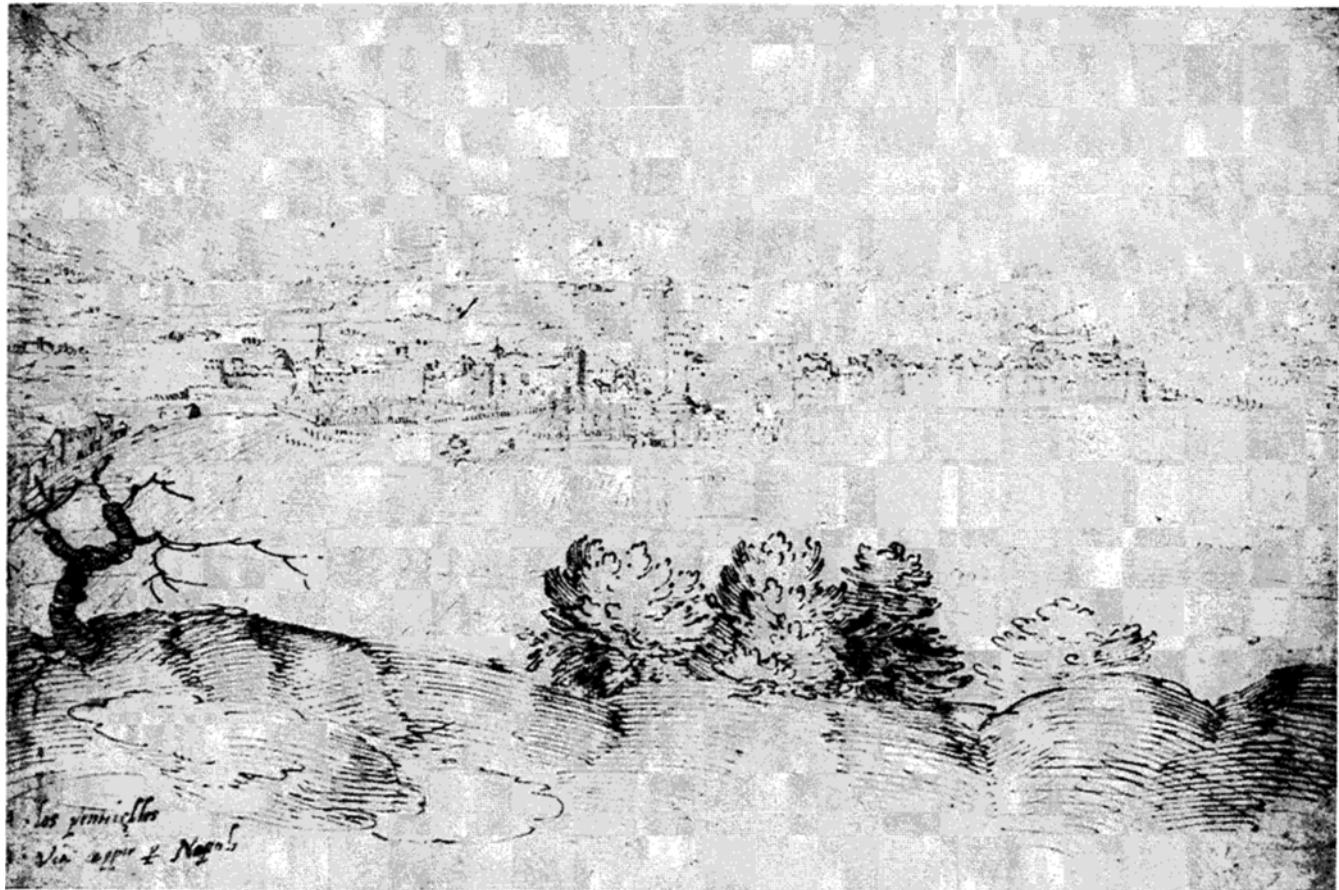
²⁰ – The miniature is in Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. n. 4804. Its complex subject is analysed by Shilling, 'Zwei Landschaftzeichnungen', p. 237.



Figures 13 and 14. *View of Fondi* drawing (Washington, National Gallery of Art). This drawing, attributed to Bruegel and Anonymus Fabriczy, could be by the hand of Hoefnagel as the first sketch for his view of *Fondi* (Albertina Graphische Sammlung), engraved in the *Civitates*, V.

Two pages concerning Innsbruck answer the same purpose. The address is now to Ferdinand of Tyrol, who commissioned the *Missale Romano*, and the views describe sites connected with him: the castle of Ambra, seat of the Duke's rich collection, the cave with Christ's image. And what is the thing, in that wide stretch of mountains and valleys, that most attracts our attention? An aedicule celebrating the historical encounter between Ferdinand and his brother Charles. It is brought into focus by the artist's usual conventions: travellers in the picture point it out, and a detail is blown up in the foreground. The inscription engraved on the front with Roman capital letters is so enlarged that it can easily be read, and, taking time to do so, one realizes that the view is little to be observed and much more to be read. Hoefnagel stayed in Tyrol on his way to Italy, which he came to in 1577, heading first for Venice.

The Italian group is distributed in the third and the fifth books. First the most important views were published, the reason for the journey, and then something else: sketches drafted on the road, awaiting the real goal.



Towns and villages mirrored are in fact located on the route most commonly followed by travellers south.²¹ We can also read them in a geographical succession, but the final outcome does not change. There is a nucleus that is meant to be the core of Italian views, the journey in the journey. It was announced by Braun in the preface as a long awaited achievement, the central record for his book by Hoefnagel of the land once called 'Campania felix'.²²

To be quite sure of going deeply into the secret of that land of myth he left with a very special travelling companion, Abraham Ortelius, whose name needs no comment.²³ It's not by chance that Ortelius, though physically present from the beginning, does not appear in those that we might call anticipatory views. In them we note that they are extremely poor in participation, though drawn by a hand that had become extremely skilled (figures 13, 14 and 15). The fields are cultivated, but no peasant is seen working;²⁴ the landscapes are quite deserted, the routes not very crowded, and further they do not keep the outstanding evidence of the Spanish views, with directions inscribed on. Italy was approached in few words as a land of ruins, as they peep out more and more frequently from the midst of the silent landscape. And in such a silence the images are also extremely devoid of words.

Until, that is, we get to Tivoli (figure 16). This view is a most complex

²¹ – For the main Italian routes in past centuries see J. Day, 'Strade e vie di comunicazione', *Storia d'Italia*, 5 (Torino: Einaudi, 1973), pp. 89–120, and L. Bortolotti 'Viabilità e sistemi infrastrutturali', *Storia d'Italia, Annali 8* (Torino: Einaudi, 1976), pp. 289–366.

²² – The land around Naples was called Campania felix for its extraordinarily fertile soil. Its hot springs, volcanoes and sulphur pits seemed to suggest that it was in touch with Hell, perhaps the door itself of Hell. Many legends flourished about it, e.g. the story of Pompeii, of the rich villas and temples buried by the belching volcanoes. Many poets celebrated it, and the most famous, Virgil, was buried there. For the impact that that land of myth had on foreign travellers, see C. Lorenzetti, 'Napoli nel le vedute dei neerlandesi' *Napoli, rivista del Comune di Napoli*, 11/12 (1934); R. Causa, 'Introduzione', *Il paesaggio napoletano nella pittura straniera* (Napoli, 1962); D. Chambers, 'The tomb in the landscape: John Evelyn's garden at Albury', *Journal*

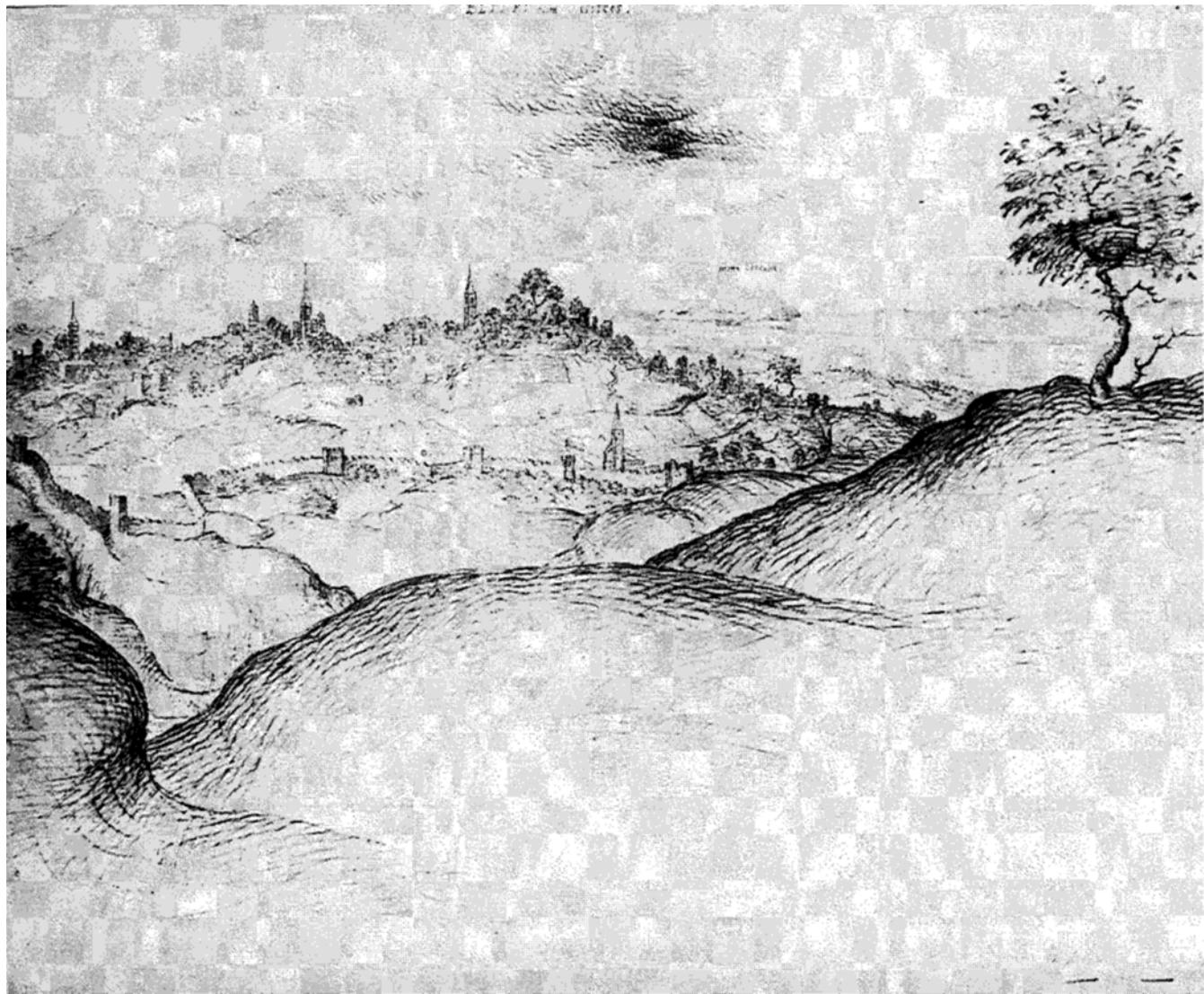


Figure 15. Hoefnagel, *Blitri olim Veltres*, drawing (Albertina Graphische Sammlung). The inscription at bottom left 'la prima giornata da Roma a Napoli' (the first day from Rome to Naples) that was evidently a mark of the traveller's experience, was eliminated in the engraving. The eye witness was given in figurative terms. The two travellers are depicted in the foreground and are about to descend a slope.

of *Garden History*, 1 (1981), pp. 37–54; C. De Seta L'Italia nello Specchio del Gran Tour, *Storia d'Italia, Annali* 5 (Torino: Einaudi, 1982), pp. 126–263.

23 – For basic information about Ortelius see H. Wauwermans, 'Ortelius', *Biographie National de Belgique*, 16 (Bruxelles, 1901), pp. 291–332; *Pieter Bruegel und seine Welt* (Berlin, 1975), pp. 74–76; R. Boumans, 'The religious views of Abraham Ortelius', *Journal of the*

one, the first of the journey within the journey. The town is high in the distance, at the top of a steep cliff. In the left foreground two travellers following a guide descend cautiously towards a river. Before them two marble Egyptian statues²⁵ hold up a drapery, which bears an inscription explaining their own location in Tivoli, the location of an ancient Templum, the names of the two travellers and the reason for their descent, the marvel of the waterfall.

The experience and the identity of the travellers are both recorded with a figurative and verbal language.²⁶ This is only the first doubling. In the foreground still, but on the right, with a common pictorial artificium, a sheet pinned to the back, we are allowed to see what there is behind the cliff, marked with B, the waterfall of the river Tiverona. But the picture on the pinned sheet is not directly drawn from life. It is a reworking of one of the best known Breugel engravings, 'Prospectus Tiburtinus' (figure 17), undoubtedly well recognizable by contemporaries. There is no explicit acknowledgement of that and, what is more, Hoefnagel links the



Figure 16. Hoefnagel, *Tiburtum vulgo*
Tivoli, engraving from the *Civitates*, III.

two parts of the image by putting his signature on the blank turned edge of the sheet. This is his third presence. But, as it was commonly agreed, whatever was printed became common property to be used again, without any acknowledgement. The figurative quotation conveniently serves to create a second doubling in the image: on one side reality experienced from life, on the other, reality experienced through cultural image. The cultured man, the artist has a constant dialogue with such imagery and appeals to it as a reference and starting point for that perception of reality.

Up to this point we have been observing the presence of a figurative culture; at the same time we can take the second step and discover the presence of a written culture.

The two travellers have reached Gaeta and, before entering the door of the city walls, take a rest to admire the wonderful gulf. Very few words are inscribed in the view, the name of two villages in the neighbourhood and that of the road; but the identification of the two travellers is properly made by a tablet detailing their position and their role inside the image. Ortelius is pointing out something in the clouds to Hoefnagel, a cartouche with the Virgilian words concerning Gaeta. That is not, of course, an

Warburg and Courtauld Institutes (1954), pp. 374–377; C. Koeman Abraham Ortelius *savie et son Theatrum orbis terrarum* (Lausanne, 1964).

24 – With the exception of the olive harvesting in Terracina (iii).

25 – For interest in Ancient Egypt by the cultural circles of the Renaissance, see R. Wittkover, 'Hieroglyphics in the Early Renaissance', *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977), pp. 114–128.

26 – An analogous case of doubling of the artist's presence in a picture is presented by Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, p. 179. The signature and the mirror claim that Van Eyck was present at the Arnolfini wedding.

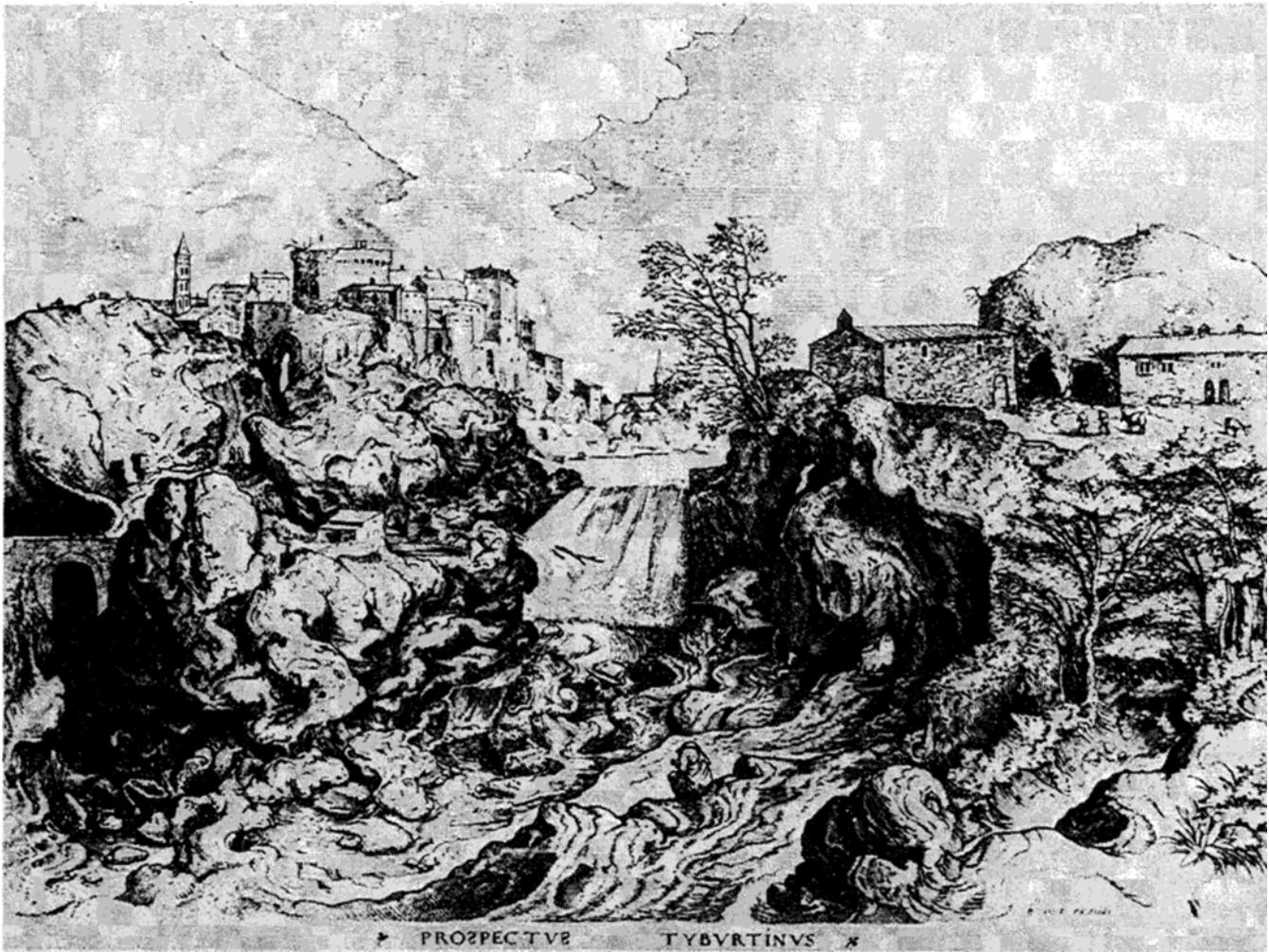


Figure 17. Bruegel the Elder, *Prospectus tiburtinus*, engraving.

²⁷ – The meaning of the emblems in the view 'Forum Vulcani' is analysed by Wilberg Vignau-Schuurmann, *Die emblematischen Elemente*, p. 257.

actual presence, something you can find in the scene; you can find in your mind the key to the view, to be gazed at and enjoyed while thinking of Enea's legend.

Now we can enter the land of the myth. The three views constituting the key to the whole journey are so complex that a long, patient and detailed analysis is required to understand them. The association of emblems,²⁷ decorative elements, different kinds of writing, and views – that is different fields of signs – make the reading as laborious as the invention seems to have been.

A basic contradiction, or better, a duplicity, can be immediately perceived in their nature: on one side they retain the will to map, to record names and events of a real journey. The artist is present in the image, the orientation is given, and key letters are put on the landmarks. But the *legenda*, definitively out of the view, are inscribed in a special space. They are very long and take time to be read and understood, because every key does not only tell the name of the landmark, but details also the classical and the vulgar name, the history, the legends or traditions concerning it, or something experienced by the author such as quotations of classical poems.

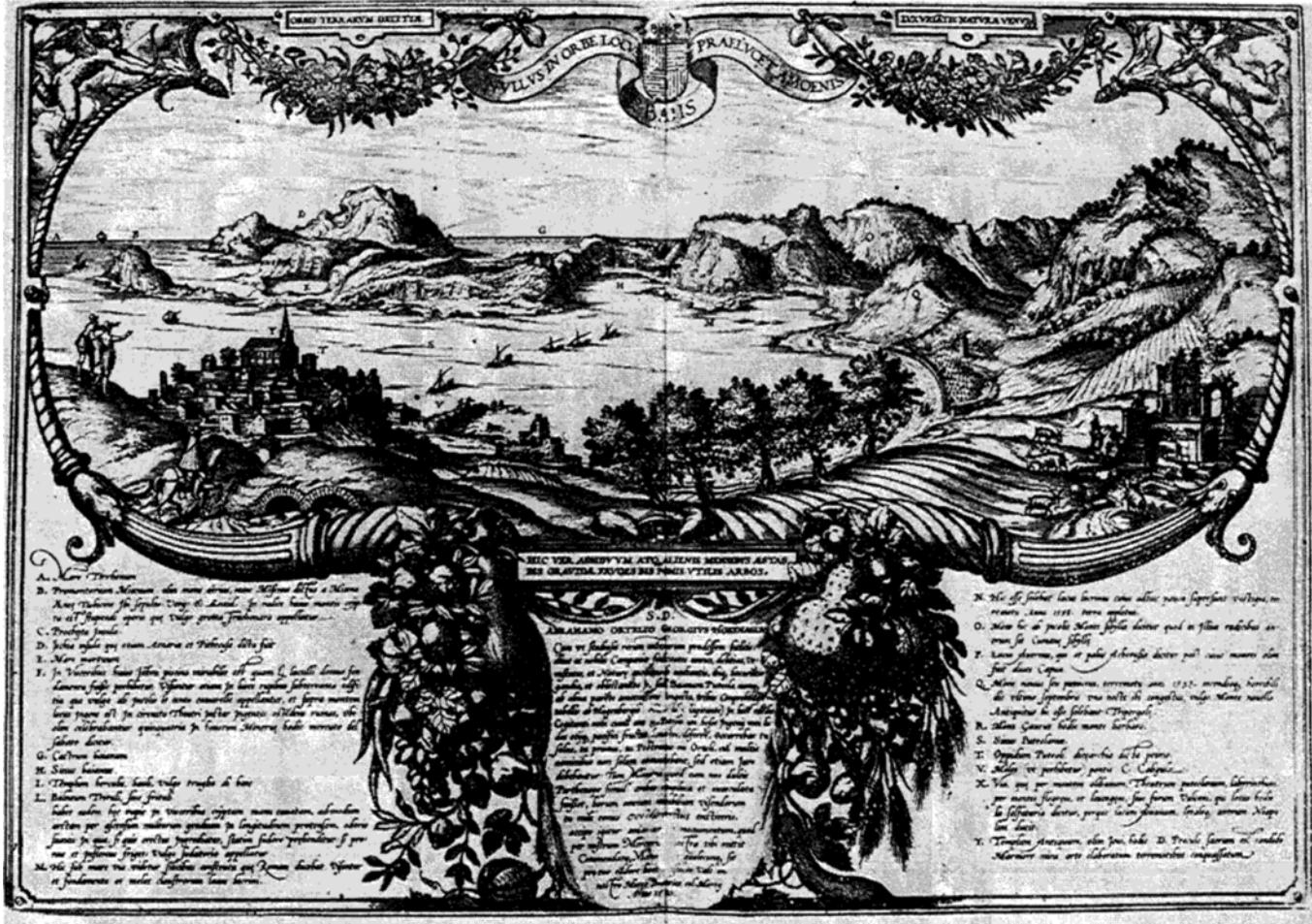
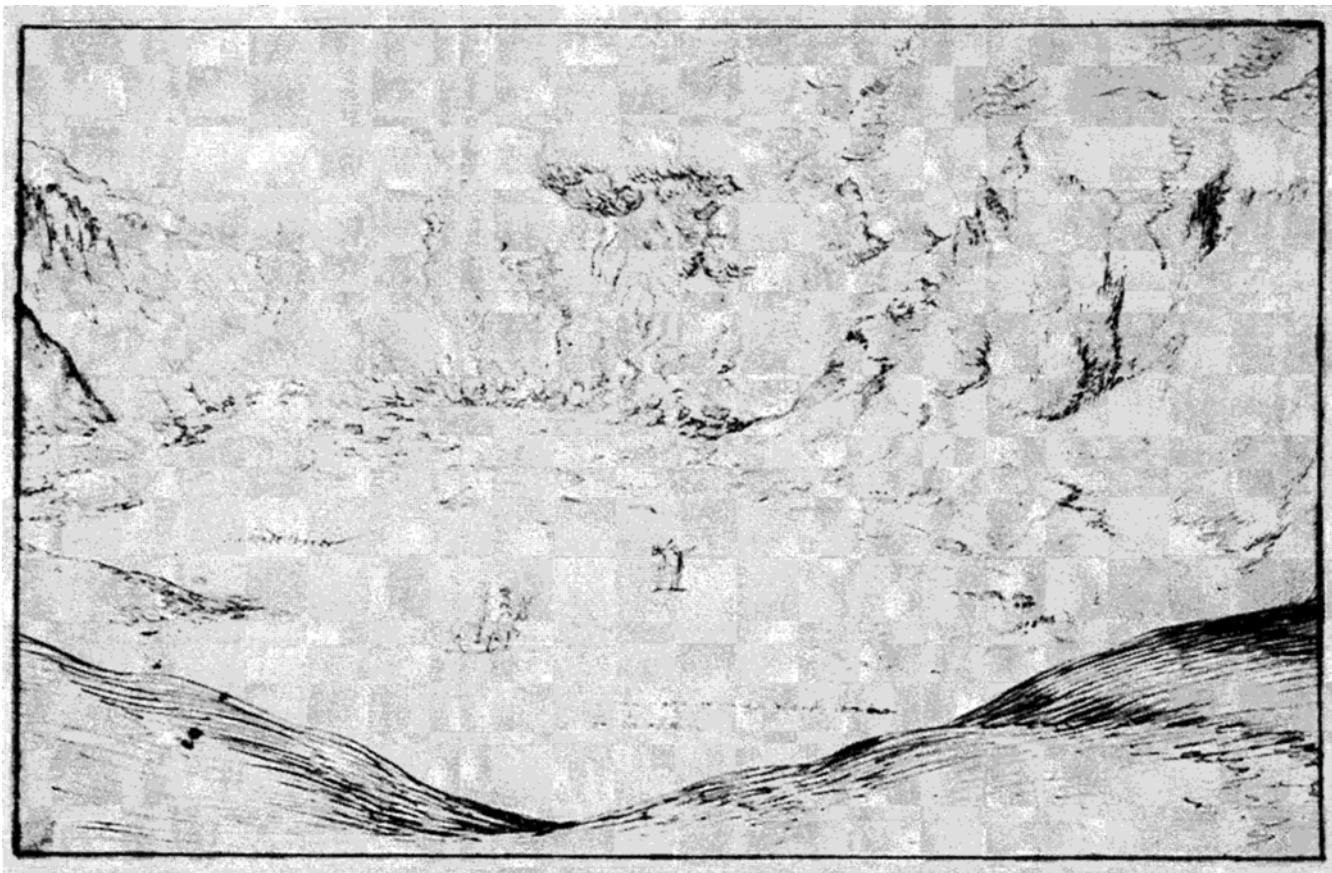


Figure 18. Hoefnagel, *Campaniae felicis delitiae*, engraving from the *Civitates*, iii.

Thus the views are distanced from immediate perception by elaborated borders, and offered as something precious, like a stone in its setting, to be discovered and enjoyed slowly. Words are essential for the understanding of the image, but not in the same way as they were for Spanish views. They are not there to explain or to comment upon what is seen, but to give it meaning. Encountering them before approaching the painted space, you have to take them as a guide to the land of myth. Written surfaces that embrace the views – *legenda*, quotations, dedications – are composed by words coming from different backgrounds. Quotations from classical authors – mainly from Virgil – stand out, preferably inscribed in capital letters, to put us immediately in touch with the mythological dimension of the sites.

Latin texts quoted are supposed to have been sufficiently known to the scholars; but in this case they are not drawn straight out of them: the operation is filtered through the work of an Italian humanist. Leandro Alberti published his *Descrittione di tutta Italia*²⁸ in 1550, a description of the country or better a collection of all kinds of information about it – geography, topography, history, legends, learning, *mirabilia*. The work came out in Latin, in a German translation (in Cologne where the *Civitates* did) in 1566, and it can be supposed that it was the impulse for Braun and Hogenberg's commission to Hoefnagel. In fact, if we compare

28 – For basic information about Alberti, see A. L. Redigona, 'Leandro Alberti', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Roma, 1960).



the explanations of the views with Alberti's description of the same sites, we will find only slight differences. And going further, we could state that Alberti's words, filled in with classical quotations, anticipate and even suggest Hoefnagel's views. This is strikingly evident in the view of Baia (figure 18), where the succession of places and relative explanations translate almost perfectly the Italian textbook.

The two other views (figures 20 and 21) detail the wonders of two sites located at the edges of the panoramic view of the gulf – the lake of Agnano (we catch a glimpse of this at the top right), and the Solfatara (cut off at the bottom left). The way Solfatara is mirrored is nothing but the perfect translation into a picture of Alberti's description: 'At the end of this clearing you can see a big and rather roundish shaped ditch filled with dark, thick and ever boiling water . . . If you plunge something raw into it, you can immediately take it out cooked.'²⁹

There are few words in the explanations undoubtedly deriving from those of the artist himself, as an achievement of his own journey to that country. He liked to put in the vulgar, current name of places that were famous in ancient times. Expressions like 'hodie mercato del sabato' (today Saturday market) or 'Vulgo Sudatorio' (currently sweat bath) or 'Mons Gaurus hodie monte Barbaro', are not in Alberti's text. These words come from a real experience of the sites, that is itself constantly emphasised in different ways. I refer to the portrait, already mentioned, of the two travellers inside the picture as it was shown above, but more of

29 – Alberti, *Descrittione*, c. 160v.



Figures 19 and 20. Hoefnagel, *Solfatara*, drawing (Washington, National Gallery of Art). This is the first sketch for the engraving in the *Civitates, III*, that turns out as a very complex composition.

the word *αὐτόπτης*,³⁰ that is inscribed in Greek characters (an eye witness).

The use of the Greek to say something that could have been said in Latin as well, raises a question. Shall we refer it to the northern descriptive attitude of picturing, with words too,³¹ or to the humanist's will to show the extent of his culture, including Greek? Probably something else: the way the word is put here recalls the one Polybius used.³² The *άυτοψία* (seeing by oneself) is meant as the only assumption upon which to build a universal history. To trust one's eye, taking long journeys and not to trust hearsay, listening to liars' stories: this is the task of the historian.

In the view of the lake of Agnano (figure 21), we see two travellers in the middle of the picture pointing out the lake, which was supposed to be in ancient times a bottomless hole, the vestibule of Hell. Birds flying over it, because of deadly fumes, fell dead as if abducted by Pluto. That was the explanation of the name *ἄσορπον*, that means birdless. But the picture says that Ortelius and Hoefnagel did realize that it was not really *ἄσορπον*:

³⁰ – The word *αὐτόπτης* was used again in the fifth volume, at the bottom of the page dedicated to Venice. The artist is likely to have been eye-witness of the fire in San Marco Square, because he was in Venice at that time. But another question arises: the format of the view is atypical for Hoefnagel and, what is more, the way he describes the scene closely recalls the one used by Pozzoserrato, the Italianate Flemish artist, whom he knew. Given that Hoefnagel is always so careful in quoting his sources and no reference is made here, what is the relationship between the two works? See L. Menegazzi, 'Ludovico Pozzoserrato', *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte* (Venezia, 1957), n. 1. *Αὐτόδιδακτος* is used in the Solfatara, water colour on vellum (Berlin: Kupferstichkabinett n. 3991).

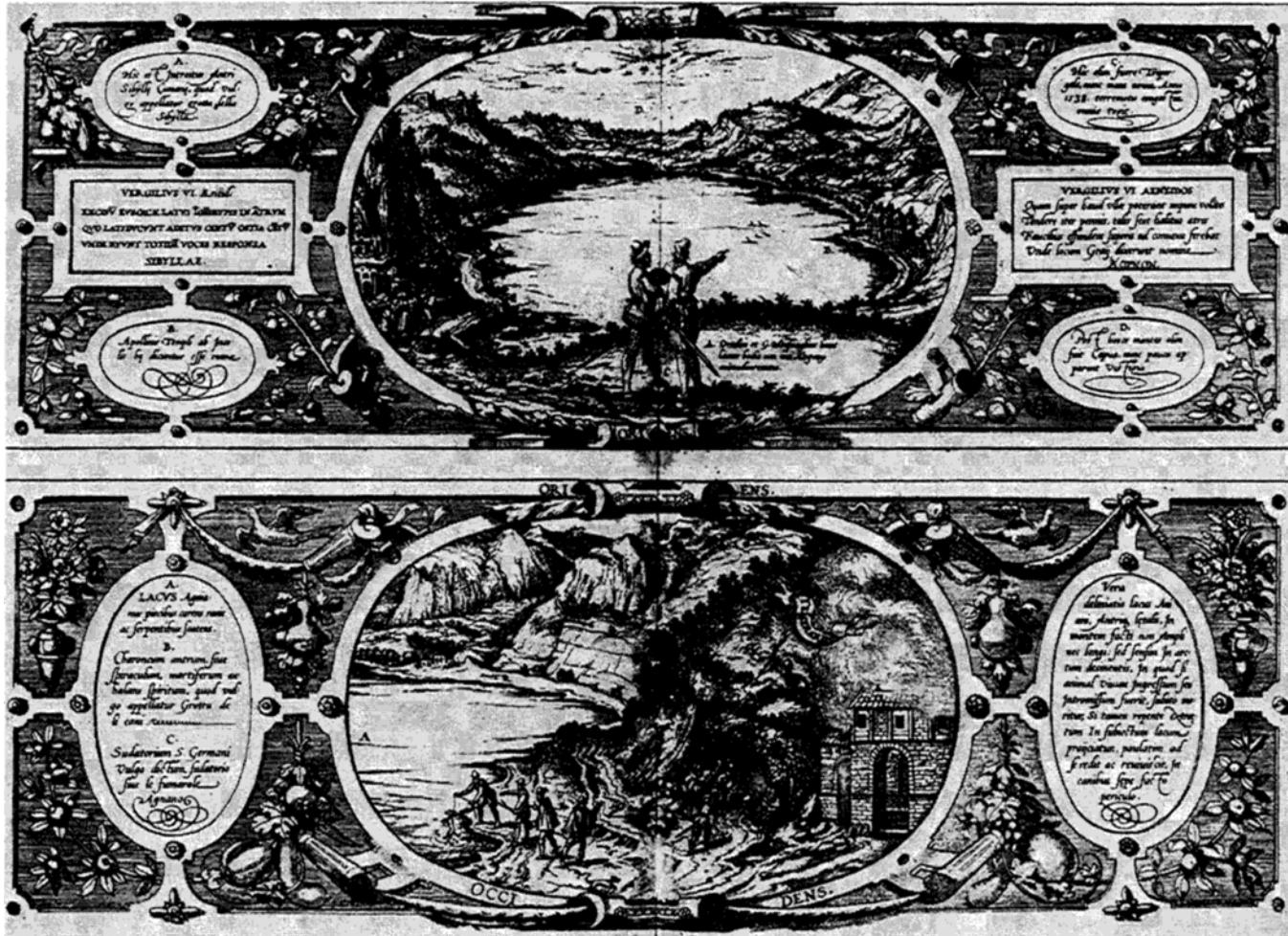


Figure 21. Hoefnagel, *Antrum Sibillae et Lacus Agnanus*, engraving from the *Civitates*, III.

31 – See Alpers' analysis of the relationship between Northern picturing and words (*The Art of Describing*, chapter 4).

32 – See C. Jacob, 'Carte greche', *Arte e scienza per il disegno del mondo* (Milano: Electa, 1983), p. 25.

33 – Alberti, *Descrittione*, c. 156.

they gaze at birds perched on the surface. Talking about the lake and its legends, Alberti says that a few years before soundings had been taken and the depth of the lake measured by some curious men.³³

The importance of direct experience to know the truth and discredit the legends was thus drawn out of a text, was itself a quotation. What a game of doubling in the humanist's mind!

And finally the third dimension: the remembrance.

The journey was taken in 1577–78; the images were composed in München in 1580. While working them up, Hoefnagel lived again the emotions experienced with his friend and wanted to put these too into the view, not in the Italian manner, through gesture, but through words. The two travellers not only see, but have feelings. They go down to the waterfall full of interest (*studiose*); they look at the lake, realizing the truth (*animadvertisentes*); Ortelius is admiring the beauty of Gaeta (*contemplator*). From München Hoefnagel sent a very special dedication to his travelling companion to celebrate what they had shared and he linked emotions to the views: map of places, maps of the spirit, maps of remembrance.