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The journey through Spain of John Synge and three views of Toledo in 1813

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Abstract

In 1812 the Irishman John Henry Synge joins the list of British travellers who accomplished a journey through Europe. During his continental experience through Spain, Portugal and Italy he wrote a tour journal and completed five sketchbooks. The manuscript titled *Views in Spain* includes three views of Toledo in 1813, containing iconic monuments of the city. This article focuses on the study of these drawings, preceded by an introduction to the European tour, especially the Hispanic itinerary.

Il viaggio di John Synge in Spagna e tre vedute di Toledo del 1813

Nel 1812 l'irlandese John Henry Synge si unì alla lista dei viaggiatori britannici che fecero un viaggio nell'Europa. Durante la sua esperienza continentale in Spagna, Portogallo e Italia scrisse un diario di viaggio con cinque quaderni di disegni. Il manoscritto intitolato *Views in Spain* include tre vedute di Toledo del 1813 che contengono monumenti rappresentativi della città. Il presente contributo si concentra sullo studio di questi acquarelli, nel contesto della fortuna del viaggio nella penisola iberica.

Keywords: John Synge, Toledo, Spain, 19th century.

John Synge, Toledo, Spagna, secolo XIX.

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1 | Introduction

During the XVII and XVIII centuries amongst British youngsters from upper class families there was the custom of completing their higher education with a formative tour across Europe. Depending on the resources and time available, this tradition held as its regular destinations the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, France and, to a greater extent, Italy [Freixa 1993, 20-21]. Spain was therefore left out of the circuits frequented by Anglo-Saxon visitors, with the exception of a few daring ones who, out of obligation or to satisfy their curiosity, reached the ports and land borders. A mistrust sprouts and is smeared based on discredit. On the one hand, there is the comparative grievance between a despotic form of government, practiced by the Hispanic Monarchy, and the United Kingdom parliamentary system. But the discredit is also rooted in the divine. One of the most powerful arguments for refraining from making the journey is contempt for an ecclesiastical establishment that subjects broad seams of the population, ravaged by poverty, ignorance and religious fanaticism. Not to mention the machinery of terror that is the Inquisition, hated by foreign public opinion. Of course, the stereotypes about the Spanish way of life, the scarce technical and scientific development, the bad state of the economy, the absenteeism of the nobility and the geographical isolation do not help either. If we add to this the inconveniences of the journey in terms of the quality and accessibility of food, communications and accommodation, the dangerous nature of the route for Protestant knights and the secular animosity between the two nations, it seems reasonable that the Spanish land would not be attractive to the inhabitants of the islands. In short, the English traveller looks wary at the

set back of the country with respect to the more advanced states of Europe [Shaw 1981, 323-325; Guerrero 1990, 51-54; Black 1992, 76-80; Freixa 1993, 22-24]. The trend began to change slowly in the mid-eighteenth century and accelerated after the Peninsular War, which brought an end to Spain's isolation with the massive arrival of foreigners from England and France. The mistrustful attitude turns into an interest for the picturesque, the sublime and the exotic, embodied in the landscape and architecture, as well as in the character and practices of the natives. The nineteenth century guest is freed from the drag of scepticism of past times and yearns to live experiences that are not so much intellectual and ostentatious as sensitive [Freixa 1993, 24-26; Calvo 1995, 15-18]. John Henry Synge is one of those bold travellers, whose journey across continental Europe takes place between 1812 and 1814. Our adventurer is a man of his era, whose tour is linked to the less demanding type of travel that was on trend in the *primo Ottocento*, different from the sophisticated routes of the British Grand Tour elite. Its circuit belongs to what has been characterised as a «viaggio di diporto» or «pure jouissance» [Berrino 2011, 15-37; Bertrand 2008, 5]. That said, he conserves from the past the geographical origin of the great visitors of the Modern Age, the aristocratic status and the critical eye. So, this paradigm shift does not prevent him from being meticulous about anything that goes against his principles. This feat is set in the twilight of a fashion that is languishing due to the Napoleonic Wars. He follows the trail of a few intrepid people who, during the second half of the 18th century and the first decade of the 19th century, entered the Iberian Peninsula for different reasons. These forerunners will provide our traveller with valuable travel literature to start the continental passage, with editions published in his native country [Barretti 1770; Twiss 1775; Dalrymple 1777; Jardine 1789; Robertson 1988, 50-71, 79-95, 118-127]. The result of his voyage, a tour journal and five sketchbooks, shows us a man with courage, willing to swarm into spaces before unexplored by his fellow citizens. He shows clear preferences for Portugal and Spain, given his determination to attend the armed conflict in the Iberian Peninsula. This desire is built on the fascination he feels for his countrymen John Moore and Arthur Wellesley, whose military campaigns were told in 1809 by authors who had lived them in first person [Porter 1809; Neale 1809; Bradford 1809; García-Romeral 2010, 89-90, 294, 324]. In addition to recording the Peninsular War, these writers and draftsmen offer the reader a description of both countries and their inhabitants. These books also have the added value of containing illustrations that make the description more graphic. It is more than likely that Synge was inspired by some of these books before embarking in Dublin. The presence in battle of the future Duke of Wellington, born in Dublin like Synge, might have weighed in when making his decision to leave home and family and head towards adventure. If we consider the references made out to the famous military in the daily journals, we can infer that «Dublin-born Arthur Wellesley was a leading attraction» [McCormack 2003, 137]. This suspicion is confirmed in Portuguese lands when he draws the grave of Colonel Lake in the hills of Columbeira, «where Wellington had first got to grips with the French» [McCormack 2003, 139-140]. For Synge the hostilities between the warring sides pose a spur, as he planned the trip with the expectation of «to watch the war» [Williams 1968, 24]. Being afar from the epicentre vanishes his dreams of witnessing a war that was in its death throes. While the battles were raging in the Pyrenees, Synge, far away physically from his desire to contemplate military action, «was sketching peaceful *haciendas* in the Portuguese *sierra*» [Williams 1968, 24]. Nonetheless, he abandons not the British habit of travelling to Italy, starting a trail that will take him all over the country, from the south to the northern lakes. But it is in the Swiss canton of Vaud where, unwittingly, finds the goal of his journey and the meaning of his life. At the end of

his pilgrimage he comes to a stop in Yverdon-les-Bains, the home of the institute of Johann Pestalozzi, a famous pedagogue who was known for his successful learning methods. And there something unforeseen happens to him. What was to be a regular visit extends over a period of three months and will change the course of his existence forever. Synge, a carefree man without concrete vocation, later leaves Switzerland renewed and with a project for the future: spreading the Pestalozzian system through the printing press and the foundation of schools. In 1815 the first two books financed by Synge are printed, published in Dublin under the pseudonym *An Irish traveller*.

2 | Time was entirely at his own disposal

The expression that gives title to this epigraph appears in one of the indicated publications: *A biographical sketch of the struggles of Pestalozzi to establish his system* [Williams 1968, 24]. Being concentrated in it the attitude of indifference towards his forecast that he had maintained from his departure from Ireland until his conversion. Trained at Trinity College Dublin and Oxford University, our fearless tourist is the heir to a lineage of Irish landowners of the Protestant faith, an underlayer that will influence his critical attitude during the European tour, in his educational and philanthropic project, family life and religious activity [*Alumni Dublinenses* 1935; *My uncle John* 1974, 1-13; *Alumni Oxonienses* 1887; Stunt 1976; *The complete peerage of England* 1953]. In 1812, at the age of 24, he embarks on an odyssey around Europe that would take him two years to neighbouring Portugal, Spain, Italy and Switzerland. This is a late age for what is stigmatized, but one which is recommended to make the trip to Europe [Freixa 1993, 12]. The travel diary, titled *Tour journal of John Synge, of Glanmore, Co. Wicklow*, starts on October 31¹. It's the traditional month of departure to take advantage of a pleasant winter in the warm Spanish climate [Freixa 1993, 13]. At nine o'clock in the evening, he leaves the Dublin dock on board a ship that will take him to London. He arrives in the English capital on November 3, after passing through the Welsh town of Holyhead, and there he is joined by Saunderson, the companion on the trip who will star alongside Synge this European adventure. After several visits, stays and stopovers in the cities of England he arrives in Falmouth on November 19, the port that makes the regular line to Lisbon. Ellis, another adventurer who will travel with them to the Iberian Peninsula, arrives at this location. On December 1 they board the Prince Ernest, which after a long journey anchors at Lisbon's pier on December 14. The next day, he begins the notebook labelled *Views in Portugal* with a watercolour of the Belém Tower². On arrival, he entangles himself for a little over five months in various towns before crossing the Spanish border in the north. In Portuguese territory he draws cities, landscapes, religious and civil buildings, urban spaces and defensive bastions. The views correspond to the current boroughs of Lisbon, Oeiras, Sintra, Torres Vedras, Alcobaça, Batalha, Bombarral, Leiria, Óbidos, Porto, Santo Tirso, Guimarães, Amares and Valença. He depicts himself handling a spyglass, an optic instrument that will be a great help in capturing the detail of most distant objects. After crossing the river Miño by boat, he travels through a large part of Galicia. During his itinerary through the northwest of Spain he makes drawings of Tui, Santiago de Compostela, Ourense, the castle of Monterrei and the benedictine monastery of *Santo Estevo de Ribas de Sil* in their natural surroundings [Novo 2014].

On May 25, 1813 he returns to Portugal and four days later he puts an end to his travel diary in Porto. The last three Galician drawings already belong to *Views in Portugal & Spain*, his second sketchbook, made between May and August of 1813³. This manuscript incorporates designs of some of the cities he found until reaching the capital of the river Duero. At this point he plans

¹ Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Manuscripts & Archives Research Library (M&ARL), MS 6205, fol. 1r-33r). A typed version of this travel diary exists entitled *Typescript copy of diary of John Synge, describing a tour in Spain and Portugal* (National Library of Ireland (NLI), MS 19680).

² TCD, M&ARL, MS 6207.

³ TCD, M&ARL, MS 6208.

to say goodbye to this country and enter Spain, therefore the notebook continues with depictions of towns, religious architecture and natural attractions located on the way to the border, such as the monastery of *São Cristóvão*⁴, the *Serra da Estrela* and the towns of Amarante, Lamego, Manteigas, Covilhã, Belmonte and Castelo Rodrigo. The first Spanish city that appears in the notebook of illustrations is Alba de Tormes. He was also in Salamanca, hence he names in two loose sheets of another manuscript all the doors of the fortified wall and relates sixty-four churches, convents, monasteries, schools, hospitals and brotherhoods, forgetting the two cathedrals⁵. In the province of León, he delays at the cities of Ponferrada and Benavente [Mariño 2014-2015]. On his way to Asturias he is captivated by the river valleys and the peaks of the Cantabrian Mountains.

The third and last of the Iberian albums is called *Views in Spain*⁶. It contains chorographies of Spanish cities and landscapes roamed by Synge since August 1813. To travel in Spain he obtains passports for himself and fellow traveller, issued on September 19 by Arthur Wellesley⁷. This volume begins with three rural Asturian sites located between Cangas de Onís and Llanes, including the holy cave and basilica of Covadonga. Passing through the provinces of Santander, Bizkaia, Navarra and Burgos he detains himself in Santoña, San Sebastián, Arizcun, Roncesvalles, Pamplona and Pancorbo. In Segovia he draws a magnificent view of the *Alcázar*, and in Toledo he renders three perspectives of the town, which we will study later. In Cuenca he focuses on the capital itself and the monastery of the Order of Santiago in Uclés. In València, in the half-light of his Spanish journey, he recreates the cities of Gandia, Xàtiva, Castalla, Sax and Alcoi.

Our traveller will depart for Italy from some Levantine port. On April 2, 1814 he receives a passport processed by the «minister for the Spanish navy»⁸. From the Italian tour two sketchbooks are preserved, both from 1814, which are titled *Views of Italy*⁹. They contain drawings of Naples, Pompeii, Rome and Florence; a section of the Apennines between Loiano and Pianoro, close to Bologna; the road to Laveno, near Lake Maggiore; the city of Arona and the Borromean Islands. It is evident that he is fascinated by the majesty of the lake area given the number of pictures he makes of four of its islands: Bella, Madre, San Giovanni and Pescatori.

3 | “But oh vanity of human greatness!”

The tour journal, although focused on Portugal and Galicia, has an appendix featured at the end that broadens horizons of Synge's stay in the centre of Spain¹⁰. The void in this affix, dated between January 1 and 2 March 1814, lead us to believe that our traveller conducted a more complete description of the Spanish expedition. On the first day of the year he was in the capital, from which he departed towards the *Palacio Real de El Pardo*. Inside he is struck by a tapestry inspired by a work of David Teniers and a drawing in which Napoleon Bonaparte is depicted. In the evening, he enjoys a «rustic ball to celebrate the new year with Spanish costumes & manners». On January 2 he had planned to go with the palace guards to a country activity with wild animals, but it was cancelled due to bad weather. This will not be the last allusion in his diary to the weather of the courtly town. To make up for the earlier frustration, he takes part in a gala dance during the evening. After two days he returns to Madrid, where he resorts to social and cultural activities, attending visits, dinners, dances and gatherings with members of the high society. On January 3 he is invited to see two collections of surgery and another of anatomy wax figures, probably belonging to the *Real Colegio de Cirugía Médica de San Carlos*. The guide of the visit is the old doctor Antonio Gimbernat, one of the eminences of Spanish medicine and founder of said institution. On January 5 he witnesses the return of the members of the Regency and the *Cortes* from Cádiz.

⁴ Probably the monastery of São Cristóvão de Lafões.

⁵ TCD, M&ARL, MS 6206/7.

⁶ TCD, M&ARL, MS 6209.

⁷ TCD, M&ARL, MS 6206/4-5.

⁸ TCD, M&ARL, MS 6206/6.

⁹ TCD, M&ARL, MS 6209/10.

¹⁰ TCD, M&ARL, MS 6205, fol. 34r-38r.

For Singe this passes not unnoticed due to the streets and public buildings being adorned with tapestries and decorations of ephemeral architecture, as well as by the manifestations of popular rejoice and rejection to the provisional Government. On the 6th he dines with Henry Wellesley, British diplomatic agent in Spain. The next day he goes to see an exhibition of «models of artillery & fortification». On January 15 he is present at a session of the Parliament. The agenda is the discussion of the treaty signed by Napoleon Bonaparte and Ferdinand VII, defended by the Duke of San Carlos in the name of the Spanish King and denounced by the Regency and the Legislative Chamber. During the following day, he has fun in the *Coliseo del Príncipe* with a theatrical performance about the Spaniards who collaborated with the invaders, to be specific the comedy *El gran chasco de los afrancesados*. Spanish politics keep him intrigued, so on January 18 he returns to another session of the *Cortes*. He makes the most of January 24 to watch «the works of Goya» in the company of a *cicerone*. That same day he is shown to the private art gallery of a collector called Pablo Rico, which is preserved in a house situated in the *Red de San Luis*, an ancient urban location of the capital. There he has the opportunity to contemplate paintings by Velázquez, Titian, Sebastiano del Piombo, Rubens, Zurbarán, Murillo and Bassano. To complete his vision of Spain, on the 25th he confers with the help of a mentor, the *Descrizione o deporica della Spagna* by Antonio Conca and the *Atlas historique* by Emmanuel de Las Cases.

On Friday 28 January, he heads for Alcalá de Henares, passing through a «magnificent villa of the Dutchess of Osuna» and also a place known as *Real Sitio de San Fernando*. Seven leagues away is the university town. They stay in the *Casa del Rey*, founded as a centre of studies by the Spanish Crown, whose chapel treasures a painting by Bartolomé González Serrano that arouses the interest of the Irish visitor. He is amazed at the monumentality of the Archbishop's Palace, the impermanent abode of the prelates of Toledo. He points out that in the past it was used as a temporary residence by Philip V on his trips to Naples and that the rooms are in a dilapidated state. The next objective of the walk through the city of Alcalá is the monastery of *San Bernardo*, inhabited by Cistercian nuns, that owes its existence to the patronage of the Bishop of Toledo Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas. He's pleased that the pictures of Angelo Nardi that it keeps inside have not succumbed to the ravages produced by the French troops. The following day he leaves for the college of *San Ildefonso*, quarters of the University founded by Cardinal Cisneros. He confesses that as soon as he arrived in Alcalá it «was the first thing which attracted his observation». He was so impressed that he could not resist plotting one of its openwork windows, being object of one of the most detailed descriptions in the route book. In one paragraph of his narration he compares the façade with that of the convent of *San Marcos* in León, so we deduce that he was also in this city. After dissecting the university edifice, he moves on to the cathedral. In one of its chapels he contemplates an unfinished painting of St. Jerome by Vincenzo Carducci. In the sacristy he looks at «some pleasing pictures» and a crucifix carved by the Jesuit sculptor Beltrán Olay. In the convent of *San Diego*, run by Poor Clares, he examines a few canvases of the nearly one thousand that it once held coming from different backgrounds.

On Sunday, January 30, he sets out for Guadalajara, four leagues away from Alcalá. There he takes lodge in the palace of the *Duques del Infantado* at the invitation of its noble owner. He finds the mansion striking, grandeur which is reflected in the diary. But if there is something that leaves our illustrious visitor astonished, it is the magnificence of the family mausoleum in the convent of *San Francisco*. The exclamation he utters on seeing it makes clear his amazement: "But oh vanity of human greatness!". He also verifies bones being all mixed inside the burial chamber, extracted from their stone lairs and velvet shrouds in an act of desecration perpetrated by the

French army. After witnessing the consequences of the looting of the graves of distinguished family, he proceeds to the convent of *San José*. The community of Carmelite nuns discovers that Synge and his companion had been guests of their patron. They ask impatiently about him and lament the misery caused by the five years of occupation, during which they had had no news from their protector.

Synge's visit to the tombs of the dukes puts us on the trail of another monument examined by the Irishman: the college-monastery-palace of *El Escorial*. Proof that he was there is found in a loose sheet containing a conscientious measurement of the building, including the church and library, accompanied by a sketch. He takes note of the sound of the bells ringing from the towers and of the fourteen coffins and twelve empty spaces in the Royal Crypt. He also correlates and couples together the statues of kings and prophets on the church's façade and, finally, quotes Bartolomé Carducho, one of the painters who worked on the complex conceived by Philip II¹¹. Since the meeting with the nuns there is a leap of nineteen-days in the story. On February 19 he is already back in Madrid. Such a day he is invited again to a party organized by Ambassador Wellesley. At dinner he shares a table with George L'Estrange, an English colonel who has just arrived from Gibraltar and is assigned to Spain under the orders of General Pack. On the following day he holds the usual social get-together at the home of the Marquis of Villamejor, which went on until the early hours of the morning «in honour of the carnival». On Monday 21 he makes his way to see the English detachment of artillery in the presence of L'Estrange and then leaves to visit the *Casa de Campo*. That same day he had planned to participate in a dance that is finally suspended. On the morning of Tuesday 22 he finds himself at «the palace again», most probably making reference to the Royal Palace of Madrid. At night «to close the carnival», he betakes to a social gathering. On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday he doesn't jot anything down due to the bad weather, which must have kept him confined. On Saturday 26 he attends dinner once again with Wellesley, who introduces him to the minister of defense of the Spanish Government, who the next day invites him to a party. Amidst the personalities who are present at the gala is José de Palafox, military hero of the sieges of Zaragoza in 1808 and 1809, although he fell into disgrace for having been «the bearer of Napoleon's late insidious overtures». On Monday 28 he manages a last visit to the gallery in the Royal Palace, despite the accumulated fatigue of the previous night. During his absence his pocket watch will get stolen. The first two days of March he tries to recover it, but finally withdraws the report due to the poor results of the police investigation. This unfortunate incident ends the appendix to Synge's tour journal.

3 | Toledo in sight of John Synge

Synge's third Iberian sketchbook includes three views of Toledo, taken from the left bank of the river Tagus. Evidence of its importance is the quantity of images that Synge dedicates to it, an attraction only comparable to that felt by the lakes of northern Italy and the Naples bay. The first chorography offers a perspective of the town through an opening between rocks, with the water torrent in the middle. Situated to the right of the image is the *Alcázar*, built on the summit of a terrain prominence, while the rest of the urban fabric is situated at a lower level. Some constructions are partially hidden behind the slope. The Irish's clumsiness in organising the buildings and squares, added to his propensity for simplification, puts us in a tight spot when it comes to identifying certain architectures. He is more capable of transferring to paper exempt constructions such as said regal fortification. It lacks roofs, which disappeared after a fire during the French occupation. The ochre shades are used to determine which parts of the



Fig. 1: John Synge, *First view of Toledo*, 1813 (©The Board of Trinity College Dublin).

city receive sunlight and which remain in shadow. The east façade is obscured, but the divisions and windows of the towers are still distinguished, as well as two rows of openings on either side of a balcony. The southern front is presented in all its fullness, with its round arch *loggia*, apertures, straight pediments, moulded imposts, pinnacles and pilasters. This frontispiece largely corresponds to the original, except for a row of vertical windows that are missing above the arcade. Apart from this omission, there are square gaps on the top floor when in reality they are semicircular. The building is completed with two cylindrical chimneys. The cathedral, the other great emblem of Toledo, is somewhat chaotic. Many of its parts are misplaced, adding to this the difficulty of identifying some elements. The Bell Tower stands out from the rest of the buildings of the basilica, but its place in space is false. The plane in which it is situated is not the one that corresponds to it, and we can only understand this location if the intention of the artist is that we see the totality of the elevation. Its constructive and ornamental elements are treated in great detail: blind arches, geminate windows, joining sleeves, pinnacles, decorative figures, and spire with its ball and cross. On the right there is a dome structure probably belonging to the *Capilla de San Ildefonso*, with its gaps in the drum, cover and pinnacles. Next to it stands the Clock Tower, with its narrow and slender figure, impost, apertures, roof and cross. Below these last two structures lies the exterior of the cathedral naves. On the right, at a lower level, the Chapter Hall building is located, on which its upper floor a corridor with round arches opens. To the left of the composition, partially covered by the boulder, stands the Archbishop's Palace, the most important ecclesiastical institution of Toledo. This building is placed at one end of the Town Hall Square, the only open space we can see in the drawing. The rest of the civil and religious buildings in the view move in the realm of conjecture.



Fig. 2: Alfred Guesdon, *Tolède. Vue prise au dessus du sarcophage du Roi Maure*, ca. 1855. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España (Inv. 69191).

The second drawing focuses on the *Puente de Alcántara*, with the *Montes de Toledo* as the scenic backdrop. It embodies two round arches, one of them wider and slightly higher. Between the two, placed buttresses, but the only one that resembles the stone model is the one on the left. The distance between the objective and the observer could be the cause of this error of perception, in the event it being not intentional, alas to the right of the wall where he places the second abutment, are instead two parallel pilasters. Next to this unrealistic pier there is a mirador supported by brackets, which although existing does not locate properly. Instead of outlining it at the height of the parapet, he moves it down as if it were a window. After a reform carried out in the Middle Ages the third arch disappears, replaced by a transit arch represented in the design by a small aperture. Close to it is an eighteenth-century door in the form of a triumphal arch that allows entry to the viaduct, formed by a semi-circular aperture and a pyramid-shaped top with three pinnacles and a cross. On the opposite side there is a medieval tower crowned by a cresting. The point of view chosen by the draftsman and the effect of the penumbra leads us to see the fortification as a rectangular prism, although we know that its floor is polygonal. From the parapet of the bridge a wall with battlements begins, at the end of which there is a three-sided building ending with a strange balustrade. Most probably corresponding to the *Puerta de San Ildefonso*, today missing. In one of his engravings of Toledo, the French lithographer Nicolas Chapuy perceives this door in a like-minded way to Synge.

At the level of the Tagus, the ruins of the hydraulic plant designed by the Italian Renaissance engineer Juanelo Turriano to bring water from the river to the city still linger. What can be seen in the drawing is what was left standing of the building that gave shelter to the wheels that moved the device, opened by means of archways. The front wall has two rows of five arches, while on the shadowy wall face there is only one aperture. Of the two buildings in the foreground, the one on the left, with a single-slope roof and illuminated by a skylight, would have been part of the system of booths that were staggered along the slope and housed the system of dippers that transported the liquid. The one on the right, somewhat rickety and with a gable roof, consists of a staircase, door and one window. In Chapuy's view, next to the remains of the contraption of Turriano two buildings are distinguished that seem to coincide with those that appear on the watercolour of our traveller.

On the right side of the drawing stands the *Castillo de San Servando* on a rocky hill. The view shows three cylindrical towers separated by crenellated walls and a fourth more slender one has a prismatic build, all pierced by windows and loopholes. Two decreasing structures by the west belong to a hypothetical access portal to the castle. The dark cube on the right hand side appears to be thicker than the one next to it, so it is possible that Synge may have wanted to place the tower of the southeast angle in the centre of this south wall, although we know that this place is occupied by a narrower cube. The western wall and one of the angle towers have some cracks that years later will lead to the collapse of side west battlement. Between the river and the castle there are three paths at different levels: one that crosses by the small side door of the bridge; another that links to the viaduct itself, through which a person is walking; and a third that goes up to the defensive architecture.

The third *veduta* composes a partial portrait of the city from the *Puente de San Martín*, with the mountains again as a natural frame. The viaduct is made up of four round arches, although they are actually slightly pointed, one of which is wider than the others. The vertex-shaped abutments of the central pillars are extremely short. In fact in reality the one on the left reaches right up to the parapet. At both ends of this civil architecture there are two castle-shaped





Fig. 3 (previous page): Jean Laurent, *Fachadas de levante y mediodía del Alcázar*, ca. 1875. Stockholm, Hallwylska Museet (LXVI:J.123).

Fig. 4 (previous page): John Synge, *First view of Toledo*, 1813 (©The Board of Trinity College Dublin).

Fig. 5: Nicolas Chapuy, View of the *Puente de Alcántara* with the *Puerta de San Ildefonso* on the left, ca. 1844. Madrid, Instituto Geográfico Nacional, Cartoteca (13-C-73).

Fig. 6: Nicolas Chapuy, View of Toledo with the ruins of the *ingenio* of Turriano, ca. 1844. Madrid, Instituto Geográfico Nacional, Cartoteca (13-C-73).





Fig. 7: Joseph Lacoste, *Castillo de San Servando* in Toledo without the western wall, ca. 1900-1907. Madrid, Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural de España, Archivo Ruiz Vernacci (VN-22582).

Fig. 8: Charles Clifford, Remains of the *artificio* of Turriano in Toledo, 1858. Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum (St.F.80).



doors. The one on the right shows a good part of its polygonal perimeter, as well as the transit arch, a couple of windows and a moulding that divides the elevation in two levels. In this first tower access to the bridge a semicircular entrance is outlined to the bridge, although we know it is horseshoe-shaped. On the left bank of the river a path opens up between a wall and a rock in the direction of the bridge. The second fortified door of the viaduct, or *Puerta de San Martín*, shows one of its side walls and despite the shade a small window can be seen. Likewise, the change in tone allows us to appreciate the side face of the building that houses beneath it the entrance arch.

The bridge is adjacent to a section of the first defensive belt, with its ramparts and round towers, from which an appendix descends towards the river. Inside the walled enclosure the *Puerta del Cambrón* is located, simplified and somewhat distorted, with its semicircular entrance. The distance makes it difficult to perceive correctly its towers, as he draws two openings where there is only one. This is perhaps due to the fact that he perceives the double side orifices more clearly and assumes that they are like this throughout the perimeter. The constructions that appear at its side could correspond to the already then ruined Augustinian monastery. At the top of a hill is the church of the Franciscan convent of *San Juan de los Reyes*. Despite the distance he makes a detailed description of the exterior, from the occidental façade to the gabled roofed nave, passing through the left arm of the prominent transept and the crossing tower with its drum, roof and lantern ending in a cross. Such is the detail that the tracery decoration and blind arcades are perfectly visible, as well as the buttresses, geminated pointed windows, pinnacles and a triangular pediment on the main front of the western side. In the foreground of the river stands the tower of the *Baño de la Cava*, a relic of an old pontoon bridge. In it they open two pointed arch doors and the same number of skylights. In the background, behind the main arch of the bridge, a small building can be seen, probably a mill.



Fig. 9: Charles Clifford, *Puente de Alcántara* with the *Alcázar* without roof and the *Puerta de San Ildefonso* at the end of the bridge, 1858. Boston, The Boston Public Library.

Fig. 10: John Synge, *First view of Toledo*, 1813 (©The Board of Trinity College Dublin).



4 | Conclusion

The present work encompasses an original contribution to the representation of Toledo and, by extension, of the Spanish and European cities. However, as we know, it is not the first time that a study of the tour is approached. A few years ago two articles were published about his Galician drawings and about the city of Benavente. The views of the city of the Tagus are part of the wider context of the *ritratti di città*, which already proliferated in Europe centuries before Synge's voyage, whether in paintings, drawings or engravings. For some time now they have been the subject of a new discipline, urban iconography, developed over the last fifty years by Cesare de Seta and the Centro Interdipartimentale sull'Iconografia della Città Europea (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II). This scholar has analysed the evolution of the *forma urbis* of Naples, Rome, Florence, Milan, Bologna and Mantua, among others, not forgetting European capitals such as Paris, London and Amsterdam [de Seta 1996; de Seta 2001]. The intellectual legacy of the Italian researcher has been held up by authors who have also specialised in these same urban centres [Calabi 1996; Bakker 1996; Picon 2001; Rosa 2001; Iaccarino 2001; Iaccarino 2006], and others in the Atlantic France [Saupin 2014], from Central and Eastern Europe [Ordasi 2001; Buccaro 2004; Miltenov 2004; Schiätti 2012; Schalenberg 2012; Principe 2004] and Northern Portugal [Barroca 2014].

With respects to Spain, the general work of the following stand out Kagan [1986], Marías [1996; 2002; 2008¹], Sazatornil [2019], and González [2019]. In the same way, knowledge and study have been widened about Madrid's urban image [Pereda 2001]; about cities in Catalonia and other Mediterranean territories, mainly Barcelona, Valencia and Palma de Mallorca [Guàrdia 1996; Muñoz 2001; Marías 2008²]; of localities of the Crown of Castile, of the importance of Salamanca, Segovia, Valladolid and Burgos [Pereda 2001]; of Seville, Granada, Córdoba, Cádiz, Málaga and other Andalusian towns [Marías 2001¹; Marías 2001²; Gámiz 2011]; of the most

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Fig. 11: *Puente de San Martín* of Toledo at present time (Creative Commons by Carlos Delgado, 2013, used under CC BY-SA 3.0 es).

Fig. 12: View of the *Puente de San Martín* with the *Puerta de San Martín*, the convent of *San Juan de los Reyes*, the tower of the *Baño de la Cava* and the first belt of the wall, 1898. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (RP-F-F01130-BD).

Fig. 13 (next page): Entrance of the *Puerta del Cambrón* in the walls of Toledo (Creative Commons by José Luis Filpo Cabana, 2012, used under CC BY3.0).





important urban port settlements in the Basque Country, Cantabria and Asturias, such as Gijón, Santander, Bilbao and San Sebastián [Sazatornil 2006; Alonso - Sazatornil 2009; Sazatornil 2014; González 2014; Fernández 2014]; and of the cities of Galicia, specifically Santiago de Compostela, Pontevedra, A Coruña and Ferrol. [Cajigal 2014; Vigo 2014; Pita 2014; Taín 2014; Fernández 2015].

The three pictures of Toledo, unpublished to date, we have delved into have served as pretext to submerge ourselves in depth and seek out more about the vicissitudes of Synge's stay in Spain. They are now part of the visual memory of the city, made up mainly by foreign visitors. This selected list of sketches begins with the panoramic view in 1563 by Anton van den Wyngaerde, commissioned by Felipe II and kept in the Austrian National Library [Peris - Almarcha 2009; Remolina 2010]. From the Flemish draftsman to the end of the Napoleonic occupation, artists and travellers have shaped the image of the city during the Ancien Régime. Of those two and a half centuries of urban iconography are preserved as outstanding examples two engravings by Frans Hogenberg on drawings made by Joris Hoefnagel in 1565 for *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, one of which has been reproduced by later authors with hardly any modifications [Remolina 2010]; two of El Greco's canvases, dated between 1599 and 1614, with allusions to the urbanism of the city, exhibited at the painter's museum in Toledo and at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York [Brown - Kagan 1984; Marías 2002; Garrido 2009; Marías 2014]; the view of Pier Maria Baldi from 1668-1669, made for Cosimo III de' Medici, deposited in the Laurentian Library in Florence. This graphic compendium includes works of other British visitors, both predecessors and contemporary. I am referring especially to Henry Swinburne, William Gell and Edward Hawke Locker. The first, author of *Picturesque tour through Spain*, is a gentleman of Bristol interested in the Islamic substratum of Spain. He moves to our country in 1775 and 1776 and his writings were eagerly read by romantic travellers of the 19th century. The second is an archaeologist seduced by Spain and its Muslim past, in parallel to his travels to the ruins of Greco-Roman antiquity. One of his sketchbooks, belonging to the British Museum, contains a panoramic view of Toledo around 1808. The third, who published his *Views in Spain* in 1823, is coeval with Synge. This soldier and artist, enlisted in the English army destined in the Iberian Peninsula, could have coincided with our traveller in the city in 1813 [Locker 1998].

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