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An inedited view of Naples by Jan van Essen: a general analysis of this work

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Abstract

Since the 16th century, numerous European monarchs had established specialized offices in charge of cartographic production which were often headed by specialists at the service of their Crown. This Veduta, part of a private collection owned by the Medinaceli's house, has been recently displayed in a private meeting. It shows the Spanish-Dutch fleet, the former opponents fought side by side against the French, off the city then under the Spanish rule. The painting shows the Viceroy of Naples paying tribute to de Ruyter's fleet after it repulsed an initial attack at the Battle of Stromboli.

Un'inedita veduta di Napoli di Jan van Essen: un'analisi generale dell'opera

Fin dal XVI secolo, numerosi monarchi europei avevano istituito uffici specializzati preposti alla produzione cartografica che spesso erano diretti da specialisti al servizio della loro Corona. Questa veduta, parte di una collezione privata di proprietà della casa Medinaceli, è stata recentemente esposta in un incontro privato. Essa mostra la flotta ispano-olandese, a quell'epoca in guerra contro i francesi, al largo della città allora sotto il dominio spagnolo. Il dipinto mostra il viceré di Napoli che rende omaggio alla flotta di de Ruyter dopo aver respinto un attacco a Stromboli.

Keywords: Naples, vedute, Spanish Crown.

Napoli, vedute, Corona spagnola.

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1 | Introduction: Europe during the Modern Age

Centuries ago, personalities of such high rank as those concerning this war would have given gifts such as an object of religious devotion, like an altarpiece or an image of the Virgin Mary. But times had changed profoundly along the years. Instead, a prominent position was occupied by various objects that synthesized philosophical, religious, and political issues that were very much in vogue for the European elite at the time: the new emphasis on the practical nature of the sciences and the schism of Christianity – symbols of the new approach of the prevailing thought and the religious discord of the time.

This *Veduta*, called Naval parade in the Bay of Naples of Jan Van Essen, could be considered one of the most iconic pictorial representations of the beginning of a new era. The painting is a testimony of the changes produced in Europe as a consequence of wars, imperial rivalry, scientific study and the religious agitation of the XVI-XVII centuries. It is a world of transition, caught between the religious certainties of the past and the political, intellectual and commercial enthusiasm of an ever-evolving present.

Regarding cartography, after long centuries of hegemonic domination of theology, a prolonged scientific revolution took place based on classical wisdom to ultimately discard and generate new knowledge of its own character. The printing press greatly speeded up the dissemination of ideas, knowledge escaped its seclusion of centuries in libraries and monasteries, and outstanding figures flourished whose works laid the foundations of current science: Copernicus, Galileo, Servetus, Kepler or Newton, among others. This unknown masterpiece of the city of Naples is



Fig. 1: Jan van Essen, *Naval parade in the Bay of Naples*, 1676 (Private Collection of Medinaceli).

a great topographical and pictorial witness and unique historical document with realistic descriptions of the second half of the 17th century and some details of the city of Naples with its many palaces, churches and more than 400,000 inhabitants. But the most important part is focused on the parade of fleets, which inform the viewer about the Dutch alliance with the Spanish crown against the French naval attack ordered by Louis XIV.

Jan van Essen, author of this painting just exposed to the world this year, studied under the direction of Sebastiaen de Bruyn in Antwerp in 1659, and, between 1665 and 1669, he travelled with the Flemish battle painter Pieter Hofman to Turkey. Later, he travelled to Rome in Italy. He might be the same person as Flemish painter Giovanni Vanes, whose presence in Rome was noted in September 1669. In Rome, he became a member of the 'Bentvueghels,' also known as the 'bent,' an organization made up primarily of Flemish and Dutch painters. New members of the Bentvueghels were welcomed during a ceremony in which they received a nickname, the so-called "bent name". Santruyter or Zandruiter was Van Essen's bent name. He attended a farewell meal for the Flemish engraver Albertus Clouwet that was hosted by the Bentvueghels in Rome on September 30, 1669, or perhaps around that date. He stayed in Italy and passed away in Naples in 1684 [de Seta 1980; de Seta-Buccaro 2006].

Jan van Essen is renowned for his paintings of landscapes and geographical scenes, like this one that stayed unknown until now. Three of his well-known pieces are vedute of the Naples harbour. Two of these pieces are held in the collections of the Brukenthal National Museum in Sibiu, Romania, and the Museo Nazionale di San Martino in Naples, respectively. The third, which is in a private collection in Spain, shows the harbour of Naples during the naval review that Dutch admiral Michiel de Ruyter is leading. De Ruyter, Michiel. To these three *Vedute* we have to add this one. So, right now four *vedute* of Naples exist. During June 1676, the French-Dutch War was in its fourth year. Spain, which had sided with the Netherlands against France in 1673, had received reinforcements in 1675 from a Dutch squadron that went to the Mediterranean. The French, for their part, had managed to land in Messina, which mutinied against Madrid. The battles of Messina [January 2, 1675], Stromboli [February 11, 1675], Alicudi [January 8, 1676] and Agosta [April 22] had ended with victories for the French fleet. During the last of them, the Dutch squadron, poorly supported by the Spanish forces, had been badly damaged and had lost its admiral, the prestigious Michiel de Ruyter. Consequently, the Spanish-Dutch fleet sought refuge.

2 | Geography and chorography, two different concepts in cartography

In order to understand the *veduta* presented here, we have to differentiate between chorography and geography. In the Renaissance, the dualistic conception that geographer Claudius Ptolemy had devised, with geography and chorography as two different fields, is recovered. The goal of chorography would be the description of specific regions or places, such as a town or a village. It was a discipline that knew how to bring together geography, art, history and even philology. The fundamental difference between geography and chorography is simple. Whereas the first one attends to quantity or mathematical precision in the representation, chorography is more interested in the quality of the picture [Lázaro Carreter 1980]. Different ways of representation cohabited together during the Renaissance [de Seta 1996].

During the 15th and 16th centuries, different techniques were developed to represent natural or ad vivum urban views, as can be seen in figures 2 and 3. Thus, in the Renaissance, all the scientific advances in drawing were applied to the knowledge of the city and its representation, which

undoubtedly made it possible to improve the methods of cartographers and choreographers [Llull Peñalba 2012].

Depending on the techniques used, we can broadly distinguish three types of choreographies: the profile view, the bird's-eye view and the perspective or iconographic view. The Renaissance city needed maps showing the city as it was. Streets became wide, neighbourhoods were built in a grid and squares were their axes. The great architects of the cities, therefore, needed drawings to plan their urban and architectural projects [Buccaro-Pessolano 2004].

This passion for architecture led, over time, to the wealthiest decorating their homes with city frescoes (painting done as a kind of mural on a wall or ceiling, but this implements the technique of pigmentation on a thin layer of plaster or wet marble). This custom also had a vanity touch: they shaped what they ruled or influenced, they decorated their home with their own power. Later, by imitation, more people with sufficient purchasing power began to join this trend of decorating with urban frescoes. We can find examples at the end of the fifteenth century and throughout the sixteenth century in different places of Europe and overall in Italy, such as Mantua, Rome or Florence.

Outside palaces, the first representations of cities were through the so-called natural view. From the end of the fifteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth century we can find them in large compilations such as Jacopo Foresti's *Supplementum chronicarum*, Hartman Schedel's *Nuremberg Chronicle*, and Sebastian Munster's *Cosmographia Universalis*.

But the truth is that unusual precedents already existed, such as the plan of the ancient city of Rome known under the name *forma urbis Romae*, from the 3rd century, the plan of the San Gall monastery, from the 9th century, or the plan of Venice on the *Chronologia magna*, from the 14th century. However, these were specific examples that had not achieved continuity, as it did from the 16th century [Ballon-Fiedman 2007].

At the same time, one of the challenges faced by those responsible for drawing urban maps so that they could be used for practical purposes was the proper application of mathematical calculations and measurements. The fact of producing an apparently reliable urban representation was a laudable task; but achieving a result that was truly faithful to reality involved efforts that were bearing fruit since the end of the Middle Ages. For this reason, it was very important to lay the theoretical foundations for the measurements of spaces. In this sense, the 15th-century work *Descriptio urbis Romae*, by Leon Battista Alberti, stands out, where the author described how to carry out the topographical survey of the city, despite the fact that it was not accompanied by any graphic example. It seems, however, that the difficulty of mapping reality as reliably as possible must have contributed to the fact that examples of orthogonal planes during the 16th century were not very numerous [Polo Martín 2019, v. 48].

3 | The development of urban cartography. The war as a trigger

Travelling has not always been as easy as it is today [Polo Martín 2019, v. 37]. The insecurity of roads or the lack of infrastructure, among other difficulties, made this an experience reserved for just a few. Those who finally undertook the trip had, in general, a religious purpose – pilgrims –, an economic one – merchants – or a political one – ambassadors, military –. So one way to visit other places, at least for the elite who had access to them, were the urban view books. Until the 16th century, the pictorial representations of cities were associated with storytelling or were included in more general maps. In there, cartographers simply indicated the placement of a locality, without adding distinctive elements of the reflected city; the unique



Fig. 2: Jan van Essen, *Naval parade in the Bay of Naples*, 1676; detail (Private Collection of Medinaceli).



Fig. 3: Anton van den Wyngaerde, *View of Alcalá de Henares*, 1565 (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek).

Fig. 4: Leonardo da Vinci, *Pianta di Imola*, 1502 (Web Gallery of Art).

characteristics of each urban space were not revealed. However, the Renaissance was a turning point. During the 15th and 16th centuries, the traditional iconic urban views, typical of the Middle Ages, gave way to representations that made it possible to identify the drawing with specific cities. In Germany, compilations of engravings began to appear, where images of cities were faithfully shown. For example, the pious could turn to the *Journey to the Holy Land*, by Bernard de Breydenbach, a work from the end of the fifteenth century in which engravings of many cities of the holy places of Christianity were included. Or people avid for geographical knowledge could look for information in the *Cosmographia universalis*, published by Sebastian Münster in the middle of the 16th century. However, the masterpiece of those devoted to urban views was *Civitates orbis terrarum*, edited by Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg between 1572 and 1617 [Braun-Hogenberg 1577]. To create this masterpiece, more than five hundred plates with a great level of detail were used. During the second half of the 16th century, the Flemish landscape painter Anton van den Wyngaerde stood out for his views of Spanish cities such as Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona or Córdoba, among many others.

In these atlases, the reader could go through the churches, castles, markets, walls and the surroundings of the cities that appeared among its pages, which also included details about customs or typical clothing of each locality. It was a six-volume atlas that was published between 1572 and 1618. Edited by the Colonial-based clergyman Georg Braun, it constitutes the largest and most complete systematic compendium of views of cities made up to that time. “What could be more pleasant than reading these books and observing the shape of the Earth from the comfort of one’s own home, oblivious to all danger, adorned with the splendour of cities and fortresses,” he stated in the preface to his third book.

Travel literature began to acquire an increasingly prominent role for a public that, encouraged by these discoveries and the European explorations of the time, was somehow seeking to discover other places without leaving home. It is what we could consider the perfect “salon explorer’s atlas” of the time, in which, along with the views, a detailed account of the history of the city could be read, as well as information on its commercial importance or the characteristics of that area. Thanks to the level of accuracy with which the general view of the city was made, the viewer can see details like the urban planning and architecture of the moment, which don’t exist anymore because of the conflicts that have taken place over the centuries, or because of the improvement of urban planning.

In these urban views, the perspective was elevated, as if the image were taken from a high point on the ground – a hill, for example – or a high-rise building. A change that occurred in the representation of cities during the Renaissance consisted in the elevation of the angle of the observer. Consequently, cities began to be illustrated according to what is known as the bird’s-eye perspective, which would end up distancing itself even further from the ground, as we will see. One of the first and most outstanding examples of a bird’s eye view urban plan was that of the city of Venice, a work of Jacopo de Barbari made in the year 1500. From then on and for two centuries, this was the predominant point of view, at least until the 17th century, when the primacy of the bird’s-eye perspective gradually eroded.

However, these examples of maps of urban views, as plausible as they may seem, were far from reality in the vast majority of cases. They were partially iconographic representations, in transition between that of the medieval city, indistinct, and another more truthful one, which was consolidated during the 16th century. In addition to numerous errors in orientation and scale, showing building elevations inevitably obscured certain areas of the town. One of the crucial

aspects that would partially solve the lack of credibility of urban representations was the evolution of the point of view. This is how the orthogonal projection, that is, from the zenith perspective, was consolidated, although it would take time to prevail. This new point of view may have been the logical evolution of the bird's-eye perspective, which in many cases revealed part of the street layout, almost as if it were a plan.

Between the 17th and 18th centuries, views of cities were losing popularity in Europe. However, in the 17th century there are still examples of great quality, which delve into the techniques developed since the Renaissance [Galindo Díez 1996]. This is the case of the engravings of Spanish cities by Louis Meunier or the original aerial views by Texeira [1634] of port cities on the Iberian Peninsula [Texeira 1634].

In the eighteenth century, cartography would reach a certain mathematical precision in the Netherlands and also in France during the reign of Louis XIV, under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences. At the end of the 18th century, urban views took a new turn, this time by the Scottish-based Irish painter Robert Barker. With his view of Edinburgh in 1787 he inaugurated what would be called the panoramas [Corner 1857].

As we pointed out, the inaccuracy of the results undoubtedly limited the practical uses of these first urban maps. But the new complexity and demands of bureaucracy, urban life and emerging states required them. One of these needs was the military. The image of the city, captured as such by the human eye, had to be replaced by another one of mathematical inspiration, at scale and whose objective was to place the viewer in each of the sectors of the map and maintain the proportion of the elements in the set. The objectivity and the scientific and functional nature prevailed over the delight of contemplating a panoramic view of a city. And the great development of artillery played a crucial role in this regard.

When French cannons made fortifications obsolete towards the end of the 15th century, many scrambled to find ways to make cities protected places again. However, at first no one really knew how. If the walls were built very high, they were an easy object to hit by artillery. If, on the other hand, they were excessively low, the enemy could easily escalate them. The solution was to build low walls and manage to prevent assaults with ingenuity. Firearms, which had caused the problem, provided the solution. Bastions were built so that, by protruding from the line of the wall, it allowed the fire of the defenders' cannons to cover its entire perimeter and thus prevent the enemy from getting too close to the perimeter of the city. The angular bastions provided the best coverage with the fewest blind spots for reasons of geometry alone. This new style, known as Italian design, originated in Italy around 1515 and crossed the Alps in the 1530s.

Because of that, urban design and war purposes were the main drivers of reliable urban plans [Truchuelo-Torres 2022]. That of 1502 in the city of Imola, work of Leonardo da Vinci who traced it following the orders of César Borgia, was one of the first examples and, without a doubt, the most advanced of all [Johns 2015]. Military constructions take center stage on the map, whose position is much more faithful to reality than other urban elements, such as the layout of the streets. Soon after, in 1529, Pope Clement VII, determined to punish his rebellious hometown of Florence with the support of Emperor Charles V commissioned Benvenuto della Volpaia, who was also a gifted surveyor, to produce a model that would allow him to follow the progress of the army sent to besiege the city. Towards the middle of the same century, atlases of fortifications of cities of the Italian peninsula and the Netherlands appeared. At the same time, visual representation was becoming increasingly necessary to accompany detailed accounts of war campaigns, especially so that those who were not present at the battles could follow the

events in the most detailed way possible [Polo Martín 2019, v. 9; Woodward 2007]. The number of reporting maps increased as fortifications became more complex. In the 17th century, the expansion and fortification of Dutch cities encouraged the production of a large number of urban design drawings, mostly from a zenith perspective. The extension plan of Amsterdam, approved by the city council in 1611, was illustrated on a map around 1620. However, the popularization of orthogonal projection planes was progressive. It should be noted that these types of maps, which had been associated with the military for a long time, were only available to a few. The bulk of the population was not aware of these representations of space until quite some time later. In fact, bird's-eye city plans continued to be much more popular until the late 17th century. Map users needed new visual literacy skills to decipher planimetric images that until recently many would have considered impossible to interpret. It seems that the ability to correctly read orthogonal projection planes advanced during the 17th century, thanks in large part to the extraordinary diffusion of some maps of this type, such as those of Gomboust of Paris 1652 [Taride 1900; Hollar 1675] and Ogilby and Morgan [1676], both of London; and Stalpaert, who led a further urban expansion of Amsterdam in 1663. These plans became highly celebrated and helped establish the tradition of orthogonal perspective in urban representations. In the field of cartography, the 18th century marked the triumph of this more schematic, but precise and reliable, means of representation over the pictorial character, which had prevailed until then when it came to representing cities.

Naval warfare plagued the Mediterranean coastline of Italy throughout the 17th century in a mixture of religious hatred at first, then shifting secular ideas about the state and commercial interests and rivalries. The year 1648 was pivotal in the 17th century. In the Peace of Westphalia that was finally agreed that year, the immensely destructive Thirty Year's War [1618-1648], fought mainly in Germany, finally came to an end. That was the last and greatest of the cruel "Wars of Religion," even more devastating in terms of percentage of deaths per population than WWI or WWII. The "German War" reflected a complex mix of political, economic, dynastic and religious causes and conflicts, although it centered on Habsburg ambition and Protestant rebellion against the Catholic empire. It ended when an ascendant Catholic France joined the Protestant powers in a purely secular triumph over declining Habsburg dynasties in Austria and, although it took another decade, fading Habsburg power in Spain. After four years of negotiation a set of treaties agreed at Westphalia between Catholic and Protestant princes also ended the Eighty Years' War [1568-1648], between the Spanish monarchy and Dutch Calvinists (also known as the Dutch Revolt or War of Independence).

The end of fighting for religious causes reset all politics. Mostly gone were bitter confessional divides, replaced by a newly secular and more modern conception of politics and diplomacy that was first enunciated during the Italian Renaissance by Niccolò Machiavelli, and later codified by Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (Huig de Groot). The great Westphalian settlement introduced concepts to international law that included "sovereign independence" and the "non-intervention in internal [religious] affairs" of states. But instead of ending the cycle of war in the 17th century it only shifted war's focus onto newly secular causes and issues like trade.

At the mid-century mark nearly all the old alliances and quarrels came apart, realigning basic interests and national ambitions for another half century that was filled with war. The long and bitter conflict between Spain and its rebellious possession in the Netherlands had ended when Protestant rebels finally won independence after 80 years of fighting on land and at sea. But that end to religious war only freed the Dutch Republic to fight its once-and-future ally England over

commercial primacy, and then to fight another old ally, France, in partnership with its old enemy Spain [Ruiz Ibáñez-Sabatini 2020]. The key to understanding these remarkable shifts of war-time allegiance is to appreciate the new primacy of France. Even as Louis XIV grew into young manhood, France had replaced the Habsburgs as the principal threat to peace and the balance of power. That drew the still-divided Italy into new wars fought mainly by other people's armies on Italian territory, and foreign navies off Italian coasts. Meanwhile, war to the east was dominated by an ancient Venetian rivalry with the powerful Ottoman Empire, the latest outbreak continuing after 1648 as the War of Candia [1645-1669]. Fighting over the water in the eastern Mediterranean was complicated by the arrival of English and Dutch mercenary galleons. They fought in support of Venetian and sometimes also Austrian Habsburg galleys, frigates, galleasses and galleons. Things were more intense in the Western Mediterranean where multiple navies clashed as Spain declined.

4 | Jan Van Essen and his work

The view is evidence of all of this. It starts from the left – from the viewer's point of view – with a partial view of Castel dell'Ovo, the oldest fortification of the city, connected by a small isthmus. The continent was originally called *Castrum Lucullanum* and changed its name due to its oval shape. Van Essen c the angle to capture this Sixteenth century advanced Naples vedute leaving only part of the Riviera Di Chiaia exposed. Continuing we find the Tower of San Vincenzo, built under Charles of Anjou, the Defensive fortress of Castel Nuovo, the Pier – built by Viceroy Pedro Antonio Aragon – and the Arsenal next to the Royal Palace – the work of architect Domenico Fontana and residence of the Spanish Governor – as well as Warning Military and Defense Strategies and areas for salvaging large battleships [Herrero Sánchez 2000]. After painstakingly dredging work, Pedro Antonio inaugurated the pier Aragon in 1668, an approximate date for dating this interesting live portrait of the city of Naples from the last third of the 17th century. Another important landmark in the cityscape is the lighthouse known as *Lanterna del Molo*, built in 1487 by Ferrante of Aragon. The painting instead shows the lighthouse as rebuilt in 1626 by the Duke of Alba after it was destroyed by fire in 1624. The Spanish Viceroy personally took charge of building the defensive fortress [Kagan 1986]. At the end of the east arm of the pier, there is a marble sculpture on top. Last, it shows Castel Nuovo, also known as *Maschio Angioino*, built at the initiative of Charles Anjou I of 1270, notable for its monumental proximity to the port features.

The cylindrical towers of the Royal Fortress with its battlements and the windswept flag atop the majestic Beverello Tower is striking for its resounding and personal data. Beyond the coast, a small pier full of fishing boats and Aragonese Coastal defensive walls to reach *Castello del Carmine* or *Sperone*, a defense walled fortress with two round towers protecting the sanctuary of *Santa Maria del Carmine Maggiore*, which its imposing a bell tower and a market. In the back, along the line, are *Nolana* and *Capuana* Gates. There are also many seafaring villages outside the city walls. In the background, Mount Vesuvius and its star cluster-filled sky structure. On the highest part of Mount Vomero stands the majestic *Castel Sant'Elmo*. A fortress of great strategic importance rebuilt by the Viceroy Pedro de Toledo is *Certosa* from San Martino. Built in the 14th century, it has many parts in a Baroque style. Many other early examples from the famous *Tavola Strozzi* 1472/73, celebrating Ferdinand of Aragon's victory at sea over Giovanni d'Angio on 12 July 1465; *View of Naples* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder *Galleria Doria Pamphili* [1560-62]; *Cartographical Plans of Patinopa Dupérac-Lafréry* in 1566; a *Naples landscape* by Jan van de



Fig. 5: Jan Van Essen, *Naval parade in the Bay of Naples*, 1676; detail (Private Collection of Medinaceli).

Velde II, 1618; this Topographic map of Alessandro Baratta in the *Fidelissimae urbis neapolitanae cum viis accurata et nova delienatio aedita* of lucem in 1629. Alternatively, it includes an engraving by Bastien Stopendaal in 1663. It's worth noting the importance of the canvas we're dealing with here, because its signature is Jan van Essen, capitalized a rarity of some works of the Antwerp painter.

The Naval Parade includes the Dutch in the Bay of Naples as well as Spanish ships and others from the republics of Malta and Genoa. During the war these fleets consisted of galleys, galleons, and other more common ships and ships full of officers and rowers. The whole naval spectacle comes from the port city of Naples crowd. Double row of cannons on the left side of the galleon flying the Dutch flag. Some of the nearby ships also appear in the aforementioned van Essen painting to the Certosa di San Martino. Some Spanish ships fly white flags with the red cross and Burgundy's royal coat of arms. The bow and stern bars were fired with honour from bayonets. This naval squadron is likely to respond with Dutch and Spanish ships the two countries form an alliance to counter the attack of Louis XIV's ships in France. During the Mexican uprising of 1674-1678, which sought French support. Little is known about the painter Van Essen who we know entered the Gilda of St Luke in Antwerp as an apprentice in 1658-1659. He made a journey to Turkey and stayed in Rome for some time before settling in Naples where he died in 1684.

In addition to the Dutch squadron, on the canvas you can see the gondola in which the viceroy travelled, along with other special boats to carry personalities, boats and boats; the squadron of the Galleys of the Kingdom of Naples made up of: the Captain (who leads the march and of which we see the stern with the Neapolitan eagle banner, is turning in front of the Dutch Admiral, led by De Ruyter), followed by the Patron Saint, and three galleys with red flags (the names of these galleys were San Antonio, San Fernando, San Genaro, that is why the float (the covered store that appears in the stern) finishes off a polychrome wooden sculpture of the saint that gives it its name and the Cuatralba closes the march, so called because it commands a section of 4 galleys, and which is identified with a red banner that includes a white cross with the signs of the Passion of Christ. They were also in Naples for the occasion 10 ships of the Mar Océano's Navy that we can also distinguish the galleons and pataches with distinctive white and the red blades of San Andrés, typical of the army of war and the marine infantry, the Tercio de la Armada. East protocol meeting and welcome other galleys and ships from Malta, Genoa, Sardinia and the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

5 | Conclusions: the role of a Dutch in Naples

During the Modern Age, rulers – royal houses at the head – demanded reliable cartographic sources. This led to linking the mapping work with the protection and consolidation work of the fledgling States. The spheres of power considered it necessary to take responsibility for the production of maps, since they themselves were the main consumers. It was thus them that created groups of cartography specialists in charge of preparing the necessary materials for military engineering works. Italy was the spearhead in this regard. By the mid-16th century, Venice had established a series of magistratures, the offices responsible for the maps and surveys required by the state for the management of timber, water, and other natural resources. In 1548, moreover, the Venetian Senate created the position of *cosmografo della Repubblica* and gave him official responsibility for the elaboration of maps that the republic would make use of. Similar offices soon appeared elsewhere. The southern provinces, dependent on the Spanish Crown, came

under the control of the royal cartographers of the Habsburgs. Later, the French monarchs also had their official cartographers and during the reign of Henry IV [1589-1610], the *géographe du roi* was able to count on a body of *ingénieurs du roi* responsible for provincial cartography. These were the wickers on which regulated military engineering education institutions were developed and cartography formed an important part of their training.

During the 17th century, the Dutch introduced significant changes in the structure of armies and in military discipline [Geoffrey 1988]. These transformations affected the division of tasks of their ranks, and, among other consequences, the periods of instruction were lengthening. Thus, academic training centers for engineers in the military field appeared. In Brussels, one of the military academies that would achieve the greatest prestige at the time was created in 1675 where many of those who worked as military engineers were trained. However, the truth is that Spain had had a precedent that, although it did not achieve continuity, constituted one of the first efforts to consolidate military engineering studies in the country. In 1601, Philip III appointed Tiburzio Spannocchi, a Siennese military expert in fortifications subordinate to the Captain General of the Artillery, chief engineer of the kingdoms of Spain. Spannocchi, who had served the Spanish State for a few decades before, and Juan de Herrera had promoted the creation of the Academy of Mathematics and Military Architecture in 1582. This center was erected to make up for the lack of an establishment to train military engineers, since until then those who worked in Spain were Italians – such as Spannocchi –, Flemish and Germans. After Spannocchi's death, he was succeeded in office by one of his disciples, Leonardo Turriano. However, on the death of the latter in 1625 and, it seems, due to a lack of attendees at class, the academy was forced to close its doors and military engineers would lack their own entity for almost a century. Thus, as a replica of the model of the prestigious Brussels Military Academy, much more later, the Royal Academy of Mathematics of Barcelona was created in Spain [Alcaide González-Capel Sáez 1987].

It was therefore in 1709, during the War of Succession, that the Marquis of Bedmar, secretary of the War Office, proposed to King Felipe V that he summons the expert from the Netherlands, Jorge Próspero de Verboom, to direct the creation of a group specialized in military engineering in Spanish territory. De Verboom had been trained at the Brussels Military Academy and, thanks to his theoretical background and extensive experience, he actively dedicated himself to preparing the organization of a group of expert engineers. Various proposals arose from his conversations with members of the Government, including bringing engineers from Flanders to Spain, establishing a plan for their organisation, forming categories and assimilating them into the military structure of the Spanish Army. On April 17, 1711, the project for the organization of the Corps of Engineers was approved by royal decree in the city of Zaragoza. And Verboom, as a boost to military engineering in the country, created in the same year one of the most important instruments of the body, the Royal and Military Academy of Mathematics of Barcelona. He was also in charge of drafting a curricular project and set himself the arduous task of separating the functions of the engineer from those of the artillerymen. He proposed a three-year course that included an extensive training: arithmetic, geometry, mechanics and machinery, fortification, civil and military construction, and natural philosophy, among other subjects [Carrillo de Albornoz 2002].

Cartographic knowledge of these military engineers increased considerably due to their greater specialization. If arithmetic and geometry were used to find optimal solutions to the problems posed on paper, their usefulness was also present when executing the project. Many writers of

the time warned of the need for the military engineer to know how to trace on the ground, quantify areas and determine volumes. But if for the correct handling of these tasks it was enough to know some mathematical formulas, for the layout and measurement it was essential to resort to a set of specific instruments. Unlike other tools, a heritage of constructive craftsmanship, measuring instruments were the product of ingenuity: the compass, the square, the plumb line, the level, the pantometer. Even the determination of distances, which became an important concern during the Modern Age, required exclusive books, many of them published in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Jan Van Essen, a Dutch who worked for the Spanish monarchy at that time, would have been in Naples and witnessed the 1678 celebration of restored Spanish rule following the Messina Revolt, the event recorded in the *Veduta* [Ribot García 1983; Ribot García 2022]. Such public celebrations were occasions of both cultural and political importance. They were meant to project the grandeur of monarchy and authority to the general public, in this case the population of Naples which was then a Spanish Habsburg possession. This fact can be proven through the large crowd gathered around the lighthouse and given the appearance of heralds blowing trumpets on the ship's boat with eight oarsmen in the near center. It clearly is a scene of celebration rather than battle or siege. For the same reason, the galleasses may be firing blanks in salute to victory rather than hostility. One hopes they are blanks, because at least one galleass has its guns aimed at the galleon. A frigate and a galleon, both with sails down, are in the right middle of the canvas.

These festivities were usually organized after periods of social unrest, in this case the end of Messina Revolt described below and the return of Spanish vice regal authority to Sicily, reinforced in other possessions across Italy [Peña Izquierdo 2011]. Spanish Naples was a special concern and object of festive political culture, as it was one of the largest cities in all Europe at the time, the Viceroys' political authority was very fragile in the wake of the Messina Revolt, the city had been ravaged by an outbreak of plague in the mid-1650s, and Naples had wide social and economic imbalances across the population and hinterland even in more stable times. Festivals kept people happy, in the long tradition in Italy of *panem et circenses* that dates to the days of the Roman Empire. People expected festivals sponsored by their rulers. The 1678 celebration exactly fit this purpose [Antonello 2020, 302-305].



Fig. 6: Jan van Essen, Naval parade in the Bay of Naples, 1676; detail (Private Collection of Medinaceli).

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