

Revisiting *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*. The urban space spectacle.

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Abstract

A recursive graphical resource in the representation of an urban space in the contemporary touristic thematic maps is the mix of paths with some iconic elements presented in a zoomed axonometric, perspective or elevation view.

In order to explore the origins of this resource in the creation of an image for a touristic city, this work reviews four drawings of Barcelona in the XVI century; three by Anton Wyngaerde and one by Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen that illustrates the *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* World Atlas as the first *global* image of the city of Barcelona.

Keywords: *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, Urban Tourism, Digital Humanities

Introduction

The relevance of tourism in a city such as Barcelona has generated several thematic maps from its official tourism agency, Barcelona *Turisme* (Figure 1). These [maps] have been modified to represent the landmarks based on demand studies, which at the same time are driven by the offer in a circle of information and action based on images. According to reports from Barcelona *Turisme*, venues of architectural interest and museums represent the highest amount of visitors. And in the top ten of unique visits within the old city is the *Born* Cultural Center (associated with the neighbourhood and the Cathedral of *Santa María del Mar*) and the Barcelona City History Museum (associated with *Plaza del Rey* and the Roman original settlement, *Barcino*).

The first global image of the city of Barcelona dated from 1500, where a number of elements are distinguished as representative of the city in order to create a pictorial view that is an interpretation of singularities of the city to be communicated (as a chorographic exercise). This character is not much different from contemporary tourist map, which is focused on topological relationships rather than on exposing physical distances (many maps show graphical scale only as a convention), all this with a goal; to guide visitors from one point of interest to another point of particular interest.

As for mobility, we know that the arrival to the city in 1500 was mainly by sea and by foot, horseback or carriage inside the city. Nowadays, in terms of tourist transportation, dedicated tourist buses takes the highest percentage of use -which pursues points of interests-, followed by cable railway -which pursues the panoramic- view-. Through these means of transport, the city is presented for the casual traveller as a synthesis of these two scales. A study of the image in the Flickr community (Donaire & Galí, 2011) shows that the panoramic image of the city takes a large percentage of the sample as well as the vast majority of photographs of unique venues show nodes and buildings in context, realizing that the rescued and effectively communicated image of Barcelona is bounded by scenic and transport.

The Grand Tour -Activity recognized as a forerunner of the modern tourism- recorded tours focusing on several European destinations being the most frequent France and Italy. The last one was the most important destination in the seventeenth century, due to Rome, which received a century before important visitors of the Renaissance humanists as part of their studies of the classical world. These written and pictorial records held by humanists and nobles are an important part of the development of architectural representation to be part of the work of Brunelleschi, Alberti, Palladio, among other prominent architects of the Italian Renaissance.

With the Catholic Counter-reformation cultural revolution, a strongly development of scenic image of the architectural facade and its spatial context in Italy; a show that defines the image and recurrent

representation of the city as wanted to be seen and that is synthesized in an image projected to the world; architectural and urban spectacle is put in place at the beginning of Baroque style ordered for this purpose; it is a paradigm shift towards the visually extravagant and immediate in replacement of the visually balanced and timeless of the High Renaissance.

In this context, influential works are published such as *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Ortelius, 1570) and later, as a complement, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (C.O.T.) (Braun, 1572) presenting an unprecedented visual spectacle through a collection of views and plans of urban spaces in their contexts. In 2009 a complete version of C.O.T. is republished (Braun, Hohenberg, Füssel, Taschen, & Koolhaas, 2009), then *Cartografía de la Ciudad* (Schuler, 2011a) reaching the twentieth century and gathering works of *Geographia* by Ptolemy, *Chronicles of Nuremberg* (1493) and *Hartmann Schedel Cosmographia* (1544) Sebastian Münster as well as the same *Theatrum ...* and *Civitates...*, among others

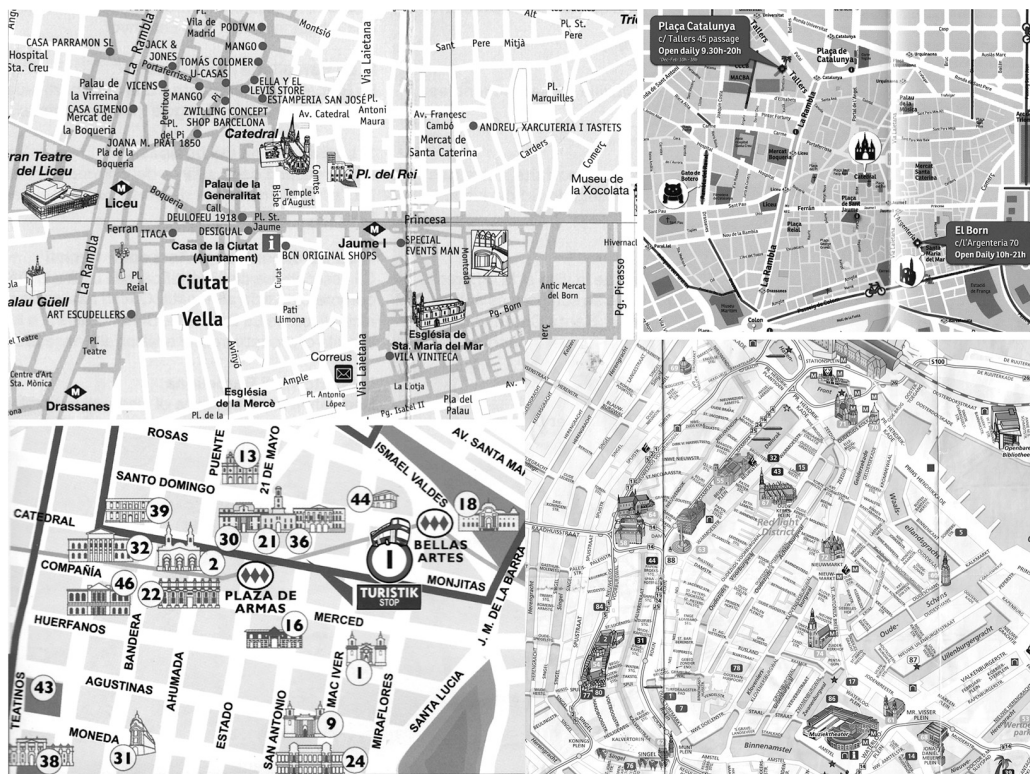


Figure 1. Tour maps. From top to bottom and from left to right: Barcelona Shopping Line (Barcelona Tourism), Barcelona Bike Tours (Barcelona Tourism), Santiago Turistik Map (SERNATUR), Amsterdam Free Map. Source: Digitalized Printed maps.

Scenographic sequence. Analysis method

In every period, urban spaces have been used as a scenery in which citizens take part as protagonists and spectator. "Urban life is nothing but theatrical" (Kostof, 1991).

The theatrical scenery image and representation of Renaissance and Baroque urban space have something in common; they are compositions of visual elements for a type of imaginary space that serves as a background for predefined actions of a character. This way, Renaissance and Baroque representation of the city, although assumed as an object itself, they are still a type of composition that considers the visual embedded elements in the intellectual vision of the author and his intentions.

These aspects were part of the route and recognition that made flamenco artist Anton van der Wyngaerde in the sixteenth century with the mission of representing in one image, the entire city of Barcelona at that

time. Drawings that now we know do not precede but proceed the drawing of Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen who later takes part of the C.O.T. from the work of the engraver Franz Hogenberg (García i Espuche, 1995).

This way of understanding urban space thereafter the drawing is formalized in the twentieth century by Gordon Cullen; a relationship between urban design and the organization of visual elements as a sequence that constitutes a visual experience; useful to evaluate the readability of an urban space.

It is necessary to synthesize the first representations of the city to identify the elements' connections that first the author -Vermeyen and, later on, Wyngaerde- expressed in their drawings the task of creating a representative image of the city. For this matter, the first known views of Barcelona are redrawn, -including one that is part of the collection of views of C.O.T. World Atlas-, focusing on the highest and especially detailed constructions of each drawing, including the general layout of the elements of the natural landscape, the streets and spaces that can be observed. In this case, pictorial details of the chorographic description are being left behind due to the topological character of which the present study is deduced from. (1)

Revisiting Barcelona of the C.O.T.

Anton van der Wyngaerde was hired by Philip II for a graphic inventory of major cities and fortified points of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. He left a collection of 62 drawings in which there are views of Barcelona, Madrid, Toledo, and Cordoba, among others. Barcelona drawings were made in one or several trips during 1563.

From the series of drawings of Barcelona *Wyngaerde*, the first sketches from the sea are a sequence that forms a wide panorama as a tour of the coast (Figure 2), taking in account the visitor's arrival, highlighting the port activity and the walls of Barcelona, leaving out in this first draft, the *Montjuic* representation. As a result of being the first sketches, the characteristic elements of the city were not yet apprehended. Therefore, these are representations that synthesize mainly a visual perception, mostly corresponding to a frontview or flat composition with some depth by superposition where some prominent elements are presented -besides the completed wall- such as the dockyards and the towers of *Santa María del Mar*.

In the next two drawings, the *Montjuic* stands out as a distinctive visual element and observation point, the watchtower on top shows this condition at the time (Figures 3 and 4).

In Figures 3 and 4, a non-technical mix between axonometric and conical projections as a composition with different vanishing points and a high horizon in a compound pictorial plane to show the Barcelona of the time behind the walls is observed; a large graphic compression of the left end of the drawing make the *Monjuic*, area Raval and Rambla look like minor visual elements in comparison to the center of the old Barcino and the most characteristic buildings of the era such as the Cathedral of Barcelona or Santa Maria del Mar, which occupy the center of the composition. The wall is shown much more extensive in the *Riviera* zone, it is possible to appreciate the proportional difference of the metric scheme in the diagram plan of the sea wall at the time. (I Espuche García & i Guàrdia Bassols, 1986). Compared to Figure 2, *Portal de Mar* and *La Merced* stand out.



Figure 2. 1563 Barcelona drawing by *Anton van der Wyngaerde*. Source: Atlas of Barcelona (Galera, 1982a). Digital retrace: Felipe Lazo - Mella.

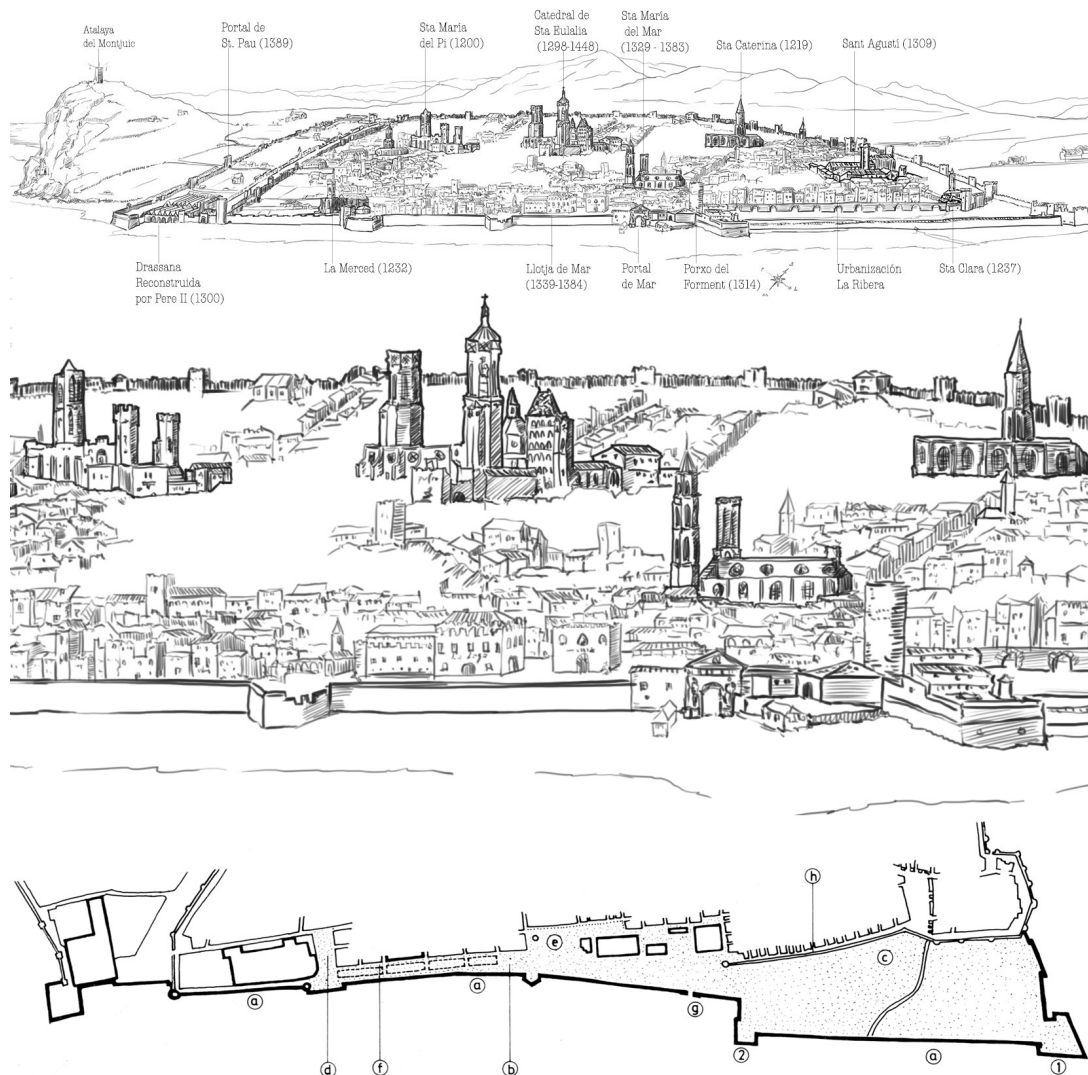


Figure 3. Above: Barcelona of 1563 by Wyngaerde. View from the Sea. Source: Self elaboration based on the reprinting of Barcelona's Atlas (Galera , 1982b) . Below: Plant of the sea wall in 1500 in real proportion. Source: Garcia and Espuche 1986.

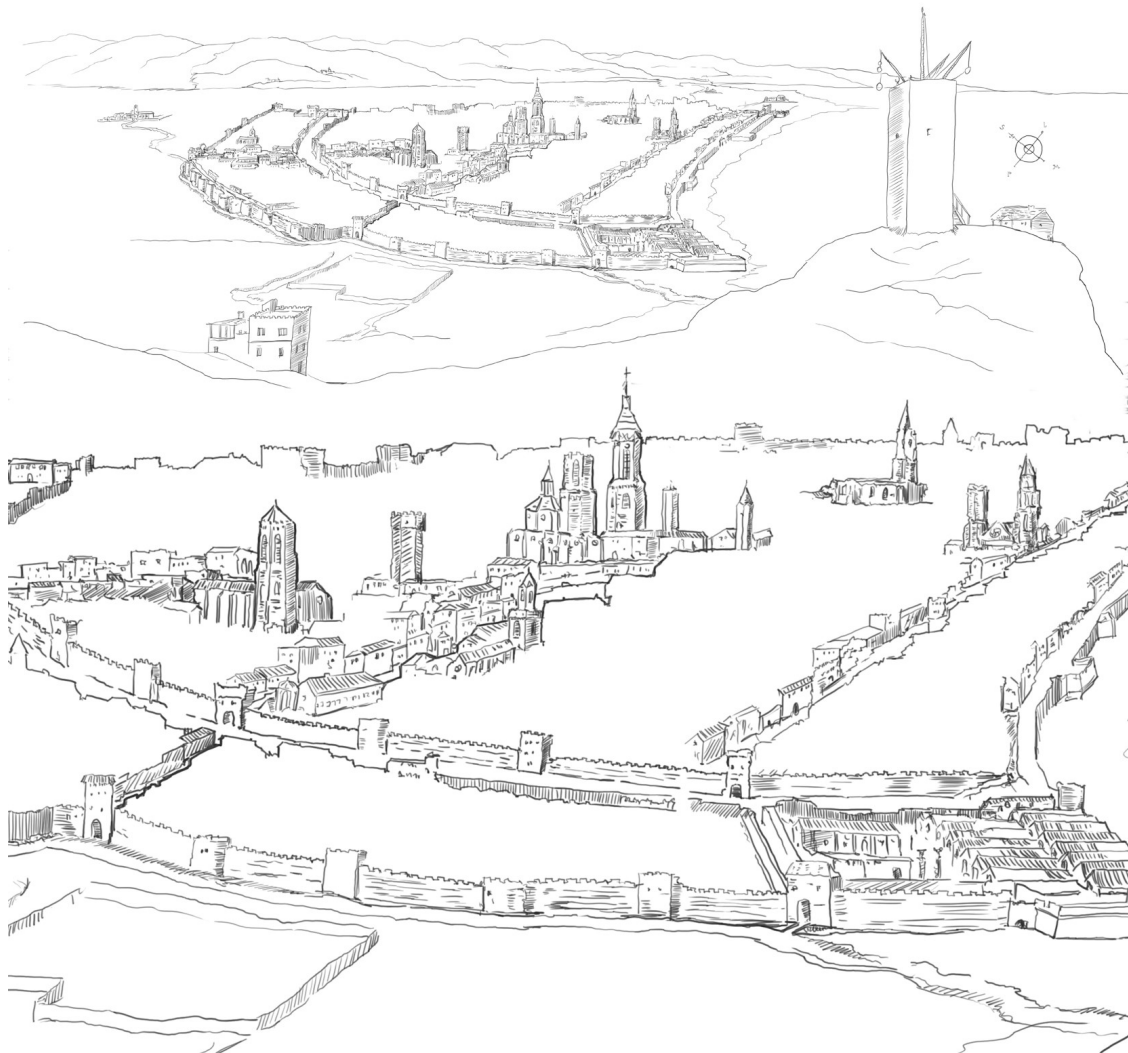


Figure 4. 1563. Barcelona. Anton van der Wyngaerde. View from *Montjuic*. Source: Self elaboration based on the reprinting of Barcelona's Atlas (Galera, 1982b)

An important difference between Wyngaerde's drawing (Figure 4) and Hogenberg's engraving (Figure 5) is the horizon. The second is the deformation at the edges of the city and its wall; The *Rambla* is depicted as a big curve. Another broad difference is that Wyngaerde's view presents more information; access and axes remain evident. The foreground is an axiom of the character of each image; while on first one the top of *Montjuic* is represented in a descriptive way, in the other one it a couple represent a theatrical scene where the is a scenography.

In Figure 5, the walls have a much smaller scale and therefore visual hierarchy. The view is supposed to be closest to the city and at a lower altitude and, in turn, presenting a much clearer skyline. At the same time, it becomes very difficult to distinguish the streets and roads within the city, considerably away from

Wyngaerde's vision who is closest to the plant and contemporary resources (Figures 1 and 9). This view uses a higher percentage of space in the representation of the environment and its expressive elements, the city is generally less detailed, while rural areas, mountains, and the sea acquire more relevance. The graphic synthesis shows that the number of empty spaces corresponding to areas unbuilt and minor construction without detail is higher compared to that of Wyngaerde's, even though both period and observation point, are near.

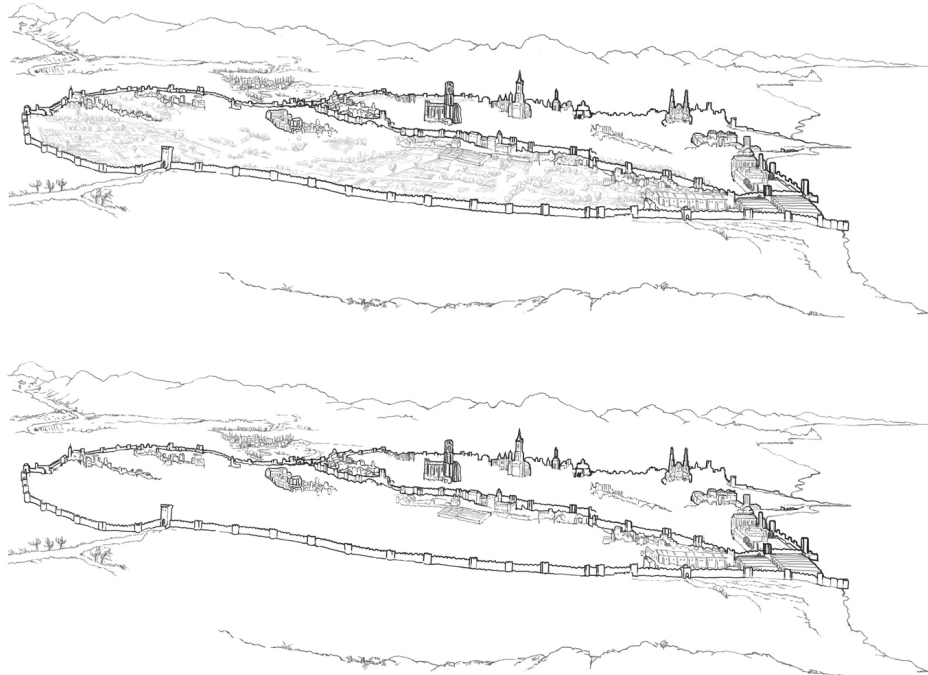
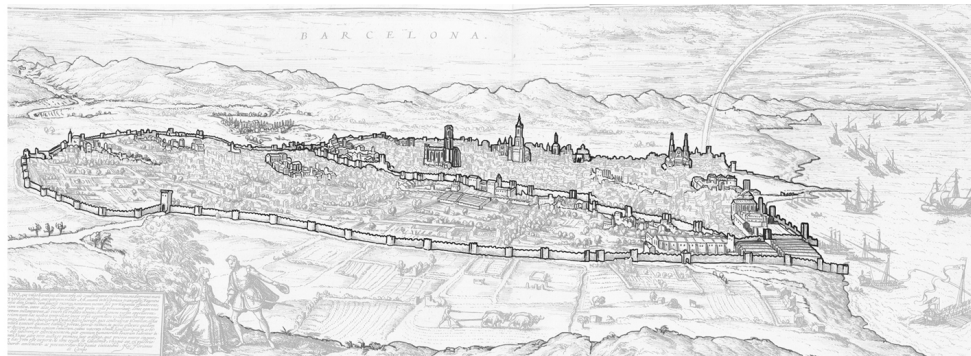


Figure 5. Barcelona (Drawing, 1535 Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen . Engraving, 1572 Franz Hohenberg). Special attention to the *Portal Sant Pau* with its external path. Limits, geographical location, cathedrals, watchtowers and harbour with the dockyards are highlighted, the main rural condition of the *Raval* area and of course the condition of *Montjuic* viewpoint. In the center, just as Wyngaerde's drawing, is the Cathedral of Barcelona (*Santa Eulalia*) and *Santa Maria del Pi* are found. Source: Compiled from the reprint found in *Cartography of the City* (Schüler, 2011b).

The topological image

Any city or device that embraces human activity should be developed on oriented surfaces, likewise the main graph representing the physical network should be flat. This condition affects both the study of settlements and their representations. But duality affects our approach in other ways: secondary graphics representations often are not flat (requiring some simplification or further elaboration).

An urban network can be decomposed into axial shaping maps graphs where nodes are lines and edges are intersections between lines (Millán Gómez, Lazo Mella, & López Moreno, 2012)



Figure 6. Topological Synthesis plane Barcelona 1439. Source: Millán Gómez, et. alt. (2012)

Cities tend to have a universal global basis (large-scale) as opposed to a local specific form of culture. This is locally patches or cluster of streets. In the case of Barcelona, the result of topological analysis

meets the definition of historic districts and drawings featured in 1500 (Figure 7) milestones.

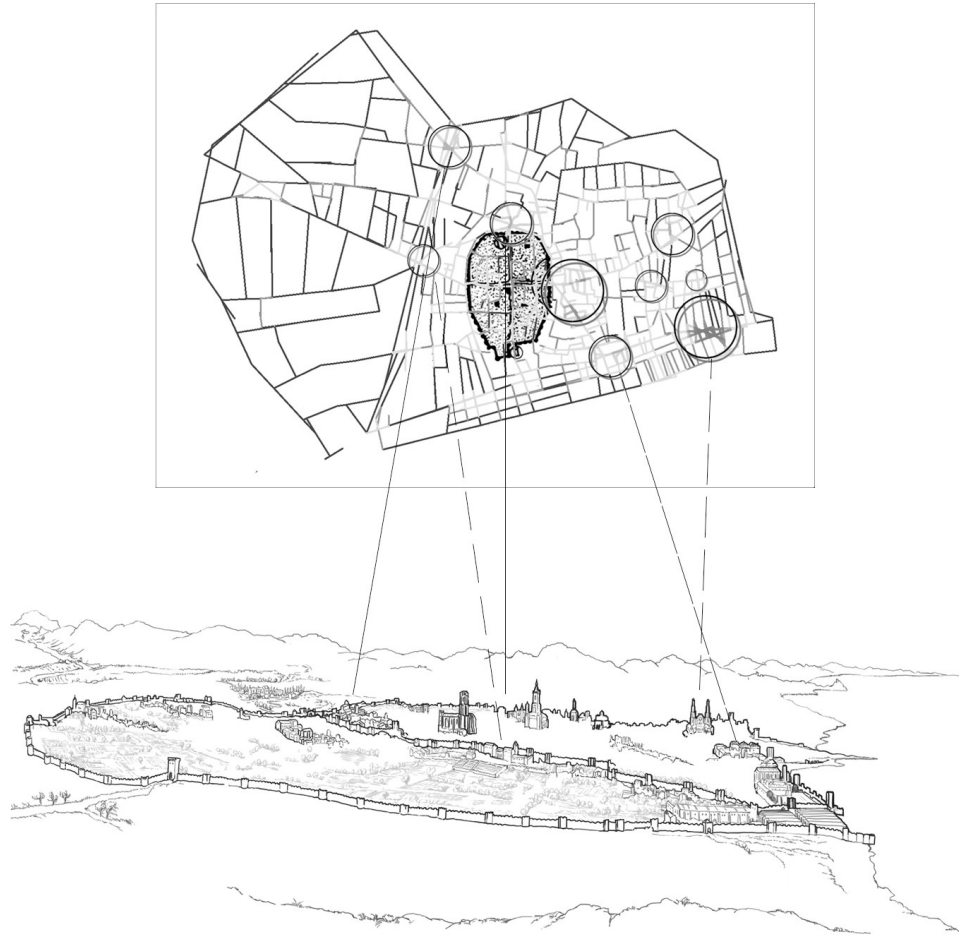


Figure 7. The relationship between the topological points of Barcelona and prominent places in the engraving C.O.T. Source: Millán Gómez, et.al. (2012).

The local and global development coincides with the local economy as well in neighbourhoods and large structures were intended to trade on a larger scale at the harbour (Figure 8). Wyngaerde recognizes Barcelona from the sea from the first sketches (Figure 2) the second most elaborate drawing (Figure 3) recognizes the dockyards and the promenade (*Rambla*) respectively, possibly guided by the previous observation of Vermeyen's drawing which highlights the same elements (Figure 5).

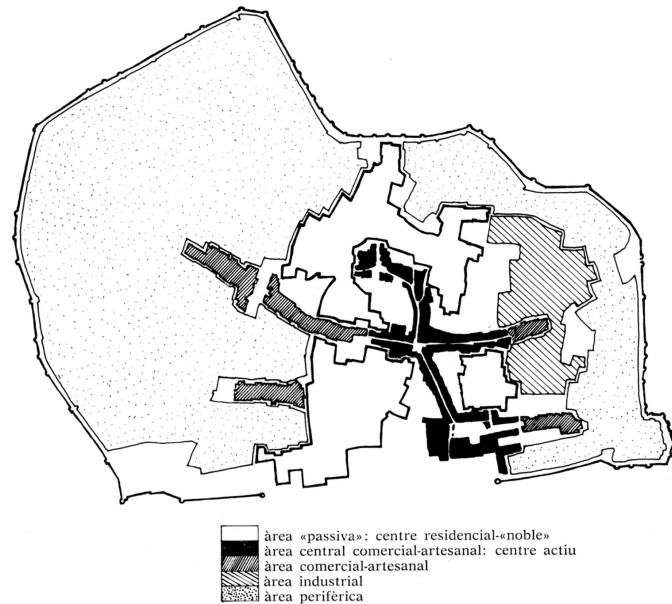


Figure 8. Synthesis of profession's distribution in Barcelona from 1500. Source: (Garcia i Espuche & Guàrdia i Bassols, 1986)

We note in Figures 3, 4 and 5, numerous points of graphic emphasis that match with points on the plan of greatest concentration of local integration (shorter and concentrated streets that meet at sharp angles and can be accessed more directly compared to the rest of the grid), however we can notice how all the emphasis on the detail of the dockyards and the port's limit does not appear prominently in the topology synthesis as it is shown in the drawing. We can say that the drawings are strongly influenced by the image rescued in his arrival to the city, bounded by the means of transport, an image that is more global than local and coincides with the character of C.O.T. However, even with strong deformation rate and form of the elements presented in different views (See metrical scheme Figure 2), the graphic expression recognizes effectively the topological links of the central elements, making them not only unitarily distinguishable but in the context of urban space as well.

Conclusions

Projection techniques, disseminating and normalizing through the time opted for technical formalities that go beyond formal and informal representations, being these diagrams, maps, or other perspectives. However, the character of graphic synthesis's massification of convention graphic resources pursuing monosemantic does not really differ in function to recreate a constructed reality, which can not be seen in its whole. Wyngaerde made several preliminary drawings of Barcelona, experiencing plans and views from sea and land—moving forward to expressive resources and leaving behind the representational ones, as a mixture of undefined axonometric cavalier projections with some banishing plans-. The first views were unable to summarize the city (despite its size); finally, he opted for a view from the *Montjuic* that becomes iconic -and it is useful for many subsequence works from other authors who require representing Barcelona-. The observation of the authors led them to this high place from where the settlement can be controlled visually, carrying out the challenge of creating a single image to represent the entire city. It is quite possible that Wyngaerde meets with the prior Vermeyen's drawing and just as contemporary traveller he was seduced by that view and wanted to replicate it with his pen to have his own version. It is the same informal technique—powerfully expressive— that is observed in most reproductions of various authors in the engravings of C.O.T.; where several chorographic views resemble thematic maps rather than perspectives.

These actions reflect a desire to move towards a re-reading and re-significance of historical graphic records of the city to be integrated, for example, diversity and specification of a type of tourism that not

only recognizes separate elements as monuments, but places as well, together with contexts and connections between themselves, such as that streets network, spaces and squares that foster encounter and failed meetings and that are an important part of that rescued image that each visitor can carry in their mind and their camera.

The route to the final drawing marks an exploration pattern that is not only physical but also conceptual in the selection of graphic resources where the city finally appears as a background, a scenery and a scenography for life that debates between rural and urban clearly identified by the walls and in the density behind the wall, identity through reference buildings and their visual and spatial connections arises.

Beyond the Civitates Orbis Terrarum

During the Italian *Settecento*, the rise of the pictorial representation of the urban landscape puts *vedutismo* especially and the city of Venice in sight -especially through the catalogue of 14 engravings in the *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetiarum* (1735)-. A feature of these pictorial expressions is that they possess a high level of technical precision, so high that even being artistic perspectives, are almost cartographic records to be in a direct relation between these views and the metric plane (between *ichnografia* and scenery in Vitruvian terms). At that time, these views were well known to be consumed by travellers as a souvenir of the visit, constituting the ancestor of the modern postcard. Already located in this analogy, *vedute* reproduced views with the most typical places of Venice, including monuments, thus reinforcing the positioning of these spaces, views, and buildings as the representatives of the place, constituting also the ancestor of the modern destination image.

Two centuries later literature *Townscape* was a phenomenon especially in England of the mid-twentieth century, it began with the *Town Desing* Frederick Gidberd in 1953 and then the famous townscape by Gordon Cullen in 1961. Cullen defined, according to Camilo Sitte, planning as the "art of relationships", focusing their analysis on historical components in the serial vision, awareness of the human scale and what Cullen called "content" that considers the perception of space (Kostof, 1991). Cullen above all was an artist, and analysis techniques of urban space are based on a drawing that transcends times, even on his writings.

Today, the graphic images of urban tourism positions using resources in urban space show to attract visitors based on a series of nodes comprised of resources, attractions, products and services based mainly on a mainly planimetric image of the city destinations - tourist Map -. The aim of future studies reveal ought to be in the timeless logic of graphics resources, the way we see, think and represent the city as a whole when this city was not due to its modern layout, but its spaces, limits and symbolic constructions; the timeless content of these graphics resources as a graphic synthesis from historical and current publications, discovering to what degree these relationships are discarded in setting standards graphical representation -today accepted without protests-, reinterpreted through new media representation of public space following the entry of digital media. Thus, the study of historical chorographic representations as those of C.O.T. and its associated images regain a new sense as part of a development of an urban tourist imaginary.

We must then consider a complementary and parallel visual development to the functional, especially when a graphic material for the special interest tourism is developed, one that considers variables exploring the view of the possibilities to observe and at the same time understand, imagine and to enjoy the urban spectacle.

Today the tourist image has a symbolic weight associated with the consumption of it over the material object; we consume images associated with experiences and share them with others as trophies. Here the importance of the media and information and communications technology.

In this context, increasingly has more sense to revisit those graphic expressions of the places that have changed or remained from the preindustrial context not only physically but also ideologically in order to understand what makes up the rescued and represented image of the city, also the ones that have been,

are, and could be their diffusion broadcast media.

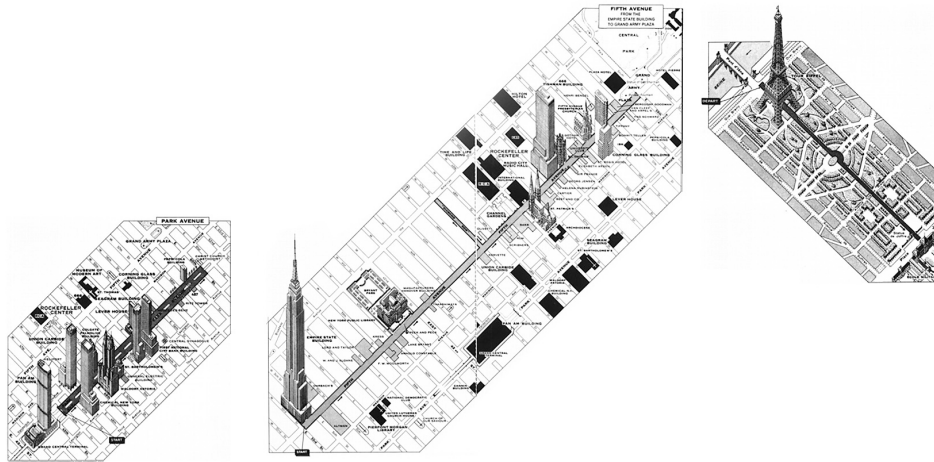


Figure 9. Graphics resources of contemporary tourism. Between maps and axonometric perspectives.

Source: (Wurman, 1971)

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Notes

(1) See Millán Gómez, A., Lazo Mella, F., & Lopez Moreno, D. (2012). Organic and Inorganic Overlapping in Old Barcelona. For more information on the topological analysis method, refers to the theory of Space Syntax.

About the author

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