

Discovering Rome through Joan Blaeu's *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*:
The creation of the town atlas of Rome (Amsterdam, 1663) in the light of
Italian-Dutch relationships in the seventeenth century



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Various primary and secondary sources have been consulted during the research for this thesis, including a number of editions of the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* available in collections in the Netherlands and in Rome. A scholarship granted by the *Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut Rome* (KNIR) for the period 3 – 30 June 2014 enabled me to study the later Mortier and Alberts editions currently preserved in the libraries of the Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut Rome and the British School in Rome; relevant secondary material has also been consulted in these libraries and in the Biblioteca Angelica.



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Introduction

The Blaeu publishing house in Amsterdam is remembered today mainly for its multi-volume world atlas, the *Atlas major*. This atlas was published in the 1660s by Joan Blaeu, son of the firm's founder Willem Jansz. Blaeu. Not so commonly known, however, is the fact that Joan Blaeu in that same period started planning the creation of a second mega atlas, dedicated to the cities and monuments of Italy: the *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiæ*. This project had its origin in Joan's own love for Italy, where he had travelled a lot and met important business relations and friends,¹ combined with a more general interest in the country arising in seventeenth-century society. Relevant factors in this respect are the humanist tradition of intense study and collecting of antiquities and the popularity of the Grand Tour, which usually had Italy as its main destination. In the 1660s, when Joan's ideas of creating the atlas of Italian cities started taking firm shape,² he decided to send his son Pieter to Italy to renew relevant contacts.

Originally, Joan Blaeu intended publishing two parts, each containing five separately bound volumes. The first part, *Civitates Italiæ*, would treat the cities of Italy, while the second, *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*, would describe the monuments of Rome. Not entirely according to plan, though, Joan succeeded in publishing only three volumes in 1663. One was dedicated to the cities of the Ecclesiastical State, the second – remaining incomplete – treated the cities of Naples and Sicily. Together these volumes form part one, while the second part, *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*, consists of just one volume on the circuses, theatres and obelisks of ancient Rome. In this thesis a closer look will be taken at the creation and appearance of this last part of the Italy atlas. The *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* provides a unique perspective on what were considered the most remarkable highlights of the Eternal City. Places and monuments regarded worthy of consideration in the work show a striking stability if they are compared to the interests of modern travellers and scholars, despite the one-sided nature of the presented selection to which, of course, many additions could be made. One can only imagine the marvel that would have filled the happy few able to physically visit Rome as well as those lacking that opportunity, as they discovered the city leafing through the atlas after it had just left the Blaeu presses. The same sentiments are experienced today by modern scholars admiring the town atlas as a masterpiece of seventeenth-century publishing.

In order to do justice to the extraordinary nature of the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* the central topic that will be addressed in this thesis is the history underlying the creation and appearance of

¹ H. de la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu, schepen, en zijn zonen', in *idem*, *In en om de "Vergulde Sonneweyser"*, *Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III (Amsterdam: Nico Israel, 1979), p. 165.

² Cfr. De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu, schepen, en zijn zonen', in *idem*, *In en om de "Vergulde Sonneweyser"*, *Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, p. 173.

the town atlas in the light of the relations between the Netherlands and Italy in the second half of the seventeenth century. The first part of the thesis will therefore discuss the social-historical context related to the appearance of the work, concentrating mainly on elements relevant for the interest in Italy during the second half of the seventeenth century. The earlier mentioned humanistic tradition, the collecting of antiquities and the Grand Tour will be treated, as well as the flourishing of Dutch publishing in this period. The emergence of the Blaeu publishing house in Amsterdam will receive much attention, particularly in relation to the specific background of its ambitious *Atlas major* project. After this, the focus will shift towards the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*. Its goal, contents and readership will be closely investigated, as well as the relationships with sponsors and the collaboration between the Blaeu firm and their Italian contacts. After a description of the characteristics of the original Blaeu version, the final part of the thesis will look at later editions by other publishers.

Chapter 1. The Charm of Italy: the Country's Attraction for Travellers, Artists and Scholars in the Seventeenth Century

The extraordinary appeal of Italy as both a travel destination and object of study in the seventeenth century is a key factor in understanding the creation of Joan Blaeu's atlases of Italian cities. Scholars, artists and travellers found themselves enchanted by the country's unique mix of ancient remains and modern fashions, refinement and roughness,³ a passion no doubt shared by Joan Blaeu himself.⁴ The publisher had spent many years in Italy as a young man and made many friends there.⁵ The potential market Blaeu hoped to reach with his town atlases was a substantial one, influenced by the intellectual tradition of Humanism that in turn stimulated trends like the collecting of antiquities and the Grand Tour. These important aspects will therefore be further investigated in this chapter, focusing on what they meant for the popularity of Italy in general and the appeal of Rome in particular.

Humanism: Intellectual Background and Ideals

Though the term Humanism nowadays is freely applied to a variety of beliefs, methods and philosophies placing central emphasis on the human realm, it was officially coined to refer to a system of education and a mode of enquiry developed in northern Italy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁶ Spreading to continental Europe and England, the programme was so influential that it has later been considered one of the main reasons why the Renaissance came to be viewed as a distinct historical period;⁷ the fundamental idea of that period as one of renewal and reawakening is humanistic in origin. Humanism in a stricter sense, however, sought its own philosophical bases in far earlier, classical times and continued to exert power long after the end of the Renaissance. It is in that broader perspective that seventeenth century Humanism and its influences on society should be interpreted.

At the centre of what thus became known as Humanism lies the emphasis on classical studies in education. Through a carefully established programme, the *studia humanitatis*, originally consisting of grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history and moral philosophy, the Humanists'

³ C. Hornsby, *The Impact of Italy: The Grand Tour and Beyond* (London: The British School at Rome, 2000), p. 5.

⁴ Cfr. De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu, schepen, en zijn zonen', in *idem, In en om de "Vergulde Sonneweyser"*, *Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, p. 173.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 165.

⁶ See the lemma on 'Humanism' in the Encyclopædia Britannica:
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/275932/humanism>> (20 January 2014).

⁷ Cfr. P. Findlen, 'Possessing the Past: The Material World of the Italian Renaissance', *The American Historical Review*, 103 (1998), pp. 83-85.

intellectual ideal was the development of human virtue in all its forms and to its fullest extent.⁸ This not only implied qualities associated with the modern word humanity – understanding, benevolence, compassion, mercy – but also much more aggressive characteristics such as fortitude, judgment, prudence, eloquence and love of honour. As a consequence, those pursuing the ideals of Humanism could not content themselves living sedentary and isolated lives as philosophers or men of letters; they necessarily took an active part in life. Insight without action was rejected as unfruitful and imperfect, just as action without insight was considered aimless and barbaric. A fine balance of action and contemplation therefore had to be maintained, in order to ultimately serve not only one's individual well-being but that of society as a whole. The scope of humanistic ideals as they were followed in the Renaissance and during later periods included the education of the young, but also the guidance of adults via philosophical literature and strategic rhetoric.

Much of Humanism's basic structure and method were provided from the Renaissance onwards by the flood of rediscovered or newly edited manuscripts through which classical literature, Greek and Roman thought became increasingly available. For Humanists there was nothing dated or outworn about the writings of Plato, Cicero or Livy. In the same sense, ancient remains, unveiled through excavations that took place throughout the Mediterranean, were valued enormously.⁹ In this context, Italy's cultural and intellectual prestige results clearly from its location so central in any exploration of the classical past; the country therefore quite obviously had a lot to offer those attempting to pursue humanist ideals.¹⁰ The concrete ways in which individuals gave shape to their attempts of developing human virtue pretty often seem to have had some sort of connection with Italy's glorified past.¹¹ Whether through close study of textual sources or actually visiting ancient sites, the road to individual elevation in many cases led people to Italy and the capital of the Papal State. Some of the possible routes on this journey will be studied in more detail in the following parts of this chapter. At this point, though, it can already be concluded that there was a growing group of people eager to discover Italy and its still tangible remains of Antiquity at the time in which Joan Blaeu published his *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae* series.

⁸ <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/275932/humanism>> (20 January 2014).

⁹ Cfr. 'From the fourteenth century onward, Italian humanists saw the past as an embodied presence. Material knowledge, in the form of ancient literary artefacts, coins, [...] and Greek, Roman and Etruscan ruins, shaped the idea of culture.' Findlen, 'Possessing the Past', p. 95.

¹⁰ See 'Art, Taste and Virtue', in Hornsby, *The Impact of Italy*, pp. 3-4.

¹¹ G. Holmes, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 114.

Elevation through Travel: The Grand Tour

The most concrete way to obtain personal virtue in the true humanist sense during the seventeenth century meant that individuals, most often when they were still young, were sent abroad to visit places that were considered beneficial to their development. Travel of this kind was regarded an essential part of the education of aristocrats and patricians: their stay in foreign places, where they were supposed to gain both knowledge and experience, was intended to prepare them for functions in military, diplomatic or royal service, or simply to turn them into 'good noblemen.'¹² This social practice soon came to be known as the 'Grand Tour'. The use of that term dates back to at least 1605, when a young Englishman, Francis Windebank, future Secretary of State, wrote to his father about '*un si grand tour*' he had just finished through France.¹³ English tourists later brought use of the term with them across the Canal, after it had been incorporated in its original French form into the English language. The notion then came to refer to a tour of the entire continent. The idea of completing a Grand Tour as a means of educating the young and privileged soon found its way into the Dutch Republic. Johannes Thijs, for instance, wrote in 1647 that he had just finished '*le grand tour de France*'.¹⁴ In the same period, Johan de Witt mentioned in his notebook the preparations for a '*grooten tour*'.¹⁵

Among the sites listed on the carefully planned itineraries of the Grand Tourists Italy and Rome soon became the most desirable destinations.¹⁶ Aernout van Buchel¹⁷ has, with his *Iter Italicum*¹⁸ written between October 1587 and April 1588, left us the earliest Dutch document to the history of the Grand Tour through Italy, also known as the *Gyro*. At the age of 22, he travelled from Northern Italy to the South and back, meanwhile taking notes as an archaeologist and historian, but also, and quite unmistakably, as a tourist. Most striking in his writings is a clear interest in people and monuments – old and new – and in contemporary uses and events

¹² In addition to these more practical aspects, the power of travel to 'mentally refine' is explained as follows by Hornsby in *The Impact of Italy*, pp. 3-4: 'The Grand Tour being the most significant means of expressing the need to change, to learn and to 'be influenced,'[...] the art which we profess has beauty for its object, conducting the thoughts through successive stages of excellence, till that contemplation of universal rectitude and harmony which began by Taste may, as it is exalted and refined, conclude in Virtue. That is to say – Art can transform Taste into Virtue. [...] the Grand Tour was a recognized shortcut to this elevation.'

¹³ A. Frank-van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour. Tekening van de educatiereis der Nederlanders in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1983), p. 2.

¹⁴ Frank-van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁵ This particular translation had been used earlier by Maria van Reigersberch in 1624 in a way suggesting that '*den toer doen*' had, by that time, found its way into the Dutch language. However, while the use of 'Grand Tour' has remained common in English, its Dutch equivalent nowadays seems forgotten by most speakers of that language. See Frank-van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 19.

¹⁷ On Aernout van Buchel and his stay in Rome, see: <<http://hadrianus.it/people/aernout-van-buchel>> (28 February 2014).

¹⁸ A. Buchellius, '*Iter Italicum*', *Estratto dall'Archivio della R. Societa' Romana di storia patria* (1901), pp. 13-14.

witnessed while travelling. The routes and sites that would become distinctive features of the Grand Tour are already clearly delineated in Van Buchel's itinerary. In 1587 he left Germany and reached Italy via the Brenner. He spent one week in Padua and only a day in Venice, nevertheless filling many pages with all remarkable things he noticed in that city. He then sailed to Ravenna and after passing through Rimini, Pesaro and Fano he finally arrived in Rome. He stayed there for three months, crossing it in all directions. In the early spring of 1588 he partook in an archaeological excursion to Naples and while travelling back North, he paid visits to places like Siena, Florence, Bologna and Ferrara.¹⁹

Young tourists preparing their travels often received all kinds of advice, ranging from unasked comments by parents and other family members to personal recommendations by fellow travellers, some more renowned than others. A case that clearly belongs to the latter category is that of Philippe de Lannoy, who explicitly asked his Leiden professor and famous scholar Justus Lipsius²⁰ for advice regarding his journey to Italy. Philippe's request probably was inspired by the fact that Lipsius himself had spent quite some time in Italy, particularly in Rome where he had worked as a secretary to cardinal Granvelle from 1568 to 1570.²¹ In response to Philippe's request, Lipsius sent him an extensive list of Italian sites worth a visit, each of them diligently commented. According to Lipsius, anyone who arrived in Italy first had to go to Rome. A stay in the Eternal City should, however, not take more time than strictly necessary to see its many antiquities, for in Rome 'the air is unhealthy and morals are perverse.'²² The noble city of Naples was another destination appreciated by Lipsius for its cultural richness, but in the end Tuscany was deemed most worthy of a longer stay. In this region, Lipsius claims, 'the air is clean, the language pure and morals are immaculate.'²³ Florence, or most preferably Siena, are most appropriate places to find accommodation. On the way back home, Lipsius recommended a visit to the university cities of Bologna and Padua, as well as a stay of a few weeks in Venice and a trip to Milan to conclude the tour.

Recommendations of this kind could, of course, have been provided by any expert on Italy. Lipsius therefore considered a discussion of the general principle, method and goal of travelling the most essential part of his advice to Philippe. First and foremost, the scholar stressed, a trip that is to have any educational effect should not be undertaken for the sole purpose of amusing oneself. Philippe had to realise that his tour had a threefold objective: enrichment of insight, knowledge and character. Furthermore, Lipsius advised him to stay away from 'harmful

¹⁹ Frank-van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour*, pp. 19-20.

²⁰ On Lipsius and his stay in Rome, see: <<http://hadrianus.it/people/justus-lipsius>> (28 February 2014).

²¹ Frank-van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour*, p. 42.

²² Paraphrased from J. Lipsius, *Epistola de peregrinatione Italica* (Leiden: Franciscus Hegerus, 1633) in Frank-van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour*, p. 42.

²³ Lipsius, *Epistola de peregrinatione Italica* paraphrased in Frank-van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour*, p. 42.

company,' and to be careful not to adopt certain 'national vices' and 'excesses in clothing and performance.'²⁴

Upon reaching Rome, the expectations of Grand Tourists had often reached such heights that the city itself in many cases proved disappointing. Criticisms of its ostentatiousness, godlessness and general decline fill many travel accounts, including that of the earlier mentioned Van Buchel.²⁵ He would, however, come to regret that during the rest of his life he never had the possibility to go to Italy again. Despite his later disappointment, when Van Buchel had just entered the Eternal City through its Porta Prima, the significance of this long awaited moment was not lost on him.²⁶ When confronted with the hard decision of how to start their exploration of Rome, many travellers opted for the places that were totally alien to them, coming from the North: the antique remains, of which they had only seen a few on their travels so far.²⁷ While it is hard to provide a representative outline of what places would be visited by the average tourist, the circuses, obelisks and theatres treated by Blaeu in his *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* would probably have featured prominently on any must-see list.²⁸

Amongst all travellers attracted to Italy in search of some sort of personal refinement, artists clearly stand out. To them, Italy represented more than the possibility to educate themselves, or even to see that education confirmed.²⁹ Instead, what they hoped to find were infinite sources of artistic inspiration. Even if such a distinction between artists on the one hand, and those perceiving travel as, above all, an intellectual endeavour, is probably too modern a separation, differences in their responses are nevertheless visible.³⁰ Dutch and Flemish artists trying to make a living in Rome around 1620 formed a group large enough to unite themselves: they founded a society in solidarity against the Italians and formal organisations, but above all to oppose the fees demanded by the *Accademia di San Luca*. The *Bentvueghels*, or 'birds of a feather,' as they were called, existed until circa 1720.³¹ During this period, the group had at least 480 members, most of whom were painters, draughtsmen or engravers, although a few sculptors,

²⁴ *Ibidem*, paraphrased in Frank-van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour*, p. 42.

²⁵ Frank-van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour*, p. 177.

²⁶ He is said to have exclaimed 'Oh! Oculi beati' in praise of his 'blessed eyes' that were finally to witness the wonders of Rome. Frank-van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour*, p. 280.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ The Royal Dutch Institute in Rome (*Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut in Rome*; KNIR) has recently launched a digitised map of Rome in which the itineraries of individual travellers from the Low Countries can be traced. Access to the map via <<http://hadrianus.it/>>, for information on the project see: <<http://hadrianus.it/about>> (28 February 2014).

²⁹ 'There were those simply in search of a confirmation of their education: the élite, the would-be-connoisseurs and gentlemen of taste.' Hornsby, *The Impact of Italy*, p. 3.

³⁰ 'Artists tended to be more hyperbolic, but they were dealing with nature and at the same time trying to live by their work. [...] The more educated classes had the leisure to travel freely and to collect antiquities, but did not always have the depth of understanding to raise their 'studies' above the level of "been there, done that".' Hornsby, *The Impact of Italy*, p. 7.

³¹ See: <<http://hadrianus.it/groups/bentvueghels>> (1 March 2014).

goldsmiths and poets also became members. The meetings of the *Bentvueghels* were interspersed with meals, drinking bouts and initiation ceremonies. An infamous ritual of the society was the inauguration of a new member. The initiate would be presented to a fake priest and given a nickname referring to his personality. Many meetings concluded at dawn with a pilgrimage to the Tomb of Bacchus in the church of Santa Costanza.³²

Several social layers can thus be distinguished amongst visitors from the Low Countries coming to Italy in the seventeenth century, though the fact that they were able to travel at all already set them apart from those staying at home. Even if a considerable group of armchair travellers that discovered Rome only through works like Blaeu's town atlas might still have had their share in the process of elevation through study of the classical past, the possibility to travel certainly created its own sort of élite in the age of the Grand Tour.³³

Acquiring Virtue through Possession: Antiquity Collections

If admiring surviving remains of the classical past was one way of pursuing humanist ideals, setting up and carefully maintaining collections of Roman antiquities was another possibility towards that same end.³⁴ Collecting as an activity suitable to the educated élite has a particularly long and distinguished pedigree.³⁵ Historians have argued that the particular trend of collecting antiquities, related to the increasing valorisation of material objects as representations of the past and the desire to possess them, had the Italian peninsula as its birthplace. Cultural investment, in this view, is considered an important part of Renaissance spending patterns, and a product of the continued wealth of Italian élites. Italians had enjoyed a more dynamic relationship to the world of trade at an earlier stage than did their counterparts in other regions of Europe, caused by the greater density of economic and social relations that produced a regular flow of goods and services into their households.³⁶ Exactly when the Renaissance thirst for goods had started or

³² This church was built during the first part of the fourth century by the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great. The building first served as mausoleum to Constantine's daughters, Constantina and Helena. Constantina later became regarded as a saint and received the Italian name Costanza, after which the church was officially dedicated to her. The *Bentvueghels* had probably been inspired by the church's mosaics, on which grapes, fruit, birds and mythological figures appear, in their interpretation of the Santa Costanza as dedicated to Bacchus, the God of Wine.

³³ Cfr. 'The famous declaration [...] 'TO THE HAPPY FEW,' adds to the elitism first suggested, the benediction of happiness as the result of being somehow 'chosen' to visit Italy.' Hornsby, *The Impact of Italy*, p. 1.

³⁴ 'New intellectual and cultural agendas also reinforced the emphasis on the variety and quality of artefacts. The historical and aesthetic consciousness and antiquarian impulses we associate with Humanism served to focus scholars' interest on tangible products of the past, viewed in the mirror of the present.' Findlen, 'Possessing the Past', p. 87.

³⁵ Hornsby, *The Impact of Italy*, p. 8.

³⁶ See Goldthwaite paraphrased in Findlen, 'Possessing the Past', p. 89; cfr. L. Syson and D. Thornton, *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy* (London: the British Museum Press, 2001), pp. 12-36; A. Ajmar-Wollheim and F. Dennis (eds.), *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London: V&A Publications, 2006), pp. 268-271; 279-281.

precisely what it entailed is difficult to determine; what nevertheless can be observed is that the deliberate cultivation of cultural goods emerged gradually and inconsistently between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.³⁷ By the seventeenth century such attitudes had, despite the Reformation and its emphasis on moderation that effected culture in large parts of Europe, not ended but rather accelerated and managed to spread over the rest of Europe. The reduplicating of Antiquity by way of collecting had, by that time, come to be associated with the programme of cultural education of the oligarchy. European monarchs and nobles considered the acquisition of objects from a glorious and distant past an important way of increasing their family's social status.³⁸ For many of these aristocrats and patricians, culture was a tangible thing instead of a concept: its rich and concrete materiality was more important than its ephemeral qualities.³⁹ The collective desire to assemble the past provided a more public role for antiquarians and historians, often working in close collaboration with wealthier patrons. The tasks facing them were never simple as they found themselves torn between wonder at the astonishing amounts of Roman remains, and despair at their diminishing quantity and quality. Antiquity, so recently rediscovered, paradoxically seemed more in danger of extinction now that its value was being recognised than when it had been neglected.⁴⁰ In this sense, the classical past is at the same time considered a novelty, something new in that it is just being unveiled, and something very venerable because of its immense age.⁴¹ Italy was clearly of great relevance here, since its soils held such an immense potential of antique treasures awaiting closer examination. Its antique remains represented, so it seems, something fresh and unique in the seventeenth century, almost an open invitation to curious scholars and others with an interest in the classical past.⁴² The elaborate and spectacular collections that had been developed in Renaissance Rome were, in this respect, a feature of the city that observers recognised as distinctive, characteristic and worthy of their attention.⁴³

This peculiar situation adding to Rome's prestigious status, can be explained in various ways. Beginning around 1450, the habit of collecting antiquities at Rome witnessed an explosive growth. Important factors in this context were the incredible volume and wealth of ancient material that turned up while the city was remade in the period, the aesthetic and scholarly

³⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 90-91.

³⁸ Hornsby, *The Impact of Italy*, p. 8.

³⁹ Findlen, 'Possessing the Past', p. 90.

⁴⁰ One of the dangers facing antique remains was theft: 'The merchant Giovanni Ciampolini, who enjoyed Lorenzo de' Medici as a client, rose to fame when tales of his nocturnal thefts of ancient sculptures [...] circulated between Rome and Florence.' Findlen, 'Possessing the Past', p. 101.

⁴¹ Hornsby, *The Impact of Italy*, p. 16.

⁴² 'The history, antiquities and arts of Italy were a soil unexhausted by natives – unoccupied by foreigners.' Hornsby, *The Impact of Italy*, p. 14.

⁴³ W. Stenham, 'The Visitors, Display, and Reception in the Antiquity Collections of Late-Renaissance Rome', 58 (2005), p. 398.

interest stimulated by this material, and the consequent investment opportunity that a collection of antiquities represented.⁴⁴ Prominently displayed antiquities, recalling Rome's ancient grandeur and stressing its contemporary splendour, became the characteristic demonstration of magnificence for Roman aristocrats. It provided them with a way of asserting their position in a rapidly growing city:⁴⁵ collecting antiquities and creating structures to hold them were strategies of establishing roots in an unstable environment. The collections at Rome of course added to the city's appeal as a travel destination, while at the same time serving as an influential example to Europe's monarchs and nobles.

The trends of both travel and collecting as means towards a close examination of the classical past thus meant that Italy and Rome enjoyed great social interest in the seventeenth century. In this light, Blaeu's decision to dedicate a series of town atlases to the peninsula and the former *Caput Mundi* clearly reveals, apart from the more personal ties between the publishing house and Italy, its commercial significance.

⁴⁴ Stenham, 'The Visitors, Display, and Reception in the Antiquity Collections of Late-Renaissance Rome', p. 398.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

Chapter 2. Mapping the World and Beyond: The Blaeu Publishing House and Its Atlases

The various generations of Blaeu publishers have left a considerable impression in the history of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century, the Dutch Golden Age. Their fame was based in large part on the maps, atlases and related maritime books they published to serve the needs of a readership in Amsterdam, other European cities and even in more distant corners of the world that were reached by the Dutch East India Company. This chapter will therefore start with a brief investigation of the relevant socio-economic context. The first part is meant to serve as a historical background, after which the emergence of the Blaeu publishing house will be treated by taking into account both the successes and hardships encountered by the first two generations leading the firm. In the final part of this chapter, the ambitious Grand Atlas Project, including the specific position of the town atlases in that venture, will be discussed in more detail.

Publishing in the Dutch Golden Age

The seventeenth century was a period of great prosperity for the book trade in the Netherlands. At the time, the Dutch were renowned throughout Europe not only as excellent transporters, but also as very able book traders, publishers and printers.⁴⁶ The Dutch had conquered a dominant share in the international book business after Antwerp had lost its position as metropolis of trade to Amsterdam. The flourishing of printing in the northern part of the Low Countries from the end of the sixteenth century until the end of the seventeenth was a truly spectacular development, especially considering the fact that the Dutch Revolt almost completely halted any progress in this field.⁴⁷ The fast rise and great success of printing can, however, be explained by a discussion of various aspects related to the social and economic situation of the Netherlands at the time.

First and foremost, the craft and entrepreneurship of Dutch book traders could be exploited freely in the Netherlands because of the relative freedom and tolerance that characterised commercial enterprises like that of publishing and printing. This situation was unique in Europe, where severe censorship and religious persecution were common practices in many regions. The organisation of printers and booksellers' guilds was, moreover, structured loosely, allowing its members a great deal of commercial freedom. Regulations, if present at all, were applied in a liberal way, enabling individual traders to operate in an independent manner.

⁴⁶ De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Willem Jansz Blaeu, "Mercator Sapiens"', in *idem*, *In en om de 'Vergulde Sonneweyser'*, *Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, p. 9.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

All of this had, however, a serious flipside: there were virtually no obstacles standing in the way of illegal reprints, a situation perverted by many looking for easy ways of personal gain.⁴⁸

In this advantageous climate, three powerful movements further stimulated the renaissance of the book trade in the Netherlands: the Reformation, Humanism and scientific developments in navigation. The Reformation is a relevant factor here in the sense that during the Revolt against Spain Protestantism gained much influence and in its wake Protestant printers started producing Bibles at an ever increasing rate. An example of the importance of Humanism is the short stay of Christopher Plantin, the greatest printer in the Low Countries during the sixteenth-century, as academic printer in Leiden, where he laid the foundations of the tradition of scientific publishing in the Dutch Republic. This tradition would later be continued by Plantin's successors, the Raphelengii, the Elzeviers and others. Finally, navigation was a force to be reckoned with: after the emergence of Amsterdam as a globally important harbour, the city became a centre for the publishing of maps, atlases and manuals for merchants, ship owners and skippers.⁴⁹

Other relevant factors adding to the tremendous progress in the Netherlands and the city of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century were international developments in politics and trade. The Eighty Years' War, or Dutch Revolt, against the rule of the Roman Catholic kings of Spain eventually ended with the formal recognition of the Dutch Republic at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. In that same period the trade with Asia and the Americas brought further prosperity to Amsterdam, resulting in an unprecedented flourishing of arts and sciences. These material and cultural successes were reflected in the greatest publishing project of the Blaeu firm, the *Atlas major* or Grand Atlas, and also in the countless other books, maps and globes produced by the firm.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ C. Koeman, *Joan Blaeu and his Grand Atlas* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1970), p. 8.

Foundation of the Blaeu Publishing House

Willem Jansz(oon) Blaeu (1571-1638), founder of the Blaeu firm, was born in Alkmaar. He was destined to become a herring merchant like his father and grandfather⁵¹ had been before him. When he was still very young, he was sent to Amsterdam to work for a few years at the office of Cornelis Pietersz. Hooft, the husband of his cousin Anna and a well-known burgomaster, in order to learn the herring trade. Willem Jansz. did not like this work very much, however, as he preferred studying mathematics and later spent some time as an apprentice to the famous Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546-1601).⁵²

Brahe demanded a high standard of his pupils, who were either invited personally by him or selected on the basis of special recommendations. The fact that Willem was considered worthy of a stay at Brahe's estate of Uraniborg on the island of Hven in the Sound between Denmark and Sweden, means that he had reached a high level of education and technical skill.⁵³ Although there is no agreement on the duration of Willem's stay at Brahe's observatory, an authentic record written by Tycho Brahe himself in his meteorological diary on 27 May, 1596 states that 'William the Dutchman returned to his home in Holland after spending the entire winter [t]here.'⁵⁴ It therefore appears that he was on the island from the end of 1595 until 27 May, 1596.

After his return to Holland, Willem Jansz. first settled in Alkmaar where he married, probably in 1597, the daughter of Cornelis van Uitgeest, Marretie or Maertgen.⁵⁵ Shortly after, their first son Joan was born. Around 1599, the family moved to Amsterdam. Here they lived first on the Korte Nieuwendijk and later on the Lastage 'aan de Waelkant,' where Willem started trading in globes, seaman's instruments and maps.⁵⁶ In 1605 he moved to the west side of the



Fig. 1. Portrait W. Jansz. Blaeu
from *De Blaeu's*, exhibition catalogue
Amsterdams Historisch Museum, 1952.

⁵¹ The latter, Willem Jacobsz., was known as *blauwe Willem*, or 'blue William' because of this profession. De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Willem Jansz. Blaeu, "Mercator Sapiens"', in *idem, In en om de "Vergulde Sonneweyser"*, *Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, p. 10.

⁵² '[...] in a letter, dated 29 November 1616, Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft wrote to Hugo de Groot (Hugo Grotius): "He (Blaeu) is the son of my mother's uncle, and has served my father a few years with a view to becoming a merchant. *Mercurio invito*. He was more inclined to mathematics and spent a certain time with Tycho Brahe and finally by way of geography, and dealing in maps and globes, came into the book-trade". J. Keuning, *Willem Jansz. Blaeu: A biography and history of his work as a cartographer and publisher* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1973), pp. 1-2.

⁵³ Keuning, *Willem Jansz. Blaeu*, p. 5.

⁵⁴ 'Abijt domon in Hollandium Vilhelmus Batavius cum per integram hyemem hic fuisset.' *Ibidem*, p. 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁵⁶ In this period, Willem Jansz. quite soon became known as *Willem Globi* for specialising in globes.

street that is now known as the Damrak (originally 'Het Water'), where he opened a shop under the sign *In de Vergulde Sonnewijser* ('In the Gilt Sundial'). Many of Amsterdam's booksellers and map makers had establishments in this area at the time: next to Willem Jansz.'s shop, for instance, the house of Johannes Janssonius was located from number 16 onwards.⁵⁷ It was probably because of the name of this map and atlas publisher, who turned out to be a serious competitor, that Willem Jansz. around 1621 added the surname Blaeu⁵⁸ to his imprint in order to avoid confusion.⁵⁹ Blaeu seems to have had no printer's mark of his own before 1612, as the vignettes appearing on title-pages of the books he published were proper to the text itself, and did not refer to him as publisher. After 1612, however, he used a personal printer's mark, a pair of scales with a terrestrial globe on the right and a celestial globe, tilted downwards, on the left side, with the Latin *Præstat* (meaning 'it (sur)passes') written underneath. Little use was made of this early mark, however, and it hardly appeared at all after 1621.⁶⁰ Blaeu later adopted the device that would also be used by his successors: a globe flanked on the left by the figure of Time and on the right by Hercules, with the inscription *Indefessus agendo* (meaning 'tirelessly at work').⁶¹



Fig. 2. *Præstat* device
(Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1633).

In his establishment, Willem Blaeu employed the best typesetters, pressmen, engravers, scribes and illuminators. His types were clean and well cut, the paper he used was heavy and of good quality. Blaeu is also believed to have made the first substantial improvements to the moving parts of the printing press, by introducing the so-called 'Blaeu hose'.⁶² This small device added to the wooden press helped to spread pressure evenly, which in turn improved the quality of the printed material.⁶³ In 1637 the printing office was moved to a larger building on the Bloemgracht where the number of presses was increased to nine, named after the Muses, and a typefoundry

De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Willem Jansz. Blaeu, "Mercator Sapiens"', in *idem*, *In en om de "Vergulde Sonnewijser"*, *Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, p. 10.

⁵⁷ Keuning, *Willem Jansz. Blaeu*, p. 10.

⁵⁸ The old nickname of his grandfather probably served as inspiration here.

⁵⁹ Keuning, *Willem Jansz. Blaeu*, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*.

⁶² 'In 1683, Joseph Moxon summed up the situation in these words: "There are two sorts of presses in use, viz. the old fashion and the new fashion, the new fashion being Blaeu's press." *Ibidem*, p. 13.

⁶³ On the 'Blaeu hose' or *Blaeu-kraag*, see:

<<http://www.bibliopolis.nl/handboek/search/recordIdentifier/HBB%3A2.2.1/maximumRecords/1/termenkaart/Blaeu-kraag>> (8 April 2014).

was installed as well.⁶⁴ The printing house probably was one of the largest in Europe⁶⁵ and attracted many foreign visitors.⁶⁶ Other merits that can be ascribed to Willem Blaeu are related to the fields of astronomy, geography and navigation. He wrote, for instance, an important treatise on navigation himself, the 'the Light of Navigation' or *het Licht der Zeevaart*, of which various editions were published from 1608 onwards.⁶⁷ That his expertise was valued can be judged, apart from his apprenticeship at Tycho Brahe's observatory, from the fact that in 1636 he was asked to sit on a scientific committee to examine the new method of the astronomer Galileo Galilei.⁶⁸ That his contemporaries had great confidence in Blaeu's knowledge of geography and navigation is also shown by his appointment in 1633 by the Amsterdam Chamber of the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (V.O.C.; Dutch East India Company) as their official cartographer. The function carried great responsibilities: the company's cartographer was head of the hydrographic service, which meant all journals, charts and sketches made by the pilots, sailors and merchants were handed over to him so they could be used to improve the charts for voyages to and from South East Asia.⁶⁹ Before any change could be made, the directors of the Company had to give their permission. Another task of the cartographer was to see to it that all journals were handed in by the merchants, seamen and pilots once a ship arrived, and that none were stolen. The material would then be kept in the cartographer's house. He was obliged to keep all his activities for the company secret.⁷⁰ The vast area under the authority of the company was still imperfectly charted at the time and many shipwrecks were caused by a lack of knowledge. It therefore was of the greatest importance that the charts were improved. Though no charts from the period of Willem Blaeu's employment with the company have survived, it seems reasonable to believe that many, if not all, new charts were sent to him for further refinement, and that he therefore had access to the latest geographical information available at the time.⁷¹

Apart from publications on cartography, geography and the art of navigation, some of which were written by Willem Blaeu himself, he also published many works dealing with other

⁶⁴ 'One of the motivations behind this considerable investment was the foreseen continuation of the publishing firm by Willem's son, Joan.' C. Koeman, 'Life and works of Willem Janszoon Blaeu. New contributions to the study of Blaeu, made during the last hundred years', *Imago Mundi*, 26 (1972), p. 13.

⁶⁵ Koeman, *Joan Blaeu and his Grand Atlas*, p. 13.

⁶⁶ Contemporary observations on the printing house can be found, for instance, in travel accounts kept during Cosimo de' Medici's journey to the Netherlands; cfr. G. Hoogewerff, 'De twee reizen van Cosimo de' Medici, prins van Toscane, door de Nederlanden (1667-1669)', *Werken uitgegeven door het Historisch Genootschap*, 3:41 (1893-1972); H.Th. van Veen, 'Cosimo de' Medici's reis naar de Republiek in een nieuw perspectief', *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review*, 102:1 (1987), pp. 44-52.

⁶⁷ On 'the Light of Navigation', see Keuning, *Willem Jansz. Blaeu*, pp. 76-86.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 26-28.

⁷⁰ '[...] without revealing them to anyone outside the Company, or publishing or divulging anything directly or indirectly without informing the Company and obtaining written permission.' *Ibidem*, p. 27.

⁷¹ Cfr. *ibidem*, p. 26-27.

topics. He was tolerant in religious matters and did not agree with the repression of Roman Catholics;⁷² Willem Blaeu therefore saw no harm in producing many books by and for Catholics, as a rule under false imprints such as: 'Cologne: Cornelis van Egmond.' His legacy as a publisher, though, depends mainly on his excellent management of the firm, which enabled him to simultaneously print ground breaking geographical works, his famous pilot guides and major publications by the *crème-de-la-crème* of the Amsterdam literary scene.⁷³ Among them were, for instance, the works of his cousin, the poet Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, and of Roemer Visscher and Joost van den Vondel.⁷⁴ Blaeu also started a series in which classical authors were re-issued in small size, years before the Elzeviers in Leiden.⁷⁵ He became friends with the professors of the Amsterdam *Athenaeum Illustre*, Gerardus Johannes Vossius and Caspar Barleaus, and published most of their works, just as the writings of Hugo Grotius, who was admired deeply by Blaeu.⁷⁶ Quite obviously, mathematical subjects continued to attract his attention as well, because he himself was a good mathematician.⁷⁷

Several of Blaeu's publications were pirated, often without alteration, by competitors in the trade, particularly by his neighbour Johannes Janssonius. This phenomenon should be put in the right perspective, however, for Willem Blaeu did the same with works published by others; piracy was, at the time, regarded in quite a different light.⁷⁸ Typographically, however, Blaeu's work was of much greater quality than that of Janssonius,⁷⁹ and careful proof correction was very important to him; mistakes are therefore found only rarely in his works.⁸⁰ Willem Jansz. Blaeu's most important contribution to the history of publishing, his atlas project,⁸¹ however, had to be taken over by his heirs after his death in 1638.⁸² The gradual stages in the publication process of what can very well be regarded Willem Blaeu's life's work will receive particular attention in the concluding part of this chapter.

⁷² H. de la Fontaine Verwey, *In officina Ioannis Blaeu* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandse Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1961), p. 166; Koeman, *Joan Blaeu and his Grand Atlas*, p. 6.

⁷³ Koeman, 'Life and works of Willem Janszoon Blaeu', p. 14.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁵ Keuning, *Willem Jansz. Blaeu*, p. 28.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

⁷⁸ Cfr. Koeman, 'Life and works of Willem Janszoon Blaeu', p. 10.

⁷⁹ According to Keuning, however, 'compared to the Elzeviers, Blaeu's typography cannot be judged first rate.' Keuning, *Willem Jansz. Blaeu*, p. 30.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 29-30.

⁸¹ It is important, in this respect, to bear in mind that the idea of publishing a world atlas did not occur to him before ca. 1626; see Koeman, 'Life and works of Willem Janszoon Blaeu', p. 12.

⁸² H. de la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu and his Sons', *Quaerendo*, 11:1 (1981), p. 5.

The Second Generation Active in the Blaeu Firm

After Willem Jansz.'s death, his role in the publishing house was taken over by two of his four sons: the oldest, Joan (1598/99-1673), and his brother Cornelis (ca. 1610-1642). They had already been assisting their father for quite some time.⁸³ Both of them had, as was the case for all of Willem Blaeu's children, received a good education.⁸⁴ Joan was born in Alkmaar and had studied law and mathematics at the university of Leiden.⁸⁵ After his student days, he had travelled widely, especially in his beloved Italy. In 1634 Joan married Geertruida Vermeulen of Gouda, with whom he then moved to the *Vergulde Sonnewijser*. In 1651 Joan Blaeu was elected into the Town Council and became a member of the board of Aldermen of Amsterdam.⁸⁶ His brother Cornelis was born around 1610 and married Elisabeth van Hoorn in Rotterdam in 1639. The couple set up house

on the Bloemgracht, but unfortunately three months later Elisabeth died. She was followed only two years later by Cornelis, who was buried in the Westerkerk on 20 March 1642. This left Joan Blaeu sole head of the firm.⁸⁷ During the relatively short period before Cornelis' death in which he and Joan collaborated they were nevertheless able to publish at least two major works:⁸⁸ the first was the jubilee volume commemorating the official visit to Amsterdam of Maria de' Medici from 1 to 5 September 1638. The work, a richly illustrated folio volume entitled *Medicea hospes*, appeared in 1638 and had been produced at the city's expense. The second main publication of the Blaeu brothers was the first in a series of illustrated topographical works, *Flandria illustrata*. The contract for this work had been bought by Cornelis and Joan from Hendrik Hondius, head of the Hondius publishing firm, who had run into trouble. The work would later turn out so successful that a third volume was initiated; this would, however, never reach publication because of disagreements between the Blaeus and Flemish members of the Hondius family acting as intermediaries.⁸⁹

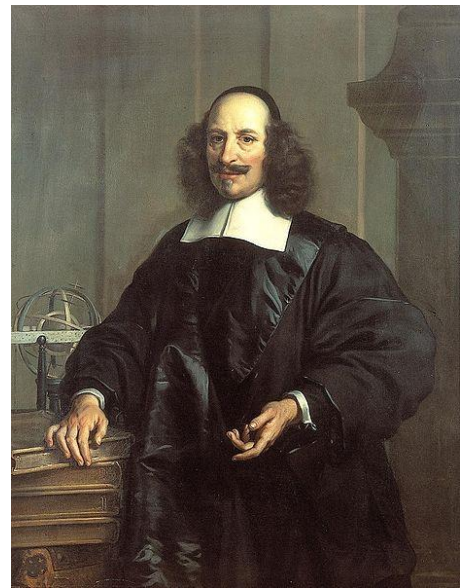


Fig. 3. Portrait J. Blaeu by
J. van Rossum (1654-1672),
Instituut Collectie Nederland.

⁸³ De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu and his Sons', p. 5.

⁸⁴ Keuning, *Willem Jansz. Blaeu*, p. 41.

⁸⁵ De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu and his Sons', p. 5.

⁸⁶ 'The first time such an honour had fallen to a printer in Amsterdam, and this represented a significant strengthening of the position of the book trade.' *Ibidem*.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 5-7.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 7-8.

After Cornelis' death, Joan, following in his father's footsteps, continued to produce many books by Catholic authors or otherwise aimed specifically at a Catholic audience. The splendid liturgical works printed by Willem and later by Joan Blaeu were very popular, even to the extent that they formed a realistic threat to the activities of the Moretus firm in Antwerp.⁹⁰ Joan Blaeu also followed his father's example in printing works by religious dissenters, particularly Remonstrants and Socinians, often without mentioning his name on the title-pages. From the beginning of the century, the activities of these religious groups had caused uneasiness in Calvinist circles, sentiments that only grew stronger when they, after 1638, set up their headquarters in the Netherlands.⁹¹ The second important contribution to the field of topography – after the *Flandria Illustrata* – produced by the Blaeu presses under Joan's management was a large publication on Brazil. Blaeu's friend Caspar Barlaeus had started writing a history of the Dutch settlement there in 1645. The resulting folio, entitled *Rerum per octennium in Brasilia*, was published in 1647 and contained 55 maps.⁹² Another major topographical work was the *Novum et magnum theatrum urbium Belgiae*, probably published in 1649. It consists of two volumes, one containing 110 maps and illustrations of the towns of the Northern Netherlands, while in the other this same number depicted the towns of the South. Inspiration for the work had probably been provided by Willem Blaeu's editions of Guicciardini's description of the Low Countries. At the end of the war with Spain, Joan Blaeu considered it was about time for a new book, describing the many changes that had taken place, to appear.⁹³

As will have already become clear by now, Joan Blaeu's foremost activities centred on the field of map making. He had succeeded his father as cartographer to the Dutch East India Company in 1638 and steadily continued to expand Willem Jansz.'s atlas. Together they had published a first edition in two volumes in 1634: the *Theatrum orbis terrarum*.⁹⁴ Between 1640 and 1655 this work was considerably extended when Joan published four different editions, now containing six volumes each. The third volume dealt with Italy, the fourth with England, the fifth with Scotland and the sixth with China. Following these developments, Joan Blaeu had become a figure of considerable standing in the international world of books by the middle of the century, comparable to famous earlier printers such as Aldus Manutius and Christopher Plantin.⁹⁵ Still, in this period something seems to have changed: even though the firm's foreign connections were continually growing, fewer works by Dutch authors were appearing and the press occasionally

⁹⁰ De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu and his Sons', p. 8.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*.

⁹² *Ibidem*, p. 10.

⁹³ According to De la Fontaine Verwey, '[...] the cities of the Northern Netherlands had grown considerably, especially Amsterdam, which had taken over Antwerp's role as the world's most important commercial town.' *Ibidem*, p. 11.

⁹⁴ De la Fontaine Verwey, *In officina Ioannis Blaeu*, p. 11.

⁹⁵ Cfr. De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu and his Sons', pp. 13-14.

started working for, or together with other publishers. In 1651, Joan Blaeu had for the first time printed several books in collaboration with Louis Elzevier, director of the *Officina Elseviriana* in Amsterdam, and in 1664 they founded a company to publish the *Corpus juris* in various formats. The number of new titles issued by Blaeu from this time onwards was relatively low and Joan's activities as a general scholarly publisher were taken over more and more by the Amsterdam Elzevier firm.⁹⁶

In 1662 Joan Blaeu saw himself forced to do the same his father had done in 1636: he informed the town council of Amsterdam that he wanted to give up bookselling in order to concentrate on printing and publishing. He therefore asked permission to hold a public sale of the contents of his bookshop.⁹⁷ This strategic decision seems to have had a positive outcome, for around 1667 the printing shop on the Bloemgracht could no longer keep up with the demand; Joan Blaeu subsequently set up a second printing office in the Gravenstraat. He wanted to inaugurate this new establishment by printing an important religious work, the fourth volume of the *Acta sanctorum*, a historical work on the lives of catholic saints. However, when during the night of 22-23 April 1672 the text for part of this work had been typeset, a fire broke out which completely destroyed the printing office. Besides the *Acta sanctorum*, part of the stock of paper, maps, copperplates and books was lost too, including the Spanish edition of the *Atlas major*.⁹⁸ On 10 September of the same year, another disaster occurred: Johan and his son Willem were removed from the Town Council of Amsterdam on the order of the reinstated stadtholder William III.⁹⁹ All this probably contributed to the decline of Joan's health; he died in December 1673. The old friend of the Blaeus, Joost van den Vondel, dedicated the following epitaph to Joan Blaeu and his ceaseless efforts towards completing his father's atlas:

Blaeu sleeps beneath this little stone's impressing,
His fame flings far and wide.
How then, could he have died?
The whole world was too small for his expressing.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

⁹⁸ According to De la Fontaine Verwey, 'The man in the street viewed the fire as a divine punishment for the printing of so many "Romish" books.' *Ibidem*, p. 18.

⁹⁹ Koeman, *Joan Blaeu and His Grand Atlas*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁰⁰ 'Hier sluimert Blaeu, gedrukt van dezen kleinen steen, / Al 't aertrijk door bekend, / Hoe quam hij aen zijn endt? / De gansche werrelt viel dien groten man te kleen.' Translated by De la Fontaine Verwey in 'Dr. Joan Blaeu and his Sons', p. 19.

The Grand Atlas Project

As was already mentioned above, the death of Willem Jansz. Blaeu in 1638 meant he had to leave the completion of his life's work, the atlas project, to the next generation of Blaeu publishers. In his last year, Willem had had to witness his rival Janssonius publish his *Novus atlas*, first in two and shortly afterwards in three volumes.¹⁰¹ Willem's son Joan dedicated a substantial part of his energies to the pursuing of his father's dream: by 1655 he had published various extended versions of the *Theatrum orbis terrarum*. As he grew older, Joan wanted to devote more and more of his time to completing the atlas; in retrospect, this probably was one of the main reasons behind his decision to give up bookselling in 1662.¹⁰² The atlas project was one of the most ambitious plans an early modern publisher had ever set himself. What it entailed becomes clear from the title: *Atlas major, or Grooten atlas*, which translated from the Dutch version reads: *Great atlas or description of the world, in which the earth, the sea and the heavens are portrayed and described*.¹⁰³ The great atlas was thus to contain all elements of geography: chorography, or description of the earth, topography, or description of places, hydrography, or description of the sea, and uranography, or description of the heavens.

As this immense task proved simply too large for any human being, only the first geographical section, the chorography, was completed. This resulted in the five existing versions of the *Atlas major*: one in Latin (eleven volumes published from 1662 onwards), one in French (twelve volumes published in 1666; reprinted in 1667), one in Dutch (nine volumes in 1664), one in Spanish (ten volumes in 1659-1672; incomplete), and one in German (nine volumes in 1667). Each of these versions has more or less the same content; differences in the numbers of volumes are due to variations in the division of that content.¹⁰⁴ A part of the topography section, however, was also published. This included re-editions of *Flandria illustrata* (1644), Barlaeus' *Brasilia* (1647), the book on the cities of the Low Countries (1649), and the five volumes of the unfinished atlas dedicated to Italy. Of the last, the *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae*, three volumes had been published by Joan Blaeu in 1663: they treat the Vatican and the Papal State, Rome, Naples and Sicily. The remaining two volumes were brought out by his heirs in 1682: these are dedicated to Piedmont and Savoy. The Italy atlas has been called the most beautiful, but also least known of Joan Blaeu's works.¹⁰⁵ The collecting of material for these books must have kept him busy for years: unlike the town atlas of the Netherlands, the volumes of the *Theatrum*

¹⁰¹ '[...] at least in the later editions – names of Mercator and Hondius, the original compilers, were omitted.' *Ibidem*, p. 5.

¹⁰² Cfr. *ibidem*, p. 16.

¹⁰³ '*Grooten atlas oft werelt beschrijving, in welke 't aardrijk, de zee en hemel wordt vertoond en beschreven.*' De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu, schepen, en zijn zonen', in *idem*, *In en om de "Vergulde Sonneweyser"*, *Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, p. 173.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁵ De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu and his Sons', pp. 16-17.

civitatum et admirandorum Italiae consist not only of maps and profiles, but also of engravings after architectural drawings of towns, *palazzi*, churches and monasteries, and ancient monuments.¹⁰⁶ In the eighteenth century, several Dutch publishers reprinted the volumes and attempted to expand the venture.¹⁰⁷

Quite a large part of the Blaeus' Grand Atlas Project thus remained unfinished. From statements made by Joan Blaeu and from surviving documents, however, it is evident that ample preparations had been made for the town descriptions of England, Spain and France; it is also known that Isaac Vossius worked on the text of an atlas of the ancient world. None of these efforts resulted in publications, as is also the case for both the sea and the celestial atlas.¹⁰⁸ The work left unfinished by the Blaeus was taken over by their competitor Janssonius, and after his death in 1664, by his successors, the Van Waesberges. Yet the publications of their publishing house, the *Pascaert*, were nowhere near the quality of works issued by the *Vergulde Sonnewijzer*.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ Cfr. P. van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici New Edition*, vol. IV-1: *The Town Atlases: Braun & Hogenberg, Janssonius, Blaeu, De Wit, Mortier and Others* (Houten: HES & DE GRAAF publishers, 2010), pp. 365-413.

¹⁰⁸ De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu, schepen, en zijn zonen', in *idem*, *In en om de "Vergulde Sonnewijzer"*, *Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, p. 174.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*.

Chapter 3. Understanding the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*: Contextualisation of Appearance and Contents

In this chapter Blaeu's *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* will be treated from various angles in order to do justice to the specific context surrounding its appearance in 1663. Attention will be given to the emergence of Dutch city descriptions in the seventeenth century, followed by a brief discussion on a selection of earlier works on Rome. The Medieval and Renaissance perspective will be compared to see how both relate to Blaeu's Rome volume and to further examine its position in the tradition of works describing cities. An outline of the ambitious atlas of Italy, the *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiæ*, will then be provided, after which a closer look will be taken at the specific role of Pieter Blaeu, the second son of Joan Blaeu, in the project of Italian town atlases. These introductory parts are followed by an exploration of Blaeu's sources and strategies in compiling the atlas of Italy in general and its volume on Rome in particular. In the final part of this chapter, the financing of the project will receive attention.

Dutch City Descriptions in the Seventeenth Century

The history of Amsterdam published in 1611 by Johannes Isacius Pontanus, entitled *Rerum et urbis Amstelodamensium historia*, has retrospectively been considered the first in a long tradition of city descriptions that started to appear in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century.¹¹⁰ All works of Pontanus show strong humanist influences: in the histories he compiled on the Dutch province of Gelderland, on Denmark and on France he clearly followed the instructions delineated by Italian Renaissance historians.¹¹¹ His work on Amsterdam, too, seems to fit in this pattern, even though it does not contain a politic history in the strictest humanist sense. Pontanus starts by treating the location of the Netherlands and its natural history, followed by a similar discourse on Amsterdam. In the second book, a description of the Netherlands' most famous buildings is provided, followed by a treatise on the Dutch journeys of discovery; then the culture and famous inhabitants of Amsterdam receive attention. The third book takes the various governmental bodies into account, and, finally, the two chronicles that had inspired Pontanus in writing his extensive history and Amsterdam's most important regents and their functions are listed. It is because of its clear outline, dividing the work in several books, its text in Latin and the frequently occurring comparisons with classical antiquity that the humanist scheme of the *Rerum et urbis*

¹¹⁰ E.O.G. Haitsma Mulier, 'De eerste stadsbeschrijvingen uit de zeventiende eeuw', *De zeventiende eeuw*, 9 (1993), p. 97.

¹¹¹ In turn, those had been derived from classical examples. Haitsma Mulier, 'De eerste stadsbeschrijvingen uit de zeventiende eeuw,' p. 97.

Amstelodamensium historia can be identified.¹¹² With this work, Pontanus found himself at the intersection of two paths: while his position was still strongly anchored in the tradition of his predecessors, he also applied the emerging example of the chorography. Blaeu would later pursue this same ideal in his *Grand Atlas Project*, in which the five editions of the *Atlas major* are considered contributions to chorography. The *Flandria illustrata* (1644), Barlaeus' *Brasilia* (1647), the book on the cities of the Low Countries entitled *Novum et magnum theatrum urbium Belgiae* (c. 1649), and the five volumes of the Italy atlas, the *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae*, brought out in 1663 and 1682, have been classified as works in the field of topography.¹¹³

The humanists of the sixteenth century understood chorography as the combination of topographical and historical descriptions of a country, a region or a city; in this sense the term is opposed to cosmography, relating to the entire inhabited world. The renewed interest in the world of classical antiquity that characterises the Renaissance entailed a growing need for more knowledge of the world in its entirety; the example of authors like Pliny, Varro and Ptolemy, who united political, historical and geographical particularities, inspired many to link old and new information on the world in which they lived.¹¹⁴ The Italian historian Flavio Biondo (1392-1463)¹¹⁵ had, in his *Roma instaurata* (1446), and later in his *Italia illustrata* (1458), a series of city descriptions, shown how antiquity itself could be united with what remained of it in later times.¹¹⁶ His efforts in collecting inscriptions and documents, active inspection of ruins and other ancient remains, together with his investigations of the habits and other characteristics of the people of the past had stimulated the beginnings of the antiquarian movement; this approach towards history differed fundamentally from the goals of narrative history. In chorography, the objectives of both movements could be combined.¹¹⁷ Antiquity, however, was not the only source of inspiration for authors, since they also followed the traces of a medieval tradition; especially in Italy, the literary genre preceding the cosmography had been particularly popular as a means of lauding a city in prose or poetry.¹¹⁸ In medieval England and France, probably under influence of guides to Rome and Jerusalem, the first city descriptions had initially started to appear. Motives from these earlier works were later included in the chorographies. From the ideological background of pilgrimages, travelling more and more became appreciated as a form of art: visiting

¹¹² *Ibidem*, p. 98.

¹¹³ Cfr. De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu, schepen, en zijn zonen', in *idem*, *In en om de "Vergulde Sonneweyser"*, *Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, p. 173.

¹¹⁴ Haitsma Mulier, 'De eerste stadsbeschrijvingen uit de zeventiende eeuw', p. 99.

¹¹⁵ See the biographical dictionary of Italians *Treccani*, vol. 10 (1968) on Flavio Biondo: <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/biondo-flavio_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/biondo-flavio_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) (24 April, 2014).

¹¹⁶ Cfr. F. Della Schiava and M. Laureys, 'La *Roma Instaurata* di Biondo Flavio: Censimento dei manoscritti', *Ævum*, 87 (2013), fasc. 3, pp. 643-666; Haitsma Mulier, 'De eerste stadsbeschrijvingen uit de zeventiende eeuw', p. 98.

¹¹⁷ Haitsma Mulier, 'De eerste stadsbeschrijvingen uit de zeventiende eeuw', p. 98.

¹¹⁸ Sometimes these *laudationes* were even included in official speeches, for instance in Venice. *Ibidem*, p. 99.

foreign countries came to be conceived as a venture with an educational goal. This would, as has been discussed in the first chapter, later lead to the beginnings of the Grand Tour trend. Knowledge of the location and history of cities, together with its governmental structure, had thus become essential pieces of information to travellers.

Previous Works on Rome: Medieval and Renaissance perspectives

Apart from its position amongst city descriptions in general, Blaeu's *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* can clearly be placed alongside other works on the Eternal City. In this context, too, a long tradition becomes visible, for which various starting points can be determined. Starting from a medieval point of view, however, the first work to be considered here is the *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ* (c. 1143), after which two subsequent Renaissance works will be taken into account: Leon Battista Alberti's *Descriptio Urbis Romæ* (c. 1433) and Biondo's already mentioned *Roma instaurata* (1446), in order to see how these works relate to each other and to the Blaeu volume.

The *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ*, or 'marvels of the city of Rome'¹¹⁹ written by an anonymous Canon of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome, has, after its appearance in the twelfth century, come to be known as the first travel guide to the city; it was used for this purpose by countless pilgrims and travellers throughout the following centuries.¹²⁰ Its Latin text describes many ancient Roman monuments that, as the majority of them would start to be removed only from the Renaissance onwards, at the time could still be found in the city. Not much had remained of the splendour of the capital of the Roman Empire in the



Fig. 4. Paul Bril, *View on the Forum Romanum or Campo Vaccino* (1600), Collection *Staatliche Kunstsammlungen*, Dresden.

¹¹⁹ On the *Mirabilia Romæ* genre, see: <<http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mirabilia-romæ/>> (7 May 2014).

¹²⁰ Cfr. <www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirabilia_Urbis_Romæ>; <www.nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirabilia_urbis_Romæ> (7 May 2014).

Middle Ages though: only a small part of the city, located in the bend of the river Tiber, was still inhabited, surrounded by ruins.¹²¹ Within the walls and gates of the once great ancient city, sheep and goats were now grazing the fields among former temples and baths; the *Forum Romanum* for this reason came to be known as the *Campo Vaccino* or 'cow pasture.' The unknown author of the *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ*, not restricted by all too accurate knowledge of the history of Rome, made ample use of his imagination in writing about the monuments; the *Mirabilia* contains many legendary passages and even incorrect data on names and functions of buildings, but nevertheless remained the standard guide to Rome until the fifteenth century.¹²² The contents of the work are divided into various sections; its main parts are related to the triumphal arches, principal buildings and other landmarks of classical Rome. Following parts take some of the legends associated with the listed monuments into account, to then provide the reader with a scheme that could be considered a sort of 'walking tour'¹²³ amongst the mentioned sights.¹²⁴ The purpose of the *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ* appears to have been to stress Rome's importance as a city after the decay of the Roman Empire into the Christian age. The fact that it was copied many times in manuscript and later even in printed form does seem to suggest that the work remained popular as an eyewitness account of the Eternal City, even though it contained only little information on its contemporary state. In this sense, the *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ* differs strongly from later works influenced by the humanist tradition, that, even though they too placed central emphasis on the classical past, did take the current state of the city into account.

In the period between the pontificate of Boniface VIII (1294 – 1303) to John XXII (1316 – 1334), additions and revisions to the text of the *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ* were made, but still its authority remained largely unquestioned until the fifteenth century, when Renaissance perspectives resulted in new descriptions of Rome.¹²⁵ One such work was Alberti's¹²⁶ *Descriptio Urbis Romæ* (c. 1433), which contains what would later be considered the first comprehensive map of Rome, or even the first accurate city map in general, ever made.¹²⁷ Alberti had set himself

¹²¹ H. Günther, 'L'idea di Roma antica nella "Roma instaurata" di Flavio Biondo', in S. Rossi (ed.), *Le due Rome del Quattrocento* (Rome: Lithos, 1997), p. 380.

¹²² See the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1908) on the *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ*: <www.newadvent.org/cathen/10337a.htm> (7 May 2014).

¹²³ See Irene O'Daly's blog on Rome and the *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ*: <<http://medievalfragments.wordpress.com/2012/11/30/the-eternal-city-through-medieval-eyes/>> (8 May 2014).

¹²⁴ The text of the *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ* has survived as a separate text, but also as part of the papal *Liber Censum*; see, therefore, for its contents, P. Fabre and L. Duchesne (eds.), *Le Liber Censuum de l'église romaine* (Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1910), pp. 262-273.

¹²⁵ Cfr. Della Schiava and Laureys, 'La Roma Instaurata di Biondo Flavio: Censimento dei manoscritti', pp. 643-666.

¹²⁶ See the biographical dictionary of Italians *Treccani* on Leon Battista Alberti: <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leon-battista-alberti_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leon-battista-alberti_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)> (7 May 2014).

¹²⁷ L. Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: Re-Cognizing the Architectural Body in the Early Italian Renaissance* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005), p. 127.

this task after the urging of several of his friends, who believed such a topographical description would help them in their studies.¹²⁸ His *Descriptio Urbis Romæ* further displays the first correct, verifiable method of surveying and tabulating the sightings of the city, probably thanks to the period Alberti had spent studying Rome's ruins according to the approach of Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446);¹²⁹ Alberti even managed to arrive at a location of the perimeter of the Aurelian wall almost equal to that determined by modern scholars.¹³⁰ Alberti's goal was to provide, in his own words, a 'picture' of the city;¹³¹ this probably relates to his very precise, structured approach, that seems quite the opposite of the Medieval view point displayed in the *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ*. In Alberti's revolutionary application of a nautical instrument, the astrolabe, to land surveying, the map of Rome had an epicentre, the *Campidoglio* or Capitol. All points of the map are plotted along course lines radiating from this point.

Where in the *Descriptio Urbis Romæ* particular emphasis is placed on topographical details, in Biondo's *Roma instaurata* (1446) the addition of historical information seems to complete the humanist scheme of the chorography. In this work, Rome's most important monuments and ruins are treated together with the sacred places and principal churches of the Christian faith. Comments are added only scarcely, most of them relating directly to the identification of the monuments, but relevant historical details are given occasionally; architectonical remarks, however, are almost never provided.¹³² The largest constructions, i.e. the city walls, aqueducts, thermal baths and theatres, are described most elaborately and are subdivided according to type, instead of the topographical order Biondo follows throughout the rest of his work.¹³³ In the *Roma Instaurata* most attention has been dedicated to the theatres; these are treated extensively by Blaeu, too, though in his work the main focus is placed on Rome's obelisks. The spectacles that had been carried out in the Roman theatres did not correspond to the ethical norms of the Renaissance and therefore gave rise to serious critiques, for they were judged savage and cruel. In general, humanists saw themselves confronted with the dilemma that the most gigantic public buildings served 'only' for entertainment, which was considered trivial, and this contrasted, in the eyes of Biondo and his contemporaries, with the rule of convenience. Biondo deduced from his studies of classical sources on this subject that the size of the buildings had grown over the course of time

¹²⁸ 'His technique was later used by Leonardo in his maps of Tuscan towns.' Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, p. 127.

¹²⁹ 'In applying this method to the monuments of Rome, Alberti "with scrupulous care", succeeded in "stabilizing" the measurements with mathematical instruments.' *Ibidem*; cfr. <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leon-battista-alberti_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leon-battista-alberti_(Dizionario-Biografico))> (8 May 2014).

¹³⁰ Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, p. 127.

¹³¹ *Ibidem*.

¹³² Günther, 'L'idea di Roma antica nella "Roma instaurata"', p. 380.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, p. 385.

and that they, in a certain sense, did provide good and practical uses, such as offering the people a place of refuge for the 'cold of winter' or 'warmth of summer,' 'leaving the State in peace.'¹³⁴

The essence of Rome's splendour had, in the time of Alberti, Biondo and later Blaeu, been passed on mainly through the writings of classical authors and through the surviving ancient monuments, of which, declared Biondo, not only 'little knowledge' had remained, but often 'corrupted knowledge' too.¹³⁵ He therefore set himself the goal of 'refreshing' what was known of the ancient buildings, in order to give the reader an idea of the former grandeur of Rome; the main aim of the *Roma Instaurata* is in this sense somewhat similar to that of the *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ* and to Blaeu's *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*. At the beginning of the Renaissance, the admiration for Rome's ancient splendour had all but decreased. The changing attitude towards antiquity consisted in the attempt to, retrospectively, capture anew what had once constituted the core of classical culture and civilisation. This same ambition is reflected in the 'In Titulum' found in the copy of Blaeu's Rome volume preserved in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague:¹³⁶

Reader, admire the great race of the Antiquity and of the Art,
the race of Athena, and so of the power of Time.

And linger over this letter, short and as much concise as possible,
for to understand the destinies of the world, and to reflect on its fate,
it is now possible, for who judges both the decline of stable things and the future,
to draw the path in the centre of life delimited by these two;
and to define with dedication the rapid cycle of the hours,
and to tear down the greed of the Creator¹³⁷ with the actions of work.¹³⁸

And the rare fruits of this labour are considered to be many,
that cannot be eaten [away] by the hunger of a year.

However, one should fight the Antiques with wit
and acquire a solid Art that grows in time.¹³⁹

This Art often gave strength to facts and lives,

¹³⁴ 'Biondo giunge dunque a questo giudizio generale sui luoghi di divertimenti antichi: <<E benché queste fabbriche insane servivano soltanto al lusso, essi furono nondimeno da alcuni principi volti in bene e in uso utile, siccome pensarono che il popolo, mentre stava qui [...] nell'inverno riparandosi quivi dal freddo, nell'estate dal caldo, lasciava lo stato in quite. Per questa medesima ragione furono dai principi istituiti i circhi, teatri, anfiteatri>>.' *Ibidem*, p. 390.

¹³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 380.

¹³⁶ *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* in Joan Blaeu, *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae, ad ævi veteris & præsentis temporis faciem expressum* (Amsterdam: Joan Blaeu, 1663); the 'In Titulum' text accompanies the engraved frontispiece on the volume's first two pages.

¹³⁷ Presumably the God of Time.

¹³⁸ This passage seems to allude to the Blaeus' printers mark with the motto *Indefessus agendo*, or 'tirelessly at work.'

¹³⁹ This Art probably refers to the need to learn how to deal with the specific amount of time that is given to each human being.

that were not sheltered from the cycle of Time:
 [It]¹⁴⁰ often sees itself positively changed,
 so it loses those things – belonging to a certain age – that rotate,¹⁴¹
 because they are not worthy.
 I will not linger with examples: Rome had an image
 of great force that is the most notable of all.
 There were no Forums, Circuses or Amphitheatres to be called superior,
 or an Empire equally great before Rome.
 A God¹⁴² destroyed those same temples and the graves of the men
 and gave to death the dead monuments of death.
 If, however, one could compare antique chapels with new ones,
 and the sanctuaries that we now have,
 then in those times all things were in abundance. [...]
 This is the work of the Mind: to [understand] that [even] the Greatest Age of all
 should also submit its arms¹⁴³ to the decision of Time.¹⁴⁴

The *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae* Project

While Joan Blaeu was finishing the first complete version of his *Atlas major* in 1662,¹⁴⁵ he had already started planning a second atlas project: the *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae*, that would treat the towns and monuments of Italy. In the foreword to the first volume of the first part, Joan confessed that his original idea had been to publish two volumes, but that his plans had changed: he now wanted to bring out a multi-volume atlas of Italian towns, consisting of two parts, with five books each.¹⁴⁶ How he further envisaged the work, is explained in the scheme added to this same foreword (see fig. 5.). The first part, *Civitates Italiae* or ‘the towns of Italy’ would consist of books on the Ecclesiastical State, on the towns of the Italian dominions of King Philip IV of Spain (1605-1665, King of Naples and Sicily, and Duke of Milan), on the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, on Mantua, Modena and Reggio, Parma and Placentia, the Venetian Republic, Genua, Lucca, etc. and on Piedmont and Savoy. The second part, *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*, treating the ancient monuments

¹⁴⁰ Referring to this Art, or the memory of past ages, so Time itself.

¹⁴¹ Like the Wheel of Time.

¹⁴² Again presumably the God of Time.

¹⁴³ In the sense of ‘munition,’ probably meaning all worldly devices are – eventually – inferior to the workings of Time.

¹⁴⁴ Translated from the Latin original by Domiziana Francescon.

¹⁴⁵ Five versions of the *Atlas major* were published: one in Latin (eleven volumes published from 1662 onwards), one in French (twelve volumes published in 1666; reprinted in 1667), one in Dutch (nine volumes in 1664), one in Spanish (ten volumes in 1659-1672; incomplete), and one in German (nine volumes in 1667). See De la Fontaine Verwey, ‘Dr. Joan Blaeu, schepen, en zijn zonen’, in *idem, In en om de “Vergulde Sonneweyser”, Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, p. 173.

¹⁴⁶ Van der Krogt, *Koeman’s Atlantes Neerlandici*, vol. IV–1, p. 365.

of Rome, would contain books on places where public spectacles had taken place, books on public buildings and books on the private palaces and the statues to be found in the city. During his life, Joan Blaeu succeeded in publishing three volumes of the Italy atlas, all of which were brought out in 1663 and had Latin texts:¹⁴⁷

- First book of the first part: *Civitates Status Ecclesiastici*, with 69 maps and plates;
- First book of the second part: the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*, on Rome's ancient monuments, containing 44 plates of the Roman circuses, obelisks and theatres, in which their state in ancient times and at the moment of publication is shown;
- Preliminary (incomplete) edition of the second book of the first part: the towns of Naples and Sicily, consisting of 33 maps and plates.

In addition, letters written by Pieter Blaeu, on behalf of his father Joan, to various renowned Italians related to the Tuscan De' Medici Court, have revealed that extensive preparations were carried out while Joan was still alive for the publication of town atlases on Tuscany, and on Piedmont and Savoy.¹⁴⁸ In 1666, however, even though earlier that year some thirty sketches for the book on Tuscany were received by Pieter Blaeu,¹⁴⁹ it already became clear that the Blaeus wanted to postpone the project for a town atlas of that region.¹⁵⁰ They had taken this decision because they wanted to keep their promise to the Duke of Savoy and Piedmont that the volume dealing with that territory would be finished first. The Piedmont and Savoy atlas, entitled *Theatrum statuum regiae celsitudinis Sabaudiae ducis* would nevertheless not be published earlier than 1682, by the next generation of Blaeu publishers, because of all the setbacks the family had to deal with in the meantime.¹⁵¹ The Tuscan volume never materialised.

¹⁴⁷ Even though textual additions in Italian are found on some of the maps. *Ibidem*, p. 367.

¹⁴⁸ H. Th. van Veen, 'A Tuscan Plan of Action for Joan Blaeu's Book of Italian cities,' *Lias*, 18 (1991), p. 223.

¹⁴⁹ H. Th. van Veen and A. Mirto (eds.), *Pieter Blaeu: Lettere ai Fiorentini Antonio Magliabechi, Leopoldo e Cosimo II de' Medici, e altri, 1660-1705* (Amsterdam/Maarssen: APA, 1993), pp. 135-136; 142-145.

¹⁵⁰ 'The letters do not only ask for drawings, but also for descriptions of the cities: [...] but it is not clear whether such descriptions were ever actually forthcoming. The Tuscans' intention to present Blaeu with a mountain of carefully organized information may never have got beyond the good intentions stage. Their enthusiasm to get really involved in this undertaking will hardly have been encouraged by the attitude of the Blaeus.' Van Veen, 'A Tuscan Plan of Action,' p. 223.

¹⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

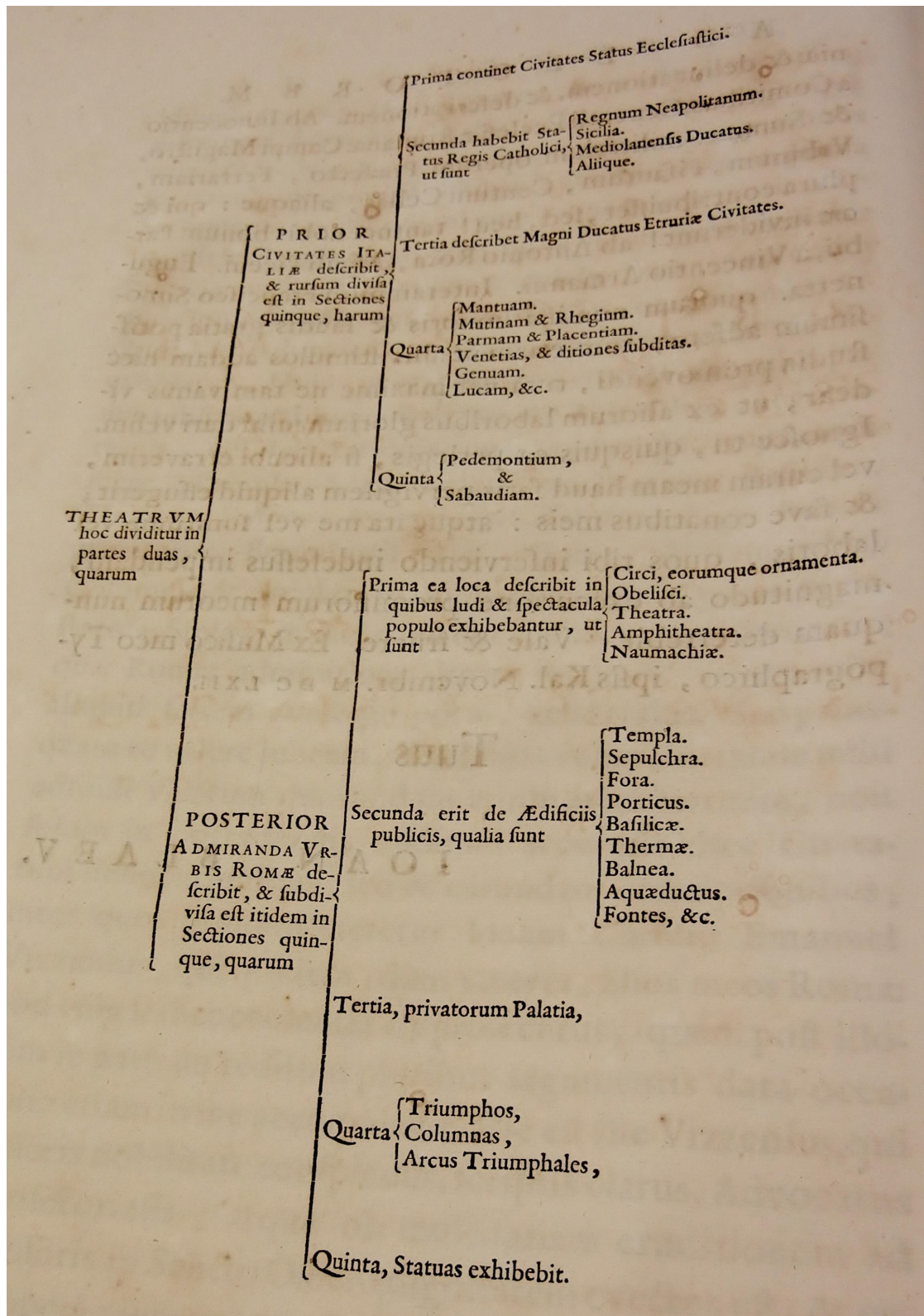


Fig. 5. Scheme explaining the outline of Blaeu's atlas of Italian towns (*Civitates Status Ecclesiastici*, in Joan Blaeu, *Theatrvm civitatvm et admirandorvm Italiæ, ad ævi veteris & præsentis temporis faciem expressum* (Amsterdam: Joan Blaeu, 1663); addition to foreword).

Pieter Blaeu: Travelling Publisher and Cultural Mediator

Pieter Blaeu (1637-1706) was the second son of Joan Blaeu and his successor as head of the Blaeu publishing firm.¹⁵² Pieter's professional activities cannot be traced before he, in 1660, started to correspond with the Florentine bibliophile and scholar Antonio Magliabechi (1633 – 1714),¹⁵³ whom he had met while travelling all over Italy for his father to renew relevant contacts.¹⁵⁴ It seems that Pieter's journeys through Italy were directly connected with Joan Blaeu's project of Italian town atlases and that he also had been instructed by his father to create a series of new markets for the firm.¹⁵⁵ First Pieter travelled to Southern Italy, where he visited Naples, and in the summer of 1660 he probably went to Rome, to continue from there to Florence. From a fellow Amsterdam bookseller, Andries Fries, who was the Dutch agent of the Venetian booksellers Combi and La Noù, Pieter Blaeu had obtained an introduction to Antonio Magliabechi.¹⁵⁶ Because of his extraordinary intellectual capacities, Magliabechi had been appointed official librarian to the Medici Court. In this function, he personally served Grand Duke Ferdinando II (1610-1670) and later Cosimo III (1642-1723, heir to the Grand Ducal title), who from 1673 onwards entrusted him with the custody of the *Biblioteca Medicea Palatina* in *Palazzo Pitti*. Magliabechi had to see to it that all books, scattered over the various parts of the *palazzo* and the Medici villa's, were reunited and catalogued. Magliabechi was librarian to Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici (1617-1675) too; his catalogue for the *Leopoldina* library probably served Cosimo III after the death of Prince Francesco Maria de' Medici (1660-1711), who had inherited the collection, to know exactly which works were included. Magliabechi's own book collection, kept at his house in the Via della Scala, soon became famous for both the quality and quantity of the manuscripts and printed works it contained. Antonio Magliabechi was further renowned for his prodigious memory, encyclopaedic knowledge and ample bibliographical knowledge on virtually any subject.¹⁵⁷

The impression Magliabechi got from the young bookseller Pieter Blaeu was expressed by Magliabechi in a letter to a friend, where he described Pieter as a 'well-mannered youth, polite,

¹⁵² 'It is clear in every respect that the one intended by his father to succeed him in the business was not the oldest son, Willem, nor the youngest, Joan, who was still far too young, but the middle one, Pieter.' Van Veen and Mirto (eds.), *Pieter Blaeu: Lettere ai Fiorentini*, p. 51.

¹⁵³ Biographical dictionary of Italians *Treccani*, vol. 67 (2007) on Antonio Magliabechi: <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-magliabechi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-magliabechi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) (27 April 2014).

¹⁵⁴ 'A few years before, his older brother Willem had also visited that country, but as a tourist rather than a bookseller. His journey was truly a "giro" (grand tour through Italy) [...] and undoubtedly was meant to prepare him well for that career in public life for which he had been destined by the older Joan.' Van Veen and Mirto (eds.), *Pieter Blaeu: Lettere ai Fiorentini*, p. 51.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

¹⁵⁶ Contacts between Magliabechi and Combi and La Noù date back to the beginning of 1657; from that time onwards, a relationship based on reciprocal respect and friendship had grown between them. The ties connecting Andries Fries, half brother of Joannes or Giovanni La Noù, Pieter Blaeu, the Elzeviers and Magliabechi are treated extensively by A. Mirto in 'Lettere di Andries Fries ad Antonio Magliabechi, 1659-1675', *LIAS*, 14:1 (1987), pp. 61-65.

¹⁵⁷ Biographical dictionary of Italians *Treccani* on Magliabechi: <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-magliabechi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-magliabechi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) (30 April 2014).

beautiful, and very intelligent.¹⁵⁸ Magliabechi made Pieter promise to keep him informed of what was currently being printed in Holland, a promise that was kept.¹⁵⁹ It was through Magliabechi that Pieter was able to obtain an *entrée* to the Medici Court and that he could make arrangements with Ferdinando II, his brother Leopoldo, and Cosimo III on the intended production of the town atlas of Tuscany that was never fully realised.¹⁶⁰ Via Magliabechi, too, Pieter managed to attract various potential customers from cultural circles in Florence. Magliabechi himself, however, remained the largest customer, both on his own behalf as on that of the Medici library.¹⁶¹ In Tuscany, Pieter had clearly been successful in opening up a new market. After he had come back from Italy, Pieter Blaeu made many business trips all over Europe for the publishing firm in the years between 1660 and 1663. First, he stayed in Amsterdam for a short period, after which he attended the *Frankfurter Buchmesse* in October 1660. In the spring of 1661 Pieter was in Vienna and by November 1661, after another short stay in Amsterdam, he was on the road again, this time headed towards Paris, Lyon, Geneva, Basel and finally Frankfurt.

Pieter's many trips were, as part of his training as bookseller, no exception: the younger members of all great bookselling families were, in this period, usually sent abroad on this kind of travels to acquire the necessary experience.¹⁶² Pieter's travels are remarkable, however, because of the important part Italy played in them. During all his wanderings, he was actively trying to enlarge the number of Italian customers of the Blaeu firm.¹⁶³ Because of Pieter's great knowledge of Italy and the Italian language,¹⁶⁴ he became a popular source for information and contacts to Amsterdam men with commercial interests regarding Italy, especially Tuscany and Florence.¹⁶⁵ He also was the ideal person to ask for letters of introduction to renowned Italians for the sons of Amsterdam city councillors before they went on their Grand Tours. In turn, many Italian tourists, including Cosimo de' Medici between the years 1667-1669, visited Pieter's shop in Amsterdam.¹⁶⁶ His many Italian contacts made Pieter valuable to literary men, scholars and scientists who wished to become better known in Italy too.¹⁶⁷ Because of these varied efforts regarding the relationships between Italy and the Netherlands, Pieter Blaeu can clearly be recognised as a cultural mediator

¹⁵⁸ 'Magliabechi describes Pieter as a "a giovan garbatissimo, cortessissimo, bellissimo, e molto intelligente".' Van Veen and Mirto (eds.), *Pieter Blaeu: Lettere ai Fiorentini*, p. 53.

¹⁵⁹ 'In return, Magliabechi promised Pieter that some time he would pay him a visit in Amsterdam. However, nothing came of it.' *Ibidem*.

¹⁶⁰ H.Th van Veen, 'Pieter Blaeu and Antonio Magliabechi', *Quaerendo*, 12 (1982), pp. 134-136; Van Veen, 'A Tuscan Plan of Action', pp. 221-227.

¹⁶¹ Van Veen and Mirto (eds.), *Pieter Blaeu: Lettere ai Fiorentini*, p. 54.

¹⁶² A. Mirto, *Stampatori, editori, librai nella seconda metà del Seicento* (Florence: Centro Editoriale Toscano, 1989), p. 26.

¹⁶³ Cfr. Van Veen and Mirto (eds.), *Pieter Blaeu: Lettere ai Fiorentini*, pp. 52, 55.

¹⁶⁴ Koeman, *Joan Blaeu and his Grand Atlas*, p. 107.

¹⁶⁵ Van Veen and Mirto (eds.), *Pieter Blaeu: Lettere ai Fiorentini*, p. 70.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 70.

between the two European countries; the contacts and knowledge that came with this role were essential for the Blaeu's *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae* project.

Sources and Strategies

As mentioned above, in the introduction to the first book of the *Civitates Italiae* (first part of the first section, on the Ecclesiastical State), Joan Blaeu explained his ambitions regarding his atlas of Italy and the, at times difficult, process of completing the work. He wrote:

Benevolent reader,

When some years ago I was producing the *Novum et magnum theatrum urbium Belgiae*, I promised myself also to present Italy; I feared, however, this promise, not of course that I would forget about [it], but because the work would be richer and would contain such a large number of places; the conviction is not leaving me, but in fact sometimes when I try to discharge myself from this debt [by completing the work], the mass of material grows so much that I feel I should return to the first aim.¹⁶⁸ In fact, I promised two volumes, of which the first would be about the Italian population and its habits, [while] the other was about [all] the marvellous cities worthy to be seen: my idea was to accomplish this amount of work. Now, anyway, I am forced to arrange these two parts in many more volumes; one part about the culture, and another about the admirable cities are in progress: in these cases I divided it¹⁶⁹ in two sections. The first part of the first section treats the people that recognize the power of the Roman Church,¹⁷⁰ and they take up an entire volume; the second part describes the Catholic kingdoms in the Italian peninsula,¹⁷¹ the third describes the great Duchy of Etruria,¹⁷² the fourth the Princedom of Lombardy, the Venetian Republic, [the Republics of] Genoa and Lucca, that¹⁷³ was seen to be decorated¹⁷⁴ by its people. In the meantime many among those princes provided me with drawings and

¹⁶⁸ By this 'first aim', Blaeu probably meant what he describes directly afterwards: the 'promised two volumes', containing what he now sees himself forced to provide in 'two parts' spread over many more volumes.

¹⁶⁹ Although it is not entirely clear how this passage should be interpreted, it seems reasonable that it would refer to Blaeu's further subdivision of his atlas of Italy: not only will its two main parts consist of many more volumes than originally intended, its contents generally concern two sections, of which the first will treat the culture of the people inhabiting the places described in the second section.

¹⁷⁰ I.e. the Ecclesiastical State.

¹⁷¹ I.e. the towns ruled by King Philip IV of Spain (1605-1665), King of Naples and Sicily, and Duke of Milan.

¹⁷² I.e. the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, located in an area that covered part of what now are Tuscany, Lazio and Umbria.

¹⁷³ Probably referring to the town of Lucca, that passed a period of great prosperity as an independent republic from roughly 1150 to 1790; during this period, many impressive 'decorations' emerged in the city, such as the Palazzo Giunigi, built at the end of the fourteenth century by the important Giunigi family, Lucca's rulers at the time.

¹⁷⁴ See previous note; 'decorated' in the sense of 'embellished,' 'ornamented.'

descriptions of their cities. The last section is the [Principality of] Piedmont, also the [Duchy of] Savoy is rewarded with a place in Italy; the generosity of [these] noble princes gave me [the harvest] that I have collected.

The second part, as you will remember, was also to contain the marvellous cities, [that] I could not avoid to assign sections to: I planned to describe those places that were especially equipped for the exhibitions of games and shows for the people in the first section, that I now offer as the first [volume] of the first part; and that among the public places there are buildings of great age and beauty, and also that they [the buildings] were so liked by the people that they desired in that way [in the buildings] bread for their meal and pleasure from the games of the Circus.¹⁷⁵ This part of the second section presents the public buildings, [and the] graceful buildings designed for the purpose of religious, political, commercial or festive events, such as temples, tombs, forums, galleries, basilicas, spas, baths, aqueducts, fountains etc. Private palaces are described in the third part; in the fourth triumphal statues, columns and triumphal arcs are displayed: in the fifth and last part there are the statues in the theatres: so that none of them, worthy of the admiration of Rome, [of which] something can be gained [are missing].

Before taking my leave of you, I would like you to know that some learned men's patronage has helped me very much, both with the gathering of precise drawings of the towns and with the descriptions thereof. Amongst them Carlo Emanuele Vizzani deserves the first place. He treated my son [Pieter] in Rome, while he [Vizzani] was still amongst the living, with unusual consideration and after his return to his country he [Pieter] bestowed this consideration on me as well by supplying several proofs of it when the occasion arose. This is the Vizzani esteemed because of his noble birth, who was famous for his writings, who was Consistorial Advocate and who because of his versatile erudition was promoted to the dignity of Assessor of the Holy Office. I must confess I have gained many things through him, firstly from the Senate of Bologna a very detailed drawing and description of their town; from Innocenzo Conti, general master of the Campo of the Church of Rome and senior director of military works in Ferrara, Urbino, Pesaro, Civita Vecchia, and others. He was to contribute much more, but unfortunately the Fates misgrudged us so great a thing.¹⁷⁶ From Antonio Rota I received [maps of] Ascoli Piceno,¹⁷⁷ and [a description] of Gubbio from Vincenzo Armanni. [Maps of] Terni were sent by Francesco Simonetta. I mention their names explicitly to honour and to praise them and

¹⁷⁵ 'Circus' should be understood in the classical, Roman sense of the word: a place for public entertainment through games, such as chariot or horse races, or even the re-enactment of naval battles.

¹⁷⁶ Vizzani died in 1661.

¹⁷⁷ This name is perhaps somewhat confusing as 'Ascoli Piceno' refers to one city instead of two, located in the Marche region.

to stimulate other people to promote my objectives and above all to avoid the appearance of vanity, as though I would want to gather honour for myself through the efforts of other people.

Forgive me, whoever you are who reads this, if I was wrong in some parts, or if you miss something in my work and smile at my attempt: and so in the execution of my promises I was never afraid of the huge [amount of] work, that I accomplished serving you tirelessly.¹⁷⁸ Goodbye, and enjoy. From my typographical studio,
Kalenda¹⁷⁹ – November 1662, Your Ioan Blaeu.¹⁸⁰

Blaeu thus started his introduction by lamenting the fact that he had had to adjust his plans for his atlas of Italy, because the amount of material to be treated seemed to keep on growing; even at the risk of overwhelming him. Whereas at first Blaeu only referred in general terms¹⁸¹ to the fact that ‘many [...] among those princes’ had given him ‘drawings and descriptions of their cities’, towards the end of his introduction he explicitly credited the Italian philosopher and lawyer, Carlo-Emanuele Vizzani (1617-1661) as one of his main sources for images and text. Blaeu and Vizzani kept in touch for several years and in 1657 Blaeu published a new edition of Vizzani’s *De mandatis principum*, followed in 1661 by *De rerum natura*, Vizzani’s Latin translation of a work by Ocellus Lukanus, a Pythagorean philosopher from the second century BC. Blaeu further mentioned several people and the places on which they provided him with maps: included are various individuals related to ecclesiastical and public administration, but also renowned intellectuals such as the writer Vincenzo Armanni (1608-1684),¹⁸² who submitted material on his native Gubbio. This town is located in modern day Umbria, a region which around 1600 was still part of the Papal State.¹⁸³ Armanni sent a description of the city, ‘drawn from various historical works,’¹⁸⁴ as a supplement to a letter in which he introduced himself to Joan Blaeu, after he had returned

¹⁷⁸ Blaeu probably meant this final passage as an allusion to his printers mark, *Indefessus agendo*, or ‘tirelessly at work.’

¹⁷⁹ The Latin word *kalenda* refers to the first day of a month ‘named according to Roman use.’ See <<http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calendae>> (11 May 2014).

¹⁸⁰ The translation of the first and final parts of this introduction, not included in Van der Krogt, *Koeman’s Atlantes Neerlandici*, vol. IV–1, pp. 365-366, was provided by Domiziana Francescon.

¹⁸¹ The fact that Blaeu did not explicitly mention all contributors should not surprise, if seen in the broader context of attributions in seventeenth century art in general; cfr. J. Michael Montias, ‘Works of Art in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam: An Analysis of Subjects and Attributions,’ in D. Freedberg and J. De Vries, *Art in History, History in Art* (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1991), pp. 331-372.

¹⁸² Biographical dictionary of Italians *Treccani*, vol. 4 (1962) on Vincenzo Armanni: <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/vincenzo-armanni_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/vincenzo-armanni_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) (3 May 2014).

¹⁸³ Cfr. Holmes, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Italy*, p. 81.

¹⁸⁴ ‘Egli è un compendio tratto della Historia.’ Vincenzo Armanni, *Delle lettere del Signor Vincenzo Armanni scritte a Nome proprio e disposte sotto diversi capi* (Rome: Iacomo Dragondelli, 1663), vol. 1, pp. 289-290, ‘Al Sig[nor] Giovanni Bleu.’

from travels and heard about the Dutchman's 'noble occupations.'¹⁸⁵ In the letter, Armanni explicitly stated how he provided the material so Blaeu could 'place it amongst [information on] many other cities competing to find immortality in your [Blaeu's] precious Volumes.'¹⁸⁶ It seems improbable that Joan Blaeu and Armanni had spoken before the letter was sent and received, so this passage could simply mean that news about Blaeu's quest for material to include in his town atlases of Italy had started to circulate throughout Italy. It is interesting that Armanni, if this is the case, had decided to submit the description of Gubbio at his own initiative. It is possible, then, that others hearing about the volumes that were being compiled would have done the same – without necessarily having to have received instructions directly from the Blaeus, or related parties, themselves – to honour the cities to which they felt a certain attachment. No further information was found on how Vincenzo Armanni and Joan Blaeu had gotten to know each other; some sort of link could, however, have existed between them through Vincenzo's uncle Giacomo Armanni, who was 'one of the most excellent astronomers' of their time¹⁸⁷ and must therefore have been a likely acquaintance to both Willem and Joan Blaeu.

Blaeu chose not to mention, however, that for towns on which he was unable to gather new sources, he copied parts from older works, such as the *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (1572) of the engraver Frans Hogenberg (1535-1590), or the atlas, that had been brought out by Hogenberg and Georg Braun (1541-1622; responsible for the texts).¹⁸⁸ Originally, Braun and Hogenberg planned to publish their town atlas in one volume, but its success made them change their minds; they decided to produce a second volume, this time adding a special request to their readers, asking them to provide material on the cities in which they lived if these were still missing. This resulted in so much material that various other volumes followed in the years to come; the sixth and final one came out in 1617. The Braun and Hogenberg atlas contains a large variety of city depictions, maps and panoramas. Each time the compilers received new depictions of cities, these were added to the already existing material; this explains why several cities – including Rome and Jerusalem – are presented more than once. The depicted cities are mostly those of the

¹⁸⁵ 'La fama delle vostre nobili occupazioni ha portato con tanta luce il vostro nome nelle nostre Provincie, che se io per congiuntura de' miei viaggio non havessi havuta un'anticipata conoscenza di voi, darei hoggi cominciamento ad osservarvi, come uno de' più bei lumi, che da Letterati d'Italia si riguardino in cotesto Cielo straniero. Or' io sapendo, che le mie orecchie non ingannano la mia ragione a persuadermi esser voi quell'huomo illustre, che i miei occhi d'havervi conosciuto si pregiano, mi pongo in vanità d'introdurmi alla fortuna della vostra cognizione.' Armanni, *Delle lettere del Signor Vincenzo Armanni*, vol. 1, pp. 289-290.

¹⁸⁶ 'Prendo la risoluzione della opportunità di trasmettervi un Racconto della Città di Gubbio, giache per vostro istituto di cortesia l'havete desiderato, ad effetto di collocarlo fra quelli di ta[n]te altre Città, che son concorse per trovare la immortalità de[n]tro i vostri preziosi Volumi.' *Ibidem*.

¹⁸⁷ 'Cortesemente mi ricercò, se era parente del signor Giacomo Armanni. Gli risposi che a V.S. era io nipote [...], mi replicò che io haveva per zio uno de' più eccellenti astronomi de' nostri tempi.' *Ibidem*, pp. 110-111.

¹⁸⁸ Van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*, vol. IV-1, p. 366.

Netherlands, the Papal State, Central Italy and Andalusia; in comparison, only little space has been dedicated to the British Isles, France and the rest of Spain. For each of the treated towns, a text on its history, in which the name of the city is explained, and special buildings and famous inhabitants are taken into account, is provided.¹⁸⁹

No further indications were given in Blaeu's introduction on the strategies underlying the process of gathering new material; a document published by Van Veen,¹⁹⁰ however, does unveil some of the approach adopted by the Blaeus. The document has cautiously been identified as a draft memorandum for the Medici Court, written by an unknown author, probably shortly after Pieter Blaeu's visit to Florence in connection with urgent requests for drawings which Pieter wrote on behalf of his father.¹⁹¹ In the text, which clearly is related to the atlas on Tuscany that never saw the light, Joan Blaeu's plans for this volume are mentioned, together with the need for the Tuscans to provide relevant material. The information on the geography and history of the Grand Duchy should be gathered orderly; prospective collectors of the material therefore should work methodically, in accordance with a system that is described in detail in the text.¹⁹² According to this document, the book on Tuscany should contain 'all that can be put together relating to the ancient and modern writings' on this region, meaning that '[its] plants should be selected, panoramas, reliefs and drawings of the principal villages and cities, together with extensive commentaries by the writer on these places.'¹⁹³ Since the work would have to contribute positively to the honourable reputation of the Grand Duchy, the compilers of the volume should preferably rely on inhabitants of the places to be described for the 'collection of information [that is] most appropriate for the intention of the author,' because of their attachment to and knowledge of their birthplace.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁹ P. van der Krogt, 'Wereldsteden uit de zestiende eeuw: de "Civitates orbis terrarum" van Braun en Hogenberg (T fol 212 Rar)', in G. Gerritsen-Geywitz *et al.*, *Bijzonder onderzoek: Een ontdekkingsreis door de Bijzondere Collecties van de Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht* (Utrecht: Universiteitsbibliotheek, 2009), pp. 148-155.

¹⁹⁰ The memorandum is preserved in the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence, MS. 2122, f. 392r-397v. Van Veen, 'A Tuscan Plan of Action', p. 224.

¹⁹¹ Cfr. *ibidem*, pp. 221, 223.

¹⁹² *Ibidem*, p. 221.

¹⁹³ 'Dove intende di adunare tutto cio che si potra mettere insieme delle memorie antiche, e moderne di questa Provincia. [...] In esso saran collocate non che le piante, le vedute, rilievi e disegni delle città, e terre principali ed eziando vi aggiungerà lo scrittore una distesa relazione di ciascun d'essi luoghi.' *Ibidem*, p. 224.

¹⁹⁴ 'A fine di recar lustro alle memorie della Patria [...]. Con ragione si ricorre per tanto a gli stessi abitanti de' luoghi, acciò come affezionati della Patria loro e informati delle sue memorie si compiacciono di raccogliere quelle notizie che stimeranno più opportune per l'intenzione dell'autore, o più accomodate all'onore del Paese.' *Ibidem*.

Firstly, 'the name of each place, its origins and etymology' should be examined, followed by a concise description of the town and the surrounding countryside.¹⁹⁵ What follows is a minute description of all the details to be included on the selected places: first aspects such as 'the quality of its location' and 'air'; its 'width and the distance to the most important city' should be treated, together with descriptions of public buildings and their architectonical style; after accounts on these, and many more details,¹⁹⁶ the history of the place should be discussed. In that part of the description, the period in which the place 'first came into existence, who the founder was and how it was built' should be mentioned; in treating its rulers the 'start of the decline of the imperial government in Italy' should receive attention, to 'descend from there to the way in which it passed onto the *Signoria* of the [at the time] dominating city'.¹⁹⁷ 'When the occasion arises,' information on ecclesiastical structures such as churches, convents and monasteries should also be included, together with a number of relevant details relating to them.¹⁹⁸

After a few general considerations on the quality of the sources to be used, the author of the text explicitly mentions the types of material he considers most trustworthy and how their contents should be elaborated in the Tuscany volume. If printed works are lacking, manuscripts can be used; chronicles, papal bulls, imperial and juridical texts, public announcements and the like should be consulted, 'always adding their date, the period related to the [used] script type, whether they are original or copies and by whom they are being conserved'.¹⁹⁹ For printed books, only the author and place need to be cited. Furthermore, inscriptions are considered the most 'sincere witnesses,' while the work of 'first class Latin or Tuscan poets' related to the place also has to be mentioned.²⁰⁰ The author then continues to stress the necessity to treat renowned

¹⁹⁵ 'Degli assegnati luoghi primieramente considerare l'origine, ed etimologia della voce con che è si chiamano. [...] Dall'esame del nome dovrà passarsi ad una ristretta, ma puntuale descrizione così della città, od altro luogo che ci sia, come del suo distretto e contado.' *Ibidem*.

¹⁹⁶ 'Si consideri la qualità del sito, [...] la bontà dell'aria, [...] la distanza della città dominante, la condizione degli edifici pubblici [...], de'quali tutto è necessario il fare particolare menzione. [...] è bene scrivere con quale ordine di architettura [...] fossero edificate.' *Ibidem*, p. 225.

¹⁹⁷ 'Descritto il luogo si potrà cominciare a narrare in che tempo avesse principio, chi ne fosse il fondatore, come finalmente e quando sia edificato [...]. Sarà dunque ben fatto l'accennare il suo antico governo pigliandone il cominciamento dalla caduta dell'autorità imperiale in Italia, scendendo a narrare poi in che modo passasse nella Signoria della città dominante.' *Ibidem*.

¹⁹⁸ 'Sempre che l'occasione lo porti diasi espressa notizia delle chiese, conventi, monasteri [...] o per altra singular circostanza. Oltre a che narrisi l'ordine, e numero de' religiosi che vi son compresi; se in mano di claustrali o di laici sia il beneficio; se vi si conservi alcuna reliquia, o immagine che sia in venerazione appresso a gli stranieri.' *Ibidem*.

¹⁹⁹ 'In difetto de gli stampati ricorrasi a' manuscritti. Per maggior prova facciasi capitale delle cronache particolari, Bolle Pontificie, rescritti imperiali, scritture giuridiche, strumenti pubblici, e simili, allegando sempre le circostanze loro, cioè di che data siano, di che tempo sia la scrittura, se originale o copia, e appresso di chi si conservi.' *Ibidem*.

²⁰⁰ 'Le iscrizioni [...] sono i più sinceri testimoni. [...] Avendo i Poeti di prima classe o Latini o Toscani qualsivoglia maniera fatta menzione de'luoghi [...] riportinisi i versi loro.' *Ibidem*.

inhabitants and their claims to fame.²⁰¹ The document ends by stating that if the ‘transmission of the requested information’ is started soon, all the ‘earlier can it be sent to Holland’ as wished by Blaeu.²⁰² Since the details mentioned in the document are so closely related to the volume on Tuscany, it is of course difficult to draw more general conclusions on how the information on the other parts of the Italy atlas was collected. It is reasonable to assume, though, that if the Blaeus adopted a roughly similar approach in the process of gathering information for all the intended volumes of the atlas, their design would have been just as well thought out and organised.²⁰³ This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the very systematic structure found in the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*, the *Civitates Status Ecclesiastici* and the *Theatrum statuum regiae celsitudinis Sabaudiae dvcis* volumes. Furthermore, the general introduction on *Roma Vetus*, or ‘Ancient Rome,’ provided in the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* seems to follow roughly the format outlined above, starting by a treatise on the city’s name, after which various parts of ancient Rome and their main monuments are described.

The second volume that was published of the atlas of Italy is what was supposed to be the first book of the second part; its title *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* is the name that was originally intended for the entire second part of the atlas. Following from Blaeu’s introduction, this second section would contain descriptions of places that had once been important for the people he would treat in his first section. More precisely, he would take public buildings used for religious, political, commercial or entertainment oriented purposes into account, amongst which the reader would find temples, tombs, forums, galleries, basilicas, spas, baths, aqueducts, fountains, and more. Even if, comparing this list with the actual contents of the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*, one has to acknowledge Joan Blaeu has probably been a little too ambitious in describing what he planned to include, the material he did manage to provide on the public buildings of ancient Rome is still impressive. The work consists of numerous topographical and architectonical depictions, accompanied by ample historical descriptions, of four circuses (e.g. the Circus Maximus and Flaminius), ten obelisks (with particular attention for the Vatican obelisk and its transportation) and six theatres (included are amphitheatres like the Colosseum, but also the Marine Theatre set up on the Campus Martius by Julius Cæsar and the Theatre of Marcellus).

The Egyptian obelisks, which had been brought to the *Caput Mundi* in Roman times, received most of Blaeu’s attention. Under Pope Sixtus V (1521-1590) and Innocentius X (1574-1655), several of the obelisks had been restored and erected. The publications of the German

²⁰¹ ‘Facciasi però espressa menzione in ciascun luogo degli uomini che stati vi sono insigni per santità di vita, per fortuna di Principato, per valor d’armi, per sapere di scienze, o per eccellenza nell’arti che liberali si chiamano.’ *Ibidem*.

²⁰² ‘Il cominciar prontamente a trasmetter quali chieste notizie farà più presta la spedizione in Olanda che vien sollicitata dal Blaeu’; the document is then closed by a short to-do-list containing very specific actions related to the Tuscany volume. *Ibidem*.

²⁰³ ‘With the necessary concessions to practical considerations.’ *Ibidem*, p. 223.

Jesuit antiquarian Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680)²⁰⁴ on the subject served Blaeu as the main source for his prints and texts regarding these particular monuments. The obelisks of Rome and their hieroglyphs were a lifelong fascination to Kircher; in 1633, when he was still based in Avignon, he had made the bold claim of possessing a key to decoding the inscriptions included on them.²⁰⁵ The translations he made, however, were later found to be erroneous.²⁰⁶ Kircher was asked by Pope Innocentius X (1574-1655) to re-erect an obelisk on the Piazza Navona, of which he reported in his work *Obeliscus Pamphilius* (1650). His studies of the Coptic language and the nature of hieroglyphs further resulted in his *Oedipus Ægyptiacus* of 1652-1654; another work on the obelisks is Kircher's *Obelisci Ægyptiaci [...] interpretatio hieroglyphica* (1666).

Several prints of the obelisks in the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* were copied after Kircher's *Oedipus Ægyptiacus*;²⁰⁷ in at least three cases this is confirmed by dedications in which Blaeu refers to Kircher explicitly.²⁰⁸ On the plates following page 124, where the Flaminian Obelisk is treated, Joan Blaeu wrote that '[this] obelisk, the inscription of which the emperor Ferdinando III [1608-1657] has kept secret up to here, has [been] saved from the darkness into the light, [by] the works of Athanasius Kircher, of the Jesuit society.' After page 144, Blaeu added to the depiction of the Obelisk of Sallustius that '[this] obelisk is said to be in the shape of [the] Ludovisi,²⁰⁹ next to the original by the calm archduke of Austria Leopold Ignatius,²¹⁰ now the eminent emperor. [It was] Inscribed by Athanasius Kircher.' On the depiction of the Pamphilian Obelisk, following page 202, Blaeu stated that 'The obelisk was once brown, shaped [according to] Barberini; when this

²⁰⁴ See J. Godwin, *Athanasius Kircher's Theatre of the World* (London: Inner Traditions, 2009), pp. 64-76.

²⁰⁵ 'As early as 1633, at which time Kircher was based in Avignon, he had boasted to the scholar Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc that he held in his possession a key to decoding the inscriptions on these monuments, in the shape of an ancient manuscript written by a Babylonian rabbi. Peiresc was intrigued, but came to suspect Kircher was lying, suspicions confirmed in the course of an awkward interview between the two men, in which Kircher agreed only to show Peiresc a single page from the manuscript, a page, in any case, that Peiresc was convinced was not authentic. It was not the only rash and unsubstantiated boast that Kircher had made, and this and other embarrassments may have contributed to his decision to leave Avignon later that year'; <http://www.spamula.net/blog/2005/09/kirchers_obelisks.html> (25 April 2014).

²⁰⁶ He had 'translated the text of several obelisks in his *Oedipus Ægyptiacus* (4 vols., Rome 1652-54).' Van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*, vol. IV-1, p. 373.

²⁰⁷ *Ibidem*; Blaeu's interest in ancient construction techniques is similar to that of Flavio Biondo, who too, for his *Roma Instaurata*, had systematically studied older writings on this subject. Günther, 'L'idea di Roma antica nella "Roma instaurata",' p. 384.

²⁰⁸ The contents of these dedications were translated from Latin to English by Carly Bakker.

²⁰⁹ Probably referring to the Ludovisi family, originally from Bologna, that had close ties with the papacy and were influential in the Papal State; they are said to have found the Obelisk of Sallustius, a copy of the Flaminian Obelisk, which was part of the Gardens of Sallustius and can now be found at the top of the Spanish Steps.

²¹⁰ If by 'original' Blaeu meant the Flaminian Obelisk, 'the calm archduke of Austria Leopold Ignatius' would refer to the earlier mentioned Ferdinando III (1608-1657), who ruled the Holy Roman Empire from 15 February 1637 until his death, and was also King of Hungary and King of Bohemia and Archduke of Austria.

statue was first built, it was translated, and Athanasius Kircher of the Jesuit society dedicated and consecrated it to Cardinal Francesco Barberini [1597-1679],²¹¹ the vice chancellor.'

Fourteen prints on the erection of the Vatican obelisk included in the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* were taken directly from a work by architect Domenico Fontana (1543-1607),²¹² *Della trasportatione dell'obelisco vaticano* (1590): for the plates 8, 12, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32 and 35 Blaeu repeated Fontana's numeration; numbers 72 and 76 in Fontana have been numbered 62 and 66 in Blaeu.²¹³ Fontana and Kircher shared a professional background that had led them to Rome and eventually to the obelisks, even though Fontana's approach was completely different from Kircher's, for whom language was the main focal point. Fontana had moved to Rome in 1563, probably influenced by the great construction projects that took place in the city in that period. In 1584 he received his first major assignment from cardinal Montalto, the future Pope Sixtus V (1521-1590); this would eventually result in his appointment as architect of Saint Peter's Basilica.

In 1586 an obelisk, known as 'la Guglia' or 'the Spire,' was transported from its location near the Vatican Hill to Saint Peter's Square under the direction of Domenico Fontana; this spectacular process has received a great deal of attention in the town atlas.

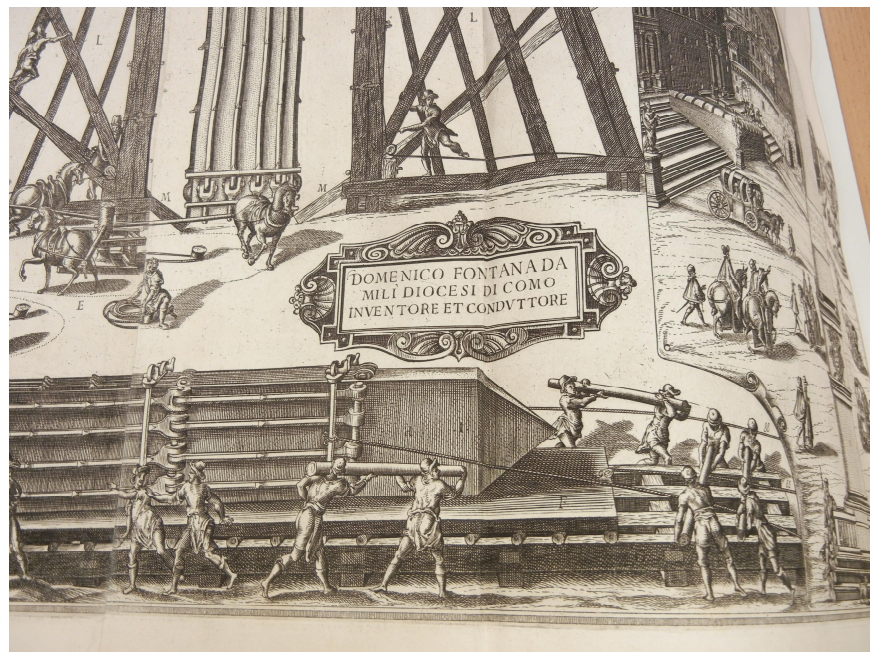


Fig. 5. Detail of print on the transportation of the Vatican Obelisk in Joan Blaeu, *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* (Amsterdam: Joan Blaeu, 1663).

²¹¹ 'Francesco Barberini (23 September 1597 – 10 December 1679) was an Italian Catholic Cardinal. The nephew of Pope Urban VIII (reigned 1623-1644), he benefited immensely from the nepotism practiced by his uncle. He was given various functions within the Vatican administration but his personal cultural interests, particularly in literature and the arts, meant that he became a highly significant patron.' <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Barberini_\(1597%E2%80%931679\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Barberini_(1597%E2%80%931679))> (15 May 2014).

²¹² Biographical dictionary of Italians *Treccani*, vol. 48 (1997) on Domenico Fontana: <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/domenico-fontana_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/domenico-fontana_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)> (13 May 2014).

²¹³ In *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*, vol. IV-1, p. 373 Van der Krogt erroneously stated that numbers 23, 25, 36 and 37 were also taken directly from Fontana's work. Cfr. D. Fontana, *Della trasportatione dell'obelisco vaticano et delle fabbriche di Nostro Signore papa Sisto V, fatte dal cavallier Domenico Fontana architetto di Sua Santità. Libro primo* (Rome: Domenico Basa, 1590), pp. 8-76.

Fontana was also responsible for placing obelisks on the Piazza del Popolo, and in front of the basilicas of Santa Maria Maggiore and San Giovanni Laterano. The erection of obelisks in strategic places was part of a larger plan designed by Sixtus V that was intended to re-populate parts of Rome that were no longer inhabited at the time.²¹⁴ The obelisks were meant to visually unite the city's various central axes, while they also served as spiritual symbols referring to Egyptian mysticism; at the same time, their vertical appearances indicated the dynamic movement towards God. Under Fontana's guidance, the obelisks were not only transported, but Christian symbols were also added to them, often a cross or the papal symbol (showing the keys of Saint Peter, also known as the Keys to Heaven). With all this, Sixtus V wanted to reflect the victory of Christianity over the heathens and bestow upon himself the same status as that of the Roman Emperors, who had brought the obelisks to Rome.

Financing of the Project

As was pointed out in the first chapter, an audience for Blaeu's atlas of Italy clearly existed at the time of publication, because of the general interest in Italy that was stimulated by humanist trends like the Grand Tour and the collecting of antiquities. In order to serve this market and to realise Joan Blaeu's ambitious plans, however, great investments had to be made. At the time, the most common way of gathering capital for commercial ventures that were related to culture and society, as was the case for the *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae* atlas, was patronage. That the Blaeus probably made use of this strategy to gather financial support for their *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* is visible in the dedications



Fig. 6. The Vatican Obelisk after its re-erection (Blaeu, *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*; copy preserved in Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum, The Hague, coloured by Dirck Jansz. van Santen).

²¹⁴ On Sixtus V's Plan for Rome, see: <<http://courses.umass.edu/latour/Italy/2005/CONE/index.html>>; <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sixtijnse_stadsuitbreiding_van_Rome> (13 May 2014).

added to several of the maps and depictions, even if it is uncertain if these dedications resulted in actual money given in return.²¹⁵ What the dedications do provide is further confirmation of the strong ties of the Blaeu family with the cultural and intellectual elite of the Dutch seventeenth century, since the names that are mentioned are all of people closely related to the highest ranks of Amsterdam's civic administration during the Dutch Golden Age. Joan Blaeu himself was quite active in this field, for he was elected into the Town Council in 1651 and was a member of the board of aldermen of Amsterdam.²¹⁶ His sons Pieter, Willem (1635-?) and Joan II (1637-1706) would later carry out various functions for the city's administration. In fact, the three generations of Blaeu publishers reflect the course of the Dutch Golden Age in general: Willem Jansz. can in this respect be considered the pioneering trailblazer, a man full of new plans and initiatives, while Joan's attitude is typical for the middle of the century, since he was the great organiser continuing his father's life's work and managed to conquer a place in Amsterdam's civic administration; in Joan II, more a regent and financier than a printer and publisher, the transition to the eighteenth century becomes visible.²¹⁷

The influential network surrounding Joan Blaeu must have helped him in gathering financial support for his project of Italian town atlases. The most important potential *mecenas* for the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* volume was probably Simon van Hoorn (1618-1667),²¹⁸ whose name appears in the dedication on the very first map of the Rome atlas,²¹⁹ showing an overview of *Roma Vetus*, or 'ancient Rome,' and its main monuments. Van Hoorn is referred to as 'legato extraordinario,' which seems to indicate that he provided the Blaeus with an 'extraordinary (financial) inheritance' of some sort, an hypothesis which is further backed by the prominent position of this first dedication. From 1659 until 1667, Simon van Hoorn was mayor of Amsterdam; he also held functions in the Dutch East-India Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, or V.O.C; Van Hoorn served as administrator), Amsterdam's civic militia (in which he was actively involved as captain), and the *Atheneum Illustre* (of which he was a curator). He was much interested in cartography, a shared passion that probably influenced his contacts with the Blaeus. Furthermore, the Blaeus and Van Hoorns were connected through more personal ties

²¹⁵ On the difficulties of ascertaining whether book dedications resulted in financial support, see P.J. Verkruisse, 'Holland "gedediceerd": Boekopdrachten in Holland in de 17e Eeuw', *Regionaal tijdschrift Holland*, 23 (1991), Special issue *Kunst in opdracht in de Gouden Eeuw*, pp. 225-242.

²¹⁶ De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu and his Sons', p. 5.

²¹⁷ De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu, schepen, en zijn zonen', in *idem*, *In en om de "Vergulde Sonneweyser"*, *Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, p. 178-179; H.Th. van Veen, 'L'ultima generazione dei Blaeu,' *Quaderni storici*, 72 (1989), pp. 839-847.

²¹⁸ J.E. Elias, *Geschiedenis van het Amsterdamsche Regentenpatriciaat* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1923), pp. 157-159; <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_van_Hoorn> (13 May 2014).

²¹⁹ The coat of arms appearing on this plate was identified as belonging to the Van Hoorn family through <http://www.heraldischedatabank.nl/databank/indeling/detail/start/6?q_searchfield=van+hoorn> (20 June 2014).

too: Joan Blaeu's brother Cornelis had been married to Elisabeth van Hoorn, a cousin of Simon van Hoorn.²²⁰

On the first depiction of the Amphitheatre of Vespasian, the Colosseum, the name of Cornelis Bicker (1592-1654) appears,²²¹ another influential member of the Republic's intellectual and political circles. Bicker was, apart from his functions for the V.O.C., the Amsterdam city council and other governmental bodies, lord of the estate of Swieten, a title to which Blaeu's dedication alludes by the addition 'dominio in Swieten.' A depiction of the Amphitheatre of Statilius Taurus carries a dedication to Nicolaes Corver (1596-1654),²²² who served the city of Amsterdam as mayor in 1650, 1652 and 1653. Cornelis de Graeff (1599-1664)²²³ is mentioned on the dedication added to a depiction of the Circus Flaminius; he was an Amsterdam regent, mayor and diplomat, as well as an art collector and esteemed *mecenas*. The De Graeff family was, together with the Bickers, active in the governing of both Amsterdam and the Dutch Republic during its period of greatest prosperity. The last dedication to appear in the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* refers to Frans Banning Cocq (1605-1655),²²⁴ who is mentioned on a depiction of the Circus Maximus. Banning Cocq was another Amsterdam mayor, a function in which he collaborated closely with Cornelis de Graeff, his brother-in-law. He was Lord of the estates of Ilpenstein and Purmerlant, titles that are included in Blaeu's dedication.

At the opposite end of the economical chain, shifting focus from the side of financing the production of the town atlases of Italy to the buyers Blaeu probably aimed at reaching, members of roughly the same social groups can be identified. Blaeu's Grand Atlas, the largest ever printed, had become known throughout the Dutch Republic as being 'the' atlas: all self-respecting

²²⁰ Simon van Hoorn's father Jacob Claesz. was a brother of Pieter Claesz. Codde, Elisabeth van Hoorn's father. Cfr. <<http://www.geni.com/people/Elisabeth-Pietersdr-van-Hoorn/6000000013837851346>>; <<http://www.geni.com/people/Pieter-Claesz-Codde/6000000013837746593>>; <<http://www.geni.com/people/Simon-Jacobsz-van-Hoorn/6000000013838089534>> (21 May 2014).

²²¹ Elias, *Het Amsterdamsche Regentenpatriciaat*, pp. 115-123; 132-137; <<http://www.genealogieonline.nl/west-europese-adel/I1073879947.php>> (13 May 2014); the Bicker – Van Swieten coats of arms appears on this plate as well, cfr. <http://www.heraldischedatabank.nl/databank/indeling/detail?q_searchfield=cornelis+bicker> (20 June 2014).

²²² *Ibidem*, p. 95; 128; <<http://www.genealogieonline.nl/alle-begijnen-van-amsterdam/I1372.php>> (13 May 2014); the added coats of arms was identified as belonging to the Corver family, cfr. <http://www.heraldischedatabank.nl/databank/indeling/detail?q_searchfield=3+korven> (20 June 2014).

²²³ *Ibidem*, pp. 145-149; 155-157; <<http://www.genealogieonline.nl/west-europese-adel/I1073926249.php>> (13 May 2014); the appearing coats of arms has been ascribed to the 'De Graaf' family, cfr. <http://www.heraldischedatabank.nl/databank/indeling/detail?q_searchfield=spade+zwaan> (20 June 2014).

²²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 138; 148; 153; <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frans_Banning_Cocq> (13 May 2014); the found coats of arms belongs to the Banning Cocq family, cfr. <http://www.heraldischedatabank.nl/databank/indeling/detail?q_searchfield=banning+cocq> (20 June 2014).

merchants and book or map collectors wished to possess this giant work.²²⁵ For its renowned status, the Blaeu Atlas made the perfect gift if one wanted to honour a sovereign or another highly esteemed individual.²²⁶ Joan Blaeu's target market clearly consisted of well-to-do,²²⁷ highly educated readers; this is confirmed by the contents and physical characteristics of the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*. The work is characterised by a high density of information, oriented towards humanist interests, and its appearance can be called anything but plain: the edges gilt and bound in white parchment with gold stamps, the basic features of the volumes are already quite luxurious. In addition, buyers preferring an even more lavish look could have both text and appearance of their book adjusted to personal wishes: examples of this were found in the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* volumes preserved in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek and in the Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum in The Hague. To the first, the abovementioned 'In Titulum' text was added, whereas in the second, part of the atlas²²⁸ of Adriaan Reland (1676-1718),²²⁹ nearly all initials and maps have been coloured by Dirck Jansz. van Santen (1637/38-1708).²³⁰ The Hadrianus Relandus Atlas consists of first editions only, printed on paper of the highest quality, illuminated with transparent colours and gold, that appear strikingly 'fresh' until this day. The atlas was bought in the shop of Albertus Magnus (1642-1689), a bookbinder who after the death of Joan Blaeu in 1673 had started selling atlases and other publications of the Blaeu firm, for 2000 guilders and must then have been offered by an unknown party to Adriaan Reland, professor in Eastern Languages at the university of Utrecht and a cartographer, as a gift on the occasion of his son's birth.²³¹ Reland had a passion for historical geography and travel stories; it is therefore not surprising that Blaeu's town atlases of Italy formed a substantial part of the atlas that was composed with his personal interests in mind.

The most precious collection of maps and related geographical works that has been compiled in the seventeenth century with Blaeu's Grand Atlas as its foundation is the atlas of

²²⁵ De la Fontaine Verwey, 'De glorie van de Blaeu-atlas en de "meester afsetter"', in *idem, In en om de "Vergulde Sonneweyser", Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, p. 195.

²²⁶ This tradition survived into later years: when Joan Blaeu's sons published the town atlas of Piedmont and Savoy in 1682, e.g., one copy, bound in red morocco leather tooled with gold ornaments, was offered as a gift to duke Victor Amadeus II. *Ibidem*, pp. 199-201.

²²⁷ Cfr. 'Op welke wijze Joan Blaeu zijn atlassen afleverde, blijkt uit de in het Frans gestelde catalogus die hij [...] tegen het einde van 1671 uitgaf. De Franse versie van de atlas in twaalf delen was in de winkel verkrijgbaar, gebonden in perkament met gouden stempels en verguld op snee, gekleurd voor f 450,- en ongekleurd voor f 350,-.' *Ibidem*.

²²⁸ In this case consisting of nineteen parts in the largest format: the Latin edition of the *Atlas major* in eleven parts, two volumes of the Dutch town atlas and five of the project on Italian cities. *Ibidem*, pp. 213-214.

²²⁹ <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adriaan_Reland> (21 May 2014).

²³⁰ On the 'Master Colourist' Van Santen, see De la Fontaine Verwey, 'De glorie van de Blaeu-atlas en de "meester afsetter"', in *idem, In en om de "Vergulde Sonneweyser", Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, pp. 202-207.

²³¹ It was from the library of this son, Johan Reland, that the atlas was bought for 415 guilders by Gerard Meerman in 1761. *Ibidem*, pp. 213-214.

Laurens van der Hem (1621-1678),²³² today one of the treasures of the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna. Laurens van der Hem must have made a considerable number of travels and had lived for some time in Italy, before starting to work as a lawyer in Amsterdam. He was as a very wealthy and influential inhabitant of the city, and his house acquired a status quite similar to that of a museum; one of its main attractions was his Blaeu atlas. The collection consists of 46 volumes, plus four supplementary bindings and a portfolio filled with drawings. Various editions of Blaeu's *Atlas major* form the core of the atlas, further supplemented with printed land and sea maps of other publishers, countless manuscript maps, and additions for each treated country from the town atlases of Blaeu and Janssonius; all printed maps of the atlas, moreover, have been coloured by Van Santen.²³³ A great deal of attention has been dedicated to Italy and Sicily, that were described by Laurens van der Hem himself.²³⁴ After Laurens' death in 1678, his atlas passed to Agatha van der Hem, his daughter. She tried to sell the work, but rejected the offer of a representative of the French ambassador, Count d'Avaux, who wanted to buy it for 20.000 guilders, asking 50.000 guilders instead.²³⁵ The Atlas Van der Hem was later put up for auction, probably at the initiative of Agatha's heirs, by the bookseller Adriaan Moetjens in The Hague and sold for 22.000 guilders. In 1737, the atlas was bought in its entirety by emperor Charles VI (1685-1740) and brought to Vienna; the work thus escaped the faith of many similar atlases that were taken apart and sold separately, complicating retrospective identification of the owners that had carefully selected all elements of their atlas collections. Of all four known copies of the Blaeu edition of the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*, it was possible only for the copy preserved in the Museum Meermannno-Westreenianum to trace down the original owner, Adriaan Reland, with certainty.

When considering the socio-historical context surrounding the appearance and contents of the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*, strong ties between the work, the Blaeu publishing firm and both humanist influences and the cultural, intellectual and political context of the Dutch seventeenth century in general thus become strikingly visible. Impressive as the work might appear to us today, this context is essential to any attempt at grasping its full significance at the moment of publication in 1663.

²³² *Ibidem*, pp. 207-213.

²³³ *Ibidem*, pp. 208-210.

²³⁴ It seems likely that elements from Blaeu's town atlas of Rome would have been included in the Atlas Van der Hem, even though no concrete confirmation was provided in the consulted sources. Cfr. *Ibidem*, p. 210; Illustrated and annotated catalogue of the Atlas Van der Hem: E. de Groot and P. van der Krogt, *The World of a Seventeenth-Century Collector: The Atlas Blaeu – Van der Hem* (Houten: HES & DE GRAAF Publishers, 2006).

²³⁵ Earlier, the Grand Duke of Tuscany had offered 30.000 guilders to Laurens van der Hem for his atlas. De la Fontaine Verwey, 'De glorie van de Blaeu-atlas en de "meester afsetter"', in *idem*, *In en om de "Vergulde Sonneweyser"*, *Uit de wereld van het boek*, vol. III, p. 211.

Chapter 4. Reshaping the Town Atlas of Rome:

Blaeu's Legacy in Later Editions

After the three volumes of the *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae* that were published by Joan Blaeu in 1663, the only addition to the Blaeus' Italy atlas that saw the light was the Piedmont and Savoy atlas, entitled *Theatrvvm statvvm regiæ celsitvdinis Sabavdiæ dvcis*. Of this part, a Latin and a Dutch edition were published by the heirs of Blaeu in 1682; in addition, a Dutch (1697) and a French (1700) edition were later brought out by Adriaan Moetjens in The Hague.²³⁶ In the years 1704-1705, Pierre Mortier (1661-1711),²³⁷ a publisher active in Amsterdam, reissued all the original Blaeu maps; he amended and retouched several of them, adding his name on all maps. He also included many new maps of his own design in order to 'fill' the gaps of the first part of the *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae*. Mortier published four volumes with texts in Latin, Dutch and French, treating:²³⁸

- Lombardy (Blaeu's unpublished part 1, sections 3 and 4; all plates are new);
- The Ecclesiastical State (Blaeu's part 1, section 1, reissue of the 1663 Blaeu edition);
- Naples and Sicily (Blaeu's part 1, section 2, reissue of the 1663 edition);
- The monuments of Rome (Blaeu's part 2, reissue of the 1663 edition of section 1, with several plates belonging to other sections).

Following in Mortier's footsteps, The Hague publisher Rutgert Alberts (1691-1732)²³⁹ reissued the Mortier atlas with virtually no alterations in 1724, uniting the work with his edition of the Piedmont and Savoy town atlas.²⁴⁰ In this final chapter, a closer look will be taken at how Joan Blaeu's aspiring project of Italian town atlases lived on after him, giving specific attention to the later editions of the volume on Rome that were published by Mortier and Alberts. The *Galérie Agréable du Monde* published in Leiden by Pieter van der Aa (1659-1733),²⁴¹ will also be briefly taken into consideration, since the contents of this work, though not based directly on Blaeu

²³⁶ See 'Scheme of the Blaeu town atlases of Italy' in Van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*, vol. IV-1, p. 367.

²³⁷ On Mortier, see I.H. van Eeghen, *De Amsterdamse Boekhandel 1680-1725*, vol. III: *Gegevens over de vervaardigers, hun internationale relaties en de uitgaven A-M* (Amsterdam: Scheltema & Holkema NV, 1965), pp. 265-270; M.M. Kleerkooper, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam voornamelijk in de zeventiende eeuw. Biographische en geschiedkundige aantekeningen, aangevuld en uitgegeven door W.P. van Stockum jr* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1914-16), vol. I, pp. 430-447; <<http://explore.rkd.nl/nl/artists/438445>> (25 May 2014).

²³⁸ Van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*, vol. IV-1, p. 366.

²³⁹ On Alberts, see E.F. Kossmann, *De boekhandel te 's-Gravenhage tot het eind van de achttiende eeuw* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1937), pp. 5-7.

²⁴⁰ Here, too, editions were brought out in Latin, Dutch and French. Van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*, vol. IV-1, p. 366.

²⁴¹ On Van der Aa, see P.G. Hoftijzer, *Pieter van der Aa (1659-1733), Leids drukker en boekverkoper* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1999).

material, do seem to suggest that Van der Aa had been inspired by Blaeu. In tracing part of Joan Blaeu's legacy through these various later works, it becomes clear that the interest in Italy and Rome had all but disappeared after the Blaeus had had to leave their *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae* series unfinished.²⁴²

Mortier's Town Atlas of Italy (1704-1705)

Like Joan Blaeu had done before him, Pierre Mortier addressed the reader of his town atlas of Italy in the foreword to the first volume (on Lombardy), elaborating in general terms on his approach. In his 'Den Boekverkooper aan den Leezer' (or 'Le Libraire Au Lecteur' in the French edition), Pierre Mortier stated:²⁴³

It is not necessary to insert a long discourse at the beginning of this work, in order to explain the design, since Italy is a country to which the curious make frequent trips, and which is famous for several ancient monuments, and [which has been] provided with a great amount of noble palaces, churches, and other similar buildings, so that I thought to serve the world; making an exact description of all cities, palaces, churches, sea ports, and everything that one sees most remarkably there.

I have followed the designs of the late Mr Joan Blaeu, Alderman and Senator of the city of Amsterdam, renowned for the Grand Atlases and Town Atlases that saw the light because of him, which makes his name immortal, and to whom one should also ascribe the glory in its entirety; it is indescribable how much energy he dedicated to this work, [and] what expenses [...]; seeing to it that all was drawn on the [related] places themselves. This great man was obliged to discontinue this work owing to a misfortune that became him, fire having taken hold of his workshop.²⁴⁴ It consumed nearly all the plates, the designs and all the materials that he had collected at so much effort and expense.

In order to make up for this misfortune in some way, I have tried to recover everything that was spared by the fire, I have had several designs engraved which had not yet seen the light of day, I have added to them all the new plates and designs, which have been made in Italy, and mainly in Rome.²⁴⁵

²⁴² 'Because of all the setbacks the family had to deal with in the meantime.' See Van Veen, 'A Tuscan Plan of Action,' p. 223.

²⁴³ Translated from the Dutch original in Joan Blaeu, *Het Nieuwe Stede Boek van Italie, ofte naauwkeurige beschrijving van alle deszelfs steden, paleyzen, kerken, &c*, vol. 1: *Lombardye* (Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1704); introduction on the first page, following directly after the engraved title-page.

²⁴⁴ On the fire and its consequences, see De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu and his Sons', p. 18.

²⁴⁵ This passage suggests, as does the document published by Van Veen in 'A Tuscan Plan of Action,' that preparations were carried out throughout Italy and 'mainly in Rome' for the completion of the Blaeus' project of Italian town atlases, even if not all of them resulted in material that was effectively included, for a variety of reasons, in the volumes of Blaeu, and later in those of Mortier and Alberts. It seems probable,

To make this work even more complete, and to give an exact description of the whole of Italy, I have added to all of this the maps of that country. For each part of this work one will find an exact explanation of each plate, even though the same explanation is given in many places.²⁴⁶ I will divide this work into four volumes.²⁴⁷ The first will contain all of Lombardy, including Savoy, and Piedmont; the Republic of Genoa, the Duchy of Milan, Parma, Modena and of Mantua, the Republic of Venice, Lucca, and the grand Duchy of Tuscany. The second will be the description of the Ecclesiastical State. The third will contain the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily. And the fourth will deal with all that is most remarkable in Rome, both ancient and modern.

In this introduction, Mortier referred explicitly to Joan Blaeu as his great predecessor, who, though unable to complete his project of Italian town atlases, had successfully paved the way for others to continue the work. The general scheme underlying Mortier's town atlas resembles Blaeu's,²⁴⁸ even though in a somewhat different order: the volume on the monuments of Rome has changed positions with the volume on Naples and Sicily, and the work on Lombardy was inserted by Mortier as first volume to his entire atlas, whereas Blaeu had intended it as the fourth part of his *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae*.²⁴⁹ In his introduction, Mortier explained in quite

however, that the activities would have left traces in formal and informal documents; some of these may have survived into our times, leaving us with a considerable potential for discovery. The mentioned document related to the Tuscany atlas was discovered more or less by surprise by Van Veen and recognised as a highly relevant addition to the other material from Florentine archives somewhat easier accessible to him; even though the Roman situation is, in this respect, more complicated because of the scattered nature of archival sources available in the city, the fact that, using details given in Blaeu's introduction, some information that was earlier overlooked, included in the letter from Armanni discussed in chapter 3, was retrieved from the collections of the Biblioteca Angelica, is promising. It means that structural research of Rome's main archives, particularly the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, could bring other formerly hidden material related to the production and perception of the town atlas of Italy, including its Rome volume, to light.

²⁴⁶ The new explanations that were added for some of the plates in the later Alberts edition are probably, as an attempt to improve upon the earlier Mortier edition, closely related to this fact.

²⁴⁷ 'The maps and plates of the towns of the first three volumes could be amended with the maps of the provinces. To do this, Mortier used the old copperplates from Blaeu's atlases. [...] these maps were not necessarily included in all copies and [...] customers had the choice to buy these volumes with or without these extra maps. Customers who wanted to add the atlas to their *Atlas maior* had no need for the province maps. However, for those interested only in the town atlas, those maps could be a useful addition. For this reason, a volume without extra maps is not incomplete; it is just a variant edition. In fact copies with the maps are rarer than copies without.' Van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*, vol. IV-1, p. 379.

²⁴⁸ This is also confirmed by the fact that Mortier's introductive part on *Geheel Italie* (All of Italy) consists of the same elements that were mentioned in Van Veen's 'A Tuscan plan of action', treating Italy's name, its topographical division, the quality of its air and land, its rivers, mountains and lakes, finally considering the customs and religion of its population. Cfr. Joan Blaeu, *Het Nieuwe Stede Boek van Italie, ofte naauwkeurige beschrijving van alle deszelfs steden, paleyzen, kerken, &c*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1704), pp. 1-3.

²⁴⁹ See the translation of Joan Blaeu's introduction in the previous chapter: 'The first part of the first section treats the people that recognize the power of the Roman Church, and they take up an entire

some detail how he had tried not only to imitate but also to improve²⁵⁰ Blaeu's work as he had 'tried to recover everything [...] spared by the fire, [...] had several designs engraved which had not yet seen the light of day' and even made the effort of adding 'to them all the new plates and designs, [...] made in Italy, and mainly in Rome.' It seems probable that this was the case for the maps and depictions included in Mortier's town atlas, but not in the original Blaeu edition where a double reference was added by Mortier, stating that the prints could be bought 'chez Mortier' in Amsterdam, but that they had been produced 'par Blaeu.'²⁵¹ Even if Mortier's writings do not contain clear notes on the provenance of the other material included in his edition, on several of his newly added depictions, i.e. on the plates numbered 63, 64, 65, 66 and 68, showing the Capitoline Hill, Monte Cavallo (the Quirinal Hill), the Castel Sant'Angelo, St. Peter's Square and part of St. Peter's Basilica's interior (in the margins of this plate the various ceremonies related to death and election of the Pope are depicted), the phrase 'a Rome par Rossi' was found. This probably means material was taken from the works issued by Giovanni Giacomo De' Rossi,²⁵² head of the seventeenth-century De' Rossi print shop, active in two locations in Rome (in the Via della Pace and on Piazza Navona). Print material of this office is known for the period between 1613 and 1639, and includes the series *Fontane di Roma e altrove* (1618), with engravings by Giovanni Maggi,²⁵³ and the *Urbis Romæ novissima delineatione* (1622, reprinted in 1637), a copy of the map of Rome by Ambrogio Brambilla,²⁵⁴ first published in 1590 by Nicolaus van Aelst (ca. 1526-1613),²⁵⁵ a Flemish engraver who from 1550 to 1612 carried on a considerable commerce in prints in a shop that was located in the same Via della Pace. In addition, the name of Alessandro Specchi (1666-1729),²⁵⁶ a Rome based architect and engraver, appears on depiction no. 67, treating the interior of St. Peter's Basilica.

volume; the second part describes the Catholic kingdoms in the Italian peninsula, the third describes the great Duchy of Etruria, the fourth the Principedom of Lombardy,' etc.

²⁵⁰ This seems in line with the attitude of the earlier mentioned Braun and Hogenberg, who actively involved the readers of their atlas in completing its contents, and Joan Blaeu, who – though somewhat implicitly – expressed a similar stance in the introduction to the first book of his *Civitates Italix*: 'Forgive me, whoever you are who reads this, if I was wrong in some parts, or if you miss something in my work and smile at my attempt.'

²⁵¹ This same reference, plus the original dedications to potential patrons, was found on all depictions already included in the earlier Blaeu edition of the town atlas of Rome. No new dedications referring to potential patronage were found in the Mortier town atlas.

²⁵² On De' Rossi, see F.G. Waller, *Biographisch Woordenboek van Noord Nederlandsche Graveurs* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1938), p. 534; Biographical dictionary of Italians *Treccani*, vol. 39 (1991): <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/de-rossi_res-5a2dba60-87ec-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/de-rossi_res-5a2dba60-87ec-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) (9 June 2014).

²⁵³ An Italian painter and engraver probably born around 1566 in Rome. See biographical dictionary of Italians *Treccani*, vol. 67 (2007) on Maggi: <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-maggi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-maggi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) (9 June 2014).

²⁵⁴ An Italian printmaker and cartographer active in Rome between 1579 and 1599. <http://www.wga.hu/bio_m/b/brambill/biograph.html> (9 June 2014).

²⁵⁵ On Van Aelst, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolaus_van_Aelst> (9 June 2014).

²⁵⁶ Biographical dictionary of Italians *Treccani* on Alessandro Specchi: <<http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/specchi/>> (5 June 2014).

Mortier had evidently dilated the scope of the town atlas of Rome by having it treat 'all that is most remarkable in Rome, both ancient and modern,' instead of focussing solely on the remains of the city's ancient past, as Blaeu had done. This also becomes clear from the subscript 'Rome Ancienne et Moderne' added to the title-page of Mortier's fourth volume, which contains a later edition of the engraved Blaeu title-page.²⁵⁷ Mortier's somewhat different approach is primarily visible when comparing the contents of his town atlas of Rome with the Blaeu volume: not only did Mortier add depictions of the contemporary state of the *Campo Vaccino* (Forum Romanum) and of several of the circuses, obelisks and theatres treated by Blaeu, in his volume other elements were also taken into consideration. In Mortier's atlas, some attention was given to ancient structures not yet considered by Blaeu – e.g. triumphal arches, temples, the Pyramid of Cestius, various columns and the Pantheon – but most noteworthy is the fact that Mortier also treated some of Rome's squares (Piazza del Popolo, Piazza Navona and Piazza Laterano), the Capitoline Hill, the Quirinal Hill, Castel Sant'Angelo and the *palazzi* of the wealthy and powerful Borghese, Farnese and Chigi families.²⁵⁸ It is, moreover, striking that Mortier dedicated much more space to St. Peter's Basilica, that only featured in the background of the Vatican Obelisk in Blaeu's volume. Mortier treated both its exterior and interior, and he included descriptions and explanatory illustrations of other churches and ceremonies important for Rome's clerical communities.

Interestingly enough, the coat of arms belonging to the Chigi family appears on plate 69, a depiction of the *Cathedra Petri* in St. Peter's Basilica,²⁵⁹ separated only a few sheets from the plate (78) dedicated to the Chigi *palazzo*. In the subscript added on plate 69,²⁶⁰ an elaborate description of the appearance of the *cathedra*, Pope Alexander VII (1599-1667)²⁶¹ is mentioned as commissioner behind the placing of the Bishop's throne that was designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680)²⁶² in 1657 and installed in 1666. This particular endeavour was part of the

²⁵⁷ Van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*, vol. IV-1, p. 380.

²⁵⁸ Background information on these edifices is provided in G. Masson, *Italian Villas and Palaces* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1959), pp. 212-217; 244-245; 248-249. The cautious interpretation that the Borghese, Farnese and Chigi were probably somehow involved in the atlas project, most likely as sponsors, seems quite plausible even though no explicit references to any financial support were found.

²⁵⁹ <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedra>> (26 June 2014).

²⁶⁰ Translated from the Latin original to English by Martje de Vries: 'Pope Alexander VII set the *Cathedra* [lit. chair; Bishop's throne] of St. Peter, in an honourable way, inside the church, facing [those] who entered from the threshold, visible from that area, and he decorated [it with] the Holy Church Fathers Athanasius, Iohannes Chrysostemus, Ambrosius and Augustinus, [who] support a unique [and] colossal statue [in] bronze, that includes angels, clouds and heavenly rays surrounding the Holy Spirit, in the appearance of a dove, which crowns the world, being projected over it. The base is made of Jasper [or *iaspis*; a mineral] and other precious and distinct stones. Furthermore, the bronze is covered with gold. In the Holy Year 1666.'

²⁶¹ On Pope Alexander VII, see A. Angeli, M. Butzek and B. Sani, *Alessandro Chigi (1599-1667): Il Papa Senese di Roma Moderna* (Siena: Protagon Editori Toscani, 2000), pp. 17-24; 25-38; 140-200; 379-399.

²⁶² See Biographical dictionary of Italians *Treccani*, vol. 9 (1967) on Bernini: <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gian-lorenzo-bernini_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gian-lorenzo-bernini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) (26 June 2014).

numerous projects carried out during Alexander VII's pontificate, including those on the Piazza San Pietro and other interior embellishments of the Vatican Palace and St. Peter's Basilica. These activities are documented in the engravings of Giovanni Giacomo De' Rossi's 1665 publication *Il Nuovo Teatro delle fabbriche et edificij in prospettiva di Roma moderna*, a work that, quite probably, served Mortier as a source for plate 69 in his edition of the town atlas. Alexander VII's plans for urban renewal in Rome were generally characterised by a greater scope and scale when compared to earlier papal projects of this kind; yet most remarkable are their consistent underlying structure and architectural vision towards glorification and embellishment of the city through strict order. Alexander's ideas were based on the principle of *teatro* or urban theatre; urban interventions in this sense became the settings or manifestations of the dignity of Rome and its status as centre of the Roman Catholic faith. Hence, the small Santa Maria della Pace church and its piazza were, for instance, considered as much a *teatro* as the impressive colonnade that forms the Piazza San Pietro in front of its Basilica.

In general, one could conclude that in the Mortier edition the public places of contemporary Rome enter the scene, whereas in the Blaeu edition attention had been dedicated to structures that had served their main purpose during the city's earlier period of splendour. Mortier's additions to the town atlas of Rome clearly show his broader interest in Rome's contemporary cultural life, even if he too may have been a little overenthusiastic in his promise to treat all remarkable aspects of the city, 'both ancient and modern.' Despite Mortier's attentiveness for contemporary Rome, the separate introduction to his Rome volume²⁶³ is nevertheless entitled 'Description of Ancient Rome,' omitting part of the title of the volume itself ('Description of Ancient and Modern Rome'), and focuses mainly on Rome's earlier rulers; only in the final parts of this text the contemporary population of the city is mentioned. Even though Mortier moved away slightly from Blaeu's example by incorporating contemporary Rome in the contents of his atlas, he was only able to do so to a certain extent; he too must have still felt the obligation to do justice to the city's ancient grandeur.

²⁶³ *Beschrijvinghe van Oud Romen*, in Joan Blaeu, *Het Nieuwe Stede Boek van Italie, ofte naauwkeurige beschrijving van Oud en Nieuw Romen*, vol. 4 (Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1704), pp. 1-3.



Fig. 7. Detail of the Piazza del Popolo in Joan Blaeu, *Het Nieuwe Stede Boek van Italie*, vol. 4 (Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1704).



Fig. 8. Piazza Navona in Blaeu, *Het Nieuwe Stede Boek van Italie*, vol. 4 (Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1704).

Alberts' Town Atlas of Italy (1724)

The four volumes of Mortier's edition of the town atlas of Italy were re-issued in 1724 by Rutger Alberts in The Hague.²⁶⁴ Like Mortier, Alberts published editions with Dutch, French and Latin texts, adding only little new material. Several plates are damaged or show repairs in the Alberts edition,²⁶⁵ though not necessarily the oldest ones still originating from the Blaeu edition, that already show general signs of wear, particularly the unequal spread of ink over various parts of the depictions resulting in their grey and somewhat blurry appearance, in the Mortier edition. The same characteristics were found most remarkably – though not exclusively – in the Alberts edition on the Mortier plates showing the Capitoline Hill (numbered 63) and the Palazzo Chigi (numbered 78, some of the letters have faded almost completely). It is noteworthy that, compared to the obvious deterioration over time of the Blaeu plates, the additions by Mortier generally show more severe signs of wear, suggesting their intensive use and maybe a somewhat lower overall quality than the Blaeu plates.

Like in the Mortier edition, Alberts published the work on Rome as the fourth volume to his town atlas of Italy. On the title-page of his work, Alberts repeated the same engraving used by Mortier and Blaeu, to which he added his own name, stressing his status as the latest publisher of the atlas. In the rest of the work, Alberts' imprint was only found on the last eight plates, that were newly added to the atlas. Further additions by Alberts include a list of subscribers and a second introduction placed before Mortier's 'Roma Antiqua.' By choosing to open his edition of the town atlas of Rome with a 'new and accurate description of ancient and new Rome,'²⁶⁶ Alberts seems to have been even more determined than Mortier to reserve ample space for modern Rome in the work. Yet, this is immediately contradicted by the fact that of the 42-page introduction, only ten pages were dedicated to the 'recent' state of the Eternal City. The introductory parts of the work are followed by a repetition of the contents of Mortier's volume on Rome; only after page 79 the eight plates with explicit references to Alberts appear. On four of them, the name G. de Rossi is encountered; this further supports the hypothesis that the '[De] Rossi' found on the earlier Mortier plates does indeed refer to Giovanni Giacomo De' Rossi.

²⁶⁴ In the Alberts' town atlas of Italy, according to the list of maps found in the second volume of the Dutch edition, provincial maps would have been added. These maps, however, were not found in any actual copy, nor are they mentioned in the lists of maps in the French and Latin edition. Cfr. Van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici*, vol. IV-1, p. 413.

²⁶⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶⁶ *Nova & Accurata Descriptio Romæ Antiquæ & Novæ: Roma Antiqua; Roma Recens* in Joan Blaeu, *Novum Italiæ theatrum, sive accurata descriptio ipsius urbium, palatiorum, sacrarum ædium, &c*, vol. 4 (The Hague: Rutger Alberts, 1724), pp. 1-42.

The eight plates appearing in Alberts' town atlas of Rome that were not included in earlier editions of the work contain:

- A much more elaborate overview of the Colosseum than offered on the plates of Blaeu and Mortier, showing its contemporary state, its interior and architectonical structure;
- A depiction of the Fontana dell'Acqua Paola, located on the Janiculum Hill, that had been built in 1610-1612 to mark the end of the Acqua Paola Aqueduct, and was later restored by Pope Paul V (1552-1621) (including a reference to G. de Rossi, the material was probably taken from the *Fontane di Roma* series);
- A vista of the Palazzo della Grande Curia, where the Curia Apostolica, or Papal Law Courts, had been housed in 1696, showing it from two angles;²⁶⁷
- A façade of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore (with a reference to G. de Rossi);
- An overview of the Pantheon on Piazza della Rotonda, showing its contemporary state and architectonical structure;
- A façade of St. Peter's Basilica, where its underlying ground plan is treated at the bottom of the depiction (with a reference to G. de Rossi);
- St. Peter's Basilica seen from the side (with a reference to G. de Rossi);
- A depiction of the baldachin, a large sculpted bronze canopy designed by Bernini in the years 1623-1634,²⁶⁸ present in St. Peter's Basilica.

Alberts' additions to the town atlas of Rome, in line with the earlier ones of Mortier, seem to reveal the development of a changing attitude towards Rome: parting from Blaeu's purely humanist approach, focussing on the remains of classical antiquity, Mortier had widened the range of monuments worthy of consideration, followed by Alberts who further refined the perspective on these monuments. When comparing the contents of the three editions, the most remarkable feature is the increasing amount of attention dedicated to contemporary Rome; even if most space is still reserved for the ancient monuments of the Eternal City, these are treated from a changing angle, placing more and more emphasis on their surroundings and contemporary state. Furthermore, the public place that is still the centre of Rome's public sphere, the piazza,²⁶⁹ starts to appear, indicating a growing interest in the city's cultural life as it was emerging in the early eighteenth century. Interestingly enough, this development is analogous to the changing attitudes of later Grand Tourists,²⁷⁰ who seem more and more interested in the modern state of monuments and the cultural environment surrounding them as these could be witnessed during their travels.

²⁶⁷ Today, this building is the seat of the Italian Chamber of Deputies and known as Palazzo Montecitorio.

²⁶⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Baldachin> (26 June 2014).

²⁶⁹ On the emerging role of the piazza in Renaissance society as a means to transmit past grandeur to the present, see E. Canniffe, *The History and Meaning of the Italian Square* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 75-112.

²⁷⁰ Cfr. Hornsby, *The Impact of Italy*, pp. 3-8.

Parallels on an even broader, social scale are visible within the context of the 'Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns',²⁷¹ the artistic and literary debate that raged predominantly (though not exclusively) in England and France from the 1690s onwards. If considered in a somewhat simplified manner, two main groups were formed during the dispute: while the Ancients believed that only Classical literature – later expanded to science and arts in general – offered models for excellence, the Moderns questioned the supremacy of Classical civilization, attempting to assert the independence of modern culture from the heritage of Roman and Greek authorities. Precisely this struggle, characteristic for the debate, to prove that contemporary cultural achievements have their own intrinsic value, apart from the accomplishments of the Classical past, is mirrored in the contents of the later Alberts and Mortier editions of the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*. While modern aspects of the Eternal City are now taken into consideration, the fact that their position and autonomous significance have not yet conquered an undisputed status, however, is clear from the great amount of space still reserved for Rome's ancient remains.

Another interesting aspect of the Alberts edition is the fact that it contains a list of subscribers, divided into those purchasing the more luxurious 'Exemplaria Cartâ Majore,' which, literally translating as 'large paper,' refers to the larger folio sheets that had been used, providing more ample margins, and their exceptional overall quality, and the 'Exemplaria Cartâ Vulgari' or common version. A total of 500 copies were bought by 272 different subscribers (of whom 79 chose the 'Cartâ Majore' option, while the other 193 went for the 'Cartâ Vulgari') from all over Europe. To some of the persons on the list, their city of residence was added: copies of the work were sent to places varying from Amsterdam, Arnhem, Haarlem, Middelburg and Den Bosch in the Netherlands, to Bruges, Brussels and Mechelen in Flanders, the French Rouen, the British capital London, Berlin, Leipzig and Hamburg in Germany, and the Italian Venice and Leghorn. Even if the majority of subscribers consisted, as would be expected, of men, some women are included in the list as well: we find Mrs. Maria Elizabet de Waal Lady of Ankeveen (1691-1753)²⁷² (subscription no. 10) and 'Mrs the widow Rubert' appears a great number of times (subscriptions 31, 33, 75 & 76, 121, 125, 131, 135, 167 & 177); other female subscribers are the widows 'Van der Slyph' (103 & 104), 'Bos' (218), 'Bouquet' (231) and 'Ottens and Sons' (470), who had all been married to men active as booksellers at least at some point in their life. As a group, therefore, these latter cases are quite different from private female buyers, in this case presumably Mrs. De Waal and the widow Rubert, whose purchase of the town atlas is much more remarkable in view of both status and financial means generally available to women in this period. For some of the subscribers

²⁷¹ Cfr. Lemma in the Encyclopædia Britannica on the Quarrel:

<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/23376/Ancients-and-Moderns>>;

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quarrel_of_the_Ancients_and_the_Moderns> (16 July 2014).

²⁷² <http://www.buitenplaatsenin nederland.nl/NoordHolland_beschrijvingen/Ankeveen_Ankeveen.html> (10 June 2014).

aristocratic or professional titles, such as Baron, Lord, Duke, Alderman or Senator were added, for instance in the cases of Jacob Godefroy Baron of Boetzelaar (1680-1736),²⁷³ fifth subscriber to the luxury edition, and Jacob Valckenier (1673-1740),²⁷⁴ Alderman and Senator to the city of Amsterdam (subscriber 162), who opted for the ordinary version. In some instances, titles alone, such as 'Her Majesty the Queen of Prussia' (subscription 78), 'the Baron of Bulow' (80) or 'the Lady of Montbail' (81); all 'Cartâ Majore', were listed. Amongst the Italian subscribers,²⁷⁵ the name of Giuseppe Arnaldo Mornini,²⁷⁶ an inhabitant of Leghorn belonging to the intellectual circle surrounding the philosopher Guido Grandi (1671-1742),²⁷⁷ appears several times (subscriptions 293-300; 456-460). All this seems to confirm that the market for the town atlas of Rome still consisted, as had been the case when Joan Blaeu first published the work, mainly of people in the highest ranks of society. Indeed, potential buyers of the work must of course have had both the financial means enabling them to afford the purchase, and – at least ideally – particular intellectual capacities in order to fully appreciate its contents. The more mundane aspects that start to appear in the later editions, however, seem to suggest that, apart from the traditional humanist readership aimed at by Blaeu, Mortier and Alberts were not oblivious to the wishes of a different type of buyer, part of the group of new readers starting to arise at the time, not necessarily highly educated but certainly in possession of substantial capital and interested in travel, Italy and Rome. To them, books like the town atlas would serve mainly as status symbols.

In general, it can be concluded that even if the later editions of the town atlas of Rome show a number of significant differences in relation to the first edition, the contents of the works and the perspective on the city revealed through them are still strongly rooted in the intellectual ideals of humanism and in what Joan Blaeu had envisaged in his foreword to the series of Italian town atlases. Evidently, Blaeu's legacy continued to inspire the compilers of atlases when the original plates of his *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* were no longer used, as becomes apparent when considering Pieter van der Aa's *Galérie Agréable du Monde*, of which two tomes are dedicated to the 'Campagne de Rome, & Rome Ancienne.' Though their contents were not based directly on Blaeu's town atlas of Rome,²⁷⁸ the depictions included in the work show similarities in both style and focus when compared to Blaeu's approach. Despite the fact that in Van der Aa's work a much

²⁷³ <<http://www.genealogieonline.nl/genealogie-van-den-boetzelaar/I118148.php>> (10 June 2014).

²⁷⁴ <<http://www.genealogieonline.nl/west-europese-adel/I1073900567.php>> (10 June 2014).

²⁷⁵ On the place of books in Italian Renaissance households, see Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 164-165.

²⁷⁶ Cfr. <http://electronica2.unifi.it/gori/ind_corrispondenti.htm>;

<http://www.internetculturale.it/opencms/ricercaMagExpansion.jsp?q=&searchType=avanzato&channel__creator=Mornini+Giuseppe+Arnaldo&channel__contributor=Mornini+Giuseppe+Arnaldo&opCha__contributor=OR&opCha__creator=OR> (10 June 2014).

²⁷⁷ Biographical dictionary of Italians *Treccani*, vol. 58 (2002) on Grandi:

<[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guido-grandi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guido-grandi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) (10 June 2014).

²⁷⁸ Cfr. Van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici New Edition*, vol. IV-A1-2: *The Galérie Agréable du Monde by Pieter van der Aa (1728)* (Houten: HES & DE GRAAF Publishers, 2010).

greater range of subjects related to classical Roman society is treated – varying from depictions of temples, circuses and other architectonical structures to aspects such as the Roman calendar and coins –, the parts of the *Galérie Agréable du Monde* dedicated to Rome can be considered, where its selection of topics is concerned, almost as close to Blaeu's Rome volume as the later editions by Mortier and Alberts.²⁷⁹ It seems, nevertheless, that Van der Aa had aimed his work primarily towards the type of reader that Mortier and Alberts had considered only relevant as a possible addition to their main audience. The underlying perspective on Rome revealed in the *Galérie Agréable du Monde*, plus the fact that it appeared only in French and not in Latin, in order not to frighten away potential buyers lacking a classical education, seems to confirm that this work was no longer directed primarily towards a traditional humanist readership. It is very likely that a considerable part of Van der Aa's audience consisted of the new, wealthy readers whose interest in Italy did not necessarily stem from the same humanist ideals that had probably inspired the Blaeus when they started their project of Italian town atlases.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ Especially because in these later editions new subjects start to be treated and a change in the perspective on classical monuments becomes visible, a development that is not clearly detectable in the 'Campagne de Rome, & Rome Ancienne' in the *Galérie Agréable du Monde*. In this light, Van der Aa's work appears somewhat conservative, and its overall style clearly reminds of Blaeu's town atlas of Rome, though this could also be a mere coincidence, due to the miscellaneous nature of the *Galérie Agréable du Monde*; the work was based primarily on Van der Aa's earlier published thesauruses of classical and modern Rome, that are clearly different from Blaeu's town atlas. See Hoftijzer, *Pieter van der Aa (1659-1733)*, pp. 36-41; 60-61; Van der Krogt, *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici New Edition*, vol. IV-A1, pp. 9-21; 30-47.

²⁸⁰ A part from later editions based on or inspired by the works of Blaeu, other interesting ways in which his work is made accessible to a larger audience include the annotated reproduction presented for the Piedmont and Savoye town atlas in M. Bernardi and A. Peyrot, *Le cento più belle vedute del Theatrum Piedmontii* (Turin, Ruggero Aprile, 1970); the contents and production of this town atlas had already been treated quite extensively in F. Rondolino, *Theatre des Etats de Son Altesse Royale le Duc de Savoye, Prince de Piemont, Roy de Cypre [...] (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1964).*

Conclusion: Towards a Changing Perspective on Rome

In this thesis, the history underlying the creation and appearance of Blaeu's *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* has been explored through a discussion of the work's audience, the process of gathering contents, its financing, and finally its perception. The place of the town atlas of Rome in the context of emerging city descriptions and its after life in later editions have also been investigated; the relations between the Netherlands and Italy in the second half of the seventeenth century were a guiding theme through the entire research.

The Italian peninsula clearly exerted a great deal of attraction over various social groups in the Netherlands when the Blaeus started planning their multi-volume atlas of Italian towns. In general terms, the country's appeal in the seventeenth century stems mainly from the great classical heritage that had been found on its soils. Many individuals pursuing the humanist ideals that characterise the intellectual tradition of the period were led to Italy as both an object of study and a travel destination. The emerging social custom of the Grand Tour, which regarded travel as a means towards acquiring enrichment of insight, knowledge and character, is essential in this context: many of the Grand Tourists' itineraries culminated in visits to Italy, and Rome in particular. Even though the travellers would generally be interested in both the historical and contemporary state of the places they visited, upon reaching Rome many of them were primarily interested in the city's ancient remains, of which they often had only been able to see little on their travels so far. This particular, classical focus is clearly reflected in Blaeu's *Admiranda Urbis Romæ*, since its contents – treating the circuses, obelisks and theatres of the Eternal City – reveal a similar humanist scheme.

In addition to the study of classical remains through both travel and literary sources, the setting up and maintaining of Roman antiquity collections formed yet another route towards personal refinement and elevation in the seventeenth century. It has been argued that this trend even had the Italian peninsula as its birthplace; Italy was, in any case, clearly of great relevance in this respect, because of the large amount of antique treasures that could be examined there. In this period, Italy's ancient remains, still largely undiscovered, represented something fresh and unique, undoubtedly a very attractive prospect to curious scholars and others with an interest in the classical past. Furthermore, the elaborate and spectacular collections of art and antiquities that had been assembled in Renaissance Rome were a feature of the city that observers recognised as distinctive, characteristic and worthy of their attention. In this broader social context, the commercial potential of Blaeu's project of Italian town atlases, including its Rome volume, becomes apparent; even though both Joan and Pieter Blaeu must have had a more personal attachment to Italy too, originating from their own travels there, the financial considerations necessarily underlying the venture should not be underestimated.

Amongst various aspects related to the social and economic situation of the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, the relatively liberal commercial and political climate, the impact of the Reformation, the influence of Humanism and scientific advancements, particularly in navigation, were essential elements in the fast rise and great success of Dutch printing. The end of the Eighty Years' War culminating in the formal recognition of the Dutch Republic and the prosperous trade with Asia and the Americas also proved beneficial to the great flourishing witnessed in the Netherlands and the city of Amsterdam during the Dutch Golden Age. The Blaeu publishing house played a considerable role in these developments. The reputation of Willem Jansz. Blaeu, founder of the firm, and his successors Joan, Cornelis and ultimately Pieter, was based mainly on the maps, atlases and related maritime books that were published under their direction. The death of Willem Jansz. in 1638 meant that he had to leave the completion of his life's work, the atlas project, to the next generation of Blaeu publishers. The atlas project was one of the most ambitious objectives an early modern publisher had ever set himself: Blaeu's *Atlas major* was to contain all areas of geography, i.e. chorography, topography, hydography and uranography. However, only the first section, the chorography, was completed, resulting in the five existing versions of the *Atlas major*. Nevertheless, part of the topography section was also published; the unfinished town atlas of Italy, the *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae*, forms a part of this branch of the greater Grand Atlas project.

Joan Blaeu managed to publish only three volumes of the Italy atlas during his lifetime; these volumes, brought out in 1663, describe the Ecclesiastical State (first book of the first part), the ancient monuments of Rome (first book of the second part, the *Admiranda Urbis Romae*) and the towns of Naples and Sicily (incomplete edition of the second book of the first part). A Piedmont and Savoy volume was published in 1682 by Joan Blaeu's heirs, while the planned work on Tuscany was never fully realised. The efforts of Pieter Blaeu, son of Joan, especially in his role as cultural mediator between the Netherlands and Italy, were essential for the Italian town atlases project. Even though sources on the process of gathering and selecting material to be included in the various parts of the *Theatrum civitatum et admirandorum Italiae* are only scarcely available, some information is provided in the introduction to the volume on the Ecclesiastical State. In this text, Joan Blaeu explicitly mentions some of the Italians who provided him with images and text; in addition to various individuals related to ecclesiastical and public administration, we find intellectuals such as the philosopher and lawyer Carlo-Emanuele Vizzani and the writer Vincenzo Armanni. The contents of a letter that accompanied Armanni's contribution seem to suggest that he had submitted material at his own initiative; if this is the case, the Blaeus must have adopted an approach quite similar to that of Braun and Hogenberg, who directly addressed their readers in a request for material if they found information on their own residential towns was still lacking. This would mean, then, that the Braun and Hogenberg atlas had served Joan Blaeu not only as a

source of information, but also of inspiration on how to gather material for his town atlases of Italy.

No other direct references to the strategies in gathering new material are given in Blaeu's introduction, but a document published by Van Veen, identified as a draft memorandum for the Medici Court related to the Tuscany volume, does reveal part of the approach adopted by the Blaeus. In general, this text prescribes that both geographical and historical information on the listed places should be collected orderly, according to a well-defined system. Inhabitants of the towns themselves were regarded the most appropriate sources of information. Armanni's above mentioned contribution, a compilation of historical material on his native Gubbio, meets this requirement, which seems to further confirm that the Blaeus adopted an approach similar both to the example of Braun and Hogenberg and to the one described in the draft memorandum. The document further contains very precise indications as to which aspects should be treated – from the name of each place, to a description of its surroundings, the quality of its location, the distance to the most important cities, its public buildings and history, etc. – and gives some general advice on the quality of sources to be used. The systematic structure of the volumes on Rome, the Ecclesiastical State and Piedmont and Savoy seems to confirm that the Blaeus adopted roughly the same approach outlined in the document in collecting material for all the intended volumes of the Italy atlas. Parting from their predecessors, the Blaeus were thus structuring the process of gathering material, taking it to a new, more elaborate stage. The core of the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* is formed by topographical and architectonical depictions, accompanied by historical descriptions, of four Roman circuses, ten obelisks and six theatres. The Egyptian obelisks brought to the Eternal City in Roman times have received most attention; the works of the Jesuit antiquarian Athanasius Kircher and the architect Domenico Fontana on the subject were Blaeu's main sources for the prints and texts regarding the obelisks.

Some information on the financing of the town atlas of Rome can be deduced from the dedications found in the work. Apart from supporting the hypothesis that the required investments were probably collected mainly through patronage, they provide further confirmation of the strong ties linking the Blaeu family with the cultural and intellectual elite of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic and Amsterdam in particular. The names that appear in the dedications all belong to individuals closely related to the highest ranks of Amsterdam's civic administration. It is likely that the main sponsor for the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* was Simon van Hoorn, a cousin of Elisabeth van Hoorn who had been married to Joan Blaeu's brother Cornelis. Other names found on the dedications are those of Cornelis Bicker, Nicolaes Corver and Cornelis de Graeff, all influential members of the country's intellectual and political circles. The potential buyers of Blaeu's town atlases of Italy belong to the same social group: the contents and physical characteristics of the volume on Rome seem to confirm that the target audience for the work

consisted of well-to-do, highly educated readers, even though only for the copy preserved in the The Hague Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum the original owner, Adriaan Reland, could be identified. The socio-historical context that surrounds the appearance of the town atlas of Rome clearly shows the intense relations between the work, the Blaeu firm and the contemporary Dutch cultural, intellectual and political environment, which was strongly influenced by humanist ideals.

The contents of Blaeu's *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* were reissued in later editions by Pierre Mortier (1704-1705) and Rutgert Alberts (1724). Mortier explains in his introduction to the complete series how he had tried to follow in Blaeu's footsteps: not only had he reproduced the contents of the earlier town atlases, he had also added material produced for Blaeu that had not yet been published. Mortier had, moreover, added entirely new material, including plates probably taken from works published by Giovanni Giacomo De' Rossi in Rome and others; on one plate a reference to the architect and engraver Alessandro Specchi was found. Whereas Blaeu had only treated the ancient remains that were still present in Rome, Mortier chose to include information on some of the city's other highlights as well. In his edition, furthermore, some antique structures are discussed which had not been considered by Blaeu. Most noteworthy is the fact that depictions of the Piazza del Popolo, Piazza Navona, Piazza Laterano, the Capitoline Hill, the Quirinal Hill, Castel Sant'Angelo and the *palazzi* of the Borghese, Farnese and Chigi families are included. Additionally, in the Mortier edition St. Peter's Basilica is treated more extensively. Even though Mortier's claim to treat all remarkable aspects of the city, 'both ancient and modern', was probably a bit exaggerated, it is interesting to observe how some of the public places of contemporary Rome appear in this later edition.

In the Alberts edition, only eight plates were added to the contents of the Mortier atlas, offering the reader a more elaborate view of the Colosseum, depictions of the Fontana dell'Acqua Paola, the Palazzo della Grande Curia, the façade of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, the Pantheon as seen from the Piazza della Rotonda, two new perspectives of St. Peter's Basilica and an illustration of the baldachin inside that church. Despite the fact that Alberts stressed his intention to devote much attention to modern Rome, most of the contents is still taken up by the description of ancient Rome. On four of Alberts' newly added plates the name G. de Rossi is found; this probably refers to the same '[De'] Rossi' identified for the earlier Mortier depictions. Among De' Rossi's publications, most relevant in this respect are the series *Fontane di Roma e altrove* (1618), the *Urbis Romæ novissima delineatione* (1622, reprinted in 1637) and *Il Nuovo Teatro delle fabriche et edificij in prospettiva di Roma moderna* (1665), since the Mortier and Alberts additions with references to De' Rossi were most likely based on some of these works' contents.

While Mortier's additions to the town atlas of Rome show a widening range of monuments considered worthy of attention, on Alberts' new plates even more highlights are depicted; in addition, the perspective on all treated sites seems further refined in the latest edition of the town

atlas, since a greater emphasis is placed on their surroundings and contemporary state. Compared to Blaeu's original edition, then, the later editions of the work reveal a gradually changing attitude towards Rome: parting from the purely humanist approach, which treats only the antique remains, an increasing amount of attention is given to the cultural achievements of contemporary Rome at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Even if this may indicate that the interests of a new kind of reader, part of the group starting to enter the book market at the time, not necessarily highly educated but with considerable financial resources and an interest in travel, Italy and Rome, were not ignored completely by Mortier and Alberts, information included in the subscription list in the Alberts edition reveals that the majority of buyers still belonged to the most privileged social groups. Within this group too, however, a change in attitudes and interests is visible in this period: the accounts of later Grand Tourists, e.g., show their growing concern for the modern state of monuments and the cultural environment surrounding them.

The audience that could be identified for the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* through the mentioned subscription list indicates that, similarly to the highly elitist character of early-modern travel to Rome, the opportunity to discover the city on paper through works like the town atlas remained equally available primarily for people from the highest ranks of society. While a steady humanist approach is visible in the contents of Blaeu's edition of the *Admiranda Urbis Romæ* that still form the core of later editions, the town atlases of Rome published by Mortier and Alberts show a changing and more balanced attitude towards the Eternal City, combining elements from both the past and the present. The fact that this development is in many respects analogous to the artistic and literary debate that heated up at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the 'Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns', forms yet another piece of proof for the fact that the activities and decisions of publishers can never be fully understood separately from the society in which they operate.

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