

**Antoon van Wijngaerde's drawings of cities in the low countries  
Cleverly constructed city views for Philip II**

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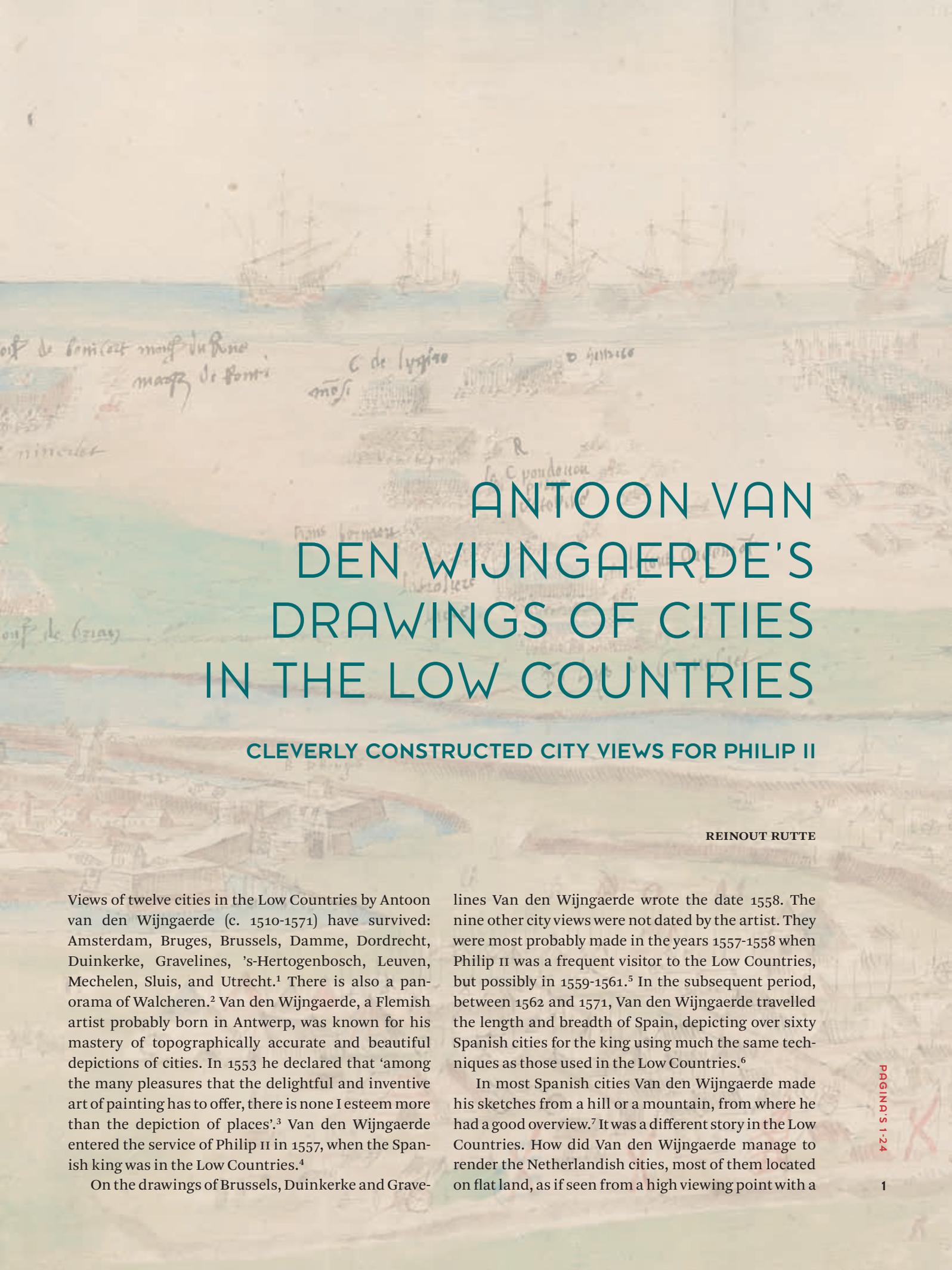
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# ANTOON VAN DEN WIJNGAERDE'S DRAWINGS OF CITIES IN THE LOW COUNTRIES

## CLEVERLY CONSTRUCTED CITY VIEWS FOR PHILIP II

REINOUT RUTTE

Views of twelve cities in the Low Countries by Antoon van den Wijngaerde (c. 1510-1571) have survived: Amsterdam, Bruges, Brussels, Damme, Dordrecht, Duinkerke, Gravelines, 's-Hertogenbosch, Leuven, Mechelen, Sluis, and Utrecht.<sup>1</sup> There is also a panorama of Walcheren.<sup>2</sup> Van den Wijngaerde, a Flemish artist probably born in Antwerp, was known for his mastery of topographically accurate and beautiful depictions of cities. In 1553 he declared that 'among the many pleasures that the delightful and inventive art of painting has to offer, there is none I esteem more than the depiction of places'.<sup>3</sup> Van den Wijngaerde entered the service of Philip II in 1557, when the Spanish king was in the Low Countries.<sup>4</sup>

On the drawings of Brussels, Duinkerke and Grave-

lines Van den Wijngaerde wrote the date 1558. The nine other city views were not dated by the artist. They were most probably made in the years 1557-1558 when Philip II was a frequent visitor to the Low Countries, but possibly in 1559-1561.<sup>5</sup> In the subsequent period, between 1562 and 1571, Van den Wijngaerde travelled the length and breadth of Spain, depicting over sixty Spanish cities for the king using much the same techniques as those used in the Low Countries.<sup>6</sup>

In most Spanish cities Van den Wijngaerde made his sketches from a hill or a mountain, from where he had a good overview.<sup>7</sup> It was a different story in the Low Countries. How did Van den Wijngaerde manage to render the Netherlandish cities, most of them located on flat land, as if seen from a high viewing point with a



1. View of Gravelines by Antoon van den Wijngaerde, dated July 1558 (Stedelijk Prentenkabinet Antwerp)

sweeping view of the city and the surrounding landscape? The general method by which Van den Wijngaerde constructed his views of cities in the Low Countries is the focus of this article.

#### A BIG PROJECT

In research into Van den Wijngaerde's drawings of the Spanish cities it has been argued that they served as a basis for the large painted city views that Philip II loved to hang in the Alcázar, his palace in Madrid. All of those paintings were lost during the fire that destroyed the royal palace in the Spanish capital in 1734. However, there are descriptions by visitors to the palace, who reported admiringly on the magnificent paintings by Antonio de las Viñas – the Spanish version of Antoon van den Wijngaerde – of cities in Spain, Italy and the Low Countries. Amsterdam, Dordrecht, Ghent and Gravelines were mentioned by name.<sup>8</sup>

We do not know precisely which cities in the Low Countries were captured by Van den Wijngaerde; no written commission or list of cities to be depicted has survived. We can only guess at the criteria Van den Wijngaerde employed in selecting the cities he drew. Nevertheless, two groups can be distinguished. On the one hand there are what were the largest and most important cities in 1560: Bruges, Mechelen, Brussels,

Leuven, 's-Hertogenbosch, Utrecht, Dordrecht and Amsterdam. No drawings of Antwerp or Ghent are known, but Ghent at any rate is mentioned in accounts by visitors to the Alcázar. So it is not inconceivable that the artist drew these two cities as well. On the other hand we have a quartet of smaller cities: Gravelines, Duinkerke, Damme and Sluis. What these cities have in common is that they are Flemish ports close to the North Sea, which Philip II was familiar with from his channel crossings to visit his wife, Mary Tudor, the Queen of England.<sup>9</sup>

Gravelines had another claim to fame in that it was where the Spanish king won an important victory over the French in July 1558, which Van den Wijngaerde incorporated into his city view (fig. 1).<sup>10</sup> The detailed depiction of this battle in the landscape around the city, sets this drawing apart from the other eleven city views, which are primarily concerned with producing a topographically accurate and attractive representation of the city. In this article the main features of the drawings of these eleven cities are analysed. Unlike Van den Wijngaerde's over sixty Spanish city views, his drawings of the cities in the Low Countries have never previously been the subject of comparative analysis.<sup>11</sup>

The art historian Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann wrote a fine article about Van den Wijngaerde's Span-



ish city views, in which he convincingly demonstrated that the artist constructed some of those views on the basis of a series of preparatory sketches, namely studies of the entire city or large parts of it, studies of details of the city and situational studies of the city in the landscape.<sup>12</sup> Van den Wijngaerde ingeniously composed the finished city view from these different types of preparatory studies, which were drawn mainly from elevated viewpoints in the environs of the city.

The following analysis elaborates on the work of Haverkamp-Begemann. In determining the positions Van den Wijngaerde adopted when drawing the cities in the Low Countries, I have made grateful use of the town plans of his contemporary, Jacob van Deventer (c. 1500-1575).<sup>13</sup> Van Deventer started mapping cities in the Low Countries in around 1540 and in 1558-1559 he secured a commission from Philip II to compile the maps of the cities in the Spanish Netherlands in three atlas volumes. Like Van den Wijngaerde, Van Deventer was meticulous in his work and strove to produce reliable representations of the cities in the landscape. This is what makes Van Deventer's maps an especially suitable aid in reconstructing Van den Wijngaerde's working method, according to the principle: look, compare, reason, see and understand.

#### CONSTRUCTION IN THREE PARTS: BRUGES, UTRECHT AND 'S-HERTOGENBOSCH

Bruges is the only city in the Low Countries for which we have both the finished city view as well as several preparatory drawings: a sketch of Bruges seen from the south-west (fig. 2a), in which prominent buildings are identified by name, the landscape outside the walls is partially depicted, and in the margin there are several vignettes of details; a sketch of a large part of the city (fig. 2b) in which prominent buildings are also named and in the foreground a roofscape stands out, suggesting that this drawing was made from a high point, such as a city gate or a windmill, on the southern edge of the city; and, finally, a sketch in which the perimeter of the city is indicated with a line, but the city in the foreground is not drawn in and the focus is on the wider surrounding landscape (fig. 2c), suggesting that Van den Wijngaerde made this drawing from the highest point in Bruges, the belfry atop the Cloth Hall. In this third drawing the names are written above silhouettes of places and church towers on the horizon. These three preparatory sketches are the key to unravelling how the artist put together the finished, coloured city view of Bruges (fig. 2d) and the views of the ten other cities in the Low Countries.

From the four drawings of Bruges we can deduce





2a. Preparatory drawing for a view of Bruges by Antoon van den Wijngaerde [1557-1558] (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford)



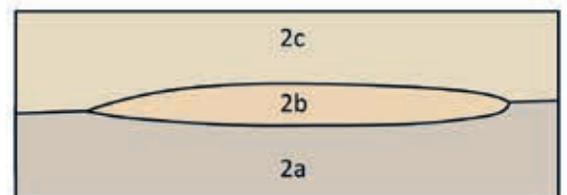
2b. Preparatory drawing for a view of Bruges by Antoon van den Wijngaerde [1557-1558] (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford)



2c. Preparatory drawing for a view of Bruges by Antoon van den Wijngaerde [1557-1558] (Victoria & Albert Museum, London)



2d. View of Bruges by Antoon van den Wijngaerde [1557-1558] (Stedelijk Prentenkabinet Antwerp) and diagram of component parts (approximate)





3. Detail of Bruges town plan by Jacob van Deventer, c. 1564 (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid), with approximate location of Antoon van den Wijngaerde's viewing points and line of sight

that Van den Wijngaerde set to work as follows. He began by seeking out the highest point outside the city, which turned out to be a sand ridge on the south-west side, clearly recognizable in Jacob van Deventer's map from its yellow colour (fig. 3). From that high viewpoint (A in fig. 3) he recorded the view of the city (fig. 2a), including the landscape in the immediate vicinity of the defensive works and the buildings along the roads out of the city. He then climbed a high viewpoint on the south-western perimeter of the city – a windmill or city gate (B in fig. 3) – from where he once again sketched what he saw, looking as far as possible in the same direction as from his viewpoint outside the city

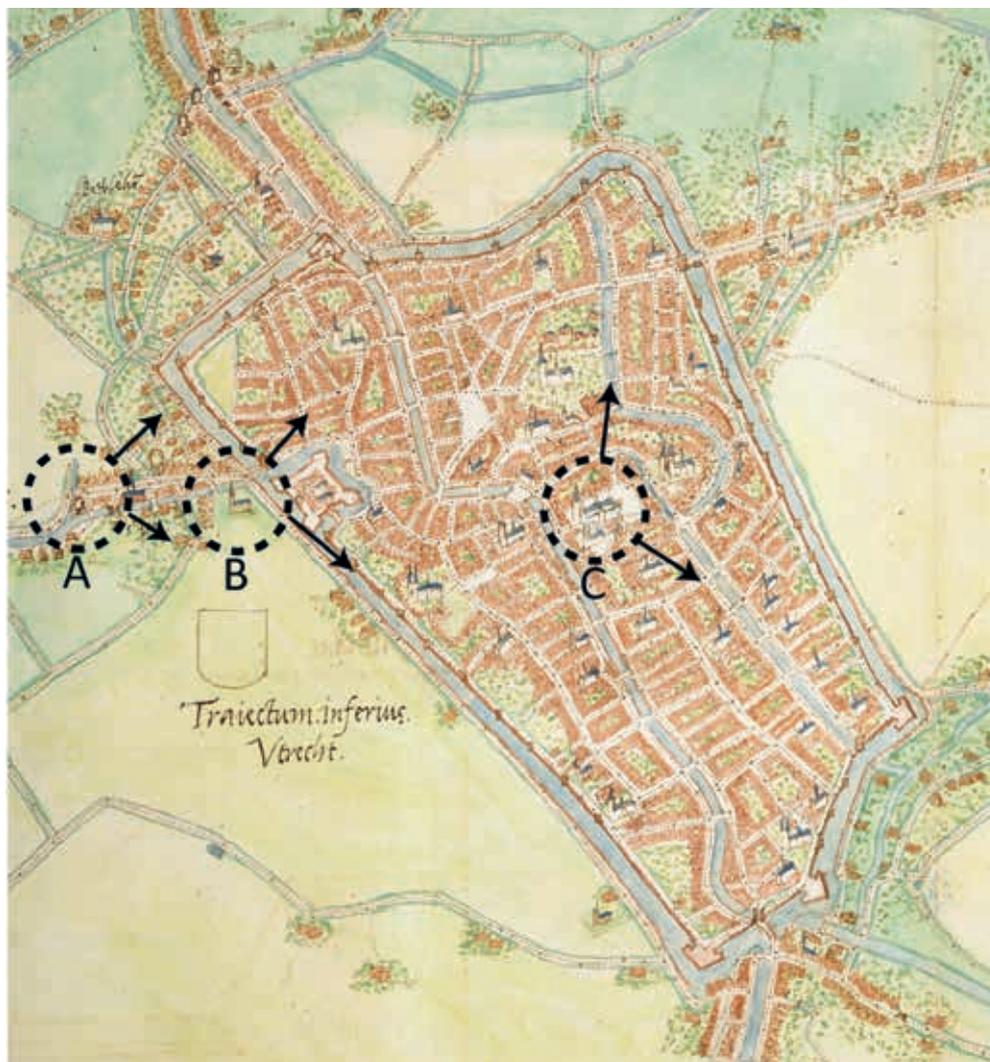
(fig. 2b). The first sketch gives a profile of the city including the defensive works. The second sketch differs from the first not only in the absence of the defensive works, but also in the oblique view above the sea of roofs. For the third study (fig. 2c) Van den Wijngaerde climbed the highest tower in Bruges (C in fig. 3), once again looking in the same direction but with a wider perspective, drawing the landscape outside the city as far as the horizon. Based on these three preparatory sketches the artist was then able to compose the finished city view (fig. 2d). For the landscape in the foreground and the defensive works he used the first study (fig. 2a), for the city itself the second (fig. 2b) and for the

prominent buildings possibly both the first and second sketches. He used the drawing made from the highest viewpoint (fig. 2c) for the rest of the landscape and the panoramic view. In the finished city view place names are also indicated on the horizon and the names of prominent buildings on roofs or beside towers.

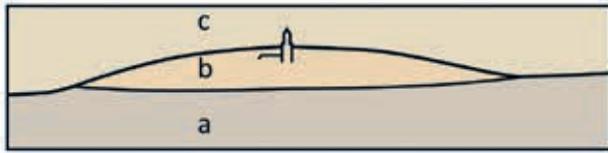
No preparatory sketches of the other ten cities have survived. However, the method used for Bruges does provide starting points for exploring how Van den Wijngaerde made the other city views. It should be noted here that the author is perfectly aware that any clues gleaned from the illustrations in this article as to the components from which these city views may have been constructed and as to the possible viewpoints adopted by the artist, are only approximate. Antoon van den Wijngaerde's city views are not photographic representations and Jacob van Deventer's town plans are not dimensionally stable topographic maps, even though both are – especially for their time – exceptionally reliable.

The city views of Utrecht and 's-Hertogenbosch

have a similar tripartite set-up as Bruges. In his search for a high viewpoint in Utrecht, Van den Wijngaerde ended up on the north-western side (A in fig. 4). The artist drew the city, possibly from the windmill shown on that spot in Van Deventer's map, looking in an easterly and south-easterly direction (section a in fig. 5). Two things stand out: the prominence given to the buildings outside the city walls in the foreground left, and the distortion that occurs to the right as a result of the oblique angle from which Van den Wijngaerde observed the view to the south-east. Prominent buildings in the city may have been drawn from the same high viewpoint in the north-west – most of the churches, given the rendering of the naves, were recorded from the north – but for the sea of roofs and houses a different high viewpoint close to the edge of the city would have been used, possibly the tower of the chapel just outside the walls in Van Deventer's map (B in fig. 4). Preparatory studies of parts of the roofscape may also have been made from church towers on the west side of the city, for example the Mariakerk and the Jacobikerk. Compared with Bruges, Utrecht looks



4. Detail of Utrecht town plan by Jacob van Deventer, c. 1568-1569 (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid), with approximate location of Antoon van den Wijngaerde's viewing points and line of sight



5. View of Utrecht by Antoon van den Wijngaerde [1557-1561] (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford) and diagram of component parts (approximate)





6. View of 's-Hertogenbosch by Antoon van den Wijngaerde [1557-1561] (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford) and diagram of component parts (approximate)



7. Detail 's-Hertogenbosch town plan by Jacob van Deventer, c. 1545 (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Brussels), with approximate location of Antoon van den Wijngaerde's viewing points and line of sight



like an island in the landscape in Van den Wijngaerde's city view (section b in fig. 5). The horizon and the landscape to the north, east and south-east (section c in fig. 5) were undoubtedly drawn from the tower of the cathedral: the Domtoren (C in fig. 4).

As in Utrecht, in his search for a high viewpoint in the flat countryside around 's-Hertogenbosch, Van den Wijngaerde probably had to fall back on a windmill. He drew 's-Hertogenbosch from the south-west. For the view of the city in the landscape (section a in fig. 6) he most probably used the windmill that Van Deventer depicted at some distance from the city walls (A in fig. 7); for the view of the roofs in the city (section b in fig. 6) the windmill immediately outside the city

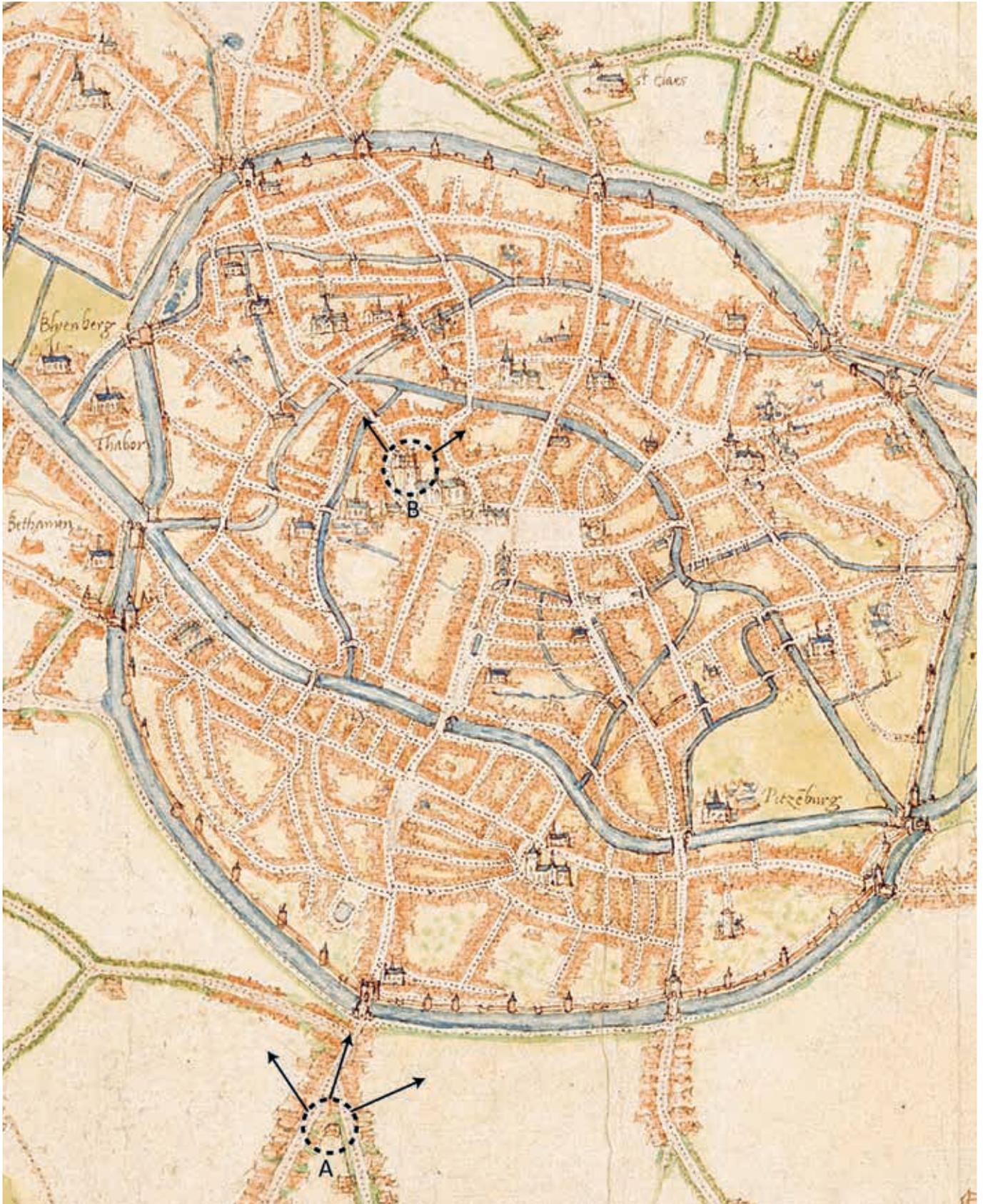
gate or the city gate itself (B in fig. 7). Drawing 's-Hertogenbosch from the south-west corner produces an even greater distortion than in the view of Utrecht in the right-hand section of the city view. The very precise depiction of the Sint-Janskerk suggests that the artist used it for a preparatory detail study, which may also have been the case for the Domtoren and cathedral in Utrecht. The tower of the Sint-Jan church (C in fig. 7) was essential for capturing the horizon in the north and the panoramic view of the landscape (section c in fig. 6). It is tempting to assume that in the city views of both Utrecht and 's-Hertogenbosch, the artist deliberately gave the windmill he used as his high viewpoint and which determined his direction of view a promi-

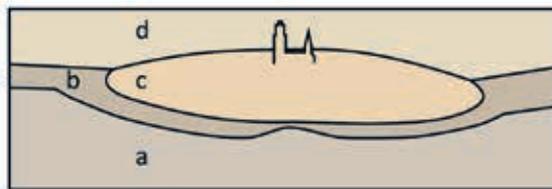
ment place in the foreground. In this respect it is significant that in the finished view of Bruges, Van den Wijngaerde sketched a small figure in the act of drawing on the site of his directional viewpoint atop the sand ridge outside the city (fig. 2d).

#### STRUGGLE: MECHELEN AND AMSTERDAM

At first sight it would appear that the tripartite working method was also used for Mechelen. A high viewpoint outside the city can be pinpointed on Jacob van Deventer's map of the city (A in fig. 8). From that point

8. Detail of Mechelen town plan by Jacob van Deventer, c. 1560-1565 (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Brussels), with approximate location of Antoon van den Wijngaerde's viewing points and line of sight





9. View of Mechelen by Antoon van den Wijngaerde [1557-1558] (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford) and diagram of component parts (approximate)

Van den Wijngaerde looked in a northerly direction straight along the main road to Mechelen. But there is something odd about the landscape to left and right of the ribbon development along that road (section a in fig. 9). The scale is too big compared with the city walls, which is evident, for example, in the size of the trees. Van den Wijngaerde probably drew the walls and bits of landscape immediately to the west and east of Mechelen (section b in fig. 9) from a different, difficult to determine viewpoint further away from the city than the road with ribbon development and flanking landscape. The buildings inside the city (section c in fig. 9) were probably drawn from several points, possibly towers along the city walls. Because of this varying line of sight, the buildings appear to lean forwards.

Combining the preparatory studies from three different viewpoints proved to be no easy task and Van den Wijngaerde was forced to engage in considerable sleight of hand in fitting them together. The most convincing features of the Mechelen city view are the landscape and the horizon on the north side which, as with the other cities, was the easiest section (d in fig. 9) because it consists of a vista from the highest point in the middle of the city. In Mechelen that was the tower of the Sint-Rombout church (B in fig. 8).

The city view of Amsterdam (fig. 10) attests to an even greater struggle than in Mechelen. Of the eleven city views, this one suffers most from distortion and deformation. It is possible that Van den Wijngaerde was frustrated by the lack of any high point outside the



city capable of determining his direction of view. In the absence of any such point he appears to have sketched the city from several unspecifiable viewpoints, looking south from the northern shore of the IJ or from ships' masts, with the result that the waterfront looks disproportionately wide. Some parts of the city may have been drawn from the tower of the Oude Kerk, other parts from different towers. The Oude Kerk and the Nieuwe Kerk appear to be based on detail drawings and to have been 'parachuted' into the cityscape which, as in the view of Mechelen, appears to lean forwards. At top left, the river Amstel flows into Amsterdam at an odd angle. Clearly, the viewpoints and lines of sight Van den Wijngaerde had recourse to for his preparatory sketches diverged so much that it

proved well-nigh impossible to combine them as convincingly as in the city views of Bruges or Utrecht. Moreover, the pronounced distortion and deformation may have been due to the fact that Van den Wijngaerde also made use of Cornelis Anthonisz's 1538 bird's-eye view painting of Amsterdam, which hung in the town hall, or the woodcut of it in 1544.<sup>14</sup>

#### INGENIOUS SOLUTION: DORDRECHT

That there were other solutions to the lack of a directional high viewpoint outside the city, Van den Wijngaerde demonstrated in his view of Dordrecht. Dordrecht lay like an island in the midst of major rivers and the expanses of water resulting from flooding. The artist devised a ruse to get around this. He climbed the



10. View of Amsterdam by Antoon van den Wijngaerde [1557-1561] (Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

tower of the Grote Kerk (A in fig. 11) and sketched the view over the water and the landscape around the city, with special attention to the horizon in the east (section a in fig. 12). He used that horizon to suggest a line of sight and to conceal the fact that the entire landscape outside the city was recorded from a single high point inside the city: the church tower. The suggestion of a view of Dordrecht from the west was reinforced by two other stratagems. Firstly, Van den Wijngaerde exploited the Grote Kerk's location in the extreme south-west corner: looking east from the tall church tower he was able to capture the greater part of the buildings in the city (section b in fig. 12). Secondly, he drew the western waterfront of the city from the other side of the river left, possibly from the dike (B in fig. 11) or from the mast of a ship (section c in fig. 12). The prominent siting of the Grote Kerk, to all appearances

based on a detail drawing, and the nave rotated to the left vis-à-vis its actual orientation, completes this ingenious solution in the absence of a high viewpoint outside the city.

#### ONE, TWO OR MORE COMPONENT PARTS: DAMME, DUINKERKE AND SLUIS

The surviving, uncoloured, drawing of Damme may well be a preliminary sketch. Likewise the view of Sluis. Nevertheless, both can readily be discussed in the series of eleven views of cities in the Low Countries. The drawing of Damme must have been composed from several preparatory studies. For the landscape in the foreground (section a in fig. 13), Van den Wijngaerde stood some distance away on the south-western side of the city (A in fig. 14), for the profile of Damme possibly also at a second point closer to the city perimeter (B in fig. 14). The buildings in the city (section b in fig. 13) could have been drawn from the towers of the rather



prominently depicted city gate (C in fig. 14). This gate, the town hall with steeple and the church to the right would have been based on detail drawings. The view over the landscape behind the city as far as the horizon (section c in fig. 13) is, as usual, drawn from the highest point in the city, in this case the tower of the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk (D in fig. 14).

The view of Duinkerke differs in that it only provides a silhouette and no vista of the landscape beyond the city (fig. 15). In other words, Van den Wijngaerde did not look out onto and over the city from above. Here, too, he eschewed the tripartite approach. In order to show both the west side and some of the south side of the wall, he took up two viewpoints in the dunes to the west of Duinkerke (A and B in fig. 16). He then pieced the two preliminary sketches together as they were (see sections a and b in fig. 15) to achieve the desired result in the finished city view. These different viewpoints also explain the deformation of the dike in

the foreground right.

In the case of Sluis, there was no need to make studies from different viewpoints and combine them, thanks to the presence of an excellent high point to the west of the city. The artist was no doubt pleased with the church tower of Sint-Anna-ter-Muiden (A in fig. 17), which offered a wonderful view of the waterfront and silhouette of Sluis, which he duly recorded in the drawing (fig. 18).

#### **PANORAMA FROM A SINGLE HIGH VIEWPOINT: LEUVEN AND BRUSSELS**

When it came to the city views of Leuven and Brussels Van den Wijngaerde had a relatively easy time, because the environs of both cities contained a high point that offered an expansive view of the city and encircling landscape, as far as the horizon. The entire city view could be captured from that single point, although it is not inconceivable that he made preparatory sketches

11. Detail of Dordrecht town plan by Jacob van Deventer, c. 1545 (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid), with approximate location of Antoon van den Wijngaerde's viewing points and line of sight



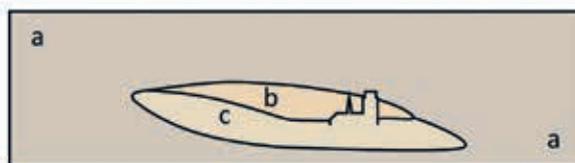
and detail drawings of prominent buildings. Studies from multiple viewpoints were not, however, necessary for these two cities. In Leuven (fig. 19) he was able to take up a position on the hill to the west of the city (A in fig. 20). From there the artist had an impressive view over the city and the wider surroundings. It is tempting to think of him contentedly sitting drawing there, without having to bother about clever ruses like those that had been necessary in making city views in the flat areas of the Low Countries, in particular the Northern Netherlands. Brussels (fig. 21), like Leuven, was by comparison relatively easy to capture. From Laken in the north, Van den Wijngaerde had an excellent view of the city in the landscape. It is no accident that the city views of Brussels and Leuven make a very convincing impression; the landscape setting allowed for a depiction from a single viewpoint with a single line of sight. Which only makes the views of cities

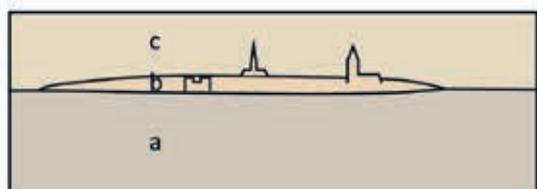
where this was not the case and Van den Wijngaerde was obliged to employ considerable ingenuity in constructing his views using multiple preparatory studies from different viewpoints, all the cleverer.

#### CONCLUSION

In setting up his city views, Antoon van den Wijngaerde followed a set routine but also made clever use of the situation on the ground. He liked to avail himself of a high point outside the city and let it determine his direction of view. When several preparatory studies proved necessary he preferred to make them all looking in the same direction as that made from outside the city, drawing the roofscape and prominent buildings in the city from the city perimeter and the wider surroundings from the highest point inside the city. This method produced the city views of, among others,

12. View of Dordrecht by Antoon van den Wijngaerde [1557-1561] (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford) and diagram of component parts (approximate)





13. View of Damme by Antoon van den Wijngaerde [1557-1558] (Victoria & Albert Museum, London) and diagram of component parts (approximate)

Bruges and Utrecht, that were basically composed from three preparatory studies. When the local situation did not permit this approach, or only partially, he sought alternatives. In Dordrecht this was an artful solution that compels admiration. In Mechelen, where the tripartite set-up with the same direction of view was problematical, Van den Wijngaerde resorted to preliminary studies from more than three viewpoints. Amsterdam was even trickier. There, in addition to a series of preparatory sketches with difficult to determine viewpoints and different lines of sight, he made use of an existing bird's-eye view by Cornelis Anthonisz. It is assumed that Van den Wijngaerde availed himself of existing bird's-eye views or city plans for other cities as well, including those of his contemporary Jacob van Deventer.<sup>15</sup> It is equally possible that Amsterdam was an exception, which would explain why the city view of Amsterdam deviates from those of other cities in the

Low Countries where it appears that the artist had no need of city plans. It is unlikely that he used Van Deventer's city plans because most of them were not completed until the period (1562-1571) when Van den Wijngaerde was busy with his major project in Spain.<sup>16</sup>

If we compare the results of the analysis of Low Countries cities with the Spanish city views, the following points stand out.<sup>17</sup> Owing to the presence of hills or mountains in the vicinity of most Spanish cities, Van den Wijngaerde was usually able to employ the same method there as in Leuven and Brussels. In some cases, such as Granada and Málaga, he appears to have used a working method similar to that used in Duinkerke, which is to say a combination of several viewpoints outside the city. In a great many of the Spanish cities he depicted Van den Wijngaerde marked his viewpoint outside the city, usually with tiny figure in the act of drawing or pointing, sometimes with a



14. Detail of Damme town plan by Jacob van Deventer, c. 1564 (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid), with approximate location of Antoon van den Wijngaerde's viewing points and line of sight

prominently depicted building in the foreground. Here he was using the city views of Bruges, Utrecht and 's-Hertogenbosch as a model for his Spanish views. In the finished city views of cities in both the Low Countries and Spain, naming the prominent buildings was the rule; only on the silhouette of Duinkerke are names missing. In some of the finished Spanish city views this notation took the form of a legend from 1564 onwards. Instead of names beside the towers or on the roofs, there are letters and numbers which are explained in a list at the edge of the drawing. Only for a very small number of Spanish city views (Zaragoza, Valencia, Barcelona, Jerez de la Frontera and Alcalá de Henares) is it possible that the artist consulted existing city plans. So they, like Amsterdam, are exceptions. Van den Wijngaerde preferred to rely on his own observations.





15. View of Duinkerke by Antoon van den Wijngaerde, dated July 1558 (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford), and diagram of component parts (approximate)



16. Detail of Duinkerke town plan by Jacob van Deventer, c. 1570 (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid), with approximate location of Antoon van den Wijngaerde's viewing points and line of sight





← a | b →



17. Detail of Sluis town plan of c. 1564 by Jacob van Deventer, c. 1570 (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid), with approximate location of Antoon van den Wijngaerde's viewing points and line of sight

18. View of Sluis by Antoon van den Wijngaerde [1557-1558] (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford)





19. View of Leuven by Antoon van den Wijngaerde [1557-1558] (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford)



20. Detail of Leuven town plan by Jacob van Deventer, c. 1560-1565 (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Brussels), with approximate location of Antoon van den Wijngaerde's viewing points and line of sight





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- 1 In M. Galera i Monegal, *Antoon van den Wijngaerde, pintor de ciudades y de hechos de armas en la Europa del Quinientos. Cartobibliografía razonada de los dibujos y grabados, y ensayo de reconstrucción documental de la obra pictórica*, Barcelona 1998, 91-216, Antoon van den Wijngaerde's entire body of work – over two hundred drawings; no paintings have survived – are reproduced in black-and-white, arranged by current location. R. Rutte and B. Vannieuwenhuyze, *Stedenatlas Jacob van Deventer. 226 stadplattegronden uit 1545-1575. Schakels tussen verleden en heden*, Bussum/Tielt 2018, 62-63, 72-73, 78-79, 94-95, 232-233, 250-251, 300-301, 334-335, 382-383, contains Van den Wijngaerde's city views of twelve cities in the Low Countries in colour.
- 2 The panorama of Walcheren is a drawing over ten metres wide, consisting of glued together sheets showing the coast of the island more or less all round, seen from the abbey tower in Middelburg. The Walcheren towns are depicted schematically and are different in character from the views of the twelve cities in the Low Countries. For this reason the panorama of Walcheren was not considered in this article. For a complete coloured reproduction of the panorama, which is in the collection of the Nationaal Scheepvaartmuseum [National Maritime Museum] in Antwerp
- 3 This is taken from the first sentence of the explanation that Antoon van den Wijngaerde included in a box at top left in his 1553 city view of Genoa: 'Fra tutti quei piaceri che la deletteuole & artificiosa pittura ha in se no/ v'ce nisuna che piu io stimi: che la discriptione di luochi'. See: E. Poleggi, 'Dopo Grassi, Anton Van den Wyngaerde/After Grassi, Anton Van den Wyngaerde', in: E. Poleggi and I. Croce, *Ritratto di Genova nel '400. Veduta d'invenzione/A Portrait of Genoa in the 15th Century. A View of Invention*, Genoa 2008, 62-72, quotation 68.
- 4 For Philip II's stay in the Low Countries

21. View of Brussels by Antoon van den Wijngaerde, dated 1558 (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford)



- in 1557-1558: G. Parker, *Imprudent King. A new life of Philip II*, New Haven/London 2014, 89-97; on Philip II as commissioner of maps and city views: G. Parker, 'Maps and Ministers. The Spanish Habsburgs', in: D. Buisseret (ed.), *Monarchs, Ministers and Maps. The Emergence of Cartography as a Tool of Government in Early Modern Europe*, Chicago/London 1992, 124-152, esp. 128-130. Cf.: R.L. Kagan, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World 1493-1793*, New Haven/London 2000, 1-18.
- 5 The views of Dordrecht and 's-Hertogenbosch are sometimes dated in the 1540s, but cogent arguments for that are lacking. See: Galera i Monegal 1998 (note 1), 162, 169-170 and 213-214.
  - 6 R.L. Kagan (ed.), *Spanish Cities of the Golden Age. The Views of Anton van den Wyngaerde*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1989.
  - 7 Kagan 1989 (note 6).
  - 8 Kagan 1989 (note 6), 11. Van den Wijngaerde is also credited with painted city views hanging in Philip II's hunting lodge, El Pardo, near Madrid, but they, too, have been lost.
  - 9 Parker 2014 (note 4), 89-97.
  - 10 For the battle near Gravelines: Parker 2014 (note 4), 95-96. Van den Wijngaerde also made drawings of other battles that were important for Philip II or his father Charles V, which have only survived as copies. See: Galera i Monegal 1998 (note 1), 180-185, 188-190 and 194-195.
  - 11 All the Spanish cities are reproduced in colour and analysed in: Kagan 1989 (note 6).
  - 12 E. Haverkamp-Begemann, 'The Spanish Views of Anton van den Wyngaerde', *Master Drawings* 7 (1969), 375-399. Cf.: J. Peeters and E. Fleurbaay, '16de en 17de-eeuwse topografische voorstellingen en het standpunt van de kunstenaar', *Bulletin Koninklijke Nederlandse Oudheidkundige Bond* 88 (1989), 30-41, on Van den Wijngaerde's possible work method 39-40; J. Peeters, *Anthonis vanden Wijngaerde des co: ma: schilder*, Amsterdam 1990 (MA thesis UvA).
  - 13 Rutte and Vannieuwenhuyze 2018 (note 1). With thanks to Yvonne van Mil for the approximate location of Antoon van den Wijngaerde's viewpoints and direction of view in Jacob van Deventer's street plans and for drawing the diagrams approximating the components from which Van den Wijngaerde's were constructed.
  - 14 B. Bakker and E. Schmitz, *Het aanzien van Amsterdam. Panorama's, plattegronden en profielen uit de Gouden Eeuw*, Bussum/Amsterdam 2007, 86-97. Based on the buildings in Van den Wijngaerde's city view, Bakker and Schmitz argue that the artist on the one hand used Cornelis Anthonisz's bird's-eye view and on the other sketched on-the-spot studies himself.
  - 15 Peeters and Fleurbaay 1989 (note 12), 39-40; Bakker and Schmitz 2007 (note 14) 96.
  - 16 Rutte and Vannieuwenhuyze 2018 (note 1), 40.
  - 17 The comparison is based on the complete overview of Van den Wijngaerde's Spanish city views in: Kagan 1989 (note 6).

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## ANTOON VAN DEN WIJNGAERDE'S DRAWINGS OF CITIES IN THE LOW COUNTRIES

### CLEVERLY CONSTRUCTED CITY VIEWS FOR PHILIP II

REINOUT RUTTE

Views of twelve cities in the Low Countries by the Flemish artist Antoon van den Wijngaerde (c. 1510-1571) have survived: Amsterdam, Brugge, Brussels, Damme, Dordrecht, Duinkerke, Gravelines, 's-Hertogenbosch, Leuven, Mechelen, Sluis, and Utrecht. Van den Wijngaerde was known for his mastery of topographically accurate and beautiful depictions of cities. The artist entered the service of Philip II in 1557 and between 1557 and 1561 he produced panoramas of cities in the Low Countries for the Spanish king. Between 1562 and 1571 Van den Wijngaerde travelled the length and breadth of Spain, depicting over sixty Spanish cities using much the same techniques. In most Spanish cities the artist was able to make his sketches from a hill or mountain, where he had a good overall view. It was a different story in the Low Countries.

So how did Van den Wijngaerde manage to render the Netherlandish cities, most of them located on flat land, as if seen from a high viewing point with a sweeping view of the city and surrounding landscape? Van den

Wijngaerde followed a fixed routine in setting up his city views, but he also made clever use of the local situation. He seized on any high point outside the city and allowed that to determine his direction of view. When several preparatory studies were necessary, he preferred to make them all looking in the same direction: the city roofscape viewed from outside the city, prominent buildings viewed from the city outskirts, and the surrounding area from the highest point in the city. This resulted in city views that were effectively a composite of three preparatory studies. When the local situation did not favour this approach, Van den Wijngaerde looked for alternatives, such as preliminary studies from more than three viewing points. In determining the viewing points that Van den Wijngaerde adopted when drawing cities in the Low Countries, the author consulted the town plans drawn by Van den Wijngaerde's contemporary Jacob van Deventer (c. 1500-1575).