

World Views

A TIMELESS REMAKE OF CENTURIES-OLD BOOKS SHOWS CITIES AS THEY ONCE WERE. BY **JEFF GOLDMAN**

Long before Google Maps changed the way we were able to see our planet, two 16th-century Germans, Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg, assembled one of the first comprehensive aerial renditions of cities in Europe, Africa, Asia and Central America as they then existed.

The results, the carefully compiled and intricately recorded *Civitates orbis terrarum*, were published in six volumes between 1572 and 1617.

The volumes were published in Latin (1572), German (1574) and French (1575), and were intended to be a companion to the previously completed *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (*Atlas of the World*), which was put together by the geographer and cartographer Abraham Ortelius.

Now, four centuries later, the stunningly beautiful library-quality collection has been reproduced by Stephan Füssel with a foreword by architect Rem Koolhaas under the title *Cities of the World*. The enormous, 504-page book, published by Taschen, contains 363 color plates consisting of maps and illustrations, along with excerpts from the original and commentary.

Hogenberg, an engraver, assembled the drawings mostly from work done by Joris Hoefnagel, a professional topographical artist. Hoefnagel was actually one of more than 100 artists and cartographers who contributed to the massive project. Braun compiled the text when he wasn't serving as canon and dean of St. Maria ad Gradus, a cathedral in Cologne.

In addition to maps of the cities and towns, the plates display scenes from everyday life as well as "nobles, merchants, tradesman, peasants, travellers and maids in their various costumes."

Who and what else was relevant in those places in the late 16th and early 17th centuries? Here's a sampling of some of the notable events, people and locations featured around the time the original volumes were produced.

COLOGNE

(1) Cologne, where the first volumes of *Civitates* was published, could best be characterized as staunchly Catholic in the late 16th century—so much so that Protestants were persecuted. Now known as "The Jewel of the Rhine," Cologne is Germany's oldest major city and has close to one million residents. It became independent in 1475, about a century before the *Civitates orbis terrarum*, the original volumes, were assembled.

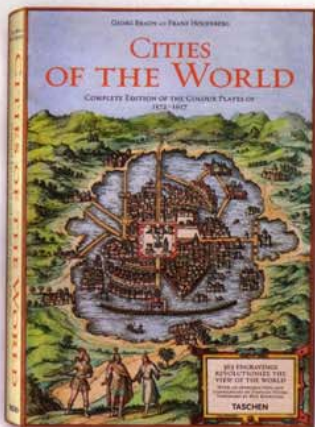
The Dutch playwright and poet Joost van den Vondel was born in Cologne at around the time the map of the city was produced. A proponent of religious tolerance, van den Vondel converted to Catholicism.

Meanwhile, in 1560, work on the Gothic cathedral known as the Dom was postponed due to lack of funds. Construction on the Dom began in 1248 and, remarkably, wasn't completed until 1880. It can be found just left of center on the map. A village of 40,000, Cologne's town hall lies a bit to the right of the cathedral. The Romanesque basilica of the Holy Apostles is visible in the lower half of the image.

HESDIN-FORT

(2) Hesdin-Fort is one of the many names this northern French village has had through the years. Now known as Vieil-Hesdin, it was destroyed around 1553 as a result of fighting between kings of France, the Holy Roman Empire, Henry VII of England and several French nobles.

The image shows the then-newly built fortress from the south. It was rebuilt 3.5 miles south of the original Hesdin, which Charles V's troops destroyed in 1554. It's protected by a wide moat with five bastions. The castle features a moat of its own. The town also had plenty of green space to allow for growth, and in stark contrast to most places then, it didn't have a church.

**SEVILLE**

(3) Seville's main cathedral (and the largest gothic cathedral in the world), Catedral de Santa Maria de la Sede, was completed in the 16th century. It was built to showcase the wealth of Seville, which was a major trading center in the years following the Reconquest. The cathedral's bell tower, La Giralda, remains the city's most famous landmark. Hernán Ruiz renovated it in 1598, and it hasn't changed since. The cathedral has housed the remains of Christopher Columbus since 1891; the explorer lived in the Cartujo Monastery in the city's Triana section in the 15th century.

One of three engravings of Seville in the collection, this one is a distant view. Near the bottom of the illustration is a punishment scene in which an adultress has been covered with honey and is being swarmed by bees. Wearing large antlers and a string of bells, her husband pursues her, with magistrates closely behind.

JERUSALEM

(4) Under Ottoman rule during most of the 16th century, Jerusalem underwent a major cosmetic change from 1537 to 1541, when Sultan Suleiman, known as "The Magnificent," rebuilt the city walls as well as the present-day Seven Gates and the Tower of David, seen around the perimeters of Jerusalem. The Damascus Gate is considered the most beautiful in the modern Israeli capital. The City of David, which sits on the southern end of Jerusalem encompasses the lower quarter of the map. Near the southern edge of the City of David is the Cenacle, with Jesus and his Disciples depicted at The Last Supper. Immediately to the left of the Cenacle is the Palace of Caiaphas.

North of the City of David, the palace and throne room are marked.

VLISSINGEN

The fishermen's hamlet of Vlissingen, Netherlands, was founded at the estuary of the Scheldt River on the former island of Walcheren in 620 A.D. Vlissingen is now the third most important port in the Netherlands.

The city of 45,000 owes its prominence to a decision to have the harbor basins excavated during the 14th century. The many ships near the wooden jetties are evidence of the town's significance in the country's shipping industry.

A destroyed citadel can be seen to the right of town, and gallows appear to the right of it. Vlissingen is also the 1607 birthplace of Michiel de Ruyter, one of the most prominent Dutch admirals.

FRENCH CASTLES

(left) The Palace of Fontainebleau, one of France's largest châteaux, contains some of the earliest examples of Renaissance architecture. King François I built the entrance, the ballroom and the Saint Martin Chapel. He also constructed the buildings

encircling the current White Horse Courtyard and the François I Gallery to link the two groups of buildings in the early-to-mid-16th century. François II, the grandson of François, who was later king for a short time, was born in Fontainebleau in 1544. The palace and park have been UNESCO World Heritage Sites since 1981.

(6, right) From the eastern aerial view, the Henry II-built Château Neuf can be spotted in the center of the map. The symmetrical Italian-style gardens, built under Henry IV, included a vast network of ramps and stairways and were among the first to be brought to France.

The birthplace of Louis XIV, France's longest ruling monarch, the Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye is in Yvelines, about 11 miles west of Paris. It was built in 1122, and François I reconstructed it in 1539. The palace today houses the Museum of National Archaeology.

DAMASCUS

(7) Damascus, Syria's capital and its largest city, lies about 50 miles from the Mediterranean Sea. The sites of two significant events are pictured on the map. Christ appeared to Paul in the memorial church

seen in the lower left. The text near the upper left is the approximate spot where Cain murdered his brother, Abel. The large structure near the center is the Umayyaden Mosques.

Although the painting seems to depict differently, by the 14th century the city had outgrown its walls, and as many residents lived outside them as within.

PARIS

(8) Two well-known Parisian structures are identifiable on the Île de la Cité, the largest island in the Seine river: The Cathedral of Notre Dame lies toward the top of the island, and beneath it is the Palais de la Cité. Planning for the city's oldest bridge, the Pont Neuf, began in 1578, but it wasn't completed until 1604—too late to make it into the illustration. The Pont Neuf was the third bridge in Paris to cross the Seine and the first to be built without houses on it.

The period in Paris that this illustration displays is best remembered for the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, in which 3,000 Protestants were strangled, knifed and thrown into the Seine. The massacre was a consequence of the Wars of Religion between Catholics and Protestants, which were waged for about 36 years in the late 16th century. □