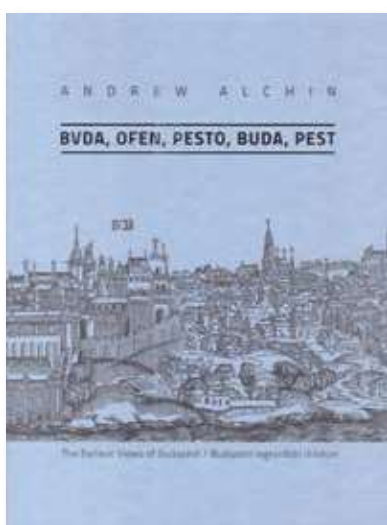


**Buda, Ofen, Pesto, Buda, Pest. The earliest views of Budapest: 15th and 16th century woodcuts, copperplates and paintings depicting Buda, Pest and Óbuda / Budapest legkorábbi látképei: A XV. és XVI. századi Budát, Pestet és Óbudát ábrázoló fametszetek, réznyomatok és festmények**

by Andrew Alchin. Szombathely: Yellow Design Ltd., 2019. ISBN: 9786150071077. HB, 154, illus., bilingual (English & Hungarian), Ft 18000.



The development of European town views in the sixteenth century moved from schematic woodcuts in early printed books to realistic, mostly engraved town portraits in the 1600s. Early highlights were the large-scale views of Florence probably by Francesco Rosselli (c. 1471/82) and of Venice by Erhard Reuwich (1486) and Jacopo de' Barbari (1500). Early books with town views were for the most part inspired by the illustrations in the *Nuremberg Chronicle* by Hartmann Schedel (1493), many of which are rather fanciful. While in some instances the same woodcut was used to represent different cities, other views are more faithful to reality and remain recognisable today. Two important sixteenth-century milestones of urban iconography are the woodcut vedutas in Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* (1544–1628) and the etchings in Georg Braun's and Frans Hogenberg's *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (1572–1617).

Author Andrew Alchin brings these exciting developments to life with his examination of the cities

Buda and Óbuda), both on the west bank of the Danube, and Pest on the east. In 1873 these three separate cities were united to form the new metropolis of Budapest. Starting with the earliest documented views, dating from the late fifteenth century, Alchin meticulously compiled 23 views, woodcuts and engravings, unique miniatures and drawings to trace the image of the city over the next one hundred years. Of particular interest is the author's decision not to focus only on the European gaze but to include some splendid Ottoman book illustrations of the city; these document an alternative way of describing urban landscapes. Not obliged to follow European conventions of perspective with one clearly defined beholder, these examples combine characteristics of a city map with representations of architecture seen from different points of view. The views were produced on site, as well as in Nuremberg, Rome or Istanbul/Constantinople. The breathtaking story of the city's changing alliances, sieges and battles with the Hungarians, the Habsburgs, and the Turks is explained in the introduction and in several excursions.

Alchin's starting point is the magnificent two-block woodcut of Buda in the *Nuremberg Chronicle* which provides a depiction of the castle, the Royal Palace, churches and residential area. In a thorough analysis of Schedel's view Alchin reveals that many of the buildings have been depicted with astonishing accuracy and are clearly identifiable today. Another highlight is Erhard Schön's large-scale woodcut of the siege of Buda in 1541 which portrays the confrontation between the Holy League under the Habsburg emperor and the Ottomans. An interesting juxtaposition is the related miniature by the Ottoman artist Nakkas Osman. It describes the obeisance of Isabella Jagiellon and her one-year-old son John Sigismund Zápolya to Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent and is set against a schematical view of the Royal Palace of Buda. The siege of Pest (1542) is the subject of two views, one of which is attributed to Schön or Virgil Solis, the other is by the Italian Enea Vico. Münster's woodcut of Buda's Royal Palace in *Cosmographia* (1550) draws on Schön's view and adds some interesting inscriptions with contemporary names of the palace's buildings and surroundings. The view of Buda in *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (vol. 1, 1572) is a copy from a section of Schön's 1541 woodcut, however all references to military activity have been removed. A more dramatic view of the city is provided by Nuremberg artist Leonhard Heussler with his

woodcut of the lightning strike of 1578 which caused an explosion in the city.

The views by Giovanni Maggi, Giacomo Franco, Ahasver Rotenberger and Philipp Uffenbach, which date from the epoch of the Fifteen Years' War between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire (1591–1606), are all dedicated to the 1598 siege of Buda. Wilhelm Dilich's *Ungarische Chronica* (1600) contains two portraits of Ofen (Buda) and one of 'Alt Ofen' (Óbuda). Though Dilich had probably never been to Hungary, he must have had reliable sources, for his delicate etchings with their harmonious combination of architecture and landscape give a realistic picture of the cities. The two views of Buda reveal his ability to describe a topographical situation from different viewpoints. One could have added the battle plan with the siege of Buda and Pest (1602), which Dilich included in the extended second edition of the *Ungarische Chronica* and which gives bird's-eye views of the two cities. Among the additional vedutas, though outside the timespan of the book, are Joris Hoefnagel's view of Buda and Pest under Turkish rule, indicated by the presence of mosques, and John Speed's 'Mape of Hungari' (1626). Buda, depicted in the border, is a late revamp of Schön's work transmitted via Hogenberg's view in the first volume of *Civitates*.

The book concludes with a list of all the discussed views, a timeline containing the most important events, and the original texts which accompany Schedel's and Schön's views (the latter written by the German poet Hans Sachs).

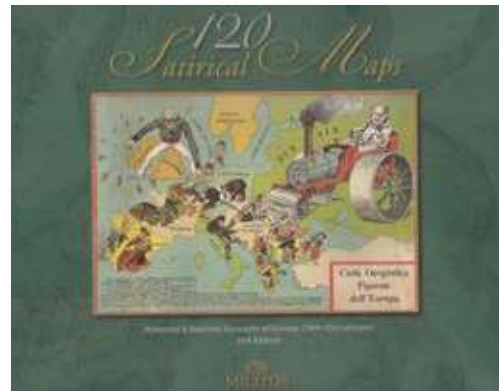
Alchin's excellent study, which emerged from his lecture delivered in 2014 at the Hungarian Cultural Centre in London, reconstructs the technical, intellectual and historical background of the views, which provide unique sources to the history of Budapest, as well as to the contemporary perception of the city. These pictorial sources are of particular interest, when they show urban situations which were later modified or destroyed. Beside questions of authorship and publication media, he draws attention to contemporary events. The author not only discusses the accuracy of the views, their relation to the geography of present-day Budapest, but also their authenticity: Which vedutas are drawn *ad vivum* (according to the 'living' model) and which were borrowed from authentic town portraits.

Using Budapest as an example, the reader is offered an overview of a European city in the early modern

period. The tension between idealisation and topographical precision reveals an important artistic strategy which we experience as a kind of selective realism: Artists did not document reality like a camera. They chose the buildings which they found worthy of recording and highlighted them using scale and perspective. On the other hand, they omitted other less important ones. Focussing on one geographical place and on one special historical period Andrew Alchin's study is a valuable supplement to Béla Szalai's standard work on Hungarian views of castles, towns and villages (*Magyar várak, városok, falvak metszeteken*, 6 vols., Budapest: Múzeum Antikvárium, 2006–18). Last but not least, the reader will appreciate the production values of Alchin's book, the fresh typography and book design by Ferenc Kassai, the brilliant quality of the colour reproductions and the opulent fold-out plates.

Michael Bischoff, Lemgo/Berlin, Germany

**120 Satirical Maps: Historical & Satirical Accounts of Europe (19th–21st century), 2nd edition** by Panayotis N. Soucacos, M.D., FACS (Hon.). Athens: Militos Editions, 2019. ISBN 9786185438104. HB. 441, 120 illus. 81.00 €.



If one observes a map that presents Russia as a giant octopus with its tentacles choking the Baltics, Poland and Central Asia; England as a smartly dressed gentleman leaping across the Channel; Germany as the pickle-helmeted Kaiser Wilhelm pushing back Russia with one hand and heavily leaning into France with the opposite shoulder, he or she is likely seeing a satirical map from the nineteenth or early twentieth century. In this case, the map is titled *Serio-comic war*