

THE PORTRAYAL OF TOWNS IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN *VOLKSBÜCHER*

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The spread of printed vernacular literature in the second half of the fifteenth century, with printing presses being established in a variety of towns both large and small, underlines the importance of towns in literary consciousness. However, no German town was large in today's sense of the term. Only the largest cities, such as Cologne, Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Danzig, had populations in excess of forty thousand, while Strasbourg, Lübeck, and probably Hamburg, had about half that number.¹ The self-awareness of the German towns is demonstrated by a new kind of literary work – the town encomium – that was introduced into German literature by the Nuremberg poet Hans Rosenplüt. In 1447 he composed a poem of 396 lines in rhyming couplets celebrating the town of which he had acquired citizenship in 1426 – his *Lobspruch auf Nürnberg*, extant in some nineteen manuscripts and two incunables.² A dozen years later he produced a *Lobspruch auf Bamberg*, which has come down to us in a single print of 1491.³ Rosenplüt is not a poet of the first rank, so neither of these poems is well-known or easily accessible today, but they started a fashion that led via Kunz Has's *Lobspruch auf Nürnberg* of 1490⁴ to Hans Sachs's *Lobspruch der Stat Nürnberg* of 1530⁵ and Wolfgang Schmeltzl's *Lobspruch der Hochloeblichen weitberuembten Khuenigklichen Stat Wienn in Osterreich* of 1547.⁶ All

¹ E. Maschke, 'Deutsche Städte am Ausgang des Mittelalters', in *Die Stadt am Ausgang des Mittelalters*, ed. W. Rausch (Linz: Österreichischer Arbeitskreis für Stadtgeschichtsforschung, 1974), 4.

² *Der Spruch von Nürnberg, beschreibendes Gedicht des Hans Rosenplüt genannt Schnepferer*, ed. G.W.K. Lochner (Nuremberg, 1854). See Jörn Reichel, *Der Spruchdichter Hans Rosenplüt* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1985), 253–4.

³ Otto Hartig, 'Hans Rosenplüts Lobspruch auf die Stadt Bamberg, mit dem Bamberger Stadtwappen, gedruckt von Hans Sporer in Bamberg, 1491', in 86. *Bericht d. hist. Vereins f. d. Pflege d. Gesch. d. ehem. Fürstbistums Bamberg*, 1938, 5–24; Reichel, *Der Spruchdichter Hans Rosenplüt*, 255, 269.

⁴ Reichel, *Der Spruchdichter Hans Rosenplüt*, 204–5; Hans Rupprich, *Von spätem Mittelalter bis zum Barock. Erster Teil: Das ausgehende Mittelalter, Humanismus und Renaissance, 1370–1520* (Munich: Beck, 1970), 215.

⁵ Hans Sachs, *Werke*, ed. A. von Keller and E. Goetze (Tübingen: Bibl. des Lit. Vereins in Stuttgart, 105, 1870), 189–99; also in *Spätmittelalter Humanismus Reformation: Texte und Zeugnisse Zweiter Teilband: Blütezeit des Humanismus und Reformation*, ed. Hedwig Heger (Munich: Beck, 1978), 789–99.

⁶ A section is printed in *Spätmittelalter Humanismus Reformation Zweiter Teilband*, 799–805.

these works were in German, but such was the cultural climate that more ambitious literary works were usually couched in Latin. Albrecht von Eyb, canon of Bamberg in his later years, wrote an encomium of Bamberg in 1452,⁷ while in 1495 the arch-humanist and *poeta laureatus* Conrad Celtis produced an extensive work entitled *De origine, situ, moribus et institutis Norimbergae*, which was eventually printed in 1502. A German translation was made for the town council by Georg Alt.⁸ No later than 1502 the Dominican Felix Fabri composed another early account of a town in his *Tractatus de civitate Ulmensi*.⁹

The leading position of Nuremberg stands out in this list of early panegyric and topographical works. As early as 1424 the city had received a peculiar honour when the Emperor Sigismund entrusted it with the custody of the imperial insignia and holy relics.¹⁰ This is celebrated in a poem entitled *Ein sag von der Edlen vnd wirdigen Stat Nurenberg*, once considered as possibly by Rosenplüt, though that is now discounted, but it is not a topographical work in the sense that the previously listed poems and treatises are.¹¹ The imperial distinction accorded to Nuremberg by its custody of the insignia and relics was, however, symptomatic of its central role in German politics and cultural development.

The late fifteenth century was a period in which many chronicles were composed, with varying kinds of focus. The most sumptuously produced of printed chronicles was Hartmann Schedel's massive *Liber cronicarum*, illustrated with an astonishing number of woodcuts and printed in Nuremberg by Anton Koberger in 1493. Before the year was out a German translation, made by Georg Alt, was published, again by Koberger. Schedel's is a world chronicle rather than one devoted to a specific locality, but interspersed in the history of the world from Creation are multifarious descriptions and woodcuts of cities. Many of the woodcuts are of no representational value, since the same cut functions for more than one city (for example, Naples and Mainz are represented by the same cut, and another is used for Siena, Mantua and Ferrara). For a number of cities a double spread is used, and these are generally more reliable as visual depictions. Venice, Rome, Florence, Cologne, Augsburg, Regensburg, Vienna, Nuremberg, Constantinople, Budapest (Ofen), Strasbourg, Salzburg, Erfurt, Würzburg, Bamberg, Magdeburg, Ulm, Passau, Munich, Prague, Breslau, Con-

⁷ See Reichel, *Der Spruchdichter Hans Rosenplüt*, 201.

⁸ A section of Latin text and German translation is printed in *Spätmittelalter Humanismus Reformation . . . Zweiter Teilband*, 17–22.

⁹ *Fratri Felicis Fabri Tractatus de civitate Ulmensi, de eius origine, ordine, regimine, de civibus eius et statu*, ed. Gustav Veesenmeyer (Tübingen: Bibl. des Lit. Vereins in Stuttgart, 186, 1889).

¹⁰ *Albrecht Dürer, 1471–1971* [exhibition catalogue] (Munich: Prestel, 1971), nos. 240, 241, 242.

¹² *Fastnachtspiele aus dem fünfzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. A. von Keller (Stuttgart: Bibl. des Lit. Vereins in Stuttgart, 28–30, 1853), iii. 1168–71; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965. See Reichel, *Der Spruchdichter Hans Rosenplüt*, 167, n. 47.

stance, Basle, Krakow, Lübeck, and Neisse (Nysa) are portrayed in this format. Koberger gained widely distributed sales of the *Liber cronicarum* through partnerships with firms in Basle, Strasbourg, and Lyon. When the final account was made in 1509 it showed unsold stock as far afield as Paris, Lyon, Strasbourg, Milan, Como, Florence, Venice, Augsburg, Leipzig, Prague, Graz and Budapest.¹² The woodcuts in Schedel's chronicle are a sign of increasing interest in the depiction of the urban environment as something impressive in its own right. They were made by Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff, as the colophon attests. Only a year or two later Dürer painted watercolours of Innsbruck (1494) and Trent (1495), which are the first portraits of towns that belong to the category that Kenneth Clark calls 'landscape of fact'.¹³ Some time before 1520 Hans Wurm made what is recognized as the first independent watercolour of Nuremberg.¹⁴

Travel-guides clearly also gained importance as the possibilities of printing were expanded. The most splendid of the many travel-guides for pilgrims was Bernhard von Breidenbach's *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* with editions in both Latin and German (Mainz: Erhard Reuwich, 1486).¹⁵ In 1500 we find the first cartographically accurate plan of Venice by Jacopo de' Barbari,¹⁶ and in the same year Erhart Etzlaub's map of the route to Rome provided the first large-scale travel map of Germany.¹⁷ These works are, however, only the beginning of factual and visual curiosity about the character and appearance of towns. By the beginning of the seventeenth century we can point to the six volumes of the *Civitates orbis terrarum* of Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg (Cologne, 1572–1618), which Wolfgang Bruhn described in 1938 as unsurpassed even at that date in their large format, lavish design, quantity of material assembled and excellence of their etched and hand-coloured plates of plans and views.¹⁸ Midway between Schedel's *Liber cronicarum* and the *Civitates orbis terrarum* we should note the *Cosmographia universalis* of Sebastian Münster (Basle, 1544), an enormously popular and frequently reprinted compilation with an important geographical dimension.¹⁹

With this bird's-eye view of the achievements of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in focussing on the depiction of towns in poems and treatises, topographical art and cartography, let us now take a look at

¹² S.H. Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 58.

¹³ Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 34.

¹⁴ Albrecht Dürer, no. 228.

¹⁵ Rupprich, *Vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Barock. Erster Teil*, 162–3.

¹⁶ Albrecht Dürer, no. 175.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, no. 318.

¹⁸ *Alte deutsche Städtebilder: 24 farbige Blätter nach Georg Braun und Franz Hogenberg*, ed. Wolfgang Bruhn (Leipzig: Asmus, 1938), v.

¹⁹ Rupprich, *Vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Barock. Zweiter Teil: Das Zeitalter der Reformation, 1520–1570* (Munich: Beck, 1973), 439.

what popular narrative literature, the so-called *Volksbücher*, make of the theme. German prose romances of the sixteenth century are many and varied in character, deriving in part from earlier works in verse and prose in German, French, and Latin and to a large extent transmitting popular material from the heyday of medieval courtly society to a less sophisticated reading public. They include such books as *Melusine*, *Die schöne Magelone*, *Tristrant und Isalde*, *Wigoleis vom Rade*, *Herzog Ernst*, and *Sankt Brandan*.²⁰ Amongst all this traditional material, the stories of which take place chiefly in a fictional setting or one in which geographically identifiable places are simply ciphers, there are a few works that are set in what we may call the 'real' world. They come, oddly enough, at the very beginning and the very end of the century – *Fortunatus* (Augsburg: Johann Otmar, 1509), *Ein kurtzweilig Lesen von Dil Ulenspiegel* (Strasbourg: Johann Grüninger, c. 1510–11), *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Spies, 1587) and *Hans Clawerts werckliche Historien* by Bartholomäus Krüger (Berlin: Nicolaus Voltz, 1587). Till *Eulenspiegel* and *Faust* are still, more than four centuries later, household names, but the stories of *Fortunatus* and *Hans Clawert*, extremely popular in their time, have now receded from the forefront of general knowledge.

Fortunatus consists of an unusual combination of realistically devised action and fairytale motifs, but its geography is largely realistic in intention. The story begins and ends in Cyprus, but takes in Venice, Flanders, London, Nantes, Constantinople, Cairo, and Alexandria as its main stopping places. The emphasis at all times, though, is on adventure and the relationships between the main figures of the story. The author in his opening remarks refers to the island kingdom of Cyprus as being known to many journeying to the Holy Land and Jerusalem. He describes Famagusta, *Fortunatus*'s birthplace, simply as 'a splendid town' and later names Nicosia as the capital.²¹ No further details are offered. The eighteen-year-old *Fortunatus* is taken into service by the Count of Flanders and leaves Cyprus with him on a ship bound for Venice. Of Venice we learn only that the count had seen all the splendour and was anxious to get back home, since he was planning to marry the daughter of the Duke of Cleves. The woodcuts of the 1509 edition of *Fortunatus* do not contain any topographically interesting material, but the 1554 edition (Frankfurt am Main: Hermann Gülferrich) has a recognizable woodcut of Venice with St Mark's and the piazza.²²

The text does not state where the count resides – the historical counts of Flanders had a massive castle at Ghent, but there were other

²⁰ David Blamires, 'The German Arthurian Prose Romances in their Literary Context', in *The Changing Face of Arthurian Romance: Essays on Arthurian Prose Romances in Memory of Cedric E. Pickford*, ed. Alison Adams et al. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1986), 66–77.

²¹ *Fortunatus: Studienausgabe nach der editio princeps von 1509, mit Materialien zum Verständnis des Textes*, ed. Hans-Gert Roloff (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981), 5.

²² On page 27 (copy in Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, 124.1 Ethica).

residences at Bruges, Brussels, and Lille²³ – nor does it indicate where the marriage takes place. Fortunatus's success in the count's entourage provokes the jealousy of the latter's other servants. One of them insinuates to Fortunatus that the count is going to Louvain, described as a large town, the seat of a bishop and possessing a university, to find a master qualified to castrate him. The alarmed Fortunatus decides to flee, but the wicked servant informs him: 'The town is closed on all sides, and nobody can get in or out until tomorrow morning. When the bell rings for matins the gate called Porta de Vacha is opened. That is the Cowgate, which is opened earliest.'²⁴ The details appear quite circumstantial, but the town is not identified.

Fortunatus flees via Calais to England, eventually arriving in 'the capital city of England, called London, where merchants from all parts of the world reside and practise their trade. There too a galley from Cyprus had arrived, loaded with valuable cargo and many merchants.'²⁵ After Fortunatus has run out of money through riotous living, he goes one morning to Lombard Street and manages to get into service with a rich merchant from Florence.²⁶ The author points out that 'the big ships could not get nearer to the city than twenty miles away, though there is a navigable river called the Tynis from the city right to the sea.'²⁷ The name of the Thames is distorted here and may be derived from a misreading of a form such as *Tyms. The Swiss traveller Thomas Platter the Younger, writing of his visit to London in 1599, gives the form 'Täms oder Tamesis'²⁸ and thus shows the monosyllabic pronunciation. The author of *Fortunatus* gives more information about London later: 'Between the city and Vestminster there is a very beautiful palace, containing the king's council chambers and a beautiful, large church, so that between the city and the palace there is more traffic than in the rest of the entire city.'²⁹ The details given here, brief though they are, may betoken personal, if sketchy, knowledge on the author's part. It is noteworthy that London is named with the form 'Lunden' in contrast to the earlier German form 'Lunders', which was obviously taken from French.

But when the story ventures to other parts of Britain, names and geographical locations become very hazy. Fortunatus joins up with an impoverished nobleman from 'Ybernia' (Ireland), which the author envisages as contiguous to Scotland. He tells us: 'from London to "Odwürk", the capital of Scotland, is nine days' journey, and when

²³ Photograph in C.W. Previté-Orton, *The Shorter Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), ii. 789; R. Vaughan, *Valois Burgundy* (London: Allen Lane, 1975), 76–7, 95.

²⁴ *Fortunatus*, 17.

²⁵ *ibid.*, 22.

²⁶ *ibid.*, 25.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ Thomas Platter d. J., *Beschreibung der Reisen durch Frankreich, Spanien, England und die Niederlande, 1595–1600*, ed. Rut Keiser (Basle/Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1968), ii. 778.

²⁹ *Fortunatus*, 37.

they arrived there they had a further six days' journey to "Ybernia" to the town from which Lüpoldus came. He asked his lord Fortunatus to ride there with him, to which he agreed, and they rode to Ybernia and so came to the town of "Waldrick", which was Lüpoldus's home.³⁰ 'Odwürk' may be Edinburgh, but 'Waldrick' can hardly be Warwick, as Roloff suggests in his edition.³¹ We must accept that most parts of the British Isles beyond London were *terra incognita* to German writers of this period. That is confirmed by the meagre half page that Schedel devotes to England (14 lines), Scotland (14 lines), and 'Hybernia' (3 lines) in his *Buch der Croniken*, which is almost totally lacking in geographical comment.³² From Lüpoldus's home it is a further two days' journey to the place for which medieval Ireland was far-famed – St Patrick's Purgatory – here located in the town of 'Verniks', the entrance being behind the altar of a great abbey.³³ This place of pilgrimage, in reality on an island in Lough Derg,³⁴ is described by Schedel, but not given any precise geographical location.³⁵ Roloff suggests that the puzzling 'Verniks' may reflect the name of the little town of Pettigo, not far from Lough Derg.³⁶ However, I propose a derivation from 'Furness', transposed from the name of Jocelyn of Furness who wrote a *Vita sancti Patricii* in 1185–86, in which St Patrick's Purgatory figures prominently.³⁷

Fortunatus's travels take him to Nantes and Brittany and, at the other end of Europe, to Constantinople, where brief mention is made of the church of Sancta Sophia, 'in which there is a very beautiful chapel dedicated to the honour of Our Lady'.³⁸ Later journeys take him to Alexandria and Cairo among other oriental cities and countries, but very little is given by way of physical description. The oriental travels are derived from Mandeville, and other itineraries within Europe have been shown to depend on the travel books of the Rieter family and Hans Tucher.³⁹ In the second part of *Fortunatus* we are told that Andolosia, Fortunatus's wayward son, after he has departed from the English princess Agripina, travelled first of all 'to Bruges, in Flanders, where there is every entertainment from beautiful ladies and other things', after which he rode 'through Germany and saw the beautiful towns situated in the Holy Roman Empire and then rode to Venice, Florence

³⁰ *ibid.*, 58.

³¹ *ibid.*, 58, n. 7.

³² *Buch der Croniken*, fo. cclxxxiii^r. A convenient modern edition is *The Nuremberg Chronicle: A Facsimile of Hartmann Schedel's Buch der Chroniken* (New York: Landmark Press, 1979).

³³ *Fortunatus*, 58–9.

³⁴ *Saint Patrick's Purgatory: A Twelfth-century Tale of a Journey to the Other World*, trans and introd J.M. Picard and Y. de Pontfarcy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1985).

³⁵ *Buch der Croniken*, fo. cxlv^v.

³⁶ *Fortunatus*, 59, n. 12.

³⁷ *Saint Patrick's Purgatory*, 17.

³⁸ *Fortunatus*, 70.

³⁹ Marjatta Wis, 'Zum deutschen "Fortunatus": Die mittelalterlichen Pilger als Erweiterer des Weltbildes', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, lxiii (1962), 37–42.

and Genoa' before making the final voyage to Famagusta.⁴⁰

Looking at the whole text of *Fortunatus*, we are forced to conclude that the author is little concerned with visual detail in his treatment of towns. Most of them remain simply as names. Only in a few instances is information added that focusses on particular buildings or streets. The author is chiefly concerned with the adventures of his characters, but within the scope of geographical knowledge of his day he attempts a degree of factuality that is novel for his time. Some of the information that he purveys must be based on hearsay, but the details of London, for example, seem to point in the direction of the personal experience of a merchant, almost certainly from Augsburg.

With *Dil Ulenspiegel* we have a quite different type of narrative from that found in *Fortunatus*. The book consists of ninety-five chapters that retail the episodic tricks and adventures of the folk-hero Till Eulenspiegel in a loose biographical framework. The various episodes are located in a large variety of towns and villages, beginning with Till's birth in the village of Knetlingen, near Brunswick, and ending with his death in the small town of Mölln, situated on the route between Lübeck and Lüneburg. There is absolutely no connection in the stories with Strasbourg, so it is a puzzle why Johann Grüninger came to publish the book. The episode with the location nearest to Strasbourg is chapter 35, dealing with the deception of the rich Jews in Frankfurt am Main, which is borrowed and adapted from the Nuremberg poet Hans Folz.⁴¹ Otherwise the stories are largely confined to northern Germany, with three episodes set in Nuremberg (17, 32, 77), two in Cologne (79, 80) and one each in Denmark (23), Poland (24), Prague (28), Rome (34) and Antwerp (86). For the majority of episodes the location is indicated merely by the name of the town.

With Brunswick the author is clearly familiar. He refers to the Wild Man inn and St Nicholas' church in chapter 19, to a bootmaker called Cristoffer on the Cabbage-market in chapter 45 and a tanner on the Damm in chapter 56. His knowledge of nearby Hildesheim seems similarly precise. Chapter 64 opens with the remark: 'On the right in the street that leads from the Haymarket there lives a rich merchant.' This merchant is on the way to taking a walk in his garden when he encounters Eulenspiegel lying down in a field. Gardens belonging to burghers are in fact documented from the thirteenth century onwards.⁴² Neighbouring Hanover also receives detailed attention. In chapter 69 the bath-house is precisely located 'outside the Leine Gate', Hanover being situated on the River Leine, and it seems likely that the

⁴⁰ *Fortunatus*, 172.

⁴¹ David Blamires, 'Hans Folzens "Die Wahrsagebeeren" als Quelle für "Ulenspiegel"', *Historie* 35, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, cxi (1982), 53–60.

⁴² *Ein kurzweilig Lesen von Dil Ulenspiegel. Nach dem Druck von 1515; mit 87 Holzschnitten*, ed. Wolfgang Lindow (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1978), 181, n. 3.

author has a grudge against the owner's pretentiousness in calling it a 'house of cleanliness'.

Further afield, the chapter located in Hamburg (74) specifies the Hopmarket as the place where the barber has his house with its high windows. The first of the Erfurt episodes (29) mentions that the town has 'a very big and famous university' and blithely proceeds to ridicule the rector and lecturers of the fifth oldest German university (founded 1392). A few details are given about some other towns by way of explanation of their geographical position. Thus, Dresden is described as being on the Elbe on the edge of the Bohemian Forest (62), while Wismar is stated to be by the sea (65). Uelzen is described in chapter 68 as having a 'fair to which many Wends and other country people come'. In chapter 73 the town in Saxony on the River Weser is most probably Bremen, the setting of chapters 70 and 72, and in this chapter we have a reference to the use of a crane for loading material into a ship. Chapter 35, the episode with the Jews, has Eulenspiegel selling his dubious wares in front of the Römer (the old town hall) in Frankfurt, and the city is further mentioned in chapter 63 as the place where the election of the emperor takes place. Lübeck's severe laws are explicitly alluded to in chapter 57, which makes Eulenspiegel's scurrilous escape from the gallows in the succeeding chapter especially piquant. In the Rome episode (34), Eulenspiegel's trick with the pope is set, with sharp punning on the name, 'in the Jerusalem chapel at St John Lateran' – 'Latronen' in the original.

Finally, more extensive information is given about Nuremberg. This starts with the episode in which Eulenspiegel rids a hospital of its patients by proposing to 'cure' them by means of a medicine prepared from the burnt ashes of the weakest person there. The hospital is identified as the new one, 'where the venerable Holy Lance is kept along with other remarkable items'. This is in fact the Heilig-Geist-Spital, in whose church the Holy Lance was kept after the Emperor Sigismund had entrusted it to Nuremberg in 1424. This trick of Eulenspiegel's is taken from the Stricker's thirteenth-century verse epic, *Pfaffe Amis*, where it is located at the court of the Duke of Lorraine. Its transference to the site of the imperial relics adds a note of daring irreverence to the story. Chapter 32 testifies to considerable acquaintance with Nuremberg too, and is concerned with the town watchmen, whom Eulenspiegel tricks into falling into the River Pegnitz through a gap that he has made in a bridge. The author declares: 'Eulenspiegel had got to know Nuremberg's alleys and bridges very well and had particularly noted the bridge between the Sowmarket and the watchman's house, which is nasty to cross at night, since many nice girls when they're going to fetch wine get molested there.' The Sowmarket later became known as the Trödelmarkt.⁴³ The woodcut to

⁴³ *ibid.*, 96, n. 6.

this chapter shows the scene of the broken bridge with a fine twin-towered church in the middle background along with other buildings and towers. The church is probably intended to represent St Lorenz, which it resembles quite closely. Chapter 77 is also set in Nuremberg, but it provides no special details about the place. The adventure could have been set anywhere.

The emphasis on towns in *Ulen Spiegel* is more marked than in *Fortunatus*, but the kind of information given is similar. The details provided give an air of verisimilitude to the stories, even though any attempt at actual description is slight. Many of the chapters deal with typical aspects of town life and mention dwelling houses, town halls, and churches as a matter of course, but without adding comments specifically related to their visual appearance. One can link this with the secular painting of the period, which is more concerned with depicting individuals, sometimes in a domestic or interior setting, occasionally with a glimpse of buildings through a window or door, but which rarely focusses on the urban scene as a subject in its own right.

Almost eighty years after the first publication of *Ulen Spiegel* we find a kind of imitation in Bartholomäus Krüger's *Hans Clawerts werckliche Historien*,⁴⁴ a much shorter collection consisting of thirty-six chapters devoted to the pranks of 'der märkische Eulenspiegel'. Hans Clauert is a more good-humoured, less vindictive figure than Eulenspiegel, and his adventures take place in the narrower setting of the Mark of Brandenburg, where there were no towns of any great size. Krüger is extremely sparing in descriptive detail. *Clawert* is decidedly provincial and reflects a small-town mentality. Only in its last, additional chapter does it mention a town that was then famous far beyond the frontiers of Germany – Wittenberg – but it supplies no information beyond the mere name.

Wittenberg is, of course, the focus of the last work to concern us here – the *Historia von D. Johann Fausten*, printed in the same year as *Clawert*, not in a small provincial town like Berlin, but in Frankfurt am Main, which had become the centre of the German book trade. The events narrated in this remarkable book take place not only in far-famed Wittenberg, but – leaving aside for the present the places visited in the lengthy chapter of travels (26) – include nearby Eisleben, Halberstadt, Gotha, Zwickau, and Brunswick, and, further afield, Innsbruck, Salzburg and Frankfurt. The scope is comparable to that of *Ulen Spiegel* and, if we take in the travel chapter, *Fortunatus*. Yet in the case of all these towns scarcely any detail beyond the name is given that would enable the reader to visualize the setting. Eisleben is simply the place where Faustus sees the comet (28) and also the town to which he is travelling when he meets the count on to whose head he had previously

⁴⁴ *Hans Clawerts werckliche Historien in Deutsche Volksbücher*, ed. Peter Suchsland (Berlin/Weimar: Aufbau Verlag, 1979), ii. 157–228.

conjured antlers (56). Halberstadt is where a doctor explains to him about the stars. Gotha and Zwickau are the settings for Faustus's grotesque performances of eating hay (36, 40). A similar sort of magical trick occurs outside Brunswick with a peasant who loses the four wheels of his cart (50). Innsbruck is merely the location of the Emperor Charles V's court (45), while Salzburg is the seat of the one bishop on whom Faustus's anti-Christian antagonism is fixed. Frankfurt is the setting of the fair in which Faustus tricks four magicians in an inn near the Judengasse (51). The magicians are not explicitly stated to be Jews, but that seems to be the implication. In its anti-Semitic intent (seen also in chapter 38) the episode forms a parallel to chapter 35 in *Ulenspiegel*.

The long travel chapter (26) shows Faustus the following sequence of towns – Trier, Paris, Mainz, Naples, Venice, Padua, Rome, Milan, Florence, Lyon, Cologne, Aachen, Geneva, Strasbourg, Basle, Constance, Ulm, Würzburg, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Regensburg, Munich, Salzburg, Vienna, Prague, Krakow, Constantinople, Cairo, Budapest (Ofen), Šabac, Magdeburg, Lübeck, Erfurt and back to Wittenberg. Most of the information given in this account is derived directly from Schedel's *Buch der Croniken* and is thus approximately a hundred years old or more. The *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* is far from being an up-to-date work. On the contrary, it is deeply conservative in the supposed information that it purveys, most of it being taken from popular late medieval sources such as the *Elucidarius* and Schedel, together with Andreas Hondorff's *Promptuarium exemplorum* (Leipzig: Jakob Berwaldt, 1568) and Luther's table-talk.⁴⁵ The author of the *Historia* selects from Schedel's loquacious material and compresses it, but almost every word or phrase is taken from that source and only slightly recast. The material is presented with one or two narrative innovations, such as when Mephostophilis occasionally comments on what Faustus sees and when Faustus in his invisible state plays tricks at the courts of the pope and the Turkish emperor in Constantinople, but very little new information is given. These few novelties, however, deserve some attention.

On a couple of occasions the author uses the word 'altfraenckisch' (quaint, literally 'old Franconian') to characterize a town. Faustus decides first of all to visit Trier, specifically 'because it was so *altfraenckisch* to look at', and Milan comes in for the same comment: 'In it there are beautiful, imposing, well-built temples and royal palaces, but they're *altfraenckisch*.' The addition of this adjective to qualify the two towns suggests that the author probably knew them personally. To the description of Padua he adds the detail that Faustus went there to inspect the university, and he mentions also that Naples has 'unbelievable numbers of monasteries'. The information about Rome is slightly

⁴⁵ *Historia von D. Johann Fausten. Text des Druckes von 1587. Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Stephan Füssel and Hans Joachim Kreutzer (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1988). Source texts are on 218–96.

garbled in that the *Historia* refers to the seven hills as being on the right bank of the Tiber, while Schedel correctly has them on the left; moreover, it reduces the number of gates from thirty-seven to eleven. It makes specific reference to the 'many pagan, profane temples, the many columns, arches, etc., which would take too long to recount' and which Schedel has no time for in his concentration on Christian Rome.

Two further interruptions in the catalogue of towns come with Cologne and Constantinople. With the former Faustus exclaims in regard to the relics of the Magi: 'Oh you good men, how did you travel so far off course and turn up here when you were meant to go to Palestine to Bethlehem in Judaea? Or were you perhaps thrown into the sea after death, washed up the Rhine, picked up at Cologne and buried there?' Protestant scepticism is at work here. With Constantinople the author interjects that Faustus 'came . . . to Constantinople, which the Turk now calls Teucros, where the Turkish Emperor holds court, and performed many tricks there (some of which will be told later), which he inflicted on the Turkish Emperor Suleiman.' A few sentences later he mentions the fact that the city has 'three royal palaces or mansions'. The only other difference from Schedel that I have detected is with regard to Würzburg, about which the *Historia* mentions 'three Carthusian churches' where Schedel has 'three Augustinian churches'.

In his journeyings Faustus moves from Würzburg to his next port of call, Nuremberg, and here the author of the *Historia* appends to his slavish use of Schedel a mass of detailed statistical information that he derives from Hans Sachs's *Lobspruch der Stat Nürnberg*, mentioned above:

This town has 528 streets, 116 draw-wells, 4 big and 2 small striking clocks, 6 big gates and 2 small ones, 11 stone bridges, 12 hills, 10 appointed markets, 13 public bath-houses, 10 churches for preaching. In the town there are 68 mill-wheels driven by water, 132 leading citizens, 2 big town walls and deep ditches, 380 towers (Sachs has 183), 4 bastions, 10 apothecaries, 68 watchmen, 24 armed guards or look-outs, 9 constables, 10 doctors of law and 14 doctors of medicine.⁴⁶

This description of Nuremberg comes right in the middle of the travel chapter and is the most detailed account of any town in the whole sequence. Yet, like virtually all else, it is firmly based on a literary source and not on personal observation. Its function is surely to pay recognition to Nuremberg's leading role among cities in the Empire. The minor differences from Schedel that we have noted elsewhere are unsystematic and do not appear to be motivated by any consistent approach.

This brings us finally to Wittenberg, the centre of Dr Faustus's supposed activities. Faustus is presented to the reader as a real-life figure with a biography carefully located in specific places, though with

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 209, note to 119, 12.

no precise dates. He is said to have been born the son of a peasant at 'Rod', i.e. Stadtroda near Weimar, and to have been brought up and educated in Wittenberg, where he subsequently lived and had a house. The town is mentioned by name in several chapters (2, 3, 32, 37, 41, 45, 53, 54, 55, 60, 67, 68), but for the most part no further information is given. Indeed, when one investigates the details that are provided one quickly discovers that they cannot be substantiated. For example, the forest near Wittenberg where Faustus first conjures up the devil is called 'der Spesser Wald', a name reminiscent of the Spessart, the forest east of Aschaffenburg on the north bank of the River Main. It is just possible that this name is a distorted form of the Speckwald in the neighbourhood of Wittenberg, but, given the rest of the supposed information, it is probably coincidence that a similarly named forest exists near the town. The last two chapters of the *Historia*, in which Faustus meets his grisly end at the hands of the devil and is buried by his students, are set in the village of Rimlich, said to be 'situated half a [German] mile away from Wittenberg', but no such village is geographically attested. The most apparently circumstantial detail about Wittenberg is provided in the description of the house that Faustus bequeathes to his servant Wagner: 'the house, together with the garden, situated next to the Ganser's and Veit Rödinger's house, by the Eysern Thor (Iron Gate), in the Schergasse by the town wall.'

All the *Historia's* claims in respect of Wittenberg are denied as early as 1597 by Augustin Lercheimer in his *Christlich bedencken vnd erinnerung von Zauberey*, where he declares roundly: 'All this consists of wicked and knavish inventions and lies.'⁴⁷ He spells the name of the village as 'Kimlich' and refers to the house as being 'in the suburb by the Iron Gate.' The plan of Wittenberg in the *Civitates orbis terrarum* names the three gates as 'Die Coswicker port', 'Die Elb port' and 'Die Rostocker port'⁴⁸ and gives no indication of anything that might be an 'Eysern Thor'. However, the present-day name of the so-called 'Rostocker port' is Elstertor,⁴⁹ and it would appear that 'Eysern Thor' is a misreading of this. But there was no 'Schergasse' in this area.⁵⁰ A century later than Lercheimer Johann Georg Neumann is specifically concerned to remove the blot on Wittenberg's reputation made by the tradition that Faust lived there, and he points out that the historical Faust was born in Kundling, that the Spessart lies within the duchy of Württemberg, and that the author of the *Historia* must have confused Wittenberg with 'Wirtenberg' (Württemberg). He states bluntly: 'De

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 297.

⁴⁸ Reproduced in *Deutschland vor drei Jahrhunderten: Seine Städte, Flüsse und Wälder betrachtet von Willem und Joan Blaeu, Georg Braun, Franz Hogenberg und Joris Hoefnagel*, ed. C. Broekema (Amsterdam: N.V. Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1971), 98.

⁴⁹ Helmar Junghans, *Wittenberg als Lutherstadt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), map attached to 224.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, list of streets.

Wittenberga vero, quod fingit *Historia Fausti*, eo nihil fabulosius esse arbitror.⁵¹

A slightly different light on Faustus and the Wittenberg traditions is thrown by the young English traveller Fynes Moryson's account of his visit to Wittenberg in 1591. Moryson clearly had his doubts about what he was told with regard to both Luther and Faustus:

The Wittebergers tell many things of Luther which seeme fabulous, & among other things they shew an aspersion of inke, cast by the Divell when he tempted Luther, upon the wall in S. Augustines Colledge. Besides, they shew a house wherein Doctor Faustus a famous conjurer dwelt. They say that this Doctor lived there about the yeere 1500. and had a tree all blasted and burnt in the adjoyning Wood, where hee practised his Magick Art, and that hee died, or rather was fetched by the Divell, in a Village neere the Towne. I did see the tree so burnt; but walking at leasure through all the Villages adjoyning, I could never heare any memory of his end.⁵²

Moryson's account reflects the details of the *Historia* rather than providing any independent evidence. The Wittenbergers seem to have been responding to the popularity of the book by identifying a house as Faustus's and a nearby blasted tree as the place where he engaged in magical experiments, but their foreign visitor does not appear to have been wholly convinced.

In the four *Volksbücher* that we have looked at the real world of towns is beginning to play a significant part in the structure of narrative literature. None of them gives great prominence to the description of towns, but they all show an awareness of their importance and of the importance of travel. Eulenspiegel and Clauert, both of humble status, move in geographically more restricted circles, but Fortunatus and Faustus, through magic, have the Old World (but not the New) as their playground. Eulenspiegel and Clauert travel in order to get work, but Fortunatus and Faustus, as rich men, are able to travel for pleasure and in order to see things. With them the exotic comes into play. The *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* furnishes the greatest detail with regard to the portrayal of towns, principally, though not exclusively, through its dependence on Schedel and Hans Sachs. All four books give evidence of personal knowledge of some towns, though they use second-hand material as well. But the *Historia* mingles received fact with literary fiction in a much more thoroughgoing way than is the case with either *Fortunatus* or *Ulenspiegel*; the presence of a persuasive author is much more palpable. Indeed, his persuasiveness was such as to invent a picture of Wittenberg that was entirely at odds with its Lutheran reputation.

⁵¹ Joh. Georg Neumanns *Faust-Dissertation: Schrift gegen den Aufenthalt Fausts in Wittenberg. Faksimile des Drucks von 1693*, trans. and interp. Karl Theens (Mainz: Gutenberg-Museum, 1973), c.ii, § iv.

⁵² Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary Containing his Ten Yeeres Travell through the Twelve Dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turky, France, England, Scotland & Ireland* (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1907), i. 16.

