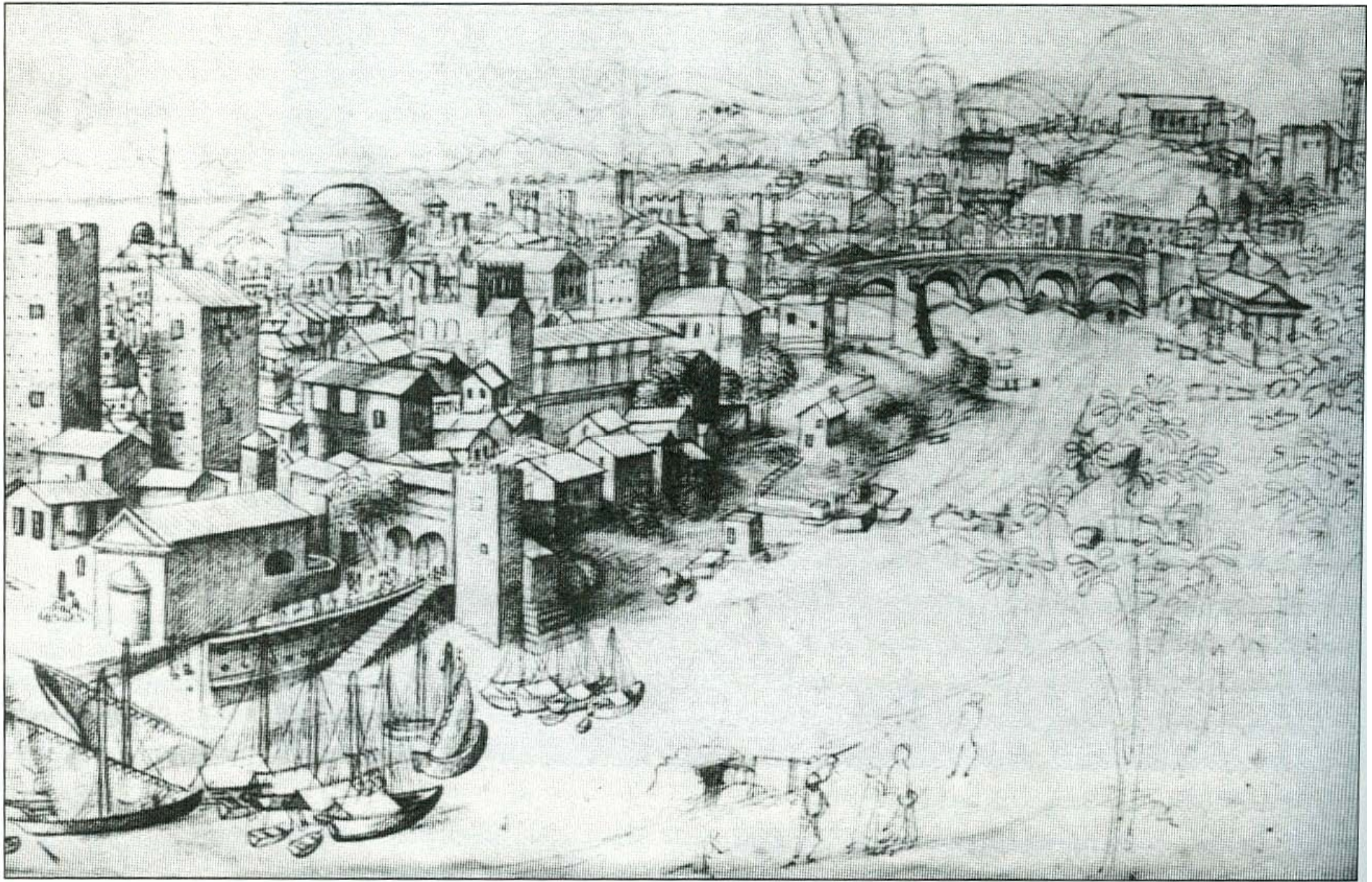# The Lost Port of Rome

Vedute by Dutch and Flemish Artists
as Evidence for the Reconstruction of the Ripa Grande

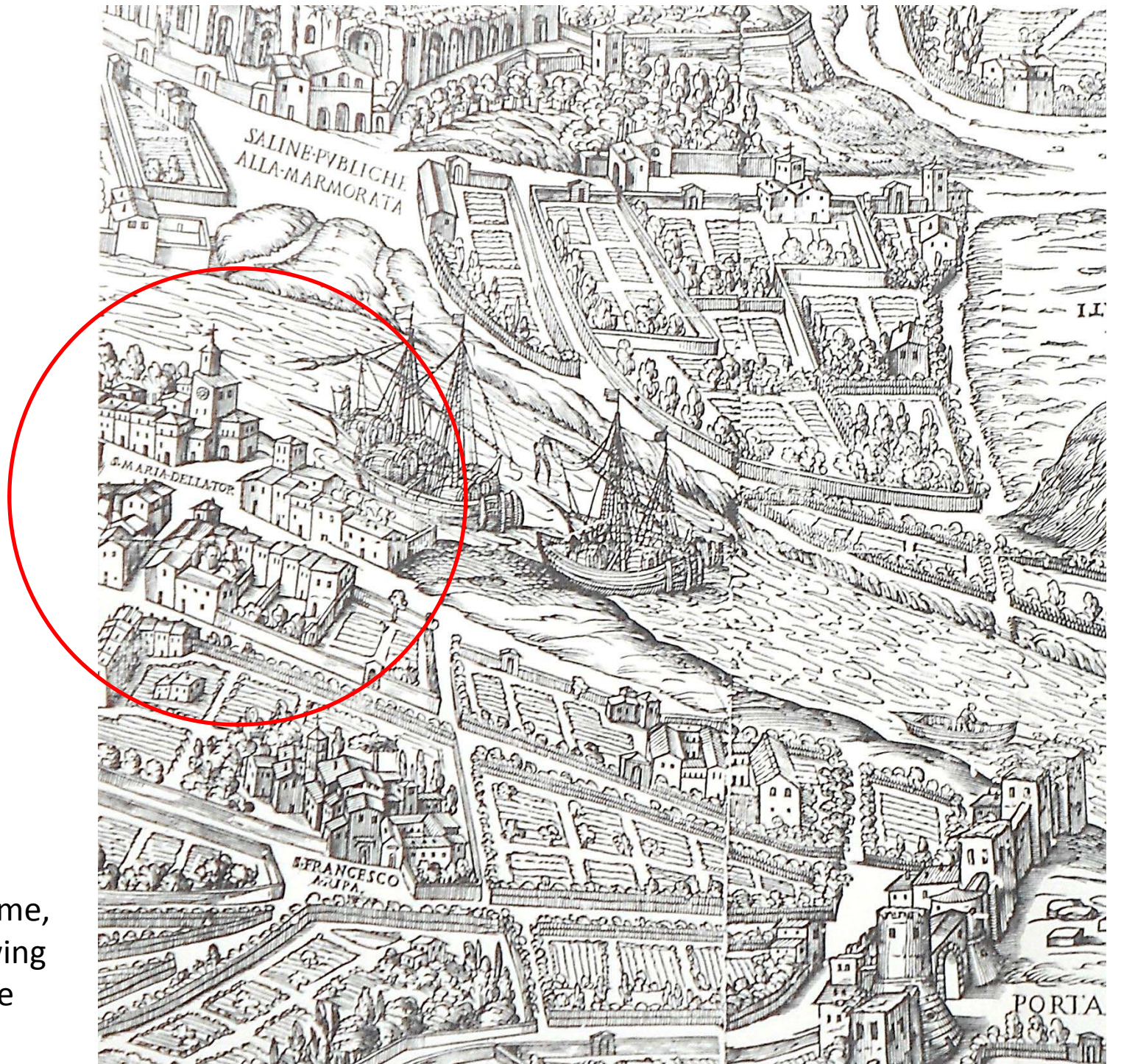Dr Nikolaos Karydis, University of Kent

View of the Port of Ripa Grande, Codex Escurialensis, c. 1470

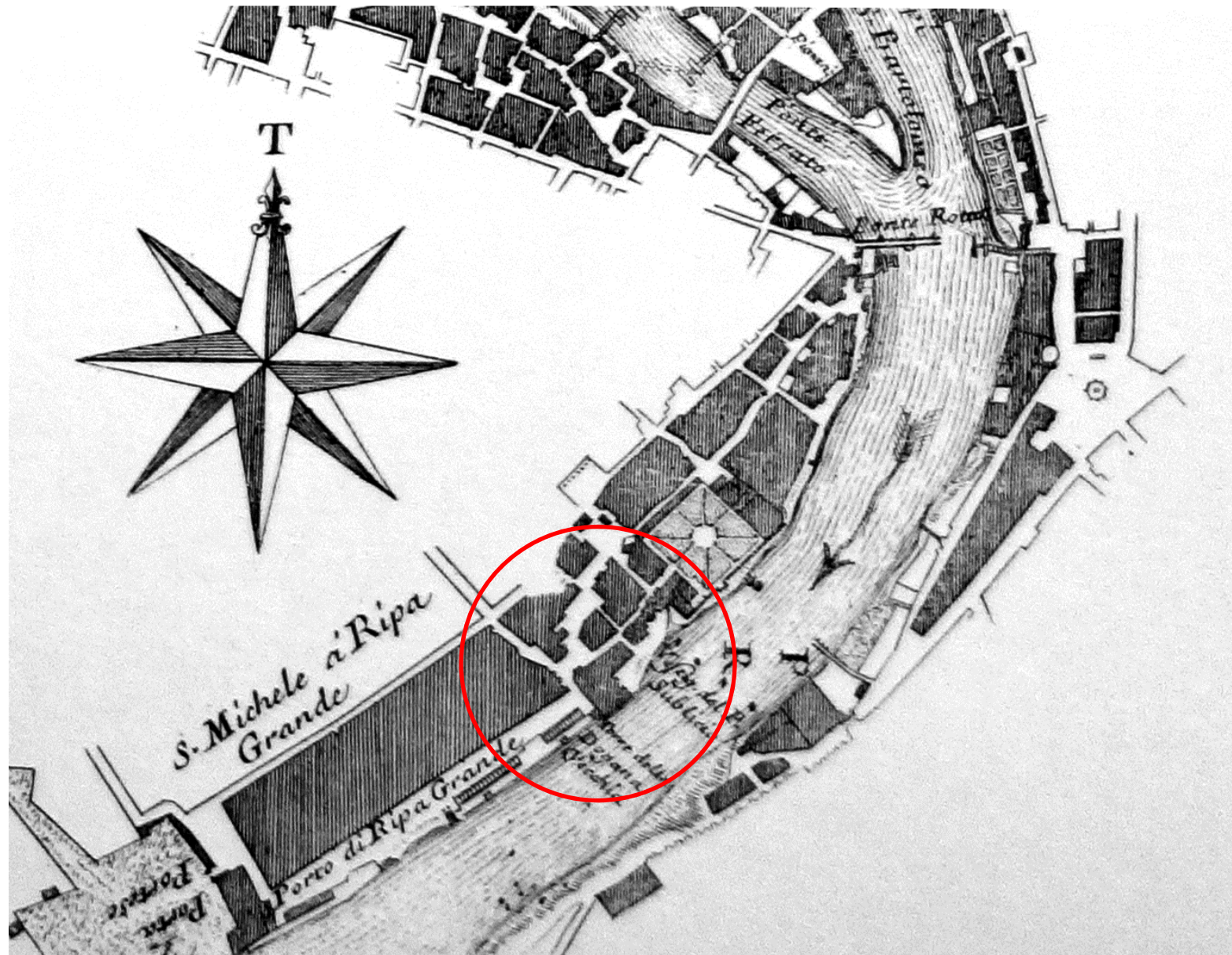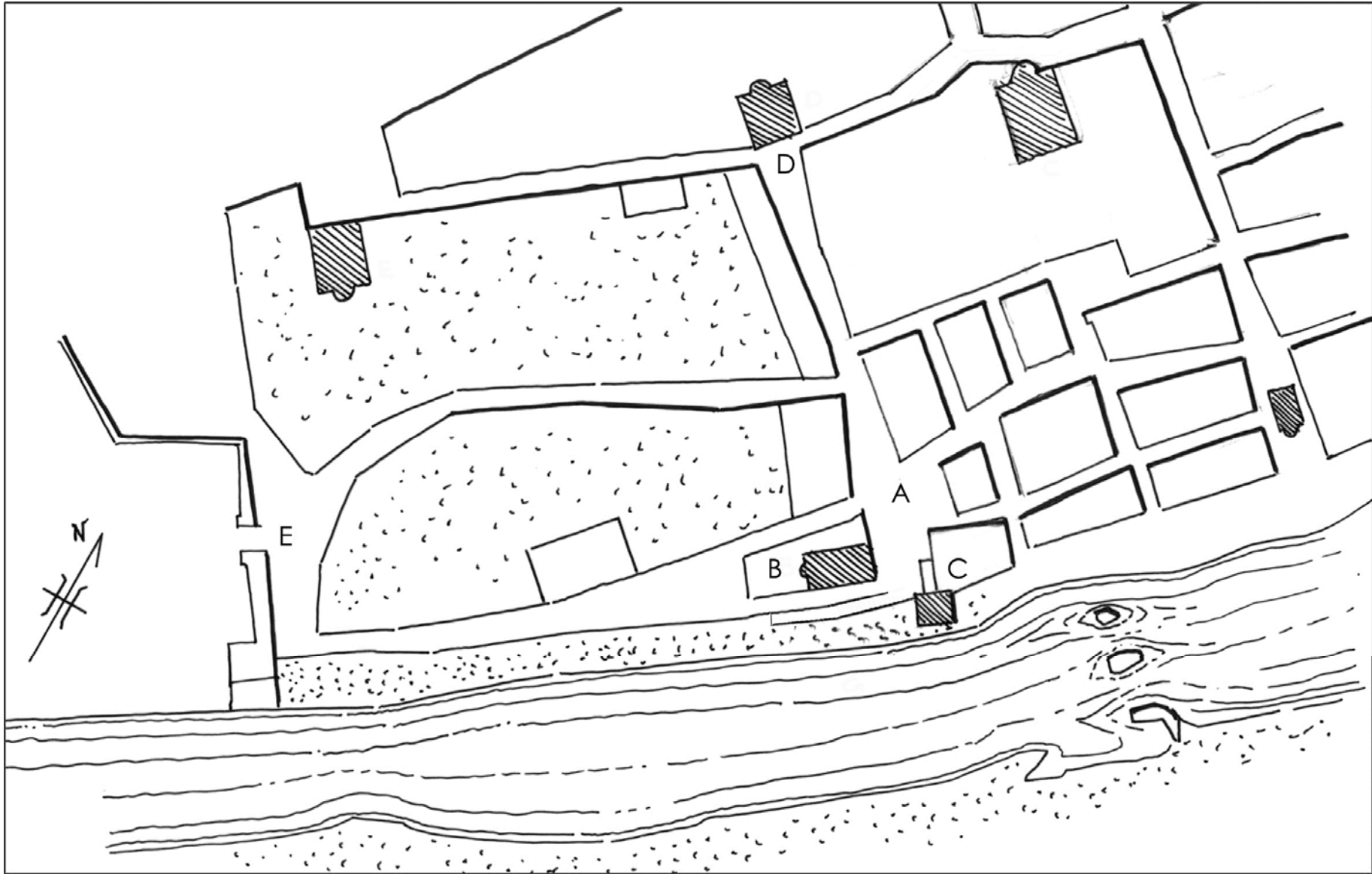Leonardo Bufalini, Plan of Rome, 1551, detail showing the Port

Antonio Tempesta, Plan of Rome, 1591, detail showing the Ripa Grande

Maggi, Plan of Rome, 1621, detail showing the Ripa Grande

Giovanni Battista Nolli, Plan of the Tiber Riverfront, 1743, Detail showing the new port of the Ripa Grande, the Hospice of San Michele and some remains of the old port

Schematic Reconstruction of the 16th and 17th Century Port of Ripa Grande
A. Port Square; B. Santa Maria della Torre; C. Customs House (Dogana Vecchia)
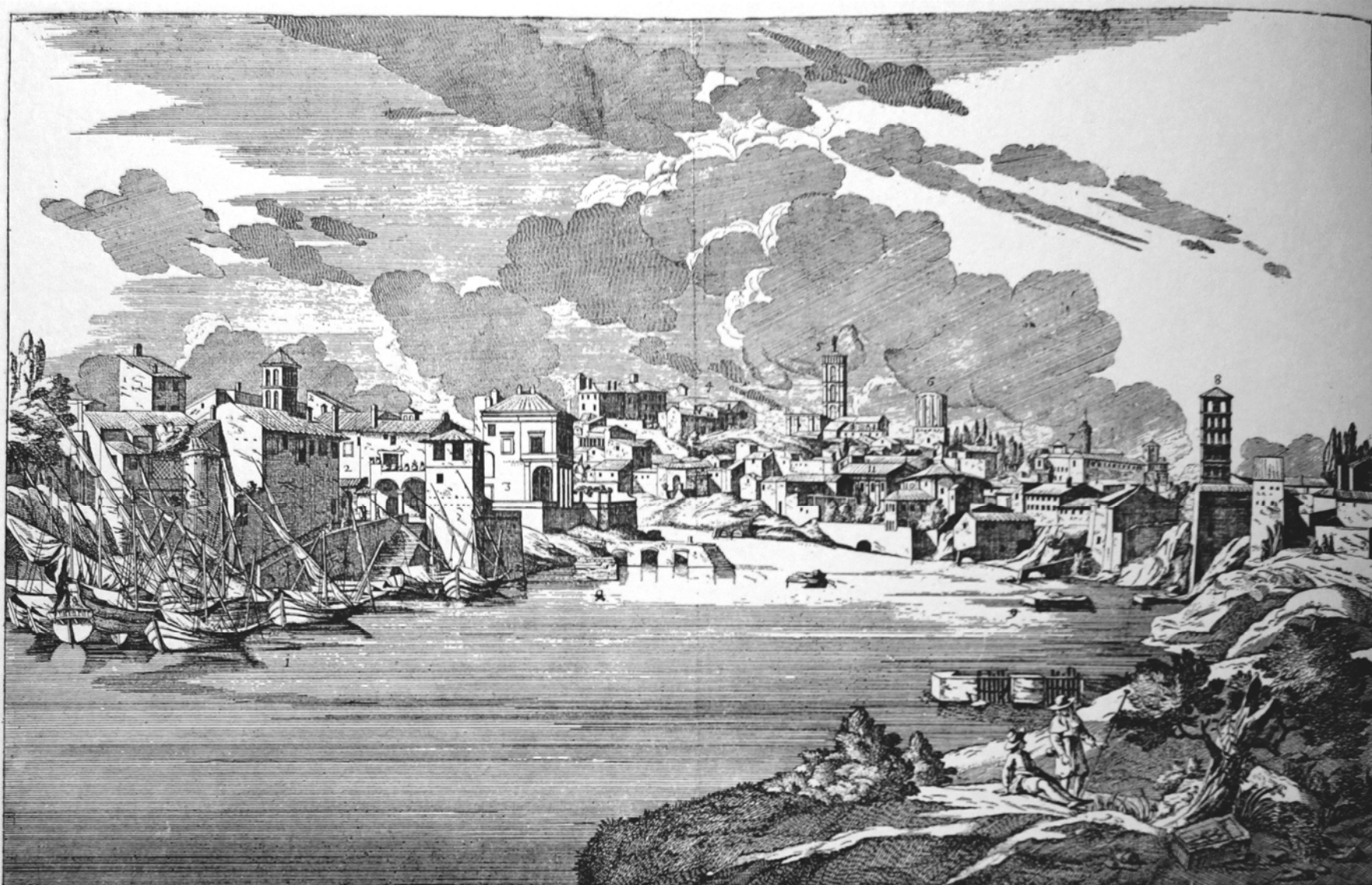D. Santa Maria del'Orto

Peter Bruegel the Elder (1525-1569), View of Ripa Grande, **1557**, pen in two inks (Chatsworth)
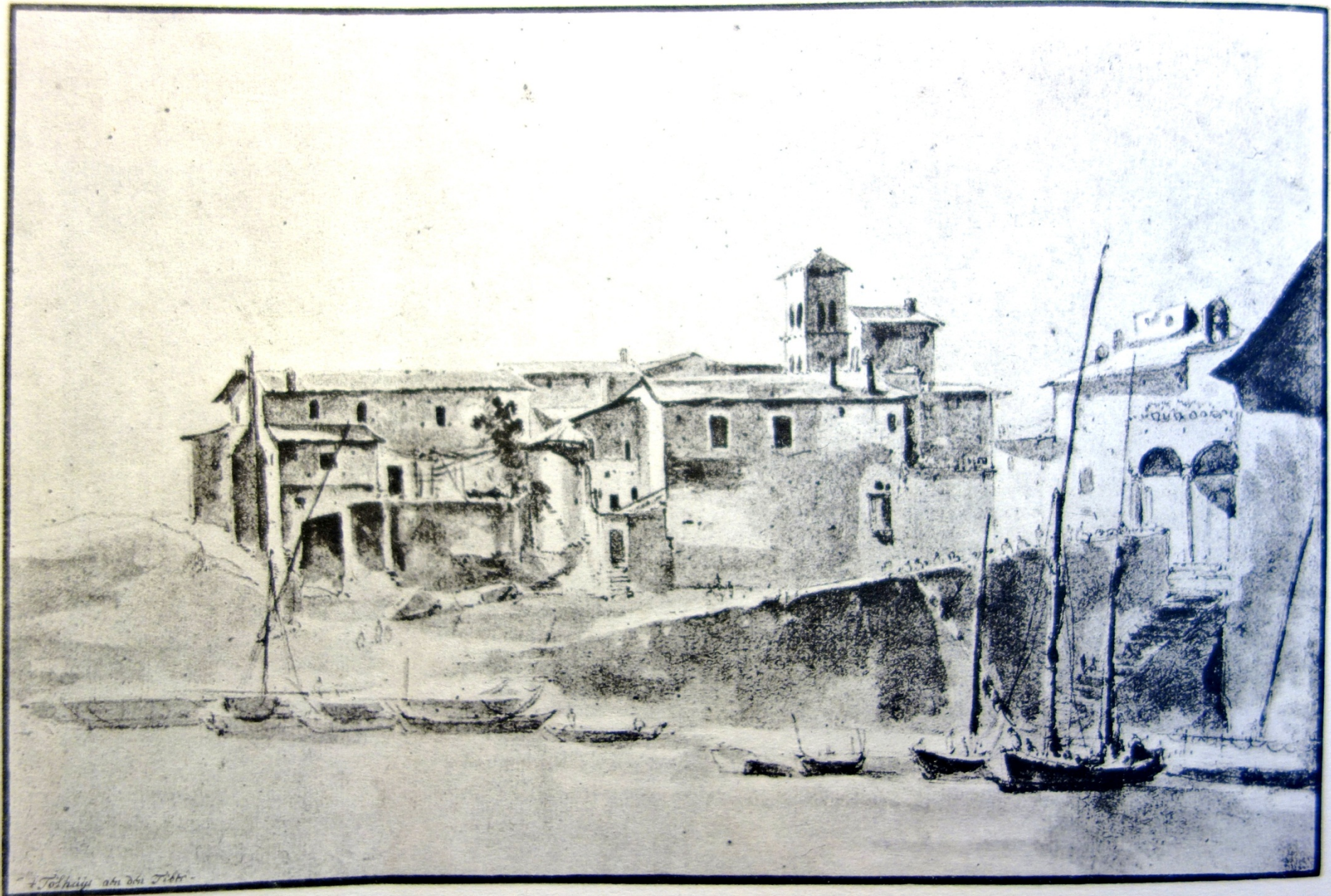
R 4

Jan Aselijn (1610-1652), View of Ripa Grande, **1640**s (Frankfurt, Stadelsches Kunst-institut)

Lievin Cruyl (1634-1720?), View of Ripa Grande, **1660s**, engraving

Lievin Cruyl (1634-1720?)

- Born in 1634 in Gand
- He combine the role of the priest with the one of the Architect since 1662
- 1662: project for the tower of St. Michael's church in Gand
- 1664: arrival in Rome
- 1666: he publishes his famous group of inscriptions "Prospectus Locorum Urbis Romae insignium"
- He remains in Rome until 1671. He collaborates with the Gesuit Athanasius Kircher (designs for the Tower of Babel, 1670). Kircher is one of the pioneers of the Camera Obscura.
- 1676: works in Venice
- 1681-84: works as an architect in France. His last known work dates back to 1690.
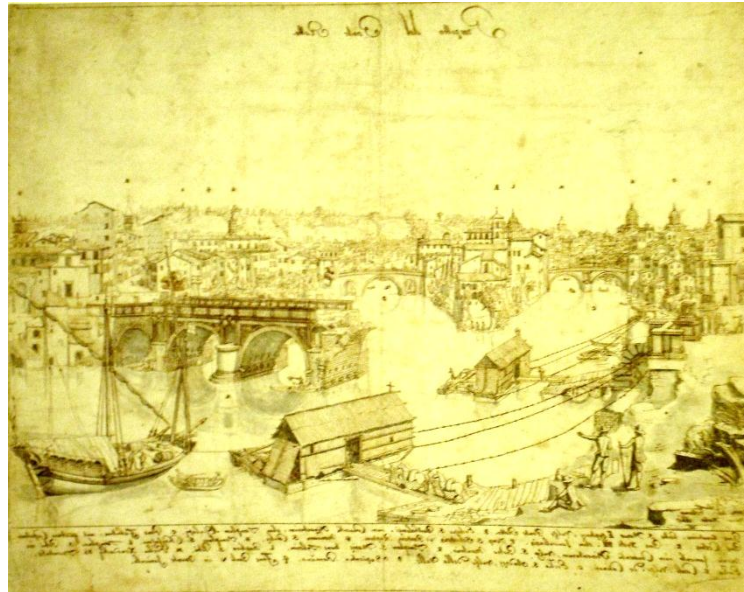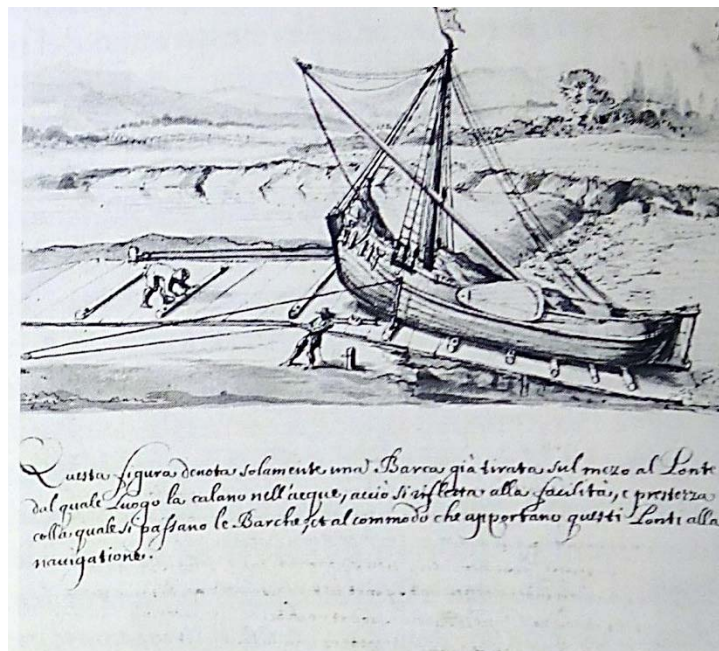
Jacob de Heusch (1656-1701), View of Ripa Grande, **1675-1692**

Gaspar Van Wittel (1652?-1736), View of Ripa Grande, **1690,** oil on canvas
(Accademia di San Luca, from G. Briganti, 1996, cat. 191)

Gaspar Van Wittel

- Apprenticeship with Matthias Withoos in Amersfoort, whose work includes "Vedute", i.e. the port of Zuiderzee (1675)
- Left for Italy in 1674.
- He joined the **Schildersbent** in Rome (or Bentvueghels, the community of the Dutch and Flemish artists)
- First employment in Rome: designer and topographer with **Cornelius Meyer**. The latter was commissioned by Clemente X to find ways to improve navigation along the Tiber.
- He remained in Rome becoming a very successful landscape painter. His work constitutes one of the origins of the landscape painting tradition in Italy during the 18th century


Questa figura denota solamente una Barca già tirata sul mezzo al Ponte dal quale luogo la calano nell'acque, accio si rifletta alla facilità, e prestezza colla quale si passano le Barche; et al commodo che apportano questi Ponti alla navigatione.

Gaspar Van Wittel (1652?-1736), View of Ripa Grande, **1690,** oil on canvas, detail
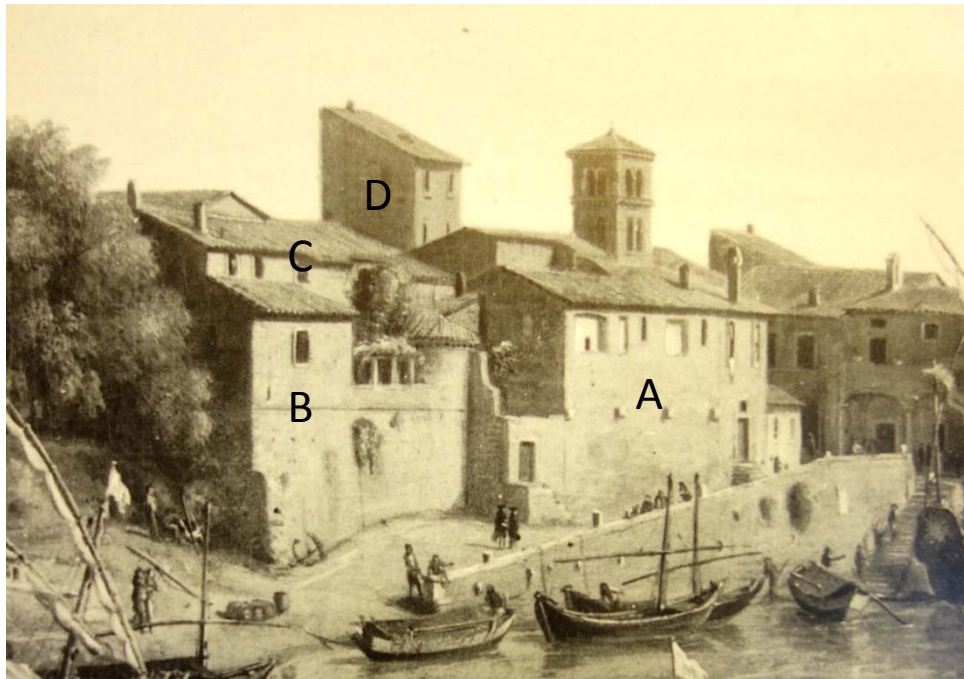
Isaac de Moucheron (1667-1744) View of customs house of Ripa Grande,
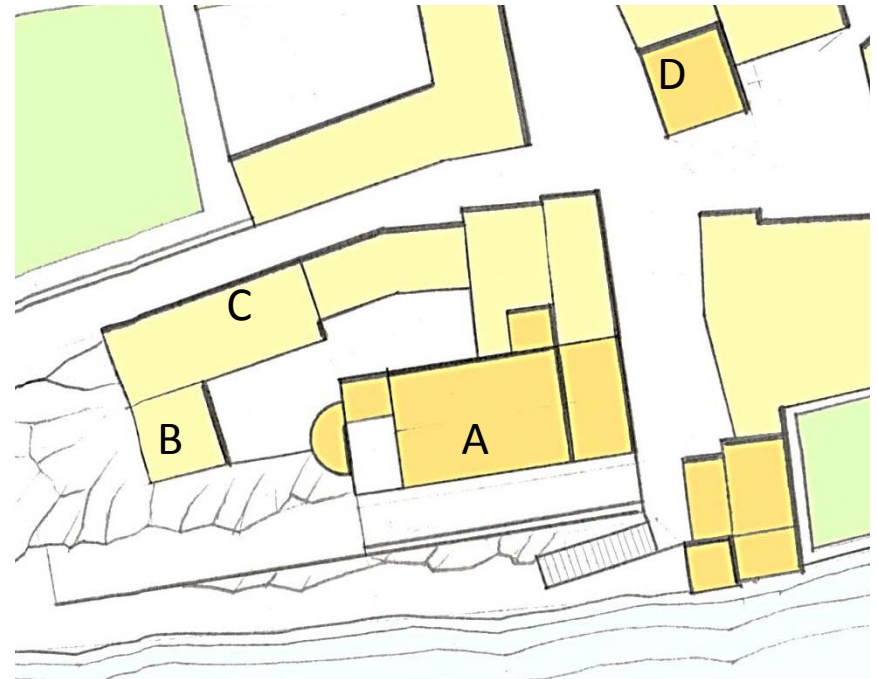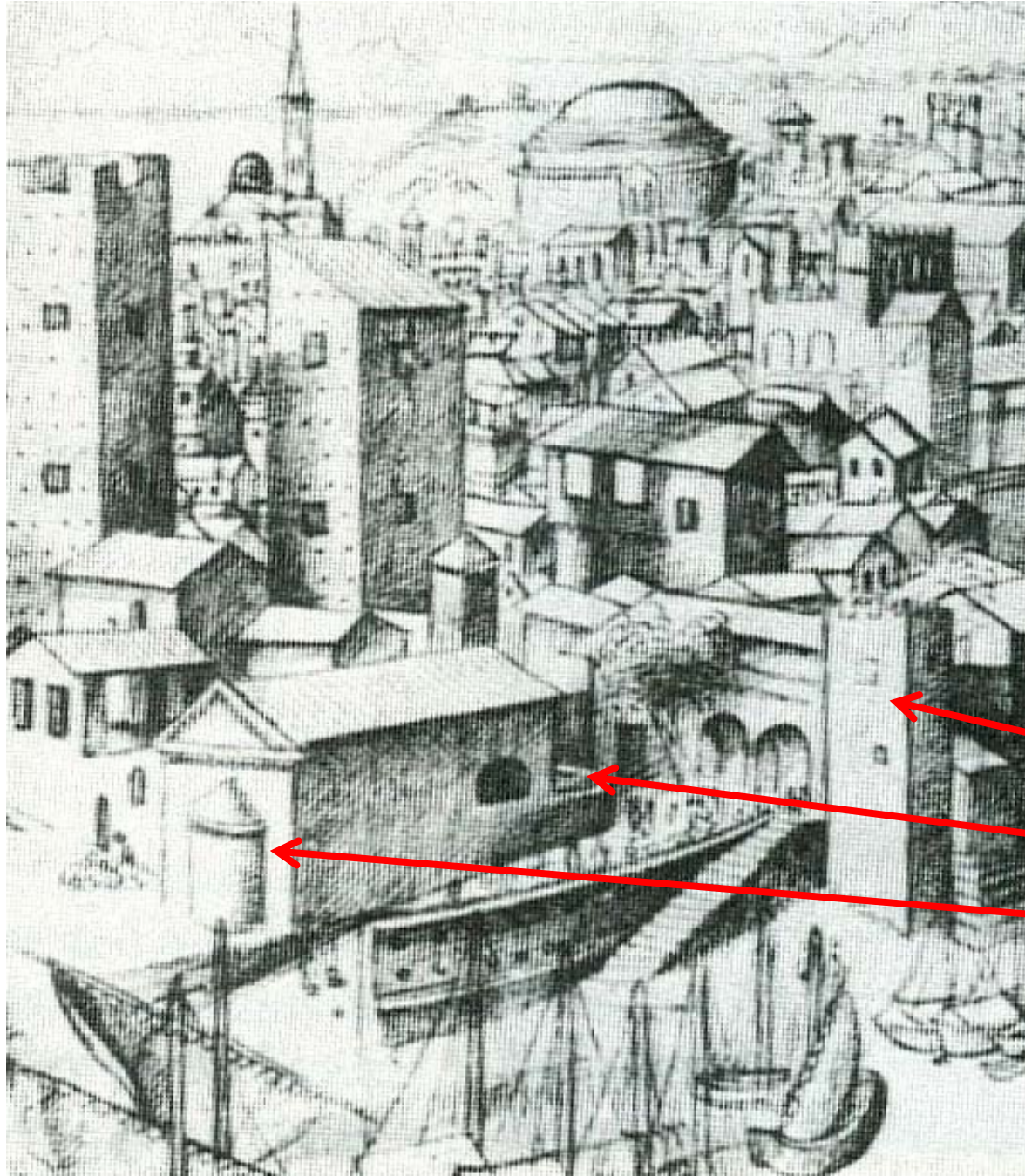Between **1694-1697**, ink on paper

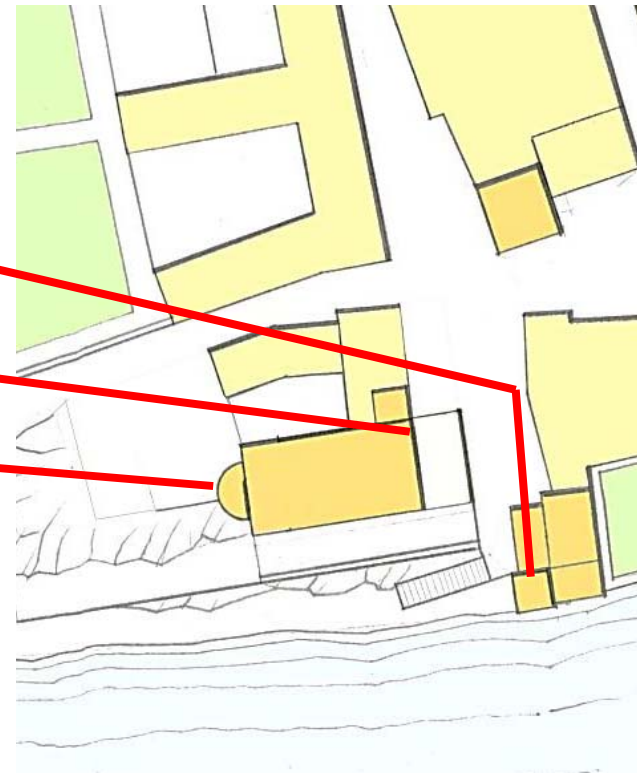Jan Aselijn (1640)
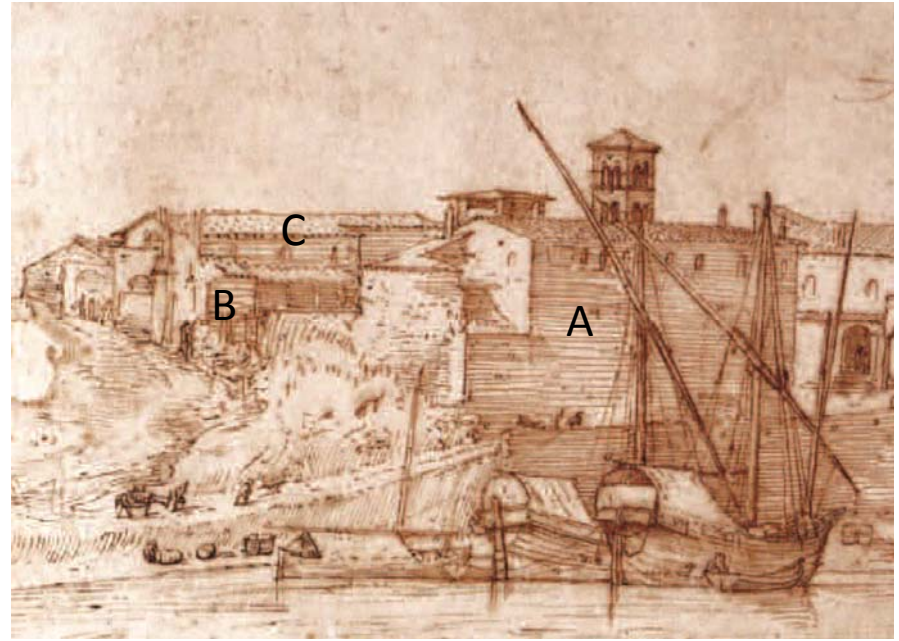
Peter Bruegel the Elder (1557)

Gaspar Van Wittel (1690)

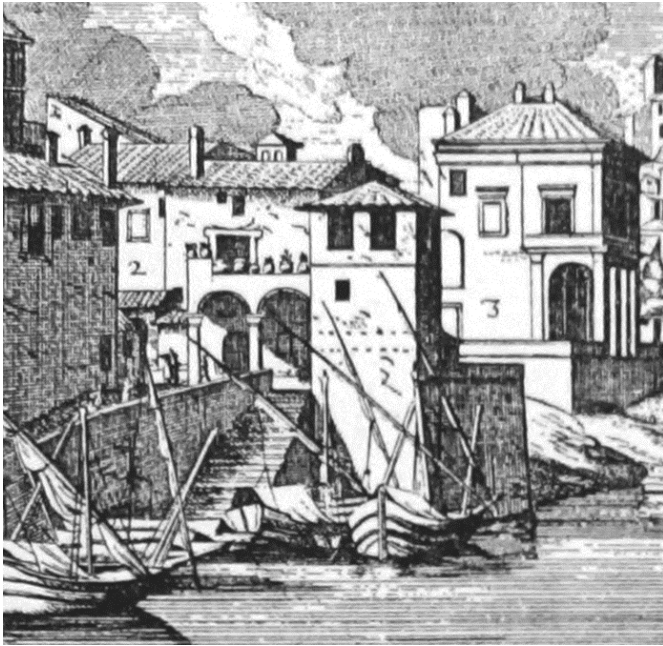Block of Santa Maria della Torre, 17th Century Plan

Reconstruction of the 16th Century plan of the block of Santa Maria della Torre on the Basis of the view in the Codex Escurialensis (1470)

Reconstruction of the 17th Century plan of the block of Santa Maria della Torre

Comparison with the church of San Bartolomeo all'Isola, as rebuilt by Torriani in 1624.

Lievin Cruyl (1660s)
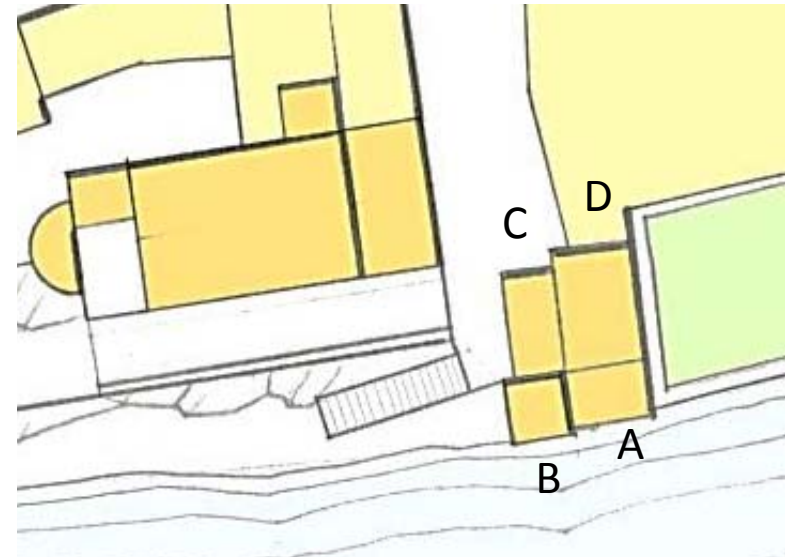

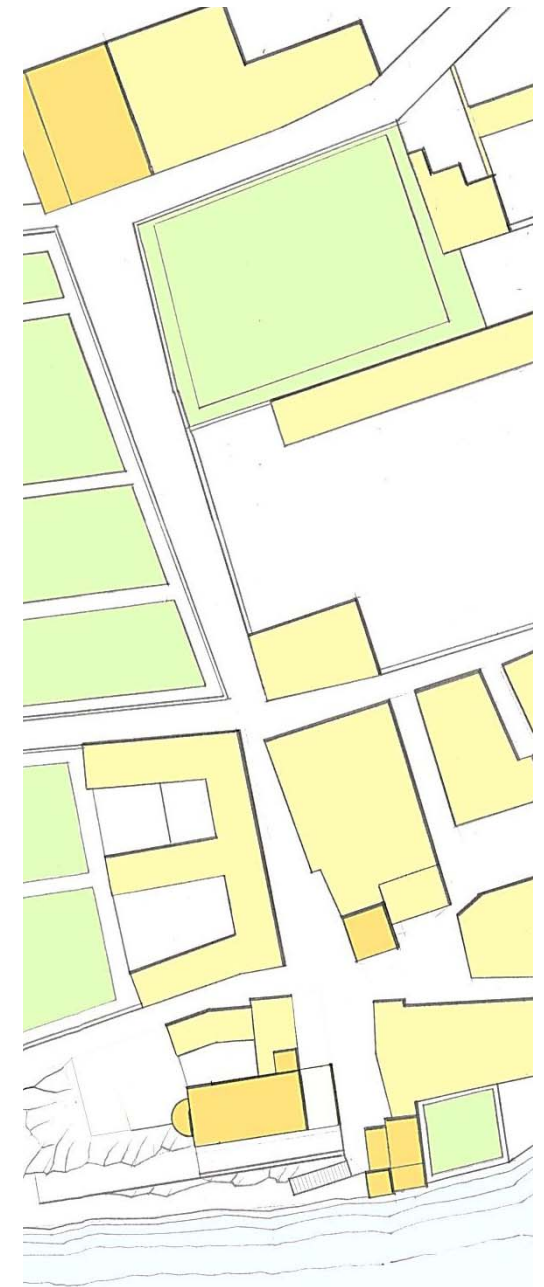Isaac de Moucheron (1690s)

Gaspar Van Wittel (1690)

Lievin Cruyl (1660s)

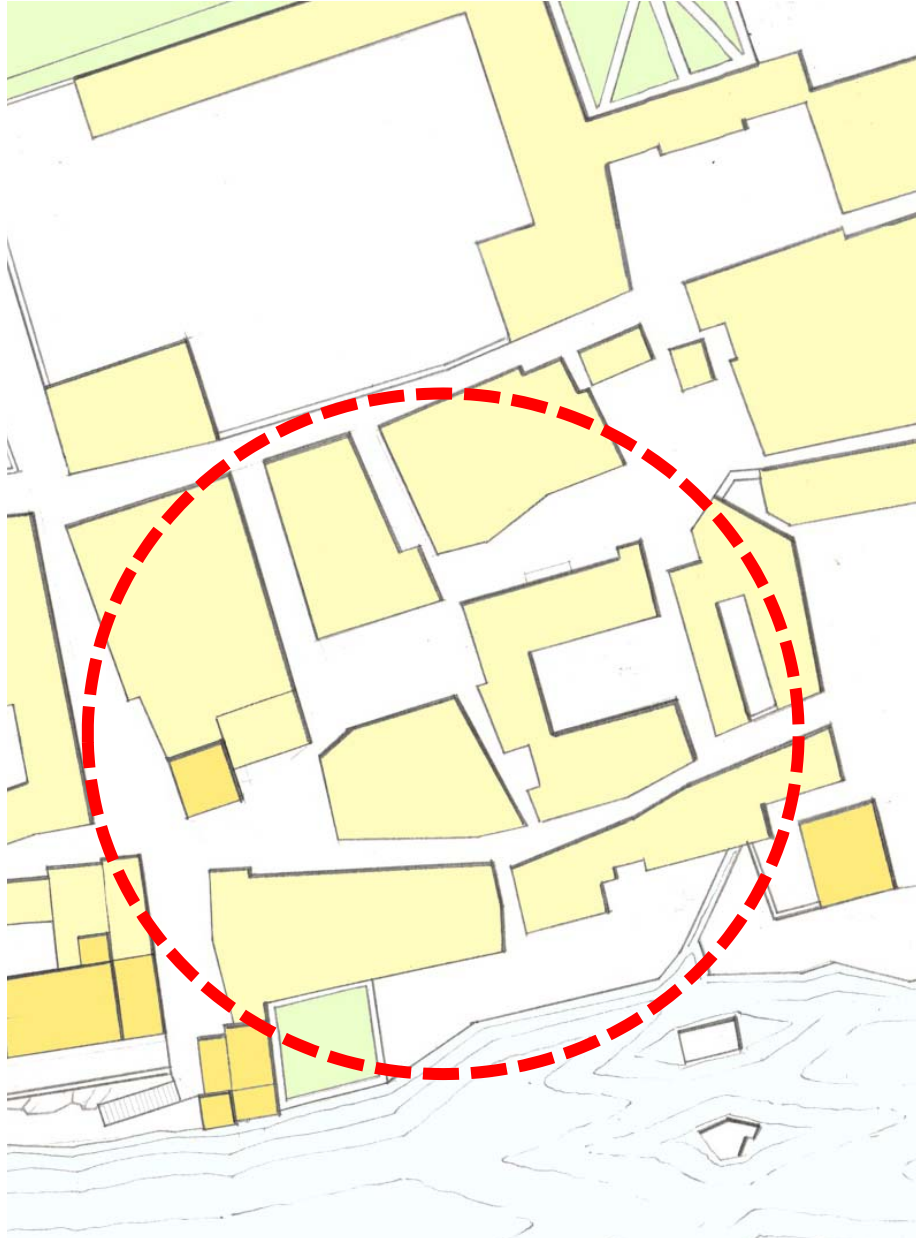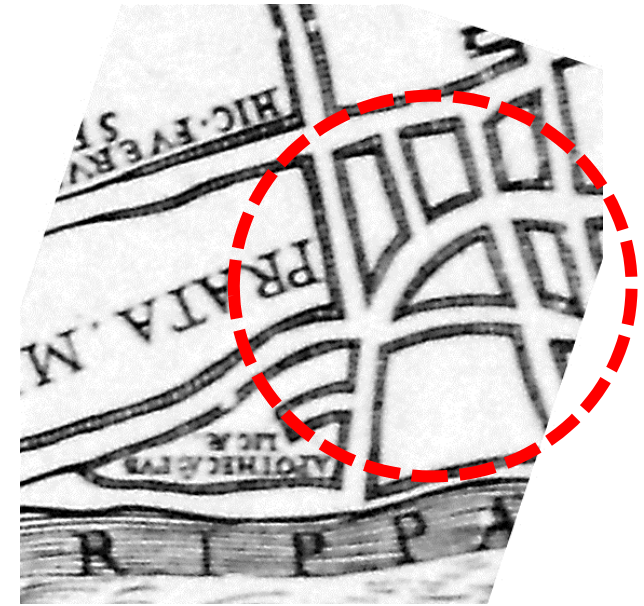Reconstruction of the 17th Century plan of the block of the Customs House of Ripa Grande
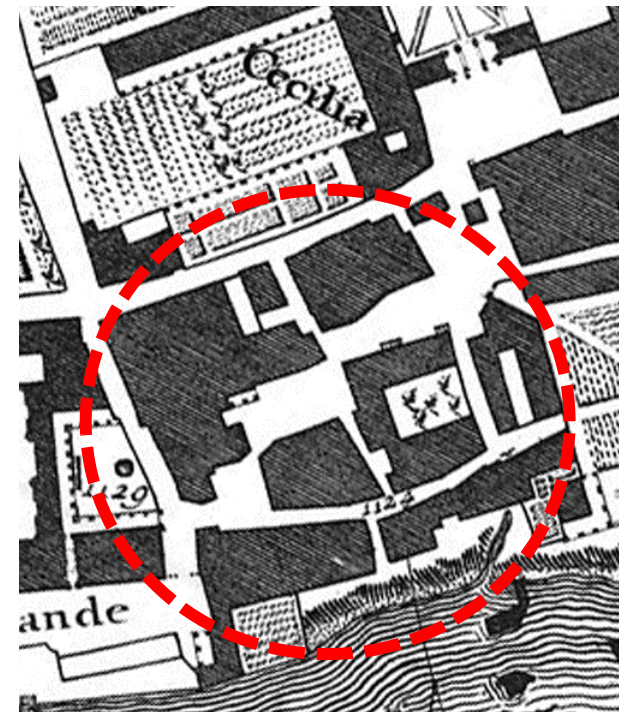
Tempesta Plan of Rome, Detail (1591)

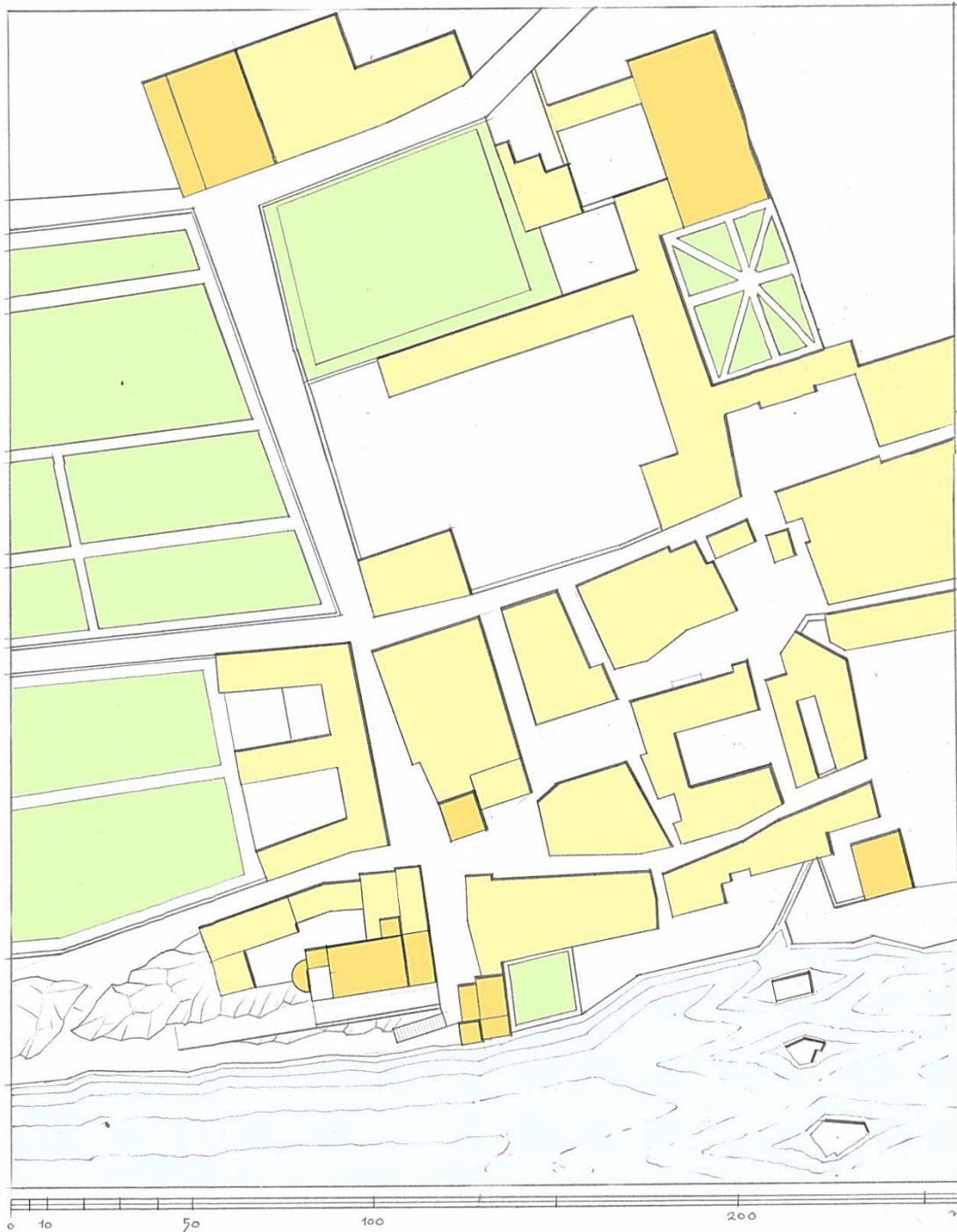Reconstruction of the 16th Century Plan of the Port Square

Reconstruction of the Urban Tissue between the Port
And the Monastery of Santa Cecilia

Bufalini Map of Rome, 1551, detail

Nolli Map of Rome, 1748, detail

Port of Ripa Grande

Reconstructed Plan
17th Century (left)
Early 16th Century (below)