

THE EARLIEST MAP OF BATH

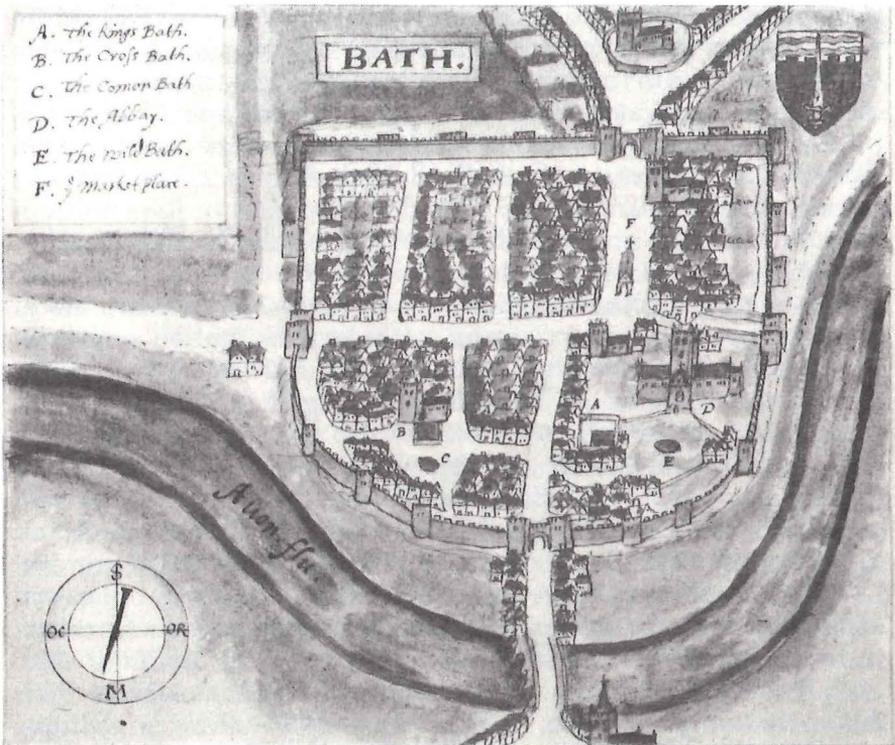
Stephen Bird

Introduction

The earliest known plan of Bath appears in *The Particuler Description of England with the Portratures of Certaine of the Cheiffest Citties and Townes*, published by William Smith in 1588.¹ The early history of this manuscript is unknown, although it was clearly familiar to other map-makers, notably John Speed who was working in Smith's lifetime and who copied some of his town plans. It passed into the British Library in 1753 with the collection of Sir Hans Sloane, but was only noticed in 1876 and published three years later.² Many early maps of Bath were already known in the city; the Royal Literary and Scientific Institution had an extensive collection put together by its librarian,³ but all those earlier than Joseph Gilmore's of 1694 – and there were several – were copied, with varying degrees of competence, from John Speed's plan inset in a corner of his map of Somersetshire published in 1612.⁴ Thus the discovery in 1876 of an earlier, entirely different view of Bath, which pre-dated Gilmore by over a century, attracted considerable interest and ten years later, on January 13th 1886, Emanuel Green read a paper on it to a meeting of the Bath Field Club.⁵ Now, one hundred years later, it is perhaps appropriate that Smith's map be re-appraised, particularly with regard to its authenticity, accuracy and the information it contains about the medieval city.

Smith's City Views

The Particuler Description of England contains colour plates of fifteen English cities. Eight of them – Chester, Colchester,



1 William Smith's 'portrature' of Bath published in 1588
(British Library Sloane Ms. 2596)

Coventry, Lichfield, Oxford, Salisbury, Stafford and Winchester – are sketched in profile while the other seven – Bath, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, London, Norwich and Rochester – are shown from a more elevated, sometimes near-vertical position. It would be interesting to know the reasons for Smith's varying choice of perspective. The elevated views inevitably contain more of topographical interest and it is possible that he spent more time surveying them, although this would not explain why Chester is only shown in profile. Smith was a native of Cheshire and probably more familiar with Chester than any other English town. His profile sketch is crudely executed in comparison with the view of Chester which he published in 1585,⁶ which is altogether more carefully drawn. The amount of time available to

him might have affected his work. Like Chester, several of the views appear hastily sketched and one suspects that some were only drawn from memory. Blank spaces left in the text for drawings of several more cities suggest that the manuscript was put together and published with some haste. York, which Smith describes as 'the greatest cittie in all England next to London', is a notable absentee, and it may be significant that no cities north of Chester, Stafford and Lichfield are illustrated.

Smith is also known to have copied existing works. His two largest plates, on leaves folding out from the manuscript, are of London, probably copied from Anthony von Finden's view of 1560, and Norwich, after William Cunningham's plan in *The Cosmographical Glasse* of 1559. His Cambridge is a reduced version of Richard Lyne's bird's-eye view of 1574, and Canterbury may be taken from Braun and Hogenberg's map of around 1570. Thus of the elevated views, only Bristol and Bath are likely to be his own work. The eight profile sketches are probably also his own, but they contain little topographical information. For Salisbury and Lichfield, Smith shows no town defences or perimeter, only a sea of red roofs above which the churches emerge; in both cases, were it not for the cathedral, the town would be unidentifiable. The rest of the profile views show the towns within their defensive walls but some, like Coventry and Stafford, are almost as anonymous. Even those which contain more topographical detail cannot be trusted. Colchester, for example, has far more churches than are known to have existed in the 16th century and the castle is drawn standing on a motte, which it did not have.

The Date of Smith's Description

Although the title page of Smith's manuscript is marked 1588, its exact date of origin is uncertain. Wheatley and Ashbee⁷ cite Smith's list of 'manor places belonging to the king' and his description of Hampton Court as 'the fayrest howse that the king hath' as evidence that parts of the text were not written until the reign of James I. But it is equally likely that such passages were transcribed in the Elizabethan period from documents written in the reign of Henry VIII, and the gender of the monarch merely overlooked. As we have seen, Smith copied earlier works in some

of his city views and this could also have been true for parts of his written description. Moreover, had he only completed sections of the text in the early 17th century, he would also have had time to draw and insert the illustrations for which blank panels were left in the manuscript. Clearly this did not happen.

Of the fifteen city views illustrated, only Bristol (1568), Canterbury and Salisbury (both 1588) are dated. The plan of Bristol carries the legend 'Measured & Laid in Platforme, By me, W. Smith, at my being at Bristow, the 30. & 31. July: Ano. Dm. 1568.' It is probable that Smith visited and surveyed Bath around the time of his short stay in Bristol, and this theory may be supported by the absence from the Bath plan of the New (later Queen's) Bath and the Lepers' Bath, both thought to have been built around 1576. Yet the plans of Bath, Bristol, Canterbury and Norwich, and the profile view of Oxford, all contain an indicator of the cardinal points derived from a compass clock used by the instrument- and map-makers of Nuremburg, where Smith lived for nine years after 1575, and he is unlikely to have used it before this date. There is no apparent reason why this device is included on some plans and not others and its appearance on the Bristol view of 1568 – seven years before he went to Nuremburg – can only be explained as a later addition. It is a pity that Smith did not sign more of his city views as this is the only one that can definitely be attributed to him. Bath and Oxford are also likely to be his own work but despite their compass indicators, Canterbury and Norwich have known antecedents.

Smith's 'Portrature' of Bath

Smith's manuscript description immediately below his coloured plan of Bath is cursory in the extreme:

Bath lyeth on ye northest corner of Somersetshire, compassed almost round about, with ye River of Avon, distant southeast from Bristow 10 myles, & southwest from Marsfeld in glocestershire 5 myles. It is but a litle cittie, yet one of ye most ancientest in England, whereunto Welles is added, & so do both make one Bishoppriock.

These brief and very general comments do not inspire confidence

that Smith paid Bath any great attention, or that he even visited the city at all. While the three main baths over the hot springs are shown on the plan and noted on the key, there is no mention of the thermal water which, had he inspected the city in detail, would surely have made sufficient impression on him to warrant inclusion in his text. By contrast Smith shows that he certainly visited Bristol. Not only did he sign and date his drawing, he also made some interesting observations there:

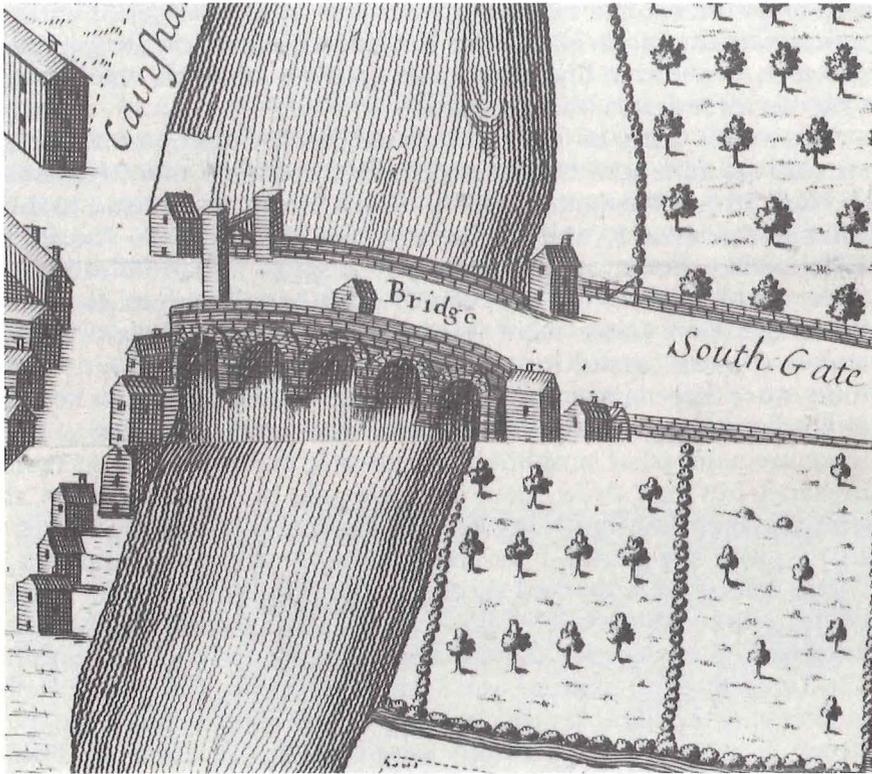
. . .there is no dunghill in all the cittie, nor any sinck that cometh from any howse, but all convoid under the ground; neither use they any cartes in their streetes, but all sleades. . .

Such comments are unlikely to have been made with confidence by one not acquainted with the city. Similarly, Smith wrote of Chester:

The howses are builded in such sort, that a man may go from one place of the cittie to another and never come into the streetes. . .

showing, as we have already seen, that he was familiar with the fabric of that city. Nevertheless he chose to portray Bath in plan rather than in profile, which suggests that he visited and surveyed the city, albeit superficially, himself. Most of his city views are shown from the south and the proximity of Beechen Cliff immediately south of the river Avon would have made it an obvious vantage point from which to study the city.

It is a pity, then, that Smith did not take this opportunity to portray the medieval city with sufficient accuracy and detail to complement John Leland's carefully observed account published in 1545 which followed his visit to Bath a few years earlier.⁸ While the view may roughly equate with Leland's first sight of the city as he descended Holloway, Smith's bright red roofs, blue river and green open spaces are poor compensation for the wealth of information which Leland went on to record, and it is tempting to imagine that Smith did little more than observe from a distance. On approaching Bath, Leland records that: 'Ther is a great gate with a stone arche at the entre of the bridge', a feature known to have existed in 1273 when, Green tells us, it was kept in time of



2 St Lawrence's Bridge as shown by Joseph Gilmore in 1694
(Bath Reference Library)

war by Robert Cherin in exchange for a tenement in the city and a meadow outside the walls. Speed and other subsequent map-makers all drew this defensive gate at the south end of the bridge, but Smith did not include it. However, Leland continues: 'The bridge hath v. fair stone arches', a detail which Smith, rather surprisingly, gets right. Speed, and those who imitated him, only show three arches, and it is Gilmore in 1694 who is the first to illustrate the bridge correctly, complete with the chapel of St Lawrence perched on the middle of the east side. The weir and mills upstream and east of the city are also missing from Smith's plan; had he walked down Boatstall Lane and poked his head out of the East Gate, he could hardly have failed to notice them. Their absence is inexplicable as in common with all of his other

bird's-eye views, he has recorded other known areas of extra-mural settlement, in particular the houses south of the bridge, between the bridge and the South Gate and outside the North Gate on Broad and Walcot Streets.

The street plan of Bath shows further evidence of Smith's cursory examination. He has noted the three main thoroughfares of High Street, Westgate Street and Stall Street, which lead to the principal gateways, and the narrow Boatstall Lane to the East Gate is also shown, albeit incorrectly aligned. When he came to draw up his plan of the city, Smith must have assumed that the West and East Gates were joined by one straight, continuous street. A more careful inspection would also have told him that there were three lanes, and not two, leading from Westgate Street to Upper Borough Walls. The lanes in the south-west part of the town are somewhat simplified, suggesting that Smith noted their presence but only drew them later. Despite these inaccuracies, it is interesting that Smith noticed the open land inside the north-east wall of the city and scribbled a couple of faint boundaries, which Speed later marked more clearly. Similar divisions, more boldly marked but which Speed omits, can be seen behind the houses on the west side of Broad Street and it appears that Smith has unwittingly recorded, in simplified form, the pattern of medieval urban land tenure, long parcels of land behind narrow street frontages. A thorough examination of leases should provide an accurate plan of the city's houses and their land,⁹ against which the reliability of early maps can be checked.

The Abbey and Monastic Buildings

One of the most striking anomalies in Smith's portrait of Bath is that he has not recorded the incomplete state of the Abbey Church, as it must certainly have been when he made his survey. After the dissolution of the monastery in 1539, the church started by Bishop Oliver King and Prior William Birde in 1499 was left unfinished. Queen Elizabeth I visited Bath in 1574 and found the nave still roofless and the south transept incomplete. She immediately ordered collections to be made to pay for the completion of the church, and a stone carved 1576 on the south wall of the unfinished transept probably indicates the resumption

shows the Abbey without a roof on the nave and the south transept incomplete, much as Queen Elizabeth must have seen it. The nave remained open to the skies until James Montague was appointed Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1608, when he encouraged donations towards the final completion of the Abbey with a gift of over £1,000 for timber, lath and plaster to roof over the nave.

It is hard to know why Smith has omitted the parts of the monastic range that survived in his time. Much of the south-eastern corner of the city is coloured green as open ground, presumably a grassy precinct and burial grounds. These open spaces within the precinct must have impressed him more than the buildings in it, and appear in marked contrast to the uniform huddle of houses with which he largely filled the rest of the town. Excavation¹⁰ has shown that the eastern claustral range was demolished to make way for a burial ground after the Dissolution in 1539, but Abbey House was built on the foundations of the western range and is clearly shown by Speed and Gilmore. It was only demolished in 1755 and Smith certainly should have seen it. Around 1540 Leland observed that 'one gret squar tour' of the Bishop's Palace was still visible with other ruins nearby, but by Smith's time the land had been sold and the extant remains probably demolished altogether. Emanuel Green ruefully commented that '. . . had Smith marked these, supposing they were there in his time, we should know the exact site of the palace.'¹¹ While this would have demanded from Smith a degree of accuracy not noted elsewhere in his plan, such information would indeed have assisted greatly in recent archival and archaeological work in this area of town, where in 1984-5 parts of the Bishop's Palace finally came to light.¹²

Smith makes another omission, this time correctly, from the same corner of the city. The row of houses formerly known as Lilliput Alley, now North Parade Passage, contains a house traditionally dated to 1482, although this is generally thought to be inaccurate as secular structures would not have been erected on monastic land. Speed does not show the buildings on his slightly later plan either, and recent archival work seems to have resolved the uncertainty by producing leases for this row of properties.¹³ In 1622 John Hall is known to have issued building leases along the fringe of 'Abbey Orchard', shown by Speed as an unbuilt area containing trees and a statue. The southern edge of

this orchard was probably the line of the south claustral range and the new houses became the north side of Lilliput Alley.

The Baths

It is remarkable that the unique phenomenon of the Baths, which distinguished this city from the others surveyed by Smith, are so summarily drawn, in only two dimensions. This may be taken as further evidence that he did not become intimately acquainted with the city's fabric. Having visited and recorded numerous towns, Smith was well-practised in drawing the usual urban structures – houses, churches, defences, etc – to a common formula, perhaps at a later date when preparing his sketches for publication. He may have been reluctant to draw the baths, either because he was not familiar with them, or because he did not want to conceal the three sources of the hot springs, preferring to show them as pools of blue standing out against the abundance of green and red around them.

The King's Bath, the Cross Bath and 'The Comon Bath' are clearly marked on the plan. The two smaller baths correspond well to Leland's description: '. . . both these bathes be in the midle of a lite [little] streat. . .'. The New Bath, the Lepers' Bath and the Horse Bath are, however, missing from the plan and are not mentioned by Leland. In 1562 Dr William Turner, Dean of Wells, published his treatise on the Bath waters¹⁴ in which he criticised the lamentable conditions which prevailed in the baths and recommended separate facilities for women, lepers and horses. The New Bath is known to have been built adjacent to the King's Bath in 1575–6, and the archival evidence has been described in detail by P. Rowland James.¹⁵ Wood asserts that the Horse Bath was built around the same time as the New Bath, which he wrongly attributes to the beneficence of Thomas Bellot in 1597, but while he may have the date wrong, Wood is likely to be right in principle as it would have been convenient to arrange water supply and drainage for two new baths at the same time. The Lepers' Bath first appears in the City Chamberlain's accounts in 1598 but may be the 'poor folks bath' and 'lasser bath' mentioned in the accounts for 1584 and 1593 respectively. It was

probably built by Abbot Feckenham when he erected the Lepers' Hospital near to the Hot Bath in 1576.

While the omission of one bath might be understandable, particularly in view of Smith's inaccuracies elsewhere, the absence of three baths suggests that they had not yet been built when Smith surveyed the city. This indication of an earlier date is supported by the inclusion of 'The Mild Bath', 'corrected' on some copies of the plan to 'The Mill Bath'. Smith shows this bath lying directly south of the Abbey and east of the King's Bath in the area where the Prior's Lodgings, later Abbey House, should be. Leland mentions '2 places in Bath priorie used for bathes,' once supplied by the King's Bath but no longer used. These were the Abbot's Bath and Prior's Bath. Little is known about the Abbot's Bath, but the Prior's Bath was probably built by John de Villula at the same time as the King's Bath. Both were included within the precincts of the monastery, the Prior's Bath situated inside the Prior's Lodgings, probably fed by hot water escaping from the King's Bath. As it was disused in 1540 and still covered by a building in Smith's day, it is a mystery as to why he has recorded it as a bath apparently in use; indeed it is laudable that he discovered its existence at all. A possible context for this bath may be the transfer in 1552 of ownership of the baths to the City Corporation, when it may have been re-opened for public use, only to be closed again when the extra water was needed to supply the New and Horse Baths. There are no civic records to support this, however.

The Parish Churches

Smith shows only four of the five parish churches in the city. St Michael-without-the-Walls, St Mary-within-Northgate, St Michael by the Cross Bath and St Mary de Stalls are all more or less in their correct positions, but of St James' church there is no sign. In 1279 the original St James' was incorporated into the Bishop's Palace as a private chapel and a new parish church was built in a small field just inside the city wall by the South Gate, where it stood in Smith's time. If he had viewed the city from the hillside across the river it is possible that the large and ornate

South Gate partly obscured the church. Nevertheless it is a serious omission.

St Michael-without-the-Walls, on the other hand, is of considerable interest. The Churchwardens' Accounts in the reign of Edward III (1327–1377) include several items of expenditure for the repair of a wattled enclosure wall around the church, a feature which Smith illustrates. After the Act of Consolidation of 1583, St Michael's ceased to be a parish church and it is possible that the churchyard wall was no longer maintained. Speed's map, published in 1610 but probably drawn in the later years of the 16th century, shows no sign of it.

The church at the south end of the bridge is likely to be St Thomas à Becket, Widcombe. Although the church is situated well to the east of this position, Smith may have chosen to illustrate it here as it was ecclesiastically part of the city, being annexed to St Mary de Stalls. Less likely alternatives are that it represents the chapel of St Mary Magdalen further up Holloway or even the small chapel of St Lawrence situated on the bridge itself.

The City Walls

Perhaps the most puzzling aspect of William Smith's portrait of Bath is his treatment of the city walls. He has drawn them in a U-shape that is more or less symmetrical and completed them by a straight north wall. The four gateways visible are in roughly the right places, although they bear little resemblance to the original structures. The North Gate is known to have had three arches as opposed to the single arch drawn by Smith, and he has depicted the East Gate with twin turrets and of similar proportions to the other three main gateways, which it was not. Ham Gate in the south wall and Lod-gate in the east wall are omitted. But it is Smith's inclusion of fifteen towers around the circuit of defences which is the most surprising feature, and it raises the question of whether Bath's city walls ever included bastions. Archaeology has failed to locate any on the few occasions that the outer face of the wall has been seen. Even on the stretch about 50 metres long exposed by the clearance of bombed-out houses in the southeast corner of the old city, there

was no sign of towers ever having been built into, or attached onto, the city wall. In his assessment of the archaeological and literary evidence for the defences of Bath from Roman times to their destruction in the 18th century, Tim O'Leary found no indication that bastions had ever existed here.¹⁶ Emanuel Green describes in detail the changing fortunes of the wall through the Middle Ages,¹⁷ and notes the letter sent in 1369 to the Mayor and Bailiff of Bath ordering them to survey and repair 'the walls and towers and ditches.' In particular he catalogues the many occasions on which stone was robbed from the city wall by various townspeople, not least, it appears, the monks and priors of the day. Had external towers existed on the walls, they are likely to have been plundered first, as such deprivations would not immediately compromise the security of the city. In 1540 Leland recorded that 'In the walles at this tyme be no toures saving over the toune gates'. He also described Gascoyne's Tower on the north-west corner of the city wall, which appears on subsequent maps by Speed and Gilmore and which Smith certainly would have seen. He must also have seen Counter's Tower at the other end of the north wall. Neither of these towers appears to have served in a defensive role, nor did they stand proud of the wall's outer face but were built onto it from the inside. Leland tells us that Gascoyne's Tower rose higher than the normal line of the city wall.

It is tempting to dismiss Smith's string of towers as pure fantasy, perhaps an attempt to beautify his portrait or to enhance the city's ancient appearance. In the absence of conclusive evidence on the matter, it is interesting to note the way in which Smith illustrated the defences of the other cities portrayed in his book. Out of fifteen cities, ten are walled or partly walled and, with one exception, wherever he has drawn a city wall, he has adorned it with towers. The exception is Chester which, as we have seen, was probably the town best known to him and which he was thus most likely to record accurately. On this profile view of Chester he has only drawn two towers on the wall close to the West Gate and bridge, and the isolated Water Tower in the foreground on the Dee. Speed's view, although taken from a different angle, is consistent with Smith's in these details. Like Smith, Speed was a native of Cheshire and would have been familiar with the county town. Smith's profile view of Colchester

shows the East Gate and adjoining sections of Wall, both equipped with three square bastions. In fact the town is known to have had round bastions, and only to the south of its East Gate; possibly Smith added those on its north purely for reasons of symmetry. Coventry, whose earthwork defences were only replaced by stone walls in the 15th century, is again shown in profile, with seven round towers on its south wall. Unfortunately this area now lies under a ring road and cannot be excavated, but several other towers are known elsewhere on the walls, and one still stands today. In his view of Stafford, Smith has embellished the South Gate with turrets, which it did not have, and has put on the wall more towers than are known to have existed. Similarly at Oxford it is known that there were many bastions on the town walls, particularly to the north and east, but few on the south side where Smith has drawn twelve. The profile sketch of Winchester shows ten towers on the south wall, although this length in the 16th century contained only the South Gate, King's Gate and Wolsey House. There were bastions on the town's west wall, however. The birds-eye plans of Canterbury and Norwich both appear to be accurate in this respect, but as both were copied from earlier maps, they cannot be used to judge Smith's own reliability. This leaves the near-vertical view of Bristol, known to be by Smith, in which the Portway wall south of the river is seen with two gates – Redcliffegate and Templegate – and six towers. The original number of towers between the two gateways is unknown, although Smith has drawn two. Between Templegate and the river Avon, there were five towers, one of which has been excavated recently. Smith has drawn four.

The evidence from the other walled towns is revealing. Despite the common forms which their defences take – all town gates are given double turrets, and the shape of the towers on the walls is often indeterminate – Smith has been consistent in what he recorded. Despite frequently getting numbers and locations wrong, wherever a town had towers in its defences, he has illustrated them. If Bath had no bastions on its walls, as the archaeological and literary evidence seem to indicate, then this is the only plan in which Smith got it completely wrong. Moreover with Bristol, Bath is the only bird's-eye plan which he has not taken from an earlier source; indeed, he may have surveyed the two cities around the same time, as has been shown already. In

such circumstances it is hard to understand why he should portray the Portway wall at Bristol reasonably accurately and the wall around Bath so ineptly.

An Earlier Portrait of Bath

It is an intriguing, though unlikely, possibility that Smith may have seen and copied an earlier plan of Bath, although none is known to exist. Nevertheless a miniature portrait of the city was painted in the 15th century, which Smith is unlikely to have seen. It appears as part of a richly illuminated initial for Psalm 69 in a Book of Hours which belonged to Henry Beauchamp, Duke of Warwick, and may be dated to between 1445, when he became Duke and 1446, when he prematurely died. The painting is, of course, primarily the product of a Court art, concerned more with colour and decoration than with perspective and realism, and little interpretation of the buildings within the encircling city wall is possible. Despite this, it is unmistakably Bath and interesting for several features. John de Villula's cathedral dominates the town, its leaded roof and square stone tower standing proud of timber-framed, red-roofed houses with elaborate chimney pots. There is no sign of the substantial monastic range, unless a faint gold cross on the building immediately south of the church indicates the presence of the Bishop's Palace. A wall is clearly shown around the west end of the cathedral and the area within it is coloured dark blue. This may represent the King's and Prior's Baths which were contained within the precinct. One hundred years later, Leland noted that '... the colour of the water of the baynes is as it were a depe blew se water. . .'.¹⁸ A wide road emerges from large double doors in the south side of the cathedral tower – there is no transept – and passes through the South Gate, perhaps alluding to the Abbey Gate and the access it gave from the monastery to the bridge over the Avon and the road to Wells. It is also tempting to interpret the tower and its large doors as the North Gate from which a street may once have led directly through the town to Ham Gate;¹⁹ although this street, if it ever existed, would have been re-routed when the monastic precinct was laid out in the 12th century. Only the South Gate, sporting two large croselets with oilets breaks the line of the city



4 Miniature portrait of Bath in a Book of Hours of around 1445
(Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, Ms. 893)

wall. Outside the walls the sheep in the meadows signify the medieval town's important role as a centre of the cloth trade.

Reginald Wright has dated the manuscript to around 1372 and identified the three figures in the foreground as King Edward III in the river, watched by Bishop Ralph de Salop and Prior John de Berewyck.²⁰ This date cannot be correct as Ralph de Salop died in 1363 and John de Berewyck only became Prior in 1377. While it is probable that the figures are indeed the reigning king, the Bishop of Bath and Wells and the Prior of Bath Abbey, they are not actually named. In the absence of evidence to the contrary it must be taken that the manuscript was commissioned by Henry Beauchamp around 1445–6.

The foreground of figures, meadows and walled city is set against a tapestry-like background of steep tree-topped hills. The

scene corresponds well to Thomas Chaundler's romantic description which he wrote a few years later.

Among its charms are shady groves, flowery meadows, pleasant streams, transparent fountains, and above all, the very nature of the place is formed for delight; for the very hills themselves by which the city is surrounded seem to smile and to diffuse a delight with which beholders cannot satisfy themselves, or be weary of surveying; so that the whole region round about may rightly be esteemed and named a sort of paradise. . . . The whole compass of the city is, in fine, encircled as by a coronet by a splendid wall; and, unless it be surveyed within, all its beauty cannot be beheld; for it has not less beauty within its walls than without; nor are only one or two of its streets neat and elegant, but all its parts.²¹

An Earlier Map of Bath?

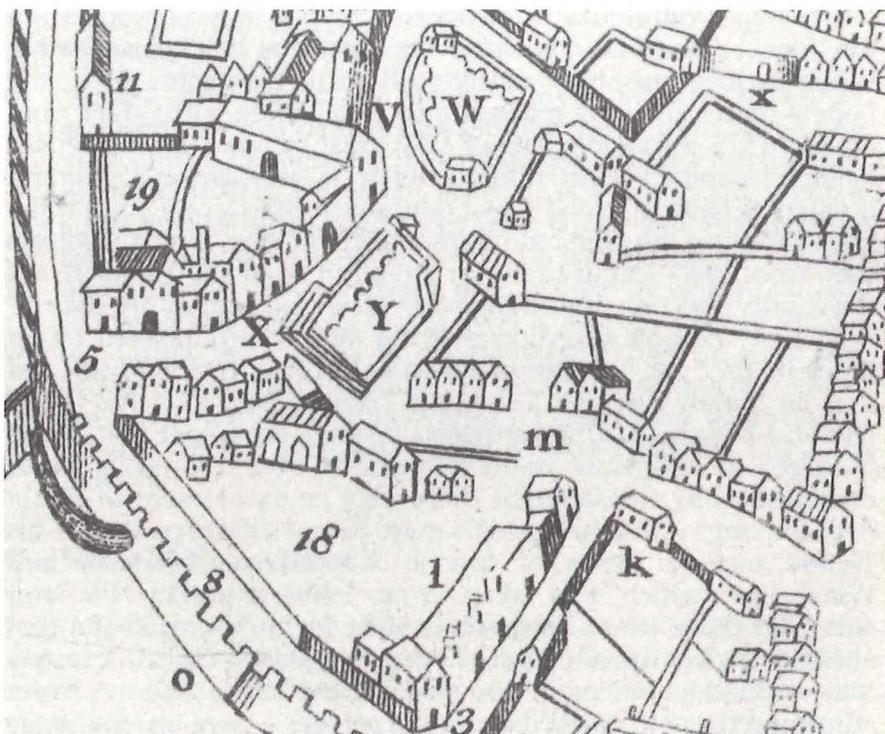
Another map of Bath has been attributed to the year 1572 and requires some explanation. In 1634 Thomas Johnson published his *Thermae Bathonicae* in which he included a plan of Bath closely modelled on John Speed's, although different in some minor details. In 1742 John Wood referred to Johnson's work in the first edition of his *Description of Bath*:

In the year 1634 Dr Thos. Johnson wrote a description of Bath and therein inserted a draught of the same, a copy of which I have caused to be engraven.²²

However, in his second edition of 1749, Wood repeated the Johnson map but under the title 'A Copy of Doctor Jones's VIEW of the CITY of BATH, as it was Published in the Year MDLXXII'. He states that it was drawn to illustrate *The Bathes of Bathes Ayde*, published by Dr John Jones in 1572, but the map is not included or even mentioned in this book. Indeed, Wood's second edition of his *Description of Bath* is the only source for 'Dr Jones' Map'. In an eloquent and persuasive tirade, Emanuel Green²³ catalogues the flaws in the map, shows that it is identical to the plan published by Johnson and argues that Wood deliberately altered it to create the impression that it was an earlier work.

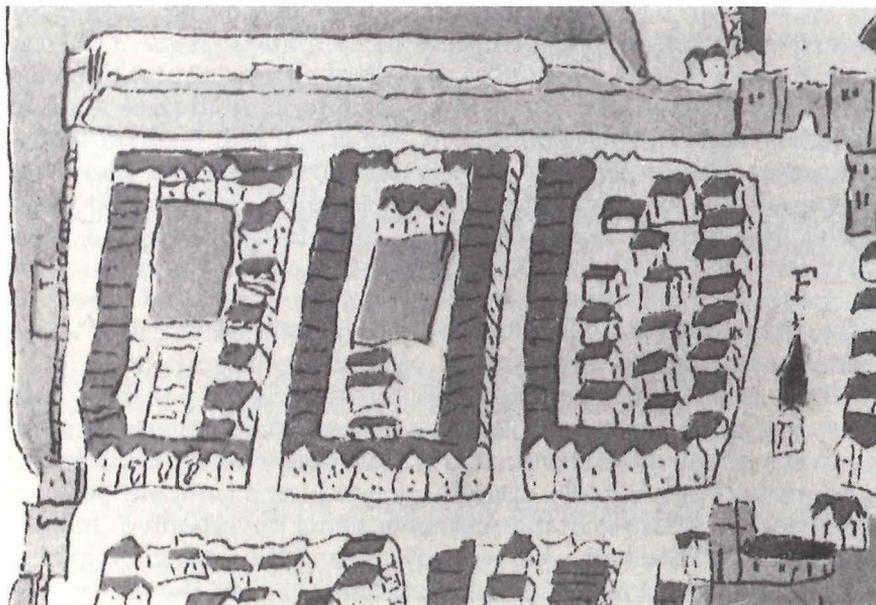
The major difference from Speed's map is the omission from the 'Jones' plan of the inset drawings showing the various baths. While it does not show the New Bath or the Horse Bath, the Lepers' Bath is clearly marked and as all three baths date from around 1575-6, Wood's date of 1572 must be incorrect. Moreover Bellot's Hospital is located by the letter 'k' on Johnson's map and is listed as such in Wood's first edition. In the second edition the letter is left on the plan but omitted from the text, which suggests that Wood was trying to divert attention from the Hospital. As the charity was only founded in 1609, the map cannot pre-date it.

At best, Wood's assertion that the map was published by Dr Jones in 1572 can be interpreted as an error of transcription and that he merely mistook Johnson's *Thermae Bathonicae* for Jones' *Bathes of Bathes Ayde*. Nevertheless Green's argument that Wood indulged in deliberate fraud is a strong one. This situation is complicated by the fact that there may be an element of doubt over the origins of John Speed's map. Speed's early proofs for his *Theatre* include views of Bristol, Canterbury, Norwich and Winchester which are taken from Smith's works; he later surveyed these towns himself, in time for inclusion in the first edition. In his introduction, he acknowledges the '... many Master-Builders having in this subject gone before me . . .', freely admitting that he copied the work of others; 'I have put my sickle in other mens' corne'. He goes on to explain that to differentiate his own maps from those which he had copied, he has included a 'Scale of Pases' by which his own surveys could be recognised. Skelton has pointed out²⁴ that about one quarter of Speed's town plans have known antecedents and that of the 50 or more others, 45 contain his 'Scale of Pases.' A handful, including Bath, are without it. There may be a reason for this omission. Perhaps he was not consistent in his use of the scale, although he is always meticulous in crediting the original work of others, or perhaps he sacrificed the scale so that he could put in the plans of the baths. While this is not the place for a detailed investigation of Speed's accuracy, there can be no doubt that many details in his map of Bath are correct, particularly in respect of the baths and Abbey Church. The unfinished state of the latter is remarkably well portrayed, particularly when compared with other cathedrals, like Peterborough, which is accompanied by the 'Scale of Pases' but which is a very poor likeness.



5 South-west corner of Johnson's map of 1634; 'X' marks the Leper's Bath (1576) and 'k' Bellot's Hospital (1609). Wood wrongly attributes the map to Dr Jones and 1572 (Bath Reference Library)

In the absence of a convincing explanation, the matter remains unresolved, but the possibility at least exists that Speed's map of Bath was preceded by one whose surveyor is unknown. Other than Smith's, no earlier view of the city is known and, as we have seen, the plan which Wood attributes to Dr Jones and 1572 was in fact published by Johnson in 1634, and was itself taken from Speed. It is an irony that the late 16th century precursor to Speed's map which Wood tried to fabricate, may have existed anyway and been known to Speed. One possible context for this occurs in William Harrison's *A Description of England*,²⁵ published in 1577 as part of Holinshed's *Chronicle*. Harrison lists 26 English cathedral cities, including Bath, and states that at the time of writing, engravings of these were being prepared. In a footnote, however, the editor adds that these had been lost, but that had



6 North-west corner of one of the poorer copies of Smith's plan
(Bath Reference Library)

they survived, they would have been the most valuable set of Elizabethan maps known.²⁶ Although never published, these city plans may have been seen by Speed.

Conclusion

In the absence of a known precursor, Smith's portrait must be considered the earliest authentic plan of Bath. Bath and Bristol appear to be the only bird's-eye views which Smith surveyed himself and this is made the more likely by their proximity to one another. Bristol is signed and dated 1568 and Smith is thus likely to have surveyed and sketched Bath in the same year. The presence of the compass indicator in the bottom left hand corner suggests that he may have prepared a fair copy of the plan after his return from Nuremburg in 1585, although he probably did not come back to inspect the city again. While the plan is not sufficiently accurate to provide reliable dating evidence, this may explain the absence of the three baths built in 1576.

With regard to Smith's accuracy, there is sufficient in his plan

to show that he visited Bath at some point and noted the principal landmarks. Nevertheless the simplified shape of the city and the various inconsistencies described above support the view that the published plan was drawn at a later date, from notes and sketches made during a brief visit. The bright red, green and blue colouring cannot disguise the haste with which the plan was prepared. It is interesting to note that all copies of Smith's portrait have been drawn with more care than Smith seems to have applied to the original. For example, none of them reproduce his ill-concealed error at the north-west corner of the town, where he drew the north wall too long, and had outlined the end tower before noticing his mistake and attempting to correct it.

There is little of topographical interest in Smith's plan of Bath that cannot be learned from later, more reliable maps or from Leland's detailed description. The Mild Bath and the churchyard wall around St Michael's church outside North Gate are perhaps the principal features of interest, both being documented, but not illustrated, elsewhere. As we have seen, the string of towers around the city walls remains a problem but, in the absence of corroborative evidence, must be taken as incorrect.

Smith's portrait does not appear to have been used by contemporary or subsequent map-makers, perhaps an indication that it was considered inadequate even in its own time. Speed must have known it, but chose not to copy it. Emanuel Green, in his concluding remarks, was clearly reluctant to criticise Smith's accuracy too much; maybe it would have appeared churlish to do so after such an interesting discovery had been made so recently. His comment that ' . . . the walls are shown more bastioned than in other maps . . .', reveals a preference to minimise Smith's errors rather than an ignorance of other early plans, none of which contain bastions at all. Nor can we accept Green's opinion that Smith's portrait conveys a better picture of the walled city than its successors. The maps published by Speed in 1612 and Gilmore in 1694 will always be of greater use to archaeologists and archivists investigating medieval Bath. Nevertheless Smith's plan is still important as an independent view of the 16th century city, unrelated to the many produced throughout the 17th century that were modelled on one prototype. In the absence of a proven antecedent to Speed's map, Smith's portrait remains, for the moment, the earliest map of Bath.

Notes

- 1 British Museum Sloane Ms.2596.
- 2 H.B. Wheatley and E.W. Ashbee, *The Particular Description of England* 1588, 1879.
- 3 C.P. Russell, *Maps and Plans of the City of Bath* Vol. 1, 1856.
- 4 J. Speed, *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*, 1612.
- 5 E. Green, *The Earliest Map of Bath*, Bath Field Club Proceedings Vol. 6, 1889.
- 6 *Vale Royall of England, or Countie Pallatine of Chester*, Ashmolean manuscript no. 765. In 1588 Smith published another profile view of Chester dated September 7 1585, as well as a bird's-eye view of the city in his *Treatise on the History and Antiquities of Cheshire*, B.M. Harleian Ms.1046.
- 7 *op. cit.*.
- 8 L. Toulmin Smith (ed.), *The Itinerary of John Leland*, 1907.
- 9 Currently being prepared by The Survey of Old Bath.
- 10 B. Startin, 'Excavations at Terrace Walk, 1973' in B. Cunliffe (ed.), *Excavations in Bath 1950-1975*, 1979.
- 11 *op. cit.*.
- 12 P. Davenport, 'In Search of Bath Abbey' *Popular Archaeology* Vol. 6. No. 10, 1985 and forthcoming.
- 13 Egerton Charters 5845 (British Library). I am grateful to Miss Elizabeth Holland and Mrs Marta Inskip for their help in this matter.
- 14 W. Turner, *A Booke on the natures and properties as well of the bathes in England . . .*, 1562.
- 15 P. Rowland James, *The Baths of Bath*, 1938.
- 16 T.J. O'Leary, 'Excavations at Upper Borough Walls, Bath, 1980', *Medieval Archaeology* XXV, 1981.
- 17 *op. cit.*.
- 18 *op. cit.*.
- 19 B. Cunliffe, 'Saxon Bath' in J. Haslam (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England*, 1984.
- 20 R.W.M. Wright, *The Early Plans of Bath*, P.S.A.N.H.S. (Bath Branch), 1932.
- 21 T. Chaundler, *Libellus de Laudibus Civitatum*, 1452.
- 22 J. Wood, *Essay towards a Description of Bath*, 1742.
- 23 *op. cit.*.
- 24 R.A. Skelton, *Tudor Town Plans In John Speed's Theatre*, *Archaeological Journal*, 1951.
- 25 W. Harrison, *A Description of England*, Lothrop Withington (ed.), 1899.
- 26 *op. cit.*.

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