

English Abstract

Heinrich von Staden's »Land and Government of Muscovy« is considered one of the most extraordinary sources on the Oprichnina, the reign of terror under Tsar Ivan IV (1530-1584), also known as Ivan the »Terrible«. Many publications refer to Staden's text, and during the 20th century its reception has led to a reassessment of Ivan's regime of terror. At the same time, no philological study has taken place since its publication in 1930, and analysis with respect to Staden's 16th-century context has remained wanting.

This book presents a philological classification of Staden's texts. It argues, on the basis of intratextual references, that Staden composed his text around 1578/9 against the background of the narratives of the Conquest of Mexico by Hernan Cortés. This is particularly evident in the plan for the conquest of Muscovy, which draws heavily on literary representations and contemporary courtly understandings of Cortés' conquest of Mexico. Emperor Rudolf II, for example, for whom the Staden papers were originally intended, had grown up with the history of the conquests at the Spanish court. His uncle, King Philip II of Spain, had grown up with Cortés's son Martín, who served as a page at his court.

Cortés' Conquest of Mexico had already been shaped into a master colonial conquest narrative that became a template for conquest campaigns in the Spanish colonies in the Americas. Although, they never succeeded after the conquest of the Inca Empire along the same lines. However, a reading of the letters with the conquest of Muscovy plan accompanying them and produced at the court of Count of the Palatinate Georg Hans von Veldenz at Burg Lützelstein in the Vosges shows that the purpose of the conquest plan was to initiate military intervention in Livonia in the first place and a reconquista of this former part of the Empire that had been invaded by the Muscovites since 1558.

In his description of Muscovy, Staden reshapes this early modern European state to be an example of a barbarian empire as the American colonies were supposed to be. For this purpose, he essentially uses known and already published anti-Muscovite pamphlets as well as a letter of Albert Schlichting circulating in manuscript, which had been published in Latin translation by Alexander Guagnini in 1578 in his *Sarmatiae Europeae Descriptio*.

Using these sources and his own marginal and not necessarily coherent self-biography, Staden constructs Muscovy as a corrupt and unjust state, and thus establishes the initial justification for a *bellum iustum*. In his proposed plan, Staden maps Cortés' scheme in Mexico onto an imagined occupation of all of Muscovy, of which the eventual goals include nothing less than pan-European colonization and the Christianization of the Russians. Indeed, the Muscovites were already Orthodox Christians, but Staden puts them on a par with barbarian pagans. To this end, this analysis demonstrates that the parallels Staden draws between Cortés and his own conquest plan, between Ivan IV and the Aztec ruler Montezuma, supplant even reality, as the most emblematic episode of the conquest of Mexico, the encounter between conqueror and to-be-conquered.

Contents:

1 Introduction

This chapter explains Alexander VI's bull *Inter caetera* as the basis for colonial self-understanding by Europeans, which also resulted in the writing down of colonial processes. Starting with the patronage system in the Spanish royal court as well as the Reconquista of Spain by the Catholic Monarchs, it demonstrates how colonial patterns developed and continued in the conquests in the Americas.

2 The *bellum iustum*

This chapter shows how Cortés described the Aztec Empire and its ruler Montezuma in order to lay the groundwork for a *bellum iustum*, a just war. By attributing to Montezuma traditional actions of a tyrant, like injustice, cruelty, paganism, the latter becomes an unjust ruler. The conquest of Mexico becomes a liberation of oppressed peoples and their return to a Christian empire.

3 The Manuscript

This chapter describes the manuscript of the Staden papers. It shows which sources have been used for the description of Muscovy, which parts were originally written by Staden, and how he uses traditional examples published by Guagnini to position himself as a connoisseur of contemporary Muscovite history. A textual comparison between the description and Staden's self-biography, shows that the self-biography is probably a memoir text with Staden's own recollections written first and that afterwards, with recourse to Guagnini, the other texts, description, conquest plan, and supplication to the emperor, were written. It is also assumed that the secretaries of Palgrave Georg Hans von Veldenz, at whose court the papers were written, were heavily involved in this process.

4 The Conquest

This chapter analyzes the attack plan of Staden. Right at the beginning it is noticeable that the imperial forces will enter Moscovy via a secret passage. This is the first obvious parallel to Cortés' conquest of Mexico, who also traveled to Tenochtitlan via a secret passage. As the story progresses, the conquest of Muscovy is described similarly to the conquest of Mexico, markets are described, places where treasures can be found, salt is mentioned, and finally the city of Muscovy is taken in a siege, like Tenochtitlan. Now Staden describes the possibilities that arise from the conquest of Muscovy and its incorporation into the Empire: the Muscovites are made Christians, the way to America is open, the Emperor can expand his Empire once around the world.

5 The Meeting

This chapter describes the initial event of the Conquest of Mexico, the Meeting between Cortés and Montezuma, an encounter resonant in Staden's papers. Staden's meetings with Grand Prince Ivan are structured similarly to the Meeting between Cortés and Montezuma. They serve to lend credibility to Staden and portray him as a confidant of Ivan who is suited to carry out a conquest of Muscovy because he knows Ivan and his rule intimately.

6 The Protagonists

In this chapter, I show the parallel spellings used to portray Staden and Cortés as colonial conquerors on the one hand, and Montezuma and Ivan as »natives« to be colonized. The description as well as the conquest of Muscovy here

follow the pattern familiar from Mexico and are therefore themselves a catchy master narrative.

7 The War

This chapter shows that the conquest plan had already been sent by Palgrave Georg Hans to rulers in the Empire and northern Europe six months before the rest of Staden's papers were written. Staden's writing here is only one of a multitude of writings intended to forge an alliance against the Muscovites in Livonia. The conquest plan is not to be read on the surface, but as a dissimulation. Georg Hans already considered Stefan Báthory's attack on Muscovy in the autumn of 1579 as the coming into force of his plan. He was not concerned with a conquest of Muscovy, but with a Reconquista of Livonia.

8 Conclusion

This chapter shows how strongly Muscovy was inscribed in Spanish colonial discourse in Staden's correspondence. This is the strength of the Staden papers, for his account holds as little factual reality as does Cortés' account of Mexico.