Ett försvar för kvinnan från 1590-talet

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Kvinnans natur och ställning blev under renässansen ett ämne för lärda utläggningar. Den gängse synen utgick från auktoriteter som Aristoteles, Augustinus och Thomas ab Aquino. De hävdade att kvinnan stod lägre än mannen i alla avseenden och därför var underordnad honom. Man fann också talrika exempel i Bibeln för denna uppfattning. Men under 1400-talet började en del lärda skribenter, inte minst kvinnliga, sätta den rådande bilden i fråga. Under det följande århundradet tillkom ytterligare författare som försvarade kvinnan och vilkas arbeten fick större utbredning tack vare den nya tryckkonsten. Bland dem kan man nämna Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529), vars spridda handledning om hovlivet, *Il cortegiano*, tryckt 1528, tecknar henne som mannens intellektuella jämlike. Castigliones porträtt gäller inte enbart den bildade hovdamen, som sprider glans över furstehovet, utan han ger också exempel på lysande kvinnliga regenter, t.ex. drottning Isabella av Kastilien.[1]

Flera författare förfäktade således att kvinnor kunde vara jämställda med män. Längst gick en tysk filosof och läkare, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486–1535). 1529 utgav han en bok, *De nobilitate et præcellentia fæminei sexus* ("Om kvinnokönets höghet och företräde"), tillägnad Margareta av Österrike, 1507–1530 spansk ståthållare i Nederländerna. Agrippa hävdar där att kvinnan är överlägsen mannen. Hon är förnämare, eftersom hon skapats sist. Skapelseberättelsens Eva sågs av många teologer och filosofer som sinnebilden för kvinnan som frestar mannen till synd, men Agrippa anslöt sig till dem som försvarade Eva och förfäktade motsatsen: visserligen förleddes kvinnan av ormen till syndafallet, men medan mannen oaktat förbudet åt av den förbjudna frukten, gjorde kvinnan det av okunnighet.[2] Också den fullkomligaste av alla varelser är en kvinna, jungfru Maria. Vidare tar Agrippa exempel från Bibeln och antiken för att belysa hur trofasta kvinnor är i kärlek. Han hävdar även, i några renässanshumanisters efterföljd, att kvinnor kan ägna sig åt intellektuellt arbete: muserna var kvinnor; konster, vetenskaper, dygder är alla feminina; antikens tre världsdelar (Asien, Europa, Libya eller Afrika) har uppkallats efter kvinnor. Kvinnor kunde fordom vara präster, vilket visar att de skickligt och framgångsrikt kan bekläda ämbeten. Drottning Semiramis i Babylon – en kvinna som tycks ha fascinerat humanisterna – var framstående i statskonsten. Med talrika historiska

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* Artikelförfattaren var tidigare verksam vid Riksantikvarieämbetet och Statens historiska museer.

och mytologiska belägg visar Agrippa också att kvinnor kan vara lika lärda som män, liksom att de är framstående i skaldekonsten. Trots detta stod samtidens kvinnor under männens tyranni, vilket strider mot Guds och naturens lag. Agrippas verk väckte stort uppseende och översattes dessutom till franska, tyska, engelska och italienska. Det fick inflytande på debatten under 1500-talet om kvinnans jämställdhet med mannen, *la querelle des dames*.[3]

I Sverige saknas under 1500-talet, såvitt känt, alla spår av denna diskussion, med ett undantag. I Uppsala universitetsbibliotek har nämligen påträffats en avskrift av ett försvar för kvinnan, som bör ha tillkommit någon gång mellan 1594 och 1597. Det rör sig om en kort avhandling i form av ett brev till riksrådet Gustaf Banér (avrättad i Linköpings blodbad 1600). Skriften bär rubriken *Ad ill:m D. Gustavum Baner Apologia Jac. Typotii de laudibus Mulierum* ("Till välborne Herr Gustaf Banér, Jacobus Typotius Apologi för kvinnornas förtjänster").[4] Att den verkligen är författad av Typotius, går knappast att betvivla. Det krångliga latinet påminner om hans tryckta texter, likaså de lärda exemplen från klassiska auktorer. Därtill kommer att texten innehåller några av Typotius älsklingsteser i fråga om rätten och lagen.

Den lilla avhandlingen är, såvitt bekant, den första skrift i svensk miljö som diskuterar och försvarar kvinnans jämlikhet med mannen. Det finns därför skäl att redovisa innehållet och att kortfattat jämföra det med kvinnosynen i ett par av Typotius tryckta skrifter. Eftersom Agrippas *De nobilitate* synes vara den kvinnovänliga skrift från renässansen som mest påminner om Typotius försvar, kan det vara befogat att peka på några likheter och olikheter dem emellan.

Den lärde humanisten Jacobus Typotius (ca 1540–1601), som vistades i Sverige mellan 1578 och 1597, hade ett märkligt öde. Född i staden Diest i nuvarande Belgien, skrevs han 1563 in vid universitetet i Leuven (Louvain), där han studerade *artes liberales*, troligen också juridik. Han begav sig sedan till Italien, sannolikt till följd av de spanska härjningarna i Nederländerna. 1577 vistades han i Neapel, där Pontus De la Gardie fick ögonen på honom. I februari 1578 anställdes Typotius som latinsk sekreterare hos Johan III, men redan efter ett och ett halvt år kastades han i fängelse, ovisst varför. Under den långa fångenskapen – på Åbo och Tavastehus slott – skrev han flera arbeten med moralfilosofiskt och historiskt innehåll. Efter Johans död 1592 återupprättades han av konung Sigismund. Typotius upprätthöll under sin tid i Sverige goda förbindelser med flera av de framträdande personer inom rådsaristokratien som senare avrättades av hertig Karl. Under den allt skarpare konflikten mellan konungen och hertigen lyckades han balansera mellan dem båda, men 1597 lämnade han landet, när inbördeskriget närmade sig. Han fann slutligen en varaktig tillflyktsort i Prag, där han fick en aktad ställning hos kejsar Rudolf II.

Åtskilliga av Typotius verk trycktes men är i dag föga kända. Hans mest bekanta arbeten är två postuma skrifter, tryckta i början av 1600-talet. Den ena är ett stort illustrerat praktverk med uttydningar av symboler för den kristna tron och för kejsaren, kungar och furstar i Europa. Den andra är en relation om Sveriges historia under vasatiden med huvudvikt på de inbördes motsättningarna under 1590-talet. Båda verken upplevde många upplagor. Andra skrifter av Typotius publicerades på 1590-talet under hans livstid men fick inte samma spridning.[5]

Typotius kände väl till renässansens litteratur och kunde sina antika klassiker. Han var av allt att döma insatt i diskussionen om kvinnans jämställdhet, men han hade också studerat Jean Bodins (1530–1596) arbete *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (1566). I detta verk säger Bodin bl.a. – i drottning Elisabet I:s tid – att det strider mot Guds och naturens lag att låta kvinnor härska över män.[6]

Typotius intar en helt annan hållning i sitt försvar för kvinnan. Hans lilla skrift inleds med en skildring av hur han vid glaset skämtat om amasonerna. Det hade inte behagat Banér, som därför befallt Typotius att skriva ett försvar för kvinnorna. Efter blott några rader tycks han inte längre rikta sig enbart till Banér utan också till en adelsdam, som han kallar *Tacita* ("den hemliga"), kanske Banérs hustru. Typotius ber om ursäkt för att hans gyckel kränkt *Tacita*. Nu vill han med en allvarlig oration förklara sig. Om han med övertygande bevis visar att förnäma och begåvade kvinnor i alla slags dygder höjer sig över männen – som av dåraktig själviskhet gör anspråk på allt för sig själva – då kanske han har ursäktat sig helt och fullt. Typotius vänder sig här liksom sina föregångare enbart till kvinnor av högre stånd.

Typotius börjar med att anknyta till Bibelns skapelseberättelse. Medan mannen – som, föreställer vi oss, är den förnämsta levande varelsen – är danad av formlöst stoft, är kvinnan skapad av mannen. Hon är således av förnäm börd. Det var varken mannens eller kvinnans fel att de åt av frukten, trots att Gud förbjudit mannen att göra det, eftersom den omisstänksamma kvinnan blev bedragen av den listiga ormen. Syndafallet har därför inte inneburit att hon sjunkit från sitt ädla ursprung: Gud skattade nämligen kvinnan högre än mannen, när han lät Jungfrun föda utan att ha varit när en man. Gud har därtill givit kvinnonamn åt en mängd ting i världen. Typotius illustrerar bl.a. med de fyra världsdelarna (Asien, Afrika, Europa, Amerika), människornas hemvister som stater och städer, himlens sfärer och stjärnor; alla dessa exempel har på latin feminint genus. Efter att ha anfört benämningar i femininum på konster och vetenskaper räknar han upp verk av Homeros, Herodotos, Vergilius, Thukydides, Xenofon, Horatius och Pindaros. Den något skruvade förklaringen är att dessa antika storheters snillealster inspirerats av kvinnorna. För övrigt vill inte någon man – vilket Banér som fostrats vid hovet vet – tilltalas med annat än en kvinnlig titel, varpå Typotius räknar upp höga titlar

såsom ”Eders kunglig majestät”, ”Eders höghet” etc., alla i femininum på latin.

Den lärde skribenten övergår till att beklaga att männen förbehåller sig de offentliga sysslorna. Då är Platon mycket klokare, som fostrar kvinnorna inte blott för folkförsamlingen utan även för slagfältet – Typotius anspelar på Platons utopiska dialog *Staten*. Han tar sedan exempel från den antika litteraturen om bl.a. drottning Semiramis, som räddade det assyriska riket, medan en man förstörde det. En stat kan inte fortleva utan råd av kvinnor, men amasonerna – ett kärt ämne under renässansen – har visat att kvinnor kan styra en stat utan män, vilket erkännes av männen (han syftar på de män som skrivit om amasonerna). Också i vår och våra förfäders tid har drottningar regerat framgångsrikt utan män både i Italien och i England. Det skulle dock, säger Typotius, bli alltför vidlyftigt att rada upp alla berömliga gärningar av kvinnor. Han nöjer sig med att slå fast att visa och mäktiga män alltid tagit råd av kvinnor och att alla påbud och beslut granskats av kvinnor, innan de fått rättskraft. Han exemplifierar bl.a. med Themistokles, den visaste av greker, och Augustus, den mäktigaste bland romare, som båda skötte de allmänna angelägenheterna med råd av kvinnor.

Typotius säger sig alltså med stöd av de klassiska auktoriteterna ha klarlagt, att en stat inte kan bestå utan kvinnors medverkan, men att ett samhälle av kvinnor kan bestå utan männens bistånd. Det senare har amasonerna bevisat, vare sig de existerat eller är sagogestalter.[7] För kvinnornas delaktighet finner Typotius stöd hos Livius, som berättar hur Roms kvinnor förmådde senaten att taga tillbaka en lag som förbjöd dem att bära dyrbarheter.[8]

Att männen inte kan vara utan kvinnor, ger den lärde författaren anledning till att prisa äktenskapet med historiska exempel. Kvinnorna skall vara männens bundsförvanter inte blott i vällust utan än mer när det gäller att fatta beslut och dela mödor. Männen skall å andra sidan deltaga i vården och uppfostran av barnen. Om kvinnorna av kärlek är trofasta i en föränderlig värld, vem kan då tvivla på att de är kloka när det rör sig om allvarliga ting? Men det finns lagar, som står i vägen för unga kvinnors kärlek. De avslöjar männens ovilja mot kvinnorna. De strider mot förnuftet och bör avskaffas. Enbart folkets samtycke skapar nämligen inte lag, utan lagen måste härflyta ur rätten, *iustitia*. Typotius tillägger, att man över huvud inte får åberopa sådana lagar, som strider mot allas likhet inför lagen.[9] Han påstår sedan, att lagen tillåter en man att ostraffat dräpa sin hustru, om hon begår äktenskapsbrott, men att hustrun inte får röra ett finger, om mannen ertappas med samma brott. Detta till trots är det förförarens skuld, när en kvinna överraskas med hor – ty det är han som förlett henne till den skändliga gärningen.

Efter det att Typotius trots allt visat sig dela en vanlig föreställning om kvinnan som passiv gentemot den aktive mannen, lämnar han frågan om

äktenskapets helgd och kvinnans rättställning för att förespråka att vi frigör oss från oren lust.

Typotius återgår sedan till att än en gång upprepa vad han redan sagt. Återigen prisar han kvinnors stordåd med många belägg. Männen har däremot orsakat förstörelse. Han kan även meddela sin svenske läsare att italienarna förbannar minnet av de manliga goterna, samtidigt som de vördar den heliga Birgitta.[10] Den lilla skriften avslutas med en paradoxal vändning: för att inte med sin framställning förarga männen vill Typotius ge dem allt beröm och i tysthet dyrka sin vördade *Tacita*.

Typotius argument och belägg från de klassiska författarna liknar delvis Agrippas. Det behöver inte bero på någon omedelbar påverkan, men det är inte osannolikt, att Typotius på något sätt varit bekant med Agrippas verk: han var beläst och väl förtrogen med den historiska och politiska situationen i sitt hemland Nederländerna. De antika referenserna finns å andra sidan hos alla tidens lärda författare, och Semiramis och amasonerna var *commune bonum*. Trots likheterna med Agrippas *De nobilitate et præcellentia fœminei* finns det emellertid skillnader. Den mest påfallande olikheten är att Typotius inte hämtar något exempel från Bibeln med undantag för skapelseberättelsen, medan Agrippa anför mängder av argument från både Gamla och Nya testamentet. I frågan om mannens och kvinnans skuld till syndafallet är det hos Agrippa mannen som förbrutit sig och fört in ondskan i världen, medan Typotius finner att ingen av dem bär skuld utan utpekar ormen, d.v.s. djävulen. Hos Agrippa är kvinnan i huvudsak överlägsen mannen, medan Typotius snarare talar för att bägge könen är jämlika. Agrippa åberopar *Codex Justinianus* och kanonisk rätt (Gratianus dekretaler) för att visa att man bör straffa en kvinna mildare, eftersom mannen är brottsligare, när det handlar om samma slags ogärning.[11] Typotius kritiserar däremot en orättvis lagstiftning, som ger hustrun hårdare straff än maken. Han stöder sig förmodligen på antika auktorer[12] – samtida lagar gjorde inte makan fullt så försvarslös gentemot maken, som Typotius hävdar. Hans grundtanke är att lagen skall vara rättfärdig, alltså grundad på Guds eviga lag, återspeglad i den naturliga lagen. Till rättfärdigheten hör att lagen är lika för alla, kvinnor som män. En orättfärdig lag är alltså ingen lag. Idén – som ingalunda är originell för Typotius – återkommer i många av hans skrifter.[13]

Inledningen och avslutningen är hållna i en lätt och skämtsam stil, och man kan naturligtvis sätta i fråga, hur allvarliga Typotius avsikter med denna lärdomsuppvisning varit. Han talar t.ex. om en kvinnostat utan män fastän han tycks betvivla amasonernas existens – bakgrunden till orationen var ju hans drift med dessa gestalter. Helt klart är dock kritiken av könens ojämlikhet inför lagen ett äkta uttryck för Typotius åsikter.

Man kan fråga sig, hur Typotius ser på kvinnan i sina tryckta skrifter. I några av dem, främst *De fama libri II* (”Om ryktet, i två delar”) och i någon mån *De iusto* (”Om rättfärdighet”),[14] uppehåller han sig vid kvinn-

liga egenskaper. Han är på det hela taget uppskattande, och han betraktar inte det andra könet som mindervärdigt. Kvinnorna är, menar Typotius, lika måna om sitt goda rykte som männen. Över huvud skiljer sig deras dygder inte från männens. Intellektuellt är könen helt jämställda: Sapfos sånger är oefterhärmliga, och bland samtida kvinnor nämner han den italienska poeten Vittoria Colonna (1490–1547), vars dikter lästes mycket. Också i politiken strävar kvinnor efter anseende. Typotius ger mängder av exempel, de flesta från den antika historien. Således prisar han Lucretia, som inte kunde leva med skammen efter att ha våldtagits utan tog sitt liv (enligt sagan blev det orsaken till att Rom räddades från tyranniet). Drottning Semiramis var alltför högsint för att dela den äkta bädden med den som intagit hennes rike, och tack vare sin djärvhet besegrade hon Babylon, där hon regerade framgångsrikt över det assyriska riket. I sin egen tid berömmer han bland andra Englands drottning Elisabet I, som beslutsamt för krig mot jordens mäktigaste monark, d.v.s. den spanske kungen Filip II.[15]

Över huvud finns det ingen anledning att nedvärdera kvinnokönet bara för att männen håller kvinnorna borta med maktspråk och driver somliga till prostitution (teatern); även om det finns fördärvade kvinnor, finns det också fördärvade män, som Nero och Heliogabalus.[16]

Under 1400-talet hade renässanshumanister börjat utveckla tankar om att manliga och kvinnliga egenskaper inte behövde vara bundna till könet. Män kunde ha kvinnliga dygder och kvinnor manliga. De manliga stod emellertid högre.[17] Även om Typotius går långt i sin syn på kvinnan, har han inte frigjort sig från dessa föreställningar, som ju bygger på den aristoteliska – och bibliska – traditionen om att kvinnans egenskaper står lägre än mannens. Sålunda citerar han i slutet av *De fama* Aristoteles beskrivning av levnadsålderns och könets brister och dygder. Kvinnans prydnad är – förutom ärbarhet – tystlåtenhet, medan handlingskraft smyckar mannen. I ett tidigare sammanhang skriver Typotius, att kvinnor vill berömmas mest för sin anständighet och skönhet. På ett annat ställe kan han utan vidare konstatera, att kvinnokönet har svårare att fastställa den verkliga innebörden av en handling, en återklang av den aristoteliska tanken att kvinnans förnuft är känslostyrt.[18] Å andra sidan finns det kvinnor, som är överlägsna sitt kön. På tal om Semiramis säger han, att hon drevs till djärva dåd för att nå berömmelse, ingalunda ett kvinnligt drag.[19]

När Typotius skriver om kvinnans natur, talar han i huvudsak om bildade eller inflytelserika kvinnor ur de högsta klasserna. Det är dock inte tal om att kvinnan skall vara självständig. Det är inte passande att hon själv utser sin make, utan familjen och släkten skall godkänna giftermålsförbindelser av hänsyn till den goda ordningen i staten. Typotius avvisar å andra sidan bestämt tvångsäktenskap, något som i och för sig inte är särpräglat för honom. Men om makarna är lika i samhällsställning, d.v.s. inte bryter mot ståndsordningen, blir äktenskapet en gemenskap, där

”tjänarinnan är likställd sin härskare, tjänaren sin härskarinna”.[20] Makarna skall alltså vara jämställda i äktenskapet, en för tiden sällsynt tanke som också tycks vara främmande för de antika författare som Typotius anför. Kanske har han känt till Mario Equicola (d. 1525), lärd sekreterare hos Isabella d'Este i Mantua, som 1520 brukade liknande fraser om makars jämlikhet i sin skrift *De mulieribus (*”Om kvinnorna”).[21]

Typotius menar alltså, att kvinnor kan ha samma moraliska och intellektuella dygder som män, men att politisk handlingskraft är en berömlig manlig egenskap till vilken vissa kvinnor kan höja sig. Föreställningen att kvinnan ibland kunde överträffa sitt kön hade t.ex. uttryckts av Justus Lipsius i hans *Politicorum sive civilis doctrinæ libri sex* 1589.[22] Lipsius var samtida med Typotius i Leuven, men Typotius tycks inte ha känt till hans skrifter.

Det finns likheter mellan avskriften av apologien och avsnitten om kvinnonaturen i Typotius tryckta skrifter. Tendensen att jämställa kvinnor med män är densamma, men i försvarsskriften har författaren dragit ut konsekvenserna så långt, att man väl också får se den som en uppvisning av lärda exempel. Med denna skrift har i vilket fall som helst renässansens debatt om kvinnornas egenskaper jämförda med männens satt ett avtryck i svensk miljö. Avtrycket blev dock inte beständigt: även om någon av Typotius samtida i Sverige har ansett hans apologi så viktig att den förtjänat att kopieras, försvann den snart ur sikte. När den svenska dissertationslitteraturen på 1620-talet började ställa frågan om kvinnans förmågor,[23] låg Typotius försvar bortglömt. Hans lilla oration är dock det första tecknet på att *la querelle des dames* sent omsider nått svensk miljö. Det är en märklig skrift i 1590-talets Sverige.

Noter

1. *Boken om hovmannen,* övers., inledn. och kommentarer av Paul Enoksson (Stockholm, 2003), t.ex. 277ff. För en grundlig översikt av synen på kvinnan intill omkring år 1500 hänvisas till Prudence Allen: *The concept of woman,* I. *The Aristotelian revolution, 750 B.C.–A.D. 1250* (2:a uppl., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1997); idem: *The concept of woman,* II. *The early humanist reformation, 1250–1500* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2002).

2. Evas skuld debatterades flitigt sedan lång tid. Agrippas argument liknar den lärda italienska författarinnan Isotta Nogarolas (1418–1466) i hennes dialog om Adam och Eva, tryckt 1503. Isotta Nogarola: *Complete writings. Letterbook, dialogue on Adam and Eve, orations*. Utg. och övers. av Margaret L. King och Diana Robin (Chicago, 2004), 138ff. Se även Allen: *The concept of woman,* I–II, *passim* under registerordet ”Eve”.

3. *De nobilitate et præcellentia fœminei sexus. Edition critique d'après le texte d'Anvers 1529*. Utg. R Antionoli, Ch. Béné, O. Sauvage och M. Reulos (Genève, 1990). Se även t.ex. Marc van der Poel: *Cornelius Agrippa, the humanist theologian and his Declamations* (Leiden, 1997), särskilt 185ff; Margaret L. King: *Women of the Renaissance* (Chicago, 1991), 181ff; Bo Lindberg: ”'Anden saknar kön.' Ett argument för jämlikhet mellan könen”, *Lychnos* 1997, 31ff; samt Otto Schönbergers inledning till Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim: *De nobilitate et præcellentia fœminei sexus*. Utg. och övers. av O. Schönberger (Würzburg, 1997), 20.

4. *Palmsköldska samlingen*, vol. 371, 791–803.

5. Om Typotius se förf:s artikel ”En renässanshumanist i svensk tjänst och fångenskap”, *Personhistorisk tidskrift* 2012, 193ff, och Sten G. Lindberg: ”En okänd stockholmsupplaga av Jacobus Typotius' Fortuna 1594”, *Lychnos* 1977–1978, 246ff. De båda nämnda verken är *Symbola divina et humana pontificum, imperatorum, regum*, 1–2 (Prag, 1601–1602; text av Typotius, gravyrer av Ægidius Sadeler, förlageteckningar av Ottavio da Strada), samt *Relatio historica de Regno Sveciæ …* (Frankfurt a. M., 1605, senare uppl. 1606, 1678; tjuvtryck under titeln *Notæ de Regno Sveciæ,* 1605, 1606).

6. *Methodus*, i den för mig tillgängliga antologien *Artis historicæ penus* (Basel, 1579), 357f. Att Typotius läst *Methodus* framgår av ett brev, vari han påpekar, att Bodin misstagit sig om Gustaf I:s fader (brev till Erik Sparre 1 maj 1584, *E5464*, RA; se även S. G. Lindberg: ”En okänd stockholmsupplaga”, 249). Typotius reflektion avser med största sannolikhet *Methodus*, 377, även 269. I den första efterskriften till Typotius *Orationes III …* (Frankfurt a. M. 1595; en av hans agitationsskrifter mot Höga Porten), ark H3, kommenteras Bodin i en diskussion om tyrannbegreppet. Möjligen kan Typotius där i stället avse *Les six livres de la république* från 1577.

7. Typotius skepsis till amasonernas existens kan ses som ett utslag av källkritik, men han kan också ha tagit intryck av Strabon, som betvivlar sagornas sanningshalt. Se t.ex. Peter G. Bietenholz: *History and fabula. Myths and legends in historical thought from Antiquity to the modern age (*Leiden, 1994), 43ff.

8. *Ab urbe condita*, bok 34: t.ex. *Livy with an English translation in fourteen volumes*, 9. Utg. och övers. Evan T. Sage (London, 1936).

9. Typotius skriver: “Quæ enim est illa æquitatis norma, ut quod mihi licet, huic in eadem facti spetie non liceat?” *Æquitas* har här betydelsen ”likhet inför lagen” (Otto Dann: ”Gleichheit” i Otto Brunner m.fl.: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 2 [Stuttgart, 1978], 1002).

10. Samma tendens att ifrågasätta den götiska historiemyten, ett av vasakungarnas ideologiska fundament, finns i Typotius relation över den äldre vasatidens svenska historia, medan han i sina retoriska skrifter använder goternas bragder som efterföljansvärt exempel. Östergren: ”En renässanshumanist”, 205, 211f, 216.

11. *De nobilitate …* Utg. R. Antionoli m.fl., 85ff, 117ff.

12. Om kvinnans underordning i romersk rätt se t.ex. Thomas A. J. McGinn: *Prostitution, sexuality and the law in ancient Rome* (New York, 2003), 141ff. Romersk lag känner bara till äktenskapsbrott av hustrun. Före *Lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis* (Augustus lag om äktenskapsbrott) hade mannen under vissa omständigheter rätt att döda en otrogen hustru.

13. T.ex. *De iusto, qui est fons omnis divini & humani iuris sive de legibus lib. III* (”Om rättfärdighet, som är källan till all gudomlig och mänsklig rätt, eller om lagarna, i tre delar”), (Frankfurt a. M., 1595), *passim.*

14. *De fama libri II* har den för Typotius karakteristiska undertiteln *Opus novum, utile, lepidum*, d.v.s. ”Ett nytt, nyttigt och behagligt verk” (Frankfurt a. M., 1595). *De iusto*, se föregående not.

15. *De fama*, 12ff. Den flitige Typotius har även dedicerat en av sina orationer mot turkarna till drottning Elisabet, där hon hyllas på samma sätt: bl.a. sägs hon ha stridit djärvare än män mot jordens mäktigaste monarker. *Orationes III …*, dedikationen, ark D2.

16. *De fama*, 14f.

17. Allen: *The concept of woman,* II, t.ex. 933f.

18. *De fama*, 258f, 23f, 223: ”Muliebris sexus debilior est ad cōfirmandam rei veritatem.” Sammanhanget och betydelsen är inte helt klara, men jag har valt att tolka meningen om kvinnokönet såsom framgår.

19. *De fama*, 12.

20. *De iusto*, 187ff.

21. Carolyn James: ”'Machiavelli in skirts.' Isabella d'Este and Politics” i *Virtue, liberty and toleration. Political ideas of European women, 1400–1800*. Utg. Jacqueline Broad och Karen Green (Dordrecht, 2007), 67f.

22. Lindberg: ”'Anden saknar kön.'”; ds., *Stoicism och stat. Justus Lipsius och den politiska humanismen* (Stockholm, 2001), 98ff.

23. Lindberg: ”'Anden saknar kön.'”, 9ff.

How to read old maps

A methodological introduction

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Introduction

In recent years, maps have become part of a fruitful discussion in historical debates. For a long time, modern maps depicting historical facts have been used in textbooks to explain, among other things, war campaigns or the territory of former empires. What has now come into focus are historical maps that illustrate affairs in the language of their time. However, these maps are fundamentally different from the maps we learned to read in school. They were made for different purposes with different means and for a different audience. Thus, when analyzing old maps, it is important to consider their historical background as well as navigational, artistic and semiotic developments.

The following text points at some of the issues modern readers typically face when confronted with maps of the late Middle Ages and early modern period. For this, I will use as examples three maps that can be found in the Armoury (Museum Zeughaus) in my current hometown Innsbruck, Austria. The oldest example is Martin Waldseemüller's *Carta itineraria Europae*, a woodcut he produced between 1511 and 1520.[1] Martin Waldseemüller is one of Europe's best known cartographers of the early 16th century. His 1507 world map is one of the most precious documents in the United States Library of Congress, because it is the first map to name the New World "America". My second example is a hand-drawn map of the Tyrolean-Bavarian border region by Paul Dax from 1544.[2] The pen drawing is painted in watercolors. Dax was a soldier, painter for the court in Innsbruck and a cartographer. The third map discussed in this text is Warmund Ygl's printed map of Tyrol from 1604, one of the best known early maps of the region.[3] As an officer for Emperor Rudolf II, he was well-educated and probably had access to earlier maps of Tyrol. His map, though relatively unknown in Tyrol, was commonly used as the best map of the region until the *Atlas tyrolensis* was created 170 years later. It also served as the basis for Joan Blaeu's map of Tyrol in his *Atlas Major* (published in 1662), which enjoyed wide publication all over Europe, despite being full of errors and inaccuracies.[4]

All the examples show more or less the same region in central Europe. But it will become obvious in the following that they represent this space

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in different ways, thus exposing the artificial character of mapping. These maps also each illustrate specific aspects of old maps, not despite but precisely because they are in some respects quite ordinary examples of maps of their time. Thus, they reveal that even the most common maps are in many ways comparable to the grand and richly adorned examples that often have been examined in studies of recent decades. They epitomize the early modern view of the world and its unique conception of space and sovereignty. It is of vital importance for the modern reader to understand this difference in thinking, otherwise old maps will always be misunderstood.

The following essay is meant as an introduction to early modern maps for historians and cultural and literary scholars who have not been working with cartographic documents before. In order to uncover the issues a modern reader might encounter, I will first discuss some definitions of the word 'map' and their relationship to historical cartography, before turning to the medieval roots of early modern mapping. I will also cover the issue of map literacy because it lies at the heart of the question of how maps can shape a society's worldview. Finally, I will focus on the philosophical, political, artistic and semiotic developments illustrated in these cartographic documents, which primarily distinguish them from modern maps. What we will see is that, despite differences in conceptions, the maps analyzed in this text and their contemporaries are the ancestors of the maps we use today. But as with medieval texts, we first have to learn to understand their language in order to recognize their value and appreciate them fully.

What is a map?

Historically, maps are a relatively new phenomenon. Some scholars even go so far as to state that there were no maps before 1500.[5] Part of this argument is an underlying debate on the definition of maps. As Denis Wood has shown with an impressive word cloud based on a collection of 321 definitions of the word "map" by J. H. Andrews, most definitions include the words "representation" and "surface". In other words, they focus on the subject of maps, on what they *show*. Wood himself criticizes this definition and focuses, instead, on the function of maps as a form of communication, especially in the development of the modern state. And since he is directly linking the evolution of the territorial state and modern maps, it is only fair that he will use other conceptualizations for geographical sketches before 1500.

> The discourse functions a society evolves, chooses, or has forced on it depend on what kind of society it is. Ultimately, what's at stake are the differences in organization and structure that in the cases of the Mixtec, Jain, and medieval Christian called for pictorial genealogies

and cosmographical diagrams, but in the case of modern states call for topographical surveys and the construction of the *institution* of cartography that such surveys seemingly entail.[6]

Even though Wood is right in his qualitative differentiation between what we would consider a map in the 21st century and, for instance, medieval *portolan charts*, there is no denying that maps of the 16th and 17th centuries include many elements pointing to medieval and ancient traditions. Despite their increasing scientificity, which certainly sets them apart from the historical paintings we call *mappae mundi*, David Turnbull insists that "there has not been an 'epistemological break' or 'cartographic revolution'," but rather a continuing process that was intertwined with and accelerated by the growth of the modern territorial state and its bureaucracy.[7] This gave maps a new purpose, which can be the basis of a different definition of maps after 1500. But it did not erase older traditions and applications of spatial diagrams.

Even today, maps can serve other purposes than the representation and communication of authority over a territory. Highly abstract maps used in public transportation, for instance, are not very helpful when trying to find a specific address or even street in a strange city. Their sole purpose is to illustrate the succession of stops and crossings of bus, tram or underground lines. The sense of place and distance they communicate only vaguely resembles geographical realities. Nevertheless we call these diagrams maps.

This example also points to another problem in Denis Wood's focus on maps as an expression of stately authority: authorship. Even though the majority of maps might still be produced or commissioned by state governments, there is today a growing number of maps that is being produced for simple non-governmental tasks. These types of maps might represent public transportation lines, the route to a shop in a shopping center, or an alpine valley with its hiking trails, huts and other points of interest for tourists. Apart from the tax revenue that might be acquired due to actions resulting from the use of these maps, the state is not an actor in these scenarios and these maps can be drawn entirely without its participation.

And finally, even state-authorized maps communicate different messages that might refer back to medieval traditions. Their decorative functions are as important as their content. They might solve legal disputes over borderlines or raise these types of questions in the first place by visualizing territory. These last points will be discussed in a later part of this article.

Using function as a guiding principle for developing a definition of the word 'map' is thus not productive. In their seminal *History of cartography*, David Woodward and J. B. Harley use another approach. Instead of focusing on the subject or function of maps, their definition emphasizes the cognitive process of the act of mapping: "Maps are graphic representations

that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes or events in the human world."[8] This "spatial understanding" is usually the starting point of any map and thus enables us to include a wide variety of phenomena that we call "maps" in everyday language: sketch-maps, diagrams of public transportation systems, maps of fictional places or other planets, and a broad range of historical maps.

Ancient and medieval traditions

The two most influential types of medieval cartography were portolan charts and *mappae mundi*. Portolans were originally based on antique *periploi*, books of sea routes that include lists of ports, cities and landmarks with distances and other important information for navigation along a coastline. Later these were complemented with charts representing the course of a coastline, with the names of the landmarks recorded in a ninety-degree angle to the shoreline, an element featured on many maps of later centuries. The biggest advantage of portolan charts was the possibility to draw rhumb lines representing straight courses through a body of water, usually the Mediterranean Sea, thus allowing for crossings instead of coastal navigation.

A similar type of document for travel on land was the *itinerarium*, a list of stations (cities, landmarks, etc.) to get from A to B, including the distances between stations. These were usually sufficient for long-distance cross-country travel, for instance for pilgrimages or trade.[9] However, there are a few charts illustrating early forms of overland travel. The best known is the Ancient Roman *Tabula Peutingeriana*, a chart of the entire Roman road network. In its design it is more similar to the famous London underground map than to a topographical map, using mostly straight lines and distorting the shape of the European continent beyond recognition to fit it on an oblong parchment scroll. But, of course, its purpose is not that of a topographical map, it does not try to represent the three-dimensional space of the Roman Empire. It is rather a more graphical version of an *itinerarium*, giving additional information due to its two dimensions (e.g. intersections of multiple crossroads) and a few geographical features, such as major rivers or mountain ranges. What David Turnbull writes of portolan charts also applies to *itineraria* such as the *Tabula Peutingeriana*: "it was directionality – the attribution of direction to the observational and experiential phenomena in analogue rather than digital form – which allowed the process of assemblage of the heterogeneous elements on the portolan charts."[10] Despite superficial similarities to some types of modern maps, the analogue form of their creation distinguishes portolan and itinerary charts from the maps we use today.

Mappae mundi are often referred to as medieval world maps, but that is not quite accurate. Rather, they are paintings including geographical,

historical, religious and mythical elements. They do not represent the earth as it is, but a philosophical idea of the world. The two best-known examples, the Hereford and the Ebstorf *mappae mundi*, both show the known world as the body of Christ, with his head, hands and feet on the top, sides and bottom of the drawing, respectively. Jerusalem is set at the center, as the navel both of Christ's body and of earth itself. The representation of this city is a good example of how medieval *mappae mundi* include information, but not for geographical purposes but to illustrate a religious or philosophical point. Jerusalem is the city of the alleged deeds and crucifixion of Jesus and as such, it must be the center of the Christian world. The further away one moves from this center, the stranger nature becomes. The edges of the world are the place for monstrous races, corrupted bodies and ancient myths, but also of the Garden of Eden, inhabited by Adam and Eve. Other elements of the Old and New Testament, such as Noah's Ark and the tower of Babel, can be found on those paintings as well. Thus, they link place, history (or what was considered historical in the Middle Ages) and myth on one piece of parchment.[11] Appropriately, the historian Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken calls them "Geschichtsgemälde" ("historical paintings").[12] Similar to the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, the purpose of *mappae mundi* is not to provide a navigational tool, but rather an image of the complexities and traditions of the Christian world, all condensed in the body of Christ.

At the dawn of the Age of Explorations, the rediscovery of the work of the ancient mathematician Ptolemy proved the first turning point in the shift from the medieval idea of 'mapping' geography, mythology and history to our modern understanding of mapping geographical features of the world. His *Geographia* introduced 15th century cartographers to the mathematical principles of projecting a three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface, and thus grounded the idea of a map in what we now call the natural sciences. This not only allowed for a different kind of mapping on a smaller scale, but it also opened up the early modern view of the world to the explorations and discoveries that were about to change it radically.[13]

But before turning to our examples, maps of the 16th and early 17th century, to find traces of these medieval traditions, it is necessary to take a short look at how we read and understand the semiotic system we call a map.

Map literacy – now and then

Despite being surrounded by maps everyday in the Western world, we need to learn how they communicate information at some point in our lives. We usually acquire this map or cartographic literacy in early school years, in geography or similar classes. But because we learn to read maps

at a relatively young age and are then confronted with them regularly, we are unaware of their centrality to our thinking. Today, it is hard to imagine a world without the mapping of space.[14] We do not even need to use paper maps anymore. Instead mapping software, satellite navigation and online services have become ubiquitous in the Western World. This has led critics to conclude that after centuries of relying on atlases and globes for a sense of our place in the world, their use and, with them, analogue forms of orientation are in decline. But even if that is true, I argue that map consciousness, the "ability to think cartographically and to prepare sketch maps as a means of illuminating problems," is increasing due to the permanent use of GPS in our smart phones and cars, which constantly shows us where we are on a map.[15] And despite the occasional reports about the inability of students to find certain countries on maps or globes, most of us are generally aware of the shape of the globe and recognize its oceans and continents. We know the outlines of our home countries and have a rough cartographic understanding of our direct environments. In this sense, we know our place in the world.

However, this geographic awareness is a product of the introduction of school atlases in the 19th century. Before that, only certain interest groups, military and merchant personnel, discoverers and ruling elites, were confronted with maps. There was simply no need for maps in the everyday lives of most Europeans. Pilgrims, for instance, the medieval version of today's traveling tourists, could easily find their way to Rome or other places with the help of *itineraria* and pilgrims' travel journals. Even if they saw maps on their travels, it is doubtful they would have recognized the signs and shapes as representations of countries they traveled through, or even their home countries.

Because we are constantly made aware of the geographic shapes around us, we never deliberate on the fact that the representation of space in maps is highly artificial, made possible only by measurements and mathematical functions. The perspective of a map cannot even be matched by climbing a high mountain: "The map reader is not so much above space as outside it."[16] Thus, it should not be so inconceivable that many ancient civilizations might not have had maps in our modern sense.[17] Of course, there are some very old sketches and diagrams that illustrate spatial relationships but we would hardly call them maps. As Denis Wood argues, maps might not be the universal constant of human interaction that we believe them to be.[18]

Also, the field of geography was not 'invented' until the 16th century, when it developed into a subject distinct from cosmography.[19] The new field was based on the mathematical principles as explained in Ptolemy's *Geographia*, and thus required a basic understanding of Euclidean geometry. The study of mapmaking, cartography, is even younger as an academic discipline.

In order to understand these new geographic sketches and maps conceptually, the early modern map reader needed "a broader familiarity with the mathematics and geometry of spatial representations."[20] Thus, map literacy in a region depended on the general level of education. In Italian merchant cities of the late 15th century, for instance, there was a "high level of visual literacy as a result of geometrical training in the *abacco* which involved the recognition of simple spatial and volumetric relations together with mathematical and proportional calculations."[21] As Leslie Cormack explains, growing cartographic literacy in 16th century England was part of a larger development that favored literacy and education in a growing number of careers: "The goal of education ceased to be only a career in the church; government offices, secretarial positions, and eventually gentry culture and patronage possibilities all provided new incentives for achieving a certain level of education." Colleges in Oxford and Cambridge became not only places of learning but also of meeting the right people for the chosen career path. This altered the demographics of the universities' student bodies, and led to a diversification in possible subjects and their curricula, which became "more general, secular, and worldly."[22]

Additionally, the newly founded trade agencies, such as the Dutch Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie and the English East India Company, developed their own training programs, which included navigational and geographical instruction. Independent educators and mathematicians became important stimulators for the introduction of maps into these less formal places of education. Their students would then carry on the work and argue for the usefulness of maps in general: "As men in governance and investment positions became more comfortable reading and interpreting maps, maps were increasingly seen as a source of information and beauty."[23]

The developments in both formal and informal education reveal that the spread of geographical literacy, including training in map reading, was mainly inspired by the needs of trade and commerce. But the increased map consciousness among European elites also led to map use in other areas, especially for legal, military and political purposes. Courts began to allow maps as evidence when trying disputes over landownership. In military campaigns and fortification, maps were increasingly used to assess surrounding areas. Maps also became useful in solving international political conflicts, such as the dispute over the Moluccas in the early 16th century. Finally, and most importantly, maps gave students of cartography a new "sense of space and place" that would eventually lead to newly formed ideas of themselves based on geographical entities: European and national identities.[24]

Territory, borders, localization

The growth of cartography only came about with the idea of what we now call the territorial state. For most of the Middle Ages, a monarch ruled over people, not space. Knights swore allegiance to certain noblemen or families, not to a duchy or an empire. This resulted in realms without clear borders, enclaves and exclaves, and a fading authority toward the limits of a ruler's domain.[25] The idea of a territorial state, based on rule over space, gave rise to an enormous demand for knowledge of what that space actually looked like. "Cartography became an instrument of rule in the sixteenth century. It was initially adopted for war."[26] This first bloom of the use of maps in military campaigning points to one of the problems modern readers tend to have with early modern maps: their representation of territories and borders, which is inconsistent and ambiguous. Drawn at a time when the concepts themselves were only just developing, the cartographic representation of complex medieval allegiances can be difficult to grasp for a modern reader, who has been educated in an age of (mostly) clear borderlines that shape our identity from early on.[27] But this cartographic recording of the seemingly chaotic system of allegiances also offered chances: "Cartography revealed anomalies and suggested new possibilities. While early maps portrayed the space of the dynastic realm, they also implied a rationalization of that space – its demarcation and homogenization."[28]

This performative function of maps is important. Especially in the Age of Discovery, rulers were able to use maps to claim lands or draw borderlines in faraway provinces without having to leave their palaces. In the beginning, the real implications of these symbolic acts might have been small. A good example is the Cantino world map of 1502, which claimed Newfoundland as a Portuguese colony by drawing it to the east of the vertical Tordesillas line and calling it "Terra del Rey de portuguall." Of course, Portugal never actually took possession of the island and the claim was ignored by other European powers. But this foreshadows the division of Africa and the Middle East by European colonizers of the 19th century simply by drawing straight lines on maps that, in some cases, serve as border lines until today. And, of course, the Tordesillas line itself did have real consequences for the Spanish and Portuguese colonization of South America. In order to enlarge their respective claims, Portuguese and Spanish cartographers drew the line further to the west or east, respectively. They could do that because, at the time, it was not possible to determine longitude accurately. On the ground in South America, the manpower and routes of the conquistadores was more relevant than the position of a place in relation to an arbitrary geographic line. So today Portuguese is spoken only in the easternmost country of South America.[29]

Of course, all maps, including the ones analyzed in this text, represent

Figure 1. Paul Dax: *Tyrolisch-bayerisches Grenzgebiet*, 1544 (Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck).

certain territories and their boundaries. It is clear in their titles, but also if one looks at the maps themselves. Dax and Ygl, for instance, chose to represent the territory of Tyrol, because they had an idea of what that entailed. However, it was not generally common to consistently name regions or realms on maps. Some only specified historical regions (e.g. former Roman provinces), others included contemporary kingdoms. Very often there was no pattern whatsoever in naming spaces on maps, and those regions that were named were not demarcated in any way. Even more interesting is Waldseemüller's map of Europe. According to Michael Biggs, the Ptolemy-editions of the 15th century traditionally did not include a specific map of Europe and medieval Europeans tended to think in terms of the *oikoumene*, i.e. Christendom, as a unifying identity.[30] By representing Europe as a continent, joining all the different reigns and regions on one map, Martin Waldseemüller expresses a novel idea that would eventually contribute to the construction of a common European identity.[31]

While the Waldseemüller and Ygl maps do not include borders and only give the names of some regions, Dax's map's specific purpose is to illustrate the Tyrolean-Bavarian border region (Figure 1). As Thomas Horst explains, Dax's map is a so-called "Augenscheinkarte" (survey map), representing a certain territory for judicial or administrative purposes. These maps were always hand-drawn, usually for a court case, and represent space in a blend of plan and front view. Their German name derives from the idiom "in Augenschein nehmen" – to peer, because they were usually based on a field survey by an impartial, sworn artist or cartographer. Dax's map is also based on a site survey lasting several days.[32] The border is represented by a red line, climbing mountains and crossing rivers from left to right. This red line is at the same time obviously artificial, due to the seemingly natural coloring of the landscape (brown and green for mountains and woods, and blue for rivers), which is in strong contrast to the bright red line; while being embedded in the natural landscape, because it follows the course of rivers and mountain ranges. The representation of the border in a map seems to be a relatively recent concept, because Dax felt the need to include an explanation. On the top and bottom left of the map he noted, in text, that the area of Tyrol is shown from the bottom "hinauf bys an den roten Strich" ("up to the red line") whereas Bavaria is shown from the top of the map downwards ("Bayrisch gebirgk hinab bys an den roten strich"). Catherine Delano-Smith confirms this impression when she writes that the representation of political boundaries was not common on maps until the second half of the 16th century.[33] Thus, this map was part of a larger development, as it was explicitly drawn to represent the border in an official document and to settle border disputes that had been going on for decades between the Duchy of Bavaria and the County of Tyrol.[34]

Other typical lines we find on modern maps are roads and highways. Indeed, the sole purpose of many maps was to display the infrastructural network of a given area. Dax's map, however, does not include any roads, bridges or other elements of infrastructure, which is actually not atypical for maps of the period. As has been mentioned before, most early modern maps were not drawn as road maps and travelers were much more likely to use written itineraries.[35] Waldseemüller's map is an exception. As its title, *Carta itineraria Europae*, suggests, he relates his map to the itinerary tradition. However, this is not a road map in a modern sense. Waldseemüller indicates routes between cities in the shape of pointed lines. But these are only abstract connections and do not give any information on the course, condition or surface of the road, or distance between two cities. Ygl's map includes only one route over the Fern Pass, represented as a dotted line. It is one of the major passes through the Alps, based on the Roman Via Claudia Augusta. The map also prominently features bridges over the river Inn (even though there are no roads leading over these

bridges) and boats on the same stream, referring to shipping.[36] But it does not indicate specific harbors or landing stages. Thus, the bridges and ships only serve as general indications of trade and infrastructure, not as a directory to specific sites.

Apart from the conceptual problems of what to represent on a map, one of the most significant practical issues for early modern Europeans was to determine their position. With no accurate method of time measurement, it was very difficult to give even a rough estimation of longitude. There was no agreement on the length of a degree and, for that matter, most countries did not have standard measuring units anyway.[37] While this was only impractical at times within the relatively well-known space of Europe, it was common for ships traveling the oceans to get lost until they made landfall because of the limited accuracy of navigational instruments onboard ships.[38] And of course, maps at the time could only be as accurate as the best measurements would allow.[39]

But the purpose of these maps was not necessarily to aid with navigation. Depending on their size and material, it would even have been impractical to use them during travel. As much as one might have wanted to look at them to find one's home town or province and thus one's place in the world, maps were also a decorative element in rich households, demonstrating the host's wealth and power.

Decorative aspects

Early maps had representative functions. As Michael Biggs writes, maps on display in royal households served several functions: "to gain geographical information, to indulge an interest, or simply to represent the fact of their [the princes'] dominion."[40] The many images one can find on maps up until the 18th century mostly serve this representative purpose. Their use on a map hints at the medieval roots of mapping (especially *mappae mundi*) and the early entanglement of mapmaking and painting. Denis Cosgrove points to the townscape paintings of late 15th century Venice, which "combined complex perspectives with topographical detail of an almost cartographic accuracy," while at the same time adhering to Renaissance ideals regarding beauty.[41]

That is not to say that the images on maps are purely decorative. Many are used as placeholders for more complex phenomena, pointing to economic, cultural or natural resources, especially in regions that are less well known or regarded as exotic. Europe and Tyrol were well known spaces in the 16th century, so the maps analyzed in this text include not as many images as contemporary examples, representing, for instance, the New World.[42] Still, the Waldseemüller map with its image of Neptune riding a big fish (possibly a whale) in the Mediterranean proves a good example of this decorative quality of maps and their images. It is also a

Figure 2. Martin Waldseemüller: *Carta itineraria Europae*, 1511/20 (Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck).

reminder of a figure found on Waldseemüller's *Carta Marina* of 1516: King Manuel I of Portugal, riding a whale in the Indian Ocean, southeast of Africa. That image is not simply a pretty portrait of the king, but an affirmation of Portugal's claim to being a naval super power. Its placement alongside the African coast, which was first explored and circumnavigated by the Portuguese, is no coincidence and cannot simply be attributed to the often mentioned *horror vacui*, the idea that empty spaces on maps and other works of art needed to be filled. These kinds of images usually carry with them further information and they want to provide the reader with a certain impression of the represented region or the world as a whole.

Similar signs of empire on maps are coats of arms representing the ruling family of a region. The map of Paul Dax includes only two coats of arms: that of Tyrol and that of Bavaria, which are facing each other from opposite sides of the map. In constrast, Waldseemüller's map is full of them (Figure 2). He includes not only the coats of arms of the major European dynasties, but also those of smaller principalities, provinces and cities. The map itself, and thus Europe, is framed with them. "Political authority [is] symbolized outside space."[43] The major European powers are represented by their coats of arms on top of Europe, with the coat of arms of the Vatican at the center and slightly bigger than the others. Thus, the European monarchs, as represented by their slightly more abstract

emblems, dominate the continent pictographically and factually, with God's representative on earth as *primus inter pares*. But while they are shown as rulers over (an image of) the European space, the coats of arms are themselves symbols of the king or queen, not defining the realm "geographically, by its spatial extent", but personally.[44] Both the images and coats of arms mentioned thus refer back to the traditional personal rule of the Middles Ages, while they are being used as signs of the newly developing idea of the territorial state unified by what is to become the idea of a geographically and culturally distinct nation.

Later, the outline of regions and nations would take over that role to form what Thongchai Winichakul called the "geo-body". The publication and wider distribution of maps, beginning in the late 16th century, "engraved the distinctive shape of a particular territory on the imagination."[45] Dutch republicans, for instance, would use and popularize the map turned image of *Leo Belgicus* in their fight against the Habsburg regime. The image depicts a heraldic lion superimposed on the outlines of the new Dutch Republic. There are also other versions of this map, including less or more of the original provinces and thereby changing the political message. This geo-body in its republican version demonstrates that semiotic shift of maps from coats of arms to the outlines of regions: The geo-body is impersonal, i.e. it is not connected to the person of a ruler; and natural in the sense that it is grounded in the natural world.[46] The so-called Aleph maps of the 19th century make use of the geo-body in a similar way. In those maps, William Harvey colored and distorted the geo-bodies of many European countries to form people in national dress or other symbols of the nations for caricatures. He could do that because of the use of maps in general education, which made Europeans increasingly aware of the shapes of countries and made it possible for them to recognize and use these outlines as placeholders for more general ideas of those nations.

Thus, not only elements but also the maps themselves were objects of art, valued for their aesthetics as well as geographical content. Indeed, mapmaking and painting were closely connected enterprises in the Renaissance, which is evident not only from the biographies of early mapmakers, but also from references in artworks.[47] Their artistic value was especially important for rulers across Europe who viewed them as "precious objects whose possession was both a source of amusement and princely diversion." By looking at them, the monarch could at the same time oversee his entire empire and a work of art symbolizing his power. Accordingly, monarchs made a point of collecting and publicly displaying maps for the entertainment of their subjects and as a sign of their own power and (geographical) wisdom.[48]

Map signs

The use of signs and legends, not only in historical but in all maps has long been neglected as a subject for academic discourse. Fortunately, Catherine Delano-Smith's contribution to the *History of cartography* established a groundbreaking basis for further research into this field.[49] Because we grow up with well-ordered and more or less standardized atlases, it is often difficult for modern readers to fully understand the signs used in early modern maps:

> The notion that there was such a thing as a conventional sign in the context of premodern printed topographical maps is just one of the myths concerning map signs that colors the modern reader's preconception of map signs, in the Renaissance in particular and in the history of cartography in general.[50]

Delano-Smith lists a number of "long-cherished misconceptions" about Renaissance maps, such as an increasing standardization of map signs and more detailed representations due to printing.[51] The issue of standardization is especially important. Its lack is one of the most obvious differences of historical and our modern maps. Even though Denis Wood challenges the notion of standardized signs and legends on modern maps, we at least assume that they are coherent.[52] Renaissance maps on the other hand are inconsistent in their use of signs, even when they were drawn by the same cartographer. There were simply no organizational mechanisms to ensure the use of one paradigm. No craft guilds, professional institutions or commercial companies were able to draw up rules or instructions and then implement them on a wider scale. Even contemporaries commented on this "semiotic anarchy."[53] It was not even common to include legends to explain the signs used. Delano-Smiths conclusion is important: "standardization was simply not a Renaissance ideal and [...] modern commentators are misguided in expecting it."[54]

Ygl's map is the only one of my three examples that provides the viewer with a legend. It differentiates nine signs for different kinds of settlements (city, village), institutional sites (market, abbey, church, castle, etc.) and, interestingly, also includes the sign for a grape vine. As Catherine Delano-Smith shows, agricultural signs were usually only included, "where something unusual merited a remark."[55] The differentiation of settlements and institutions on the other hand was common practice. What is interesting in Ygl's map is that he still goes to the trouble of providing individual views of many towns despite his catalogued signs which he draws over the towns' buildings. His mountains are mostly groups of the typical molehill-shape and the most important or recognizable are named but not individualized. Most of the mountain passes are represented in the shape of mountains, as was common at the time. But the Brenner Pass is an

Figure 3. Detail from Warmund Ygl: *Karte von Tirol*, 1604 (Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck).

exception to this rule, being (correctly) pictured as a valley. What stands out is the big glacier ("Der Groß Verner") in the center of the map, covering much of the Stubai and Ötztal Alps (Figure 3). It is drawn as a continuous area, almost like a blanket placed over the mountains, a not uncommon imagery in the German language. Its size and the crevasses indicated by black convex spots on the glacier reveal the impassability of this part of Tyrol. It is the first representation of an Alpine glacier on a map.[56]

Because Dax's map of the border region is hand-drawn, all lines and signs naturally have individual features. However, he uses some abstract signs: his trees are drawn as cones and those mountains that are not explicitly named and individualized resemble the molehill shape. In this respect, Dax's hand-drawn map is not as semiotically distinct from the printed maps as one might think.[57] Houses are typified but cities are individualized, usually drawn as a group of houses and a church. Names of mountains, settlements and other landmarks are all inserted in frames and

Figure 4. Detail from Paul Dax: *Tyrolisch-bayerisches Grenzgebiet*, 1544 (Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck).

accentuated with their white background as opposed to the green and brown coloring of the landscape (Figure 4). Even names that were added later, are glued on in the shape of little boxes to set them apart from the landscape. Dax uses black and red ink to distinguish between Tyrolean (black) and Bavarian (red) landmarks. Their names are an important part of the map, especially in relation to the border and their territorial allegiance.

Waldseemüller's map is drawn on a much larger scale. Thus, features of the landscape are more abstract and typified. Cities, for instance, are only indicated by a red dot and their name, with no distinction between bigger or smaller cities, or royal residences. As mentioned before, borders or regional divides do not play an important role on his map except when natural borders can be used to separate a region. Bohemia, for instance, is surrounded by molehill-shaped mountain ranges (Figure 5). This molehill type was common for the designation of individual or groups of mountains, even though the shape of the molehills could vary. It gave the viewer a more natural sight of the mountains and allowed for the inclusion

Figure 5. Detail from Martin Waldseemüller: *Carta itineraria Europae*, 1511/20 (Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck).

of individual features.[58] But Waldseemüller also employs another method of indicating mountains, which emphasizes their areal extent rather than their shape or height. His drawing of the Alps, the Black Forest and other mountains resembles a dark area (colored in brown) interrupted by rivers and lakes at the side of which he added several towns. This depiction stresses the separating properties of the mountains, the fact that they are a barrier that can only be crossed through a small number of routes which Waldseemüller, of course, adds. The mountains themselves are an unknown (and perhaps) unknowable brown mass, but the routes through this barrier are the focus of his map. However, this was a less common method for the indication of hills or mountains in early modern maps:

"profile signs are easier than plan view signs to recognize because they match the average map user's personal experience."[59] Waldseemüller uses similar methods for the suggestion of large woods, sometimes drawing individual trees and sometimes surrounding groups of them with a line and coloring the area green. In the Bavarian Forest (today the border region between the German state of Bavaria and the Czech Republic) he combines the mountain area sign with molehills and trees to illustrate the wooded hilly landscape. But as Delano-Smith demonstrates in her study, there does not seem to be any connection between the tree sign itself and the represented kind of tree or thickness of the forest and these signs should not be interpreted beyond general assumptions. In fact, a lot of the wooded areas in Europe are not drawn as such, probably because woods were far too common to be included everywhere on the map.[60]

Conclusion

Working with early modern maps poses challenges. Depending on the definition of the word 'map', the objects at hand might not be considered maps at all. Thus, our tools for map reading, with which modern readers are supplied during their schooldays, are usually not helpful because these old maps were made for different purposes and addressees. They use a different language to communicate information and they attach importance to information that a modern audience might find unnecessary. To understand this language, it is important to understand the development of territorial rule as opposed to the personal rule of the Middle Ages. It is also paramount to understand the pictorial and semiotic development, since these maps are at the root of our modern map symbolism.

These same issues also make old maps an important resource for historical research. They force us to think differently about space exactly because they are different from the maps we are used to, providing a thought-provoking expression of the worldviews of their creators and original audience. Once we learn how to read them, they communicate fascinating information about the landscape they depict. They can be an important source for historians and cultural studies scholars, offering unique insights into the conceptions of space of their creators, which written texts can only provide in a limited way.

Because of that, they also force us to think about modern maps and the importance and meaning we place on them. The geographically accurate representation of a landscape that we value in contemporary maps and satellite images was not necessarily the goal of early modern cartographers. Once this different approach to mapping has taken hold, it is easy to see that most contemporary maps are, in fact, not geographically accurate at all. Despite careful measurements of our earth's surface, maps can only include a certain number of elements of a landscape's features. These

features have to be abstracted in order to make the map readable. And, of course, every choice for inclusion and abstraction is, in the end, a choice representing certain power structures that place importance on some and exclude other elements. It is not surprising that this challenge to the standard map communication model was publicized in the 1980s by J. Brian Harley, a map historian appealing to the works of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. His work on old maps led to new insights in dealing with contemporary maps and created what we now call critical cartography, in which maps are no longer viewed as neutral, scientifically grounded sources of information.[61]

Apart from their historical value, the study of old maps is relevant for this insight. They are

> not just the decorative treasures of the collector's cabinet but [...] active instruments of power. Maps can be read as a record of a clash between cultures, of conflicting ideologies, of ethnic attitudes and stereotypes, and of the values that different societies attach to the land. Maps always conceal more than they seem to show. Maps are often a record of myth as much as of a real geography [...], and they represent relentless religions and a crusading search for wealth far more than an abstract pursuit of human knowledge. Every map has several faces and more than one level of meaning.[62]

Thus, maps are texts that can be deconstructed and interpreted with the instruments of cultural and literary studies. They carry meaning beyond showing us where a particular place is situated. By employing critical theory to analyze maps, it is possible to gain a better understanding not only of the maps themselves but also of the societies that produced them. This is true for contemporary maps, but even more so when dealing with historical maps. When read critically, they can be an instrumental source for research, not just in the fields of geography and history. This essay has been an attempt to invite historians of other specializations into the discussion, by introducing them to the relevant terms and concepts, and with the hope that they will contribute to and enrich the debate on early modern mapping.

Notes

1. Martin Waldseemüller: *Carta itineraria Europae*, 1511/20, Inv.-Nr. K 9/39 (TLMF, Historische Sammlungen), Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck.
2. Paul Dax: *Tyrolisch-bayerisches Grenzgebiet*, 1544, Inv.-Nr. K 9/42 (TLMF, Historische Sammlungen), Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck.
3. Warmund Ygl: *Karte von Tirol*, 1604, Inv.-Nr. K 9/43 (TLMF, Historische Sammlungen), Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck.
4. Cf. Thomas Winkelbauer: *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht. Länder und Untertanen des Hauses Habsburg im konfessionellen Zeitalter* (Wien, 2003), 309.
5. Cf. Dennis Wood: *Rethinking the power of maps* (New York, 2010), 20–25.

6. Wood: *Rethinking the power of maps*, 27.

7. David Turnbull: *Masons, tricksters and cartographers* (London, 2005), 92.

8. David Woodward & J. B. Harley: "Preface," in Woodward & Harley (eds.): *History of cartography, Vol. 1. Cartography in prehistoric, ancient, and medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago, 1987), xvi.

9. Cf. David Turnbull: "Cartography and science in early modern Europe. Mapping the construction of knowledge spaces," *Imago mundi* 48 (1996), 16.

10. Ibid., 10.

11. Cf. Michael Biggs: "Putting the state on the map. Cartography, territory, and European state formation," *Comparative studies in society and history* 41.2 (April 1999), 377.

12. Cited in Ute Schneider: *Die Macht der Karten. Eine Geschichte der Kartographie vom Mittelalter bis heute* (Darmstadt, 2004), 27.

13. Cf. Biggs: "Putting the state on the map," 379; Denis Cosgrove: "Mapping new worlds. Culture and cartography in sixteenth-century Venice," *Imago mundi* 44 (1992), 66, and Jordan Branch: *The cartographic state. Maps, territory, and the origins of sovereignty* (Cambridge, 2014), 6.

14. Cf. Turnbull: *Masons, tricksters and cartographers*, 92–93.

15. Leslie B. Cormack: "Maps as educational tools in the Renaissance," in Woodward & Harley (eds.): *History of cartography, Vol. 3. Cartography in the European Renaissance, Part 1* (Chicago, 2007), 636.

16. Biggs: "Putting the state on the map," 378.

17. Kai Brodersen, for example, makes an interesting case for a mapless Roman Empire in *Terra cognita. Studien zur römischen Raumerfassung* (Hildesheim, 1995).

18. Wood: *Rethinking the power of maps*, 19–25.

19. "[W]hile the subject of cosmography was the globe and its relationship with the heavens as a whole, picturing the earth as an integral part of the cosmos, geography had a narrower focus, concentrating specifically on the earth itself." (Cormack: "Maps as educational tools in the Renaissance," 622); cf. also Cosgrove: "Mapping new worlds," 66–67.

20. Cosgrove: "Mapping new worlds," 69.

21. Ibid.

22. Cormack: "Maps as educational tools in the Renaissance," 623–24.

23. Ibid., 633.

24. Cf. ibid., 635–36.

25. Cf. Biggs: "Putting the state on the map," 385–86.

26. Ibid., 380 and then further 387–88. Cf. Cosgrove: "Mapping new worlds," 67–68.

27. It is now perfectly normal to know the shape of a country by drawing its borderlines. "Published maps [...] engraved the distinctive shape of a particular territory on the imagination. This familiar shape provided an alternative symbol of political authority" (Biggs "Putting the state on the map," 390).

28. Biggs: "Putting the state on the map," 386.

29. Cf. J. B. Harley: *Maps and the Columbian encounter* (Milwaukee, 1990), 63–65.

30. Again, this identity is based on belonging to a certain group of people (with the same religion) as opposed to the space these people inhabit.

31. Cf. Biggs: "Putting the state on the map," 392–93 and Cormack: "Maps as educational tools in the Renaissance," 636.

32. Cf. Thomas Horst: "Augenscheinkarten – eine Quelle für die Kulturgeschichte," *Akademie aktuell. Zeitschrift der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 2010.1 (2010), 39–41.

33. Catherine Delano–Smith: "Signs on printed topographical maps, ca. 1470–ca. 1640," in Woodward / Harley (eds.): *History of cartography, Vol. 3. Cartography in the European Renaissance, Part 1* (Chicago, 2007), 555–56.

34. Cf. Thomas Horst: *Die älteren Manuskriptkarten Altbayerns. Eine kartographiehistorische Studie zum Augenscheinplan unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Kultur- und Klimageschichte* (München, 2009), 88–89.

35. Cf. Delano–Smith: "Signs on printed topographical maps, ca. 1470–ca. 1640," 568.

36. Cf. Ingrid Kretschmer, Johannes Dörflinger & Franz Wawrik: *Österreichische Kartographie. Von den Anfängen im 15. Jahrhundert bis zum 21. Jahrhundert* (Wien, 2004), 45.

37. Cf. Turnbull: "Cartography and science in early modern Europe," 12, and Felipe

Fernández-Armesto: "Maps and exploration in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries" in Woodward & Harley (eds.): *History of cartography, Vol. 3. Cartography in the European Renaissance, Part 1* (Chicago, 2007), 746–47.

38. William Bradford's *History of Plymouth plantation* is a good example. In the early chapters of his story, Bradford declares Virginia the goal of the Puritan's journey, but they make landfall in what is today Cape Cod. Because it is quite late in the season, the ship's captain refuses to sail south and so the Puritan Colony is set up in Massachusetts. Cf. William Bradford: *Of Plymouth plantation* (New York, 1994 [1669]), 60.

39. John W. Hessler, referring to M. J. Blakemore and J. B. Harley, elaborates on the different types of accuracy and the processes behind them in "Warping Waldseemüller. A phenomenological and computational study of the 1507 world map," *Cartographica* 41.2 (2006), 102–04.

40. Biggs: "Putting the state on the map," 381.

41. Cosgrove: "Mapping new worlds," 69.

42. Chapters 6–8 of my forthcoming doctoral thesis will discuss maps of the New World intensively.

43. Biggs: "Putting the state on the map," 392.

44. Ibid., 390.

45. Ibid. On the subject of the geo-body, cf. Thongchai Winichakul: *Siam mapped. A history of the geo-body of a nation* (Honolulu, 1994).

46. Ibid. and Richard L. Kagan & Benjamin Schmidt: "Maps and the early modern state. Official cartography," in Woodward & Harley (eds.): *History of cartography, Vol. 3. Cartography in the European Renaissance, Part 1* (Chicago, 2007), 673–74.

47. One of the most famous paintings featuring a Visscher map in the background is Jan Vermeer's *The art of painting* (ca. 1662–65).

48. Kagan & Schmidt: "Maps and the early modern state," 677–79.

49. Delano-Smith: "Signs on printed topographical maps, ca. 1470–ca. 1640," 528–90.

50. Ibid., 529.

51. Ibid., 529–31.

52. Cf. Wood: *Rethinking the power of maps*, 67–72.

53. Delano-Smith: "Signs on printed topographical maps, ca. 1470–ca. 1640," 532.

54. Ibid., 534.

55. Ibid., 574.

56. Cf. Kretschmer, Dörflinger & Wawrik: *Österreichische Kartographie*, 45.

57. Cf. also Delano-Smith: "Signs on printed topographical maps, ca. 1470–ca. 1640," 529–30.

58. Cf. ibid., 549.

59. Ibid., 550.

60. Cf. ibid., 552 and 574.

61. Cf. Jeremy W. Crampton: "Maps as social constructions. Power, communication and visualization," *Progress in human geography* 25 (2001), 236–38.

62. Harley: *Maps and the Columbian encounter,* xii.

Errata

I förra numret av *Lychnos* finns ett antal fel gällande handledare för avhandlingar i idé- och lärdomshistoria. Jag beklagar djupt de felaktigheter jag blivit uppmärksammad på och meddelar här de korrekta uppgifterna:

Nr 63 Elisabeth Mansén: *Konsten att förgylla vardagen* (27/5 1993) – handledare Svante Nordin, ej Gunnar Broberg

Nr 160 Andreas Önnerfors: *Svenska Pommern* (6/6 2003) – handledare Svante Nordin, ej Svante Nordin & Gunnar Broberg

Nr 172 David Dunér: *Världsmaskinen* (3/12 2004) – handledare Svante Nordin, ej Gunnar Broberg

Nr 177 Ingmar Lundkvist: *Kulturprosten* (30/4 2005) – handledare Gunnar Broberg, ej Svante Nordin

Nr 229 Kristiina Savin: *Fortunas klädnader* (22/10 2011) – handledare Svante Nordin, ej Gunnar Broberg

Jag beklagar det inträffade.

Ingemar Nilsson, Göteborgs universitet