

ARTICLES

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DESCRIPTIONS OF GDAŃSK AND TORUŃ
IN THE ACCOUNTS BY PETER MUNDY:
BETWEEN AN ENGLISHMAN'S SINCERE CURIOSITY
AND EARLY MODERN THEORY OF EKPHRASIS

Key words: Peter Mundy, Gerard Bucoldianus, Gdańsk, Toruń, rhetoric, ekphrasis, travel literature, curiosity

In the 16th and 17th centuries the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, including Royal Prussia, especially Gdańsk, was visited by many inhabitants of the British Isles. At least eleven of them left wrote accounts of their pilgrimages: Jerome Horsey, Fynes Moryson, Thomas Roe, William Lithgow, Peter Mundy, Robert Bargrave, Patrick Gordon, Laurence Hyde, Robert South, Bernard Connor and the anonymous author of *A Relation of the State of Polonia*¹. Peter Mundy (1596 – ca. 1667), a son of a merchant from Cornwall, seems to have completed his education at sea as a ship boy, serving on ships sailing to France and Spain, and next as a young merchant traveling across the Mediterranean Sea to Constantinople. According to Dorothy Carrington was a particularly representative figure of his time: “In an age when curiosity was the outstanding characteristic of intelligent Englishmen, curiosity was the ruling passion of this life. [...] His instable appetite for information, his eye for detail, his desire for accuracy, would have made him in modern times a first-rate scientist”². Agnieszka White, on the other hand, draws attention to the dehierarchization of content present in Mundy’s work, in which only chronological order remains; apart from it, the author describes “the smallest, often accidental and extremely different elements of reality that in any way aroused the peregrinant’s

¹ See Agnieszka WHITE, *Obraz kultury Rzeczypospolitej w angielskich relacjach podróżniczych (koniec XVI i XVII wiek)*, Warszawa 2014, pp. 6, 29–68.

² Dorothy CARRINGTON, *The Traveller's Eye*, London 1949, p. 178.

interest. [...] The diversity of the English merchant's notes confirms the multi-directional interests that go far beyond his professional activities"³.

The aim of the article is to take a closer look at the descriptions of the most important cities of Royal Prussia: Gdańsk and Toruń in the context of early modern theory of ekphrasis⁴ and praise of cities, in order to attempt to answer the question to what extent Mundy's descriptions are a free form resulting only from the "cognitive passion of the intelligent Englishman" (using the terminology of the 20th-century British researcher), and to what extent they constitute a construct firmly rooted in the form developed in the humanist school of the 16th and early 17th centuries⁵.

Therefore, we should start with the information about the education of young Peter and present briefly one of the most important and widely available rhetoric textbooks that he could have come across in his *curriculum*. The main source referring to the English traveler's life is the manuscript of his work, published in its entirety only in the years 1907–1936⁶, in which the first of his *Relations*⁷ concerns his youth, specifically 1608–1617. We learn from it that Mundy left his family home in the Cornish Penryn for the first time in 1608, going with his father to Rouen; next he mentions his mastering of the French language in Bayonne in 1610 and traveling to Barrameda, Cadiz, Malaga and San Lucar in the years 1611–1613; then a stay in Seville in the years 1615–1617

³ A. WHITE, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁴ I treat the terms 'ekphrasis', 'description' and 'account' interchangeably in accordance with their understanding in the rhetorical theory of the 16th–17th centuries, in which invariably the Greek term *ἐκφρασις* was translated as *descriptio*. See Bartosz B. AWIANOWICZ, *Progymnasmata w teorii i praktyce szkoły humanistycznej od końca XV wieku do połowy XVIII wieku. Dzieje nowożytnej recepcji Aftoniosa od Rudolfa Agricoli do Johanna Christopha Gottscheda*, Toruń 2008, pp. 171–172. About the terminology related to *descriptio* and its translation as 'description', see Heinrich LAUSBERG, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric. A Foundation for Literary Study*, transl. Matthew T. BLISS, Annemiek JANSEN, David E. ORTON, ed. David E. ORTON, R. Dean ANDERSON, Leiden–Boston–Köln 1997, pp. 359–360 and 365–366 (it also appears there as a specific term for the 'description'/'presentation' of geographical places, the term 'topography' as a transcription of the Greek *τοπογραφία*, which, however, is hardly functional due to its different semantic scope in modern Polish or English).

⁵ The theoretical parts of rhetoric textbooks read in the humanities schools of the period were essentially convergent in Protestant junior high schools, in Jesuit colleges, and in many lower-level schools – either of the Catholic faith or other denominations. The differences can be seen only at the level of the selection of examples. Comp. Bartosz AWIANOWICZ, *Die Progymnasmata-Sammlungen und der Glaubenskampf des 17. Jahrhunderts*, [in:] *Welche Antike? Konkurrierende Rezeptionen des Altertums im Barock*, Bd. 1, hrsg. v. Ulrich HEINEN, Wiesbaden 2011, pp. 480–489.

⁶ *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia 1608–1667*, vol. 1–5, ed. Richard C. TEMPLE, London 1907–1936 (further cit. *The Travels of Peter Mundy*).

⁷ See *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. 1, pp. 13–40.

and finally a trip to Constantinople in 1617. He records not only the purpose of the one-year visit to Bayonne (learning French), but also a two-year stay in Seville, where he studied Spanish⁸. However, we do not learn from Mundy's first 'account' of what he learned in France and Spain besides languages, nor what education did he receive in his native Cornwall or in London. Nevertheless, it can be assumed with high probability that at some stage of his education he came into contact with the extremely popular Latin translation of the *Progymnasmata* of the Greek rhetorician Aphthonios along with the commentary (*scholia*) of the Marburg professor Reinhard Lorich, which from the first edition in 1542 to 1718 had over 150 re-editions all over Europe⁹. This edition was a textbook also widely used in English schools, as it was assured by Richard Rainolde, the author of its English paraphrase of 1563 titled *A book called the Foundacion of Rhetorike*¹⁰. Naturally, this was not the only textbook from which the young British man could learn the theory of description or praise of cities. Its outline was included for instance in the equally popular *De arte rhetorica libri tres* by the Spanish Jesuit Cyprian Soarez (book I, 49); however, its form was much more laconic and limited to half-page 32° pocket format¹¹. On the other hand, it seems superfluous to cite the broad context of strongly retorted poetic descriptions of cities in the context of Mundy's notes¹², because the work of the traveller from Cornwall was guided rather by the approach of the geographer Pomponius Mela expressed in the 1st century AD

⁸ See *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. 1, p. 13: "I was sent to Bayon in Gascony to learne the French Tongue, where, haveing remaind one yeare"; *ibid.*, p. 14: "I was sent upp to the Cittie of Seville to remaine with Mr. Charles Partker [...], where I lived two yeares more, and in that tyme attained the Spanish Tongue".

⁹ See B. B. AWIANOWICZ, *Progymnasmata*, p. 108.

¹⁰ See Thomas W. BALDWIN, *William Shakespere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, vol. 2, Urbana 1944, p. 288.

¹¹ See e.g. Cyprian SOAREZ, *De arte rhetorica libri tres, ex Aristotele, Cicerone et Quintiliano praecipue deprompti* [...], Coloniae 1590, p. 49. About the popularity of this textbook and its numerous editions in Spain and France see: Lawrence D. GREEN, James J. MURPHY, *Renaissance Rhetoric: Short-Title Catalogue 1460–1700*, Hunts 2006, pp. 417–419. Even less space was devoted to descriptions and praises of cities in *Institutio oratoria* by Quintilian (3, 7, 26), extensively printed and read in the 17th century. See more about ancient (and medieval) praises and descriptions of towns in Carl J. CLASSEN, *Die Stadt im Spiegel der Descriptiones und Laudes urbium in der antiken und mittelalterlichen Literatur bis zum Ende des zwölften Jahrhunderts*, Hildesheim 1980; Roman KRZYWY, *Deskrypcja Stambułu w „Przeważnej legacji” Samuela Twardowskiego wobec topiki laudatio urbis*, *Pamiętnik Literacki*, vol. 102: 2011, no. 4, pp. 41–45; *idem*, *Wędrówki z Mnemozyne. Studia o topice dawnego podróżopisarstwa*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 73–88.

¹² The poetic descriptions of cities in the poetry of the end of the 16th century could have a well thought-out structure and rich imagery, as demonstrated by the example of Jan Rybiński's hodoeporicon: Jan RYBIŃSKI, *Księga elegii podróżnych*, trans. Elwira BUSZEWICZ, intro. and ed. Elwira BUSZEWICZ, Wojciech RYCZEK, Warszawa 2015, pp. 29–45.

(*De chorographia* 1, 1): “I proceed to the description of the Earth; it is a difficult work that is completely unsuitable for rhetorical embellishments [*facundiae minime capax* – B.A.]. It contains almost exclusively the names of peoples and towns in a rather intricate arrangement; the topic is more extensive than pleasant”¹³. The difference here is, however, that the author of *Relations* nowhere complains about their form, because, unlike the Roman, he is more a businessman and traveller than a writer.

Thus, one may leave aside early modern poetic ekphrasis and speeches – panegyrics in honor of natal towns or visited cities. However, it will still be valuable to study the theory contained in the textbook *Progymnasmata*, which Mundy could have become acquainted with at an early age. He might have been able to refer to it (even subconsciously). Lorich added to his *scholia*, which he affixed to Aphtonios’ theory of praise (*laus*) and examples of both the Greek rhetorician and his own, the chapter *Copiosa urbis laudandi ratio, ex Bucoldiano*, taken from *De inventione et amplificatione oratoria, seu usu locorum libri tres* by a philologist and doctor Gerard Bucoldianus (also known as Gerard Bucholds, Gerhard Bucholtz or Bucoltz), who was active in the first half of the 16th century.

This theory, largely based on the work of Menander of Laodicea (3rd century AD), includes the following chapters: XVIII: *Quae urbes ex locis copiose laudandi ratio* (How to praise cities by points); XIX: *Urbis laus a conditore, per locos ducitur* (Praise of the city for its founder, carried out by topoi); XX: *Urbis laus ab iis, quae huic simul tempore coniuncta sunt, & primum ab aeris temperie <per> locos ducitur* (The praise of the city is effectuated by topoi appropriate for what is associated with the present time, and above all for a moderate climate) and XXI: *Laus urbis ab agris, fluminibus, publicis item munitionibus, tectis, ipsisque civibus, per locos ducitur* (The city is praised by topoi appropriate for land, rivers, as well as common fortifications, buildings and citizens themselves)¹⁴. The first of these chapters turns out to be virtually irrelevant to our considerations of Peter Mundy’s ekphrasis, because in Chapter XVIII Bucoldianus focuses on the polemic with Quintilian’s claim that cities should be praised in the same way as people. Chapter XIX is devoted to the characteristics

¹³ Marian Golias’ trans. after: POMPONIUS MELA, *Chorographia czyli Opis kregu Ziemi*, ed. Sergiusz SZARYPKIN, Krzysztof T. WITCZAK, trans. Marian GOLIAS, Krzysztof T. WITCZAK, Piotrków Trybunalski 2011, p. 37. English trans. by Agnieszka Chabros.

¹⁴ See Gerardus BUCOLDIANUS, *De inventione et amplificatione oratoria, seu usu locorum libri tres*, Lugduni 1551, pp. 90–97; APHTONIUS SOPHISTA, *Progymnasmata. Partim a Rodolpho Agricola, partim a Ioanne Maria Catanaeo Latinitate donata. Cum luculentis & utilibus in eadem Scholiis Reinhardi Lorichii Hadamarii*, Lugduni 1640, pp. 316–329.

of the city's founder¹⁵. The ekphraseis written by the English merchant and traveller lacks a broader historical perspective, even in reference to cities with such a rich and well-documented history as Constantinople¹⁶.

Juxtaposing the Englishman's descriptions with the recommendations from the next (XX) chapter of the author: *De inventione et amplificatione oratoria* we find more similarities between the theory of Bucoldianus and Mundy's descriptions. The theoretician recommends in it that the reasons why the founder chose this place for the location of the city ("cur eo in loco urbem locarit") be provided. On this occasion, the benefits of the location on the sea or inland should be presented and a comparison with the location of other cities should be introduced ("conferendo hanc cum aliarum urbium agro, situque"), which is to show that the praised city lies in the area "either more fertile, or at least comparable, by no means inferior" ("aut fertiliorem, aut certe parem esse, nullaque in re deterioration"). In addition, there were recommendations to describe the laws (*leges*) and moral principles (*religio*) established in a given city, thanks to which citizens live "in justice, morality and fear of God" ("iuste, modeste, pieque"); what is more, "at the very beginning of the city's existence, literary interests and martial arts" ("simul cum urbis primordijs literarum bellique studios") awakened by the founder should also be depicted. According to Bucoldianus, it is also worth presenting testimonies of one's learning ("cuiusque eruditionis testimonia"), as well as "bravery and courage displayed in the fight either by all or by individual citizens" ("nunc uniuersum, nunc singulorum militiae fortitudo, uirtusque")¹⁷.

It should be remembered that Mundy's primary goal was not rhetorical praise (Latin *laus*), but only a description (Latin *descriptio*) of the places he reached, along with objects and phenomena he watched. This is clearly visible in his descriptions of Gdańsk and Toruń, which he visited during his European tours of 1640 and 1642. Thus, describing various forms of the "execution of Justice" in Gdańsk¹⁸, close to both *leges* and *religio* categories, he does it not so much to praise but to show "various ways of punishment" ("sundry Manner of waies"); yet, he also makes evaluative comments such as the description of the beheading, which he ends with the statement: "All this sodainely perfformed: a generous kind of death for an offender both in the sufferance and execution".

¹⁵ A thorough discussion of these chapters and their dependence on Menander Rhetor in: Bartosz B. AWIANOWICZ, „*Urbes laudandi ratio*”. *Antyczna teoria pochwały miast i jej recepcja w „De inventione et amplificatione oratoria” Gerarda Bucoldianusa oraz w „Essercitii di Aftonio Sofista” Orazia Toscanelli*, Terminus, vol. 11: 2009, no. 1–2, pp. 22–23.

¹⁶ See *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. 1, pp. 25–40.

¹⁷ See more B. B. AWIANOWICZ, „*Urbes laudandi ratio*”, pp. 23–24.

¹⁸ See *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. 4, pp. 172–177.

According to the recommendation of the German theoretician that the description of habits be embellished with *testimonium* – a testimony or example, the Englishman also introduces here “a strange story”¹⁹ illustrating the description of the death penalty to a young man who was to be executed for murder on 6 August 1632 at nine o'clock in the morning. Nevertheless, a Hans Tetelhofft appeared at the place of execution and shouted that “the Man is Innocent” and confessed himself to having committed the crime. The death sentence was carried out on him the same day at twelve o'clock. The perjurers who had testified against the young man had two fingers cut off. Admittedly, Mundy fails to provide this ‘strange story’ with a valuable commentary, but this description can be treated as an example of the smooth operation of the justice system in Gdańsk. This interpretation of the Englishman’s *exemplum* as an element of the *encomium* is weakened by the beginning of the next chapter on punishments, in which Mundy stated: “I have said soe much off executions beecause som off them vary from those used with us”²⁰. In the description of Gdańsk, the English traveller used Bucoldianus’ (and also Aphtonios’) comparison (*comparatio*), already signalled in the subtitle of the first chapter of the ‘relation’ XXXV: “Dantzigk: ittts comparison with London”²¹. It is a juxtaposition not only with the capital of England, but also with Amsterdam – situated closer to the Baltic metropolis; it appears as a reference point in the brief description of the location of Gdańsk in the ‘relation’ XXXIII²².

The traveller from Cornwall seems to be driven more by early modern curiosity than the principles of praise of cities or their ekphrasis – curiosity about which Alexander Marr wrote as one of two concepts (next to wonder) that are very strongly present throughout the whole early modern period, from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment²³. This tendency to describe curiosities is even more evident in the juxtaposition of Mundy’s descriptions with the theory of Chapter XX of Book II of Bucoldianus’ treaty, i.e. *The praise of the city from lands, rivers, as well as common fortifications, buildings and the citizens themselves*²⁴. It is devoted to the praise of the city because of the climate (“quo

¹⁹ “I have said soe much off executions beecause som off them vary From those used with us”; *ibid.*, pp. 174–175.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

²² See *ibid.*, p. 89.

²³ Alexander MARR, *Introduction*, [in:] *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. Robert J. W. EVANS, Alexander MARR, Aldershot 2006, pp. 1–18 (there also a very reliable review of studies in which the categories of ‘wonder’ and ‘curiosity’ and their interrelationships have been analyzed over the past decades).

²⁴ The shortened version of the title: *Laus urbis ab agris, fluminibus, publicis item munitio-nibus, tectis, ipsisque civibus*; see APHTHONIUS SOPHISTA, *op.cit.*, p. 320.

in climate”), which is to be primarily mild (“aeris temperies”), and because of the climate-related fertility of the area surrounding the city: “Then you will have to say about the fields with which the city is adjacent, about rivers, lakes, ponds, mountains, about the sea, if it is nearby, or directly envelops the city. Regarding all this, it is important to praise the fertile and pleasant things; this is what we are taught by the topic of the attribute appropriate for everything: namely, that the fields are fertile, rivers rich in fish and seaworthy, mountains covered with vine, and finally that there are many ships sailing in the sea”²⁵.

Bucoldianus goes on to mention that it is possible to indicate whether the city is close to the borders or in the center of a country, which the Greeks wrote extensively (*copiose*) about: “[...] especially the rhetorician Menander, who left a separate letter of praise. However, while writing about praising, he outlined the circumstances surrounding the location of the place, which is an inexhaustible topic; he did not even mention what should not have been overlooked – namely, what the common fortifications and the citizens’ buildings inside them are”²⁶.

Mundy, in his descriptions of both Gdańsk and Toruń, seems to make the most use of this part of the theory of rhetorical (praiseworthy) description. Here is the beginning of the description of Toruń from the ‘relation’ XXXIII of the Englishman: “Thorun [Thorn, Toruń] is a well contrived City and a pleasant place, Seated on the River Weessel [Weichsel, Vistula], walled round, Full off Turretts, 9 or 10 gates, Faire large straightt streetes, the best Councell house in all this Country [i.e. in Poland or Pomerania – B.A.], somewhat resembling an exchange, very large and high, 4 square, a space in the Middle, a lofty costly tower to itt”²⁷.

In accordance with the recommendations of Bucoldianus, we have here the emphasis on the good location of the city on the river, then the characteristics of the fortifications, the streets inside and the town hall building. The description of Gdańsk, which starts with, as I underlined earlier, the comparison of its size and location with London, has a slightly more free layout:

²⁵ G. BUCOLDIANUS, op.cit., p. 93: “Deinde dicendum erit de agris, qui adiacent: de fluminibus, stagnis, piscinis, montibus, ipsoque mari, si aut uicinum est, aut urbem alluit. In ijs autem omnibus ea, quae fructuosa amoenaque sunt, laudibus uehenda esse idem qui omnium, adiunctorum nos locus admonet. Siquidem agros fertiles, fluuios piscosos, nauigabilesque, montes uitibus consitos, tum mare nauibus frequentatum”. English trans. by Agnieszka Chabros.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 93–94: “praesertim Menander rhetor, qui de laude seorsum scripta reliquit. Verum dum hic in laudando ex loci positione circumstantias, quod infinitum est, studiose prosequitur, eorum quae omitti minime debuissent, quae uidelicet publicae munitiones, interiorque ciuium structura esset, ne meminit quidem”. English trans. by Agnieszka Chabros. See more about the chapter in B. B. AWIANOWICZ, „*Urbes laudandi ratio*”, pp. 26–28.

²⁷ *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. 4, p. 99.

having assessed the location and size of the city Mundy characterizes “Streets and houses”, but before the description of “The Citty wall” and the Great Armory (“Zeugh-hause or munition house”)²⁸ he mentions the denominations of the inhabitants of Gdańsk and provides a description of St. Mary’s Church (“Pffarre kerke”), which is only partly a formal ekphrase, as the English traveler was interested first of all in two elements of the temple’s equipment; here, having presented the size of the church (slightly smaller than St. Paul’s Cathedral in London), he focuses almost entirely on the bells and clocks of the Gdańsk temple. Mundy returns to St. Mary’s Church in a further narrative to describe “The great Organs in the Pfarrekerke”²⁹. The extensive description of the Toruń bridge as the only Toruń accent in ‘relation’ XXXV³⁰ constitutes an analogous departure from the classical theory of description or praise of cities, which was very typical of the English traveller. This focus on selected objects is undoubtedly a very personal feature – Mundy describes exactly what he was interested in, regardless of the composition of the whole.

The personal feature of the Englishman can also be considered his greater, than recommended by Bucoldianus, concentration on the inhabitants of the described lands and cities. Therefore, Mundy extensively describes entertainment in Gdańsk (“Recreations in Dantzigh”); he notes the fact of English dramas being staged in the city (“English plaiers or commediens”) or depicts various types of people from Poland and Gdańsk to be found in the city³¹. He also adds his drawings to them³². This interest in the lives of people in Prussian cities rather than their architecture can also be seen in the detailed description of “A greatt faire”³³, i.e. the Fair of the Three Kings in Toruń; it is longer than the description of the entire city, and shorter only than the description of the bridge in the ‘relation’ XXXV.

The remarks presented here on the descriptions of Gdańsk and Toruń, written by Peter Mundy, confronted with one of the most extensive and at the same time very widely available ekphrasis of city descriptions, lead to the conclusion that the English traveller was probably aware of this theory. Especially the beginning of Toruń’s characteristics is faithful to the order recommended by Bucoldianus: location – fortifications – buildings inside the walls. Mundy, however, as an author not limited by the convention of occasional writing, left

²⁸ See *ibid.*, pp. 170–172.

²⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 186.

³⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 196–197.

³¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 177–179, 181–182, 190–192.

³² See *ibid.*, board X, ill. 11.

³³ See *ibid.*, pp. 100–101.

a strong individual mark on his descriptions; he focused on the buildings and objects he was interested in – especially those in which, as in the case of the Gdańsk organs or the Toruń bridge, he observed interesting technical solutions; he also concentrated on the customs of the population, which he usually describes without evaluative comments.

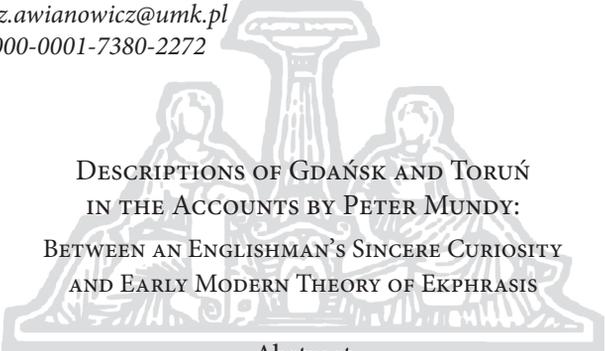
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DESCRIPTIONS OF GDAŃSK AND TORUŃ
IN THE ACCOUNTS BY PETER MUNDY:
BETWEEN AN ENGLISHMAN'S SINCERE CURIOSITY
AND EARLY MODERN THEORY OF EKPHRASIS

Abstract

Key words: Peter Mundy, Gerard Bucoldianus, Gdańsk, Toruń, rhetoric, ekphrasis, travel literature, curiosity

Peter Mundy (1596 – ca. 1667), one of the most representative English travellers of his period, visited Gdańsk (Danzig) and Toruń (Thorn) in 1640 and 1642 and described these cities in his *Relations*. The article includes deliberations concerning Mundy's descriptions of the two most important cities in Royal Prussia in the context of early modern theory of ekphrasis and the eulogy of the city, represented especially by manuals of preliminary exercises in rhetoric (*progymnasmata*) and chapters from *De inventione et amplificatione oratoria* by Gerard Bucoldianus included in Reinhard Lorich's *Scholia* attached to his edition of Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata*, one of the most popular rhetoric books in the second half of 16th and in 17th centuries. The analysis of the structure and contents of Mundy's "relations" leads to the conclusion that the English traveller was aware of the early modern theory of description and eulogy of cities but, at the same time, his curiosity made him free to leave the theoretical rules aside and focus himself on interesting technical constructions ("The great Organs in the Pfarrekerke" in Gdańsk or the Toruń bridge) or customs of burghers ("execution of Justice" and "Recreations" in Gdańsk and "A greatt faire" in Toruń).

BESCHREIBUNGEN VON DANZIG UND THORN
IN DEN BERICHTEN VON PETER MUNDY.

ZWISCHEN DER EHRLICHEN NEUGIER EINES ENGLÄNDERS
UND DER FRÜHNEUZEITLICHEN EKPHRASIS-THEORIE

Abstract

Schlüsselwörter: Peter Mundy, Gerard Bucoldianus, Danzig, Thorn, Rhetorik, Ekphrasis, Reiseliteratur, Neugier

Peter Mundy (1596 – ca. 1667) war einer der repräsentativsten englischen Reisenden seiner Zeit. 1640 und 1642 besuchte er Danzig und Thorn und beschrieb beide Städte in seinen *Relations*. Der vorliegende Artikel enthält Überlegungen zu Mundys Beschreibungen der beiden wichtigsten Städte im Königlichen Preußen im Zusammenhang der frühneuzeitlichen Theorie der Ekphrasis und des Städtelobs, wie sie sich vor allem in Lehrbüchern mit Vorübungen zur Rhetorik (*progymnasmata*) und in Kapiteln aus *De inventione et amplificatione oratoria* von Gerald Bucoldianus finden. Diese sind enthalten in den *Scholia* von Reinhard Lorich, die seiner Ausgabe der *Progymnasmata* des Aptonios angefügt sind, einem der populärsten Bücher über Rhetorik in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. und im 17. Jahrhundert. Eine Analyse der Struktur und des Inhalts der *Relations* von Mundy führt zu dem Schluss, dass der englische Reisende von der Existenz der frühneuzeitlichen Theorie der Beschreibung und des Lobs von Städten wusste, dass seine Neugierde es ihm aber erlaubte, die theoretischen Regeln über Bord zu werfen und sich auf interessante technische Konstruktionen („The great Organs in the Pfarrekerke“ in Danzig und die Brücke in Thorn) oder auf die Gewohnheiten der Bürger („execucion of Justice“ und „Recreations“ in Danzig, aber auch „A greatt faire“ in Thorn) zu konzentrieren.

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