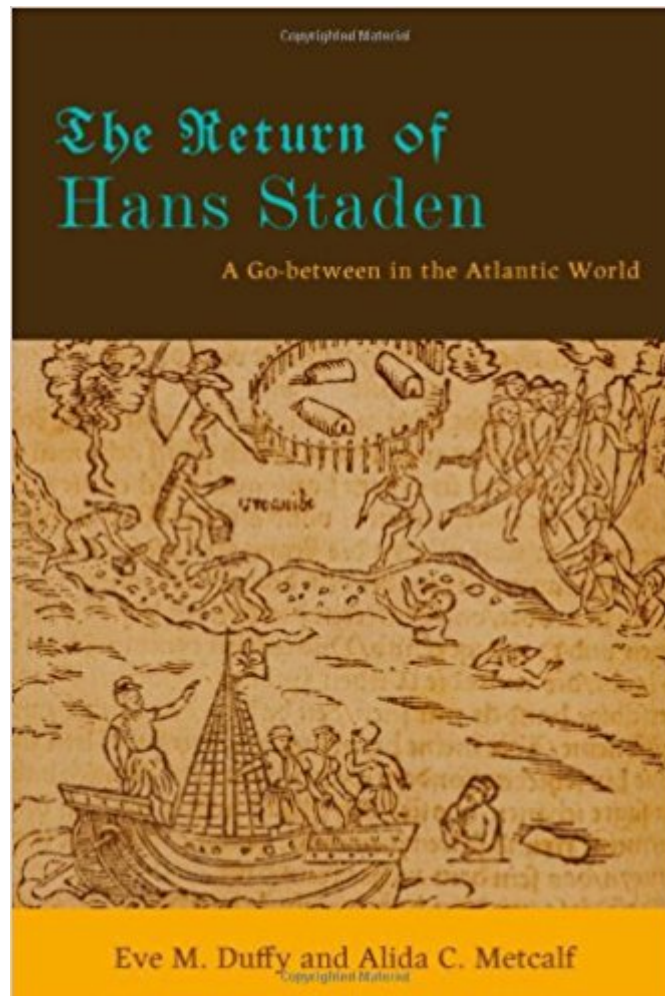




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# The Return Of Hans Staden: A Go-between In The Atlantic World



## Synopsis

Hans Staden's sixteenth-century account of shipwreck and captivity by the Tupinambá Indians of Brazil was an early modern bestseller. This retelling of the German sailor's eyewitness account known as the *True History* shows both why it was so popular at the time and why it remains an important tool for understanding the opening of the Atlantic world. Eve M. Duffy and Alida C. Metcalf carefully reconstruct Staden's life as a German soldier, his two expeditions to the Americas, and his subsequent shipwreck, captivity, brush with cannibalism, escape, and return. The authors explore how these events and experiences were recreated in the text and images of the *True History*. Focusing on Staden's multiple roles as a go-between, Duffy and Metcalf address many of the issues that emerge when cultures come into contact and conflict. An artful and accessible interpretation, *The Return of Hans Staden* takes a text best known for its sensational tale of cannibalism and shows how it can be reinterpreted as a window into the precariousness of lives on both sides of early modern encounters, when such issues as truth and lying, violence, religious belief, and cultural difference were key to the formation of the Atlantic world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This work has a broad appeal and should be of immediate interest to a wide variety of scholars and students. One of its best features is that it is readable while also very scholarly... This enjoyable text could be used very successfully with graduate students or undergraduates in an upper-division

class." (Timothy J. Coates *The Americas*)" *The Return of Hans Staden* is a useful book for students, a good way to acquire a first acquaintance with the worlds of a sixteenth-century Landsknecht and German conquistador on both side of the Atlantic." (Bernd J.W. Ludke *German History*)"Elegant... intriguing." (Mary Lindemann *The Coordinating Council for Women in History*)"Scholars of early images of the Americas and of cultural encounters, captivity, and oceanic expansion will find the material engaging." (Surekha Davies *William and Mary Quarterly*)

Eve M. Duffy is the director of the Program in the Humanities and Human Values at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Alida C. Metcalf is the Harris Masterson, Jr. Professor of History at Rice University and the author of *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*.

Fascinating

aces while a captive in Brazil. it does not. Rather, this study seems more like a doctoral dissertation which uses Staden's report as a starting point for dealing with that very interesting historical era.

I happened across this book, and knowing of but never reading about Hans Staden, I decided to read it. It does not contain Staden's account of captivity among the Indians in Brazil, it's an account of his life, the writing of the book and its impact and the power of the images (woodcuts) in the book in the formation of the European image of Brazil. It's really an academic study, but a highly readable one. Staden was a gunner from Hesse, who served on Portuguese, Spanish and French ships. He made two voyages to the Americas, the last going home on a French ship whose captain had ransomed him. His American experience about brackets the 1550s. One aspect of this book is the long-lasting academic debate about were the Tupi tribes cannibals? Staden says yes and describes cannibal ceremonies and how he narrowly escaped. Some scholars claim the accusation of cannibalism was a way for Europeans to justify taking Indian lands and enslaving Indians. Others claim that yes, cannibalism existed. The intro is a good overview of this on-going debate. This is a short book, and the reader will come away with a good understanding of Staden and the importance of his book--and the last chapter offers detail on its publishing and where the images came from. It can get complicated, as Staden was a Protestant (as was his town) amidst religious strife, so his book has a tone, apparently, of God's mercy in letting him escape. Staden's book has two parts (I have not read it yet) one relating his adventure and the other a kind of natural history.

This book provides fantastic insight of Hans Staden's experience as a captive in Brazil through a historical and critical lens.

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