Doctoral Dissertation for Defense

The Politics and Poetics of *Morbus Gallicus* in the German Lands (1495 - 1520)

by

IRINA SAVINETSKAYA

Supervisor: GERHARD JARITZ

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INTRODUCTION

Often referred to as a plague and sometimes the plague of the Renaissance, the French pox came into historical focus at the end of the fifteenth century and became immediately known as *morbus gallicus* (and its synonyms and vernacular equivalents) in the German lands. It was named differently in other countries: "le mal de Naples" in France, the Spanish disease in Holland and Portugal, the German disease in Poland, the Polish disease in Russia and the Portuguese disease in India, earning it the appellation of the "neighbor's disease."[1] The very term "syphilis" appeared only in the 1530s when Girolamo Fracastoro used it for the first time in his poem *Syphilis sive morbus gallicus*. It took a long time, however, for the new name to gain its current prevalence: *morbus gallicus* and its vernacular equivalents remained much more common in the German lands throughout the sixteenth century. This dissertation argues that the name and phenomenon of *morbus gallicus* was a composite of interconnected narratives of French-ness and German-ness from across various genres, which in addition to medical treatises included astrological, literary, polemical, and poetical works.

The name, *morbus gallicus*, was accorded to the disease by the confrontation between the French King Charles VIII and Maximilian I over Naples in 1494-1495. It was readily accepted by chroniclers and even though heated debates broke out in the medical community about the disease's "correct name," *morbus gallicus* and its vernacular variations remained the most popular designations of the disease in the period under study. The Neapolitan expedition of Charles VIII not only bestowed a name upon the disease, but also influenced the medical discussions of its causes. An overwhelming majority of authors dealt with in this dissertation regarded *morbus gallicus* as the disease of another people, the French, from whom (but –

[1] Herfried Münkler, Hans Grünberg and Kathrin Mayer, *Nationenbildung: die Nationalisierung Europas im Diskurs humanistischer Intellektueller: Italien und Deutschland* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1998), 160; Stefan Winkle, *Geisseln der Menschheit: Kulturgeschichte der Seuche* (Düsseldorf: Artemis & Winkler, 1997), 547-548.

importantly – not necessarily by) it spread to the German lands and other countries. They repeatedly presented *morbus gallicus* as God's punishment for the acts of disobedience of Charles VIII towards Emperor Maximilian I. Explanations of its astrological and humoral causes also pointed to the French as the first targets of the disease. In non-medical texts, *morbus gallicus* was often employed as a topos of French-ness or foreignness, and used to wage attacks on goods and practices that were deemed morally corrupt, as well as to define the normative German-ness.

France, the country after which the disease was named, played the role of one of the most important "archetypical Others"[2] for the formation of German late medieval national identities, comparable only to that of Rome.[3] Having emerged at a time marked by an increase in attempts to define what it meant to be "German," *morbus gallicus* was soon incorporated into the formation of German identites which were defined in anthithesis to the imagined French-ness. The rediscovery of writings of Antiquity and their reintroduction into the learned culture, along with the wars of Emperor Maximilian I abroad and his ambitions as a universal ruler, all framed *morbus gallicus* as a foreign disease, a symbol of all things French and foreign troubling the German lands.

As this dissertation demonstrates, the association between the French and this new disease was maintained in a variety of genres, including medical treatises, literary and poetical works, chronicles, and astrological prognostications and relied upon existing perceptions of

[2] Len Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity: Authority and Crisis, 1245-1414* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 374. Hirschi examined the bearing of perceptions of Italy and France on German self-fashioning in Caspar Hirschi, *Wettkampf der Nationen: Konstruktionen einer deutschen Ehrgemeinschaft an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005), 326-347. For a different perspective on relations between the French and Germans as cultural and political allies, see Jean-Marie Moeglin, *Kaisertum und allerchristlichster König 1214 bis 1500* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2010).

[3] See, for example, Kurt Stadtwald, *Roman Popes and German Patriots: Antipapalism in the Politics of the German Humanist Movement from Gregor Heimburg to Martin Luther* (Geneva: Droz, 1996); Helmut Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400-1600* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

French-ness and German-ness. Thus, *morbus gallicus* was a palimpsest[4] of intertextual narratives of German-ness and French-ness. The lack of contemporary discussions of the name of the English sweating sickness, yet another "national" illness, a respiratory disease which swept across the German lands in the late 1520s[5] and which, unlike the French pox, was lethal,[6] is another indication that the French pox represents a seminal case.

Despite the importance of *morbus gallicus* for the formation of German national identities, its role in late medieval narratives of French-ness and German-ness has escaped scholarly focus.[7] My dissertation aims to fill this gap by examining how German medical and non-medical writers in the first decades since its outbreak framed the French-ness of *morbus gallicus* with the help of explanations of its origins and causes.

Review of scholarship

The first scholarly publications on the history of the French disease appeared in the early twentieth century and were aimed at answering two major questions: where did the disease come from and when did it appear in Europe for the first time.[8] Karl Sudhoff (1876-

[4] The notion was proposed by Jonathan G. Harris. He defines *morbus gallicus* as "a textual palimpsest that splices together many strands of discourse – strands that include not only the physiological and the pathological, but also the religions and the economic." Jonathan G. Harris, "Po(X) Marks the Spot: How to 'Read' 'Early Modern' 'Syphilis' in *The Three Ladies of London*," in *Sins of the Flesh: Responding to Sexual Disease in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Kevin Siena (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2011): 110-111.

[5] John L. Flood has recently published a detailed bibliography of early modern treatises on the subject: John L. Flood, "Englischer Schweiß und deutscher Fleiß. Ein Beitrag zur Buchhandelsgeschichte des 16. Jahrhunderts," in *The German Book in Wolfenbüttel and Abroad. Studies Presented to Ulrich Kopp in his Retirement*, ed. William A. Kelly & Jürgen Beyer (Tartu: University of Tartu Press, 2014), 119–178.

[6] Paul Albert Russell, "Syphilis, God's Scourge or Nature's Vengeance?: The German Printed Response to a Public Problem in the Early Sixteenth Century," *Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte* 80 (1989): 303.

[7] Contrary to Healy's remarks about the field of the French disease that "it rapidly became so well colonized that it might be difficult to see what is new to be said in 2011." See Margaret Healy, "The Body in Renaissance Studies," *Renaissance Studies* 25/5 (2011): 718.

[8] For an overveiw of scholarship, see Jon Arrizabalaga, John Henderson, and Roger French, *The Great Pox: The French Disease in Renaissance Europe* (New Heaven, Conn.: Yale Univeristy Press, 1997), 1-19; Claudia Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox in Early Modern Germany*, trans. Franz Steiner (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) 7-14; Siena, "Introduction."

1938), the metaphorical "founding father of medical history,"[9] as well as the literal founder of the Leipzig Institute for the History of Medicine (renamed *Karl-Sudhoff-Institut* in 1938) and of the journal *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* (*Sudhoff-Archiv* since 1922), argued that the disease had been known in the Old World since Antiquity under various different names,[10] an opinion shared by Karl Johann Proksch (1840-1923), a specialist in skin diseases from Vienna.[11] Proksch's and Sudhoff's view was contested by a German dermatologist and theoretician of the new science of sexuality (*Sexualwissenschaft*) Iwan Bloch (1872-1922).[12] Bloch considered "syphilis" to be unknown prior to the Renaissance and believed that Columbus had brought it to Europe from the Americas.[13] The next most comprehensive work on the history of venereal disease did not appear until the 1980s, during the AIDS epidemic. Claude Quétel's *Le mal de Naples, Histoire du Syphilis*[14] offers an overview of the history of "syphilis" starting from the 1490s to the 1980s, but the period that mostly interests me is covered only in the first chapter. *The Great Pox*, an invaluable study by Jon Arrizabalaga, John Henderson, and Roger French[15] marked a shift from seeing the French pox as part of the long

[9] Thomas Rütten, "Karl Sudhoff and 'the Fall' of German Medical History," in *Locating Medical History: The Stories and their Meanings*, ed. Frank Huisman, John Harley Warner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004): 96.

[10] Sudhoff considered the French pox a typhoid infection. He summarizes his views on the origins of the disease in: Karl Sudhoff, *Graphische und Typographische Erstlinge der Syphilis-Literatur aus den Jahren 1495 und 1496* (München: C. Kuhn, 1912). For a bibliography of Sudhoff's writings on "syphilis," see Grete Hochmuth, "Systematisches Verzeichnis der Arbeiten Karl Sudhoffs: Nachtrag für die Jahre 1898-1933" in *Sudhoffs Archiv* 27 (1934), 131-186; Grete Hochmuth and Rudolph Zaunick, "Bibliographie Karl Sudhoff: Nachtrag für die Jahre 1933-1938," *Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften* 31/6 (November 1938), 343-344.

[11] Johann Karl Proksch in *Österreichisches Bibliographisches Lexikon* 8 (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1983), 303-304; Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 8-10. Proksch's *Die Litteratur über die Venerischen Krankheiten* remains the most comprehensive bibliography of writings on the French pox from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. See Johann Karl Proksch, *Die Litteratur über die Venerischen Krankheiten* (Bonn: Verlag von Peter Hanstein, 1889). Also see Idem, *Die Geschichte der Venerischen Krankheiten; eine Studie* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1895).

[12] Murray J. White, "The Legacy of Iwan Bloch (1872-1922)" in *New Zealand Journal of Psychology* 1/1 (1972): 25-29; Stein, *Negotiating the Great Pox*, 8-9.

[13] Iwan Bloch, *Ursprung der Syphilis: eine Medizinische und Kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Jena: Fischer, 1901-11), 2 vols. Particularly vol. 2: *Kritik der Lehre von der Altertumssyphilis*.

[14] Claude Quétel, *Le mal de Naples: histoire du syphilis* (Paris: P. Seghers, 1986). Translated to English in 1990: Claude Quétel, *The History of Syphilis*, trans. Judith Braddock and Brian Pike (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990).

[15] Arrizabalaga, Henderson, and French, *The Great Pox*. The authors focus mostly on the French pox in Italy; only one chapter is dedicated to "the case of Germany." Also see on the French pox in the German lands by the

history of syphilis to distinguishing between the two. Claudia Stein's *Negotiating the French Pox* continued the methodological approach of separating the histories of the French pox and syphilis, and was the first book dedicated specifically to German early modern treatises of the French pox. She combined that analysis with the examination of hospital records at Augsburg, defining her goal as the reconstruction of "the negotiated 'reality' of the pox."[16] Stein focuses on ten vernacular treatises on the French disease published in the German lands between 1496 and 1620, including the vernacular treatises by Joseph Grünpeck, Alexander Seitz, and Ulrich von Hutten, analysed in this dissertaiton. In the German context, the writings on the French disease by Joseph Grünpeck,[17] Ulrich von Hutten,[18] and Dirk van Ulsen,[19] as well as the debate

same authors: Roger French, "The Arrival of the French Disease in Leipzig," in *Maladies et société: (XIIe-XVIIIe siècles): Actes du colloque de Bielefeld, Novembre 1986*, ed. Neithard Bulst (Paris: Editions du CNRS., 1989), 133–41; Roger French and Jon Arrizabalaga, "Coping with the French Disease: University Practitioners Strategies and Tactics in the Transition from the Fifteenth to the Sixteenth Century," in *Medicine from the Black Death to the French Disease*, ed. Roger French (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 248–287; Jon Arrizabalaga, "Medical Responses to the 'French Disease' in Europe at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century," in *Sins of the Flesh*, 33–55.

[16] Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 176. Published first in German: Claudia Stein, *Die Behandlung der Franzosenkrankheit in der Frühen Neuzeit am Beispiel Augsburgs* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003). Also see: eadem, "The Meaning of Signs: Diagnosing the French Pox in Early Modern Augsburg," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 80 (2006), 617–648; eadem, "Der Leipziger Streit (1497-1501) über die Ursachen der Franzosenkrankheit und ihre Behandlung im Augsburger Blatterhaus," in ed. Stefan Oehmig, *Medizin und Sozialwesen in Mitteldeutschland zur Reformationzeit* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2007), 156-178.

[17] Russell, "Syphilis, God's Scourge or Nature's Vengeance?"; Idem, "Astrology as Popular Propaganda. Expectations of the End in the German Pamphlets of Joseph Grünpeck (1533?)," *Forme e destinazione del messaggio religioso: aspetti della propaganda religiosa nel cinquecento*, ed. Antonio Rotondò (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1991): 165-195; Darin Hayton, "Astrology as Political Propaganda: Humanist Responses to the Turkish Threat in Early-Sixteenth-Century," *Austrian History Yearbook* 38 (2007), 61-91; "Joseph Grünpeck's Astrological Explanation of the French Disease," in *Sins of the Flesh: Responding to Sexual Disease in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Kevin Siena (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 81–108; Idem, *The Crown and the Cosmos: Astrology and Politics of Emperor Maximilian I* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), chapter 3.

[18] Michael Peschke, *Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523) als Kranker und als medizinischer Schriftsteller* (Cologne: Instituts für Geschichte der Medizin der Universität Köln, 1985); Wolf-Dieter Müller-Jahncke, "Die Krankheit aus dem Gestirn. Syphilis und Astrologie" in *Ulrich von Hutten 1488-1988. Akten des Internationalen Ulrichs-von-Hutten Symposions 15.-17. Juli 1988 in Schlüchtern*, ed. Stephan Füssel (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1989): 117-127; Thomas G. Benedek, "The Influence of Ulrich von Hutten's Medical Descriptions and Metaphorical Use of Medicine," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 66/3 (1992): 355–375; Lewis Jillings, "The Aggression of the Cured Syphilitic: Ulrich von Hutten's Projection of His Disease as Metaphor," *The German Quarterly* 68/1 (1995): 1-18.

[19] Raimund Kemper, "Zur Syphilis-Erkrankung des Conrad Celtis, zum 'Vaticinium' Ulsens und zum sog. 'Pestbild' Dürers," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 59 (1977); Catrien Santing; *Geneeskunde en humanisme: een intellectuele biografie van Theodericus Ulsenius (c. 1460-1508)* (Rotterdam: Erasmus, 1992); eadem, "Medizin und Humanismus: die Einsichten des Nürnbergischen Stadtarztes Theodericus Ulsenius über Morbus Gallicus," *Sudhoffs Archiv* 79/2 (1995): 138-149.

over the causes of the French pox in Leipzig in late fifteenth century[20] have received particular attention in the past decades, as have responses of public institutions to the French pox in the early modern German lands.[21]

The national aspect of the French pox has not gone unnoticed. According to the medical historian Owsei Temkin, "syphilis was not the only disease to be named after neighbouring lands, but with no other did this occur to such a pronounced degree. And this, I think, is no accident. These names express a national hatred unthinkable in a time without national consciousness."[22] His thoughts are echoed by Susan Sontag in her seminal essay "AIDS and its Metaphors." Sontag regards syphilis as one of a whole group of epidemic diseases (along with leprosy and later AIDS), characterized by similar distinct metaphors. According to her, early perceptions of the French pox were similar to those of AIDS, particularly its metaphor of "collectively invasive" and blame for immoral behavior of sufferers from the disease.[23]

Since Sontag, a number of scholars have studied the French disease in the light of discussions of "self" and "other," focusing primarily on England, Italy, and Spain. Scholars of Early Modern England have produced the largest amount of works on the subject.[24] Winfried

[20] Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 90-97; Vivian Nutton, "Medicine at German Universities," in *Medicine from the Black Death to the French Disease*, ed. Roger French et al. (Aldershot, Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), 85-110; Helmut Schlereth, *Martin Pollich von Mellrichstadt (geb. um 1455, gest. 1513) und sein Streit mit Simon Pistoris über den Ursprung der "Syphilis"* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001); Stein, "Der Leipziger Streit."

[21] Robert Jütte, "Syphilis and Confinement: Hospitals in Early Modern Germany," in *Institutions of Confinement: Hospitals, Asylums, and Prisons in Western Europe and North America, 1500-1950*, ed. Norbert Finzsch and Robert Jütte (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 97-115; Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, Chapters 2 and 4; Annemarie Kinzelbach, "Infection, Contagion, and Public Health in Late Medieval and Early Modern German Imperial Towns," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 61/3 (2006), 369-389; Melanie Linöcker, *Der Unzucht und Lastern derbey entspringende Krankheit. Syphilis und deren Bekämpfung in der Frühen Neuzeit am Beispiel des Wiener Bürgerspitals St. Marx* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2008).

[22] Owsei Temkin, "Syphilis and Morality," in *The Double Face of Janus and Other Essays in the History of Medicine by Owsei Temkin* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977), 473.

[23] Susan Sontag, *Aids and its Metaphors* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux 1988), 45.

[24] As they have on the metaphor of the French disease in English Early Modern literature in general. See Greg Bentley, *Shakespeare and the New Disease: the Dramatic Function of Syphilis in* Troilus and Cressida, Measure for Measure, *and* Timon of Athens (New York: Peter Lang, 1989); Johannes Fabricius, *Syphilis in Shakespeare's England* (London; Bristol: Jessica Kingsley, 1994); Raymond A. Anselment, *The Realms of Apollo: Literature and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Newark, London, Cranbury: University of Delaware Press; Associated University Presses, 1995), esp. chapter 4; Jonathan Gil Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Schleiner,[25] Margaret Healy,[26] Kevin Siena,[27] Christi Sumich,[28] and Louis F. Qualitiere together with William W. E. Slights[29] have examined medical as well as polemical and literary texts and established that women were often treated as a source of contagion and threat to the body politic in Elizabethan England. Jonathan Gil Harris added Jews, Catholics and "witches" to the list[30] and also examined the use of the French disease in discussions on national trade in early modern England, arguing that the French disease was perceived as "an exotic and dangerous commodity" – an influence of the development of international trade, he believes.[31]

Roze Hentschell, in her analysis of English sixteenth- and early-seventeenth medical texts and satire, concluded that the fear of the French disease "translated into a biting, inflated xenophobic rhetoric intent on vilifying the French, especially, and other Catholic countries, in order to distance the English from associations with the new disease," and as such "contributed to early modern English nation formation."[32] The CNRS-funded five-year long research project "Representing France and the French Database Project" produced two articles on "syphilis" in the context of cultural tensions between England and France.[33]

Press, 1998), esp. chapters 2 and 3; Idem, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare's England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Margaret Healy, *Fictions of Disease in Early Modern England: Bodies, Plagues and Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Colin Milburn, "Syphilis in Faerie Land: Edmund Spenser and the Syphilography of Elizabethan England," *Criticism* 46/4 (2004): 597–632.

[25] Winfried Schleiner, "Infection and Cure through Women: Renaissance Constructions of Syphilis," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 24/3 (1994): 499-517; Idem, "Moral Attitudes towards Syphilis and its Prevention in the Renaissance," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 68 (1994): 398-410; Idem, *Medical Ethics in the Renaissance* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1995), chapters 5-6.

[26] Healy, *Fictions of Disease*.

[27] Kevin Siena, "Pollution, Promiscuity, and the Pox: English Venereology and the Early Modern Medical Discourse on Social and Sexual Danger," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 8/4 (1998): 553–574; idem, "The 'Foul Disease' and Privacy: The Effects of Venereal Disease and Patient Demand on the Medical Marketplace in Early Modern London," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 75/2 (2001): 199-224; idem, *Venereal Disease, Hospitals, and the Urban Poor; London's "Foul Wards," 1600-1800* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004).

[28] Christi Keating Sumich, *Divine Doctors and Dreadful Distempers: How Practicing Medicine Became a Respectable Profession* (New York, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013).

[29] Louis F. Qualtiere, William W. E. Slights, "Contagion and Blame in Early Modern England: The Case of the French Pox," *Literature and Medicine* 22/1 (2003): 1–24.

[30] Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic*.

[31] Harris, *Sick Economies*, 17.

[32] Roze Hentschell, "Luxury and Lechery: Hunting the French Pox in Early Modern England," in *Sins of the Flesh*, ed. Siena, 153.

[33] See Frédérique Fouassier, "The 'French Disease' in Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama," in *Representing France and the French in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. Jean-Christophe Mayer (Newark: University of

Although Arrizabalaga, French, and Henderson do not specifically focus on the national aspect of the French pox in their monograph, they make some important conclusions, that have influenced my thinking about the French disease. In their words, "…disasters like epidemics always come from somewhere else: from another world, indeed, either the celestial or the New World; more directly from another nation or state, the 'French', 'Neapolitan' and Ethiopian sources of the disease; from an ethnic group – the Jews – who might be closer to home but who behaved like foreigners; and finally from people who shared everything but gender with the writer."[34] As they show in their book, Italian and Spanish medical writers often attached the blame for spreading the French pox in local communities to the Jews and Arabs.

Anna Foa highlighted the role of Jews and native Americans in theories of the origins of the pox in Early Modern Italy,[35] stressing its intrinsic foreignness: "one thing is immediately clear: syphilis was always a disease/evil (*male*) that came from the outside – from a neighboring country or, better yet, from the country of the enemy."[36] William Eamon examined the a treatise on the French pox by an Italian physician Leonardo Fioravanti published in 1561, in which Fioravanti blamed the French pox on the practice of canibalism among the French and Italian armies during the siege of Naples in 1494. According to Eamon, Fioravanti's theory should be seen in the context of anxieties about the dangers of the New World.[37] Finally, Laura McGough investigated perceptions of venereal disease in Early Modern Venice that pointed to Jews, foreigners, prostitutes, and non-married women in general as transmitters of the French

Delaware Press, 2008), 193-205; Anthina Efstathio-Lafabre, "'False Frenchmen' in Richard Brome's Plays," in Ibid., 207-222.

[34] Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 52. And on page 12: "As in the outbreak of AIDS... the question of the source of the disease is partly a cultural one, rising almost to xenophobic belief that disease always comes from elsewhere."

[35] Anna Foa, "The New and the Old: The Spread of Syphilis (1494-1530)," in *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective*, ed. Guido Ruggiero and Edward Muir (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990): 26–45.

[36] Foa, "The New and the Old," 26.

[37] William Eamon, "Cannibalism and Contagion: Framing Syphilis in Counter-Reformation Italy," *Early Science and Medicine* 3/1 (1998), 1–31.

pox. As she demonstrated, the confinement of Venetian women in hospitals was a manifestation of anxieties that these women were putting the body politic of Venice at risk.[38]

With the exception of a fascinating chapter in Bethany Wiggin's *Novel Translations* that explores the metaphors of the French disease in the late seventeenth – early eighteenth century German literature,[39] the national component of the French disease in the German lands has remained out of focus from important studies on perceptions of French-ness in the German lands, just as it has received little attention in the works on German nationalistic thought. Thus, Caspar Hirschi mentions the disease only in a footnote,[40] and it is given two pages in Münkler's, Grünberger's and Mayer's *Nationenbildnung* with recognition, nevertheless, that *morbus gallicus* was a "topoi of national identity."[41]

As a result of a lack of interest in the "neighborly aspect" of the French disease, its nomenclature is often treated merely as an "instinct"[42] or a peculiar anecdote of history. When touched upon at all, the French-ness of *morbus gallicus* is often explained through the default stereotype of a sexually corrupt Frenchman. Thus, Ruth Florack writes in her survey of the image of the French: "The repertoire of stereotypes also derives from (or invokes) real historical details which distinguish the one people from the other: from the moment the first case of syphilis crops up in the French army round and about 1500, it is defined as the 'morbus gallicus' in Europe; even Luther talks of the 'French' when he refers to the dreaded disease. This does not come as a surprise: anything French is often associated with sexual liberty."[43]

[38] Laura J. McGough, *Gender, Sexuality, and Syphilis in Early Modern Venice: The Disease That Came to Stay* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); eadem, "Quarantining Beauty: the French Disease in Early Modern Venice," in *Sins of the Flesh*, ed. Siena, 211-237.
[39] Bethany Wiggin, *Novel Translations. The European Novel and the German Book, 1680-1730* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), chapter 2. Wiggin highlights the role of the French disease as integral to the perceptions of the French gallantry which she calls "a foil against which national identites were articulated in strict counterpoint." Ibid., 63.
[40] Hirschi, *Wettkampf der Nationen*, 282, n. 102. Hirschi also has a chapter entitled "Vaterlandsverrätter und Träger ausländischer 'Krankheiten'," which focuses on the "diseases" of robbery, foreign trade, and Roman law. See Ibid., 338-347.
[41] Münkler, Grünberg, Mayer, *Nationenbildung*, 160-161.
[42] Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 6.
[43] Ruth Florack, "French" in *Imagology*, ed. Bellers, Leerssen, 154-155.

Florack's sentences are problematic in several respects. First of all, we can hardly claim that the naming of the disease was associated with a factual truth of it being manifested first in the French army. If anything, it is a contested subject and had been a contested subject ever since its first alleged outbreak in Europe at the end of the fifteenth century, as this dissertation demonstrates. Martin Luther referring to the disease as "French" does not necessarily imply that he associated the disease with the "sexual liberty" of the French, but that he used the most popular denomination of the disease at the time. Florack's conclusion that the French disease received its name in connection with the stereotype of the "sexual liberty" of the French is misleading. As I argue in my dissertation, the framing of the disease as French in the first decades of the outbreak of the disease was much more about politics and broader notions of moral depravity than it was about sexuality.

Primary sources

My dissertation focuses on the period starting from the first references to *morbus gallicus* in the German sources in the 1490s and continuing until 1520; however, I also examine materials outside of this temporal framework. Owsei Temkin defined these decades as the first period in the history of "syphilis," based on the absence of a firm causal connection between the disease and sexual intercourse in the medical writings from that period.[44] Recently, Temkin's periodization has been re-affirmed by Arrizabalaga, Henderson, and French.[45]

Morbus gallicus came to be "French" through a variety of genres, "an eclectic soup of competing and complementary narratives," to apply Healy's metaphor.[46] Due to the interconnectedness of these narratives, I examine primary sources of different genres such as

[44] Temkin, "Syphilis and Morality," 474.
[45] Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 34-35.
[46] Healy, *Fictions of* Disease, 51.

medical treatises, poems, cosmographies, prognostications, chronicles, and treatises on natural philosophy.

Medical treatises devoted specifically to the French disease, published in the German lands between 1495 and 1520,[47] constitute the core of my medical primary sources. A great part of these writings were edited and published in 1843 by a professor of medicine at the University of Göttingen, Conrad Heinrich Fuchs (1803-1855).[48] I also explore references to the French disease both in other works by the authors of these treatises and in texts written by their contemporaries.

Skilled in the fields besides medicine, physicians framed the French disease not as an isolated medical phenomenon but as part of familiar cultural and political narratives. That is why I believe that medical and non-medical writings complement each other and need to be examined side by side. It is important to remember that in the studied period the line separating the medical profession from the humanities was much more fluid than it is nowadays. In the late fifteenth through the early sixteenth century, medical doctors found themselves increasingly engaged in humanist pursuits. A number of historians came to discount these medical authors who combined several occupations, regarding them medically non-professional.[49] However, in the curriculum of Italian universities, where the majority of the German medical doctors received their education, medical theory was considered a far more

[47] For a chronological list of published sources, see Proksch, *Die Litteratur über die Venerischen Krankheiten*, 6-11.

[48] Conrad Fuchs, *Die ältesten Schriftsteller über die Lustseuche in Deutschland, von 1495 bis 1510* (Göttingen: Verlag der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1843). This was the first scholarly edition of German medical writings on the French disease. It was preceded by a number of general collections of medical writings on the French pox, of which the most comprehensive was Christian Gottfried Gruner's *Aphrodisiacus, sive de Lue Venerea in duas partes divisus quarum altera continet eius vestigia in veterum auctorum monimentis obvia, altera quos Aloysius Luisinus temere omisit scriptores et medicos et historicos ordine chronologico digestos. Collegit notulis instruxit glossarium indicemque rerum memorabilium subiecit D. C. G. C.* (Jena: Apud Chr. Henr. Cunonis Heredes, 1789), 2 vols. For a discussion of Gruner's collection and earlier ones, see Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 4-8.

[49] Charles Singer, for example, called Grünpeck a "layman in Physic." Karl Sudhoff, *The Earliest Printed Literature on Syphilis: Being Ten Tractates from the Years 1495-1498*, trans. Charles Joseph Singer (Florence: Lier, 1925), xxiv. For the original publication, see Karl Sudhoff, *Zehn Syphilisdrucke aud den Jahren 1495-1498* (Milan: Lier, 1924).

prestigious occupation than medical practice.[50] To quote Nancy Siraisi, "traditional links between medicine and natural philosophy, the philosophical approach encouraged by medical humanism, emerging connections between medicine and natural history, and the interaction of physicians with political authorities all suggested directions in which intellectually ambitious men might pursue branches of learning that were not strictly medical yet were perceived by themselves and their contemporaries as not just compatible but appropriate for a medical career."[51]

Among the German medical writers treated in this dissertation, four were particularly influential in the humanist circles: Martin Pollich of Mellerstadt, Joseph Grünpeck, Theodoricus Ulsenius also known as Dirk van Ulsen, and Ulrich von Hutten. The Leipzig physician Martin Pollich of Mellerstadt (ca. 1450-1513) was not only the dean of the medical faculty at the university of Leipzig and the personal physician of Frederick the Wise, but also a Hellenist, the first rector of the Wittenberg University, and a prominent humanist. Called "lux mundi" by his contemporaries, he was a member of the Leipzig circle of the *Sodalitas litteraria Rhenana* of Conrad Celtis, which for some time took his name and was called *Sodalitas Polichyana*.[52]

Joseph Grünpeck (ca. 1473 – 1530) was another medical humanist whose diverse pursuits found their reflection in his writings on the French pox. Less than a year after the publication of the two treatises on the French disease, Grünpeck composed a Latin *festspiel* performed during one of the numerous visits of Emperor Maximilian I to Augsburg. It was published as part of the *Comoedie vtilissime, omnem latini sermonis elegantiam contientes. e*

[50] Charles B. Schmitt, "Aristotle Among the Physicians" in Andrew Wear, Roger K. French, Ian M. Lonie, *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 4-5: "...there was a pecking order: the logician at the bottom of the ladder, the natural philosopher above him, but physicians at the top, with *theoretici* being superior to *practici*."
[51] Nancy Siraisi, *History, Medicine, and the Traditions of Renaissance Learning* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 7.
[52] Nutton, "Medicine at German Universities," 85-110; Schlereth, *Martin Pollich von Mellrichstadt*, 178.

quibus quisque optimus latinus evadere potest (*"Very useful comedies that contain all the elegance of the Latin language, from which everybody can become a perfect Latinist"*)[53] and is considered the first German Neo-Latin festival play.[54] The *festspiel* is written in the form of a dispute between *Virtus* (Virtue) and *Fallacicaptrix* (Deceitful Huntress) at the court of a King (Maximilian). Just like Hercules in a famous tale ascribed to Prodicos of Ceos, Maximilian has to choose between Virtue and Vice. *Virtus* complains to him that *Fallacicaptrix* attempts to rule in all parts of the world, chasing *Virtus* away. She reminds the King that she has always been by his side helping, protecting and consoling him. One of such occasions was Maximilian's war with "the treacherous King of France" in which *Virtus* was his advisor. "And elsewhere I have never deserted you; [therefore] remove all the maliciousness from me today, [and] you shall obtain victory in all things and, finally, be victorious as long as the sky upholds the stars,"[55] she tells him. In the end, the King chooses "mi amantissima Virtus" and expels *Fallacicaptrix* from his kingdom. A little less than a year later, on 20 August 1498, Grünpeck was crowned *poeta laureatus* at the Imperial Diet in Freiburg, and became private secretary to Maximilian. As his secretary, Grünpeck worked on the biography of the emperor and his father Frederick III together with Johann Stabius, Maximilian's court scholar, and Albrecht Altdorfer.[56]

In 1501, Grünpeck performed in a play by Conrad Celtis, *Ludus Dianae* in front of the emperor and his wife Bianca Maria Sforza in Linz. Other actors were Celtis himself, the secretary of the Austrian chancellery, Petrus Bonomus and the physician Dirk van Ulsen.[57] Dirk van Ulsen (ca. 1460 – 1508) was born in Zwolle, but spent most of his life living in the

[53] Joseph Grünpeck, *Comoedie vtilissime, omnem latini sermonis elegantiam contientes. e quibus quisque optimus latinus evadere potest* (Augsburg: Hans Froschauer, [1497]).
[54] Cora Dietl, "Neo-Latin Humanist and Protestant Drama in Germany," in *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Jan Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland (Leiden: Brill, 2013): 132.
[55] Joseph Grünpeck, *Comoedie vtilissime*, C3 r-v.
[56] Larry Silver, *Marketing Maximilian: The Visual Ideology of a Holy Roman Emperor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 30, 41 et al.
[57] Albin Czerny, "Der Humanist und Historiograph Kaiser Maximilians I, Joseph Grünpeck," *Archiv für Osterreichische Geschichte* 73/2 (1888): 317; Flood, *Poets Laureate*, xc-xciii.

south of Germany. Having most likely studied in Italy, he was a refined intellectual, member of the literary circle of Conrad Celtis, and a friend of Hartmann Schedel – a fellow physician, resident of Nuremberg and the author of the famous *Weltchronik*. Ulsen also personally knew Albrecht Dürer.[58]

Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523) was not a physician, but his *De Guaiaci Medicina et Morbo Gallico Liber Unus* is the most researched early sixteenth-century German treatise on the French pox.[59] He was a prominent humanist, crowned poet laureate by Maximilian I, and the first "*Reichsritter*,"[60] who left a wealth of writings on all sorts of subjects.[61]

Other medical authors who are dealt with in this dissertation might not have been part of the humanist circles, but were active in areas outside of the medical domain. Alexander Seitz (1473-1544) composed moralistic treatises, dramas, and prognostications, and later became a proponent of the Reformation;[62] Lorenz Fries (1490-1531/32), in addition to medical works, published on the subjects of astrology, geography, bathing, and the art of memory.[63]

As my analysis of the medical texts from the period under study reveals, medical perceptions of *morbus gallicus* were formed by a variety of literary, religious, astrological, and polemical texts. Thus, in order to situate the disease in its historical context, I examine miscellaneous writings of various genres.

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[58] See Santing, "Medizin und Humanismus."
[59] Peschke, *Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523) als Kranker und als medizinischer Schriftsteller*; Benedek, "The Influence of Ulrich von Hutten's Medical Descriptions"; Lewis Jillings, "The Aggression of the Cured Syphilitic."
[60] John Flood, "Ulrich von Hutten"; Eobanus Hessus, *The Poetic Works of Helius Eobanus Hessus*, vol. 3: *King of Poets, 1514-1517*, ed. Harry Vredeveld (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 352-353.
[61] For a list of his works, see Flood, "Ulrich von Hutten."
[62] Julius Pagel, Johannes Bolte, "Seitz, Alexander," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 33 (1891), 653–655; Alexander Seitz, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 2: *Politische und Theologische Schriften, Monucleus Aureus, Briefe*, ed. Peter Ukena (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975); idem, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 3: *Tragedi vom Großen Abentmal*, ed. Peter Ukena (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969); David Lederer, "Alexander Seitz and the Medical Calling; Physic, Faith, and Reform," in *Ideas and Cultural Margins in Early Modern Germany. Essays in Honor of H. C. Erik Midelfort*, ed. Robin Barnes, Marjorie E. Plummer (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 183-199.
[63] Charles Schmidt, "Laurent Fries de Colmar, Médecin, Astrologue, Géographe à Strasbourg et à Metz," *Annales de l'Est. Revue trimestrielle publiée sous la direction de la Faculté des Lettres de Nancy* 4 (1890): 523–575; Karl Sudhoff, "Lorenz Fries" in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 49 (1904), 770-775; Ernest Wickersheimer, "Lorenz Fries," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 5 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1961), 609-610.

Approaches and notions

Body

The human body lies at the center of collective images and is essential to perceptions of self and other.[64] It is a microcosm of the social body and as such provides symbols for the expression of social experience, giving rise to the rhetoric of health of political or social entities.[65] Thus, the notions of disease and those of nationhood often feature side by side. In the words of Kevin Siena, "it was perhaps in discussions of nation that it [the French pox] performed its most elaborate and significant symbolic work. Because the body was a primary metaphor for nation, the urge to preserve a clean national body and the anxiety of possible infection from without gave sixteenth and seventeenth-century commentators a powerful discourse to help formulate early notions of national identity."[66]

Healy's book *Fictions of Disease* and Harris's works focusing on the role of disease in shaping the English national "body" have changed my perspective on the French disease and invited me to think of it, in the light of Douglas's theories, as a matter beyond the physical body. And so did Puff's and Rublack's writings, particularly Puff's findings that, in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, sexuality was (as it is today) "often used to control the boundaries between the pure and the impure, rights and wrongs, indigenous and the foreign"[67] and Rublack's analysis of the importance of dress for defining German-ness in early modern Germany, as "seen to mould a person and materialize identity."[68]

[64] Elena Agazzi, "Body" in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey*, ed. Manfred Beller, Joseph Theodoor Leerssen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 270-272. Also see Andreas Musolff, "Metaphor in History," in *Metaphor and Discourse*, ed. Andres Musolff and Joerg Zinken (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 70-90.
[65] Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology, with a New Introduction* (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), 77.
[66] Kevin Siena, "Introduction" in *Sins of the Flesh*, 15.
[67] Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany*, 7.
[68] Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 138.

Syphilis

Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, and Stein have warned against the methodological dangers of equating *morbus gallicus* with modern-day syphilis. Following their approach, in this dissertation I distinguish between syphilis and the French pox.[69] At the same time, I find it important to stress that the establishment of the physiological reality of *morbus gallicus* is not my goal, and I use *morbus gallicus* following its usage in the Later Middle Ages.

"National" and "German"

The use of the words "German" and "national" in relation to late medieval and early modern German material has been a subject of heated debates in the last several decades.[70] I have been most influenced by the following three recent studies on German late medieval national identities: *The Shaping of the German Identity* by Len Scales, *The Origins of Nationalism* by Caspar Hirschi, and Joachim Whaley's two-volume *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, all published in 2012. These three historians have independently concluded that late medieval German identities in Late Middle Ages were centered upon the figure of the emperor, despite his lack of authority compared to the French and English monarchs at the time.

Thus, in his meticulous analysis of German ceremonial records, legal documents, and polemical and literary sources from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, Scales notes that "German" was used in relation to the emperors, kings, electors and other princes, whereas the "triumphs and failures were understood as reflecting honour or shame upon the German people – a viewpoint which was applied particularly to deeds done beyond Germany's frontiers or in conflict with non-German neighbors."[71]

[69] Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great* Pox, 1-19; Siena, "Introduction," 12-13; Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 3-6; eadem, "'Getting' the Pox: Reflections of an Historian on How to Write the History of Early Modern Disease" in *Nordic Journal of Science and Technology Studies* 2/1 (2014), 53-60.
[70] For overviews of this subject, see Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity*, 8-52; Hirschi, *Wettkampf der Nationen*, 19-75 and 389-501. Also see Len Scales, "Identifying 'France' and 'Germany': Medieval Nation-Making in Some Recent Publications," *Bulletin of International Medieval Research* 6 (2000): 21-46.
[71] Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity*, 535.

In his second monograph after *Wettkampf der Nationen*, Hirschi crystallizes his view that "nationalism" was born not in the nineteenth century like the modernist nationalist theories claim, but in the fifteenth with the re-interpretation of classical ideas about political power and civic identity by Renaissance humanists. Touching upon Italian and French humanists, he particularly focuses on the German context. Hirschi reaches a conclusion, already foreshadowed in his first book, that the national discourse in the German lands was "mainly used to compensate the limited legal means of the Emperor to coerce subsidiary powers within the Empire into supporting his military campaigns outside of the Empire. Appeals to the national honor and patriotic duty were meant to raise the psychological pressure on princes and municipalities to contribute troops or money of their own volition."[72] The language of these appeals was eagerly adopted by humanists, who advocated for a competition with other nations (such as France and Italy) and, according to Hirschi, venerated Maximilian as the leader of the German nation.[73]

Joachim Whaley also highlights the role of the empire in generating the idea of "Germany." However, contrary to Scales, who traces the development of nationalist thought back to Alexander of Roes and Conrad of Megenberg, both Whaley and Hirschi date the emergence of German national rhetoric to the end of the fifteenth century. If, for Hirschi, the movement of German humanism and the rediscovery of ancient texts played a major role in this movement, for Whaley, it was the threat coming from the Ottoman Turks and the French: "The emergence of a Turkish threat in the east and of a Burgundian/French threat in the West generated the rhetoric of German national self-defense that introduced a new vocabulary into

[72] Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism: An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 102.
[73] Ibid., 155. Hirschi argues that "Maximilian did not even ask his humanist supporters to contribute to his own genealogical and literary projects of massive proportions" (Ibid.). However, as Larry Silver (whose works are absent from Hirschi's biography) demonstrated in his work, Maximilian I did employ a number of humanists directly to work on his projects of representational biographies, histories, etc, including Grünpeck. See Silver, *Marketing Maximilian.*

the language of imperial politics. At the same time, resistance to Habsburg ambitions in Italy defined another distinction between what was German on the one hand and 'Welsch' (Latin or Italian) on the other."[74]

I find it necessary to stress that in my dissertation, unlike Scales, Whaley, and Hirschi, I do not attempt to establish the extent to which the word "German" applied to any particular group. My primary concern lies with perceptions and images of German-ness in learned culture. When I am not using the term "German" as an indication of a birthplace (e. g., "a German astrologer"), I am employing it as a construct, one which is leaning on the pre-existing textual tradition and is negotiated against the image of external and internal "others" in the writings of the educated elites of the German lands. This construct was not in any way linear, but fluid and flexible. To quote Len Scales, "what late medieval Germans had to say about themselves appears self-contradictory, anxious, uncertain and incomplete."[75] Nevertheless, it was marked by certain distinct patterns, which I explore in the third chapter, and in which the French disease was part.

Auto- and hetero-image

The field of imagology has long been concerned with the study of national perceptions and stereotypes as "images," not visual or pictorial representations, but "attributions of moral or characterological nature."[76] Images are mimetic constructs, which follow representational conventions and general patterns regardless of any specific nation or culture. Auto-image or "self-image," then, refers "to a characterological reputation current within and shared by a group," whereas the hetero-image denotes "the opinion that others have about a group's purported character."[77] Images vary according to the proximity or the remoteness of the

[74] Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, vol. 1: *Maximilian I to the Peace of Westphalia, 1493-1648* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 54-55.
[75] Scales, *Shaping of German Identity*, 530.
[76] Joop Leerssen, "Image" in *Imagology*, ed. Bellers, Leerssen, 342. See other articles in the volume for an overview of the field of imagology.
[77] Ibid., 342-343.

"other," thus countries that present a threat of political or economic rivalry are usually described in negative terms, giving rise to xenophobia, while countries which do not pose any threat are represented in "pleasant" terms, evoking exoticism or xenophilia. Hetero-images of perceivably "superior" countries are accordingly infused with laudable as well as pejorative characteristics. The latter dynamic applied to the German auto-images and their hetero-images of the French. France was "at once an object of desire and derision,"[78] to use Homi Bhabha's metaphor. Accordingly, *morbus gallicus* was associated with luxury goods, which bore positive as well as negative characteristics.

Framing disease

Already in the first pages of the introduction I use the word "framing" in relation to the French disease. Following Charles E. Rosenberg's definition, I employ framing as the "fashioning of explanatory and classificatory schemes."[79] Names are central to "framing." In the words of Rosenberg, "in some ways disease does not exist until we have agreed that it does, by perceiving, *naming*, and responding to it."[80] As my analysis shows, *morbus gallicus* was not only the most popular name of the disease, but also acted as a "frame" for its causes and qualities all pointing to its intrinsic French-ness.

Description of chapters

In the first chapter I examine the nomenclature of the French pox in medical literature. Language and particularly names were essential in medieval medical epistemology, and the naming of the French disease was a primary matter of concern for the medical writers. The nomenclature was associated with several contested issues. First of all, was it a new or old disease? If it was an old disease, what was its "true" name? If it was a new disease, then what

[78] Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism" in *The Location of Culture* (London, New York: Routledge, 1994): 67.
[79] Rosenberg, "Framing Disease," in Idem, *Explaining Epidemics and Other Studies in the History of Medicine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 308.
[80] Ibid.

was its appropriate name? I begin with a short overview of the Neapolitan campaign of Charles VIII (1494-1495) and then move to the first reactions to the French pox in German medical and non-medical sources. I then focus on discussions of a "correct" name for the new disease in the medical literature, which occupy the largest part in the chapter.

The second chapter discusses the astrological, humoral, and theological causes of the French pox in medical treatises. For some authors, the name of the French pox constituted a framework in itself for explaining its causes and properties. Religious, astrological, and humoral explanations of the outbreak of the French pox to various degrees evoked the connection between the disease and the French. Some pointed to the disease being a punishment for the immoral behavior of the princes, who, because of their lack of support for Maximilian's campaigns against the French, prevented the emperor from fulfilling the tasks he was destined to fulfill as the emperor, that is, safeguarding of the peace and conquering the Turks and other infidels. Others held the French accountable for provoking God's wrath and thus causing the disease. The theme of "the children of the planets" helped to explain why the disease originated among the French for the first time. At the same time, the disease was absorbed into the prognostic tradition, with its familiar late medieval polemical narrative of the confrontation between the German emperor and the French king. The four-humor theory and medical theories of Paracelsus also accommodated the perception that the disease was not only named after the French, but also in fact originated among the French people.

The third chapter explores ways in which the French disease was absorbed into contemporary perceptions of French-ness and German-ness. Mediated through the narrative of the inborn innocence of the ancient and modern *Germani*, the French disease was seen as a foreign commodity and as a metaphor for moral corruption caused by the use of all things foreign. I begin by exploring the narratives of German-ness and French-ness in late medieval German texts and the ways in which they related to each other. I then move to discussions of

German-ness influenced by the rediscovery of Tacitus's *Germania*, and turn to perceptions of the French disease as a foreign commodity, which symbolizes moral decay. In the last part, I focus on the metaphor of the disease as an enemy, attacking the German body politic.

CHAPTER 1 | WHAT'S IN A NAME?

> "Composed as they are of letters, diseases have no other reality than the order of their composition. In the final analysis, their varieties refer to those few simple individuals, and whatever may be built up with them and above them is merely Name."[81]

Iwan Bloch counted more than 400 terms used for "syphilis" from the end of the fifteenth until the end of the nineteenth century in the Old World, noting that no other disease had ever been called by such an array of names.[82] The list of these names in his monograph is nearly 30 pages long.[83] The four majors types of the disease's denominations are names after the saints (the disease of St. Job, the disease of St. Sementus, the disease of St. Mevennus); after the body parts the disease affected (for example, *mentulagra* – a disease of the *mentula* or penis), after manifestations of the disease on the body (*purpelln*, scabies, etc.), and after geographical locations labeled as 'syphilis''s early modern "patients A" (*morbus gallicus* or the French disease, the Neapolitan disease, the Spanish sickness, etc.). For Bloch, the appearance of the name "morbus gallicus" in the 1490s, meant that it had not been known in Europe before that.[84]

Bloch recognized *morbus gallicus* and its Latin and vernacular equivalents as the most popular name of the disease in the first decades of its outbreak in the German lands and in Italy.[85] This denomination was tied to a political event, the invasion of Italy by the troops of Charles VIII, the king of France (1483-1498) in 1494-95. The causal connection between the Neapolitan campaign of Charles VIII and the German king Maximilian's anti-French campaign was repeated and discussed in contemporary medical writings and non-medical sources alike.

[81] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage/Random House, 1994), 118.
[82] Bloch, *Der Ursprung der Syphilis*, vol. 1, 61.
[83] Ibid., 58-97.
[84] Ibid., 61.
[85] Ibid., 63.

The majority of the latter readily assumed this causal connection, while medical authors often disagreed with this denomination, dismissing it as "popular." Originally from a non-medical vocabulary, *morbus gallicus* had to be negotiated by medical professionals before it became widely accepted in the medical milieu. Certainly, not all medical authors found it necessary to elaborate on the issue of the disease's nomenclature in their treatises, but those who did so had strong reasons, which had to do with their medical allegiances, cultural perceptions, and even political aspirations. Despite the objection made using the name *morbus gallicus* in relation to the disease, it remained its most widespread denomination in the German context in the medical as well as non-medical literature.

Given the importance of the nomenclature of the French pox, I have chosen to devote a whole chapter to the name *morbus gallicus* and other alternative names of the disease. My major interest is in the ways of adoption of the name by German medical authors in the first decades since its alleged arrival to the German lands. I begin with a short description of the Italian campaign of 1494-1495 and its reception by contemporaries in the Italian states and the German lands. I then move to the usages of *morbus gallicus* and its Latin and vernacular equivalents (*morbus francus, morbus francicus, böse Franzos, Franzosen, mala Franzosen, Franzosenkrankheit*, etc.) in the late medieval German medical literature with a particular focus on discussions of the origins and meaning of the name. As I show, the naming of new diseases was taken seriously by medical authors, since they expected names to convey facts about the malady's essence or/and causes and, at the same time, remain faithful to the medical tradition. I particularly focus on the Leipzig debate, which stands out among other medical disputations since the issue of the disease's nomenclature was one of the central points of controversy. Due to the fact that the Leipzig debate began as a response to a similar dispute in Ferrara, the latter will be touched upon here as well. I then analyze other early reactions to the

name *morbus gallicus*, which ranged from indifference to cheerful enthusiasm, and reasoning behind rejecting or favoring the name *morbus gallicus*.

The Neapolitan expedition of Charles VIII

On 29 August 1494, Charles VIII left Paris to claim his ancestral right to the Kingdom of Naples at the head of an army, which consisted of Flemish, Gascon, Swiss, Italian and Spanish mercenaries. Charles had claim to the Neapolitan throne through his grandmother, Marie of Anjou of the Angevin dynasty that ruled in the Kingdom of Naples from 1265 to 1435. Charles began planning an Italian invasion already in the early 1490s, after Pope Innocent VIII had excommunicated and deposed King Ferdinand I of Naples. The latter's sudden death on 25 January 1494 accelerated Charles's projects. On September 9, the French, via Savoy, entered the town of Asti which was under the rule of Charles VIII's cousin Louis, duke of Orleans. In nearly half a year, on 22 February 1495, the French troops, via Florence and Rome (where Charles stayed for a month at the beginning of 1495), arrived at Naples and conquered it in about three weeks. Charles VIII intended to remain there until the summer of 1495.[86]

Meanwhile, Italian states were mobilizing against the French king. On 31 March 1495, their efforts resulted in the foundation of the League of Venice aimed at protecting signatory Italian states from acts of aggression by rulers with authority over any Italian states. The league included Emperor Maximilian I, Pope Alexander VI, Ferdinand of Aragon, Ludovico of Milan, Venice and the King of England. On 12 May 1495, Charles VIII made his formal entry into Naples and left it eight days later, heading north by land. The combined forces of the League

[86] Leopold von Ranke, *History of the Latin and Teutonic nations (1494 to 1514)*, trans. Dennis George Ravenscroft (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1909), 29-61; Hermann Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I., das Reich, Österreich und Europa an der Wende zur Neuzeit*, vol 2: *Reichsreform und Kaiserpolitik, 1493-1500: Entmachtung des Koenigs im Reich und in Europa* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1975), 43-58; Michael Edward Mallett and Christine Shaw, *The Italian Wars, 1494-1559: War, State and Society in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Pearson: Harlow, 2012), 2-28.

of Venice confronted the French army in the Battle of Fornovo on 6 July 1495. Both sides had heavy losses; the French retreated – signing the Peace of Vercelli on October 9 with the League of Venice (but in fact mostly with Milan) which upheld the French conquest of Naples – and shortly returned to France.

As a result of the peace agreement, Naples was plunged into a civil war between the supporters of the French and their rivals. By late summer 1496, the French troops had almost lost the Kingdom of Naples, and all that remained of their triumphal march across Italy was an insignificant presence. Meanwhile, Italian states involved in the crisis were experiencing their own political troubles. Ludovico Sforza, the uncle of Emperor Maximilian's second wife, Bianca Maria Sforza, hoping to strengthen his position with the help of the emperor, urged Maximilian to help him settle his affairs in Italy. In August 1496, Maximilian arrived in Italy with a meager army composed of his own horsemen and Swiss mercenaries. By late October, he was in Pisa from where he was hoping to retake Livorno from the Florentines with the help of Milan and Venice. Several ships were sent by the French king to aid his allies in Florence. In the middle of the siege, Maximilian abruptly decided to suspend the assault, returned to Milan and, from there, rushed back to the German lands, reaching home by December 1496.

First reactions

Marcellus Cumanus, who took part in this conflict as the physician of the Venetian troops and left one of the first accounts of the new disease, does not refer to it as "French,"[87] but notes that it manifested itself for the first time among the troops in the wake of the Battle of Fornovo, the largest military collision of the first Italian War. In his *Observationes Medicae* Cumanus narrates: "I can bear witness that in the year 1495, while I was in the camp of Navarra with the troops of the Venetian and Milanese lords, I saw that many cavalrymen and foot

[87] It was published for the first time in 1668. See Georg Hieronymus Velsch, *Sylloge curationum et observationum medicinalium centurias… complectens* (Augsburg, 1668).

soldiers were affected by a celestial influenza that became an outburst of humors…"[88] A physician from Ferrara, Coradino Gilino, two years later writes in his *De morbo quem gallicum nuncupant*: "Starting from the past year of 1496 this ruthless disease has invaded many men – both in Italy and beyond the mountains. The Italians call it *morbus gallicus*, stating that the French brought it to Italy. The French, on the other hand, call it Italian or Neapolitan disease…" [89] Later, Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540), the famous Florentine historian and diplomat, reproduced in his famous *Storia d'Italia* the by then already widespread belief that the appearance of the disease in Italy was connected with the French invasion:

> After having narrated so many other things, it seems to me not unworthy of note that those very times when it seemed destined that the woes of Italy should have begun with the passage of the French (or at any rate were attributed to them) was the same period when there first appeared that malady which the French called the Neapolitan disease and the Italians commonly called either boils or the French disease. The reason was that it manifested itself among the French when they were in Naples and then, as they marched back to France, they spread it all over Italy. This disease, which was altogether new or at least unknown up to that in our hemisphere, if not in its most remote and out of the way parts, was for many years especially so horrible that it deserves to be mentioned as one of the gravest calamities.[90]

The first accounts of the disease from the German lands refer to it as the French disease as well. For example, the Erfurt chronicle reads: "In the year of 1497, a disease spread in the area of Doringen and Erfurt, in towns and in the countryside, which is called the French."[91] The majority of sources, like the entry for 1495 from the Augsburg Chronicle of Hector Mülich, express the view that the disease originated among the French: "At this time a great plague

[88] Velsch, *Sylloge curationum*, 30. Quoted in Guido Alfani, *Calamities and the Economy in Renaissance Italy. The Grand Tour of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, trans. Christine Calvert (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 206 n54.
[89] Quoted in Jean Astruc, *De morbis venereis: libri IX.* (Paris: apud Guillelmum Cavelier, 1740), vol. 1, 24: "Cum anno elapso 1496. morbus quidam saevissimus mortales quamplurimos invaserit tam in Italia quam etiam ultra montes, hunc Itali *morbum Gallicum* appelant, eum Gallos in Italiam apportasse asserentes: Galli vero Italicum seu Neapolitanum morbum nominant, eo quod in Italia & maxime Neapoli se hac truculenta[m] peste affectos esse dicant."
[90] Francesco Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, trans. Sydney Alexander, *The History of Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983 (3rd ed.), 108-109.
[91] Quoted in Bloch, *Der Ursprung der Syphilis*, vol. 1, 270: "1497 anno domini do wanderte eyne Krangheit jm lande zu Doringen vnnd zu Erffort jn der stad vnnd jn fele landen, dy man hisz dy Franczoszen."

came in these lands that is called the French because for the first time this disease emerged in France. And from there it spread all over the world."[92] Later narratives also trace the origins of the French disease to the French. The chronicle of Dietrich Westhoff, begun in 1548, alleges that the French disease was named so "because this plague had befallen the French in France," and, during the conflict between Maximilian, Ludovico Gibboso, the Venetians, and the King of France was contracted by foot soldiers who brought it to the German lands.[93]

In the third chapter, I look at more examples of the French-origins story of *morbus gallicus* and its political connotations in non-medical literature, but in this chapter I will focus mostly on medical sources. It is certainly difficult to separate the non-medical and medical usages of the term *morbus gallicus* and its vernacular equivalents. Written often by medical doctors highly educated in humanities, early modern medical treatises on the French disease are imbued with poetics and metaphors that can be found also in non-medical literature and that are the focus of the third chapter. However, medical authors were bound by epistemological conventions of their medical profession and it is the negotiations of the French-ness of the French disease within the existing medical tradition that I am mostly interested in.

The German medical author Joseph Grünpeck, whom I will discuss in more detail below, was one of the first medical writers to tie the appearance of disease to war. "Foreign people, coming to other countries to wage wars bring with them not only terror, devastation of fields, famine, fire, and other calamities, but also leave behind them particular misfortunes,

[92] Hektor Mülich, "Fortsetzungen der Chronik des Hector Mülich von Demer, Walther und Rem," in *Die Chroniken der Deutsche Städte*, vol. 23, ed. Friedrich Roth (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1894): 421-422: "Zů der zeit des jars ist ain grosse plag in dise land kommen mit den grossen platteren, die hieß man Frantzosen, umb daß [die kranckhait] in Franckreich am ersten sich erhůb; und kam darnach in alle welt..."

[93] "Chronik des Dietrich Westhoff von 750-1550," in *Die Chroniken der Deutsche Städte*, vol. 20*: Die Chroniken der westfälischen und niederrheinischen Städte*, 368: "Item dis jaers als keiser Maximiliaus mit Lodowico Gibboso, dem koning to Frankrijch, und mit den Venedigern krijg voerde, brachten | die lantsknechte disse jamerliche und verdervende plage der franzosen mit ine net Frankrijch in Duetslant, und word van den knechten morbifranzos genant, darumb dat sie disse plage bij den Franzosen in Frankrijch overkomen hedden..."

unknown and deadly diseases," he writes.[94] Another German author, Otto Raut, evokes the same connection between the French disease, war, and famine in Italy.[95]

There was nothing new in associating disease with war. Pestilence, war, famine, and death, the familiar four horsemen of Apocalypse, were often depicted as interconnected phenomena.[96] Thucydides had provided a model for the connection already in the fifth century BCE with his description of the spread of an epidemic disease in Athens in the second year of the Peloponnesian War, which in the Middle Ages became to be associated with plague.[97] It entered the medical vocabulary with the help of Galen who used it as a way to demonstrate that unburnt corpses of men at the battlefield can cause the corruption of the air that in its turn causes disease.[98] However, the fact that the disease was named after a particular people that participated in this war is worth our attention.

Medical discussions of the name

In the first years since the outbreak, not all medical men in the German lands accepted the name *morbus gallicus* – a term used by their medical colleagues across the Alps for the first time. They often felt compelled to explain that *morbus gallicus* and its various vernacular forms were popular and not academic designations of the disease. Prefacing references to *morbus gallicus*, the following formulas were employed by Late Medieval authors: "quam

[94] Joseph Grünpeck, "De Mentulagra," 55-56: "Repentens autem memoria, alieni populi adventum in aliquam provinciam, quum praesertim id belli causa fit, non solum terrorem, agrorum vastationem, famem, ignem, cladem et alias calamitates inferre, sed peculiaria etiam damna, insolitos et invisos morbos post se relinquere, in mentem venit ad castra hostium mox festinandum esse, si et ista foeda lues militum comes foret, ex cuius eventu coniecturari posset, universum genus humanum eius foeditati obnoxium fore et per eam illud vaticinium expleri, quod ex Tiberino flumine paullo ante evenerat."

[95] Otto Raut, "Pronosticum ad annos domini millesimum quingentesimum secundum et tertium," in *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, ed. Fuchs, 297.

[96] On the French disease as the "pale horseman of Apocalypse," see Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 247-248 et al.

[97] See Thomas E. Morgan, "Plague or Poetry? Thucydides on the Epidemic at Athens," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 124 (1994): 197-209.

[98] Vivian Nutton, "The Seeds of Disease: An Explanation of Contagion and Infection from the Greeks to the Renaissance," *Medical History* 27/1 (1983): 6.

gentes Francingenarum appellant,"[99] "De morbo quem gallicum nuncupant,"[100] "De pustulis et morbo qui vulgato nomine mal de franzos appellatur,"[101] "… pusculis ulceribus, & doloribus morbi Gallici, mali frantzoss appellati,"[102] etc. This cautionary approach was due to the importance accorded to names in medieval natural philosophy. We know that Galen wrote the treatise *On Correctness of Names*, which unfortunately has been lost. Nevertheless, his ideas about language and the use of words survive in his other extant writings. Galen considered the correct usage of the Greek language a way to ensure proper communication and avoid misinterpretations: "If we have the appropriate words, we should use them. Otherwise, it's better to put each thing into words using a phrase, and not to name it metaphorically, whenever someone wants to teach and not babble away… The initial teaching of all technical things needs the appropriate words in order to be clear and articulated."[103] The "appropriate words" for Galen were the ones from the Attic dialect, used by Hippocrates and other Greek doctors, himself included. Galen admits that new names can be used in case there are none in the Greek medical corpus: "For those things of which we do not have names, either to transfer the usage from those for which we do have names, or to make up names by some analogy from the already named things, or to make use of names given to other things."[104] However, he himself did not invent any new words and discouraged others from doing so with his example.

[99] The full title of Grünpeck's first Latin treatise is "Tractatus de pestilentiali scorra sive mala de Franzos originem remediaque eiusdem continens compilatus a verabili viro magistro Ioseph Grunpeck de Burckhausen super carmina quaedam Sebastiani Brant utriusqve iuris professoris," in Fuchs, *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, 3.
[100] Thte title of Corradino Gilino's treatise. For a facsimile edition, see Coradino Gilino, "De morbo quem Gallicum nuncupant" in *The Earliest Printed Literature on Syphilis: Being Ten Tractates from the Years 1495-1498*, ed. Karl Sudhoff (Florence: Lier, 1925), 251-260.
[101] The title of a treatise by Johann Widmann. For a modern edition see Johann Widmann, "Tractatus clarissimi medicinarum doctoris, Iohannis Widman dicti Meichinger, de pustulis et morbo, qui vulgato nomine mal de Franzos appelatur. Editus anno Christi MCCCCXCVII," in Fuchs *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, 95-112.
[102] The title of a treatise by Lorenz Fries, *Epitome opusculi de curandis pusculis ulceribus, & doloribus morbi Gallici, mali frantzoss appellati, autore Laurentio Phrisio, artium & medicinae doctore* (Basel: Henricus Petrus, 1532).
[103] Ben Morison, "Language," in *The Cambridge Companion to Galen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), ed. Robert James Hankinson: 151. This paragraph is based largely on Morison's article.
[104] Ibid., 143.

Canon had been essential to medieval intellectual thought, and the Hellenistic revival in Renaissance medicine only strengthened the connection with tradition. The French disease in many ways questioned allegiances to the canon. To Late Medieval physicians, the use of this common new name indicated that the French disease had not been mentioned in classical medical treatises and therefore was to be considered new. Just like Bloch, who believed that the absence of references to the French disease before the 1490s meant that it was a new disease, late medieval medical doctors viewed the *morbus gallicus*'s nomenclature in the context of the debate on its novelty. But claiming any disease as new at the end of the fifteenth century meant rejecting the traditions of medicine and the Hellenistic culture, a stronger interest in which was developing at the time among humanist-minded medical doctors.[105]

Nomina were at the center of debates between nominalists and realists. Starting with Aristotle, the understanding of an object was thought to be achieved with the help of two questions – *quid nominis* ("nominal essence") and *quid rei* ("real essence"). If nominalists regarded the name of an object as an arbitrary sign of its meaning, realists declared it primary to its essence; that is, nominalists perceived names as not being able to reveal anything about the essence of the object they designated, whereas realists believed that, with the help of deductive semantic analysis of a name, they could learn more about the thing it referred to.[106] In line with this idea, some physicians considered names as a correlate to the things they designated. Being perceived this way, names had "a crucial role to play in the identification of such things as new illnesses and newly discovered plants."[107] Since a wrong name might prevent physicians from understanding the real essence of the disease it represented, finding a right name for a disease was considered essential to ensuring its proper treatment. [108]

[105] Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, chapter 4 and 258-261.
[106] Michael Kuhn, *De nomine et vocabulo: der Begriff der medizinischen Fachsprache und die Kranheitsnamen bei Paracelsus (1493-1541)* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996), 48-51.
[107] Ian MacLean, *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance: The Case of Learned Medicine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 105-114.
[108] Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 259-262.

Indeed, not all medical authors concerned themselves with the correctness of the name *morbus gallicus*. Konrad Schellig (1432-1514), the author of the first medical treatise on the French disease published in the German lands, was among the medical doctors who did not show much concern for its name. His treatise *In pustulas malas, morbum, quem malum de Francia vulgus appellat* appeared in Heidelberg in 1496, prefaced by an introduction written by Jacob Wimpfeling (1450-1528).[109] Schellig had spent most of his life in Heidelberg, serving as a private physician to Frederick I, Elector of Palatine, and later to his successor Philip. It was in the entourage of the latter that Schellig attended the Diet of Worms in 1495 where he heard discussions, which laid the foundation for the Edict on Blasphemy of Maximilian I published on 7 August 1495 both in Latin and vernacular – the first imperial response to the disease, referring to it as "pösen plattern."[110]

A graduate of Heidelberg and by that time already a well-known humanist, Jacob Wimpfeling was asked to write a preface to Schellig's book by the Elector of Palatine. Two years later, the Elector would invite Wimpfeling to teach rhetoric and poetry at the local Heidelberg University. In his short prefatory letter, Wimpfeling introduces the main points of Schellig's treatise and notes that this disease "as the Insubrians [Insubria – the Duchy of Milan – I. S.] lament, the French have imported into their country." He adds: "This is not a new disease, as the common people believe, but was known in earlier times…"[111] At the beginning

[109] Conradus Schellig, "In pustulas malas, morbum, quem malum de Francia vulgus appellat, quae sunt de genere formicarum, salubre consilium doctori Conradi Schellig, Heidelbergensis, illustrissimi clemenissimique principis Philippi comitis Rheni Palatini, Bavariae ducis et physici sui expertissimi" (Heidelberg: s. n., 1496). See critical edition in *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, ed. Fuchs, 71-95.

[110] For the edition of the edict, see "Gotteslästerer-Edikt Maximilians vom 7. August 1495," in Karl Sudhoff, *Graphische und typographische Erstlinge der Syphilisliteratur aus den Jahren 1495 und 1496* (Munich: C. Kuhn, 1912); Also see Karl Sudhoff, *Aus der Frühgeschichte der Syphilis; Handschriften- und Iinkunabelstudien, Epidemiologische Untersuchung und Kritische Gänge* (Leipzig: J.A. Barth, 1912), 1-12; Hans Haustein, "Die Frühgeschichte der Syphilis 1495–1498," *Archiv für Dermatologie und Syphilis* 161/2 (1930): 290-354; Bruce Boehrer, "Early Modern Syphilis," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1/2 (1990): 203-205; Amundsen, "The Moral Stance of the Earliest Syphilographers," 312-314; Darin Hayton, "Joseph Grünpeck's Astrological Explanation," 82-85.

[111] Schellig, "In pustulas malas," 72, trans. in Amundsen, "The Moral Stance," 315.

of the treatise Schellig states: "I call it evil pustules."[112] This is the only sentence in the treatise, which deals with the naming of the disease.

The physician Bartholomäus Steber, a dean at the Vienna univerisity's medical faculty, was the author of one of the earliest treatises on the French disease – *A malafranczos, morbo Gallorum praeservatio ac cura*, published in Vienna in 1498.[113] Steber argues that the disease is new, distinguishing it from all other previously known diseases, and is generally called the French disease (*morbo, quem gallicum dicunt*), without discussing the name itself.[114]

The Marbach physician Alexander Seitz (1470-1540) concerned himself with the naming of the disease a little more than Schellig and Steber. In 1509, he published a treatise on the "evil French," *Ein nutzlich regiment wider die bösen Franzosen*. The work was written at the request of Elizabeth Schott, the abbess of the Cistercian convent at Lichtenstern, and published at her expense. In his treatise, Seitz calls the malady *bösen Franzosen*, comparing it with *mentagra*, the disease mentioned by Pliny the Elder in Book XXVI of his *Natural History*: "Particularly Pliny in the twenty-sixth book of his Natural History and the learned mention this disease as "mentagra," which is now called "pudendagra"; and this disease does not spot or punish children and women, but only noble men."[115] Book 26 of *Historia Naturalis* talks about a previously unknown disease, called *mentagra* or lichens, which covers the skin "with a disfiguring, scaly eruption." Pliny's text served as a valuable authority for the medical authors who wished to rely on an ancient source to describe *morbus gallicus* as a new disease and who,

[112] Schellig, "In pustulas malas," 73: "Has pustulas voco malas."
[113] Julius Pagel, "Steber, Bartholomäus," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliographie* 35 (1893), 536; Elisabeth Tuisl, *Die Medizinische Fakultät der Universität Wien im Mittelalter: Von der Gründung der Universität 1365 bis zum Tod Kaiser Maximilians I. 1519* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2014), 172.
[114] Bartholomäus Steber, "A mala Franczos, morbo gallorum, praeservatio ac cura, a Bartholomaeo Steber, Viennensi atrium et medicinae doctore, nuper edite," in *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, ed. Fuchs, 116.
[115] Alexander Seitz, "Ein nutzlich regiment" in Idem, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 1: *Medizinische Schriften*, ed. Peter Ukena (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970), 9: "Deren kranckheiten eine unß sonderlich vermelt Plinius in seinem xxvi bůch der histori naturali und by den gelerten mentagra / wie dan die jetzig pudendagra genant wirt / die selb kranckheit kein onedlen noch frowen vermaßlet oder straffet sunder allein die edlen mannen..."Also see Proksch, *Die Geschichte der venerischen Krankheiten*, vol. 1, 361; Stein, *Negotiating the Great Pox*, 25-26, 40-41, 45-46.

unlike Leoniceno and other Hellenists discussed below, considered Pliny part of the medical canon. Like the French disease, *mentagra* manifested itself on the skin and came from elsewhere: "This plague was unknown to our fathers and forefathers. It first made its way into Italy in the middle of the principate of Tiberius Claudius Caesar, when a Roman knight of Perusia, a quaestor's secretary, introduced the infection from Asia Minor, where he had taken up his duties. Women were not liable to the disease, or slaves and the lower and middle classes, but the nobles were very much infected through the momentary contact of a kiss."[116] However, Seitz concludes that *morbus gallicus* is different from the disease described by Pliny, since in his view it affected everyone: "young and old, good and bad, heretics, Jews, and the Christian" and even animals.[117]

There were, however, other medical writers, who, unlike Schellig, Steber, and Seitz, paid rather a lot of attention to the naming of the disease. The humanist Ulrich von Hutten even lamented that medical doctors were dedicating too much time to the issue of its nomenclature, neglecting the question of its treatment.[118] One of the most engaging debates on the name *morbus gallicus* took place in Leipzig in the late 1500s between two Leipzig physicians, Simon Pistoris and Martin Pollich von Mellerstadt. As a result of the controversy, Simon Pistoris had to leave Leipzig and his office as head of the medical faculty at Leipzig University.

The Leipzig dispute

The foundation for the Leipzig dispute was laid by a debate at the court of Ferrara, which took place in 1497 between Niccolò Leoniceno (1428-1524), Sebastiano dall'Aquila

[116] Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, trans. by John Bostock, H. T. Riley (London: George Bell and sons, 1900), Chapter 26:3, 267. On the reception of Pliny's *Natural History* by late medieval physicians, see Aude Doody, *Pliny's Encyclopedia: The Reception of the Natural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 125-128.
[117] Seitz, "Ein nutzlich regiment," 9: "...und is solich meinung gütlich ze glauben / so solich kranckheit versört jung und alt böß frum juden heiden und christen auch daß unvernünfftig vich Seu visch katzen etc. kein underscheit hat..."
[118] Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 100.

(ca. 1440- ca. 1510), and Coradino Gilino (ca. 1468-1499).[119] The three participants of the Ferrara debate could not agree on the nature of the French disease. Gilino, in his treatise *De morbo quem gallicum nuncupant*, argued that the disease had already existed in Antiquity under the name of *ignis persicus*, the "Persian fire" – a disease mentioned by such medical authorities as Celsius, Galen, and Avicenna.[120] Dall'Aquila, in his major work on *morbus gallicus Interpretatio Morbi Gallici et Cura,* published twelve years after the debate in 1509, maintained that the disease had been known to previous generations and was described by Galen as *elephantiasis* (or leprosy).[121] Leoniceno was the most prominent out of the three. A notorious medical Hellenist, "the doyen of medical humanists,"[122] he became famous for his criticism of the medical university curriculum, Avicenna, and Pliny. His *Libellus de epidemia quam vulgo morbum gallicum vocant* was published twice before the end of 1497.[123] Leoniceno argued that the French disease was caused by the corruption of the air, triggered by a change in heavenly bodies. As such it was yet another illness caused by changes in the air, mentioned by Hippocrates in his *Aphorisms*. He believed that the ancient name of the disease had been lost during the Middle Ages and that a proper name for it was still to be found:

> The physicians of our time have not yet settled on a proper name. Common people call it *Malum Gallicum*, either because the French brought it to Italy, or because the disease and the French appeared in Italy at the same time. There is no lack of those who believe that this disease and the *elephantiasis* of the ancients were one and the same. Some feel it is the ancient *lichenas*, others – *asaphati, pruna or carbonis*, yet others – sacred or Persian fire. This ambiguity of naming and the diversity of views about the disease gave rise to many

[119] For the summary of the polemic see: Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, Chapter 4 and 90-97.
[120] Conradinus Gilinus, "De morbo quem gallicum nuncupant" (Ferrara, 1497). For a facsimile edition see Corradino Gilino of Ferrara, "De morbo quem gallicum nuncupat" in Sudhoff, *The Earliest Printed Literature on Syphilis*, 251-260. Cyril C. Barnard, "The 'De morbo quem gallicum nuncupant' [1497] of Coradinus Gilinus," *Janus* 34 (1930): 97-116; Darrel W. Amundsen, "The Moral Stance of the Earliest Syphilographers," 326-328; Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 82-83.
[121] Jon Arrizabalaga, "Sebastiano dall'Aquila (ca. 1440- ca. 1510), el 'mal francés' y la 'diputa de Ferrara' (1492)," *Dynamis* 1994 (14): 227-247; Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 77-82.
[122] Siraisi, *History, Medicine, and the Traditions of Renaissance Learning*, 31.
[123] Niccolò Leoniceno, *Libellus de epidemia quam vulgo morbum Gallicum vocant* (Venice: Aldo Manutio, [1497]). For a facsimile edition see Niccolo Leoniceno of Vincenza, "Libellus de Epidemia, quam vulgo morbum Gallicum vocant, Venice, June 1497," in Sudhoff, *The Earliest Printed Literature on Syphilis*, 117-178. See Charles G. Nauert, "Humanists, Scientists, and Pliny: Changing Approaches to a Classical Author," *The American Historical Review* 84/1 (1979), 72-85; Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 72-77.

> speculations that we are dealing with a new disease, previously unknown to physicians…[124]

In 1498, Leoniceno's *Libellus* was published in Leipzig and was shortly afterwards followed by a response written by the dean of the medical faculty at Leipzig University Simon Pistoris (1453-1523), *Positio de morbo franco*.[125] In his short treatise, Pistoris argues that air, as one of the four main elements, cannot become corrupt. *Morbus Francus* thus was a new disease, unknown to Hippocrates, which had originated from the hidden qualities of the air. Such a statement could not remain unnoticed by Pistoris's colleague, Martin Pollich von Mellerstadt (ca. 1450-1513), a fellow resident of Leipzig and Hellinist, who had previously expressed his support of Leoniceno's opinion on the French disease. Pollich followed with a refutation of Pistoris's *conclusio finalis* in which he reiterated Leoniceno's arguments. This marked the beginning of a battle of pamphlets that lasted for three years.[126]

Like Leoniceno, Pollich was a Hellenist, and believed that finding a right name for the disease was essential to its proper treatment. He even wrote to Giovanni Mainardi (1462-1536), one of the most prominent Italian medical men at the time, asking him to evaluate his dispute with Pistoris. Unsurprisingly, Mainardi responded with a publication that expressed thoughts similar to Pollich's and Leoniceno's. In a pamphlet with the telling title *De erroribus Symonis Pistoris de Lypczk circa morbum gallicum* ("On the mistakes of Simon Pistoris from Leipzig

[124] Leoniceno, *Libellus de epidemia*, A3 r-v. Quoted and translated into German in Bloch, *Der Ursprung der Syphilis*, 70-71: "Huic tamen morbo nondum nostri temporis medici verum nomen imposuere, sed vulgato nomine Malum Gallicum vocant, quasi ejus origo a Gallis in Italiam importata, aut eodem tempore et morbo ipso, et Gallorum armis Italia infestata. Non defuere quidem, qui eundem cum illo putarint, quem prisci elephantiam nominarunt, sicuti alii morbum Gallicum esse antiquis lichenas, alii asaphati, alii prunam, sive carbonem, alii ignem Persicum, sive sacrum existimarunt. Quae quidem ambiguitas nominum, et de re ipsa quoque dissensio, multos suspicari fecit, novam hanc esse luem, nunquam a veteribus visam, atque ideo a nullo medico vel Graeco vel Arabe inter alia morborum genera tactam."

[125] Simon Pistoris, "Positio de Morbo Franco, per doctorem Symonem Pistoris in almo gymnasio Lypcensi disputanda," in *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, ed. Fuchs, 127-130.

[126] For the list of pamphlets see: Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 308, n.7. Also see for the debate: James Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 173-184; Roger French, "The Arrival of the French Disease in Leipzig," 133–141; Vivian Nutton, "Medicine at German Universities"; Helmut Schlereth, *Martin Pollich von Mellrichstadt*; Stein, "Der Leipziger Streit."

regarding *morbus gallicus*") Mainardi argued that a disease's name was of great importance. According to him, Pistoris was too hasty in appropriating its common designation, since "names should not be considered unimportant, especially by a physician, who bears responsibility for human life and makes mistakes in them."[127] Mainardi writes that with his letter he wanted to "demonstrate that in every science it is important to understand the terms correctly, particularly in medicine, where a mistake in naming is just as dangerous as choosing one remedy over the other, ignorance over knowledge, harmful instead of harmless, as treating one disease instead of the other."[128]

Simon Pistoris represented a different direction in medicine. He blamed the Hellinists for favoring eloquence and language over *ars medica*, and referred to Galen, who urged medical men to deal not with "scientific names, but with things."[129] In a number of writings, Galen does indeed state that semantics is less important than medicine and that one "should not be deceived by names, but look to the very essence of things."[130] However, as discussed earlier, Galen also believed that the correct usage of names was nevertheless vital to the expression of one's medical ideas and that new words should be avoided in favor of the ones already present in the corpus of medical writings.

The controversy forced Pistoris to leave the city. He moved to Frankfurt on the Oder to become a private physician to Joachim I of Brandenburg. The dispute helped Pollich to secure

[127] Paolo Zambelli, "Giovanni Mainardi e la polemica sull'astrologia," in *L'opera e il pensiero di Giovanni Pico della Mirandola nella storia dell'umanesimo, Atti del convegno internazionale (Mirandola, 15-18 settembre 1963)*, vol. 2 (Florence: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 1965), 261-262: "Non igitur posthabenda sunt nomina, praesertimque medico cum humanae vitae praeiudicio in his aberranti."
[128] Ibid., 263-265: "Satis enim monstravimus, multum in omni scientia conducere, rerum vocabula recte intelligere, praesertim vero in medicina, ubi tanto cum discrimine in nominibus erratur, quanto cum discrimine et aliud pro alio medicamentum, et inexpertum pro experto, et nocuum pro innocuo propinatur; quanto etiam cum periculo unus pro alio morbus intercuratur."
[129] Simon Pistoris, "Declaratio defensiva cuiusdam positionis de malo franco nuper per doctorem Symonem Pistoris disputatae," in *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, ed. Fuchs, 156: "Audiat precor et nostri Galeni apertissima verba primo de differentiis pulsuum, dum inquit: nihil rursus neque scrutarer, utrum proprie an improprie vocare vel permutare nomina, sicut utique agunt sophistae; superflua enim omnia haec et extra nostram artem: non enim nominum scientia, sed rerum; neque eos, qui non nominant bene, ad medicos mittunt homines, sed eos, qui sanitate indigent."
[130] Morison, "Language," 133.

the position of the head of the newly established Wittenberg University. However, despite Pollich's Hellenist enthusiasm so pronounced during the Leipzig dispute, the medical curriculum at the university remained grounded in the tradition of scholasticism.[131]

Otto Raut (1460-1508), the town physician of Ulm, gives a summary of various theories of the nature of the disease and the names attached to it in his *Pronosticum* for 1502 and 1503.[132] Raut tells us that some physicians refer to Celsius and define *morbus gallicus* as *elephantiasis*; others cite Pliny and call it *mentagra* or lichens. He then concludes: "Do not be amazed with the way I talk about it; indeed, I would not call it by a unique name for the doctrine of the disease and its manifoldness is such, that at any time not only its appearance, but also its origins seem different. Also, it befits the physician to dispute the names of a disease only a little or not at all, and rather [it befits him] to portray the disease's nature and occurrences."[133] To summarize Raut's position, he acknowledges the variety of names of the new disease, but choses *morbus gallicus* in the end, as a conditional designation.

Wendelin Hock of Brackenau (- ca. 1535), a physician in Strasbourg who published a number of medical treatises but of whom little is known,[134] talks about different approaches to naming diseases in his treatise on the French pox, entitled *Mentagra, sive tractatus de causis, preservativis, regimine et cura morbi gallici: vulgo Mala françosz*. It was published for the first time in 1514, and appeared at least in two more editions in the next fifteen years, in 1529

[131] Nutton, "Medicine at German Universities," 97.
[132] According to Proksch, Raut appropriated entire passages from Leoniceno for his treatise. Proksch, *Der Antimercurialismus in der Syphilis-Therapie: literatur-historisch betrachtet* (Erlangen: Ferdinand Enke, 1874), 20.
[133] Otto Raut, "Pronosticum ad annos domini millesimum quingentesimum secundum et tertium, exploratum per Ottonem Raut, artium et medicinarum doctorem, in Ulma physicum expertissimum. Item notatu digna de causa et cura morbi nunc temporis grassantis, qui malum Franciae sive scorra nominatur," in Fuchs, *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, 297: "Non miraris, quod sic ipsum descripsi, nec unico nomine non nominaverim, tanta enim doctrina huius morbi et varietas est, quod non solum aliquando specie sed et genere differre videtur. Convenit etiam medico de nominibus nil aut parum disceptare morborum, sed naturam morbi et eius accidentia exprimere."
[134] Ernst Wickersheimer, "Hock, Wendelin" in NDB 9 (1972), 296; Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 259-261.

and 1531.[135] In the second chapter with the title "On the various causes and sources of the name of this disease," Hock writes that the disease is known under a variety of names in various countries: "As it were, it occurred at that time: as one may know from the year of our Lord 1494 until the present year of 1514 everywhere a contagious disease called [*morbus*] *gallicus* has fairly seethed. And it has acquired many names. For just as it invaded peoples of many climates, various names were attached to it."[136] He then asks:

> But I beg you tell me why common people call this disease differently in various parts of the world? You ought to know first that names are given not only to diseases, but also to things according to their substance or quality to be observed – thus says Avicenna in many ways in Thesis I, Chapter 8. For instance, sometimes the name takes hold based on the cause, and sometimes based on the effect. And this cause is of many ways… Thus, the disease of which we are talking now can be called *mentagra*, and the same regarding the other [diseases].[137]

Hock goes on to lay out Aristotle's theory of the four causes – formal, efficient, material, and final – and connects it to the nomenclature of the disease. He writes that a disease can be called "after the form it resembles, thus *elephantiasis* from the elephant, *serpigo* from the serpent. And sometimes after a formal cause. And in other times after an efficient cause."[138] He concludes by saying that in his opinion *morbus gallicus* was named after its cause, the expedition of Charles VIII to Naples: "... I say that *morbus gallicus* is called this way because of its cause. For it was discovered in the great kingdom of Naples, where the French stayed after the Rooster [Charles VIII] marched into Italy with a mighty army, and because of this the Italians call it *morbus gallicus* and think that the disease is natural among the French. However,

[135] Wickersheimer, "Hock, Wendelin," 137.
[136] Wendelin Hock, *Mentagra sive tractatus de causis, praeservativis, regimine et cura morbi Gallici, vulgo Malafrancosum* (Strasbourg: Schottus, 1514), B r-v: "Sicut evenit hoc te[m]pore: scilicet ab anno d[omi]ni 1494 usqu[am] ad p[re]sentem annu[m] 1514 quo morbus quida[m] contagiosus q[uod] Gallicus appellatur satis efferbuit. Iste e[ni]m morbus multa nomina sortitur. Nam sicut gentes multorum climatu[m] invasit. sic diversa nomina eide[m] imposita sunt."
[137] Ibid., B4 r: "Sed quaeso dic mihi / quare in diuersis regionib[us] diversimode vulgus hunc morbum appelletur. Scire te oportet in primis: q[uod] no[m]i[n]a non solu[m] morbis, i[m]mo rebus ad denotandu[m] substantiam vel qualitatem earu[m] imponuntur: hoc multifarie dicit Avicenna secu[n]da primi doc. 1. ca. 8. Nam aliqua[n]do nome[n] capiunt a causa, aliquando ab effectu. A causa etia[m] multis modis."
[138] Ibid.: "Aliquando a forma cui assimilatur, ut elephantiasis ab elephante. & serpigo a serpendo. Et aliqua[n]do a causa formali. Et aliqua[n]do ab efficiente."

in France, since this disease began to appear after King Charles had returned with his men, it was believed to have been brought from Naples; thus, they called this disease *morbus neapolitanum*."[139]

Lorenz Fries (ca. 1490-1531/32), an Alsatian astrologer, physician, geographer, and prolific author best known for his *Spiegel der Arznei*, published his first work on the French disease a little after Hock published his, around 1517-1518. The original publication had been lost, but a later version printed in 1532 under the title *Epitome Opusculi* has survived.[140] Fries deals with the issue of the disease's name already in the first chapter of his treatise, "On the origins and name of this disease." He writes that doctors named the disease "French" or "Neapolitan" because they believed it had come from France or Naples: "The aforementioned doctors looking for cure began to call that pestilential disease 'Gallicus' or 'Frantzigenus,' and some [called it] 'Neapolitanus,' according to where it had come to us first, and doctors delegated [these names] based on the origin." He suggests that a proper name of the disease might have been lost, since "according to Constantinus that disease was called epidemic, which suddenly and at once in a similar way attacked many men, and this disease can be seen in various climates." Interestingly, Fries concludes by saying that the name of the "French disease" persevered due to the absence of discussions around it, which as we have seen above, was not true: "However, since controversy did not arise among physicians on the names, the above mentioned [names] were unsheathed."[141]

[139] Ibid.: "Sed his plurib[us] modis ac aliis intermissis dico: quod morbus Gallicus appelat[ur] hac de causa. Nam Gallus manu forti Italiam ingredie[n]s / & maxime regno Neapolitano occupato / ibidem co[m]morantibus Gallis hic morbus detectus est: fuitq[ue] ob id ab Italis morb[us] Gallicus appelatus. & imaginati sunt ip[su]m Gallis co[n]naturalem fore. In Gallia v[ero] q[ui]a in reversio[n]e regis Caroli cu[m] suis in Galliam hic morbus appelere c[o]epit: crede[n]tes cu[m] ex Neapoli aportasse / ha[n]c ob ea[ru]m morbu[m] neapolitanu[m] vocaru[n]t."

[140] Sudhoff, "Fries, Lorenz"; Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 253-256; Stein, *Negotiating the Great Pox*, 46-49.

[141] Lorenz Fries, *Epitome opusculi*, 7: "Ipsis medicis supradictis itaq[ue] laborantibus in cura huius morbi, coepit ille pestifer morbus nominari, Gallicus, vel Frantzigenus, ab aliquibus Neapolitanus, eo quod primu[m] ad nos venissent morbus & medici ex partibus præallegatis. Potuisset & rationabiliter nome[n] exhausisse, Epidimialis & pestis, quia secundu[m] Constantinu[m] ille morbus nuncupatur epidimialis, qui subito & uno

Joseph Grünpeck was a medical author who embraced the name *morbus gallicus* more than any of his medical colleagues in the German lands. For him it truly represented the essence of the thing it designated. Due to the popularity of his three treatises on the French disease, and their importance to my argument in this and the next chapter, I will pay more attention to Grünpeck than to other authors.

For some time, Grünpeck remained an under-researched figure in the history of German humanism, disregarded as a mere "dilettante humanist"[142] by some and "layman in physic"[143] by others, but there have been several important studies done about him in recent years.[144] At the time of the publication of his first two treatises on the French disease, Grünpeck was only 23 years old. Using the standard medieval humility topos, Grünpeck describes himself in the Latin treatise as "only yesterday a small boy living in Burghausen, playing the game of letters."[145] Proksch writes that Grünpeck's modesty led some to disregard his work as insignificant and unimportant.[146] Since then Russell and Hayton have highlighted the importance that these treatises had accorded Grünpeck and the role they played in the advancement of his career at the court, while Stein identified Grünpeck's *Ein hübscher Tractat von dem ursprung des Bösen Franzos* as one of the ten most important vernacular treatises and

tempore simul multis ingruit hominibus, ut visum est de morbo illo in variis climatibus. Sed quia de nominibus apud medicos non oritur contentio, eo propter dicta illa stringantur."

[142] Gerhard Benecke, *Maximilian I (1459-1519), an Analytical Biography* (London, Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 7.

[143] Sudhoff, *The Earliest Printed Literature on Syphilis*, xxiv.

[144] Czerny's article remains the most detailed study of Grünpeck's life: Czerny, "Der Humanist und Historiograph Kaiser Maximilians I, Joseph Grünpeck." It was re-examined in Russell, "Astrology as Popular Propaganda." See also Fuchs, *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, 382-392; Hermann Wiesflecker, *Joseph Grünpecks Commentaria und Gesta Maximiliani Romanorum Regis. Die Entdeckung eines verlorenen Geschichtswerkes* (Graz: Verlag Jos. A. Kienreich, 1964); Russell, "Syphilis, God's scourge or nature's vengeance?"; Amundsen, "The Moral Stance," 317-320; Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 98-9, 109-112; Flood, "Joseph Grünpeck," in *Poets Laureate*; Hayton, "Joseph Grünpeck's Astrological Explanation," 81-108; Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 30-34; Hayton, "Astrology as Political Propaganda"; Idem, *The Crown and the Cosmos: Astrology and Politics of Emperor I* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), chapter 3.

[145] Grünpeck, "De pestilentiali scorra," 12: "pridie is puer tantillus in Burckhausen ludum litterarum incolebat."

[146] Proksch, *Die Geschichte der venerischen Krankheiten*, vol. 1, 376-377.

pamphlets on the French pox published between 1496 and 1620 that formed the disease's medical vernacular discourse in the German lands.[147]

In the summer of 1496, Grünpeck traveled to Italy, where he came across the army of Maximilian I returning to Germany, and saw people suffering from the French pox for the first time. Several years later he described this encounter with the disease in *Mentulagra alias morbo gallico Libellus*. Upon his return to Augsburg, Grünpeck published his first treatise on the French disease, *Tractatus de pestilentiali scorra sive mala de Franzos. originem remediaque: eiusdem continens compilatus a Joseph Grunpeck de Burckhausen super carmina quaedam Sebastian Brant utriusque juris professoris* ("A Treatise on the pestilence 'scorra', or mala de Franzos, its origin and remedies [for it], composed by Josephus Grunpeck of Burckhausen, following certain poems by Sebastian Brant, professor of civil and canon law"). The German version entitled *Ein hübscher Tractat von dem ursprung des Bösen Franzos, das man nennet die Wylden wärtzen: Auch ein Regiment wie man sich regiren soll in diser zeyt* ("An elegant treatise on the origin of the evil Franzos, called the wild warts. Also a regimen on how to conduct oneself during this time") appeared several weeks later and was the first treatise on the French pox in vernacular printed in the German lands.[148]

In 1501, Grünpeck became ill with the French disease. Coincidentally, by that time Maximilian I had the French pox himself.[149] Shone away by his friends, Grünpeck fled the court and secluded himself in Burghausen. Away from his patron, he composed his third treatise on the French disease entitled *Libellus Josephi Grünbeckii de mentulagra alias morbo*

[147] Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 16-17.
[148] As Hayton and Stein have already pointed out, Russel's dating of the treatises is in contradiction to the treatises's internal dates. See Paul A. Russel, 'Syphilis, God's Scourge of Nature's Vengeance," 293; Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 17, n. 71; Hayton, "Joseph Grünpeck's Astrological Explanation," 85, n. 15.
[149] Wiesflecker asserts that Maximilian I became infected with the French disease in 1497, but was later cured. According to him, this explains Maximilian's interest in the disease, which led him to the opening of eight hospitals in various hereditary lands (Hermann Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I., das Reich, Österreich und Europa an der Wende zur Neuzeit.* Vol. 5: *Der Kaiser und seine Umwelt, Hof, Staat, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft und Kultur* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1986), 338-339). See also Karl Schadelbauer, "Kaiser Maximilian I. und die gallische Krankheit," S*udhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 22/1 (1929), 102.

gallico ("A booklet on the *mentulagra* or *morbus gallicus* by Joseph Grünpeck") printed in 1503. This is how in his treatise Grünpeck describes the social isolation he experienced during his sickness:

> When I became sick, I ceased my service to the Emperor and all communication with my friends for two years, lying in a small bed, having thousands of strange ideas and phantoms of imagination against my will for nearly two years. Meanwhile the longitute of time, the loneliness, the hardships, the expenses, the neglect of many important affairs (which happens when one is separated from his master), the disturbing pustules, ulceration of body members, the joint pain began to feel unbearable. I could not find relief in anything else except for in the small book I had published earlier.[150]

Grünpeck's first two treatises on the French disease appeared in at least five Latin editions in Augsburg, Magdeburg, Leipzig, Cologne, and Nuremberg[151] and two German editions in Nuremberg and Augsburg from 1496 to 1500.[152] The first Latin edition was printed in Augsburg on 18 October 1496 when Emperor Maximilian I was still in Italy with his army. The first German translation was printed on 11 December 1496. As Grünpeck tells his readers, he translated his treatise to German because "there are many more people tormented by it every day, who do not understand Latin than those who do and who cannot help or advise themselves in their sufferings." He continues: "Out of brotherly love and devotion for my neighbor the following I have translated from Latin to German. I humbly beg you with all respect and reverence to forgive me where my crude German requires more words for what Latin can define with fewer words."[153] The vernacular treatise omits certain allegorical passages and

[150] Grünpeck, "Libellus Iosephi Grunpeckii De Mentulagra alias morbo gallico," 52: "Quo vulnere totus infectus, duobus fere annis a Caesaris consuetudine, sociorum contuberniis et omnium agendarum rerum cura alienus in lecticula lucubratoria mille cogitationum formas totidemque imaginationum figuras frustra cudere coactus fui. Interim quum diuturnitatem temporis, solitudinem et graves impensas, multarum etiam fortunarum (ut fit, quum a domino quis suo disiungitur) negligentiam, et quod prius nominare debebam, pustularum molestias, membrorum exulcerationem, iuncturarum dolores impatienter ferre coepi, et me ipsum ex libello meo, quem paullo ante edideram... recuperarem."

[151] Dieter Wuttke, "Sebastian Brants Syphilis-Flugblatt des Jahres 1496," appendix IV in Girolamo Fracastoro, *Lehrgedicht über die Syphilis*, ed and trans. Georg Wöhrle (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993): 138, n25.

[152] Joseph Grünpeck, *Von dem Ursprung des bösen Franzosen* (Augsburg: Johann Schaur, 1496); Joseph Grünpeck, *Von dem Ursprung des bösen Franzosen* (Nuremberg: Kaspar Hochfeder, 1496).

[153] Joseph Grünpeck, "Ein hübscher Tractat von dem ursprung des Bösen Franzos, das man nennet die Wylden Wärtzen. Auch ein regiment wie man sich regiren soll in diser zeyt," in *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, ed. Fuchs, 27-28: "… daz vil mer lebend lateinischer sprach vnwissenhafft dann wissenhafft, die mit diser erschrockenlichen kranckheyt jne selbs zu erleidigung nit hilflich noch rätlich sein mügen, täglich gepeyniget werden. Byn ich auss brüderlicher liebe vnd treü meines nächsten sölch latein in teutsch wie hernach volget zů

references to Ancient authorities given in the Latin version, but otherwise remains true to the original text.

Grünpeck prefaced the Latin and vernacular treatises by *Eulogium de scorra pestilentiali* – a poem written by a fellow humanist, Sebastian Brant (1457-1521).[154] The poem was published for the first time between August and October 1496 as a separate single-leaf pamphlet; that is, during Maximilian's campaign in Italy.[155] In 1498, it was featured in the *Varia Sebastiani Brant Carmina*, a collection of selected poems by Sebastian Brant (printed by the same printer who published Brant's poem the first time, Johann Bergmann von Olpe) where it was placed before a poem dedicated to Emperor Maximilian I.[156] At the time of the publication of the poem, Brant was already a well-known author, made famous through his *Narrenschiff*, published in 1494. Including a poem by such a prominent literary figure doubtlessly rendered some weight to Grünpeck's first published works.

In the poem, Brant maintains that the disease was named after the French, because they brought it with them to Liguria, from where it spread via the mountains to Germany, to people living near the Danube, and further east to Thracia, Bohemia, and Poland. "Even the Sarmatians dread this disease. And at the end of the world, the British, surrounded by the flowing and waning sea, are not protected enough," he writes.[157]

äsern bewegt, diemütligklich mit aller ere vnd reuerenz bittende, ob mein grob teütsch vil wort brauchete, dann dise latein mit wenig worten beschleüsset. So söllichs dem lesenden gemeynen volcke zů mer verständtnuss vnd gründlichem bericht, ob es not würde, beschicht, wöllend mir nit verargen, aber günstlich zů verzeyhen etc."

[154] For a critical edition of Brant's poem, see Stefan Rhein, Matthias Dall'Asta, Gerald Dörner, *Johannes Reuchlin Briefwechsel, 1477-1505*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1999), 265-276. See also: Wuttke, "Sebastian Brants Syphilis-Flugblatt," 125-142. There is an English translation of the poem, but it is erroneous: William Renwick Riddell, "Sebastian Brandt: De Pestilentiali scorra sive impetigine anni XCVI," *Archives of Dermatology and Syphilography* 20 (1929), 63-74. On Brant's other polemical works written about the same time see, e. g., Vera Sack, *Sebastian Brant als politischer Publizist: zwei Flugblatt-Satiren aus den Fogejahren des sogenannten Reformsreichstags von 1495* (Freiburg: Archiv der Stadt Freiburg im Bresgau, 1997); Hayton, *The Crown and the Cosmos*, chapter 2.

[155] Sebastian Brant, *De pestilentiali scorra* (Basel: Johann Bergmann, 1496).

[156] Sebastian Brant, *Varia Sebastiani Brant Carmina*, ed. Johann Bergmann (Basel, 1498).

[157] Grünpeck, "De pestilentiali scorra," 5-6: "Pestiferum in Ligures transvexit Francia morbum, / Quem Mala de Franzos Romula lingua vocat. /Hic Latium atque Italos invasit, ab Alpibus extra / Serpens, Germanos Istriscolasque premit. / Grassatur mediis iam Thracibus atque Bohemis, / Et morbi genus id Sarmata quisque timet. / Nec satis extremo tutantur in orbe Britanni, / Quos refluum cingit succidumque fretum."

It is not clear whether Brant regarded the French pox as a new disease, but Grünpeck certainly did, referring to is as a new disease on several occasions: "novum genus morbi"[158], "unerhörte, ungesehne, unbekanntte allen tödlichen menschen… kranckheyt,"[159] etc. According to him, the disease appeared among the French for the first time: "…On top of it all, this terrible, previously unheard of and unseen disease, *Böss Franzos*… was sent from the French to Italy, and then to the German [lands]…" Since it appeared among the French for the first time, it became known as malum de Franzos:

> It has become a habit to call it *malum de Franzos*; and it is not after the Germans, Italians, British, English, Sarmatians or any other people that it received its name, but after the people of France, who acquired a particular and lasting stigma associated with this name which will never be erased.[160]

Just as Grünpeck predicted, the name *morbus gallicus*, regardless of the efforts of some medical writers to caution against its usage, remained the most widespread term used in relation to the disease in the German lands throughout the late fifteenth - early sixteenth century. It was such a recognizable name, that in his booklet *De morbo gallico* published in 1519 Ulrich von Hutten wrote that he preferred to use the name *morbus gallicus* because he feared that using a different name would confuse people.[161] In his treatise, Hutten recounts the story of the first appearance of the disease, familiar to his contemporaries, even though he gives a different date: "In the Year of Christ 1493, or thereabout, this Evil began amongst the People, not only of

[158] Ibid., 8.
[159] Grünpeck, "Ein hübscher Tractat," 32-33.
[160] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali,"17: "Namque malum de Franzos vocitari consuevit; non autem a Germanis, Italis, Britannis, Anglicis, Sarmacis aliisve gentibus nomen sibi inditum accepit, sed Gallica de gente, quae sui nominis monumentum peculiare ac perpetuum sibi iniussit, quod nullam unquam passarum est lituram."
[161] I have used Böcking's edition. Ulrich von Hutten, "De gvaiaci medicina et morbo gallico liber unvs," in Idem, *Vlrichi Hvtteni eqvitis germani opera qvæ reperiri potvervnt omnia*, ed. Eduard Böcking, vol. 5 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1861), 400: "Pervicit tamen gentium consensus, et nos hoc opusculo Gallicum dicemus, non invidia quidem gentis clarissimae, et qua vix alia hoc tempore ciuilior aut hospitalior, sed veriti ne non satis intelligant omnes, si quolibet alio nomine rem signemus." For a later English translation that is close to the original, even though not ideal, see: Ulrich von Hutten, *De Morbo Gallico, a Treatise of the French Disease, Publish'd above 200 Years Past, by Sir Ulrich Hutten, Kt. Of Almayn in Germany. Translated Soon after into English, by a Canon of Marten-Abbye. Now Again Revised and Recommended to the Press, with a Preface to the Same, and a Letter at the Close, to Mr. James Fern, Surgeon, Concerning a Very Singular Suppos'd Infection. By Daniel Turner Of the College of Physicians in London* (London: Printed for John Clarke at the Bible under the Royal Exchange, 1730).

France, but originally at Naples in the French Camp, who under King Charles were set down before that Place, and where it was taken notice of, before it came elsewhere."[162]

Theophrast von Hohenheim or Paracelsus (1493-1541) was another important German medical author who had something to say about the nomenclature of the French pox, although Claudia Stein has chosen to exclude his works from her study. "To introduce them [the writings of Paracelsus] would necessitate comparing them with those of other pox authors, and hence emphasize difference in sixteenth-century medical theory," she writes, "But my aim is, rather, to trace the constitutive elements of a unitarian medical world shared by the authors of the available sixteenth-century vernacular literature on the pox."[163] Even though already in his times Paracelsus was championed as the "Lutherus Medicorum,"[164] his understanding of the disease's nomenclature and its origins (the matter that concerns us in the second chapter) was in dialogue with the existing medical theories and therefore deserves to be studied here as well.

Paracelsus was very interested in the French disease, to which he dedicated some of his first treatises. He was particular critical of the use of the Guaiac tree as a treatment for the disease, and since the Guaiac tree was imported by the Fugger family, who helped Charles V to win the imperial election, they obstructed the publication of the works by Paracelsus in Nuremberg, where he had moved after fleeing legal proceedings in Basel.[165] While working on *Paragranum*, his first general theoretical book on medicine, Paracelsus learned about the decision of the Nuremberg city authorities not to publish his writings on the French disease upon advice of Heinrich Stromer, the Dean of the Leipzig university's medical faculty who

[162] Ulrich von Hutten, *De Morbo Gallico*, 1. Idem, *De guaiaci medicina et morbo gallico liber unus*, 399-400: "Annus fuit a Christo nato post millesimum & quadrigentesimum nonagesimus tertius aut circa, cum irrepsit pestiferum malum, non in Gallia quidem, sed apud Neapolim primum; nomen vero inde sortitum est, quod in Gallorum exercitu qui illic Caroli regis sui auspiciis belligerabat apparuit prius quam usquam alibi."
[163] Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 20.
[164] Paracelsus, "Das Buch Paragranum Philippi Theophrasti," in Andrew Weeks, *Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, 1493-1541): Essential Theoretical Writings* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008), 91.
[165] Henry Maximilian Pachter, *Paracelsus: Magic into Science, the Story of Paracelsus* (New York: Schuman, 1951), 161-185. Stein refutes the popular assumption that the Fuggers held a monopoly on the Guaiac trade. Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 101-103.

was also a shareholder in the Fugger's guaiac trade.[166] He responded to the rejection of his writings on *morbus gallicus* in the book's introduction: "O why do you, you anointed fools, slander my writings, which you can only discredit by asserting that I do not know anything else or write about any disease except for luxus and veneris? Is that such a small thing then? Is this the way you see it? Considering that I incorporate all surgical diseases, as they are transformed into the French disease – which is indeed the greatest disease in the entire world, since no worse has ever been known, and since it indeed spares no one and attacks the largest number in the worst manner – should I be despised for thus concentrating on such a thing?"[167]

He addresses the subject of the French disease in a number of his works, but the ones devoted specifically to the French disease are *Vom Holz Guajaco gründlicher Heilung* (1529), *Von der französischer Krankheit drei Bücher Para* (1529), *Der drit tractat, sagt von dem gemeinschaften, so die franzoesisch art mit andern des menschen wesen haben* in *Das (angebliche) Dritte Buch der Großen Wundarznei* (written in 1536, but published for the first time only in 1579[168]), and *Von Ursprung und Herkommen der Franzosen samt der Recepten Heilung, acht Bücher* (written in 1529, first published in 1564[169]).[170]

In his analysis of Paracelsus's use of language, Michael Kuhn notes that Paracelsus regarded medical philologists as "nonsensical," believing that philological critique of sources could not advance medicine.[171] At the same time, Paracelsus was a realist who saw names as correlating to the things named and strove to create a new system of medical nomenclature

[166] Ibid., 6-7; See also Pachter, *Paracelsus: Magic into Science*, 175-183.
[167] Weeks, *Paracelsus*, 87.
[168] Karl Sudhoff, *Bibliographia Paracelsica: Besprechung der unter Theophrast von Hohenheim's Namen, 1527-1893, Erschienenen Druckschriften*, 2nd edition (Graz: Academische Druck- u. Verlangsanstalt, 1956), vol. 1, 315-318.
[169] Ibid., 92-96, 458.
[170] For a list of Paracelsus's writings touching upon the subject of the French disease, see: Johann Karl Proksch, *Paracelsus über die venerischen Krankheiten*, 11. Also see Gundolf Keil and Willelm F. Daems, "Paracelsus und die "Franzosen": Betrachtungen zur Venerologie Hohenheims, I: Pathologie und nosologisches Konzept," *Nova Acta Paracelsica* IX (1977), 99-151.
[171] Kuhn, *De nomine et vocabulo*, 48.

corresponding to his own natural philosophical epistemology. In his endeavor, he did not leave the nomenclature of the French disease unnoticed.[172]

Paracelsus pays the most attention to the nomenclature of the French disease in his *Von Ursprung, Herkommen, unnd Anfang der Frantzosen… acht Bücher*. He writes that there exist three types of names of diseases: names that do not match diseases they designate (like *febris*), names based on the "demonstration of disease," that is, symptoms of disease (like *caducus*), and names of foreign diseases coming from a particular country (like *persicus* from Persia). He goes on to say that certain names like *caducus* and *persicus* should not be used by medical doctors and should be replaced by those that reflect the matter of disease. As for the French disease, Paracelsus continues, ignorant doctors have called it by a variety of names, including *mentagra, pustualae*, etc., but "out of all the names the name of the country persists and justly so."[173] He calls *Franzosen* a generally correct name, since it indirectly conveys the astrological influence that caused the disease, but advises to use a different term in Latin medical writings based on the disease's matter (*luxus*[174]), influence (Venus), or treatment drug (*crepinus*).[175]

Paracelsus repeats his approval of the "French disease" as the appropriate name in *Der drit tractat, sagt von dem gemeinschaften, so die franzoesisch art mit andern des menschen wesen haben*: "I would like the name to remain, because the disease originated from the French,"[176] and offers several befitting Latin names including "scelus Gallorum,"

[172] Ibid., 177-184.
[173] Paracelsus, "Von Ursprung und Herkommen der Franzosen samt der Recepten Heilung, acht Bücher," in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Sudhoff, vol. 7 (Munich, Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1923), 187: "so ist nun unter allen mane der namen des lands bliben und billich."
[174] Weeks notes that "luxus" "is obviously sexualized" by Paracelsus with the intention of "bringing out the connotation of *luxuria*, "dissipation" (Weeks, *Paracelsus*, 467, n. 5). Proksch stresses that even though Paracelsus attributed the causes of the French disease to the influence of Venus, Jacques de Béthencourt should be credited with the first use of the term venereal in relation to the disease (Proksch, *Paracelsus über die Venerischen Krankheiten*, 14).
[175] Paracelsus, "Von Ursprung und Herkommen der Franzosen," 187. Also see Kuhn, *De nomine et vocabulo*, 177-180.
[176]Paracelsus, "Der drit tractat, sagt von dem gemeinschaften, so die franzoesisch art mit andern des menschen wesen haben," in *Paracelsus Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Sudhoff, vol. 10*: Die große Wunderarznei und andere Schriftwerke des Jahres 1536 aus Schwaben und Bayern* (Munich, Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1928), 439: "Den Namen mag ich bleiben lassen, dann von den Frantzosen ist die Kranckheit entsprungen."

"Leprosorum Gallinorum spurius," "Basiliscus Gallorum," "Gonorrhoea Francigena," etc.[177] He also notes that the disease appeared in Naples.[178] In *Chirurgia Magna* (1536) he writes that the French pox originated among the French people, from the intercourse of a French leper and a "shameless prostitute" with genital buboes and spread to the rest of the world primarily through coitus, but initially through other means as well.[179] In *Vom Ursprung und Herkommen der Franzosen* (1529) he makes no mention of the prostitute, but attributes the French disease to *luxuria* during conception and the influence of Venus, writing that it originated in 1480.[180]

The export of the guaiac wood from the Americas by the Augsburg merchant family of the Fuggers added new overtones to the story of the origins of the French disease. In 1517, Emperor Maximilian I and his chancellor Cardinal Matthew Lang sent a group of medical doctors to Spain to acquire information on the use of the guaiac wood. Nicolaus Pol (ca. 1467 – 1532), the private physician of Maximilian I and later Charles V was a member of the expedition. Upon his return, he composed a work on the use of the tree, which was not published until after his death in 1535.[181] Pol does not touch upon the origins and name of the disease, focusing on diet and preparation of the guaiac bark.

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[177] Ibid., 440-441.

[178] Ibid., 440: "Auf das folget, dass ein solche congregatio in Neapolis gelegen ist, von den die krankheit entsprungen, darumb der Namen vom selbigen her wol geben werden, Neapolitanum crimen."

[179] I have used a later edition. Paracelsus, *Philippi Aureoli Theophrasti Paracelsi Bombast Eremitae, summi inter Germanos Medici & Philosophi Chirurgia magna* (Argentorati [i. e. Basel], 1573), 97: "Morbum Gallicum, iam verbi gratia, consideremus, unde is originem duxerit. Ex coito nimirum Leprosi Galli, cum scorto impudenti, Bubonibus venereis laborante, quod deinde scortum co[n]tagio omnes infecit, qui potea in eius amplexus venerunt, atq[ue] sic ex Lepra & Bubone venereo, Gallica ista Lues orta, per contagium totum perreptavit orbem, quemadmodum ex Equi & Asinae coitu Mulorum genus extitit. Neque vero inter initia alio quam per venereos amplexus contractu, malum contagiosum fuit." Also see Schleiner, *Medical Ethics in the Renaissance*, 184-185. Pietro Mainardi wrote in 1525 that the disease occurred from an intercourse between a leper and a Spanish prostitute, who subsequently infected soldiers in the camp of Charles VIII, whereas in his treatises *De morbo gallico tractus* (1560) Gabriele Falloppio linked the disease to poison with which the Spanish soldiers poisoned the wells during the War of Naples (Healy, *Fictions of Disease*, 133).

[180] Paracelsus, "Von Ursprung und Herkommen der Franzosen samt der Recepten Heilung, acht Bücher," in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Sudhoff, vol. 7 (Munich, Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1923), 189-190.

[181] Nicolaus Poll, *Nicolai Poll, medicinae professoris & Sacrae Caesareae Maiestatis phisici, De cura morbi Gallici per lignum guaycanum libellus* (Venice: Per Ioannem Patavinum & Venturinum de Ruffinellis, 1535). Nicolaus Poll had remained a virtually unknown figure before the publication of a study on his impressive library (which numbered 1350 volumes) by Max Fisch. See Max Harold Fisch, *Nicolaus Pol, Doctor, 1494; with a Critical Text of His Guaiac Tract* (New York: Reichner, 1947). Also see Robert S. Munger, "Guaiacum, the Holy Wood from the New World," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 4/2 (1949): esp. 197-199; Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, The Great Pox, 100.

Preceding the publication of Pol's booklet was a short treatise by the physician Leonard Schmaus, issued in Augsburg, the town of the Fuggers, in 1518. In his booklet Schmaus argued that the disease was not new, but had been known to the inhabitants of the Indies and to German merchants. There was an outbreak of the disease during the particularly hot and wet year of 1494, when Europe became flooded and the disease spread via the hot and humid air. He did not explain the nomenclature of the disease but, too, chose the conventional popular name *morbus gallicus*, noting, however, the various names of the disease used by medical authors, which he took from Niccolo Leoniceno (quoted below), including *elephantiasis*, *lichenas*, *asaphati*, *carbonis*, and *ignis persicus*.[182] The same year, the Augsburg printers Sigmund Grimm, a physician, and Max Wirsung, a merchant and apothecary, published the first, anonymous description in the German language on how to prepare and use the guaiac wood.[183] Without explaining the causes or the name of the disease, they, too, chose to refer to it as "kranckhait der Frantzosen."

Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (1478-1557), a Spanish writer and one of the first colonizers of the Indies, who had taken part in the Spanish war against the French king during his Neapolitan campaign, argued in his *Sumario de historia natural de las Indias* ("Summary Account of the Natural History of the Indies"), written in the early 1500s, but published only in 1526, that the French disease had in fact come from America. He claimed that the disease originated in the "Indies" and was brought to Europe by the crew of Christopher Columbus from their voyage to America. According to Oviedo, upon their return to Spain, members of Columbus's crew were sent to Naples to fight against the French army. While in Naples, the Spanish soldiers infected the local courtesans and through them the disease spread

[182] Leonard Schmaus, *Leonardi Schmaus Lucubratiuncula de morbo Gallico* (Augsburg: Sigismund Grimm, 1518), A2 r - v. Also see, Munger, "Guaiacum, the Holy Wood."
[183] Ein bevert rezept von ainem holtz genannt Guaiacanum (Augusburg 1518). I have used a later edition*: Ain Recept von ainem holtz zu brauchen für die kranckhait der Frantzosen und ander flüssig offen schäden: auß hispanischer sprach zu Teütsch gemacht* (Augsburg: Hanns von Erffort, 1519). See Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 18.

to the Italians and the French: "And because it was at this time that the French arrived with the aforementioned Charles, the Italians called this malady the French sickness, and the French called it the Neapolitan sickness because they had never seen it before the time of that war."[184] One of the chapters in his book advertised the curative powers of the guaiac tree.[185] The American origin theory has been debated ever since; however, the *Urheimat* of syphilis remains undetermined. To quote Stein, "it is unlikely that a definite answer will be provided in the near future."[186]

The disease's Spanish origins story found its reflection in a number of German medical treatises published in the second half of the sixteenth century. The Nuremberg surgeon Franz Renner, in his *Ein new wolgegründet nützlichs und haylsams Handtbüchlein gemeiner Praktik aller innerlicher und eusserlicher Erzney wider die Krankheit der Franzosen* ("A New Well-Reasoned, Helpful and Useful Little Handbook of General Practice of All Internal and External Medicine Against the Frightening Repulsive Franzosen"),[187] published for the first time in 1548, mentions that it was believed that the French disease had been brought to the German lands from France in 1495. However, Renner notes, since then, learned men had demonstrated that in the same year there was a beautiful Spanish courtesan at the court of the Spanish king who infected a great number of highborn men with the disease, including Neapolitans who

[184] Quoted in Quétel, *History of Syphilis*, 35.
[185] Sheldon J. Watts, *Epidemics and History: Disease, Power and Imperialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 130-131.
[186] Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 9. For discussions of the origins of "syphilis," see Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973); Ernst Bäumer, *Amors vergifteter Pfeil: Kulturgeschichte einer verschwiegenen Krankheit* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1976), 38-39; Francisco Guerra, "The dispute over syphilis. Europe versus America," *Clio Med* 13/1 (1978), 39-61; Quétel, *History of Syphilis*, 34-49; Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, trans. Matthew Adamson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 177-179; Anna Foa, "The New and the Old"; Ann Carmichael, "Syphilis and the Columbian Exchange: Was the New Disease Really New?" in *The Great Maritime Discoveries and the World Health*, ed. Mario G. Marques and John Cule (Lisbon: Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública, Ordem dos Médicos, Instituto de Sintra, 1991), 187-190; Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 7-9; Mary Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 68-69; McGough, *Gender, Sexuality, and Syphilis in Early Modern Venice*, 9-12; Kevin Siena, "The Venereal Disease 1500-1800," in *Routledge History of Sex and Body, 1500 to the Present*, ed. Sarah Toulalan and Kate Fischer (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 463-78.
[187] Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 20.

stayed at the time at the court. Later they returned to Naples and when the French king sacked the city during his Italian campaign in 1495, many of his men contracted it. Because of this, many have proposed to call it "Hispanische plag." Renner concludes, that it is clear to everybody that the disease has originated on the "Indian islands" and spread to other areas via air.[188]

Johannes Wittich (1537-1596), a personal physician to the counts of Schwartzburg and the city physician of Arnstadt, in his *Report on the Guaiac Tree* published in Leipzig in 1592, tells a story which is far from the one told a century earlier, but nevertheless bears some resemblance to it. According to Wittich, in 1493,[189] there was a battle for Naples in Italy, "led by the Catholic king against the king of France," known as Charles. At the time of the battle, "Christophorus Colonus" arrived at the camp in Naples with his Spanish troops from India, where they had just discovered the Island of Saint Domingo (where the Guaiac tree grows). With him he brought a great number of Indian men and women. After the Catholic king made peace with the king of France, the armies intermingled, and the Spanish men mixed with Indian women, and the Indian men with Spanish women, and afterwards "the pollution took control" over the Italians, French, and Germans, and thus spread all over Europe. At the beginning this disease was given different wondrous names: the Spaniards, thinking that it had come from the French, called it the French, and the French called it the Neapolitan disease, because they contracted this disease fighting for Naples. The Germans, however, associating themselves with the Spanish, blamed the latter, calling this disease "the Spanish scabies" (*Spanische*

[188] Franz Renner, *Ein new wolgegründet nützlichs unnd haylsams Handtbüchlein gemeiner Praktik aller innerlicher und eusserlicher Erzney wider die Krankheit der Franzosen* ([Nuremberg], 1557), A v-A2 r: "Wie dem allem befindt sich doch gantz lauter vnd klar / das dise kranckheyt ihren ersten vrsprung auß den Insulen inn India hat / alda sie von Natur gantz gemein vnnd nach arth des luffts / mit des Himmels einflus mehrers regiert / dann andern orten vnnd Landtschafften."
[189] The text reads "in 1439," but this is most probably a printing error.

Krätze). Some, however, called it the "weaving Indian plague," and that was also the right name because this disease had been brought from India, Wittich concludes.[190]

As is evident from these examples, the term "Spanish sickness," although widespread, did not overshadow the name *morbus gallicus*. The latter maintained its currency in the German lands and continued to be used alone or alongside "Spanish sickness" all throughout the second half of Early Modern Times.[191] Thus, for example, an early eighteenth-century Styrian Völkertafel, a comparative early modern ethnology, attributes "an eigner" (meaning "his own" or the French disease) to the Frenchmen as their archetypical disease (see fig.1).[192]

[190] Johannes Wittich, *Von dem Ligno Guyac Wunderbawm, Res nova genandt, von der China, ex Occidentali India, von der Sarssa Parilla, von dem Frantzosenholtz Sassafras, und von dem Grießholtz, so man Lignum nephriticum nennet, etc., welche alle zum Theil wieder die flechtende indianische Seuche, zum Theil für die Flüsse, Zipperle, Wassersucht und reissenden Stein, sampt andren eingewurtzelten Kranckheiten, gantz dienstlichen; und wie dieselben, an denen Orten, do sie wachsen, zubereitet und gebraucht werden; biß daher in Druck also noch nicht kommen* (Leipzig: s. n., 1592), B2 v: "Als man schrieb 1439. enstund ein grosser krieg für Neapolis in Italia, welchen krieg der Catholische König wieder den König in Franckreich / Carolum mit dem grossen heupte genandt / führete. Zu derselben zeit kam Christophorus Colonus mit seinen Hispaniern (so die obgemelte Insel sancti Dominici erstlich erfunden) wiederumb aus Indien in das lager für Neapolis, und bracht mit sich viel Indianische Männer und Weiber. Und als der Catholische König mit dem Könige in Franckreich einen friede gemacht hatte / begab sichs / daß das Kriegsvock sich zusammen hielt / und vermischten sich die Hispanier mit den Indianischen weibern / dagegen die Indianischen Männer mit den Spanischen weibern / welche verunreinigung nachmals bey den Italianern / Frantzosen und Deutschen uberhand genommen / und also in gantz Europam sich ausgeteilt hab."

[191] For examples of later usages see Steven Blankaart, "Abhandlung der sogennanten Frantzoss oder Spanischen Pocken-Krankheit" in *Die belägert- und entsetzte Venus das ist, chirurgische Abhandlung der sogenannten Frantzosen* (Leipzig, 1689); Nicolaas Heinsius, Heinrich Elias Hundertmarck, *Schmachtende Venus; oder, Curieuser Tractat von spanischen Pocken und so genanten Frantzosen* (Frankfurt, Leipzig: Christoph Hülsse, 1700).

[192] Reproduced in Franz Stanzel, *Europäer, ein imagologischer Essay* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1998), 14-15.

Fig. 1.: Völkertafel, ca. 1725. Österreichisches Museum für Volkskunde, Vienna.
http://www.altertuemliches.at/files/11_alles_fremd_c_oesterreichisches_museum_fuer_volkskunde_wien.jpg

The term "syphilis" appeared for the first time in the poem *Syphilidis sive de morbo gallico libri tres* (1530) by the Italian physician Girolamo Fracastoro. Fracastoro named the disease after a fictional shepherd, Syphilus, who had angered the gods by defying them. In his study of the etymological origins of the word "syphilis," Walther Pflug comes to a conclusion that it originated from the Arabic word "sufl" which he translates as "die untere Welt" or "weltlich." Based on his research, Pflug concludes that Fracastoro had attempted to coin a term to match its all-encompassing nature as opposed to local, "national" names. By naming the disease "syphilis," Fracastoro gave it a truly universal name, turning it, Pflug suggests, into a "Weltkrankheit."[193] Nonetheless, the "national" names of the disease continued to predominate even after the introduction of "syphilis" in the works of Fracastoro.

And what did the French medical authors think of *morbus gallicus*? According to Hutten, the French, unhappy with the association between their country and such a horrible disease, gave it the name "Neapolitan disease," since they found it insulting that the disease

[193] Walther Pflug, *Syphilis oder morbus gallicus?: Eine etymologische Betrachtung* (Strasbourg: Karl J. Trübner Verlag, 1907), 52.

had been named after them.[194] The French medical author and physician Jean Astruc (1684-1766) in his eighteenth-century compendium on "syphilis" notes that the name was so popular in Italy, Germany, and England, that Jacques de Béthencourt and Denys Fontanon, among the first French doctors to write on the disease, had to use this name and "gave themselves up, so to speak, to the insult."[195] For the purpose of comparison I would like to provide a brief overview of the discussions of the name in the writings of three major early sixteenth-century French physicians: Jacques de Béthencourt, Symphorien Champier, and Jean François Fernel.

The Rouen physician Jacques de Béthencourt in his *Nova poenitentialis Quadragesima* or "A new penitential fast and expiatory purgatory on *morbus gallicus* or *venereus*; with a dialogue between Mercury and the Guaiac Wood, contending with one another to be chosen for the above-mentioned disease"[196] reiterates the theory that diseases are named after various things: after the organ they affect, after its symptoms, after its causes, based on physical resemblance, etc. The disease is called "French" because it manifested itself for the first time in the army of the French King Charles VIII when he was invading the Kingdom of Naples. He, however, offers the name "morbus venereus" saying that he believes diseases should be named after their causes.[197]

Another early sixteenth-century French medical author, the Lyonnaise physician and humanist Symphorien Champier (1471-1539), showed a particular interest in the French

[194] Ulrich von Hutten, *De guaiaci medicina et morbo gallico liber unus*, 400: "Qua occasione Galli ominosam ab se appellationem amolientes non Gallicum hunc, sed morbum Neapolitanum vocant, et contumeliam agnoscunt cognominem sibi pestem fieri."
[195] Jean Astruc, *Traité des maladies vénériennes* (Paris: Veuve Cavelier & Fils, 1755), vol. 1, 17: "cette dénomination avoit tellement pris faveur, que Jacques de Bethencourt & Denys Fontanon, qui parmi les François ont écrit les premiers de cette maladie, furent contraints de s'en servir & de céder, pour ainsi dire, à l'injure." Quoted in Ernest Wickersheimer, "Sur la syphilis aux XV^{e} et XVI^{e} siècles," *Humanisme et Renaissance* 4/2 (1937): 168.
[196] Jacques de Béthencourt, *Nova poenitentialis Quadragesima, nec non Purgatorium in morbum Gallicum sive Venereum; una cum Dialogo Aquae Argenti ac Ligni Guaiaci colluctantium super dicti morbi curationis praelatura. Opus fructiferum* (Paris 1527). A French translation appeared in 1871: Jacques de Béthencourt, *Nouveau Carême de pénitence et purgatoire d'expiation à l'usage des malades affectés du mal français ou mal vénérien; suivi d'un Dialogue où le mercure et le gaïac exposent leurs vertus et leurs prétentions rivales à la guérison de ladite maladie*, ed. and trans. Alfred Fournier (Paris: Masson, 1871).
[197] Béthencourt, *Nouveau Carême*, 31-32.

disease. Champier believed that the French disease was new and caused by the wrath of God, and was involved in a polemic on its origins and causes with Leonhard Fuchs.[198] Even though Champier does not offer a new alternative name for the disease, as Brian Copenhaver notes, "one popular name for the dreaded disease offended Champier's patriotism."[199] The French campaign in Naples was part of Champier's familial history: a relative of the famous French captain François Champier who took part in the expedition of Charles VIII to Naples,[200] he was also related to the illustrious Chevalier Bayard, who took part in the Neapolitan campaign. In a letter to Leonhart Fuchs, Champier, alluding to Deuteronomy 32:11, describes the disease as a punishment for the lack of chastity sent to "spot" the French, Italians, Germans, Englishmen, Danes, the people of Poland, Pannonia, and Spain.[201]

Jean François Fernel (1497-1558), a French sixteenth-century physician and medical author and a noted Paracelsian, for the first time gives the name "lues venerea"[202] to the French pox in his theoretical work *De Abditis Rerum Causis*, or, *On the Hidden Causes of Things* (1548). He does not explain his use of this term explicitly, but mentions that he is mostly concerned with the disease's causes rather than its origins, among the existing theories of which he mentions an "unusual conjunction of stars… pollution of the waters… impurity of some

[198] Brian Copenhaver, *Symphorien Champier and the Reception of the Occultist Tradition in Renaissance France* (The Hague: Mouton, 1979), 77-79.
[199] Ibid., 77.
[200] Paul Allut, *Étude biographique & bibliographique sur Symphorien Champier: Suivie de divers opuscules françois de Symphorien Champier: Lordre de chevalerie, Le dialogue de noblesse et Les antiquites de Lyon et de Vienne* (Lyon: Nicholas Scheuring, 1859), 30.
[201] Symphorien Champier, "Annotatio Campegii in Fuchsium De pudendagra, quam nostri Neopolitanum morbus, Itali vero Gallicum vocant" in *Annotatiunculae in errata recentiorum medicorum per Leonardum Fuchsium collecta. Apologetica epistola pro defensione Arabum composita a Bernardo Unger. Epistola responsiva pro Graecorum defensione in Arabum errata a Symphoriano Campegio composita* (Lyon: Benoist Bounyn, 1533), fol. xxiiii r: "In lege igitur gratiae te[m]pore Caroli octavi Galloru[m] regis Deus profectui nostro semper inte[n]tus, sicut aquila provocans pullos ad volandum, ita & Gallos, Italos, Germanos, Britannos, Danos, Polonos, Pannones, atq[ue] Hispanos, ut altius proveheret, atq[ue] traheret, & ut flagitiosae vitae maculas poenitentia delerent, eos pudendagra excitavit, illorum luxuriam increpavit."
[202] The term "lues venerea" did not gain currency in German literature until the seventeenth century, and for a long time did not result in any vernacular equivalents. The vernacular name *Lustseuche*, originally from the religious vocabulary, became another denomination of the French pox only in the eighteenth century. See "Lustseuche" in *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, ed. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1956), vol. 12, 1350-1351.

prostitute."[203] But, since he classifies the disease as contagious and transmittable by coitus and by contact in general,[204] one can assume that he, just like Béthencourt, gives the disease its name based on the cause of transmission. Charles Sherrington sketches out the subsequent reception of the term "lues venerea" in England and France in the second half of the sixteenth-century, quoting Gottfried Grüner's opinion of Fernel as "the reformer in this matter of nomenclature."[205]

According to Wickersheimer, *morbus gallicus* was rarely used in French medical literature in the fifteenth - sixteenth century, and he found no instances of its vernacular.[206] Wickersheimer and Sudhoff both provide a great many examples of the use of the term "mal de Naples" instead. Karl Sudhoff cites an entry from a French chronicle, in which the disease is referred to as "mal de Naples" with the following explanation provided: "because the French returning from Naples were ill with it… and people say that the Lombards invented this disease to avenge the French."[207] These French examples show that the nomenclature of *morbus gallicus* had its own "national" agenda in France in the early sixteenth century. In this way it was similar to the German lands and one might assume a number of other countries.

As this chapter demonstrates, the name *morbus gallicus* and its vernacular equivalents were accepted as suitable in medical treatises as well as in chronicles. Medical writers did not take *morbus gallicus* for granted, but engaged in debates about the disease's proper name. Those who deemed it appropriate, did so either because in their opinion it indicated that the

[203] Jean François Fernel, John M. Forrester and John Henry, eds., *Jean Fernel's "On the Hidden Causes of Things": Forms, Souls and Occult Diseases in Renaissance Medicine* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005), book II, chapter 14, 615-616.
[204] Ibid., 614-629. Also see Linda Deer Richardson, "The Generation of Disease: Occult Causes and Diseases of the Total Substance," in Andrew Wear, Roger French, and Iain M. Lonie, *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* (London, New York, New Rochelle, al.: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 183.
[205] Charles Sherrington, *The Endeavour of Jean Fernel: with a List of the Editions of his Writings* (Folkestone: Dawson, 1974; 2nd edition), 125-126.
[206] Wickersheimer, "Sur la syphilis aux XV^{e} et XVI^{e} siècles," 169.
[207] Karl Sudhoff, *Aus der Frühgeschichte der Syphilis*, 155. For representations of the French disease in French Renaissance poetry, see Lesa B. Randall, "Representations of Syphilis in Sixteenth-Century French Literature" (PhD Dissertation: University of Arizona, 1999).

disease had appeared for the first time among the French people or because they recognized it as the most popular name of the disease. Even after a new theory of its origins connected to the guaiac bark trade began to feature in medical treatises, in the majority of sources the disease continued to be called *morbus gallicus* and the story about its first appearance among the troops of Charles VIII was reproduced in almost every popular treatise on the French pox. In the next chapter, I will look at how *morbus gallicus* provided a frame for explanations of the disease's theological, astrological, and medical origins, all of which pointed to its French-ness.

CHAPTER 2 | THE FRENCH DISEASE AND ITS MANIFOLD CAUSES

Late medieval medical authors perceived *morbus gallicus* as "French" not only on the basis of its name, but also of its causes. The French-ness of the disease was reflected in the theories of its causality pertaining to such diverse domains as theology, astrology, and the humoral theory. The initial cause of the disease, according to the medieval macrocosmic worldview, was God's will. The next in the hierarchy of causes were planetary motions. Regardless of the critique of divinatory astrology by Marsilio Ficino and his pupil Pico della Mirandola in the fifteenth century, "that which foretells things to come by the stars"[208] continued to play an important role in medical writing all throughout the sixteenth century.[209] Planetary constellations were believed to affect the air (by simply corrupting it or through the air's occult or hidden cause), giving rise to pestilences, which befell on those whose humoral complexions were prone to particular sicknesses.

Following astrology was the efficient cause, one of the causes from the Aristotelean four-fold concept of causality, which, in addition to the efficient cause, included formal, material, and final causes.[210] Galen adopted this four-fold concept for the medical field, stressing that only the efficient cause was important for the treatment of patients, which he further subdivided into three more: *causa contentiva*, *causa antecedens*, and *causa procatarctica* or *causa primitiva*. An example often cited to explain the relationship between these causes is the case of putrid fever: its *causa primitiva* is the excess of heat of the sun, its

[208] S. Jim Tester, *A History of Western Astrology* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1987), 209.
[209] Lynn Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), vol. 5, particularly chapter 10. Tester, *A History of Western Astrology*, 207-213; Sheila Rabin, "Unholy Astrology: Did Pico Always View It That Way," in *Paracelsian Moments*, Gerhild Scholz Williams (Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 2002), 151-162.
[210] Vivian Nutton, "The Seeds of Disease"; Karine van 't Land, "Internal, yet extrinsic: conceptions of bodily space and their relation to causality in late medeival university medicine" in *Medicine and Space: Body, Surroundings and Borders in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Patricia A. Baker, Han Nijdam and Karine van 't Land (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 85-116; Graham White, "Medieval Theories of Causation," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta [http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/causation-medieval – accessed August 22, 2016].

causa antecedens is the change in the humoral complexion (*dyscrasia*), whereas its *causa contentiva* (that is, the disease itself) is the formation of putrid fever from the putrid humors.[211] Since God was generally considered the initial cause of the French disease, I shall start with theological explanations of its origins.

"Deus operatur sedis causis concurrentibus"[212]

Non-medical and medical writers alike referred to God's will as the primary external cause of the French disease. Even though some authors preferred astrological or humoral explanations to religious ones, to quote Nancy Siraisi, "medical explanations of the causes of plague, whether or not they invoked astrology, were, of course, consonant with the idea that the primary cause was God's will."[213] God's agency in explanations of the origins of the French disease has been studied in a great number of works on the French pox.[214] What has escaped the attention of historians are the theological explanations that pointed to its French-ness, and I intend to fill that void in this chapter.

In late medieval medicine, illnesses continued to be seen as collective or individual punishments for transgressing God's laws.[215] To quote Grigsby, "medieval notions of disease

[211] Karine van 't Land, "Internal, yet extrinsic," 105.
[212] Alexander Seitz, "*Ain schöner Tractat von dem Saturnische[n] gschoß der Pestilenz*" in Peter Ukena, ed., *Sämtliche Schriften* (Berlin: Walther de Gruyter, 1970), vol. 1, 149.
[213] Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, 129.
[214] For German material, see: Bloch, *Der Ursprung der Syphilis*, vol. 1, 15-21; Temkin, "On the History of Morality and Syphilis"; Russell, "Syphilis, God's scourge or nature's vengeance?"; Bruce Thomas Boehrer, "Early Modern Syphilis," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1/2 (1990): 197–214; Amundsen, "The Moral Stance of the Earliest Syphilographers;" Tilmann Walter, *Unkeuschheit und Werke der Liebe: Diskurse über Sexualität am Beginn der Neuzeit in Deutschland* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 396-411; Arrizabalaga, "Medical Responses to the 'French Disease' in Europe"; Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 23-29; Tilmann Walter, "Die Syphilis als astrologische Katastrophe. Frühe medizinische Fachtexte zur 'Franzosenkrankheit'," in *Naturkatastrophen. Beiträge zu ihrer Deutung, Wahrnehmung und Darstellung in Text und Bild von der Antike bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Dieter Groh, Michael Kempe, Franz Mauelshagen (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2003): 165-188.
[215] Literature on this subject is vast: e. g., Winfried Schleiner, *Medical Ethics in the Renaissance*, esp. chapter 6; Amundsen, *Medicine, Society, and Faith*; Peter L. Allen, *The Wages of Sin: Sex and Disease, Past and Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 49-60; Neithard Bulst, "Die Pest verstehen: Wahrnehmungen, Deutungen und Reaktionen im Mittelalter und inder Frühen Neuzeit" in *Naturkatastrophen*, ed. Groh, Kempe, Mauelshagen, 145-164; Bryon Lee Grigsby, *Pestilence in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2004); James C. Nohrnberg, "'This Disfigured People': Representations of Sin as Pathological Bodily and Mental Affliction in Dante's Inferno XXIX-XXX," in *Rhetorics of Bodily Disease and Health in*

and morality are not simply metaphors; instead, they were seen as literal truths."[216] Grigsby writes that the connection between disease and sinfulness in Christian medicine originated from the Hippocratic-Galenic concept of sophrosyne. Hippocrates and later Galen argued that diseases stemmed from three causes: the aging of the body, the body's predisposition to certain diseases, and immoderation. Sophrosyne was a spiritual and physical regimen, which kept humors in balance and the body healthy. The Galenic notion of immoderation survived the Christianization of medicine in the medieval times and became partly manifest in the idea that sin caused diseases.[217]

The idea that contagious diseases were manifestations of God's wrath caused by the digression of his laws was rooted in several major biblical passages. Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 27-28, and Exodus 7-12 mention new, previously unheard of diseases inflicted on people for their sins. The novelty of afflictions was regarded as a testament to the true almightiness of God. This religious paradigm found reflection in the early treatises on the French pox, in which it was argued that the French disease was a new disease, unmatched in its loathsomeness with any other known maladies. This "religious" perspective on the French disease was at odds with the view of the Hellenist medical doctors, who insisted that the French disease was in fact an old malady, described already by the Greeks. The story of St. Job was often associated with the French pox, just like it had been associated with leprosy before that, and the pox was sometimes referred to as the disease of St. Job.[218]

Medieval and Early Modern England, ed. Jennifer C. Vaught (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 43-64; Ernest B. Gilman, "The Subject of the Plague," *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 10/2 (2010): 23-44; Matthias Vollmer, "Sünde – Krankheit – 'väterliche Züchtigung'. Sünden als Ursache von Krankheiten vom Mittelalter bis in die Frühe Neuzeit," in *Religion und Gesundheit. Der heilkundliche Diskurs im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 261-286.

[216]Grigsby, *Pestilence in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature*, 17.

[217] Grigsby, *Pestilence in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature*, 15-37. See also: Adriaan Rademaker, *Sophrosyne and the Rhetoric of Self-Restraint. Polysemy & Persuasive Use of an Ancient Greek Value Term* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005).

[218] Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 52-54.

Not all the medical writers concerned themselves with religious causes. Some, like Hans Widmann, acknowledges the role of God in the outbreak of *morbus gallicus*, but maintains that "the physician, as a physician, does not concern himself much with these causes, but rather with the cause that is within the body"[219] and deals only with humoral causes in his treatise. Those who did, mentioned either the general state of sinfulness or various particular sins as responsible for the appearance of the French disease. Thus, for example, Alexander Seitz notes that "according to theologians, the cause of this disease is the rod and punishment of the heavenly lords meant to punish us for our sins so that we would improve the health of our bliss, akin to the Pharaoh's punishment."[220]

The French disease was presented as a warning from Heavens, a plea for moral improvement and the reform of a sinful life. God was sending the French disease not only to punish humankind for their sins but also to give them a chance to purify their souls.[221]A scourge from Heaven sent to encourage people to reform,[222] the disease required prayers and repentance for a successful treatment. "The remedy over nature, that comes down from above, is for man to be in God's graces and cleanse himself through confession and suffering,"[223] writes Grünpeck.

The Edict on Blasphemy, issued both in Latin and vernacular by Maximilian I at the Diet of Worms on 7 August 1495, is an example of treating the French disease as a call for

[219] Quoted in Amundsen, "The Moral Stance," 322.
[220] Seitz, "Ein nutzlich regiment," 8: "anfangs nach meinung der theologi ist dise kranckheit ain růt vnd straff des himelfürsten unser sünd damit ze straffen / da durch wir gebesser zů heil unser seligkeit / als gestrafft ward Pharaon."
[221] See Vollmer, "Sünde – Krankheit – 'väterliche Züchtigung'."
[222] Grünpeck, "De petilentiali," 9: "Quare haud clam est, haec flagitia e deifica voluntate in terram ad terrorem hominum demitti. Quam ob rem etiam haec colluvies, quam malum de Franzos vocant, ex superna vindicta demergi par videri potest."
[223]Grünpeck, "Ein hübscher Tractat," 46: "die ertzney über die natur, die von oben herab koomet, ist, das der mensch sey in der genad Gottes vnd sich reynige durch beycht und bůss."

moral improvement.[224] The edict describes *morbus francicum*[225] as a new, previously unheard of disease, sent as a reminder of the "just punishment of God." The edict provided penalties for cursing and blamed the disease on the decline of religious piety among the citizens of the empire. Darin Hayton sees the edict in the context of Maximilian's social and political reforms aimed at acquiring larger powers in the empire.[226] Bruce Boehrer goes so far as to call it an excuse "to institute close censorship and surveillance of speech."[227] Amundsen criticized Boehrer's view as "revealing much more of the cynical ideology of the former [Boehrer] than about the motives of the latter [Maximilian I]."[228] Whether or not Maximilian's intent was to introduce "censorship" in the empire, he associated the French disease with a need for moral reform among his citizens. Such confluence of religious and political themes was central to contemporary narratives of the French disease. Two notions, obedience and imperial authority, stood at the heart of these narratives, with the French disease acting as their meeting point.

The Politics of God's Wrath

In order to see how the French fit into discussions of obedience and imperial authority in the first German writings on the French pox, one ought to look at the significance of the Neapolitan campaign to Maximilian I. The Italian expedition of Charles VIII was a very sensitive topic for Emperor Maximilian I, since he considered it an obstacle in accomplishing his two most longed-for goals: papal coronation and a crusade against the Turks. In 1486, Maximilian I was elected King of the Romans, when his father Frederick III was still alive. However, he had not been able to reach Rome for an imperial coronation due to complex relations with the papal seat and Italian states. In fact, he had never succeeded in becoming an

[224] I have used the German edition in Sufhoff, *Aus der Frühgeschichte der Syphilis*, 4-7. For the Latin edition, see Fuchs, *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, 305-6. For the discussion of its publication date, see Hayton, "Joseph Grünpeck's Astrological Explanation," 84, note 10.
[225] In the vernacular version the disease is called "*pösen plattern.*"
[226] Hayton, "Joseph Grünpeck's Astrological Explanation," 83-85.
[227] Boehrer, "Early Modern Syphilis," 205.
[228] Amundsen, "The Moral Stance," 313.

emperor *de jure* and had to proclaim himself one in 1508. His successor Charles V was the last emperor to be crowned by the pope (although it took place in Bologna and not in Rome). As a result, throughout his whole life Maximilian had been anxious about the soundness of his imperial title. The imperial pretensions of the French kings only fuelled Maximilian's suspicions.[229]

He was also afraid that the advance of the French would prevent him from leading a crusade against the Turks. Contemporaries saw the Italian expedition in the context of crusading rhetoric, not least because Naples was considered one of the bases from which to launch a successful attack on the Turks and thus a key to Jerusalem. Maximilian's fears were aggravated by the imperial symbolism and implications of Charles VIII's march through Italy. The French propagandists proclaimed the French king a new Charlemagne, sent to liberate Italy and the whole of Christendom from the Turkish threat. During Charles's stay in Florence in 1494, Marsilio Ficino composed an oration in his honor filled with eschatological references and allusions to Charles VIII being the Last Emperor, while the Florentines were the chosen people.[230]

Crusade was a mission Maximilian sought to accomplish throughout his whole life.[231] Already in 1493 Frederick III founded the Knights of the Order of Saint George, a chivalric order that Maximilian supported, considering St. George, the crusaders' saint, his patron saint. Since the middle of the fifteenth century, imperial German authorities had shown the greatest support for papal anti-Turkish politics among the European princes. One of their main reasons was the Turkish threat to the Habsburg hereditary Austrian lands, the southeastern frontier of

[229] See Ranke, *The History of the Teutonic Nations*, 26-28; Robert W. Scheller, "Imperial Themes in Art and Literature of the Early French Renaissance: The Period of Charles VIII," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 12/1 (1981-82), 5-69; Robert W. Scheller, "Gallia Cisalpina: Louis XII and Italy 1499-1508," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 15/1 (1985), 5-60.
[230] Scheller, "Imperial Themes"; Alexandre Y. Haran, *Le lys et le globe: messianisme dynastique et rêve impérial en France à l'aube des temps modernes* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2000), 39-42.
[231] Hermann Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I: das Reich, Österreich und Europa an der Wende zur Neuzeit,* vol. 1: *Burgundisches Erbe und Römisches Königtum bis zur Alleinhenschaft, 1459-1493* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1971), 385-388, 396-398; Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I,* vol. 2, 24, 151-165.

the empire.[232] In April-June 1490 Pope Innocent VIII convened a congress of Christian princes in Rome. He proposed a plan, according to which the Christian powers were to divide into three groups and recapture the Balkans, Constantinople, Egypt, and Jerusalem in three years.[233] Already the *Nuremberg Chronicle* of Hartmann Schedel, published in 1493, presents a "program" of Maximilian's crusade against the Turks: France, Spain, and England will recognize Maximilian as the leader of Christendom. He will lead a crusade to Constantinople and Jerusalem and return via Rome, where all the cardinals and the bishops of the Church will celebrate him. Noble women, wearing flowers in their hair, will throw roses and lilies at him as he marches through the city. The victor, however, will not proceed to the Capitol or the Temple of Jupiter, but straight to the Church of St. Peter, where he will discuss his victory with Pope Alexander VI and prelates of the Church.[234]

Crusading rhetoric was tied to the "Last Emperor" prophecy. According to the late medieval prophetic literature, the Last Emperor was to appear in the world at the end of times to conquer all the enemies of Christianity and unite all countries in order to stall the coming of Antichrist. The Last Roman Emperor prophecy was developed as early as in mid-tenth century, and was based on a variety of New and Old Testament texts. There were two major traditions of the Last Emperor myth. One of them was based on the prophecy of the Cumaean Sibyl, according to which the last emperor was to put an end to wars and establish a golden age with Emperor Augustus seen as exemplary ruler. The other variation of the myth was developed in the prophecy of the Tiburtine Sibyl written in the fourth century CE and in the *Revelations* of Pseudo-Methodius (ca. seventh century CE). According to the second tradition, the Last Emperor was to conquer all the enemies of Christendom and unite it before the end of times.

[232] Normann Housley, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat, 1453-1505* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[233] Ibid., 82-83.
[234] Hartmann Schedel, *Chronicle of the World*, ed. Stephan Fuessel (London: Taschen, 2001), fol. CCLVIII v. See also Ludwig Grote, Dieter Wuttke, "Kaiser Maximilian in der Schedelschen Weltchronik" *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg* 62 (1975): 60-83.

In the thirteenth century, a German pro-imperial polemicist Alexander of Roes popularized this latter theme in his *Memoriale de prerogativa.* According to him, as long as the Last Emperor is alive, he is protecting the world from Antichrist. His enemies threatening the collapse of the Empire are thus endangering the whole of Christendom. The prophecy of the Last Emperor was later incorporated into the crusading rhetoric: the Last Emperor was expected to lead a crusade against the infidels.[235]

Wiesflecker summarized Maximilian's political program in the following way: France had to be subdued with the help of England, Italy and the pope or even annihilated and divided between these countries in order to organize a crusade to Constantinople.[236] However, throughout his rule Maximilian repeatedly failed to persuade the estates to finance his campaigns against France, since they regarded them a matter of his dynastic interests. At the Diet of Worms in 1495, during which the Blasphemy Edict was issued, Maximilian attempted to secure the financial backing of German princes for his anti-French campaign in Italy, but received almost no support.[237]

To win the needed financial backing for his anti-French campaigns, Maximilian I actively fostered anti-French propaganda with the help of Northern humanists, called by Joachim Whaley "a legion of literary propagandists for the Reich, who would use their influence and connections to create a humanist clientele network."[238] The French being the

[235] Franz Kampers, *Die deutsche Kaiseridee in Prophetie und Sage* (Munich: H. Lüneburg, 1896); Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), esp. 293-382; Frank Shaw, "Friedrich II as the 'Last Emperor,'" *German History* 19/3 (2001): 321-339; Anne Austin Latowsky, *Emperor of the World: Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority, 800-1229* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 16-18.
[236] Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I.*, vol. 1, 389.
[237] Alfred Schröcker, *Die deutsche Nation; Beobachtungen zur politischen Propaganda des ausgehenden 15. Jahrhunderts* (Lübeck: Matthiesen Verlag, 1974), 68-77; Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I.*, vol. 2, 53-54; Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, vol. 1, 32-33. Also see Peter Diederichs, "Kaiser Maxmilian I. als politischer Publizist" (PhD. Dissertation: University of Heidelberg, 1932).
[238] Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, vol. 1, 55. See Jacques Ridé, *L'image du Germain dans la pensée et la littérature allemandes: de la redécouverte de Tacite à la fin du XVIe siècle: contribution à l'étude de la genèse d'un mythe*, (Lille: Atelier Reproduction des thèses, Université de Lille III, 1977) vol. 1, 193-198; Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I.*, vol. 1, 389-395; vol. 5, 340-362, 452-459.

targets of the genuine German hatred of the French,"[239] "sworn enemies of the Germans" (*Teutscher Nation abgesagten Feinds*),[240] the French king – "the common enemy of the empire" (*publicus inimicus Imperii*),[241] the kingdom of France – "an evil beast" (*mala bestia*),[242] are but a few epithets used by late medieval German authors. Encouraged by Maximilian, German polemicists spread his ideas. If one accepts Flood's view of the Holy Roman Empire as "always an abstraction, a fiction, a dream,"[243] the discussions on German-ness and French-ness perpetuated by humanists were ensuring the viability of this "dream."

As Darin Hayton has pointed out, Sebastian Brant's *Eulogium* and Joseph Grünpeck's first treatise on the French pox are to be seen in the context of their attempts to win the sympathies of the German princes for Maximilian's actions at home and abroad.[244] At the time of the publication of Brant's *Eulogium de scorra pestilentiali*, discussed in the first chapter, Maximilian I was still in Italy, "among the spotted Ligurians."[245] Deemed by Darrel Amundsen "a political manifesto, a plea to the German people to support their emperor so that this scourge sent from heaven to punish them for their lack of patriotism, be removed,"[246] it was meant to express support for Maximilian's anti-French campaign in Italy and his domestic and foreign agenda as a whole.[247]

[239] Hieronymus Gebwiler, *Libertas Germaniae* (Strasbourg: Johann Schott, 1519), D3 r: "genuinu[m] certe Alem[m]anorum in Gallos odium."
[240] Johannes Aventinus, "Bayerische Chronik," in *Johannes Turmair's, genannt Aventinus, Sämmtliche Werke* vol. 5: "Johannes Turmair's gennant Aventinus Bayerische Chronik," ed. Matthias von Lexer (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1886), book VIII, chapter 48, 495.
[241] Ulrich von Hutten, *Ulrichi Hutteni equitis Operum Supplementum. Epistolae obscurorum virorum cum illustrantibus adversariisque scriptis*, ed. Eduard Böcking (Leipzig: Teubner, 1864), 213.
[242] Ulrich von Hutten, "Quam periculosa res imperium, ad Gallum," in Ulrich von Hutten, *Des teutschen Ritters Ulrich von Hutten Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Ernst Joseph Herman Münch (Berlin: J. G. Reimer Verlag, 1821), vol. 5, 203-204.
[243] Flood, *Poets Laureate*, xlix.
[244] Darin Hayton, *The Crown and the Cosmos*, chapter 2.
[245] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali," 6: "Qui modo scorrosos Ligures agit inter et aegros."
[246] Amundsen, "The Moral Stance," 314.
[247] In addition to Hayton's and Amundsen's works quoted above, the political opportunism of Brant's and Grünpeck's writings on the French pox was observed by Paul Russel in his "Astrology as popular propaganda" and Dieter Wuttke, "Sebastian Brants Syphilis-Flugblatt des Jahres 1496," in Girolamo Fracastoro, *Lehrgedicht über die Syphilis*, ed and trans. Georg Wöhrle (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993): 133.

Both Brant and Grünpeck hinted that the French disease was a direct consequence of the disobedience of the German princes and foreign powers towards the emperor. Brant's poem mentions disobedience to the wishes of the gods to have one emperor as the main reason behind the outbreak of *morbus gallicus*: "And you, Italians, first be obedient to the kind king [Maximilian], for somebody not as good could undermine and destroy you. The die is cast, Rhamnusia is playing and she resents us for wanting less."[248] According to Grünpeck, pride was the cause of the French disease: "The holy doctors say: just like there are three major sins, from which all other sins emerge, so there are three spears, with which men are punished. The three sins are pride, avarice, and unchastity, and the punishments are pestilence, bloodshed, and famine, with which the Almighty God in the old days suppressed the audacity and malice of men, and which he inflicts on us today."[249] It is curious that Grünpeck mentions pride as the cause of the epidemic, since it was one of the main negative characteristics attributed to the French people, as I show in the third chapter. At the same time, its Greek equivalent, hubris, was considered the opposite of sophrosyne or moderation. Overreaching behavior was believed to anger the gods and cause distemper, that is, the disease itself.

Brant notes the disobedience of the German princes: "We notice that few are faithful to the empire and it hardly nowadays pleases the Germans to have an emperor. For they desire to rule themselves in blind confusion..."[250] To them, Brant directs his plea: "O German virtue and vigorous hearts, wish not to act foolishly and abandon your bridles and power to others."[251]

[248] In this context, "for wanting less imperial authority." Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali," 7: "Vosque, Itali, inprimis regem observate benignum / Ne nos deterior subruatm interimat. / "Alea iacta quidem est pernix; Rhamnusia ludit, / Atque indignatur, nos voluisse minus."

[249] Grünpeck, "Ein hübscher Tractat," 33: "Es sagen die heyligen Doctores: gleicherweiss als drey haubtsünd sind, darauss all ander sünde entspringen, also auch sind drey geyseln, domit die menschen gestrafft werden. Die drey sünde sind die hoffart, geyttigkeit, vnkeüsche: aber die straffen sind pestilentz, blůtuergiessen vnd hunger, mit wölchen der allmächtig Got in den alten tagen die törsch vnd bosheyet der menschen bezwungen, auch heüt den tag vns domit peyniget."

[250] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali," 4-5: "Imperio paucos iam cernimus esse fideles, / Vix modo Germanis Caesarem habere placet. / Pro se quisque student caeco regnare tumultu…"

[251] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali scorra," 7: "Nolite, o virtus Germana et vivida corda / Desipere atque aliis linquere frena et opes."

Brant compares the German nobility to the frogs who, unhappy with their king, desired a new one and were sent King Ibis to rule over them, an allusion to one of Aesop's Fables.[252] The fable in question is *The Frogs Asking Zeus for a King* – a popular subject in the German broadsheets of the time. Several years after the publication of this poem, Brant prepared an annotated edition of Aesop's Fables.[253] According to the cautionary tale, frogs asked Zeus to send them a king. In response, Zeus sent them a crane who began eating the frogs. Just as "frogs must have their storks," so people deserve the rulers they have, Martin Luther wrote.[254]

Just like the frogs, "the Germans are striving in this greatest effort to cut off the head [the Emperor], which they themselves have begotten."[255] As a result of the lack of faith on the part of the German princes in the emperor, angry Gods send diseases on Earth: "Thereupon, God the Avenger often sends piercing diseases, and every kind of fever, numerous new monsters, wild beasts and portents, profane miracles and numerous deaths, unknown to nature."[256] At the end of the poem Brant urges everyone to pray for the health of the German emperor and exclaims that he would rather "throw himself under the foot" of Maximilian than be under "a foreign yoke."[257] The poem ends with a display of Brant's patriotic feelings: "So may God and the Mother of God forever protect the German kingdom and the Teutonic glory."[258]

[252] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali scorra," 5.
[253]Sebastian Brant, *Esopi appologi siue mythologi cum quibusdam carminum et fabularum additionibus Sebastiani Brant* (Basel: Jakob aus Pforzheim Wolff, 1501).
[254] Hans J. Hillerbrand, "Martin Luther On Governmental Authority," in *The Protestant Reformation*, ed. Idem (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 61.
[255] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali scorra," 5: "Inter multa quidem, quae me nescire fatebor / Ingenue, hoc unum te prope scire reor, / Germanos vel ad hoc summo conamine niti, / Quo sibi praecidant, quod peperere caput."
[256] Ibid., 5: "Inde adeo in terras mittit deus ultor acerbos /Iam totiens morbos, febris et omne genus, / Tot nova monstra, fera et portenta, ostenta profana, et / Naturae invisam multimodamque necem."
[257] Ibid., 7.
[258] Ibid.: "Sic Germana deus regna atque deifera mater /Perpetua observent Theutonicumque decus."

Brant's message of obedience to the imperial authority can also be discerned in the woodcut that accompanied his poem (fig. 2).[259] It shows Baby Jesus in the lap of the Virgin Mary, shooting cleansing arrows towards kneeling figures covered in ulcers. The arrows correspond to a verse from Brant's poem in which he calls diseases "the spears of God, with which the badness is cleansed, and the sins are scourged and eliminated."[260] The imagery of arrows of disease predates Christianity and goes back to the *Iliad*, in which Apollo is described not only as a healer but also as an archer striking with the arrows of pestilential disease.[261] The idea that God sends purifying "scourges" is also found in a number of Biblical texts, particularly in Jeremiah.[262] The image of spotted syphilitics was not only meant as a visual reminder to look out for the signs of the new disease. It also fulfilled a devotional aspect since the disease and its spots were an indication of sinfulness.[263] The broadsheet's audience was thus to repent their sins and pray to the Virgin Mary and God, as the texts by Brant and Grünpeck suggest.

[259] A modified version of this woodcut also appeared in Joseph Grünpeck's edition of Brant's *Eulogium*: the royal figure is kneeling and is no longer surrounded by an army; a female figure replaces a male figure to the king's right. Darin Hayton has suggested that the replacement corresponded to Grünpeck's argument that women were the agents of the disease - the man in front was thus the women's "most recent victim." Hayton, "Joseph Grünpeck's Astrological Explanation," 94. Quétel attributes the woodcuts to Albrecht Dürer in his *History of Syphilis*, 13. However, I have not found any such reference in other sources.
[260] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali," 7: "Sunt ea tela deûm, quibus exitiale piatur, Atque flagellatur deprimiturque nefas."
[261] Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident XIVe-XVIIIe siècles: une cité assiégée* (Paris: Fayard, 1978), 104-105. See also: Christine M. Boeckl, *Images of Plague and Pestilence: Iconography and Iconology* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2000), chapter 3.
[262] KJV Jeremiah 8: 7-11: "Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good."
[263] See, for example, Jonathan Gil Harris, "Po(X) Marks the Spot."

Fig. 2: Sebastian Brant, "De pestilentiali scorra sive mala de Franzos Eulogium" Wellcome Library (London) Wellcome Images, L0011146.
https://wellcomeimages.org/indexplus/obf_images/2a/b4/8ee2564f3accfe6c2dc576f91ef9.jpg

Brant's work is an example of the *Pestblätter* genre – popular prints that explained the origins of diseases, talked about cures, and were illustrated with images of saints that were believed to help the sufferers cope with diseases. Another example of this tradition is a broadsheet featuring a woodcut by Albrecht Dürer known as the "Syphilitic Man" (fig. 3) accompanied by a poem entitled *Theodericus Ulsenius Phrisius medicus universis litterarum patronis in epidimicam scabiem, quae passim toto orbe grassatur, Vaticinium dicat* ("The medical doctor Theodore Ulsenius from Frisia talks to all patrons of literature about the

prediction regarding the epidemics of scabies which marches across the whole world")[264] and written by the city physician of Nuremberg, the Dutch astrologer and poet Dirk van Ulsen or Theodor Ulsenius (ca. 1460-1508).[265] The Nuremberg publisher Hans Mair printed the first edition of the broadsheet on 1 August 1496; the second edition appeared in Augsburg around 1497.[266]

The identity of the figure in Dürer's woodcut has been at the center of attention of a number of researchers. Gilman suggested that Dürer's syphilitic man is "a German caricature of the sufferer as a fop, as a Frenchman, as the outsider already associated in German myth with sexual excesses and deviances."[267] Colin Eisler, disagreeing with Gilman, argued that the figure in Dürer's woodcut represents a German landsknecht "dressed in a usual uniform of hired Northern foot soldiers characteristic of German or Swiss military."[268] Eisler's interpretation is supported by the fact that mercenaries were often seen as the carriers of the disease.[269] The celestial globe above the figure is meant to represent the conjunction that Ulsenius mentions in the text. On both sides of the figure one can see the coat of arms of Nuremberg, and the sun represents Apollo mentioned in the text.

[264] For a critical edition, see: Conrad Fuchs, *Theodorici Ulsenii Phrisii Vaticinium in epidemicam scabiem, quae passim toto orbe grassatur: nebst einigen anderen Nachträgen zur Sammlung der ältesten Schriftsteller über die Lustseuche in Deutschland* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1850).
[265] Kemper, "Zur Syphilis-Erkrankung des Conrad Celtis"; Santing, "Medizin und Humanismus."
[266] For the history of this print's publication and its attribution to Dürer, see Jane O. Newman, "Luther's Birthday," in *Consuming News: Newspapers and Print Culture in Early Modern Europe (1500-1800),* ed. Gerhild Scholz Williams and William Layher (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2008): 79-110.
[267] Sander Gilman, *Disease and Representation: Images of Illness from Madness to Aids* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 250.
[268] Colin Eisler, "Who is Dürer's Syphilitic Man?" *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 52/1 (2009): 53-6.
[269] Larry Silver, "Pox vobiscum: Early Modern German Art and Syphilis" in *Tributes in Honor of James H. Marrow. Studies in Painting and Manuscript Illumination of the Late Middle Ages and Northern Renaissance,* ed. Jeffrey Hamburger and Anne Korteweg (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 465-76.

Fig. 3: "The Syphilitic Man." *Theodericus Ulsenius Phrisius medicus universis litterarum patronis in epidimicam scabiem, quae passim toto orbe grassatur, Vaticinium dicat.*

Wellcome Library (London) Wellcome Images L0014503.
https://wellcomeimages.org/indexplus/obf_images/10/a6/7f940c365c54242ab83def538012.jpg

Like Brant's broadsheet discussed above, this print has a devotional aspect, which is not immediately apparent. The figure in the woodcut is displaying his wounds in a Christ-like gesture. He is wrapped in a red mantel that could be interpreted as a symbol of the Passions of Christ. At first the gesturing might seem characteristic of Christ at the Judgment Day tradition after the Gospel of St. Matthews 25: eternal punishment to the ones standing to the left, and life eternal to the ones standing to the right. Perhaps, however, it would be more accurate to read this figure in the context of the Man of Sorrows imagery, as Eisler suggests.[270] The ulcers covering the body of the landsknecht were visual warnings for people looking at the woodcut (like the spotted syphilitics in Brant's broadsheet) and a reminder of sufferings endured by Christ for the sins of mankind. The image was meant to compel the audience to pity the sick, find peace in their sickness, and contemplate their sins ahead of the Judgment Day, a portent of which, the French disease, was sometimes presented as one of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.[271] To quote Charles Webster,

> "as in the medieval period, in the sixteenth century medical doctors were prominent players in the apocalyptic dialogue. Through their intervention, new disasters such as syphilis were identified as part of the prophetic scheme and were thereby accorded an even higher profile than they had already attained."[272]

Martin Luther also adopted an eschatological view of the French pox. *Morbus gallicus* occupies a prominent place in Luther's chronological chart *Supputatio annorum mundi*, published for the first time in 1541. In this work, Luther traces world history from the expulsion from the Garden of Eden until 1540, the year that Luther believed to correspond to the year 5500 in world history. Luther's chronology was based on the idea that the history of the earth would last for 6000 years. The year 1540 marked the beginning of the sixth millennium, during

[270] Eisler, "Who is Dürer's Syphilitic Man?" 57.
[271] Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 247-248 et al.
[272] Charles Webster, *Paracelsus: Medicine, Magic, and Mission at the End of Time* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2008), 219.

which Luther expected the Second Coming to happen.[273] In his eschatological view of history, "this new French disease, also called Spanish [disease], brought to the West from the new islands," placed in his chart as occurring for the first time in 1496-1497 was "one of the greatest external signs of the past,"[274] a warning from Heaven of the seventh age to come.

The woodcut accompanying Brant's poem reinforces the importance of Maximilian's Italian mission for his crusading activities. In addition to Mary with Baby Jesus, it portrays Maximilian holding a banner featuring the cross of the patron saint of crusaders, St. George (fig. 2). Thus, the textual and visual narratives of Brant's pamphlet lead the viewers to regard Maximilian's campaign as part of his greater mission to conquer the infidels and fulfill the prophecy of the Last Emperor. The fear of the "Turks" was far greater than that of the French, as the numerous pamphlets of the time demonstrate, and, as Whaley writes, the German estates were more eager to regard the Turks as their enemies than the Italian states and the French kings.[275] Brant's poem thus attempted to transform these anti-Turkish sentiments into support for Maximilian's Italian and anti-French campaigns.[276] These motifs were used by Grünpeck and Brant to gather support for domestic and international politics of Emperor Maximilian I.[277]

Erasmus of Rotterdam also named the disobedience to the emperor as the reason behind calamities afflicting the German Empire, with the French disease being one of them. Erasmus's *Utilissima consultatio de bello Turcis inferendo, et obiter enarratus psalmus 28* ("A most useful discussion concerning proposals for the war against the Turks, including an exposition

[273] James Barr, "Luther and Biblical Chronology," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 72/1 (1990): 51-68.
[274] Martin Luther, "Supputatio annorum mundi," in *D. Martin Luthers Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar: Hoermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1920), vol. 53, 169: "Morbus novus Gallicus alias Hispanicus cepit, Ex Insulis novis repertis in Occidente (ut dicitur) invectus Europae, Unum de signis magnis ante diem Extremum. Et sub isto Maximiliano signa in coelo mirabilia et multa facta sunt, imo et in terra et in aquis, de quibus Christus dixit: 'Et signa magna erunt,' ita ut nullo secuo simul et plura et maiora facta legantur, Quae spem certam faciunt diem illum beatum instare brevi."
[275] Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, 37.
[276] Kurt Stadtwald refers to turning anti-Italian sentiments into "pro-imperial support": Stadtwald, *Roman popes and German patriots*, 52.
[277] Brant also fuses apocalyptic anxieties and need to support Emperor Maximilian in "Vom endkrist" and "Vo abgang des gloube." See Sebastian Brant, *Das Narrenschiff* (Basel: Johann Bergmann von Olpe, 1494).

of Psalm 28"), published in 1530, is an example of *Türkenbüchlein*, popular moralizing texts with religious references focusing on the wickedness at home, rather than among the Turks.[278] Less than half a year before the publication, Sultan Suleiman had besieged Vienna. Even though his attack had failed, it stirred panic among the subjects of the German Empire, cries for a crusade and hopes for an eventual defeat of the Ottomans.

In his pamphlet, Erasmus refers to the Turks and the French disease as scourges sent by God for the sins of humankind. The first way to remove the scourge is to repent the sins and reform the spiritual state at home. God had already tried to warn the people about their actions, but they did not listen:

> God has acted like a faithful physician, always trying some new treatment; he sent among us an unprecedented and incurable form of leprosy, commonly known as the French pox (for no good reason, since it is rife in every land), striking humanity with a truly dreadful scourge. So far from this horrible disease teaching us chastity and sobriety, we have actually turned it into a joke: it has apparently reached the point where, among your courtiers, who suppose themselves such fine and witty fellows, anyone not infected with the disease is considered a boor and a bumpkin. How else can I describe this than as farting at the Lord, and, as the saying goes, giving him the finger as he seeks to correct us?[279]

Erasmus writes that some princes do not want to participate in the war against the Turks, since they think "it has nothing to do with the Christian religion but that it is merely a struggle for the throne of Hungary between the two princes."[280] The princes fear the growing authority of the emperor who had recently defeated the French, since "the pleasures of power often know no restraint."[281] As a result, some of them voice their support for the Turkish prince, saying that "it is easier to be a Christian under Turkish rule than under the Christian princes or the Roman pontiff."[282] "Seeing the Scythians and the Icthyopagi found the Roman Empire's yoke

[278] See John Bohnstedt, "The Infidel Scourge of God: the Turkish Menace as seen by German Pamphleteers of the Reformation Era," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 58/9 (1968): 1-58.
[279] Erasmus, "De Bello Turcico", in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. and trans. Dominic Baker-Smith (Toronto, London: University of Toronto Press, 2005), vol. 64, 212.
[280] Ibid., 256.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid., 257.

insufferable, shall we choose to place our necks beneath the Turkish yoke?," – he asks.[283] However, to Erasmus, a war against the Turks is not an answer, since no one can defeat a "hydra with innumerable heads."[284] The answer, instead, is to repent the sins and reform oneself. The princes, too, shall reform, become more obedient, and cut down on expenses such as "parades, presents, banquets, elaborate embassies, games, and gambling," either contributing money to the campaign against the Turks or offering alms to God.[285] Thus, just like Brant and Grünpeck before him, Erasmus used the crusading theme and the French disease to criticize the lack of civic obedience and corrupt morals as a whole.

The rhetoric used by Grünpeck and Brant in their writings on the French disease is similar to the anti-French and pro-imperial rhetoric in the works of Ulrich von Hutten, urging the German princes to support their emperor in liberating Italy from foreigners. While in Italy, Hutten witnessed a different episode of the Italian Wars.[286] After Hutten had heard about Maximilian's retreat from the Duchy of Milan he, while still in Italy, set out to produce a poem glorifying the emperor as the liberator of Italy. His *Epistola Italiae ad divum Maximilianum Caesarem Augustum Ulricho Hutteno equite Germano autore* was printed in Strasbourg in late summer of 1516, after Maximilian had already returned back to the German lands.[287] It is written in the form of a poem addressed by Italia to Emperor Maximilian. Suffering from the actions of the French and Spanish kings, and of the pope, Italia urges the Holy Roman Emperor

[283] Ibid.
[284] Ibid., 260.
[285] Ibid., 256.
[286] On 1 January 1515, upon the death of Louis XII, Francis I became the new king of France. One of the first goals of the new ruler was the reconquest of the Duchy of Milan and the lands in the Veneto, previously captured by Maximilian I. The French secured their victory at the Battle of Marignano that took place in September 1515, and on October 11 Francis I and his troops made their entry into Milan. Two months after Francis I's departure from re-conquered Milan, Maximilian I attempted to win the Duchy of Milan back with the help of the Swiss troops, but retracted in the last moment without even laying siege. See Mallett and Shaw, *The Italian Wars*, 116-138.
[287] Shortly afterwards, at the request of Ulrich von Hutten, Eobanus Hessus composed a fictional reply to Italia from Maximilian. Hutten's poem and Hessus' reply were printed together in a booklet in November 1516 in Erfurt. For the history of the publication of *Epistola Italiae ad divum Maximilianum Caesarem Augustum Ulricho Hutteno equite Germano autore* and Hessus's reply, see: Vredeveld, *The Poetic Works of Helius Eobanus Hessus*, vol. 3, 352-369.

to liberate and protect her from rapacious foreign rulers: "My country will be free either through you or not at all. You are my lord; your word is my command. With you as my prince, I shall raise my head proudly above the subjugated peoples, just in the days of yore."[288] The poem compares Maximilian with Charlemagne and "the two Ottos" and calls him "the head of Rome" (Rome is "the head of the world"). Italia praises Maximilian's concern for domestic politics (a view not shared by his princes): "Ah, how often I feared, when you were so intent on German affairs, that you might, in some measure, be distracted by love for your homeland!" "Germany is indeed valiant in war, but Italy offers greater wealth. Such riches are certainly a prize fit for the bold of heart," she continues.[289]

Eobanus Hessus was the author of the fictitious response of Maximilian to Italia. In the letter, Maximilian enumerates his past exploits against the "perfidious Frenchmen"[290] and other nations, but states that he cannot be as victorious as the two Ottos since the circumstances have changed greatly:

> In those days, Germany did not have so many sovereign princes, nor had that villainous contempt for the emperor cropped up as yet. The fatherland obeyed the emperors harmoniously; no one carved out a personal state for himself… And because everybody fancies himself an emperor, I myself retain nothing but the empty name.[291]

However, in his treatise on the use of the Guaiac tree for treating *morbus gallicus*, Ulrich von Hutten, the "defender of fatherland,"[292] refers to the French as "the most outstanding people, it would be hard to find a more civilized and hospitable [people]."[293] He notes that the disease occurs more often among the German people than among Frenchmen

[288] Vredeveld, *The Poetic Works of Helius Eobanus Hessus*, vol. 3, 374-375.
[289] Ibid., 378-379.
[290] Ibid., 404-405.
[291] Ibid., 400-404.
[292] Richard Ernest Walker, ed. and trans., *Ulrich von Hutten's Arminius. An English Translation with Analysis and Commentary* (Oxford, Bern, Berlin: Peter Lang, 2008), 22.
[293] Hutten, *De guaiaci medicina et morbo gallico liber unus*, 400: "…gentis clarissimae et qua vix alia hoc tempore ciuilior aut hospitalior…"

and Spaniards,[294] due to the former's immoderacy in food and drink which he proclaims the main reason for God's wrath. His righteous indignation over gluttony and drunkenness of the German nobility occupies the longest chapter in his treatise.[295] He also accuses the Church of making use of the French disease for their enrichment by inventing new saints and collecting money for indulgences, but nevertheless urges his readers to pray to St. Rochus,[296] whom he considered to be the true patron saint of syphilitics.[297] Hutten urges the nobility to abandon their indulgence in expensive foreign food and drinks, which causes the French pox, and turn to the more important tasks: the conquest of the Turks and other infidels.[298] The latter can only be accomplished by defeating the French, who are distracting the emperor from his main tasks as the Christian ruler. Thus, Hutten's rhetorical goals are similar to that of Brant, Grünpeck, and Erasmus. All of them associated the French pox with the vices of the princes and their lack of support of Maximilian's campaigns on the international arena.

The French are to blame

Not everybody agreed with Hutten regarding the role of the French in the causes of the French disease. In fact, he was the only one who defended them so openly. As I already mention in the first chapter, many claimed that the French disease had befallen the French people first. Joseph Grünpeck writes that the disease was sent to the French from Heaven: "Sent to the Gauls from the citadel of the immortal gods, [it is] now spreading to all the corners of the world and becoming dreadfully fierce in many regions."[299] Alexander Seitz, in his *Ein nutzlich*

[294] Ibid., 403: "Omnibus in Italia et Hispania, ac sicubi præterea sobrii sunt homines, mitior, nobis propter crapulam & victus intemperantiam, ut divitius inhæret, ita comprehensos infestissime torquet, acerbissime adfligit."
[295] Ibid., chapter 20. I review this chapter of Hutten's treatise in more detail in Chapter 3.
[296] Lewis Jillings, "The Aggression of the Cured Syphilitic," 5-7; Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 28-30.
[297] Hutten, *De guaiaci medicina et morbo gallico liber unus*, 401.
[298] Ibid., 470.
[299] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali," 8: "Insuper novum genus morbi, naturae invisum, minaci ferocitate, quod e deorum immortalium olim arce in Gallos demissum fuit, omnes mundi cardines enititur, pluribus in regionibus atrocissime etiam incrudescens."

regiment wider die bösen Franzosen, wrote that the French disease originated in *Alvernia (*Auvergne) in 1491.[300]

In his third treatise on the French disease *Libellus Josephi Grünbeckii de mentulagra alias morbo gallico* (1503) Grünpeck draws an explicit connection between the disease and the Italian campaign of Charles VIII:

> From the western shores of Gaul, a cruel, deplorable and terrible evil crept over to them, and nothing as atrocious, nothing as horrible and disgusting has ever been known or seen in the world. First, this disease stopped in *Insubria*, similar to a hurricane stirred by piled up clouds. Then, moving across the atmosphere, pushed by the power of the winds, it raged through the whole province of Liguria. As a horrible and pestilential scourge, it descended upon the whole French army which King Charles VIII had happened to gather there, driven by his ambition and caprice to conquer Italy ... From there the poison, directed by contagion, spread across the entire Liguria and other regions of Italy, Germany and Spain and all other parts of the world.[301]

Grünpeck is confident that the French were the first to be affected, because he himself examined the first victims of the epidemic. As we learn from his *Libellus*, while traveling around Italy Grünpeck happened to be in the "Etruscan fields" (Tuscany) where he heard from the locals that two powerful armies stationed nearby were about to fight "for the liberation of Italy."[302] Grünpeck rushed to the enemy camp "to see if this shameful disease [*morbus gallicus*] was the companion of soldiers."[303] There he observed the signs and symptoms of this new disease. The battle for the liberation of Italy, however, did not take place due to a sudden suspension of military actions between the French on one side and Maximilian I and the Duke

[300] Alexander Seitz, "Ein nutzlich regiment wider die bösen Franzosen," 8: "Dan alß solich kranckheit anfienge in Alvernia deß jars vierzehen hundert nüntzig und ein jar..."
[301] Grünpeck, "De Mentulagra," 51: "...Inter ceteras obrepsit ab occidentali sinu, gallico tractu, cuiusdam infirmitatis tempestas, adeo saeva, atra et foeda, quod ea nihil quicquam atrocius, terribilius et sordidus in mortalium regione visum vel auditum est. Collegit autem se primo super Insubriam instar procellosae nubis in ingentem acervum, deinde per magnum coeli spatium, totam Ligurum provinciam, vi ventorum sparsa horridam et pestiferam veneni procellam passim in Gallorum exercitus (quos ibi forte Caroli, eorum regis, ambitio et Italiae subigendae libido conscripserat) deorsum egit... Hinc infectio (contagione duce) per totam Liguriam ceterasque Italiae oras, Germaniam et Hispaniam et omnes mundi partes grassata, humanum genus mirum in modum afflixit et hodie dirissime excruciat."
[302] Ibid., 55: "Ex silva equidem in duabus fere horis ad Hetruscorum agros, praecipuos novitatum cultores, pervolavi. Ibi fama obviam duos potentissimos exercitus non procul ab hoc loco pro Italiae libertate pugnaturos nunciavit."
[303] Ibid.," 56: "ista foeda lues militum comes foret."

of Milan, "who sought to repel the French attacks on Italian liberty"[304] on the other side. This is how Grünpeck later described this episode in his *Historia Frederici et Maximiliani*:

> Meanwhile, King Charles of France conquered Naples and encumbered Rome and Milan with great fear and horror. A union between Duke Louis of Milan and Venice [was concluded], and [Maximilian] went to Italy to approach the French camp. However, when he arrived in Liguria, he waited for a long time in Genoa, Pisa and at the sea for the help against France from entire Italy [to come], but did not see it. In fact, he was tricked and forgotten. Via the Pennine Alps he returned to the German land and never again trusted the Italians.[305]

The idea that the French were the first to be infected with the disease and reasons for it can be found in Grünpeck's first treatise, particularly in his translation in prose of Brant's poem, the meaning of which he slightly changed in his translation. As a result, Brant's original poem and Grünpeck's translation offer rather different ideas about who is to blame for the outburst of the illness. As Grünpeck tells his readers: "And as though same Latin verses were not translated to German word for word, some still have been changed, and each can ponder over by himself, why this happened."[306]

One of the first verses altered by Grünpeck is Brant's sentence, quoted above, on the disobedience of the German princes as the reason behind the outbreak of the French disease. Grünpeck deliberately changed the text to state that the French (and not the Germans) were the ones displeased with being ruled by the emperor: "As we know, few are faithful to the Roman Empire and it hardly pleases the *French* to have an emperor, and everyone strives to rule

[304] Grünpeck, "De Mentulagra," 56: "Tunc forte induciae celebratae: hostes utrimque, hinc ex. Caroli, Gallorum regis, legionibus, qui Italiam suae ditioni subiugare conabatur, illinc vero ex Divi Maximiliani, Caesaris et Insubrium Principis, exercitibus, qui Francorum insultus a libertatis Italiae cervice propulsare laborabant, ad colloquii, victus aliorumque commerciorum facultatem admiserunt."

[305] Joseph Grünpeck, *D. Joseph Grünbecks Kaysers Maximiliani I. Geheimen Raths und Beicht-Vatters Lebens-Beschreibung Kayser Friederichs des III. (V.) Und Maximilians des I.*, trans. Johann Moser (Tübingen: Pflicke, 1721): 69: "…dieweil aber hat Carolus König von Franckreich Naplas eingenomben / Rom uundt Mailandt mit grosser forcht uund schrecken bekhümbert / von dem hertzogen Ludwieg von Maylandt uund von dem Venedigern / unnd umb verbindtnuß / und eintzog in wellische Landt wieder die Frantzösischen parthien angellanngt wordenn / allß er aber in Liguram khomben ist / unnd ein zeitt land zue Janua / Pisa / uund am Möhre gelegen verhoffet inn hielff von dem gantzen Italiam gegen Frankreich zuezekhumben / das aber nit geschehen / sondern er ist betrogen unnd verlassen gewesen hat er seinen weg über das Poechen Bierg inn deutsche lande wiederumb angenomben / unnd den Wallen niemehr vertrautt."

[306] Grünpeck, "Ein hübscher Tractat," 48: "...vnd ob die selbigen lateinischen versse nit also von wort zů wort getütschet, auch etlich verwanndelt worden sind, mag ein yegklicher ermessen bey jm selbs, warumb das beschehen sey."

himself in the blind race of the world."[307] Several passages later Grünpeck alters the meaning of yet another of Brant's verses. As referred to above, Brant's original text reads: "Among many things which I admit I do not know, I believe I know one thing well: the Germans are striving in this greatest effort to cut off the head [the Emperor], which they themselve have begotten."[308] Grünpeck translates it as: "Among many things I know I do not understand, I think there is one that is not unknown to you: as you know, the *Latinates* with great effort are trying to cut the head that the Germans have elected."[309]

Being placed between the two altered passages, both the allusion to the Greek-Roman relations and Brant's metaphor of the frogs from Aesop's fable are transformed into an allusion to relations between Italy, France, and the German Empire. The Roman Empire becomes associated with the German Empire, and Greece with Italy: "Greece wishing to revolt against the Roman government, was lost and in ruins suffers from a cruel yoke."[310] Like Greece, which had never been satisfied with the rule of the Roman Empire since its conquest in 146 BCE, was eventually conquered by the Turks in 1453, Italy was ravaged by the French, after several Italian states reached agreements with France to the detriment of imperial interests.

Another medical author who compares the Neapolitan campaign of Charles VIII to Roman history is Otto Raut. In his *Pronosticum*, Raut draws a parallel between the Goths (who once "inflicted diseases and famine" upon Rome) and the French people, "those most

[307] Grünpeck, "Ein hübscher Tractat," 28-29: "Dem römischen reych sind wenig, als wir wissen getreü; es gefelt nun kaumm den Frantzosen einen keyser zehaben, vnd ein yeder arbeyt, im selber zů regieren in dem blynden weltlauff."
[308] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali scorra," 5: "Inter multa quidem, quae me nescire fatebor/ Ingenue, hoc unum te prope scire reor, / Germanos vel ad hoc summo conamine niti, / Quo sibi praecidant, quod peperere caput."
[309] Grünpeck, "Ein hübscher Tractat," 29: "Vnder vil dingen, die ich bekenn, das ich jr nit verstee, wölche dir, als ich vermeyn, nicht vnbekannt sind, waysst du, das die Wälhischen nach dem mit grossem fleiss stellen, domit sy jnn das haubt, dass die Teutschen erwelet haben, abschneyden."
[310] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali scorra," 5: "Graecia Romanas cupiens desciscere habenas, / Perdita restoris fert dira iuga mali." and Grünpeck, "Ein hübscher Tractat," 29: "Als Kriechenlannd begerte vnder sich zebringen die römischen zügel, ist doch verloren vnd leydet des boesen regierers hertte joch…"

inconstant and fickle people who are presently unfortunately troubling Italy from all sides,"[311] and after whom the disease was named. Raut seems to suggest that the Italian campaign of Charles VIII was akin to the sack of Rome by Alaric I, and the French to the Barbaric Goths.

Grünpeck presents the French disease as a moral consequence of the Italian expedition of the French king Charles VIII. Given their disobedience to the emperor, it is not surprising that the disease would first strike the army of the French King, blinded by his desire to conquer Italy (*Italiae subigendae libido*).[312] As such, the French are akin to Shepherd Syphilus from the famous poem by Girolamo Fracostoro, *Syphilis sive morbus gallicus* (1530) after whom the disease got its present name.[313] To give a short summary of the plot, on a particularly hot summer day shepherd Syphilus laments that the Gods are not taking proper care of his flock. In despair, he rejects his faith and choses to venerate his king instead. After the king hears what Syphilus had done, he orders everyone to abandon the gods and venerate him in the same manner in which Syphilus had been worshipping him. Syphilus's actions anger the Sun, who hurls rays of light at the earth, which makes the air corrupt and causes the disease to appear. Syphilus appears to be the first to be infected: "The first man to display disfiguring sores over his body was Syphilus, who by the shedding of blood instituted divine rites in the king's honour and altars in the mountains sacred to him; he was the first to experience sleepless nights and tortured limbs, and from this first victim the disease derived its name and from him the farmers called the sickness Syphilis."[314] Just like Syphilus, the French had angered the gods and thus a terrible malady was inflicted upon them. But if Syphilus was guilty of blasphemy, the French

[311] Otto Raut, "Pronosticum ad annos domini millesimum quingentesimum secundum et tertium," 299: "Quum itaque nostris temporibus sentiamus nimiam aquarum abundantiam et auram humidam, timendum nobis est (uti naturalis loquar) de illo gallico morbo pestilentia et fame, quemadmodum evenit Romanis ea tempestate, qua Gothi Italiam bellis infestabant: inde ingens orta est fames et pestilentia. Quod ego saepius mecum volvo, cur Italia praecipue non simile accidit, quod vix differetur, quum quemadmodum olim Gothi, nunc Francigenarum inconstantissimus et mutabilis populus, proh dolor, Italiam undique perturbat."
[312] Grünpeck, "De Mentulagra," 51.
[313] On the influence of earlier origin theories of the French disease on Fracostoro, see: William Spates, "Mythopoeia and Medicine: Decoding Fracastoro's Syphilis sive Morbus Gallicus," *Studies in Literature* 47/1 (2010): 225-247.
[314] Girolamo Fracostoro, *Fracastoro's Syphilis*, trans. Geoffrey Eatough (Liverpool: F. Cairns, 1984), 102-103.

committed a sin of a political nature – excessive pride that resulted in disobedience to their emperor.

The sins that turned the French into the first culprits of the disease were not of sexual, but of political nature: according to Brant and Grünpeck, it was their *superbia* and *avaritia*, the lustful desire of the French to conquer Italy and the rejection of the authority of the German emperor. The choice of pride over sins related to sexuality is not surprising, since the understanding of the French pox as a predominantly venereal disease did not develop until the 1520s, and in the first decades of the disease sexual intercourse was described as only one of the many ways to contract it.[315] According to Arrizabalaga, French, and Henderson, only half of the early treatises on the French pox mentioned that the disease could be contracted through sexual activity[316] and for "some early writers maintaining an active sex life, even if regulated, formed a core component of their therapeutic regimen for the French Disease."[317] At the same time, "the venereal nature of the disease would not typically have caused those who contracted it to be regarded as guilty of an act of sexual immorality for which they were being punished."[318] As Tilmann Walter shows, in the first decades of the outbreak of the French pox unruly sexuality was not considered the major sin to cause the French disease: "for many forms of sin with unchastity being only one of them the notion of a pervasive 'pestilence' was a sufficient warning from Heavens."[319] The sins of pride and disobedience, named by Brant and Grünpeck as the triggers of the epidemic, were considered far graver than sexual corruption.

Another interesting example of a peculiar confluence of religious and political themes in contemporary perceptions of the French disease is found in the chronicle of Materne Berler

[315] Jean de Béthencourt is considered the first to use the term "mal venerien." For the periodization of the history of the French disease, see Temkin, "On the History of Morality and Syphilis."
[316] Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 35.
[317] Arrizabalaga, "Medical Responses to the 'French Disease,'" 48.
[318] Amundsen, "The Moral Stance," 312.
[319] Walter, *Unkeuschheit und Werke der Liebe*, 410.

(?-1555) from the Alsatian town of Rouffach, written between 1510 and 1530.[320] Dating the outbreak of the disease to 1494, Berler writes that the disease manifested itself for the first time in Naples in 1495 during the campaign of Charles VIII. He writes that "since it originated and seized the French people, it is called *frantzossen*." In his opinion the disease was inflicted on the French as a punishment for the violation of the sacred institute of marriage by Charles VIII:

> I believe that this mighty punishment from God occurred, because King Charles did not content himself with Margaret, the daughter of the Roman king, who was to be wedded to him and who was with him, but instead out of great lust removed from his father-in-law and by force married noble Anna von Britannia.[321]

In 1491, Charles VIII of France married Anne of Brittany, who had been married by proxy to Maximilian I from 1490. The wedding was made even more scandalous by the fact that, in order to marry Anne of Brittany, Charles VIII had to break his engagement with Margaret of Austria, the daughter of Maximilian I, who was promised to him by the Treaty of Arras concluded in 1482.[322] Maximilian, furious about the French king's disregard of the agreements initiated what Wiesflecker calls a "*Presserkrieg*."[323] The German humanist Jacob Wimpfeling composed a poem "Contra Carolum Regem Gallorum" which he sent to the French humanist Robert Gaguin.[324] In the poem, Wimpfeling accused the French king of kidnapping the wife of the German king and ended it with the following words: "If it is true that in Heavens there are those who see such things, the wrath of god the protector is on its way."[325] The two exchanged several more letters, in which Gaguin defended Charles VIII as "the most innocent

[320] "Materne Berler" in Auguste Molinier, *Les Sources de l'histoire de France - des origines aux guerres d'Italie (1494)*, vol. 4/1 (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1904), 218.
[321] Adam-Walther Strobel and Louis Schneegans (eds.), *Code historique et diplomatique de la ville de Strasbourg* (Strasbourg: G. Silbermann, 1843), vol. I, part 2, 105-106: "Solche grosse straff gottes acht ich daher erwachssen syn, das diesser kunig Carolus sych nitt liesz benugen mitt desz romyschen kunges tochter Margaritha die ym vermehelt was uns bey ym hett, sunder ausz grossem geitz synem scheweher Maximiliano abtrang und nam mitt gewalt seyn eegemahel das frewblim Annam von Brittania..." Reprinted in Fuchs, *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, 346-347. Also see Joseph Knepper, *Nationaler Gedanke und Kaiseridee bei den elsässischen Humanisten: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Deutschtums und der politischen Ideen im Reichslande* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1898), 204.
[322] Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I*, vol. 1, 323-344.
[323] Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I.*, vol. 5, 456.
[324] Otto Herding and Dieter Mertens, eds, *Jacob Wimpfeling Briefwechsel* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1990), vol. 1, 180-181.
[325] Ibid., 181: "Esse tamen superos coelo, qui talia curent. Si verum est, properat vindicis ira dei."

king of France."[326] Maximilian reacted to the wedding by writing a polemical work against the French published in both Latin and German, detailing the misdeeds of Charles VIII and accusing him of kidnapping his wife and of treacherousness (*Verrätterei*) and artfulness (*Listigkeit*). He questioned the Christian qualities of Charles VIII and wrote that the French would eventually be punished for their sins.[327] He ended his letter with a plea to the German princes to help him avenge this attack on the empire and the German nation and not leave the guilty party who had averted his attention from the most important task – fighting the Turks – unpunished.[328] Around the same time a popular song about the kidnapping of the bride and the trample of the sacrament of marriage began to circulate, which concluded with an appeal to Frederick III and the Christian princes to render help to Maximilian.[329]

Given the religious overtones of Maximilian's anti-French rhetoric, it is not surprising that only several years later the French disease was portrayed as part of a similar politicized religious narrative by Grünpeck, Maximilian's future biographer, and by a number of other contemporaries. They incorporated politicized explanations of the causes of the disease into the tradition of attributing contagious diseases to the wrath of God, thus demonstrating that the disease was justly called "French." Conceived as a punishment inflicted on the French people

[326] Ibid., 184. Also see Schröcker, *Die Deutsche Nation*, 54-8; Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I*, vol. 5, 456-57; Susanne Wolf, *Die Doppelregierung Kaiser Friedrichs III. und König Maximilians (1486-1493)* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2005), 272-281.

[327] *Antwurt zu handthabung vnd behaltnuß der Römischen Künigklichenn Maiestat eeren vnd glympfens, auf der frantzosen falsch erticht vnd vngegründt ausschreiben in nachuolgenden henndeln* ([Augsburg], not before 1492.05), [8] r: "… sollend ir dennoch gedencken das die götliche straff. so der almechtig: got die ye lenger verzeucht das er die ye swerer vnd schörpfer vber euch senden wirdet."

[328] Ibid., [8] v: "Es sind auch willig vnd vrbuttig all fürsten: herre[n] vnd stet des heilige[n] Römischen reichs vnd teůtscher nacion jr leib vnd gůt dartzů strecken damit sy disen vncristenlichen handel schand vnd laster an irem herre[n] dem Römischen kunig vnd teůtscher zungen jnen alle[n] zů schmach vnd verachtung beschehen: straffen vnd außreytten: den der allmechtig gütig got: gnad hilf gunst glůckh vnd sig verleyhen welle. Da[n]n sein götliche allmechtigkeyt vnd gerechtigkeit wirdet ordne[n] vnd schicke[n]: damit die volbringer vnd vrsachgeber solicher vncriste[n]licher handlung: die auch die macht vnd daz here so die Römisch kůnigklich Maiestat wider die türckhen zůziehen geordent hette: von den tůrckehen abzůwenden: vnd wider sich zůziehen: vrsach geben: vngestrafft nit beleiben."

[329] "Vom Fräulein von Britanien" in Rochus von Liliencron, *Die historischen Volkslieder der Deutschen vom 13. bis 16. Jahrhudert* (Leipzig: Verlag von F. C. W. Vogel, 1866) vol. 2, 299: "O Kaiser Friedrich, ich euch sag, / hört dise jämerliche klag, / es trift an euer flaisch und blůt! / Sparent nit euer zeitlich gůt / zu hilf dem durchluchtigen künig Maximilian, / der das ist euer geborner sun! / Ir habt zů bieten bei der acht, / daß der glaub nit werd geschwacht. / Allen cristenlichen fürsten sölt ir schreiben, / daß ir kainer auß wöll beleiben! / Ich beweg alle cristenliche künig gůt, / die da find von cristenlichen plůt!"

for their disobedience to the emperor, which then spread to other countries and most importantly to the German lands, the disease helped strengthen the postulate that relations between Maximilian and the French were threatening not only the Habsburg dynasty but also all the German subjects of the emperor.

Jupiter's children

God's will was considered the primary cause of the French disease, whereas celestial bodies were seen as the next in the system of causation.[330] Astrology became part of the medical tradition in the thirteenth and fourteenth century through the works of the Arab astrologers Albumasar and Mashallah, popularized by Pietro d'Abano, Pierre d'Ailly, and others. The foundation of their teachings was the notion that planets governed individuals and even entire countries. At the same time, each profession, human organ, age, etc. was subject to a ruling planet. On the basis of astronomical observations and calculations, personal horoscopes and prognostications were produced that contained forecasts for individuals and countries on such diverse spheres as politics, health, agriculture, and fortune.

Astrology often featured in plague tracts – a genre which developed in the middle of the fourteenth century with the advent of the Black Death. These tracts, also known as *consilia*, gave concise, practical advice on the signs, symptoms, and treatment of diseases and were often written at the request of local authorities or patrons who found the need to make information about contagious diseases available to their subjects. One of the earliest plague tracts was the report of the Medical Faculty of Paris commissioned by King Philip VI of France in October 1348. The report focused on astrological causes of the plague and discussed various treatments for it. According to the Paris doctors, the plague originated in the celestial conjunction of

[330] To establish a hierarchy of causes, Joseph Grünpeck, for example, states in his treatise that planets do not act on their own referring to Jeremiah X. "Tractatus de pestilentiali," 9: "Astris ipsis denegata est potesta iuxta illud Ieremiae X. A signis coeli nolite timere, quae gentes formidant, quoniam dominus misit pestem in Israel." See Hayton, "Joseph Grünpeck's Astrological Explanation."

Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars which occurred on 20 March 1345. The conjunction of these planets believed to be particularly portentous and to bring, in addition to plague, the great calamities of hunger and bloodshed.[331]

Similarly to the authors of plague *consilia*, early chroniclers of the French disease regarded great conjunctions as the astrological cause of the French disease, even though they had different opinions on the planets involved and the chronology of celestial events. Brant traces the origins of the disease to the great conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter without specifying the date of the celestial event.[332] Grünpeck's explanations of the disease coincide with Brant's, but differ in detail. According to Grünpeck, the epidemic was caused by three consecutive astrological events. The conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the sign of Scorpio, ruled by Mars that took place on November 25, 1484 was the first astrological event to cause the epidemic. Together with a solar eclipse that took place in March 1495 and a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the sign of Scorpio in November 1495, this conjunction was a portent of wars, famine, and pestilence.[333]

Bartholomäus Steber's astrological explanations of the origins of the French disease are similar to that of Grünpeck. He too regarded the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Scorpio, ruled by Mars, which took place in 1484, along with the solar eclipse of March 1495, as the celestial causes of the epidemic. At the same time, he added several more events that triggered the epidemic: a lunar eclipse in the house of Leo which took place on 20 July 1487 and also involved Mars being in the sign of Virgo and Saturn in the sign of Scorpio; and the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn which took place on 23 February 1494 with Saturn being in

[331] Tester, *A History of Western Astrology*, 185-188.
[332] Grünpeck, "De pestilentiali scorra," 6: "Fit, quotiens propriis Saturnus ab aedibus exit / Inque Iovis migrat morbifer ille domos. / Nam tum reliquias duri senis atque maligni / Iupiter expellit, purgat et evacuat."
[333] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali," 10-20. Hayton maintains, that Grünpeck "shamelessly plagiarized" from d'Ailly's work in his treatise on the French Disease. See Hayton, "Astrology as Political Propaganda," 67.

the sign of Pisces. The French disease, Steber writes, was a result of Saturn's celestial motion, which occurs every 300 years.[334]

Alexander Seitz also considered the movements of Saturn to be the cause of the French disease.[335] In 1521, he elaborated his position in a treatise on the role played by Saturn in causing pestilences.[336] Otto Raut wrote that the epidemic was brought by the conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars in the house of Scorpio, with Mars dominating the conjunction, but offers a different date of the occurrence – 25 October 1485.[337] Hock Wendelin suggested that the disease originated from the great conjunction of Jupiter, Mars, Sun, and Mercury in the house of Libra that took place in October 1483 and a number of numerous subsequent celestial events.[338] According to Lorenz Fries, the French disease was caused by several conjunctions starting from the conjunction of Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, and Sun in the sign of Libra in October 1483, which was followed by several celestial events in November. The latter took place in the signs of Taurus and Scorpio which indicated that the disease affected not only the genitals (governed by Scorpio), but also the throat and intestines (governed by Taurus).[339] Ulrich von Hutten notes that astrologers derive the cause of the French disease from the conjunction of Saturn and Mars ("which happened not long before"), and from two eclipses of the sun.[340] Magnus Hundt does not specify the conjunction that caused the French disease, but notes elsewhere in his treatise that conjunctions of Saturn and Mars and eclipses of the Sun cause pestilences.[341]

[334] Steber, "A mala Franczos, morbo gallorum, praeservatio ac cura," 122.
[335] Seitz, "Ein nutzlich regiment," 8-9: "...sy Saturnus kummen in das zeichen wider / so sind in den zeichen widern und visch etlich stern alwegen etlich wunderbarlich geschichten und kranckheit stiftende so der Saturnus darin hauset..."
[336] Seitz, "*Ain schöner Tractat von dem Saturnische[n] gschoß der Pestilenz.*"
[337] Raut, "Pronosticum ad annos domini millesimum quingentesimum secundum et tertium," 295.
[338] Hock, *Mentagra sive tractatus de causis, praeservativis*, 9 r.
[339] Lorenz Fries, *Epitome Opusculi*, B3 r-v.
[340] Hutten, *De Guaiaci medicina et morbo gallico liber unus*, 404: "Huc astrologi ex syderum motu ratiocinati in coniunctionem, quae fuit pauloante Saturni et Martis, ac binas solis eclipses causam eius reiecerunt...."
[341] Magnus Hundt, *Eyn kurtzes und sehr Nutzbarlichs Regiment wider die schwynde und erschreckliche krankheit der Pestilentz* (Leipzig: Valten Schumann, 1529), A3 v: "die zusamen lauffung der Planeten Saturni vnd Martis / vnd fisternis der Sonne."

The conjunction of 1484 also features in Albrecht Dürer's woodcut the "Syphilitic Man." The poem it was printed with contains exactly one hundred hexameters and, as Catrien Santing shows in her article, was meant to impress Ulsenius's refined audience of fellow humanists with his knowledge of classical mythology and command of Latin. The narrator finds himself at a meeting of physicians who cannot agree on a correct dosage of medicine against the disease. Getting tired of their conversation, he falls asleep and meets Apollo, the god of medicine who speaks to him about the new disease. He tells the author that there are two treatments available: herbs and poetry. Apollo is also the god of poetry (a hint that Ulsenius, like Apollo, is versed both in healing and poetry). Apollo explains the astrological and humoral causes of the disease and names reddish swelling behind the ears, rash, painful itching, and breaking pustules as the signs of the disease. According to Ulsenius, the epidemic occurred when the planet Saturn met his son Jupiter in the house of Scorpio. Since such conjunctions had always been considered a sign of disasters, and since there also had been a conjunction of Mars and Venus, heavenly bodies were to fall on Earth, monsters were to be born, and it was to rain with stones. Due to the fact that Mars was the ruling planet of Germany, the latter was to be particularly affected by the disease.[342]

Like Theodore Ulsenius, Grünpeck also believed that Germany was governed by Mars, whereas the French were governed by Jupiter and England by Saturn. Since these three planets were involved in the great conjunction which caused the epidemic, the disease spread to the countries they governed: "Then this disease descended upon Italians, who are thought to have imported it from the French, then Mars, the ruler of that conjunction, carried it to the Germans. Afterwards it poured over to the Englishmen and other servants of Saturn."[343]

[342] Santing, "Medizin und Humanismus," especially 143-144.
[343] Grünpeck, "De pestilentiali," 20: "Fluxit deinde morbus iste ad Italos, qui videntur participare cum Gallis, tum ad Germanos transvexit Martis in illa coniunctione principatus. Manat postremo ad Anglicos atque alios Saturni ministros."

These explanations were based on the notion of the "children of planets" – a belief that each country and social or political group, as well as each individual, had a particular connection with one of the seven planets (the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn), which determined their destiny, character, and complexion.[344] This motif, developed in a number of astrological treatises in the Middle Ages, became widespread in the German lands in the early fifteenth century through popular writings of various genres. [345]

Contemporaneous with the outbreak of the French disease, *Tractus de Complexionibus* by a certain Johannes of Neuhaus (Magister Joannis de Nova domo) published in 1500 in Leipzig, develops the motif of the children of the planets. Nothing is known about the author, and Werner Seyfert suggested Johannes of Neuhaus as the printer of the incunabula, and a thirteenth-century French philosopher and theologian John of Paris as its author.[346] The first lines of the text read: "The variety of complexions follows from the variety of their causes. This proposition is known in itself because under this or that [stellar] constellation there is this or that complexion, character, color, figure, and disposition."[347] The text offers a taxonomy of humors and characters of people and ends with the following statement: "The Saxons, and the Frisians, the Poles and the Thuringians all have the same customs, because they are brought up in the same location and under the same constellation."[348]

[344] Lynn Thorndike, "De Complexionibus," *Isis* 49/4 (1958): 398: "The word, complexion, which today has become restricted to the appearance of the face, in the middle ages had the more general meaning of one's physical constitution of bodily makeup as a whole."
[345] Dieter Blume, "Children of the Planets: the Popularization of Astrology in the 15th Century," *Micrologus* 12 (2004): 549-563; Geoffrey Schamos, "Astrology as a Social Framework: the 'Children of Planets', 1400-1600," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture* 7/4 (2013): 434-460.
[346] Werner Seyfert, "Ein Komplexionentext einer Leipziger Inkunabel (angeblich eines Johann von Neuhaus) und seine handschriftliche Herleitung aus der Zeit nach 1300," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin*, 20/3 (1928): 272-299. For a list of extant manuscripts and history of author's attribution, see Sven Limbeck, "Warum Maulwürfe melancholisch und Fische phlegmatisch sind. Zu Verfasser, Überlieferung und Inhalt spätmittelalterlichen Komplexionlehre des Erfurter Magisters Johannes Parisiensis," in *Pharmazie in Geschichte und Gegenwart Festgabe für Wolf-Dieter Müller-Jahncke zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Christoph Friedrich and Wolf-Dieter Müller-Jahncke (Stuttgart: Wiss. Verl.-Ges., 2009), 317-336.
[347] Seyfert, "Ein Komplexionentext einer Leipziger Inkunabel," 286: "Complexionum varietas sequitur varietatem suarum causarum. Haec propositio nota est in se, quia sub alia et alia constellatione alia et alia complexio et mos et color et figura et dispositio."
[348] Ibid., 299: "Et ideo Saxones omnes sunt eiusdem moris et Frisones et Poloni et Thuringi, quia in eodem loco et ab eadem constellatione sunt nutriti."

A major source for this theory was *Tetrabiblos* composed by Claudius Ptolemy in the second century CE. Ptolemy divided the world into four zones of influence of stars and zodiacs that defined the characters of individuals and entire peoples inhabiting them. *Tetrabiblos* offers an elaborate system of effects that the planets have on their "subjects" at different stages of their motion. Thus, for example, the subjects of the ascending Jupiter exceed in the hot and the moist, while the subjects of ascending Mars show "an excess of the warm and dry."[349] Ptolemy's ideas widely circulated in the Middle Ages: quoting the translator of *Tetrabiblos* to English, it "enjoyed almost the authority of a Bible among the astrological writers of a thousand years or more" after it was written.[350]

The *Great Conjunctions, Nations, and Peoples* and *Letter Concerning Eclipses* of the Arab-speaking Jewish philosopher Mashallah or al-Mansur e al-Mamun, introduced into the Latin-reading world through a twelfth-century translation usually attributed to John of Seville, was another popular vehicle of this motif, enjoying great success throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It contains a whole book on the effects of governing planets on countries and professions: thus, Libra and Saturn ruled over the Christian land, Scorpio and Venus over the Arabs, Capricorn and Mercury over India, Leo and Mars over Turkey, etc.[351]

Whereas there were almost no variations in the characteristics of the planets and their children throughout the centuries, the attribution of planets to countries and peoples differed from one author to another, largely because the original sources – the Greek and Arab astrological writers – had a different geo-political picture in mind while composing their works.

[349] Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans. Frank Egleston Robbins (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940), Book III, 11.
[350] Ibid., III. On the reception of *Tetrabiblos* in the Later Middles Ages, see Tester, *A History of Western Astrology*, 206-208; Darrel Rutkin, "The Use and Abuse of Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos in Renaissance and early Modern Europe: Two Case Studies (Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Filippo Fantoni)," in *Ptolemy in Perspective: Use and Criticism of his Work from Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Alexander Jones (Dordrecht, New York: Springer; 2010), 135-149.
[351] I have used the first printed edition of the work. Johannes Hispanus, Joachim Heller, *Epitome totius astrologiae* (Nuremberg: Ionnis Montani & Vlrici Neuber, 1548), F1 r.

The connection between Saturn and the Jews was perhaps one of the most enduring.[352] The idea that France was governed by Jupiter and England was governed by Saturn is present in astrological treatises that predate the advent of the French pox. Among them is an anonymous anti-French prognostication, composed in England and housed at the Bibliothèque Nationale, devoted to the appearance of a comet in 1368.[353]

The "children of the planets" tradition not only provided rationales for the appearance of the French disease in the countries, but also constituted the underlying principle of the means of its advancement. In a passage in the Latin version of his first treatise, omitted from the vernacular text, Joseph Grünpeck reflects on how the disease spread across Europe, suggesting that it was passed on not from one person to another, but via celestial forces:

> In our days it [the French disease] crept not only through Italy, but also through Germany, Sarmatia, Bohemia, Thrace and Britain and crawled into all the corners of the world where it has never been heard before… How can it happen that this disease was passed on to so many other peoples than the French when until now the French had suffered frequently from it, without ever being confined within city walls as to be prevented from venturing to other kingdoms? But rather as they became dispersed throughout the world they nevertheless did not spread this disease to other people, a disease which otherwise whirls as an arrow from one to another. Because of this, experts in astrology investigating the hidden cause of this affliction in detail, produced many worthy writings which I will not discuss here.[354]

Grünpeck invokes the astrological doctrine of nativity, adding that all the people who had Jupiter as their ruling planet and at whose birth the sign which had been present during the

[352] Eric Zafran, "Saturn and the Jews," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 42 (1979): 16-27.
[353] "Incogniti astrologi predictio rerum incognitarum ex aspectu cometae caudatae, quae apparuit in Francia ad plagam occidentalem anno domini 1368 maxime que Lutetiae Parisiorum videbatur post solis occasum," in Hebert Pruckner, *Studien zu den astrologischen Schriften des Heinrich von Langenstein* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1933), 209: "Quia Saturnus, qui dominationem suam per multum longum tempus habuit causa sue influencie ad honorem regis Anglie et suorum, ad presens se applicat declinere. Et Iupiter planeta regnivolus fortunam significator substetit omnino Saturno in compleccionibus hominum contrarius, qui in regno Francie suum dominium et influenciam poscidet, qui per multum longum tempus causa Saturni fuit in detrimento et infortunato."
[354] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali," 17: "Namque quomodo fieri potuit, ut idem morbus de Gallis ad tot gentes transveheretur, quum eo antehac Francigenae saepius laborarint, nunquam tamen moenibus urbium pressi fuerunt, ut alia regna petere prohiberentur? Quinimo per orbis regiones sicut iam disseminati fuerunt, haud tamen id malum in alios homines miserunt, quod iam ab altero in alterum, tamquam sagitta, torquetur. Quamobrem astrorum peritissimi, latentem huius aegritudinis causam acutius investigantes, plura scripta digna protulere, quae hic non est recensendi locus." Proksch understood this passage as an indication that the French disease was a disease that had occurred to the French in the past. However, Günpeck calls the disease "new" in other numerous instances.

conjunction of 1484 was present and a sun eclipse took place, were more prone to the French disease.[355]

Pere Pintor (c. 1423/4-1503), one of the seven personal physicians of Pope Alexander VI and a source for Otto Raut, published two treatises on *morbus gallicus* in 1499 and 1500.[356] Like the authors discussed above, Pintor also believed that one of the causes of the French disease was astrological. According to him, the disease was defined by various conjunctions from 1483 (when the disease was formed) to 1494 (the year of its appearance), with the participation of Saturn in the sign of Scorpio. Pintor also argued that the disease spread to the countries whose ruling planets and signs participated in the conjunctions.[357] According to Ulrich von Hutten, astrologers considered the areas in the North and in the West particularly affected by the celestial events that caused the outbreak of the French pox, since the first eclipse took place in the sign of Aquarius (governing the North), and the second in the sign of Pisces (governing the West).[358]

The Year 1484

Returning to the conjunction of 1484, the reference to this year in Dürer's woodcut and in the works by Grünpeck, Brant, and Steber is certainly not accidental. As Dieter Wuttke has noted,[359] this date was made popular primarily through *Pronosticatio zu teutsch* written by the astrologer and polemical writer Johannes Lichtenberger, "a late-medieval 'bestseller'" in the words of Dietrich Kurze.[360] The prognostication was originally published in Latin in

[355] Ibid. For a comprehensive discussion of Grünpeck's astrological explanations, see Hayton, "Joseph Grünpeck's Astrological Explanation," 85-94.
[356] On Pintor, see Arrizabalaga, French, Henderson, *The Great Pox*, 112-144.
[357] Ibid., 125.
[358] Hutten, *De guaiaci medicina et morbo gallico liber unus*, 404: "magis autem septentrioni id destinatum, propter aquarii signum, quo prior eclipsis inciderit, et occidenti propter pisces, quod posterior attigerit."
[359] Wuttke, "Sebastian Brants Syphilis-Flugblatt," 135-136.
[360] Dietrich Kurze, "Popular Astrology and Prophecy in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *'Astrologi Hallucinati.' Stars and the End of the World in Luther's Time*, ed. Paola Zambelli (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 183. For an excellent and very detailed analysis of Lichtenberger's prognostication and its

Heidelberg in 1488 and was shortly afterwards translated into the vernacular. During the next eleven years, from 1488 to 1499 it was reprinted fourteen times in Latin, German, and Italian. By 1525, there were nine further editions in Italy.[361] During the Reformation, the prognostication became associated with Martin Luther. One of the predictions in Lichtenberer's text concerns a "minor prophet" to be born in 1484, who would introduce changes into the Christian doctrine and laws. Even though Luther was born in 1483, many still believed that Lichtenberger's text foreshadowed his birth, which assured extra popularity during the Reformation.[362]

Lichtenberger's text is a digest of several prognostic traditions, "not an integral corpus but rather as a quarry from which writers could, according to design, lift relevant set-pieces and suitable motifs."[363] Its compilatory nature was the reason it enjoyed such great popularity. Among Lichtenberger's sources were the classic and popular works of the Church Fathers, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, a number of Greek and Arab astrologers, Sybilline prophecies, Alexander of Roes's *Memoriale de prerogativa imperii Romani*, and the Joachimite prophetic literature, as well as more recent astrological treatises – *Prenostica ad viginti annos duratura* of Paul of Middelburg published in 1484 and the *Tractatus de Cometis* by an unknown author from 1474. Despite accusations of plagiarism, which appeared after the first publication of the prognostic on 1 April 1488, Lichtenberger's work continued to be one of the most widely circulated books at the time.[364]

themes, see Heike Talkenberger, *Sinflut Prophetie und Zeitgeschehen in Texten und Holzschnitten astrologischer Flugschriften. 1488-1528* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1990), 56-110.

[361] Dietrich Kurze, "Prophecy and History: Lichtenberger's Forecasts of Events to Come (from the Fifteenth to the Twentieth Century): Their Reception and Diffusion," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 21 n1/2 (1958): 65.

[362] Bob Scribner, "Luther Myth: a Popular Historiography of the Reformer," in idem, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London and Roceverte: The Hambledon Press, 1987), 308.

[363] Helga Robinson-Hammerstein, "The Battle of the Booklets," in *'Astrologi Hallucinati,' Stars and the End of the World in Luther's Time*, ed. Paola Zambelli (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 132.

[364] Kurze, "Popular Astrology and Prophecy," 182-183.

Lichtenberger's predictions are centered upon three celestial events. The first event was the major conjunction of November 1484 when Saturn in the sign of Scorpio suppressed Jupiter, which was under the influence of Mars. According to Lichtenberger, a "horrible" eclipse of the sun in 1485 and a conjunction of the malign planets Saturn and Mars will follow this conjunction on November 30, 1485. However, the consequence of the 1484 conjunction will be juxtaposed by the conjunction of Jupiter with Mars.[365] These are the same three conjunctions that Grünpeck and Steber mention as the astrological causes of the French disease. The 1484 major conjunction is also present in Dürer's woodcut. Grünpeck, Steber, and Dürer were not the only contemporaries who regarded the French disease as the disease forecasted by Lichtenberger; a sixteenth-century reader of the *Pronosticatio* noted in his copy that *malafrantzos* was indeed the epidemic predicted by the author.[366]

By tracing the origins of the French disease to the celestial events mentioned in Lichtenberger's prognostication, Grünpeck, Steber, Raut, and Dürer placed *morbus gallicus* in the context of other predictions of Lichtenberger, which are full of patriotic references. Born in Rhineland-Pfalz around 1440, Johannes Lichtenberger, after spending several years in Bavaria at the court of Duke Louis the Rich, most probably served as the court astrologer of Emperor Friederick III for several years. Loyal to the Habsburg dynasty, Lichtenberger composed a prognostication that rebuked the enemies of the Empire and glorified the emperor.

Lichtenberger's prognostication offered predictions about foreign countries and territories within the German Empire, ending with more detailed predictions of events to come for every several years. It calls King Vladislaus II of Bohemia "the scourge of Christendom" (*Geißel der Christenheit*), accuses *Kätzerei*, the Jews, and Turks of wrongdoing, and praises Matthias Corvinus, the King of Hungary, for his efforts in battling the Turks. The prophecies

[365] Johannes Lichtenberger, *Pronosticatio zu theutsch* (Heidelberg, [Heinrich Knoblochtzer], 1488),
[366] Jonathan Green, *Printing and Prophecy: Prognostication and Media Change, 1450-1550* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 153 and n. 7, 242-243.

regarding the French-German relations are particularly relevant to our topic.[367] One of the first pieces in the text is the prophecy of Bridget of Sweden in which the author laments the sorry state of the Church and identifies the French as one of the main enemies of the Church.[368]

According to another prophecy, "a king with a beautiful countenance"[369] will triumph after defeating the French: "A Frenchman will temporarily win over the Germans. But in the end the French will be defeated and the king with beautiful countenance will reign over all the lands… and will hold the monarchy and will rule alone from the East to the West."[370] Lichtenberger explains that many connect this prophecy to Friederick III. "But I think it will be Maximilian," he writes.[371]

Allusions to the prophecies of Bridget of Sweden are followed by references to those of Brother Reinhard the Lollard and are accompanied by a woodcut depicting a wolf and two eagles. The larger eagle represents Friedrich III, while the smaller is the symbol of his son Maximilian. According to the revelations of Reinhard, the wolf in this image is "die erde von occident" and thus represents France.[372] Most probably, the tree alludes to the prophecy of a branch that was believed to prevail over the world and humble even the pope.[373] Thus, this image is an allegorical representation of the struggle between the French and German rulers for dominion in Christendom. Later on in the text, Lichtenberger urges France to unite under the banner of the German eagle and bring peace to the world.[374]

[367] For national sentiments in late medieval German prophetic literature, see Dietrich Kurze, "Nationale Regungen in der spätmittelalterlichen Prophetie," *Historische Zeitschrift* 202/1 (1966): 1-23; Frances Courtney Kneupper, *The Empire at the End of Time: Identity and Reform in Late Medieval German Prophecy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), especially chapter 7 ("German Identity in Prophetic Thought").
[368] Lichtenberger, *Pronosticatio zu theutsch*, B3 r.
[369] Ibid., B4 v: "eyn konig mit eym küschen angesicht."
[370] Ibid., B4 v-B5 r: "Eyn Frantzose wirt vberwintlich vil dütschen flagen. Zum letzsten wirt der Frantzose vnderlygen vnd der küsche am angesicht wirt regnere an allen enden wirt ingen in das nestgyn sy / ner müter des adlers vnd wirt halten die monarchie das est alleyn halten das regiment von oriente biss in occident."
[371] Ibid: "Aber ich wil ess sy Maximilianus." Also see Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in Later Middle Ages*, 347-52.
[372] Ibid, B5 r.
[373] Frank Borchard, *German Antiquity in Renaissance Myth* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1971), 257.
[374] Johannes Lichtenberger, *Pronosticatio zu theutsch*, D3 v-D4 r.

Covering such diverse topics as the Bohemians and the Turks, as well as different aspects of astrology, magic, and religion, Lichtenberger's prophecies did not deal with the French inordinately, however, anti-French sentiments played a significant role in their characterization. In addition to all the things mentioned above, Lichtenberger writes in his *Pronosticatio zu teutsch* that, as much as "disorderly acts of lust with the youth" are spreading in the Italian lands, "unchaste love" is common among the French.[375] Kurze established that interest in Lichtenberger's *Pronosticatio* in the German lands was particularly high at the time of "crisis and unrest" and wars with France. Six different editions were published in 1620-1621, at the beginning of the Thirty Years War; five more appeared between 1686 and 1691. In 1813, *Pronosticatio* was published again as a separate booklet together with a pamphlet against Napoleon.[376]

In 1508, Grünpeck published his most successful prognostication, *Speculum Naturalis*, which was called by Robinson-Hammerstein "the crucial adaptation for the more popular transmission" of Lichtenberger's work.[377] A testament to the popularity of the *Speculum* is an anecdote told by Paul Russell. In 1508, Emperor Maximilian wrote to the humanist Willibald Pirckheimer asking for a copy of the *Speculum Naturalis*. The latter replied that all the copies had been sold out.[378] Robbinson-Hammerstein succinctly summarized the message of Grünpeck's prognostic:

> The estates of the Empire, after the defeat and demise of their former leader, Berthold von Henneberg, are being encouraged to continue with their efforts at Empire Reform in the interest of the 'common good.' At the same time the practica was published as a means of stimulating popular moral support for these endeavors.[379]

[375] Ibid., G4a: "wie vyl vnordentliche werck der begerlichkeyt mit iungen vnd umbfahen werden geubet in welschen lande wie vyl der by den Frantzosen vnd sust vyl vnreyner liebe werden vben die mans personen glichsam die frauwen."
[376] Kurze, "Prophecy and History," 65.
[377] Robinson-Hammerstein, "The Battle of the Booklets," 133. Grünpeck personally knew and admired Johannes Lichtenberger, considering him his teacher. Kurze, "Popular Astrology," 180.
[378] Russell, "Joseph Grünpeck," 169.
[379] Hammerstein, "The Battle of Booklets," 134.

Grünpeck writes that his prognostication is meant to make people shake off their slumber to see the state of sinfulness they had fallen into.[380] This is a reference to Romans 13:11: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." God has been sending wars, famine, and pestilence upon earth to make people think of their sins and become pure through repentance, but the sinners have failed to adhere to His admonitions, and He now sends celestial signs to Germany, "the heart or the head of Christendom,"[381] hoping that they would come to their senses. Like in his treatises on the French disease, Grünpeck stresses that God's will is the primary cause of all calamities and "wondrous signs," while the role of the stars is secondary.[382] The conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars is again mentioned by Grünpeck as the conjunction of the outer planets that often brings large-scale disasters.[383] He mentions seven more conjunctions and makes predictions for 1516-1524.[384]

Order is one of the most important concepts in Grünpeck's prophecy. If people follow all the spiritual, natural, and secular laws, God will stop sending them calamities. For a peaceful and prosperous Christendom, all countries should follow their missions. Grünpeck evokes a metaphor of a body denoting the Christian world, with different countries representing its organs. The three main "members" of Christendom are the German Empire, Italy, and France. Italy (responsible for the Church) is its head, the German lands with the domain of imperial power represent the heart, whereas France (the liver of the body of Christendom) is meant to

[380] I have used a later edition. Joseph Grünpeck, *Ein spiegel der naturliche[n] himlische[n] vnd prophetisch[e]n sehungen aller trübsalen/ angst/ vn[d] not/|| die über alle stende/ geschlechte/ vn[d] gemainden der Christe[n]heit sunderbar so in dem sibe[n]den Clima begriffen/ in kurtzen tagen geen werden* (Augusburg: Hans Schönsberger, 1510), A2 r.
[381] Ibid, B v.
[382] Grünpeck, *Ein spiegel*, A5 v: "Natürlich / ist nichts wunderbarlichers künfftig dan[n] die wůrckungen die darauß entspringen mögen / ist aber sach das die nicht auß der werckstat der natur / sunder auß dem götlichen willen (das dan[n] auh baß zů glauben ist) außfliessen..."
[383] Grünpeck, *Ein spiegel*, A4 r.
[384] Talkenberger, *Sinflut Prophetie*, 110-145; Robinson-Hammerstein, "The Battle of the Booklets," 134-7; Hayton, *The Crown and the Cosmos*, 64-65.

help the two countries in their good deeds.[385] To ensure that the Ship of St. Peter is on the right course, these countries should fulfill their roles, and all other nations should follow them.

Sometime around 1529, Paracelsus published his own reflections on Lichtenberger's prophecies concerning the French entitled *Auslegung über ettliche Figuren Joh. Liechtenbergers aus dem ersten und dritten teils* ("Interpretation of several figures of Joh. Lichtenberger from the first and third parts"). It was around the same time that he composed his writings on the French disease. Whereas the majority of authors treat the theological, astrological, and humoral causes of the French disease separately, Paracelsus offers a unified theory of its causality where all these three elements are presented as intrinsic and interdependent and which is characterized by "an alarmist air of natural and historical catastrophe, a common vision in this time haunted by nightmares of cosmic disaster and divine punishment," to quote Andrew Weeks.[386]

According to Paracelsus, the disease originated as a punishment for lechery (*hürerey*) and befell first the "most lecherous[387] people that is the French".[388] He states that just as "lechery is the Babylon among all the sins, so is the French [disease] the Babylon among all the diseases. Such is proven by evidence from astrology, theology, and all the workings of nature, that a certain levity is among the Gauls, which infected all the other nations."[389] Venus

[385] Grünpeck, *Ein spiegel*, C4 v: "Welsch landt von des stathalters wegen Christi des haubt / Teütsch landt von des Kaisers wegen / von dem alle löbliche feüchtikait der beschirmug vnd behaltung der Christenhait ist außfliehen / das hertze / Franckreich von der nähe vnd der gerechtikait weg[e]n darauß baiden landen hilff vn[d] trost entspringe[n] mag / die leber."
[386] Andrew Weeks, *Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 136.
[387] "Hurisch" in Jacob Grimm, Wilhelm Grimm, Moritz Heyne, *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1984), vol. 10, 1967.
[388] Paracelsus, "Das (angebliche) Dritte Buch der Großen Wundarznei vom Jahre 1537" in Karl Sudhoff, ed., *Sämtliche Werke. Medizinische, naturwissenschaftliche und philosophische Schriften*, vol. 10/1 [*Die große Wundarznei und anderes Schriftwerk des Jahres 1536 aus Schwaben und Bayern*] (Munich, Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1928), 446: "Seit der süntflut her beweist sichs dass die hurerei erger vnd schentlicher nie gewesen ist als zu den zeiten der Frantzosen ursprung, auch von dem huresten volk, welches die Frantzosen seind, erstanden."
[389] Ibid.: "wie hurerei Babylon ist under allen sünden, also seind die franzosen Babylon under allen krankheiten. solchs zu probirn beweist astrologia, theologia und alle naturales operationes, das da ein leichfertikeit ist inter Gallos, die al ander nation inficirt; gehört in die gloß: also ist der unflat zusamen komen."

and *luxus*[390] are the "mothers of the disease,"[391] and the disease is trasmitted through *unkeuschheit*. However, in order for the disease to take its toll, one needs to have a corresponding *imaginatio*.[392] Paracelsus adopts the association between the French disease with impurity from medieval notions of leprosy, which, as Brody and later Grigsby demonstrated, were partially transferred onto the representations of the French disease.[393] Paracelsus's writings are part of a shift from perceiving the French pox as a disease caused by any number of sinful behavior not necessarily connected to sex towards contextualizing it as primarily a venereal disease.[394]

Paracelsus's conception of the disease as French is based largely on his stereotypes of the French, which he elaborates in his reflection of Lichtenberger's prophecies. His treatise focuses on several passages from *Prognosticatio* which had initially appeared in a thirteenth-century treatise *Memoriale prerogativa de Imperii Romani* by Alexander of Roes. There are three estates of the French represented by three roosters, Alexander of Roes writes. The first rooster is proud, unchaste, quarrelsome, envious, and angry. The two other roosters are gentle,

[390] Walter Pagel translates Paracelsus' luxus as "exuberance" (Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus, an Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance*, 2nd ed. (Basel; New York: Karger, 1982), 139. According to Weeks, luxus is "obviously sexualized" by Paracelsus with the intention of "bringing out the connotation of *luxuria*, "dissipation" (Weeks, *Paracelsus*, 467, n. 5).
[391] Paracelsus, *Vom Ursprung und Herkommen der Franzosen*, 190-192.
[392] Ibid., 189-190: "… also wissent hie auch, das die Franzosen dem himel (ich meine das volk) ein unterworfen corpus gemacht haben, in welchem venus iren willen und exaltirung hat mögen verbringen; nemlich so venus ir krankheit ansgießen sol und den influß derselbigen geben, so mag es nicht anders beschehen dan durch die unkeuschheit, so dieselbig unter irem willem und gefallen beschicht, so gibt imaginatio, cupido und actio den influß der krankheit. … dan venus ist diser krankheit ein mutter, darumb so wissent, das dise krankheit und venerischer influß kein mensch befleckt, der nicht verwilliget, das ist actionem mit voller imaginirung und begirlikeiten sich inlasset." On *imaginatio* in the works of Paracelsus, see Heinz Schott, "Paracelsus & van Helmont on Imagination: Magnetism and Medicine before Mesmer" in *Paracelsian Moments: Science, Medicine & Astrology in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Gerhild Scholz Williams, and Charles D. Gunnoe (Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 2002), esp. 137-140.
[393] Saul Nathaniel Brody, *The Disease of the Soul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 56-59; Grigsby, *Pestilence in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature*, 7-73. Also see for overlapping diagnoses of leprosy and *morbus gallicus* in early modern German lands Michelle Lewis Hammond, "Leprosy and Defeat of Diagnosis in Sixteenth-Century Germany," in *Ideas and Cultural Margins*, ed. Plummer, Barnes: 280-282.
[394] Paracelsus falls under the second period in the history of syphilis under Temkin's periodization "marked by "transition towards understanding that syphilis was a venereal disease." Temkin, "On the History of Morality and Syphilis," 474.

merry, and amiable.[395] Lichtenberger quoted this passage from Roes in his *Pronosticatio* (1488), accompanying it by a woodcut depicting three roosters (fig. 4).[396]

Fig. 4: The three roosters.
Johannes Lichtenberger, *Pronosticatio zu theutsch* (Heidelberg, 1488), D2 r.
Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.
urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00008265-3

Paracelsus agrees with Roes and Lichtenberger that the rooster is indeed the most suitable constellation for France, but denies that the French possess any good qualities. According to Paracelsus, just like the roosters they are full of pride and "are unchaste in their very nature."[397] One of their worst qualities is "excessive pride… and this is how they approach

[395] Alexander von Roes, "Memoriale de Prerogativa Imperii Romani," in *Die Schriften des Alexander von Roes*, ed. Herbert Grundmann, Hermann Heimpel (Weimar: Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1949), 32-34.
[396] Lichtenberger, *Pronosticatio zu theutsch*, D2 r.
[397] Theophrastus von Hohenheim, "Auslegung über ettliche Figuren Jo. Liechtenbergers aus dem ersten und dritten teil," in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol.7: *Die Nürnberger Suphilisschriften und anderes Nürnberger Schriftwerk aus dem Jahre 1529*, ed. Karl Sudhoff (Munich: Otto Wilhelm Barth, 1923), 477: "Von namen der Franzosen,

and behave with all the other nations."[398] Paracelsus concludes his insight into the nature of the French by stating that everyone should accept the order of law which serves the purpose of friendly life and decency, and help combat the evil, which gives rise to lust and disgrace.[399] In Paracelsus's worldview, it makes perfect sense that the French disease was conceived in a lecherous people through an act of unchastity and under the influence of Venus since the French, akin to roosters, lack chastity.

The rooster owed its connection with France to a pun on the Latin word for France - *Gallia* and its connection with another Latin word - *gallus* (rooster). At the end of the fifteenth century, the rooster was used along with the fleur-de-lis, the coat of arms of the French kings, but was beginning to play a more prominent role in German anti-French propaganda with the increasing use of the single-headed and double-headed eagles by German kings and emperors on their coat of arms. The beginning of the sixteenth century was marked by an abundant presence of eagles as symbols of Emperor Maximilian I in visual as well as literary sources.[400]

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the rivalry between the French king and German emperor was often described as a battle of a Rooster and an Eagle. Maximilian I actively employed the animal imagery in his imperial propaganda, including in his Triumphal Arch, one the most large-scale prints glorifying the imperial power of the Habsburgs.[401] The

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das die Galli heißen, entspringt in aus der natur, die sie haben gleich den hanen, und ist in geben worden von den naturalibus dan zu gleicher weis wie ein han aller unkeuschheit und hoffart voll steckt, also sind auch die Franzosen in irer natur voller unkeuschheit… aslo wisset, das zu beiden seiten gleiche constellation in Franzosen und in hanen stehen und ist wol bestett von den astronomis."

[398] Ibid., 478: "…die uberschwenkliche große und grimige hoffart der Franzosen, wie sie dan in irer influenz uber alle nationen tragen und haben."

[399] Ibid., 480.

[400] Influenced by their rivals on the other side of the River Rhine, the French kings adopted the rooster as their dynastic symbol around the same period of time. With the help of the humanists, it was turned into a positive representation and has served as one of the France's national symbols ever since. On the use of the symbols of the rooster and the eagle by the French kings and German emperors, see Benedict Jacob Roemer-Büchner, *Die Siegel der deutschen Kaiser, Könige und Gegenkönige* (Frankfurt am Main: H. Keller, 1851); Franz-Heinz Hye, "Der Doppeladler als Symbol für Kaiser und Reich," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 81 (1973): 83-84; Collette Beaune, "Pour une préhistoire du coq gaulois," *Médiévales* 10 (1986): 69-80.

[401] Commissioned by Maximilian himself, it consists of 36 sheets of paper and was printed with the use of 195 wood blocks. Initially meant to be mounted on the wall accompanied by two other large prints (The Triumphal Carriage and the Triumphal Procession), it remained the only completed print from the series, published in

uppermost panel of the Triumphal Arch contains a hieroglyphic image of Maximilian surrounded by symbolical animals. The colophon, composed by Stabius, explains the symbolical meaning of the scene: "It has been interpreted word by word to describe Maximilian as… Roman emperor [eagle], and lord of a great portion of the earth [snake on scepter]. He has by force of arms and superb victory [falcon on orb] yet with the greatest modesty [bull] subdued the most powerful king [of France; cock]."[402]

By using the rooster as the symbol of the French king, German humanists, among other things, made him look weak in comparison to his opponent, the German emperor. Being inferior to the eagle and not possessing any imperial powers, the rooster could never compete with the eagle, just like the French king could never defeat the German emperor, being inferior to the latter by default. "Cock, what are you crowing about? Why, scoundrel, do you scoff at the eagles? If you stared at the sun's lamp, you would go blind,"[403] Hutten exclaims in one of his epigrams. The eagle, being the king of the Bird's Kingdom and the emblematic animal of Jove, is the only animal allowed to aspire to be the universal ruler.

1517-18. The woodcuts for the Triumphal Arch were made by the workshop of Albrecht Dürer, and the text in the colophons was composed by Maximilian's court historiographer, Johannes Stabius (1450-1522). The print depicts the genealogy of Maximilian starting with Clovis I, stories from the mythical past, images of the Roman emperors, and scenes from Maximilian's life. Silver, *Marketing Maximilian*.

[402] It appeared for the first time on the frontispiece to the translation of *Hieroglyphica*, a Greek text on Egyptian hieroglyphs, translated by Willlibald Pirckheimer (1470-1530) and illustrated by Albrecht Dürer. Quoted in Larry Silver, *Marketing Maximilian*, 24.

[403] Ulrich von Hutten, Eobanus Hessus, "Epistola Italiae Ulricho Hutteno Equite Germano Autore Resonsio Maximiliani Augusti Helio Eobano Hesso Autore Hutteni De Eadem Re Epigrammata Aliquot," in *The Poetic Works of Helius Eobanus Hessus*, vol. 3, 419.

Fig. 5: The eagle against the rooster.
Johannes Haselberg, *Der Adler wider den Hanen. Eyn schöner lüschtbarlicher Dialogus*, titlepage (Strasbourg: s.n., 1536) Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.
http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00084192/image_5

The interconnected political, theological, and astrological causes of the French disease all pointed to its "French" origins. The French were the first to contract *morbus gallicus* as a punishment by God for their disobedience to the German emperor. Caused by the great conjunction of 1484, the disease was one of the calamities forecasted by Johannes Lichtenberger and as such was part of the familiar prognostications on the fate of the German Empire and its relations with its enemies. The motif of the children of the planets also helped to support the view that the disease first originated among the French, and then spread to other countries that were governed by the planets, involved in the great conjunction of 1484.

Bodies prone to diseases

The planetary motions were believed to cause the putrefaction of the air which in turn caused the French disease. Magnus Hundt in his treatise on pestilence writes that the air, being inherently warm and moist, is more prone to "bad" changes, particularly during prolonged

periods of hot and wet weather.[404] Otto Raut also blames the outbreak on hot and wet weather, and writes that the disease spread with water all around the world, but first came to Italy.[405]

The mechanism behind the air's putrefaction was subject to dispute. The cause for the air's corruption was one of the central points in the Pistoris-Pollich controversy discussed in the first chapter.[406] In the dispute, Pollich argued that the air was made corrupt as a result of the hot and humid weather.[407] Pistoris, on the other hand, maintained that the air, as one of the four main elements could not become putrid and therefore its occult or hidden qualities were the cause of the disease.[408] Otto Raut also writes that the disease comes from the hidden influences in the air.[409]

The corrupt air was believed to carry plague and, to protect themselves, medieval doctors wore the notorious "plagues masks." Erasmus even suggested a design of his own for a mask that he mentions in his *Colloquies*: "a mask that admits light through little glass windows and allows you to breathe through mouth and nose by means of a tube extending from the mask over your shoulders and down your back."[410] However, the putrid air, even though it was believed to cause pestilence, was nevertheless only its "external cause" which "was not

[404] Magnus Hundt, *Eyn kurtzes und sehr nutzbarlichs Regiment,* A4 r: "... die lufft ist warm vnd feuchte / vnd leychtlich gifftige faule voranderung entphet / vnnd also vor andern Elemente[n] wircklicher in vns ist / ane nottige vormeydung." Also quoted in Stein, *Behandlung*, 49.
[405] Raut, "Pronosticum ad annos domini millesimum quingentesimum secundum et tertium," 299: "Sic enim nunc ut prius mala frumenta et humida et aëris nimia humiditas comprobat. Illud etiam satis constat, tempore, quo primum morbus gallicus coepit pullulare et nunc in annis continuari, magnam aquarum per universum et Italiam primo, Alemaniam praesertim apud Saxones, et undique fuisse abundantiam et nunc in annis sicut et prius continuari. Tantis enim imbribus ubique madent campi, ut terris inde humentibus atque stagnantibus minus mirandum sit, auram nostram ad illam venisse intemperiem calidam et humidam, quam medici omnium putredinum matrem esse confiteantur."
[406] Arrizabalaga, Henderson, French, *The Great Pox*, 91-93. Schlereth, *Martin Pollich von Mellerstadt,* 193-222.
[407] Translated into German in Schlereth, *Martin Pollich von Mellerstadt*, 211.
[408] Simon Pistoris, "Positio de Morbo Franco," 130: "Morbus iam currens, malum francum appellatus... non ex mutatione aëris in qualitatibus manifestis, puta calido et humido, sed ex occulta in aëre proprietate est causatus."
[409] Raut, "Pronosticum ad annos domini millesimum quingentesimum secundum et tertium," 297: "... sic nostra scabies seu scorra venenosa qualitate quadam non est spoliata, qua tarde et cum tempore humores totius corporis ad suam qualitatem alterans, ex influentiis occultis in aëre tarde suos effectus producentes."
[410] Desiderius Erasmus, "A Marriage in Name Only or the Unequal Match" in Idem, *Collected Works*, vol. 40: *Colloquies*, ed. and trans. Alexander Dalzell, Craig R. Thompson (Toronto: University of Tornoto Press, 1997), 853.

enough by itself: it needed a suitable material, a suitable body, to work on."[411] A suitable body was defined by a suitable combination of the four humors.

The composition of the humors was believed to differ from one person to another, depending on great many factors including location, profession, gender, time of birth, etc. Medical doctors believed that each temperament had a predisposition to a particular disease, which could decrease or increase depending on the season and a number of other circumstances. Not only were different temperaments associated with particular diseases, but diseases were believed to manifest themselves differently from one patient to the other; therefore, it was particularly important to define the temperament of the patient before any diagnosis or treatment. The theory of the four temperaments was used to explain why some people had different complexions and were more susceptible to the French disease than others and why not everybody breathing the same putrid air contracted the French disease.[412]

The humoral theory dates back to the beginnings of the Greek medicine.[413] There were four major types of complexions defined by each of the four temperaments: the predominance of blood was associated with the sanguine temperament, of yellow bile with the choleric temperament, the melancholic persons had an excess of black bile and the phlegmatic people were marked by the excess of phlegm. The sanguine complexion implied the predominance of hot and wet elements, phlegmatic - cold and moist, melancholic - cold and dry and choleric -

[411] Nutton, "The seeds of disease," 5.
[412] Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, 128-129.
[413] The theory was based on the notion that the world consisted of four elements – air, fire, earth and water – as articulated by Empedocles of Arcagas in the fifth century BCE. He argued that all the things in the world emerged out of the combination of the four elements and all matter was divided into four pairs of opposing principles (hot and moist, cold and moist, dry and cold, dry and hot). The body, being understood as a microcosm of the world, was believed to consist of four humors (yellow bile, black bile, phlegm and blood), corresponding to the four cosmic elements. The number of humors had been debated, but the fourfold concept of the humors prevailed together with the tetrapartite division of cosmos into four elements, qualities and seasons. For an overview of the subject, see Klibansky, Panofsky, Saxl, *Saturn and melancholy*, particularly part I; Owsei Temkin, *Galenism; Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973); Clarence J. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*, 35-115; Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, 104-106, 116-118; Noga Arikha, *Passions and Tempers*: *A History of the Humours* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2007), parts 1-4.

hot and dry. The cooling, wetting, heating, or drying of humors against their nature led to an imbalance of the humors – the reason why people got sick. Restoring the balance of humors through – again – cooling, wetting, heating, or drying them with various remedies was thus believed to be the cure of all diseases.

Complexions were, as already mentioned, considered to belong to the domain of efficient causes of disease that, following Galen, were divided into *causa primitiva*, *causa antecedens* and *causa contentiva*. In line with Galen's medical concept, Conrad Schellig maintains that for *morbus gallicus*, its *causa primitiva* were excesses of qualities of the air (too dry, too humid, too warm, or too cold), caused by the motion of the stars and manifested in the disbalance of bodily humors, whereas its *causa antecedens* and *causa contentiva* were individual humoral complexions which pre-conditioned susceptibility to certain diseases.[414] According to Lorenz Fries, *causa primitiva* emerged from "non-natural things" such as air, food and drink, movement and stillness, sleeping and being awake, as well as "repletion and emptiness" ("repletione et inanitione").[415] The *causa primitiva* of the French disease for him lay in the changes of the air, caused by the largest planetary conjunctions.[416] The *causae antecedentes* and *coniunctivis* of the French disease pertain to the complexion, that is, the proneness of humors to corruption.[417]

For the majority of authors of medical treatises, the humoral root cause of the French disease, similar to the plague, lay in the excess of black bile and/or phlegm in the human body.[418] In chapter 7 of his "Ein hubscher Tractat," Joseph Grünpeck states that the humoral cause of the disease is the black bile, due to the participation of Saturn and Mars in the conjunction that triggered the disease: "because Saturn is cold and dry and rules over the

[414] Schellig, "In pustulas malas," 74-75.
[415] Fries, *Epitome Opusculi*, B2 v.
[416] Ibid. "Et ex illis causam huius ægritudinis rationabiliter æstimavêre sapientes aéris mutationem fuisse, ex planetaru[m] notabilissimis co[n]stellationibus..."
[417] Ibid., B2 v – B3 r.
[418] Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 41.

melancholy, which he increases and produces and drives into the body, rotting the good blood and ruining also the complexion..."[419] The excess of black bile caused "disrupted blood."[420] Grünpeck repeats his ideas in his last treatise on the French disease: "...the pernicious work of Mars and Saturn, secretly and undetectably it creeps into the human body, begins first in the liver, where it exerts its pestilential activity entirely scorching the blood, then attacking the neighboring organs, heart, lungs, spleen, and testicles."[421] Johann Widmann and Bartholomäus Steber write that the disease comes from the excess of the black bile which generates putrid blood. [422] Ulrich von Hutten informs his readers that physicians believe that the disease occurs from the imbalance of one of the four humors or from the corrupt blood.[423] According to Magnus Hundt, the melancholic humor which mixes with the blood is the cause of the French disease as well.[424] As Stein notes in her monograph, the "putrid blood" referred to by the medical writers was the nutritious blood that differed from the blood that was considered one of the four humors. In his treatise on the French disease, Alexander Seitz explains that nutritious blood is generated from digested food and drink and purified by bodily organs. The purification of the nutritious blood could be disrupted by many things including an

[419] Grünpeck, "Ein hübscher Tractat," 43-44: "... wann Saturnus ist kalt vnd trucken vnd herschet über die melancoley, wölche er meret vnd machet vnd füret sy ein in den leyb, vnd verderbet das gůt geblüt, verkeret auch die complexion. Nach darnach Mars herschet in diser coniunction vnd ist in seinem eygnen hauss vermüschet er auch sein bossheyt vnd meret die feüchtigkeit coleram, wölche ist die annder materi des Bösen Franzos..."

[420] Ibid., 44: "Die drit vrsache erscheynet das zerbrochen blůt."

[421] Grünpeck, "De Mentulagra," 52-53: "...eundem ipsum fatalem inimicum esse perniciosum Saturni et Martis opus, clandestine et insensibiliter in corpora humana devolare, incipereque primo in hepate pestiferam ditionem suam exercere sanguinem prorsus adurendo, deinde vicina loca cordis, pulmonis, splenis et testiculorum repetendo..."

[422] Widmann, "Tractatus clarissimi medicinarum doctoris," 98: "Secundo specialiter in causa est humor melancolicus malus, adustus"; Steber, "A mala Franczos, morbo gallorum, praeservatio ac cura," 119: "Causam hic dico sanguinem, humore quodam melancholico modicum adusto infectum, ea tamen adustione non ducente melancholiam extra suae naturae latitudinem, unde terreum mixtum humido terminat ipsum."

[423] Hutten, *De guaiaci medicina et morbo gallico liber unus*, 404: "... dicebantque medici ægritudinem esse a malo intus succo et vitiosis humoribus, melancholicis, adustis, aut flava bile, vel pituita, sive salsa sive adusta, et ipsa aut aliquot horum vel omnibus etiam simul permixtis... Quidam breviter ex infecto sanguine corruptoque et adusto luem hanc oriri dictitabant."

[424] Magnus Hundt, *Eyn kurtzes und sehr Nutzbarlichs Regiment*, c2 v: "... so ist dy vorgehenste ursache / als vor feuchtigkeyt in de[n] cörper dy Melancolische / welche durch ihre gifftige scherff vnnd unartige qualiteth / vnd eygenschafft sich mit de[n] geblüt vormischt / vn[d] in der leber und geedder sich ermereth..."

overabundance of one of the humors, which would make the nutritious blood "bad" or "corrupt."[425]

The notion that the French disease could be caused by "bad blood" remained popular all throughout the sixteenth century, surviving well into the twentieth century.[426] As such, it became associated with the popular prejudice that infected blood could be used to poison with the French disease. Fuchs included a peculiar reference to an instance of such prejudice from a late sixteenth-century Nuremberg chronicle in his collection of sources on the French pox:

> Also in that [1495] year, an evil, previously unheard of, cruel disease (which is called *Frantzosen*) was first brought from French footmen to Germany and this is how the disease is said to have appeared. When the emperor fought near Milan and brought the German footmen, the French are told to have taken blood from the lepers, and baked it in bread which they gave to the German footmen to eat; and likewise mixed the leprous blood with wine.[427]

People with complexions opposite the humoral composition causing the disease, that is people with hot and moist (or hot and dry) temperaments, were generally regarded as more susceptible to pestilences. Thus, Alexander Seitz writes that the pestilence-bearing "Saturn spares his children who are melancholic – that is cold and dry," but attacks persons with hot and warm elements in their temperaments. [428] For this reason, women, who were generally believed to have a cold and moist complexion, were generally considered by medical authors to be less likely to develop the French disease inside their bodies, even though they could be infected with it through contact with bodily fluids of the sick.[429]

[425] Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox*, 40-41.
[426] Kevin Brown, *The Pox: the Life and Near Death of a Very Social Disease* (Thrupp: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2006), 146-149.
[427] Fuchs, *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, 377: "Es ist auch in gemelten Jar die böse, zuvor vnerhörte, grausame kranckheit (die Frantzosen genant) von den Landsknechten aus Franckreich erstlicher in das Teutschlandt gebracht worden vnd soll sich diese krankheit solcher gestalt erhoben haben: Es sollen die Frantzosen (nachdem der keyser vmb Meylandt krieget vnd teutsche knecht hineingefüret hätte) blut von den Sundersiechen genommen haben vnd dasselbig in das brodt gebachen haben vnd den teutschen knechten zu essen gegeben; desgleichen auch solches Sundersiechenblut unter den Wein vermischt haben."
[428] Seitz, "Ain schöner Tractat von dem Saturnischen gschoß der Pestilentz," 163: "Also auch gleicherweiß / mag Saturnus mit seiner vergiften art nit yeden menschen erwirgen / sonder allain den / der im berait ist / warlich ain mensch ist von dem Saturno / angrifflicher /dass das ander / und etlich gar nit / bevor saturnus verschonet seiner kinder / die von art melancolici seind / nämlich kalter und truckner art."
[429] Schleiner, *Medical Ethics in the Renaissance*, 182-202; Stein, *Negotiating the Great Pox*, 50-52.

Joseph Grünpeck uses the medical notion that hot-blooded people are more susceptible to pestilence as a foundation for his argument that the complexion of the French people was more prone to the French disease:

> That happened thus, for it has been discovered that Jupiter rules over France and is a hot and moist planet. But life and strength are in warmth and in natural moisture, as the masters of nature indicate. Therefore, the French are fit by nature, but they fall more easily into this sicknesses, for their bodies are subject to greater harm than others, because they have more blood and more moisture and are more saturated, and these moistness and saturation are more prone to rotting, and can sooner be broken up.[430]

Sebastian Brant holds similar views, even though according to him the main reason behind the proclivity of the French to the disease is in the aridity of their bodies: "This is why it comes more often to the French and to those, whom one calls Iberians, and seldom to where it is cold and humid," he states.[431]

The idea that different nations had different compositions of humors and experienced diseases in different ways was not new in the Later Middle Ages.[432] An explanation of the differences in national humoral complexions based on environmental conditions emerged early. The first written work to formulate this idea was the Hippocratic text *On Airs, Waters, Places* written sometime in the fifth century BCE. It postulates that continuous exposure to the

[430] Translation of the last two sentences quoted from: Merrill Moore and Harry C. Solomon, "Joseph Grünpeck and his Neat Treatise (1496) on the French Evil. A Translation with a Biographical Note," *British Journal of Venereal Diseases* 11/1 (1935): 21. Grünpeck, "Ein hübscher Tractat," 43: "... das also geschicht, wann es ist erfunden worden, das Jupiter herschett über Franckreych, der ist ein heysser vnd feüchter planet. Aber das leben vnd die krafft ist in den hytze vnd natürliechen feüchtigkeiten, als die natürlichenn meister bezeügen. Darumb die Frantzosen auss der natur geschickt sind; aber leychter sy vallen in sölliche kranckeyt, wann jre cörper sind grössern schäden vndergeworffen denn ander, darumb das sy mer geblütes vnd feüchtigkeit haben vnd mer gesettiget sind, wölche feüchtigkeit vnd ersattung auch mer bereyt sind der faulkeit vnd belder zerbrochen mügen werden."

[431] Grünpeck, "Tractatus de pestilentiali," 6: "Has a variolis distinguit cause, quod istis / Frigidus humor inest, hisque melancholicus. / Fit, quotiens propriis Saturnus ab aedibus exit, / Inque Iovis migrat morbifer ille domos. / Nam tum reliquias duri semis atque maligni / Iupiter expellit, purgat et evacuat. / Id quod ab octenis lustris contingere crebro / In terris, ubi sunt corpora sicca, solet. / Vnde frequens Gallis morbi genus id vel Iberis, / Rarus apud gentes, frigus et humor ubi."

[432] Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*, parts 1 and 2; Claire Weeda, "Images of Ethnicity in Later Medieval Europe" (Phd. Diss.: University of Amsterdam, 2012), esp. chapter 2; Eadem, "The Fixed and the Fluent: Geograhical Determinism, Ethnicity and Religion c. 1100-1300 CE," in *The Routledge Handbook to Identity and the Environment in the Classical and Medieval Worlds*, ed. Rebecca Futo Kennedy and Molly Jones-Lewis (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 93-113. For Early Modern usages of the climate theory, see Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, *Imagology Revisited* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2010), particularly chapters 2 and 3.

same climatic conditions makes people share similar humoral complexions.[433] The four humor theory in conjunction with belief in environmental influences became incorporated into the Christian tradition through the writings of Orosius, Cassiodorus, Isidore of Seville, and Paul the Deacon, to name but a few. The encyclopedists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as Albertus Magnus, Bartholomew of England, Vincent of Beauvais and others, influenced by the information which emerged as a result of travels triggered by the Crusades and the Arab commentaries on Aristotle and other Ancient authorities, revived the Ancient theories, subjecting them to some changes.[434]

In addition to Grünpek and Brant, Nicolaus Pol commented on the differences of bodily complexions of Germans and that of other people in his treatise on the guaiac treatment: "…it is clear that the climate, bodies, complexions, etc. of the Spaniards are different from those possessed by the Indians, Germans, and even by other Spaniards."[435] Employing familiar tropes, he states that the bodies of the German people are more robust due to exposure to colder climate.[436] Ulrich von Hutten notes this issue as well in his treatise, maintaining that despite the differences in complexions, the guaiac tree can cure anybody.[437]

I will touch upon "German" and "French" temperaments in more detail in the next chapter, but it is important to note here that Grünpeck and Brant were not alone in describing the French as sanguinic (warm and moist) or choleric (dry and warm). However, I have not

[433] The idea is developed throughout the whole treatise. "Airs, Waters, Places," in *Hippocratic Writings*, ed. Geoffrey Ernest Richard Lloyd, trans. John Chadwick and W. Mann (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978). Also see Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*, 82-88.
[434] Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*, part 2; Weeda, "Images of Ethnicity in Later Medieval Europe," 88-117.
[435] Nicolaus Pol, "De Cura Morbi Gallici," trans. in Fisch, *Nicolaus Pol, Doctor*, 59. For the original, see Ibid., 58: "Quam similiter nos expertam credentes talem cum Hyspanorum regiones corpora complexiones etc. ab Indorum et Alemanorum, ab Hyspanorum etiam conditionibus differre compertum sit eandem pro corporibus Alemanorum sanandis proportionabiliter transumere deo auxiliante pro ingenio conabimur."
[436] Ibid., 62-63.
[437] Hutten, *De guaiaci medicina et morbo gallico liber unus*, 439: "quarum in Hispaniam quidem primum venit, ex Spagnola, arrectis in eventus expectationem aliis crica nationibus, ubi cum feliciter ea usos esse multos contigisset, acceperunt eam Siculi, deinde in Italiam transiit statimque Germani et ipsi experimento vim eius didicimus. nuper et apud Gallos audivimus eius ope consanescere plurimos."

managed to find any other instance in contemporary medical literature to a particular predisposition of the French people to *morbus gallicus* based on their humoral complexion. In this regard, Grünpeck can be seen as an innovator. Russell calls him "a great compiler of causes of events and disease, much less an original thinker than his medical-astrologer colleagues."[438] I would argue with this characterization, stressing that Grünpeck carefully "cherry-picked" ideas from the existing medical and astrological traditions to construct a medical framework for the French causes of *morbus gallicus*. His explanation of the origins of the illness was meant to indicate that it bore the name of the French disease for a reason. Following his logic, the disease was French because it was intrinsic to the French people and because it originated among them for the first time. Paracelsus's treatment of the causes of *morbus gallicus,* albeit not based on humoral medicine, was similarly concise and comprehensive.

Medical authors framed *morbus gallicus* within a tangle of religious, political, astrological, and medical contexts, all of which pointed to various aspects of the disease's French-ness. The connection between the French disease and German-French relations indicates that *morbus gallicus* was to a large extent framed as a political matter, providing an opportune foundation for rhetorical calls to support Maximilian's conjectural political program which can be summarized as: "For if Maximilian possessed Milan he would also possess the whole of Italy; if he possessed Italy, he would also possess Gaul (France), Germania (Germany), and thereafter not only the "Turks" (the Ottoman Empire), but also the "Solden" (the Egyptian Mamluk Empire) and thus dominate "inn Affrica, Assia und Erropa."[439] The issue of imperial authority, Last Emperor prophecies, crusading rhetoric, and Maximilian's domestic politics all played a role in defining the disease as "French." Among all the medical treatises examined in this chapter only that of Ulrich von Hutten actively opposed the

[438] Russell, "Astrology as Popular Propaganda," 178.
[439] Manfred Hollegger, "Personality and Reign. The Biography of Emperor Maximilian I" in *Emperor Maximilian I and the Age of Dürer*, ed. Eva Michel and Marie Luise Sternath (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2012), 25.

association between the disease and the French, but even Hutten recognized the viability of the name *morbus gallicus* and used it in his work for reasons of clarity and simplicity.

CHAPTER 3 | POETICS OF THE FRENCH DISEASE

"In Foucauldian terms, disease is unstoppably discursive and irresistibly metaphoric."[440]

Already in the first years since its oubreak, *morbus gallicus* became linked to the German national discourse. In a number of writings dealt with in this chapter, the French pox is presented as a symbol of all things French and more broadly foreign, a threat to the intrinsically beneficial moral and cultural environment of the German lands and a force, corrupting the German body natural and thus its body politic. In the previous chapter I have looked at ways in which medical authors framed the disease as "French" with the help of religious, medical, astrological, and political explanations of its causes. In this chapter I examine the function of *morbus gallicus* in discussions of what it meant to be "German" in non-medical texts. In order to establish how *morbus gallicus* was incorporated into these discussions, I will first examine the narratives of German-ness and French-ness in late medieval German learned culture. As I argue, the pattern of perceiving the French in German learned culture was intrinsically dichotomic and was grounded in the notion of chastity. I then move to representations of *morbus gallicus* as a sign of moral corruption caused by an excessive use of foreign commodities. In the last section of this chapter I examine representations of the French disease as the French king himself.

Differentia Gallorum et Germanorum[441]

The kingdom of France and the German Empire shared the same medieval past, territorial claims on Alsace and Lorraine, and a reputation of Barbarians in the eyes of their "civilized" and "cultural" neighbor – Italy – whom they both attempted to compete with

[440] Rod Edmond, *Leprosy and Empire. A Medical and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 16.
[441] Printed marginalia in Franciscus Irenicus, *Germaniae exegeseos volumina XII seu totius Germaniae descriptio pulcherrima et iucundissima* (Hagenau: Th. Anshelm, 1518), 24 r.

throughout the Middle Ages and Early Modern times.[442] Both of these political entities also shared the fame of the first emperor in the West after the fall of the Roman Empire – Charlemagne. Seeing as one of their major goals the substantiation of the German claim for the imperial throne, the German polemicists attempted to prove that Charlemagne was "German" and that the German people were indigenous unlike their neighbors on the other side of the Rhine River.[443]

As early as the thirteenth century, Alexander of Roes (1255-c. 1300) in his *Memoriale de prerogativa Imperii Romani*, named by Frank Borchardt "a turning point, indeed a normative model for polemical historiography in Germany until the Reformation,"[444] distinguished between the Germans and the French by calling the first *Franci* and the latter *Francigenae*. In his evocation of the popular Trojan myth, the Franks descended from Priam. Sometime later, a number of Franks separated from the main group, moving to the territory between Loire and Seine, where they intermarried with the local Gallic population, adopted their language and customs and therefore could not be regarded anymore as Franks, but as *Francigenae*.[445] Linguistically, the word *Francigenae* meant "of Frankish origins." Politically, it indicated that Germans were the true heirs of the Roman Empire and the first settlers on the Rhine River, while the French or *Francigenae* were a younger nation, a group that merely descended from the Franks.[446]

[442] See Stadtwald, R*oman Popes and German Patriots*; Patrick Gilli, *Au miroir de l'humanisme: les représentations de la France dans la culture savante italienne à la fin du moyen âge (c. 1360-c.1490)* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1997); Caspar Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism*, 119-152.
[443] See Jacques Ridé, *L'image du Gérmain dans la pensée et la litterature allemande de la redecouverture de Tacite au XVIe siècle* (Contributions à l'étude de la genèse de la mythe) (Lille: Atelier de reproduction des thèses, 1977), vol. 1, 92-102, vol. 2, 748-758; Borchardt, *The Renaissance Myth of the German Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971); Münkler, Grünberger, Mayer, *Nationenbildung*, 175-209; Hirschi, *Wettkampf der Nationen*, esp. 315-319.
[444] Borchardt, *German Antiquity*, 264.
[445] Ridé, *L'image du Gérmain*, 93-105; Borchardt, *German Antiquity*, 258-264; Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity*, especially 322.
[446] Ridé, *L'image du Gérmain*, 102; Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity*, 375.

Another goal of the German late medieval polemicists was to establish clear divisions between the two peoples, by representing the contemporary *Franci* and *Francigenae* as possessing distinct characteristics. Medieval sources are full of references to national characteristics,[447] but only in the Early Modern times did they begin to crystalize into firmer categories. To quote Joop Leerssen,

> the European taxonomy of national character is itself an example of a process that characterizes modern (i.e., post-medieval) European thought: methodical systematization. The Middle Ages had, to be sure, known many commonplaces and prejudices about certain sets of people, but these were generally speaking neither stable nor systematic.[448]

Late medieval German auto-images and hetero-images[449] of the French were "a curious cocktail of tradition and modernity,"[450] to quote Gonthier-Louis Fink. They were assorted from various "conventions and commonplaces inherited from a pre-existing textual tradition,"[451] going back to the writings of various classical authors, including geographers like Erathostenes, Strabo, Claudius Ptolemy, Pliny the Elder, Poseidon, and Pomponius Mela, historians like Herodotus, Caesar, and Tacitus, Aristotle, Vitruvius, the Hippocratic writers, and Galen. Their texts found their way to medieval histories, political and medical writings, as well as ethnographies and literary works such as the writings of Isidore of Seville, Alexander of Roes, Albertus Magnus, Godfrey of Viterbo and Conrad of Megenberg. The Renaissance was marked by an increased interest in classical authors, but, as Frank Borchard demonstrates in his study of Renaissance myths of the German past, medieval texts retained their popularity and continued to be read in manuscript as well as printed form.[452] In the Later Middle Ages

[447] See Ludwig Schmugge, "Über 'nationale' Vorurteile im Mittelalter," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 38 (1982): 439-459; Weeda, "Images of Ethnicity in Later Medieval Europe." On medieval German-French stereotyping, see Georg Jostkleigrewe, *Das Bild des Anderen: Entstehung und Wirkung deutsch-französischer Fremdbilder in der volkssprachlichen Literatur und Historiographie des 12. bis 14. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008); Moeglin, *Kaisertum und allerchristlichster König*, 283-324.
[448] Joop Leerssen, "The Poetics and Anthropology of National Character (1500-2000)," in *Imagology*, 63.
[449] See introduction for these terms.
[450] Gonthier-Louis Fink, "Réflexions sur l'imagologie," *Recherches germaniques* 23 (1993): 19.
[451] Joep Leerssen, "A summary of imagological theory," http://imagologica.eu/theoreticalsummary (accessed 28 November 2016).
[452] Borchardt, *German Antiquity in Renaissance Myth*, 302-303.

select commonplaces from the ancient and medieval "pool" of perceptions and stereotypes became ingrained in the German auto-images: "Germans, we might say, came to understand themselves as such not only because Italians, Frenchmen, Czechs or Poles told them they were German, and explained to them what it meant, but because Aristotle, Caesar and Isidore, and numerous other venerable authorities, told them."[453]

Explanations of the differences in national character were largely based on the theory of environmental influences.[454] In Book VII of his *Politics*, Aristotle divides the world into cold Europe, warm Asia, and Greece with a moderate climate in between. People living in these climatological zones have different types of personality and different political systems. Thus, for example, people living in cold countries are sanguineous, full of courage, but lack caution. Glacken called Aristotle's passage "one of the most influential statements ever made regarding the relation of climate to peoples" and the second most quoted work in this regard after the Hippocratic text *On Airs, Waters, Places*.[455] Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* were another often-quoted text on environmental influences throughout the Middle Ages. Isidore maintained that

> People's faces and coloring, the size of their bodies, and their various temperaments correspond to various climates. Hence we find that the Romans are serious, the Greeks easy-going, the Africans changeable, and the Gauls fierce in nature and rather sharp in wit, because the character of the climate makes them so.[456]

[453] Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity*, 361.
[454] Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*; Ingomar Weiler, "Ethnographische Typisierungen im antiken und mittelalterlichen Vorfeld der 'Völkertafel'," in *Europäischer Völkerspiegel: imagologisch-ethnographische Studien zu den Völkertafeln des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Franz Stanzel, Ingomar Weiler, Waldemar Zacharasiewicz (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1999), 97-118; Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, "Klimatheorie und Nationalcharakter auf der 'Völkertafel,'" in Stanzel, *Europäischer Völkerspiegel*: 119-137; Irina Metzler, "Perceptions of Hot Climate in Medieval Cosmography and Travel Literature," in *Medieval Ethnographies: European Perceptions of the World Beyond*, ed. Joan Pau Rubiés (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 379-416; Zacharasiewicz, *Imagology Revisited*, chapters 2 and 3; Weeda, "Images of Ethnicity in Later Medieval Europe," chapter 2; Weeda, "The Fixed and the Fluent."
[455] Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*, 93.
[456] Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. Stephen A. Barney et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), book IX, chapter 2, 105.

One of the most important German receptions of the Ancient natural philosophical tradition was *Das Buch der Natur* written by Conrad of Megenberg around the year 1349. We know that Emperor Maximilian I had at least nine copies of this work (two manuscripts and seven incunabules) in his library.[457] According to Megenberg, men of hot full-blooded temperament have red or reddish skin; the skin color of men with a moderate amount of heat and blood is between red and white; men with the skin of "flaming red color" are choleric. At the same time, men of warm temperament have heavier beards than men of "colder nature."[458] The temperament defines character: thus choleric men with "flaming red skin" are fickle, while men with light delicate skin are naturally bashful.[459]

The characteristics of the French in the German sources do not coalesce into a uniform image. A testament to this nonuniformity is a collection of epithets used by poetry students all around Europe, *Specimen Epithetorum* (1518), written by the French humanist Jean Tixier (also known as Ravisius Textor). Tixier's work was popular not only in his native France, but also in the German lands, with several editions in Basel and Cologne.[460] His work contains lists of epithets arranged alphabetically which were meant to serve as inspiration for poets and students of rhetoric. Tixier's main goal was to include as many epithets as possible, thus sometimes words with opposing meanings were listed under one entry. The 1540 edition of *Specimen Epithetorum*, for example, suggests using both *armipotens* and *impotens* in relation

[457] Ulrike Spyra, *Das "Buch der Natur" Konrads von Mengenberg: die illustrierten Handschriften und Inkunabeln* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2005), 244-45.
[458] Konrad von Megenberg, *Das Buch der Natur: Die erste Naturgeschichte in deutscher Sprache*, ed. Hugo Schulz (Greifswald: Verlag und Druch von Julius Abel, 1897), 9: "Männer von hitzigem Temperament haben einen stärkeren Bart als kältere Naturen..."
[459] Ibid., 34: "Rothe oder röthliche Färbung der Haut weist auf eine hitzige vollblütige Natur, wogegen eine zwischen roth und weiss liegende Mittelfarbe ein gleichmässiges Temperament sowie nicht zuviel noch zu wenig Hitze und Blut anzeigt, vorausgesetzt, dass die Haut nicht sehr haarig ist. Leute mit feuriger, flammendrother Hautfarbe sind unbeständig und leicht aufbrausend, helle, zarte Röthe ist schamhaften Naturen eigen."
[460] On *Specimen Epithetorum*, see: I. D. McFarlane, "Reflections on Ravisius Textor's Specimen Epithetorum" and Walter J. Ong "Commonplace Rhapsody: Ravisius Textor, Zwinger and Shakespeare" in *Classical influences on European Culture, A.D. 1500-1700*, ed. Robert Ralph Bolgar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 81-126.

to "*Gallia*."[461] Due to the compilatory nature of the work, the same epithets were listed under different entries. For example, the lists of "catchwords" for *Germania* and *Gallia* are almost identical.[462]

In his *Noticia seculi* (1288), a collection of pro-imperial verses, Alexander of Roes wrote that each nation is characterized by three types of qualities: *mores boni, mali* and *medii*. According to him, the good characteristics of the Germans are largesse, frankness, resistence to evil and care for the poor (*magnamitas, liberalitas, malis resistere et miseris misereri*), whereas their bad qualities are "barbarity, rapacity, boorishness, and antagonism" (*crudelitas, rapacitas, inurbanitas, discordia*). The positive attributes of the French are justice, moderation, amity, and sophistication (*iustitia, temperantia, concordia, urbanitas*), whereas their negative traits are pride, sumptuousness, noisiness, chatiness, inconstancy, self-admiration and hatred of others (*superbia, luxuria, clamor, garrulitas inconstantia, se ipsos amare et omnere despicere*). However, the bad qualities are more widespread:

> But since, however, mankind tends to evil, and because there are more people who follow the wrong path of life, than those who follow the path of virtue, those aforementioned provinces are ascribed more often bad qualities than good and for Italy these are greed and envy, for Germany rapacity and discord, and for France arrogance and sumptuousness.[463]

Negative images of the French and positive German auto-images were axiologically dichotomic (the French are effeminate/the Germans are manly; the French are inconstant/the Germans are steady, etc.). This dichotomic structure was imbued not only in the images of the French and the Germans– often "negative" images of the contemporary Germans were set against "positive" images of ancient Germans in an attempt to criticize the existing order of

[461]Ravisius Textor, *Epitome brevis, sed absoluta epithetorum omnium, quae a Poetis, autoribusque aliis omnibus attributa rebus, aut sunt, aut adiici apte et eleganter possunt* (Basel: apud Barptholomaeum Westhemerum, et Nicolaum Brylingerum, [1540?]), 253.
[462] Ibid., 253, 259.
[463]Alexander von Roes, "Noticia seculi," in Herbert Grundmann, Hermann Heimpel, eds., *Die Schriften des Alexander von Roes*, 84-86.

things and highlight a desired reality.[464] The French disease was associated with the negative characteristics commonly attributed to the French such as sumptuousness, effeminacy, and lack of moderation, and, as such, was set as an antithesis to the German inborn innocence and moderation. In the writings I deal with below *morbus gallicus* was presented as a metaphor for the corruption of German morals and a result of the use of foreign goods and practice of foreign habits.

Innocent Germans, luxurious others

> "The Germani themselves are indigenous, I believe, and have in no way been mixed by the arrivals and alliances of other peoples… Who would abandon Asia or Africa or Italy and seek out Germania, with its unlovely landscape and harsh climate, dreary to inhabit and behold, if it were not one's native land."[465]
> (Tacitus)

In his book *The Origins of Nationalism* Caspar Hirschi offers a new definition of the contested notion of "nation" in which he stresses the importance of competition between "communities of the same category" (e. g., nations), at the center of which "lies the concept of national honour and national shame, in which all members of the community are supposed to have a share, according to individual status and merit."[466] The derivative of the word "shame"

[464] Marc E. Lipiansky, "L'imagerie de L'identité: Le Couple France-Allemagne," *Ethnopsychologie. Revue de Psychologie des Peuples* 34/1 (1979): 273–282; Gonthier-Louis Fink, "Prolégomènes à une histoire des stéréotypes nationaux Franco-Allemands," *Francia* 30 (2003): 141–157; Ruth Florack, *Tiefsinnige Deutsche, frivole Franzosen: nationale Stereotype in deutscher und französischer Literatur* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2001); eadem, *Bekannte Fremde: Zu Herkunft und Funktion Nationaler Stereotype in der Literatur* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2007). For an overview of research of Early Modern Germany's "others," see Mara Wade and Glenn Ehrstine, "Der, Die, Das Fremde," 5–160. On inversion in the rhetoric of otherness, see François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: the Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 210-259.

[465] Cornelius Tacitus, *Germania*, trans. James B. Rives (Oxford, New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1999). Cornelius Tacitus, "De origine et sitv Germanorvm liber," *P. Cornelii Taciti libri qvi svpersvnt*, ed. Alf Önnerfors, vol. 2/2 (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1983): chapter 2:1: "Ipsos Germanos indigenas crediderim minimeque aliarum gentium adventibus et hospitiis mixtos... quis porro, praeter periculum horridi et ignoti maris, Asia aut Africa aut Italia relicta Germaniam peteret, informem terris, asperam caelo, tristem cultu aspectuque, nisi si patria sit?"

[466] Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism*, 47.

or *pudor*, that is, *pudicitia* or chastity, was essential for the German self-fashioning in the Later Middle Ages. It came into focus with the rediscovery of Tacitus's *Germania* (*De origine et situ Germanorum liber*), which provided the German polemicists with the necessary classical authority to claim their exceptional chastity.

The history of the *Germania*'s reappearance and influence on the German late medieval national discourse has been told numerous times[467] and it will suffice to give only a brief account of the history of its rediscovery here. Written in 98 CE the *Germania* remained almost unknown throughout much of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages and survived in only one ninth-century copy in Germany. In 1457-1458, Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, the future Pope Pius II, published a three volume treatise *De ritu, situ, moribus et conditione Germaniae descriptio* which consisted of a description of contemporary Germany and its ancient past, the latter being largely based on Tacitus' *Germania*. The work was presented by Piccolomini as an answer to a letter written to him earlier by Martin Mayer, the bishop of Mainz. The letter survived only in a copy written by Piccolomini himself. In it, Mayer, unwilling to pay papal taxes, described anti-Roman sentiments in the German lands, drained by high taxes imposed on the empire by the Roman Curia. In his three-volume treatise Piccolomini attempted to

[467] Among the great number of publications on the influence of Tacitus on the late Medieval German self-consciousness, see: Kenneth C. Schellhase, *Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Ridé, *L'image du Germain*; Ludwig Krapf, *Germanenmythus und Reichsideologie: Frühhumanistische Rezeptionsweisen der Taciteischen 'Germania'* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1979); Manfred Fuhrmann, *Brechungen: Wirkungsgeschichtliche Studien zur antikeuropäischen Bildungstradition* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), 113-28; Christopher Pelling, "Tacitus and Germanicus" and Donald R. Kelley, "Tacitus noster: The Germania in the Renaissance and Reformation," in *Tacitus and Tacitean Tradition*, ed. Torrey James Luce and Anthony John Woodman (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); Münkler, Grünberger, and Mayer, eds., *Nationenbildung*; Larry Silver, "Germanic Patriotism in the Age of Dürer," in *Dürer and his Culture*, ed. Dagmar Eichenberger and Charles Zika (Cambridge: Cambrdige University Press, 1998), 38-68; Gernot Michael Müller, *Die 'Germania generalis' des Conrad Celtis. Studien mit Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001); Dieter Mertens, "Die Instumentalisierung der 'Germania' des Tacitus durch die deutschen Humanisten," in *Zur Geschichte der Gleichung 'germanisch-deutsch.' Sprache und Namen, Geschichte und Institutionen*, ed. Heinrich Beck et. al. (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 37-101; Hirshi, *Wettkampf der Nationen*, 320-26; Christopher Krebs, *Negotiatio Germaniae: Tacitus' Germania und Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Giannantonio Campano, Conrad Celtis und Heinrich Bebel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2005); Idem, *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus's Germania from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011); John L. Flood, "Conrad Celtis (1459-1508), the Pride of German Humanists," in *Germania Remembered 1500-2009: Commemorating and Inventing a Germanic Past*, ed. Christina Lee and Nicola McLelland (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 27-41.

defend the role of the papal seat in the development of the German lands. He juxtaposed the barbaric past of illiterate *Germani* with contemporary *Allemania* where cities, arts, science and literature were flourishing. It was thanks to Rome that an ancient barbaric people had managed to reach such great achievements in all spheres of life. In describing the ancient past, Pius II drew his information largely from Tacitus's work. Despite its rhetorical objective, Piccolomini's *Germania* became very popular in the German lands with its first German edition in Leipzig published in 1496 and spurred great interest in the original – Tacitus' work.[468]

One of the major characteristics of the ancient Germans in *Germania* is their intrinsic chastity, which allowed the German humanists to proclaim the Germans of the past and present "the paragons of virtue."[469] Tacitus wrote that the ancient Germans held marriage in great respect and rarely committed adultery and that those who did were punished severely: "For no one there is amused at vice, nor calls the corruption of others and oneself 'modern life'."[470] Men usually have only one wife, but those who are rich sometimes take multiple wives – not out of lust, but to give them financial protection. They are "neither clever nor cunning," but impulsive and honest with each other.[471] They eat simple food "and they satisfy hunger without fancy dishes and seasonings," only in order to satisfy hunger.[472] "As for thirst, they lack the same restraint" and drinking is their only weakness.[473]

The image of the ancient Germans in the *Germania* is a "Sittenspiegel," a mirror in which the readers of Tacitus were expected to recognize the inversion of their vices. Jones poetically reflects on the portrayal of non-Roman peoples in classical sources in a positive

[468] A German language edition did not appear until 1526, but a number of Latin editions circulated before that. See Stephanie Leitch, *Mapping Ethnography in Early Modern Germany: New Worlds in Print Culture* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 200-201, n. 31.
[469] Ridé, *L'image du Germain*, vol. 2, 1167ff.
[470] Tacitus, *Germania*. "De origine et sitv Germanorvm liber," chapter 19: "nemo enim illic vitia ridet, nec corrumpere et corrumpi saeculum vocatur."
[471] Ibid., chapter 22.
[472] Ibid., chapter 23: "Cibi simplices… Sine apparatu, sine blandimentis, expellunt famem."
[473] Ibid.: "Adversus sitim non eadem temperantia."

light: "Despite occasional efforts to idealize the barbarian and to extoll his real or supposed virtues, his civilized admirers were usually just applauding in him what they imagined to be their own lost innocence – those pristine qualities abandoned by their ancestors in their journey from simplicity and purity toward the delicious vices of civilization."[474] German humanists eagerly adopted Tacitus's strategy to show the superiority of Germans above the decadent Latinate peoples, as well as to critique the German society for the obliteration of positive characteristics once described by Tacitus. The positive image created by Tacitus was turned into the basis for late medieval German self-fashioning.[475]

Jacob Wimpfeling encapsulated the German virtues in the epilogue to his *Epitome rerum Germanicarum*:

> … We do not doubt that it is evident that in the whole world Germany surpasses all the other nations in the mightiness of men, chastity of women, excellence of dukes and princes, their sincere and pure nobleness, the strength of the soldiers and the eminence of the communal freedom, faith, soundness, kindness, and constancy, and the particular talent of artists, the greatness of bishops, the number and size of cities and communities, as well as the most devoted restoration of churches, obedience to the Roman See, generosity in offering alms and tithes, the decency of dress, and even in the salubrious [geographical] position and most agreeable climate."[476]

Johann Boehme in his cosmography of Europe, Asia, and Africa entitled *Omnium Gentium Mores, Leges et Ritus*, published for the first time in 1520 and translated and reprinted

[474] William R. Jones, "The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13/ 4 (1971): 377.

[475] The virtues that Tacitus attributed to the Germanic tribes were succinctly summarized in an early 16th-century poem: "Good manners to the German / count more than laws to Rome. / Not fraud, nor guile, nor usury / find place in German home. / Adultery and whoredom are / unknown in the German's life. / He covets no man's woman / but honors his proper wife. / He knows neither gold, nor profit, / nor any such form of greed. / But takes the produce from the land / and thus satisfies his need. / He never eats or drinks too much; / he's modest in his dress. / When he says "no," he means it, / and "yes," when he says "yes." / To self and friends, he's always true, / and likewise to his mate. / All his life he lives, you see, / In a pure and simple state." Translated in Kelly, "Tacitus Noster," 152-153.

[476] I have used a later edition, prepared by Beatus Rhenanus. Jacob Wimpfeling, *Epitome rerum Germanicarum* (Marburg: Andreas Colbius apud Trifolium,1562), 74 v – 75 r: "Deniq[ue] ut at calcem properemus, exploratum esse non dubitamus, in toto orbe Germaniam cæteris præstare nationibus, virorum multitudine, fœminarum pudicicia, ducum, principum excellentia, eorumq[ue] syncera ac pura nobilitate, militu[m] fortitudine & proceritate atq[ue] co[m]muni liberate, fide, integritate, liberalitate, constantia, atriumq[ue] præcipuo ingenio, episcopatuum magnificentia, urbium & civitatum numerositate, magnitudine, ac studiosißima temploru[m] instauratione, Romanæ sedis obedientia, decimarum oblationum et eleemosynarum largitione, honesto vestium usu, tum situ salubritateq[ue] cœli iucundißima."

forty times before 1620, following Tacitus, wrote that the ancient Germans living in the South and the East were content with only one wife and rarely engaged in adultery: "Those who dwelt in the East and North contented themselves with one wife... The looks of women were modest; there were no banquets or feasts to give reason for allurement. Adultery was rare, although the nation was very numerous."[477] The German humanist and publicist Sebastian Franck (1499-1543) in his *Weltbuch* (1534) included a similar passage: "These people did not purposefully seek lust, delicacies, etc. Their women were of wonderful chastity. No lust or lasciviousness could one sense in [their] words, eyes, dress, or movements."[478] Late medieval German women remained as chaste, as they used to be: "The women are dressed so decently, so comely that there is nothing they could be reprimanded for, except for some women with cleavages that are too low."[479]

The information in cosmographies such as *Omnium Gentium Mores, Leges et Ritus* and *Weltbuch*[480] constituted "an ostentatious part of the mental furniture of all educated men,"[481] to quote McLean. Drawing on Strabo, Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, Tacitus's *Germania* and other classical and medieval authorities, cosmographies played the role of universal compendia of knowledge. One of their distinctive characteristics is the combination of positive as well as negative images of the French. This is not surprising, since, just like the collections of epithets, they fulfilled the function of repositories of all popular textual traditions.[482]

[477] Johann Boehme, *Repertorivm Librorvm Trivm Ioannis Boemi de Omnivm Gentivm Ritibvs: Item index rerum scitu digniorum in eosdem* (Augsburg: Sigmund and Wirsung Grimm, Marx, 1520), fol. 54 r: "qui ad septentrionem et ortum habitant soli vnica vxore contenti ab initio fuere...Mira in foeminis pudicitia, nulla spectandi fuit illecebra, nulla conuiuiorum ratione: rara in tam numerosa gente adulteria…"
[478] Sebastian Franck, *Weltbuch spiegel vn[d] bildtniß des gantzen erdbodens* (Tübingen: Morhart, 1534), fol. 43 v: "Diß volck süchet nicht sunderlich geschmuck wollust etc ein wunderbarliche keüschheit erfand sich bey yrn weibern / kein vnzuchts oder geylheit mocht man weder in worten / augen / kleydung oder wandel spüren."
[479] Johann Boehme, *De Omnium Gentium Ritibus*, fol. 55 v: "Satis honestus hodie foeminarum uestitus est, satis decorus, nihil haberet quod merito reprehendere quis posset, si a quibusdam superne nimium non excauaretur."
[480] Initially planned as a supplement to Franck's *Chronica*, published in 1531, *Weltbuch* was published only in 1534. For the history of its publication, see Patrick Hayden-Roy, *The Inner Word and the Outer World: A Biography of Sebastian Franck* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 99-101.
[481] McLean, *Cosmographia of Sebastian Münster*, 87.
[482] For the history of cosmography as a genre, see: Matthew McLean, *Cosmographia of Sebastian Münster: Describing the World in the Reformation* (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 45-142.

According to the poem *Dyonisius* by the Italian Carmelite, humanist, and poet Baptista Mantuanus (1447-1516), printed for the first time in 1506,[483] the French are "of fiery mind … Cheerful and gleeful, they rejoice in games, poetry, and songs. They are prone in Venus and in banquets." [484] The country is ruled by the "Wild Goat" (Capricorne), through whose influence they have a wavering heart and a soul thirsty for all things new.[485] This poem gained particular popularity in the sixteenth century and was quoted by a number of humanists in the German lands and in France, including Jacob Wimpfeling,[486] Johann Boehme,[487] and Jean Bodin.[488]

In his *On the Vanity of Arts and Sciences*, printed for the first time in Antwerp in 1530, the famous German humanist Agrippa of Nettesheim (1486-1535) collected all sorts of commonplaces, including those about peoples and countries. A chapter entitled "On the Moral of Philosophy" reads that the Germans are "coarse" (*duri*) and "simple" (*semplice*)[489] while the French are "proud" (*superbi*).[490] In another chapter, with the title "On the Art of Courtesans," Agrippa writes that the art of love depends on sex, age, and nation. According to his taxonomy of national characters in love, the Germans are "cold" (*frigidus*) and "slowly inflammable" (*lente inardeicit*) while the French "lustful" (*lascivus*).[491]

The lack of interest in love affairs is a characteristic that betokens the profile of the phlegmatic temperament, whereas lasciviousness fits the sanguine or choleric temperament.

[483] Baptista Mantuanus, *Baptistae Mantuani Carmelitae Dionysius* (Milan: Petr. Mart. Mantegatius, 1506).
[484] Ibid., D v: "Ignea mens Gallis ... Læti, alacres, lusu, choreis et carmine gaudent: in venerem proni, proni in convivia."
[485] Ibid., D2 v: "Aegoceros genti dominans: si credimus astris; / Si damus hoc cœlo arbitrium: cito mobile pectus / Corda largitus, rerum sitibunda novarum."
[486] Wimpfeling, *Epitome rerum Germanicarum*, H6v- H7r.
[487] Johann Boehme, *De Omnium Gentium Ritibus*, fol. 45 r.
[488] Jean Bodin, *Io. Bodini Andegauensis De republica libri sex, Latine ab autore redditi, multo quam antea locupletiores* (Lyon: Jacob du Puys, 1586), 520.
[489] I have used a later edition. Agrippa of Nettesheim, *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum declamatio invectiva* (Cologne: Eucharius Cervicornus, 1539), K4r: "gestu gladiatorio, uultu effreno, uoce bubula, sermone austero, moribus ferocem, habitu dissoluto." For a German critical edition, see Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Über die Fragwürdigkeit, ja Nichtigkeit der Wissenschaften, Künste und Gewerbe*, ed. and tran. Siegfried Wollgast (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1993).
[490] Ibid.: "Gallos cognoscimus ab incessu moderato, gestu molli, uultu bla[n]do, voce dulcisona, sermone facili, moribus modestis, habitu laxo."
[491] Ibid., *De incertitudine et vanitate*, N6 r.

As the second chapter demonstrates, the sanguine and choleric temperaments were considered more prone to the French disease, than others – an understanding used by Grünpeck and Brant to support their theories that the disease occured for the first time among the French people.

These associations were made popular through the "Regimen sanitatis Salernitanum," a twelfth-century text which had been edited and expanded throughout the centuries in Latin and various other languages and is extant in more than one hundred manuscripts and several hundred printed editions.[492] In the fourteenth century, the German medical writer Konrad of Eichstätt produced a new edition of the poem in Latin, which had a particular influence on fourteenth- and fifteenth-century German and Latin editions. Christa Hagenmeyer counted nearly 10,000 copies of various vernacular editions based on Eichstätt's text, with "Ordnung der Gesundheit" as the closest to the original.[493] In the text it is stated that people with sanguine complexion are "unchaste and have many desires, because they are hot and moist,"[494] the choleric temperament makes people unchaste but lacking in desire,[495] whereas the phlegmatic temperament is characterized by a lack of interest in sex and matters of love.[496]

As Weeda shows in her dissertation, there were no firm associations between temperaments and peoples in Later Middle Ages.[497] The sixteenth century did not produce any well-defined taxonomies either. Thus, Franciscus Irenicus, referring to Albertus Magnus,

[492] Pedro Gil Sotres, "The Regimens of Health," in *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. Mirko Dražen Grmek, Bernardino Fantini, and Antony Shugaar (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), esp. 300-302; Melita Weis-Adamson, "Regimen Sanitatis" in *Medieval Science, Technology, and Medicine: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Thomas F. Glick, Steven Livesey, and Faith Wallis (New York, London: Routledge, 2014), 438-439.
[493] Christa Hagenmeyer, *Das Regimen sanitatis Konrads von Eichstätt: Quellen, Texte, Wirkungsgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), 177.
[494] *Dis biechlin saget wie sich ein yegklich mensch hal=ten sol durch das gantz jar/ mit essen/ trincken/ schlaffen/ wachen vnnd baden. Als das beschreyben Auicenna/ Galienus/ Almansor vnd ander natürlich meister [et]c. Gar nutzlich dẽ menschen zů wissenn* (Freiburg: Johann Wörlin, 1523), B 3 v: "er ist unkeüsch vn[d] begert sein vil / wan[n] er ist warm vn[d] feücht…" Also see Walter, *Unkeuschheit und Werke der Liebe*, 324.
[495] Ibid.: "Er begert vil unkeüscheit vnd mag doch wenig"
[496] Ibid., B4 r: "begert nit vil zů unkeüschen vnnd mag sein auch nit vil."
[497] Weeda, "Images of Ethnicity," 100.

seems to describe the Germans as phlegmatic,[498] but the German people at the same time were also traditionally regarded as hot-blooded, due to their continuous exposure to cold climates.[499] It is safe to say, however, that when the German writers assigned the hot element to the French, they often did so with the intention of evoking the connection between the hot element and proneness in sexual matters.[500]

Side by side with the "proneness in Venus" was inconstancy. The fifteenth-century proverb reads "Polish bridge, Austrian soldiers, Italian devotion, German temperance, Bohemian monks, Swabian nuns, Prussian religion, French constancy, nothing costs everything."[501] Surviving in various forms and languages, this topsy-turvy proverb ridiculed the absence of the qualities or phenomena attributed to the named countries. Thus, *Gallorum constantia* was an obvious oxymoron, reinforcing the staple association between the French and fickleness. As I show above, already in the thirteenth century Alexander of Roes had claimed that *inconstantia* was among their main negative traits. The proverbial inconstancy of the French, juxtaposed to the German constancy, became to be associated with their behavior in the matters of love. Thus, Martin Luther stated in the *Tischreden* that the French were to be regarded as air-headed, while the Germans were ambitious.[502] Sebastian Münster in his *Cosmographia universalis* (1544) wrote that the French were to be considered fickle (*nachlässig*),[503] while Scaliger (1561) described them as frivolous (*leichtsinnig*).[504]

[498] Irenicus, *Germaniae exegeseos*, 25 v: "Albertus Magnus in lib. de Natura loci capite tertio, Gotthos, Germanos, & Gethas, ob id uiuaciores oste[n]dit. Nati, inquit, in septimo climate, propter complexionale frigus, corpora habent humida, quia locus eorum frigidior est, & frigus est co[n]stringens..."
[499] For example, see Konrad of Megenberg, *Ökonomik*, ed Sabine Krüger (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1977), vol. 2, 201.
[500] Weiler in his study of an 18th-century *Völkertafel* lists several late antique and medieval sources (including a Byzantine source) referring to the French as hot-blooded: Weiler, "Ethnographische Typisierungen," 104-105.
[501] Jan Papiór, *Aus fremden Rücken ist gut Riemen schneiden: das deutsche parömiologische Bild Polens (ein Versuch)* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo "Rys", 2010), 10: "Pons polonicus, miles Australis, Italica devotio, Teutonicum ieiuna, monachus Boëmicus, Suevica monialis, Prutenorum religio, Gallorum constantia, nihil valent omnia."
[502] Quoted in Ruth Florack, *Tiefsinnige Deutsche, frivole Franzosen*, 23: "In amoribus Germani ambitiosi, Galli leves."
[503] Ibid., 51.
[504] Quoted in Edward Reichel, "'Heimath der Schaullust, der Eitelkeit, der Moden und Novitäten' – Frankreich und der Franzose," in *Europäischer Völkerspiegel*, 175.

In his study of nationalism and morality in the eighteenth century through the early twentieth century, George L. Mosse highlighted that the pattern of representing other races as morally corrupt was integral to nationalistic feelings.[505] He argued that this dynamic did not manifest itself prior to the eighteenth century, and found its basis in the movement of pietism among the modern European bourgeoisie. However, studies of Antiquity and the Middle Ages show that the pattern of labeling others as morally deviant emerged much earlier than that and did not necessarily apply to "inferior races." As Zorach and Puff have demonstrated, non-normative sexual behavior was often attributed to countries that were perceived as culturally superior. Thus, for Germans, all the nations south of the Alps were morally corrupt,[506] while for the French Italy represented the harbor of all the vices.[507]

One of Mosse's many interesting insights about the self-fashioning as morally superior is the juxtaposition of manly "self" to effeminate "other." Masculinity is often connected to a nation's virility and therefore considered essential to its vitality. The stereotype of the fierce character of the Germans is developed in Tacitus's *Germania*, but predates its rediscovery.[508] Thus, Isidore of Seville wrote:

> The Germanic nations are so called because they are immense in body, and they are savage tribes hardened by very severe cold. They took their behavior from that same severity of climate – fiercely courageous and ever indomitable, living by raiding and hunting.[509]

Conrad of Megenberg in his *Planctus ecclesiae in Germaniam* characterized the German soldiers as manly and strong.[510] In his *Yconomica*, he argued that the Germans were the best

[505] George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985), 134: "The stereotype of the so-called inferior race filled with lust was a staple of racism, part of the inversion of accepted values characteristic of the 'outsider,' who at one and the same time threatened society and by his very existence confirmed his standards of behavior."
[506] Puff, Sodomy in *Reformation Germany*, 127-132. Also see Todd W Reeser, *Setting Plato Straight: Translating Ancient Sexuality in the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), chapter 7.
[507] Rebecca Zorach, "The Matter of Italy: Sodomy and the Scandal of Style in Sixteenth-Century France," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 28/3 (1998): 581-609.
[508] See Len E. Scales, "Germen Militiae: War and German Identity in the Later Middle Ages," *Past & Present* 180/1 (2003): 41-82.
[509] Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies*, 97.
[510] Konrad of Megenberg, *Planctus ecclesiae in Germaniam*, ed. Richard Scholz (Leipzig: Verlag Karl W. Hiersemann, 1941), verse 49: "Simplex est, agilis armis, robusta, virilis."

warriors based on their physique – "thus, it follows that the Germans are the best warriors in the world. And I say this, because it is so due to the bodily disposition. In fact, they have beautiful and very durable bodies."[511] He refers to the passage from Aristotle's *Politics* that I quote at the beginning of this chapter to state: "People far from the sun lack prudence and have excessive courage because of the abundance of blood in them. People who are close to the sun abound in sagacity and prudence, but lack courage and animosity, because, naturally, when they have little blood, they are afraid to spill or lose their blood."[512] He then notes that even though the Germans (as people living far from the sun) are not born precautious, they become prudent as a result of constant military training and the turmoil of war. Therefore, as the Greeks in the writings of Aristotle, the Germans are both prudent and courageous.[513]

In this passage, Conrad of Megenberg is engaging with the classical stereotype of *furor Teutonicus*, an epithet of Lucan, which was turned into a stereotype in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[514] Weeda shows in her PhD thesis how in the Late Middle Ages the image of ruthless German soldiers, uncontrollable in their furry and drunkenness, was successfully negotiated against the image of the French *preudomme*.[515] The rediscovery of Tacitus's *Germania* allowed German humanists to use the negative rhetoric surrounding German military in a positive light, as an antithesis to decadent Latin vices.[516]

Through the association with the Frankish origins myth, the French, in the German sources, are often described as "fierce" and "brave." However, when necessary, they are

[511] Megenberg, *Ökonomik*, vol. 2, 200-201: "Quare sequitur Teutonicos meliores esse milites omnibus nacionibus, que sub celo sunt. Et hoc dico, quantum est ex parte disponsicionis corporalis. Habent enim corpora pulchra et robusta nimis."
[512] Megenberg, *Ökonomik*, vol. 2, 201-202: "Racio vero huius, quia secundum Aristotilem VII° Politicorum gentes a sole remote deficiunt prudencia et superant animositate propter copiam sanguinis in eis. Gentes vero soli propinque habundant sagacitate et prudencia, sed deficiunt fortitudine et animositate, quia, cum naturaliter modicum sanguinem habeant, naturaliber sui sanguinis metuunt effusionem seu amissionem."
[513] Ibid., 201: "Teutonici non habent a circumstanciis sue nativitatis, quinymmo per armorum exercitacionem et per bellorum continuas volutaciones."
[514] Scales, "Germen Militiae," 68-74.
[515] Weeda, "Images of Ethnicity," chapter 7.
[516] Scales, "Germen Militiae," 45.

presented as "effeminate," to create a contrast to the German manliness. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, Jacques of Vitry wrote in his *Historia Occidentalis* that the French are seen as "proud, effeminate and carefully adorned like women" in contrast to the "ferocious" Germans.[517] Conrad of Megenberg mocked the French for being too effeminate to be good soldiers and claimed that they chose their best clothing for the battle, as if to attend a wedding.[518] Conrad Celtis, in the verse "De situ Germaniae et moribus" of his *Germania generalis*, wrote that their voice did not at all sound feminine, but very masculine instead.[519] The humanists evoked Caesar as the authority on the effeminacy of the French warriors. Franciscus Irenicus remarked in a similar fashion:

> They [the Gauls] avoid wars, while the Germans are indeed the first [at it], according to the authors Caesar and Tacitus, for just as the soul of the Gauls is eager and ready to wage wars, their mind is gentle and has little resistance to endure calamities, Caesar says in Book I of *Bello Gallico*. Florus likewise says that at the beginning of the war the Gauls are more like men and at the end they are more like women.[520]

The German humanist Heinrich Bebel (1472-1518),[521] professor of rhetoric and poetry at the University of Tübingen, in an oration composed on his coronation as poet laureate refers to the same passage from Caesar[522]

> Caesar also says that the habits of the German and Gallic soldiers are different... Moreover, he says that the Gauls are gentle. For (he says) that although the soul

[517] Jacques de Vitry, *Histoire Occidentale*, trans. Gaston Duchet-Suchaux (Paris: CERF, 1997), 85.
[518] Quoted in Moeglin, *Kaisertum und allerchristlicher König*, 294.
[519] Conrad Celtis, *De Situ et Moribus Germaniae Additiones ('Germania Generalis')*, ed. Centre Traditio Litterarum Occidentalium (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2010), carmen 2, 16-17: "Vox habitum mentis cum gestu & pectora prodit / Vox quae nil muliebre sonat: sed tota virili." Also cited in Boehme, *De Omnium Gentium Ritibus*, fol. 53 r.
[520] Irenicus, *Germaniae exegeseos*, 22 r: "... illi absunt bello, hi v[er]o germanor[um] primi su[n]t, Caesare, Tacito autorib[us], ut Galloru[m] anim[us] ad suscipienda bella alacer & pro[m]ptus est, ita mollis & minime resiste[n]s, ad calamitates p[er]ferendas mens eoru[m] est, ait Caesar lib. i. belli gallici. Florus q[uo]q[ue] Gallos in initio pugnae, plusq[uam] viros, in fine plusq[uam] foeminas dixit..."
[521] Flood, "Heinrich Bebel" in *Poets Laureate*, 141-145. Also see Marcel Angres, *Triumphus Veneris: Ein allegorisches Epos von Heinrich Bebel: Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2003).
[522] C. Julius Caesar, *The Gallic War: Seven Commentaries on the Gallic War*, ed. and trans. Carolyn J.-B Hammond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), book III, chapter 19: "For the Gallic temperament is ready and eager to start wars, but their minds are soft and lacking in determination when it comes to enduring defeats." *C. Iuli Caesaris De Bello Gallico Commentarius Tertius*, ed. Thomas Rice Holmes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), book III, chapter 19: "Nam ut ad bella suscipienda Gallorum alacer ac promptus est animus, sic mollis ac minime resistens ad calamitates ferendas mens eorum est."

> of the Gauls is eager and ready to wage wars, their mind is gentle and has little resistance to endure calamities.[523]

Reconciling the image of innocent ancient Germans with the image of erudite contemporary Germans, advanced in arts, literature, and sciences, presented a major challenge to German humanists. Anxieties associated with the perceived superiority of the Latinate peoples are voiced in Franck's *Weltchronik*: "Germania once was a rough, stagnant, infertile land, as Cornelius Tacitus wrote, populated by coarse people… But now it is so adorned with such strong cities, castles, and powerful warlike people, who have become so fluent and talented in all languages and arts that they are not inferior neither to the French, nor to the Italians and Spaniards."[524]

Conrad Celtis (1459-1508), the first German poet laureate, was the author of one of the most consistent programs of how to balance German simplicity with cultural sophistication. In his famous "Oration delivered publicly in the University of Ingolstadt" (1492), Celtis offered a concept for combining the German simplicity with learning:

> Noble men, emulate the ancient Roman nobility who, after they had taken over the empire of the Greeks, combined all their wisdom and eloquence so that it is a question as to whether they equaled or actually surpassed all the Greek faculty of invention and apparatus of learning. So you, too, having taken over the rule of the Italians and having cast off your vile barbarity, must strive after the Roman arts.[525]

Foreign goods, vices, and diseases

The virtuousness of the German past and present was often contrasted with the French shortcomings and vices. The latter were seen as threatening to corrupt the German-ness of the

[523] Heinrich Bebel, *Oratio ad regem Maximilianum de laudibus atque amplitudine Germaniae, Germani sunt indigenae* (Pforzheim: Thomas Anshelmus, 1504), A6 r: "C[a]esar aut[em] dicit Germanos m[i]l[i]tum a co[n]suetudine Gallor[u]m differre… Gallos aut[em] molles esse dicit Na[m] vt (inquiens) ad bella suscipie[n]da Gallor[um] alacer ac p[ro]mptus e[t] anipm]us sic mollis at ac mi[ni]me resiste[n]s ad calamitates p[er]fere[n]das me[n]s eor[um] est…"

[524] Franck, *Weltbuch* 42 r: "Germania ist etwan gewesen ein rauch vnbeüwig fruchtloß land / als Cornelius Tacitus schreibt / mit grobem volck besetzt… Nun ist es aber also zůgericht / mit notfesten / stetten / schlössern / starckem streitbare[n] volck darzů in allerley sprach vnd künsten / so sin[n]reich vbd fürtreffenlich worden / dz sy weder den Frantzosen / Wahlen oder Hispaniern weichen."

[525] Conrad Celtis, "Oration delivered publicly in the University of Ingolstadt," in *Humanism and the Northern Renaissance*, ed. Kenneth R. Bartlett and Margaret McGlynn (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2000), 77.

German people, and commerce was at the heart of this corruption. According to Tacitus, the ancient Germans had not known the value of money. Following this tradition, Boehme wrote that his ancestors had had no interest in it in the past: "They did not use gold or silver, and did not count the silver, which was given to their ambassadors or sent to their princes by foreign rulers, holding it in the same contempt as pottery."[526] With the absence of money came moderation: "On regular days, in their food and clothing almost all Germans were very frugal and simple."[527]

Die Welsch-Gattung ("The Welsch Kind"), an anonymous work printed in 1513 in Strasbourg, gives a detailed account of a crisis in the German lands caused by the Welsch and adoption of their habits. In this poem "Welsch" is associated mostly with Italy. However, all throughout the Middle Ages "welschen" or "walschen" and "whalen" often stood for France and even Spain. [528] The narrator finds himself in a forest in search of shade, pondering over all the terrible things happening in the world, when he is captured by a Wild Man and brought in front of a council of twelve elders. They ask him to give them a truthful portrayal of the present time.[529] In his reply to the elders, the narrator plunges into a lengthy discussion of everything that is wrong in the world. The crisis is caused by a number of things, including major constellations, but it is "Welschland" and its corrupting habits that the narrator focuses on. The poem is centered on the idea that only the imperial power can solve all the existing problems in the world described in the poem. Only when all the countries recognize the authority of the German emperor, will mankind be able to live in peace.[530]

Among the corrupting effects of Italy, the poem lists the "Welsch" money:

[526] Boehme, *De Omnium Gentium Ritibus*, fol. 43 r-v: "Auri & argenti his olim usus nullus. Argentea uasa eorum legatis data, aut principibus muneri missa, non minori contemptu quam fictilia tractabant."
[527] Boehme, *De Omnium Gentium Ritibus*, fol. 45 v: "Victu, uestituque priuatis diebus ferme omnes Germani admodum frugali et simplici utuntur."
[528] *Mittelhochdeutsches Handwörterbuch*, ed. Matthias Lexer (Leipzig: S. Hirzel), vol. 3, 652.
[529] Friedrich Waga, *Die Welsch-Gattung* (Breslau: M. & H. Marcus, 1910), vv. 401-766.
[530] Waga, *Die Welsch-Gattung*, 6.

Germany, that loves too much the Italian gold,
Beware that this money
Does not bring you bad earnings
Watch out, German nation
Of the wind that comes from the south
It is not healthy, as people say.[531]

Air, as I discuss in the first and second chapters, was commonly believed to be the source of contagion. In these verses the author seems to present money as a metaphor for plague, brought to the German lands with the corrupting southern winds blowing from Italy. Later on, the author again warns Germany of using Italian goods: "Therefore, Germany, I warn you, / Do not love now the Italian goods too much... Watch out, let the wind pass by!"[532]

Along with the purity of German men and women, the salubrity of the German air is a topos in German Renaissance literature. Thus, Franciscus Irenicus dedicated a whole chapter to the purity of the air in the German lands in his *Germaniae exegeseos*. In his words, "the air of Germany is the most salubrious, as Dracontius holds. It is even thicker than in other regions, particularly in the Alpine regions..."[533] He draws a connection between the salubrious and cold qualities of the air and the longevity of the Germans as well as their seriousness.[534]

Since the Germans had started to use money, they became subjected to foreign goods. They now often change their dress and look up to foreign fashion: "Now they find great pleasure in new types of clothing, Italian and especially French, from whom in the past years the men have gotten broad nosed shoes and their coats with wide sleeves and woven caps which are called "pyretia'."[535] Johannes Aventinus (1477-1534), the author of the eight-volume

[531] Ibid., vv. 166-171: "Teutschland, die liebt zů ser welsch gold, / Sih, das dir nit derselbig sold / Werd bringen einen bößen lon, / Hüt dich in Teütscher nation / Recht von dem wind auß dem mittag: / Er ist nit gsund nach gmainer sag!"
[532] Ibid., vv. 354-349: "Darumb, Teütschla[n]d, hab dich jn hůt, / Hab nit zů lieb yetz das welsch gůt, ... Hůt dich, laß wetter vber gann!"
[533] Irenicus, *Germaniae exegeseos*, fol. 25 v: "Aer Germaniae saluberrimus esse a Dracontio perhibetur. Est enim caeteris regionibus crassior, maxime in alpinis locs..."
[534] Ibid.: "Unde sit, ut illic crassior aer est, qui multum ingeniis optimis co[n]fert, dicente Iuvenale satyra decima secundum Heracliti ac Democriti sententiam. Cuius prudentia monstrat / Summos posse viros, & magna exempla daturos."
[535] Boehme, *De Omnium Gentium Ritibus*, fol. 55 v: "Aduenticijs et nouis uestimentorum formis iam plurimum gaudent, Italicis, Gallicisque praesertim, a quibus ante paucos annos obtusa calceamenta uiri, cum fluxis et discissis rnanicis tunicas, et texta pilea, quae pyretia uocant, receperunt."

ancient history of Germany, the *Annals of Bavaria* included a passage in which Charlemagne criticizes French fashion and the German fondness for it and issues a decree prohibiting to trade and wear French clothing in the German lands.[536]

The importance of clothing for one's identity was apparent throughout the Middle Ages and Early Modern times and was codified with the help of sumptuary legislation, which made sure that distinctions between different social classes remained in place. In the words of Gerhard Jaritz, "'the language of dress' was a language of law, of order, of creating differences, of classification and of signification."[537] As Jones and Stallybrass point out, the modern understanding of the word "fashion" differs from what it meant in the past. In the Middle Ages clothing constituted the "fashioning" of the person and was intrinsic to one's personality.[538] Banishing the French fashion from the court, Aventinus's Charlemagne thus attempted to "fashion" his subjects as proper "Germans."

Johann Cochlaeus (1479-1552), in his edition of the cosmography of Pomponius Mela published in 1512, included a description of German history and customs, *Brevis Germaniae descriptio*. In it he notes that the Germans have everything they need in their land and require neither foreign clothing nor food. The rare items they buy from Italy (spices, for examples) are

[536] Quoted in Hirschi, *Wettkampf der Nationen*, 318 and translated in Idem, *The Origins of Nationalism*, 176: "'Oh, you Germans and free Franks, you are so imprudent and inconstant! It is not a good sign that you are adopting the dresses of those whom you vanquished and fought and whose masters you are: if take their clothes, they will take your hearts. What is the point of these Latin (*Wälsche*) clothes and cuts? They do not cover your body, leave it half naked, are neither good for cold nor heat, for rain nor wind; and when someone has to do their business in the field (to put it politely), it does not cover them and their legs freeze.' Charlemagne then sent out a messanger so that these French clothes were neither bought nor sold in Germany."

[537] Gerhard Jaritz, "Images, Urban Space, and the Language and Grammar of Elite Dress (Central Europe, fifteenth century)," in *Le verbe, l'image et les représentations de la société urbaine au Moyen-Age*, ed. Marc Boone, Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin and Jean-Pierre Sosson (Antwerp, Apeldoorn: Garant, 2002), 220. Also see Idem, "Kleidung und Prestige-Konkurrenz. Unterschiedliche Identitäten in der städtischen Gesellschaft unter Normierungszwängen," *Saeculum* 44/1 (March 1993): 8-31; Idem, "Ira Dei, Material Culture, and Behavior in the Late Middle Ages: Evidence from German-speaking Regions," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 18 (2001): 53-66.

[538] Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

part of a mutually beneficial commerce, in which the Germans sell to Italy their man-made goods.[539]

Wine was considered an intrinsically foreign commodity as well. Two classical works helped to substantiate this claim: Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* and Tacitus's *Germania*. Caesar writes that the ancient Germans had dealings with merchants only in order to sell them war booty and never bought foreign goods from them. Moreover, "they forbid the import of wine altogether, believing that it makes men weak and womanish in their capacity for exertion."[540] According to Tacitus, the ancient Germans produced their own beer, but bought wine from their neighbors on the Rhine: "As a drink they use the sap from barley or wheat, fermented into something like wine; the tribes next to the rivers also buy wine in trade."[541]

Franck evokes the passage from Tacitus in his *Weltbuch* (1534) marked by a marginal note, "On crapulence widespread in the German lands in the past and today."[542] Franck dedicated one of his first printed works to the subject of drinking. According to him, wine had come to the German lands from the French, as the title of his book, published for the first time in 1528, suggests: *Vonn dem grewlichen laster der trunckenheit / so in disen letsten zeiten erst schier mit den Frantzosen auffkommen* ("On the horrible vice of drunkeness which in the recent times has just emerged here with the French").[543] It is not clear, whether Franck meant that the

[539] Johann Cochlaeus, "Brevis Germaniae Descriptio" in Idem, *Cosmographia Pomponij Mele Authoris nitidissimi Tribus Libris digesta* (Nuremberg: J. Weissenburger, 1512), H3 r: "Nihil t[u]n[c] Germanis deest / tu[m] ad victu[m] tu[m] ad amictum: p[ro]pter aromata vinaq[ue] externa cu[n]cta posssunt equo (ne dica[nt] minori) p[re]ceio co[m]p[r]ari apud Germanos / quo vel Rome emunt[ur] fere / pecora/ pisces / aves/ frume[n]ta legumina. Cibos para[n]t lautiores / tu[m] sapore... si Aromata ab illis imp[or]tant exporta[n]t artificum op[er]a ad illas mutuisq[ue] gaude[n]t commerciis."
[540] C. Julius Caesar, *The Gallic War*, book IV, chapter 2. *C. Iuli Caesaris De Bello Gallico Commentarius Quartus*, ed. T. Rice Holmes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), book IV, chapter 2: "Vinum omnino ad se importari non patiuntur, quod ea re ad laborem ferendum remollescere homines atque effeminari arbitrantur."
[541] Tacitus, *Germania*, chapter 23. Tacitus, "De origine et sitv Germanorvm liber," chapter 23: "Potui umor ex hordeo aut frumento, in quandam similitudinem vini corruptus; proximi ripae et vinum mercantur."
[542] Franck, *Weltbuch*, 43 v: "Es was nit ein hinderlistig volck entdecket sein geheymniß einfeltig einem jeden. Jr tranck war auß gersten gemacht wie eingebrochner wein. Die anflüssen sassen / hette[n] im brauch etwas frembde zů gefürte wein. Holtzöpfel / gestanden oder gerendte milch / schlechte speiß brauchten sy zur speiß und tranck."
[543] I have used the 1531 edition of the work published in Peter Klaus Knauer, *Sämtlicher Werke: Kritische Ausgabe mit Kommentar*, vol. 1: *Frühe Schriften* (Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Paris, Wien: Peter Lang, 1993), 356-408. On the treatise and how it fit in Franck's world view, see Patrick Hayden-Roy, *The*

vice of drunkenness had come from the French people or with the French disease. It is possible, that he implied both. He does not mention beer at all in his work, and it is clear that he refers to drinking wine rather than drinking beer – the only acceptable "German" alcoholic drink. He gives a detailed account of all the diseases that come with wine[544] as well as overall moral corruption.

As Jacques Ridé noted, the stereotype of the love of the Germans of beer "seriously tarnished their [German] reputation of men morally superior than others."[545] The idea that wine had been imported to the German lands since the ancient times was thus used to support narratives of corruption of the Germans by foreigners and their goods. In *Germaniae Exegesis*, Franciscus Irenicus notes that the ancient Germans had never been good producers of wine and that they in fact had used to "abstain from it."[546] Compared to the Greeks, Romans, and the French, the Germans are much less given to ebriety, he argues. He adds: "Franciscus Phelelphus already spoke about it. He condemned the whole region not because of one or two drunken Germans, but because of the unchastity of the Italians and the treacherousness of the Frenchmen, these great crimes."[547]

Foreign goods were considered luxury; luxury or *luxuria* and lechery in the Middle Ages being often interchangeable due to the association between luxury, indulgence, lack of self-control, lasciviousness, and unchastity.[548] Thus, foreign commodities were associated with

Inner Word and the Outer World: A Biography of Sebastian Franck (New York, Washingon, Baltimore et al.: Peter Lang, 1994), 17-24.

[544] One chapter is even entitled "Trunckenheyt verderbt den leibe vnd is ein vrsach viler kranckhayt / vnd eins vnzeyttigen tods": Knauer, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, 371-374.

[545] Ridé, *L'Image du Germain*, vol. 2, 1189. For various strategies undertaken by German humanists to combat this stereotype, see Ibid., 1188-1192.

[546] Irenicus, *Germaniae exegeseos*, fol. 34 r: "Denique olim vino abstinuisse Germanos reperies."

[547] Ibid.: "Modestius paulo Franciscus Philelphus re[m] tractavit. Non ob unum vel duos Germanos ebrios, Italorum incestos, Gallorum fidefragos, tantis criminib[us] universam regionem censeri voluit."

[548] Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: a Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 88-89: "Luxury came to take its place as a sin in opposition to sobriety and chastity. These latter virtues were not a major concern of classical/pagan thinkers but it is their heightened position in the Christian pictures that enables luxury to become identified with lechery…. The feminine softness of luxury was associated with indulgence and lack of self-control so that, within this usage, the term *luxuria* was able to combine lasciviousness and luxury." Also see Ellen Kosmer, "The 'noyous humoure of lecherie'," *The Art Bulletin, 57/1* (1975): 1.

sin and moral perversion. Jones and Stallybrass, for example, note that in sixteenth-century England the word "to fashion" acquired the meaning of to "counterfeit or pervert."[549]

"If only we could return to that time when German virtue flourished, the time before we had the *luxury of wealth*. Then, our ancestors managed to perform notable deeds; then, virtue alone was a just cause for action; then, when writers failed to record their feats, the glory of the German people sank into the waters of Lethe,"[550] exclaims Eobanus Hessus in the preface to the *Arminius* of Ulrich von Hutten, a praise of the Germanic ancient "Wild Man."[551] Imported foreign commodities brought with them the Italian vice, the French "unreyne liebe,"[552] and, ultimately, the French disease.

In *Ad Elsulam a priscis et sanctis Germaniae moribus degenerantem* ("To Elsula, falling away from the old-time and pure customs of Germany"), one of the verses in the *Quattuor Libri Amorum* Conrad Celtis laments the disregard for German ancient habits, and the corruption of the Germans by all things foreign, manifested in new diseases, as contrasted with a glorious past:

> Rare were diseases and there were no foreign seeds
> And avaricious physicians did not drain so much wealth.
> There was no such game,[553] the sort of which is now in the region,
> Which consumes up to ten thousand leaders a night…
> But after *luxuria* migrated to our shores
> Bacchus and Venus inflamed each roof,
> Our age is now prone to various diseases,
> And thousands are cruelly killed via poisoned air.[554]

Libri quattor amores (1502), together with *Germania generalis* (1502) comprise the first part of Celtis's ambitious *Germania illustrata*, a description of geography, history and

[549] Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 1.
[550] Walker, *Ulrich von Hutten's Arminius*, 24.
[551] On this subject see Leitch, *Mapping Ethnography*, chapter 3.
[552] See chapter 2, n. 377.
[553] Perhaps, a play on the words *lues* ("plague") and *ludus* ("play").
[554] Conrad Celtis, *Quattuor libri amorum secundum quattuor latera Germaniae*, ed. Centre Traditio Litterarum Occidentalium (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010): "Rarus erat morbus peregrina que semina nulla / Nec medicus tantas hausit avarus opes. / Nullus erat talis ludus, nunc qualis in orbe est, / Qui bis dena ducum milia nocte vorat; /...Sed postquam luxus nostras migravit in oras / Et Venere et Baccho singula tecta calent, / Hinc varios morbos patitur proclivior aetas / Mille que nunc animas crapula saeva necat."

customs of the ancient and modern Germans, planned as a response to Flavio Biondo's *Italia illustrata* (1474). Celtis envisioned it as a collaborative effort of the most prominent German humanists of his time. Even though Celtis's ambitious project never came to be completed, but had a long-lasting influence on the German nationalist thought.[555]

Heinrich Bebel uses a similar rhetoric in his allegorical poem *Triumphus Veneris*, a detailed account of moral depravity in the German lands caused by Venus and sumptuousness. "Why do we, O mortals, suffer from previously unknown diseases? From the fatal and other kinds of plagues?" – he exclaims.[556] And further on in the poem answers his question in a plea to *Germania*:

> I beg you, O Germania, preserve the old customs
> And, the most venerable, expel the foreign sumptuousness,
> And the great vice unknown to our ancestors![557]

The foreign goods make the German body weaker and less "German" and, as a result, subject to foreign diseases. Johannes Agricola laments in his *German Proverbs* that the German people "wear Italian, Spanish and French clothes, have Italian cardinals, French and Spanish diseases and also carry out Italian practices."[558] According to Erasmus, the French disease is just another sign of moral corruptness: "Unless you're a good dicer, a skillful card player, an unfamous whoremonger, a heavy drinker, a reckless spendthrift, a wastrel and heavily in debt, decorated with the French pox besides, hardly anyone will believe you're a knight."[559]

[555] Gerald Strauss, *Sixteenth-Century Germany: its Topography and Topographers* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), 17-28; Ridé, *L'Image du Germain*, 215-29; Müller, *Die 'Germania generalis' des Conrad Celtis*; Flood, "Conrad Celtis (1459-1508), the Pride of German Humanists."
[556] Angres, *Triumphus Veneris*, 86: "Cur, o mortales, patimur non cognita priscis / Ulcera, cur pestes mortis et omne genus?"
[557] Ibid., 256: "Contineas veteres, precor, o Germania, mores / Atque peregrinum pellas sanctissima luxum / Et vitium ignotum nostris maioribus olim." A different verse by Bebel on the French disease was printed on the verso of the title page of Fries's *Epitome opusculi*: "Nil hominum miserans torquebo crimina mundi, / Pestiferum morbum vulgo qui Francica fertur, / In terris mittam, quæ derformare venusta / Corpora consuevit, vel nigra ad tartara mittet / Ulcera cum varijs morbis incognita mittam / Nulla ætas tuta est, sive innuptæ que puellæ, / Si vir aut iuvenis fuering aut pigra senectur, / Nec infans parvulus, nec præbens ubera mater."
[558] Quoted in Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany*, 134.
[559] Erasmus, "The Knight without a Horse, or Faked Nobility," in *Colloquies*, 884.

Ulrich von Hutten directly linked foreign commodities with diminished "Germanness," corrupted morals and eventually disease in a number of his works.[560] In November 1518, a year before the publication of his treatise on the French disease, he finished his *Febris Prima*, and immediately after the publication of the treatise – *Febris Secunda*.[561] Both dialogues have received considerable attention as early examples of the metaphorical use of disease.[562] The dialogues take place between Hutten and Fever, a trope standing for a number of diseases, including leprosy, gout, and the French disease. In the first dialogue, Hutten asks Fever to leave his quarters, suggesting that she would be better off at the houses of rich people who indulge in gluttony, drunkenness, and expensive goods, and those that have committed crimes. He urges Fever to find home with corrupt monks and clerics and particularly with Cardinal Tommaso Cajetan, who had been sent to the German lands to collect money for a crusade against the Turks. Fever notes that the cardinal is too stingy, and in the end chooses to settle in the quarters of one of the *Curtisani*, a German cleric who spent some time at the court of a Roman prelate. Before making her decision, Fever asks Hutten a series of questions:

> Fever: Does he drink wine?
> Hutten: He drinks a lot.
> Fever: Does he use pepper, cinnamon, ginger, and cloves?
> Hutten: Plenty of it.
> Fever: Does he have a bed, a tapestry, a mattress well stuffed with feathers, and a silk pillow?
> Hutten: The best.
> Fever: Does he also eat fish?
> Hutten: He guzzles it, but only the best and most expensive, he also likes partridges and pheasants, and when he eats a hare, he thinks of himself as more beautiful. He also says that he is without asparagus during this long winter.
> Fever: And does he take a bath sometimes?
> Hutten: With great zeal and often.
> Fever: Is he however stingy?

[560] Jillings, "The Aggression of the Cured Syphilitic"; Thomas G. Benedek, "The Influence of Ulrich von Hutten's Medical Descriptions."
[561] Both dialogues were published together in 1520. I have used Böcking's edition: Ulrich von Hutten, "Febris prima" in Ulrich von Hutten, *Opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia*, ed. Eduard Böcking, vol. 4 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1860), 29–41; "Febris secunda" in ibid.,101-144.
[562] Jillings, "The Aggression of the Cured Syphilitic"; Thomas G. Benedek, "The Influence of Ulrich von Hutten's Medical Descriptions"; Sari Kivistö, *Medical Analogy in Latin Satire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 69-71.

Hutten: He is most generous.
Fever: Does he seek help from the doctors?
Hutten: He hates them bitterly and thinks they must be expelled from Germany.
Fever: Is he clad in skins or is he otherwise well-dressed?
Hutten: Yes, as the one in Martial's, like Baccara he prays for dark days, wind, and snow, among his six hundred fur mantles.[563]

After Hutten answers all of Fever's questions, she chooses the home of a German cleric who has just returned from Rome.

In the second dialogue, Fever is back at Hutten's door. She escaped the cleric's house because it had become too crowded with diseases that he had taken in, particularly the French disease.[564] The dialogue is full of satire on German clerics and the Roman church and accusations of their voluptuousness. Fever tries to persuade Hutten of positive effects she could have on him, but Hutten convinces her that he has already benefited from her influence and that she should travel to Rome to confront Roman clerics.[565]

In the longest chapter of his treatise on the French disease, entitled *Contra Luxum parsimoniae laus* ("On luxury, in praise of temperance") Ulrich von Hutten makes the same

[563] Hutten, "Febris Prima," 37-39:
"Febris: Bibit vinum?
Huttenus: Perbibit.
Febris: Condit pepere et cinamomo et zinzibere et gariophyllo?
Huttenus: Largissime.
Febris: Habet lectos et tapetes et culcitras plumis suffertas et cervicalia et sericum?
Huttenus: Instructissime.
Febris: Tum pisces edit etiam?
Huttenus: Lurcatur, sed non nisi caros et magni emptos, amatque perdices et phasianos, et si leporem edat, pulchriorem se fieri putat; iam autem longam hanc hyemem dicit, qua caret asparagus.
Febris: Et lavat nonnunquam?
Huttenus: Cupidissime et crebro.
Febris: Non avarus est interim?
Huttenus: Profusissime liberalis.
Febris: Negotium est illi cum medicis?
Huttenus: Odit infense et Germania expellendos putat.
Febris: Pellitus est aut aliter bene vestitus?
Huttenus: Immo, ut ille apud Martialem,
Optat et obscuras luces ventosque nivesque
Inter sexcentas Bacchara gausapinas."

[564] Hutten, "Febris Secunda," 109: "Non fert, iam admisit alios ille enim morbos, Gallicam imprimis scabiem, qua distinetur misere, tum calculo coepit torqueri nuper, at articulos habet perdite affectos, atque interim eget domi."

[565] In his other dialogue *Bulla vel Bullicida* (1520) Hutten compares the vices of the Roman Church with the boils of disease through a pun on *bullae*, the Latin word for papal decrees. See Jillings, "The Aggression of the Cured Syphilitic," 8-9; Kivistö, *Medical Analogy*, 71.

connection between luxury and disease. However, it is no longer the Church that is the main target of his critique, but the German nobility. He laments the betrayal of ancient customs among the nobility[566] and praises his grandfather Laurentius Hutten for leading an exemplary chaste life, which was marked by active engagement in political affairs and the refusal to allow such foreign things as pepper, saffron, ginger, or any other exotic spices in his house.[567] Not only did he not use foreign goods himself, but also scolded his equals for succumbing to foreign commodities.[568] These days, von Hutten observes, nobility prefers Milesian wool to common cloth, and foreign ointments and spices to local herbs; they require meats from Italy, wine from Corsica, and other expensive commodities, the trade of which enriches merchants. By purchasing fashionable garments, the nobility loses their good fortune and acquires many other evils or diseases,[569] including the French disease "that cannot live without pepper."[570] The voluptuous style is the reason why now one can hardly find a German nobleman who is not tormented by gout, dropsy, leprosy, or the French pox.[571] It is peculiar, that although opposing foreign goods, Ulrich von Hutten nevertheless advocates for the use of the guaiac tree in treating the French disease, arguing that it retains its curative powers even in the German lands and is good for Germans (as well as people in Italy and France).[572]

About the same time, in September 1518, Ulrich von Hutten published another dialogue on the vices of nobility ("Aula") based on the Mainz court.[573] The two main characters in the

[566] Hutten, *De guaiaci medicina et morbo gallico liber unus*, 461: "Præstabat barbaros et dici et haberi in illis ut tunc sordibus, quam in hac luxuria, hoc dedecore ingeniorum palmam aucupari."
[567] Ibid., 463: "... in suam domum piper, crocum, zinziber et id genus peregrina condimenta nunquam admisit, nec alio ipse quam ex nostra lana vestimento uti solutus est..."
[568] Ibid.: "idque non tantum faciebat ipse, sed magno etiam apud æquales suos convicio mores hominum insectabatur."
[569] Ibid., 460: "Quid aliud sunt enim ista omnia quam patrimoniorum prius nostrorum dilapidationes, deinde morborum quoque propagines?"
[570] Ibid., 465: "Meum igitur summum votum est, ne unquam podagra, unquam morbo Gallico careant qui pipere carere non possunt..."
[571]Ibid.: 463: "Cum inquam, vix decimus, quisque nunc reperiatur in Germania nobilium, qui non aut podagra laboret, aut articulari morbo crucietur, aut hydropisi infestetur, ischia, lepra, aut illa maxima secum mala invehente morbo Gallico divexetur."
[572] Ibid., 439.
[573] Klaus Schreiner and Ernst Wenzel, *Hofkritik im Licht humanistischer Lebens- und Bildungsideale Enea Silvio Piccolomini, De miseriis curialium (1444), Über das Elend der Hofleute, und Vlrichi de Hvtten, Equitis*

dialogue are Castus ("Moral") and Misaulus ("Court contrarian"). Among the signs of decadence at the court, Misaulus highlights the repelling dirtiness: "In the halls there is the dirtiest filth, a remarkable obscenity."[574] Meat is spoiled and undercooked, served in dirty dishes, and there is dog excrement everywhere, along with vomit and piss, he writes. Sleep is scarce and is always in dirty beds, which are infested with fleas. Since sheets are rarely washed, beds also harbor diseases, including *morbus gallicus*.[575]

A popular song from the early sixteenth century also associates the French disease with foreign fashion. *Ain news gedicht von firwicz der welt* ("A new poem on the fallacy of the world"),[576] printed in 1510, mocks the use of all things foreign and the adoption of foreign habits by the "people of the Upper German language" (*dasz Volck hochtewtscher Zungen*):[577]

> Drinking like Westphalians, Poles, Hessians, and also Saxons is done everywhere; eating with no limit, too much and excessively, which we call gourmandize. Dancing, gambling, and playing cards like the Flemish, Lombards, and the French...[578]

People wear *welsch* capons called *kaputz* – a foreign word that everybody uses these days,[579] and indulge in all sorts of luxuries: "hats, bags, rosaries, cloth, dresses, spurs, swords will cost twice as much every year in this delusion."[580] The poem mentions people with a

Germani Aula dialogus (1518), Aula, eines deutschen Ritters Dialog über den Hof (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 125-126.

[574] I have used the edition and translation by Klaus Schreiner. Ulrich von Hutten, *Equitis Germani Aula dialogus* in Schreiner, *Hofkritik*, 218: "Igitur immundissimæ sunt in aula sordes, mira obscoenitas."

[575] Ibid., 220: "Adde lectos, non impuros tantum, sed et pestilentes sæpe, ubi ille dormierat paucis ante diebus, morbo Gallico adesus ubi leprosus aliquis desudaverat."

[576] "Ain news gedicht von firwicz der welt: Was newes nunvor handen/ vn[d]vor gewesen nye/ was mäniklich möcht ande[n] das sey zu hören hye" ([Augsburg]: [Öglin], [ca. 1510]). The poem is based on a song attributed to Hans Heselloher (1451-1488). Published in Oskar Brenner, August Hartmann, eds., *Bayerns Mundarten: Beiträge zur deutschen Sprach-und Volkskunde* (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1892), vol. 1, 116-121. My

[577] Ibid., 117, line 8: "Dasz volck hochtewtscher zungen."

[578] Ibid., lines: 65-74: "zůtrincken alsz westfale, / Poln, Hessen vnd auch Sacks / ist worden vberale, / der essen one zalle, / zů fil vnd vber masz, / das haissen wir ain prasz. / Als Flaming vnd Lamparten / Franzosiche hanthir / der täntze, spil vnd karten/ vnd alles prauchen wir… "

[579] Ibid., 118-119, lines 91-110: "Lang zipfel oder lappen / auff mentel one nutz / hangen an welschen kappen; / Das nennen wir kaputz. / in aller red verloffen / Ainn fremdes wort gepröckt! / Mit schůch in schůch geschloffen / das haissen wir panthoffen; / auff vngerisch geröckt / das haissen wir gehasöckt. / Hoch goller bisz der oren / auff mentel vnd auch röck. / Dar an fil mie verloren / von wegen fil der flöck,/ der gäterischen premen / auff niderlöndisch pkůff. Sonst mangerlay gestreme / auff hossen fil gestäme, / brait schůch als rosses hůff, / wie fürwicz vnsz beschůff."

[580] Ibid., 119, lines 121-124: "Hütt, taschen, paternoster, / zeug, klaider, sporn, schwert / Würdt durch des fürwitz kostenn / schir all jar zwir verkert."

fondness for fashion, which led them to get *mala franzossen*. The spots from the pants seem to have transferred onto their skin: "Some people wearing brindled pants and dress, and now are bespeckled with spots from the pox that they got ... The French disease / has no regard for embroidered pants."[581]

A later example of *morbus gallicus* acting as a sign of moral degradation and diminished German-ness is found in the famous adventure novel *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus Teutsch* by Hans Jakob Christoph von Grimmelshausen. The first six chapters of Book IV are dedicated to Simplicius's adventures in Paris and have been in the center of attention of a number of scholars.[582] Simplicius accompanies two French noblemen to Paris. During their journey one of them gives Simplicius French clothing, which marks the beginning of his moral transformation. In France he meets a medical doctor, Monsieur Canard, who takes him into his service. When the king's master of ceremonies and other people from the royal entourage visit the house of Monsieur Canard, they hear Simplicius play the lute and sing a German song. They become so impressed with his beauty that they invite him to perform in a *comoedia* at the Louvre. Simplicius quickly masters the French pronunciation, and is given the role of Orpheus. On the day of his performance, he is groomed and dressed by his master and other people. With his hair dyed black, wearing clothing that could scarcely hide his body, Simplicius seems to represent an antithesis to normative German-ness. His performance becomes a great success and from that moment on the French begin to call him *Beau Alman*.[583] His new name furthers the transformation, and Simplicius turns into a *Monsieur Alamode* – a

[581] Ibid., lines 151-158: "Das manger gieng geschecket / in hossen vnd in watt / das get er nun geflecket / von platern die er hat / der etwan laut thöt kossen, / Das ligt er yetzund ynn. / die plag mala franzossen / acht nit gestrickter hosen."
[582] Richard E. Schade, "Simplicius in Paris: The Allegory of the Beautiful Lutenist," *Monatshefte* 88/1 (1996): 31-42; Peter Hess, "The Poetics of Masquerade: Clothing and the Construction of Social, Religious, and Gender Identity in Grimmelshausen's Simplicissimus," in *A Companion to the Works of Grimmelshausen*, ed. Karl F. Otto (Rochester: Camden House, 2003), 299-332; Molly Markin, "Kleider machen Leute. Clothing as a Social Metaphor in Grimmelshausen's Der Aberteuerliche Simplicissimus Teutsch," *Revista de Filologia Alemana* 18 (2010): 41-56.
[583] Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen, *Der Abentheurliche Simplicissimus Teutsch* (Nuremberg: Felsecker, 1669), 398.

caricature of a German nobleman, dressed according to the latest French fashion from numerous broadsheets that circulated during and after the Thirty-Years War.[584] In his new role, he begins to experience all things "French." According to expectations and perceptions of Frenchness by Grimmelhausen's readers, Simplicius engages in illicit sexual activities. He is taken to the *Venusberg* where he, although recently married, spends eight days in the company of four French women. As he leaves the fortress he is given 200 gold pieces and eventually acquires more "customers" ("Kunde"), thus becoming a male prostitute.[585]

Simplicius soon falls ill, and spends several days sick until he realizes that he got the "liebe Frantzosen."[586] His gradual transformation into someone he was not meant to be, the Frenchified version of himself, a "beau Alman," ends with him contracting the most French disease imaginable. The next three chapters Simplicius spends covered with spots, becoming the opposite of the "beautiful German" he once was.

In the narrative arc of Grimmeslhausen's novel, the French disease acts a catalyst, which makes Simplicius reconsider his moral choices. It is the purifying arrow sent by the Gods in an attempt to change his ways. As a result, Simplicius repents his past deeds, thinking that the punishment was just. The French disease is represented as the epitome of Simplicius's "corruption" or his loss of identity preceded by the abandonment of his innate manners and customs. At the end of his moral journey, he finds himself spiritually transformed and back in the Spessart forests, where he grew up. He chooses the hermit's life that his father led, rejecting vanity by dressing in a simple hermit's gown. His spiritual journey is complete, when he is

[584] Bärbel Zausch, *Frau Hoeffart & Monsieur Alamode: Modekritik auf illustrierten Flugblättern des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts: Ausstellung vom 21. Juni bis 19. Juli 1998 aus eigenen Beständen* (Halle: Staatliche Galerie Moritzbund, 1998); Marie-Thérèse Mourey, "Körperbilder und habitus corporis: Nationale und soziale Stereotype in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Frühneuzeitliche Stereotype: zur Produktivität und Restriktivität sozialer Vorstellungsmuster: V. Jahrestag der Internationalen Andreas Gryphius Gesellschaft, Wrocław, 8. bis 11. Oktober 2008*, ed. Mirosława Czarnecka, Thomas Borgstedt, Tomasz Jabłecki (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), esp. 251-255; Wiggin, *Novel Translations*.
[585] Grimmelshausen, *Der Abentheurliche Simplicissimus Teutsch*, 409.
[586] Ibid., 411.

back home, assuming the customs that were bestowed upon him by his father and his surroundings.

These examples demonstrate that the French disease was seen as a punishment for using commodities that were considered foreign and not German enough. Such perception of *morbus gallicus* was not unique to the German lands. Harris showed, that the French pox in Elizabethan England "was increasingly seen as an exotic if dangerous commodity, shipped into the nation by merchants, soldiers, and other alien migrants."[587] And Roze Hentschell pointed out that medical and literary works often linked the French disease to the use of luxury goods in early modern England.[588]

According to an anecdote, recounted by Erasmus, it was not uncommon to meet a Frenchman "who out of hatred for the English would rather go naked than be clothed in English cloth, or an Englishman who would rather come to bursting with thirst than drink a French wine."[589] Commodities had nationalities and so did diseases. Using the things which did not befit the descendants of the Tacitus's *Germani*, enfeebled their bodies and made them prone to catching diseases. Nobility from Hutten's dialogues, as well as Simplicius and the fashionmongers from an anonymous poem alter their German "selves" through the use of foreign goods and commodities, which lead to their moral corruption and bring them disease – the embodiment of this corruption.

Since excessive use of luxury goods caused diseases, merchants, distributing the goods, were often represented as "distributing" or spreading disease. In addition to merchants, people, who regularly crossed borders, and those on the margins of the body politic were feared as transgressors of the boundaries between healthy and unhealthy environments. Delumeau demonstrates that foreigners, travelers, and other marginalized individuals were often treated

[587] Harris, *Sick Economies*, 17.
[588] Hentschell, "Luxury and Lechery."
[589] Erasmus, "The Antibarbarians," in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. Craig R. Thomson (Toronto, London: University of Toronto Press, 1978), vol. 23, 23.

with suspicion by authorities during plague epidemics, and Jews and lepers were even accused of poisoning the wells.[590] In the case of the French disease mercenaries and "camp women"[591] were represented as transmitters of *morbus gallicus*.

As the first chapter shows, mercenaries often featured in the stories of origins of the French pox. In his *Chronicle*,[592] published for the first time in 1531, Sebastian Franck writes that the French disease, having originated in France, was carried to the German lands by *Landsknechte*:

> In the year 1495, at the time of Emperor Maximilian, when he waged a war against France with Ludovico Gibboso and with the Venetians, the mercenaries brought with them from France this despicable soiling plague, the French, and it was named "French" after the soldiers, because they had contracted it from the French and became overcome by it in France. This pestilential and terrible disease still holds this name today.[593]

He adds that the mercenary soldiers are just another plague which dates from the time of Emperor Maximilian.[594]

A poem by Johannes Haselberg, *Von den welschen Purpelln* ("On the *Welsch* Purple") published in Mainz in 1533,[595] also blames the mercenary soldiers as well as merchants and

[590] Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident*, 131-133.
[591] On "camp women" as perceived transmitters of the French pox in the German context, see Bloch, *Ursprung der Syphilis*, vol. 1, 257-258; John L. Flood, David J. Shaw, *Johannes Sinapius (1505-1560): Hellenist and Physician in Germany and Italy* (Geneva: Droz, 1997), 33-34; Christiane Andersson, "Von 'Metzen' und 'Dirnen': Frauenbilder in Kriegsdarstellungen der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Landsknechte, Soldatenfrauen und Nationalkrieger. Militär, Krieg und Geschlecherordnung im historischen Wandel*, ed. Karen Hagemann, Ralf Pröve (Frankfurt, New York: Campus Verlag, 1998), 172-183; Matthias Rogg, *Landsknechte und Reisläufer: Bilder vom Soldaten: ein Stand in der Kunst des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002), 58-66; John A. Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 73-74.
[592] Sebastian Franck, *Chronica, Zeytbuch vnd geschychtbibel* (Straßburg: Balthasar Beck, 1531). See Hayden-Roy, *The Inner World and the Outer World*, 68-101; Jean-Claude Colbus, *La Chronique de Sebastien Franck (1499-1542): vision de l'histoire et image de l'homme* (Bern; New York: Peter Lang, 2005).
[593] I have used the 1536 edition of the *Chronica*. Sebastian Franck, *Chronica, Zeitbuch unnd Geschichtbibell von Anbegyn bis in dis Gegenwertig 1536 Jar Verlengt* (Ulm: J. Varnier, 1536), T2 v: "Anno tausent / vier hundert / xcv. zur zeit Maximiliani des keisers / als er mit Ludowico Gibboso dem künig zu Franckreich / vnd mit den Venedigern krieg füret / brachten die Landßknecht dise jämerliche verderbent plag der Frantzosen mit jnen aus Franckreich / vn[d] warden von den knechten Frantzosen genant / darumb das sie dise plag bey den Frantzosen inn Franckreich erobert vnnd überkummen hetten / Welche sucht vnd erschrökliche kranckheyt noch heüt namen behalten hat."
[594] Ibid.: "zu dises Keisers zeit seind auch die Landsknecht / das niemandt nutz volck auff kummen / das vngefordert / vngesůcht vmblaufft / krieg vn[d] vnglück sůcht vnd nachlaufft."
[595] See Johannes Haselberg, "Von den welschen purppeln," in Fuchs, *Die ältesten Schriftsteller*, 363-373.

prostitutes. Haselberg considered himself "a servant of the Habsburg dynasty"[596] and wrote a number of works praising the Habsburgs including *Des Türkischen Kaysers Heerzug* (1530), *Der Adler wider den Hanen. Eyn schöner lüstbarlicher Dialogus* (1536), and *Newe zeitung vnd Kriegshandlung* (1537). In the poem, he refers to people suffering from the disease as the brothers of the "Order of the Welsch Purple." The tone of the poem is moralizing and differs greatly from other encomia to "orders of diseases" widespread at the time.[597] There are three characters in the poem: a herald of the French king, a merchant, and a patrician. On the frontispiece of the pamphlet is a male figure representing the herald. He is wearing a surcoat decorated with three lilies, the French royal symbol, and holds a herald's wand in his hand (Fig. 6). There are two more woodcuts, each depicting the merchant and the patrician demonstrating their ulcers but otherwise covered with clothing (fig. 7 and 8).

Fig. 6. The herald of the king of France. Johannes Haselberg, *Wie die Ritterbrüder des Purpelschen ordens mit grossen Schlachten und stürmen ir Ritterschafft erhaltent* (Mainz 1533), 6 B r.
Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek
http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00085073/image_9

[596] Josef Benzing, "Haselberg, Johann" in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 8 (1969): 22-23.
[597] One of the most interesting pieces in this tradition is *Ritterorden des podagrischen Fluss* ("Order of the Gouty Humour"), written by Georg Fleissner in 1594, several editions of which are known. See "Prometheus' Vulture: the Renaissance Fashioning of Gout" in Arthur L. Caplan, James J. McCartney, eds., *Health, Disease, and Illness: Concepts in Medicine* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2004), especially 17-21.

Fig. 7: The patrician exhibiting his ulcers. Ibid., A3 v.
http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00085073/image_6

Fig. 8: The merchant showing his spots. Ibid., A2 r.
http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00085073/image_3

The merchant is suffering from the "purple" and laments that there is no escape from it: "Clerics, lay people, monks and nuns, / No one escapes the war; / Princes, lords, many men-

at-arms / Are marked by the knighthood, / The ones with silver and gold, / Still have to fight against the purple."[598] The merchant heard that the patrician had gotten it too and asks his advice on how to get rid of it. The patrician tells the merchant: "Had we observed good regimen, / God would not have sent the plague upon us."[599] He goes on to state that the merchant got the disease due to his misbehavior away from home, and therefore has no one to blame but himself: "You have deserted this world / With mundane goods and disdainful money / With pride and arrogance / With greed and usury that do not do good..."[600] The patrician adds, that the disease appeared for the first time in Naples where it was brought to by men-at-arms. And from there, "through lasciviousness, I have heard / The purple has come to Germany."[601] The disease spread to German towns with merchants, Landsknechte, students, and other traveling folk who engage in adultery (*eebruch*) and all sorts of other vices.

Morbus gallicus and its king

Haselberg portrays the disease as a ferocious enemy, against which the brothers of the "Order of the Welsch Purple" have to fight day and night. He extensively uses war-like metaphors to describe the struggle. His metaphoric language suggests that the brothers of the Order are fighting the French themselves: "They fight now day and night / Against the French in the morning and at night."[602] He goes even further and associates the disease with the King of France himself:

> There is no king in the world,
> Who could fight further without money
> But this King of France

[598] Haselberg, "Von den welschen purppeln," 364: "Geystlich, weltlich, münch vnd nůnnen,/ Niemantzs ist dem krieg etrunnen; /Fürsten, herren, manch gwapnet mann / Zyhent mit der ritterschafft dran, / Die selbs haben silber vnd goldt, / Noch kriegens von den purpeln soldt."
[599] Ibid., 365: "Het wyr gefürt gůt regiment, / So het vns Gott die plag nit gsendt."
[600] Ibid., 368: "Dů bist verlassen inn der welt / Durch zeitlich gůt vnd schnödes gelt, / Durch hoffart vnd durch übermůt. / Durch geitz vnd wůcher, thůt nit gůt."
[601] Ibid., 369: "Vnd durch hůrey, hab ich vernůmmen, / Sey die purpel inn deutschlandt kummen."
[602] Ibid., 364: "Kriegen jetzund tag vnd nacht, / Widern Franzosen frü vnd spath."

To whom there is no equal on earth;
Princes, lords far beyond the Rhine
Must obey to the king:
As soon as he sends the purple to someone,
His heart becomes frightened by the Order.[603]

He refers to the disease as the French king on several occasions. For example, when the merchant asks the patrician if he knows the cure for the disease, he says: "I ask you for a brotherly council, / If you know something, do not keep it a secret, / So that I could escape / From the king of France unscorned."[604]

Haselberg was not the only one to rhetorically link the French disease to the French king. Johannes Agricola included an entry in his edition of German proverbs from 1530 dedicated to the proverb "Dass dich die Franzosen ankomen" ("French on you!"). An equivalent of this saying has survived in the form of a cursing in a number of contemporary languages. There is still a similar phrase in English: "Pox on you!" It might be archaic in the English language, but, for example, in Hungarian its equivalent is still in common use.[605] The entry from Agricola's *German Proverbs* reads:

> This curse is new, and appeared in the times of Emperor Maximilian. Because before his time this illness and pox has not been heard of in the German lands. But Maximilian and Ludovico Gibboso had a battle against the king of France and the Venetians; they brought this pox to us from Lombardy to the German lands. Thereof it got its name and even today it is called the French. And one battled with the King of France when getting the disease.[606]

[603] Ibid.: "Es ist keyn könig inn der welt, / Der weither krieget sunder gelt,/ Dann dieser künig von Franckreich, /Auff ertrich ist nit sein geleich; / Fürsten, herren weith über rhein, / Müssent dem könig ghorsam sein: /So bald er eym die purpeln schickt; /Vorm orden jm sein hertz erschrickt."
[604]Ibid., 365: "Mit brüderlichem rath ich bitt, / Weystu etwas, verschweig mirs nit, / Damit ich kem auss disem pracht / Vom küng von Franckreich vnveracht."
[605] "(A) francba!" It is often translated as "Go to hell!"
[606] Johannes Agricola, *Das ander teyl gemainer Tewtscher Sprichwörter, mit jhrer außlegung hat fünffthalb hundert newer Wörtter* (Nuremberg: Stuchs, 1530), M4 v-M5 r: "Dyser fluch ist new / und bey Keyser Maximilians zeytten auff kommen / Denn vor dyser zeyt war dyse kranckhayt un[d] plattern vngehöret / ynn Teutschen landen / Do aber Maximilian kriegte mit dem Ludouico Gibboso / König ynn Frankreich / unnd mit den Venedigern / brachte[n] die vnsern dyse plattern auß Lombardien ynn Tewtsche land / davon sie auch noch hewttigs tages den namen haben / und hayssenn Frantzosen / Vnnd der hat sich mit dem König von Frankreich geschlagen / wenn einer die krankhayt bekomme[n] hat."

In the passage quoted above, as well as in Haselberg's poem, the French king does not simply act as a participant of the origin story of the pox. He is represented as instrumental and even essential to its spreading throughout the German lands.

In her influential essay "Disease as Political Metaphor," Sontag argued that "the metaphor implements the way particularly dreaded diseases are envisaged as an alien 'other,' as enemies are in modern war."[607] Incomprehensible, unfathomable diseases are often described with the help of militarized language. Just like Haselberg, Grünpeck also extensively uses the metaphor of war in his treatises on the French disease. He refers to it as an "enemy," calling it "the most dangerous enemy" (*perniciosissimum hostem*),[608] "the worst enemy" (*deterimum hostem*)[609] etc. The militarized language used by Grünpeck to describe the course of illness deserves a longer citation:

> As soon as it [the disease] fully establishes itself in this main region of the human body and secures itself from all attacks, it tortures with utmost cruelty and severity with its poison the largest areas, which are closest to the heart – lungs, spleen, and testicles. Having conquered these parts, it directs its terrible tortures towards higher regions, where the reason resides, spares neither veins, nor arteries, nerves, limbs, muscles, joints, bones, and flesh before it inflicts its unbearable yoke on the whole being. After this is accomplished, all internal members obey the enemy.[610]

Grünpeck's use of war metaphors in relation to the French disease strengthens the perception of *morbus gallicus* as a foreign element, an enemy to one's body that, upon entering it, brings decay and corruption. In the imagery of Haselberg and the proverb, the French disease is not anymore an enemy, but *the* enemy - the French king, the main enemy of the German empire at the time. In this imagery of *morbus gallicus*, having the French pox is represented as battling the king of France himself, as if the conflict of Maximilian I and Charles VIII was reenacted in the bodies of German citizens every time they contracted *morbus gallicus*.

[607] Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and Aids and its Metaphors* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 99.
[608] Grünpeck, *De Mentulagra*, 56.
[609] Ibid., 52.
[610] Ibid., 63.

As this chapter demonstrated the French disease was part of narratives on foreign commodities, practices, and habits corrupting the pure and chaste moral climate of the German lands, which had known neither foreign vices nor foreign diseases in the past. Carried by the transgressors of geographical and social boundaries, it was presented as a morally and geographically foreign commodity and as a direct consequence of the circulation of foreign luxury goods and habits. At the same time, it was metaphorically linked to the king of France, as if he was attacking the body politic of the German empire through *morbus gallicus*.

CONCLUSION

> "Like chickens and eggs, worlds and words make each other what they are in an infinite regress."[611]

As this thesis has demonstrated, late medieval *morbus gallicus* was much more than a matter of the physical body. Statehood, national identity, perceptions of others, and borders were all part of discussions of its manifold causes and origins. At the center of these narratives stood the name itself. The name, *morbus gallicus* and its vernacular equivalents provided a framework for etymological explorations of its meanings. Musing over the meaning of *morbus gallicus*, German late medieval medical and non-medical authors often connected this disease to Frenchmen and French-ness. These semiotic analyses were reminiscent of etymologies produced by Isidore of Seville, who, for example, concluded that the word "Gallia" originated from the Greek word for "milk" to indicate the exceptionally white skin of the Gauls.[612]

Throughout the late fifteenth century and in the early sixteenth century, *morbus gallicus* was rarely linked to the stereotype of a lascivious Frenchman, contrary to what Florack and Gilman have suggested. Among all the German authors discussed here, only Paracelsus directly associated the origins of the French disease with the sexually corrupt behavior of the French. Grünpeck linked it to another topos of the French character – their excessive pride and arrogance, Otto Raut to their fickleness, Materne Berler to their treacherousness. Such views were influenced by the lack of consensus on the sexual transmission of the disease, and the belief that it came from the air, sweat, and humoral imbalance, and by the relatively low position of sexual vices in the medieval hierarchy of sins. When employed to criticize the

[611] Nicholaus Greenwood Onuf, "Reading Aristotle," in Idem, *Making Sense, Making Worlds. Constructivism in Social Theory and International Relations* (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2013), 57.
[612] Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies*, book XIV, chapter 25, 291.

current situation at home, the German authors described the French disease as a punishment for the use of luxury goods and adoption of new habits, foreign to the German moral climate.

The confrontation of the French King Charles VIII and Emperor Maximilian I permeated discussions of the origins of the French pox. Moreover, it played an important role in the explanations of its causes. A number of authors argued that the French disease was a punishment inflicted upon the French people for their disobedience to the emperor. Throughout the sixteenth century the origins story of the French disease underwent some changes, but the conflict of Charles VIII with the German Emperor over Naples remained at its core. At the same time, religious origins of the French pox were treated as inseparable from Emperor Maximilian's domestic politics and crusading plans. Thus, the French disease was rhetorically used to gather support from the German princes for Maximilian's expeditions abroad. Grünpeck, Brant, Ulrich von Hutten, and Erasmus accused the German nobility of failing to contribute to Maximilian's fight against the infidels and thus causing the wrath of God and inflicting disease upon themselves or the empire in general.

In the introduction to *Die Welsch-Gattung* (a poem discussed in the third chapter) Friedrich Waga wrote that "the national feeling is expressed in this poem not in the form of national pride, but as a concern for the welfare of the nation, a concern that, to make a comparison, is akin to the advice of an experienced physician on how to prevent contagion from a dangerous pestilence."[613] The dangerous pestilence in the poem is the "welsche" habits and goods that had been infiltrating the German lands. The French disease was seen as the ultimate disease of foreignness, integral to "others," penetrating both the German body natural and politic through the transgressors of geographic boundaries (merchants and mercenaries), luxury commodities, and habits alien to German-ness.

[613] Waga, *Die Welsch-Gattung*, 18: "Die Nationalgefühl gipfelt also im Gedichte nicht im Nationalstolz, vielmehr in der Sorge um die Wohlfahrt der Nation, einer Sorge, die, um einen Vergleich zu ziehen, dem Rat eines erfahrenen Arztes zu Verhuetung einer Ansteckung durch eine gefaehrliche Seuche gleichkommt."

The late medieval history of *morbus gallicus* is a striking case in which religious conceptions, medical theories, astrological ideas, and notions of the "self" and "other" came into sharp relief under the light of the political aspirations of Emperor Maximilian I and an increased interest in the Germanic past among the Northern humanists. Once *morbus gallicus* was recognized as the disease of the French, it joined the "pool" of interconnected and inter-reflexive perceptions of German-ness and French-ness. As any discursive constructs are, these perceptions were fluid and flexible, and so was *morbus gallicus*. It was precisely this flexibility and multifacetedness that accorded the French pox its lasting presence in the narratives of German national identities.

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