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**Germany's Glory, Past and Present. Konrad
Peutinger's Sermones convivales de mirandis
Germanie antiquitatibus and Antiquarian Philology**

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Germany's Glory, Past and Present: Konrad Peutingers *Sermones convivales de mirandis Germanie antiquitatibus* and Antiquarian Philology

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1 Historical and Intellectual Context of Peutingers's Treatise¹

In the 1470s, for a relatively short period, Alsace was carried into the bright spotlight of history. Sigismund of Habsburg, Archduke of Austria, had given his possessions in Alsace as a fiefdom to the duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold. In return, Charles would help the house of Habsburg defend its frontiers against the Swiss confederates. The Burgundians had become important players in European politics since the fourteenth century, and the control of a region abutting on the southern Rhine was an important step in their attempt to unite an impressive amount of territory in central Europe. But in 1474, Sigismund signed an agreement with the Swiss and decided to get back his possessions. However, Charles refused. The result of this and other problems in these same years were the so-called Burgundian Wars, which lasted until 1477 when Charles died on the battlefield.

The beginning of the Burgundian Wars was accompanied by weighty propagandistic writings in Germany. Alsatian authors regularly characterize Charles the Bold as an opponent as dangerous as the Turks.² Johannes Knebel, chaplain at the Minster of Basel, in a letter from 1474, writes: 'the whole of Germany is nervous because of this damned Burgundian' ('tota Germania commota est propter illum maledictum Burgundum').³ It is noteworthy that here and

1 I thank the participants and especially the organizers of the very fruitful series of conferences for their stimulating interest in this paper. Thanks to Ronny Kaiser for having shared an unpublished manuscript with me, Uta Goerlitz for an offprint of her entry in *Killy Literaturlexikon*, and Coen Maas for helpful criticism on the written version of this chapter.

2 Cf. Sieber-Lehmann C., *Spätmittelalterlicher Nationalismus: die Burgunderkriege am Oberrhein und in der Eidgenossenschaft* (Göttingen: 1995) 251–281.

3 Quoted after Mertens D., *Reich und Elsaß zur Zeit Maximilians I.: Untersuchungen zur Ideen- und Landesgeschichte im Südwesten des Reiches am Ausgang des Mittelalters*. Habil. (Freiburg im Breisgau: 1977) 91. On Knebel's so-called *Diarium* or *Cronica* (a loose collection of material concerning the war) see also Sieber-Lehmann, *Spätmittelalterlicher Nationalismus* 30–33.

elsewhere the conflict is not described as one between two European dynastic powers, but as a national one between 'Alamanni' and 'Galli' (or 'welsch' versus 'teutsch').⁴ Of course, nothing was less true, especially as the pro-Burgundian army was not purely French. Furthermore, Alsace was not at all a clear-cut national entity.⁵

The death of Charles in 1477 meant the end of both the Burgundian line and the territorial complex united under its rule. Charles' daughter Mary of Burgundy married another Habsburg, Maximilian, who later became Holy Roman Emperor. The results, devastating as they were for the Burgundians, in fact helped the house of Habsburg in its rise to power (as it also got the Dutch portion of the Burgundian booty). However, the French crown, inspired by many inhabitants of Alsace who had great sympathy with the French, tried to revise the decision.⁶ Therefore Maximilian, once he was elected Emperor, tried to revive the old feelings of a decisive fight between East and West, between Germany and Gaul; now that Burgundy no longer existed as an enemy, he simply replaced it with the French kings. According to Maximilian, the Holy Roman Empire had to face two major enemies: the Turks in the east and France in the west. To explain Maximilian's attempts to keep alive an anti-French attitude in central Europe in the years around 1500, it could be useful to again raise the discussion of the national identity of Alsace. Two dangers for the Habsburg monarch were present: on the one hand, the French king was a dangerous rival for the imperial crown; on the other hand, there was lots of sympathy for Swiss independence in Alsace, as the contestation that it had originally been Helvetian territory was repeatedly put forth.⁷

In 1501, the Alsatian humanist Jacob Wimpfeling composed his treatise *Germania*. In its short first book, he sided with Maximilian.⁸ Without

4 Mertens, *Reich und Elsaß* 97–98; Sieber-Lehmann, *Spätmittelalterlicher Nationalismus* 289–300, on the label 'welsch' as a means to alienate the opponent as much as possible from oneself.

5 Mertens, *Reich und Elsaß* 17: 'Es gibt in dem ohnehin wenig einheitlichen Südwesten kaum ein anderes herrschaftlich derart stark aufgesplittertes Gebiet wie das Elsaß.'

6 See Samuel-Scheyder M., "Wimpfeling versus Murner: die Anfänge der Polemik um die elsässische Identität im 16. Jahrhundert", *Recherches germaniques* 26 (1996) 137–151, here 140–141.

7 Cf. Mertens D., "Maximilian I. und das Elsaß", in Herding O. – Stupperich R. (eds.), *Die Humanisten in ihrer politischen und sozialen Umwelt* (Boppard am Rhein: 1976) 177–201, here 196.

8 Cf. Mertens, "Maximilian I. und das Elsaß" 182: 'Bei Wimpfeling fließen das Wissen von den Armagnakereinfällen, Erinnerungen an die Zeit Peter Hagenbacks und der Kämpfe gegen Karl den Kühnen, die Wirkung der antifranzösischen Propaganda Maximilians und Lektüreeindrücke aus Enea Silvios Schriften und Briefen zusammen zu der einen Vorstellung von dem auf die linksrheinischen Gebiete ausgehenden, das Elsaß seiner libertas

mentioning the name Alsace explicitly, Wimpfeling begins his treatise with a dedication to the city fathers of Strasbourg:

Multi existimant, clarissimi senatores, urbem vestram Argentinam et reliquas civitates ex hoc Rheni litore versus occidentem sitas fuisse quondam in manibus regum Gallicorum, et ob id animantur nonnumquam praefati reges ad repetendas istas terras, quae tamen semper a Julii et Octaviani temporibus in hunc usque diem Romano et nusquam Gallico regno coniunctae fuerunt atque constanter adhaeserunt.⁹

Honourable senators! Many think that your city of Strasbourg and the other cities that are situated on the western shore of the Rhine once were in the hands of the kings of the French. They further believe that therefore the aforementioned French kings are incited to claim these regions back. But the country has always been, since the times of Julius Caesar and Augustus until our days, connected to the Roman Empire, never to the French, and it has always adhered to that.

Scholars have shown that it is obvious from Wimpfeling's other works that he is reacting to Enea Silvio Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, who in his treatise *Europa* had defined Alsace as 'a province sometimes under French and sometimes under German jurisdiction' ('tum Gallici, nunc Germanici iuris provincia').¹⁰ Also, in the second book of his *Germania* Enea Silvio had stated:¹¹

Danubius ac Rhenus, qui quondam Germanie limites clausere, nunc per medios Germanorum dilabuntur agros. Belgica regio, que Gallie prius portio tertia fuit, nunc maiori ex parte Germanie cessit.

The Danube and the Rhine, which once formed the borders of Germania, nowadays flow in the midst of Germany's fields. And the land of the

beraubenden und es in die Knechtschaft führenden Frankreich'. For Wimpfeling's biography, see also Mertens D., "Jakob Wimpfeling (1450–1528): pädagogischer Humanismus", in Schmidt P.G. (ed.), *Humanismus im deutschen Südwesten: biographische Profile* (Sigmaringen: 1993) 35–57; on the *Germania* esp. 50.

9 Quoted from von Borries E., *Wimpfeling und Murner im Kampf um die ältere Geschichte des Elsass: ein Beitrag zur Charakteristik des deutschen Frühhumanismus* (Heidelberg: 1926) 94.

10 Enea Silvio Piccolomini (= Pius II), *De Europa* 42 (148), ed. A. van Heck (Vatican City: 2001). Cf. Mertens, "Maximilian I. und das Elsaß" 185.

11 Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *Germania* 2.6 (= ed. Schmidt A., *Aeneas Silvius, Germania und Jacob Wimpfeling, Responsa et replicae ad Aeneam Silvium*, Cologne – Graz: 1962, 48).

Belgians, that previously was the third part of Gallia, has been ceded mostly to Germany.

Wimpfeling could not stand this kind of historical relativism. According to him, a Gallic past for Alsace was an invention of French or Italian propagandists. His polemical text was received enthusiastically by the city fathers of Strasbourg,¹² but it met with disapproval from a fellow humanist. Almost immediately after its publication, Thomas Murner drafted his response, the *Nova Germania*, also dedicated to the city of Strasbourg, in which he tried to demonstrate that Wimpfeling had stretched his arguments too far and misinterpreted his sources. He argued that in ancient times, the region had been in the hands of the ‘Galli’ (which he, however, distinguishes from the French, the ‘Francigeni’).¹³

Some years later, Wimpfeling’s point was taken up again by Konrad Peutinger in his *Sermones convivales de mirandis Germanie antiquitatibus* (‘Dinner talks about the marvellous antiquities of Germany’).¹⁴ Peutinger, famous for having possessed a medieval copy of an ancient street map which after his death became known as the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, or for his house opposite the cathedral of Augsburg, in which he collected inscriptions, coins, and other objects of antiquity, was one of the most illustrious members of the young humanistic movement in Germany (Uta Goerlitz has characterized him as a typical *uomo universale* of the Renaissance).¹⁵ He studied in Italy in the 1480s, where he was influenced by the outstanding Italian humanists of his generation (he was acquainted with, among others, the famous Pomponio Leto and his Roman Academy).¹⁶ Later, he was appointed town chronicler of Augsburg (officially since 1497). In the 1490s he had met the young King (and

12 Warken N., *Mittelalterliche Geschichtsschreibung in Straßburg: Studien zu ihrer Funktion und Rezeption bis zur frühen Neuzeit*, PhD dissertation (Saarbrücken: 1995) 437–438.

13 Cf. Samuel-Scheyder, “Wimpfeling versus Murner” 143. Wimpfeling had not made this distinction, as for him it was important to prove the German(ic) roots of Alsace (ibidem 144). An important figure for both was Charlemagne, who was German for Wimpfeling, whereas according to Murner the dichotomy German-French did not exist in the Carolingian era (ibidem 149).

14 Peutinger Konrad, *Sermones convivales Conradi Peutingeri de mirandis Germanie antiquitatibus* (Strasbourg: Johannes Prüss: 1506).

15 Cf. Goerlitz U., “Maximilian I., Konrad Peutinger und die humanistische Mittelalterrezeption”, *Jahrbuch der Oswald-von-Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 17 (2009) 61–77, here 63.

16 On Peutinger and the Roman Academy, cf. Matheus M., “Pomponius Letus e gli Ultramontani”, in Cassiani C. – Chiabò M. (eds.), *Pomponio Leto e la prima Accademia Romana: giornata di studi (Roma, 2 dicembre 2005)* (Rome: 2007) 47–60, here 52–53. On Leto as a model for Peutinger’s publication on the antiquities of Augsburg cf. Pfeiffer R., “Augsburger Humanisten und Philologen”, *Gymnasium* 71 (1964) 190–204, here 193.

later Emperor) Maximilian I, who made him one of his closest counsellors, especially for advice with regard to antiquities.¹⁷

Although the *Sermones convivales* were written in Augsburg and thus were no immediate reaction to the local dispute in Strasbourg, the treatise can be seen as being closely connected to the broader anti-French propaganda concerning Alsace which Maximilian wished to undertake. Also, Peutinger, being the emperor's expert and adviser on historical matters, argues for the Germanness of the region. But this is only one aspect of his work, a second one being the argument that the Germani had been the oldest European rulers with the noblest line of ancestors, which according to Peutinger is rooted in their eastern origins. Both parts of the work obviously serve Maximilian's alleged primacy among the European kingdoms and his legitimacy in claiming Alsace for his reign. In order to achieve his aims, Peutinger decided to recur to a presentation of his argument that was slightly different from that of Wimpfeling or Murner. The treatise is set within a literary framework, namely the genre of the symposium, i.e. a dinner during which invited guests discuss historical, philosophical, or antiquarian themes. Only in the second half does it become a more ordinary antiquarian treatise.

In the following, I will first give an overview about the structure of the Strasbourg edition of 1506. Second, I will comment on the literary genre of the treatise, especially on the symposiastic frame. Third, I will deal with one of Peutinger's major concerns, the alleged eastern origins of the Germani, a point that he considers the basis for his treatise. Fourth, I will give some hints on how, on the background of this claim, he tried to prove that the western shore of the Rhine had always been part of Germania. For reasons of space, I will mostly concentrate on the parts of the text in which Peutinger deals with the prehistory and ancient history of Germany, and will not comment on his treatment of the medieval period.

2 Thresholds and Structure

The Strasbourg edition of the *Sermones convivales* frames the text as an extraordinary achievement.¹⁸ The treatise is preceded by two prefatory letters and

17 See on Peutinger's biography now Worstbrock F.J., "Peutinger (Bei-, Peitinger), Konrad", in idem (ed.), *Deutscher Humanismus 1480–1520. Verfasserlexikon*, vol. III (Berlin – New York: 2015), cols. 1–32, and Goerlitz U., "Peutinger, Konrad", *Killy Literaturlexikon* 9 (2010) 177–181. The starting point of any biographical study on Peutinger still is Lutz H., *Conrad Peutinger: Beiträge zu einer politischen Biographie* (Augsburg: 1958).

18 In the *editio princeps* of 1506 (by Johannes Prüss in Strasbourg, the same printer who had also published Wimpfeling's treatise five years earlier), the paratexts, which the editor

one laudatory epigram: a prefatory letter by Ulrich Zasius to Thomas Volphius (fols. a II r–a III v), an epigram by Ulrich Zasius (fol. a III v), and a prefatory letter by Petrus, bishop of Triest, to Matthaëus Lang (fol. <a IIII> r–v). At the end of Peutingger's treatise, the editor has added more eulogies, mostly by Alsatian humanists: a letter by Peutingger to Matthaëus Lang on the German foundation of the city of Bergamo (fols. e III r–e IIII r), an epigram by Sebastian Brant (fol. e IIII v), two others by Thomas Aucuparius (= Thomas Heinrich Vogler, fols. e IIII v–e v r) and Matthias Ringmann (fol. e v r), and finally a letter by the printer Matthias Schürer (fol. e v r–v).

The paratexts hail the *Sermones convivales* as the origin of a renewed national pride in Germany. Peutingger is presented as 'the most perfect man of our age',¹⁹ his text is written with 'heroic dignity',²⁰ his immortal writings defend the 'adornment of the fatherland'.²¹ The poetic paratexts also partake in these eulogies. The epigram by Sebastian Brant expresses Germany's gratitude towards Peutingger; it starts with the verse 'Multa Pytingero debes Germania nostro', 'You are very much in Peutingger's debt, Germany'. According to Brant, the treatise is so well written that it can leave the native soil to testify to Germany's cultural brilliance to other countries.²² Even more worship is paid in the epigram of Ulrich Zasius, which alludes to a famous verse by the Roman poet Ennius about Fabius Maximus Cunctator, one of the few Roman heroes during Hannibal's invasion in Italy. With his tactic of hesitation he had prevented Rome's armies from being wiped out: 'Konrad alone restored the German state by placing deserved trophies after having oppressed the enemies' ('Germanam solus Conradus restituit rem / hostibus oppressis iusta trophea locans', cf. Ennius, *Annales* frg. 363 Skutsch: '*unus homo nobis cunctando restituit rem*').²³ Zasius thus transforms Peutingger into a reborn and German version of Cunctator who saves Germany not by refusing the battle, but by triumphantly beating the enemy.

(i.e. not Peutingger himself) added to the treatise, give it a markedly Strasbourgian framework. They indicate that the contemporaries considered it to be part of the previous discussion in Strasbourg; cf. Worstbrock, "Peutingger" 10.

19 *Sermones convivales* fol. a II r: 'nostra aetate absolutissimus vir Conradus Peutingerus', cf. the prefatory letter by Ulrich Zasius to Thomas Volphius.

20 *Ibidem* fol. a II v: 'heroica dignitate'.

21 Prefatory letter by Bishop Petrus of Trieste to Matthaëus Lang, in *Sermones convivales* fol. <a IIII> v: 'patriae decus'.

22 *Ibidem* fol. e IIII v, vv. 5–6: 'perge liber foelix fausta pede porrige frontem / Italicis Gallis omnigenisque viris', 'continue your way, happy book, with blessed foot, and brave the Italians, French and all other kinds of men'.

23 *Ibidem* vv. 5–6, fol. a III v.

Peutinger's treatise itself begins with the setting of the symposiastic scene (fols. b <I> r–b II r). Afterwards, the guests talk about four topics. Very briefly, they discuss the first three: the first question, the *translatio* of the bones of Dionysius the Areopagite from Paris to Regensburg in the Ottonian period, serves to show that Germany possessed a kind of humanistic interest in antiquity even in what many humanists considered the dark ages, meaning the Middle Ages (fol. b II r). The second question of whether or not St Paul was married proves that the apostle had a wife (fol. b II v), whilst the third question is concerned with Germany's history in classical antiquity, namely whether a Roman expedition to India was carried to the Germanic coast by the winds (it was indeed, according to Peutinger, fols. b II v–b III r).²⁴ Then, they turn to the main topic of the treatise, which is discussed on 18 octavo folios: 'That since the time of the dictator Gaius Julius Caesar the cities at the West of the Rhine between Cologne and Strasbourg have never obeyed Gallic rulers, but always were obedient to Germanic kings and Roman Emperors'. The text is structured as follows:²⁵

- a. new praefatio (fol. b III v)
- b. in Roman antiquity Germani lived on the western shore of the Rhine (fols. b III v–b IIII v)
- c. the three German tribes and pseudo-Berosus' Tuisco (Tuisto), son of Noah, father of Mannus, and the later genealogy (fols. b IIII v–VI> v)
- d. the name 'Germania': old or new? (fols. VI> v–VII> v)
- e. Germania inferior and Germania superior (fols. VII> v–VIII> v)
- f. the role of the Germani (esp. of Cologne) during revolts against the Romans (fols. VIII> v–c II r), with an excursus: the printing press is a German invention (fol. c I r–v)
- g. Augsburg in antiquity (fol. c II r–v)
- h. refutation of arguments of intellectual opponents (the 'patriae Germaniae desertores', fol. c II v) (fols. c II v–c III r)
- i. the Helvetii are not a Gallic tribe (fol. c III r–v)
- k. the Merovingians were not a Gallic tribe, but Franci, with an excursus: the (French, but according to Peutinger Frankish) lily in the city arms of Strasbourg (fols. c III v–d I v)

24 See Leitch S., "Burgkmair's *Peoples of Africa and India* (1508) and the Origins of Ethnography in Print", *The Art Bulletin* 91, 2 (2009) 134–159, here 141, on the *Sermones convivales* as being connected to Augsburg's huge interest in developing a trade route to India in these years.

25 *Sermones convivales* fol. b III v: 'Quod Cisrhenani civitates ab Agrippina ad Argentinam et aliae a Cai Caesaris Iulii Dictatoris et superiori tempore non Gallis, sed vel Germanis vel Romano Imperio Caesaribus Augustis vel Regibus semper paruerint.'

- l. the Franks and their Trojan origin; *translatio imperii* (fols. d I v–<d IIII> v)
- m. the dynasty of the Ottonians and the Hohenstaufen (fols. <d IIII> v–e II v)
- n. summary (fol. e II v)

The amount of ancient, medieval, and contemporary sources used by Peutinger is much more impressive than those referred to by Wimpfeling and Murner. Whereas Wimpfeling's argument is concentrated mostly on the more recent past (the Frankish kings and the lilies on the coins of Strasbourg are two of his most important topics),²⁶ Peutinger's temporal focus is much broader and spans the time from the remote past (the time of the Trojans and the flood of Noah) to his own era. And whereas Wimpfeling's text was organized as a disputation (with thesis and textual witnesses treated one after the other), Peutinger's treatise is an ongoing argumentation which is roughly chronological. Moreover, at the end of the section on antiquity, before turning to the German rulers of the Middle Ages, Peutinger adds a section which he explicitly labels as a refutation of the counter-arguments that had been made by his opponents. If Wimpfeling's text is a disputation, the second part of Peutinger's antiquarian treatise has traces of a defence speech *pro Germania* against authors that argue for a political and cultural primacy of Italy and France in Peutinger's own era.

Thus, it neatly fits into a general tendency in early German humanism, namely to construct the authority and distinction of Germany's young humanistic movement.²⁷ The reason to choose the symposiastic setting for the first part of the treatise, however, needs further consideration.

3 The Symposiastic Frame

Peutinger was the first German humanist to treat the 'German question' in the genre of table talk literature. The genre had been especially popular in late antiquity as a pleasant, less pedantic way of bringing together pieces of knowledge of the past that should be rescued from oblivion by being stored in the collective memory. Plutarch's *Table Talks* and especially Macrobius' *Saturnalia* are the prime examples for this encyclopaedic tendency. The literary setting of the symposium allowed the ancient authors to structure their works and

26 The question of the lily on Strasbourg's coins had obviously been Wimpfeling's stimulus to write the treatise, cf. Warken, *Mittelalterliche Geschichtsschreibung* 436.

27 Cf. among many other contributions on this theme Robert J., *Konrad Celtis und das Projekt der deutschen Dichtung: Studien zur humanistischen Konstitution von Poetik, Philosophie, Nation und Ich* (Tübingen: 2003).

to enrich their literary appeal with little dialogical scenes. Macrobius, for example, in his preface explains that he has written his work for his son in order to bring 'the difference of the various things, with many different authors and stretched over a long distance of time, together in one kind of body so that the things which I excerpted indifferently and without system, coherently come together in an arrangement like members of a body.'²⁸ In a famous comparison in preface 9, this order is likened to the harmony of a choir in which all voices sing together in tune. This suggests that Macrobius did not only think of his work in terms of usefulness, but also of aesthetic pleasure. However, the *Saturnalia* are no mere literary pastime. Macrobius wrote the treatise at the beginning of the fifth century AD, a tumultuous period for the Roman state and especially for the old senatorial elite in Rome. Macrobius' rather conservative programme is to celebrate cultural achievements of the Romans of the past and thereby to harmonize the reverence for the past with the radically changing political and cultural environment of his own time. In other words: he defines Roman-ness in eternal cultural and political terms.²⁹

Macrobius was probably an important pretext for Peutingger because of both the former's aesthetic and political agenda. As his Roman predecessor, the humanist from Augsburg aimed at writing a work of antiquarian scholarship that was an integral part of the contemporary political discourse. But as attractive as Macrobius might have been in this respect, an even more important reason for Peutingger to choose the genre of table talks was a concrete development in his own time. In Germany, a large number of learned circles and *societates* were formed in the late fifteenth and especially early sixteenth centuries. Peutingger himself had been involved in the establishment of the so-called *Sodalitas Augustana* in his home town of Augsburg.³⁰ The beginning of

28 Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, preface 3: 'sed variarum rerum disparilitas auctoribus diversa, confusa temporibus ita in quoddam digesta corpus est, ut quae indistincte atque promiscue ad subsidium memoriae adnotaveramus, in ordinem instar membrorum cohaerentia convenirent.' Fantham E., *Roman Literary Culture: From Plautus to Macrobius* (Baltimore: 2013²) 284 stresses the literary complexity of Macrobius' narrative order; cf. for the preface Goldlust B., "Un manifeste sur l'organicité littéraire: la préface des *Saturnales* de Macrobe", in Galand-Hallyn P. – Zarini V. (eds.), *Manifestes littéraires dans la latinité tardive: poétique et rhétorique. Actes du Colloque international de Paris, 23–24 mars 2007* (Paris: 2009) 279–296.

29 For a good overview of Macrobius' work, cf. Cameron A., *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: 2011), chapter 7 ('Macrobius and the "Pagan" Culture of His Age') 231–272, here 262: 'Macrobius was in effect trying to spearhead a revival of antiquarian scholarship'.

30 See Müller J.-D., "Konrad Peutingger und die Sodalitas Peutinggeriana", in: Füssel S. – Pirozyński J. (eds.), *Der polnische Humanismus und die europäischen Sodalitäten: Akten des polnisch-deutschen Symposiums vom 15.-19. Mai 1996 im Collegium Maius der Universität*

the text, the description of the actual start of the symposium, defines such a context of a *sodalitas*, a learned and yet pleasant gathering in which the spirit of ancient Roman *convivia* seems to survive (*Sermones convivales* fol. b 11 r):

Severitate omni postposita de variis et admirabilibus ipsius naturae et aliis rebus inter nos iucundissimus plenusque voluptatis et, ut Seneca ad Lucilium scribit,³¹ ‘nullam rem usque ad exitum adducens, sed aliunde alio transiliens’ sermo habebatur.

We had a table talk that was free of strictness and treated manifold and marvellous things of nature itself, and also other things. The discussion was very pleasant, full of joy and, as Seneca writes to Lucilius, ‘not too persistent about the individual topics, but jumping from one topic to another’.

The setting is in the house of Matthaeus Lang, a native from Augsburg who since 1505 had been bishop of the diocese of Gurk (close to Klagenfurt); whether the dialogue is situated there or at his native house in Augsburg is not clear from the context and does not matter much. One might think of Augsburg, though, as at least one of the members of the group, Bernhard Waldkirch, was capitular official of the cathedral in Augsburg.³² A humanistic circle, especially that of Augsburg, is a most fitting spot for this kind of discussion, as Peutingger makes clear from the very beginning of his dedicatory letter to Matthaeus Lang: the city of Augsburg is happy to see that one of her sons, Matthaeus, has reached such high honours that he has become bishop and a close collaborator of Maximilian, the new Augustus and Caesar. The close link between Augsburg and Maximilian on the one hand and between Maximilian and Peutingger on the other, which has been mentioned above, makes the *sodalitas* an ideal spot for discussing German politics. Peutingger’s text therefore is not only a text about Germany’s glory and about Alsace, but also serves more local and

Krakau (Wiesbaden: 1997) 167–186. Müller H., “*Specimen eruditionis*: zum Habitus der Renaissance-Humanisten und seiner sozialen Bedeutung”, in Rexrodt F. (ed.), *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Gelehrten im späten Mittelalter* (Ostfildern: 2010) 117–151, here 129, remarks that *Sermones convivales* were a specific literary genre within the context of these *sodalitates*.

31 Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius* 64, 2.

32 Cf. Müller H., “Der Beitrag der Mönche zum Humanismus im spätmittelalterlichen Augsburg: Sigismund Meisterlin und Veit Bild im Vergleich”, in Müller G.M. (ed.), *Humanismus und Renaissance in Augsburg: Kulturgeschichte einer Stadt zwischen Spätmittelalter und Dreißigjährigem Krieg* (Berlin – New York: 2010) 389–406, here 391.

personal aims, namely the self-fashioning of one of the major representatives of Augsburg's intellectuals as a key figure for the German debate of his time (I will turn back to this point at the end of my chapter).

As Dieter Mertens has shown, the explicitly political engagement of Peutingers' *Sermones convivales* is a novelty in early modern symposiastic literature, which in the fifteenth century concentrated on humanistic or academic discussions instead of dealing with daily politics.³³ However, Peutingers' text only starts as a symposium. When the Alsatian question has been touched upon, the symposiastic frame is left behind. We even get a new internal preface (almost a second dedication) to Matthaeus Lang. The rest of the text is nothing more than a treatise. There is not a single reference to the symposium, or to the guests, or to questions that came up during the discussions. In fact, the text ends without any attempt to close the narrative framework.³⁴ Dieter Mertens has explained this by reading the text at face value: according to him, it rather faithfully represents the real symposium of the *Sodalitas Augustana*. When the discussion could not be developed until a satisfying end was reached, Peutingers would have added most of the material after having consulted his library.³⁵

No wonder that Dieter Mertens and others find the literary aspect of the *Sermones convivales* rather disappointing. Jan Dirk Müller, on the contrary, offers an explanation for the narrative framework that is more satisfying. He suggests that the main reason for this framework is the portrayal of feudal representation at the Habsburg court: 'Der engere Kreis der Teilnehmer wird durch einen weiteren Kreis von Berühmtheiten [Müller thinks of the contemporary humanists whom Peutingers quotes in the text, CP] wie durch einen äußeren Ring umgeben. Und erst darum scharft sich das anonyme Publikum

33 Mertens D., "Zum politischen Dialog bei den oberdeutschen Humanisten", in Guthmüller B. – Müller W.G. (eds.), *Dialog und Gesprächskultur in der Renaissance* (Wiesbaden: 2004) 293–317, here 300–302.

34 More generally, it is noteworthy that most *topoi* that characterize the genre in antiquity are absent in the *Sermones convivales* (for example, a host who plays a structuring role during the talks, or a non-invited latecomer). Of course, some ancient dialogues also stretch the literary framework to the end, e.g. when in some of Cicero's dialogues speakers are talking almost uninterruptedly for 100 or more paragraphs. But as the term *sermones* is used so prominently in Peutingers' title, I find the disappearance of the frame to be noteworthy.

35 Ibidem 311. On Peutingers' library, 'die größte private Bibliothek seiner Zeit nördlich der Alpen', see the summarizing article by Goerlitz U., "Minerva und das *iudicium incorrumpum*: Wissensspeicherung und Wissenserschließung in Bibliothek und Nachlass des Konrad Peutingers (1465–1547)", in Schierbaum M. (ed.), *Enzyklopädistik 1550–1650: Typen und Transformationen von Wissensspeichern und Medialisierungen des Wissens* (Münster: 2009) 127–172, here 129.

des Drucks'.³⁶ But perhaps the framework also enhances the urgency of the political message which Peutingger wants to convey. Whereas the generic beginning might attract readers because of its pleasant literary form, at the end they realize that the topic is too 'hot' to be dealt with only in a relaxed intellectual setting. The second part of the text is not only evidence of humanistic learnedness, but first and foremost primarily an antiquarian essay with a political message, a piece of ideologically driven scholarship that is supposed to influence the readers' understanding of the present. Whereas Macrobius' *Saturnalia* conceal a serious programme of cultural conservatism within the relaxed frame of leisure time spent with friends, Peutingger's *Sermones convivales* break the frame in order to stress that the question of the German Alsace is one of general interest, stretching far beyond the confines of a learned *Sodalitas*.

4 The Eastern Origins of Germania: Annio of Viterbo

The first part of Peutingger's argumentation on the Alsatian question sets the ground for the later argumentation. As he wants to prove that Germany's claims on Alsace are more justified than those of the French king, he first has to argue for the supremacy of the Habsburgian ruler, who represents the Holy Roman Empire, and at the same time the German nation, over the French crown. To achieve this, he turns to what we today would call prehistory, i.e. to the origin of the ancient tribe of Germani and of their reign.

The origin of the Germani from *Tuisco* (known to Peutingger's contemporaries from Tacitus' *Germania*, where he is called Tuisto) is elaborated at length with the help of a source that heavily influenced the discourse of its time: pseudo-Berosus, or, to be more precise, the fifteenth-century forgery by Annio of Viterbo of a chronographic work which he attributed to the Chaldean Berossos, who had lived in the fourth century BC and of whom only very scarce fragments are known today.³⁷ Annio's text was extremely well received, as it ingeniously filled the gap between the deluge of Noah and the Trojan war. As all

36 Müller, "Konrad Peutingger" 179.

37 On Peutingger's use of Annio, see Lehr T., *Was nach der Sintflut wirklich geschah: die Antiquitates des Annii von Viterbo und ihre Rezeption in Deutschland im 16. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a.M.: 2012) 215–230. For a short introduction to Annio's forgery, especially his interest in inventing an Etruscan past, and for the role Flavius Josephus played in his project, see Stephens W., "From Berossos to Berosus Chaldaeus: the Forgeries of Annii of Viterbo and their Fortune", in Haubold J. et al. (eds.), *The World of Berossos: Proceedings of the 4th International Colloquium on "The Ancient Near East Between Classical and Ancient Oriental Traditions"*, Hatfield College, Durham 7th–9th July 2010 (Wiesbaden: 2013) 277–289.

men were descendants of Noah, and as most European rulers were interested in having an ancestor among the survivors of Troy, such a project could serve almost all national historiographers extremely well.³⁸ Annio had included his forgery in his treatise *Antiquitates variae* and had added ample commentaries to the alleged ancient text, thus making the whole book look like a 'real' humanistic edition of an authorial classical text.

An important reason for the huge success of Annio's treatise in Germany was that the work reconciled the Tacitean tradition of the mythological origins of the Germani (Tuisco, followed by Mannus and his three sons) with biblical chronology. In short, Tuisco, according to Peutinger, was a son of Noah (*Sermones convivales* fols. <b IIII v–b v r>):

Ipseque Noa, ut idem [Berosus] libro III refert, Ianus ob vitis inventae beneficium quod Arameis sonat quod vinifer sive vitifer, item Coelum et Ogyges cognominatus est; genuitque post diluvium filios plures, inter quos Tuisconem Germanorum et Sarmatum patrem, et cum partitus esset terram omnem, eundem in Europa Sarmatiae praefecit, ut libro IIII docet. Ipsius quoque termini erant Tanais atque Rhenus.

This Noah, as our author [pseudo-Berosus, CP] tells in book 3, is also called Ianus because of the benefaction of having found out how to cultivate wine (in Aramaic, the word means bringer of wine), or Heaven or Ogyges. After the deluge, he got many sons, among them Tuisco, the father of the Germani and Sarmatians; and when he divided the earth (among his sons), he gave to Tuisco the dominion over the Sarmatians in Europe, as he teaches in book 4. The borders of his reign were the Tanais³⁹ and the Rhine.

Peutinger here summarizes Annio's text very neatly. In the third book of the alleged work of Berosus, Annio had printed the stemma of this lineage as the first stemma of the sons of Noah, thus giving to the German line pride of place (as a marginal addition printed in the 1512 edition emphasizes: 'Germanorum

38 A recent and good overview is Keller W., *Selves and Nations: the Troy Story from Sicily to England in the Middle Ages* (Heidelberg: 2008); more specifically on the Habsburg court: Tanner M., *The Last Descendant of Aeneas: the Hapsburgs and the Mythic Image of the Emperor* (New Haven, CT: 1993).

39 The Sarmatian river (to be identified with the Don) according to ancient geography divided Europe from Asia, cf. Strabo, *Geography* XI, 2, 1.

excellētia').⁴⁰ In Annio's commentary, we read (Annio, *Antiquitates* 15 [= pseudo-Berosus, book 3], fol. CX v):⁴¹

Sed notandum sunt duo: quod Noa sibi in filios adoptavit Tuysconis posteritatem et ideo in eius arbore ponuntur et non aliorum nepotes; in quo precellunt Germani et Sarmate, qui dicuntur nunc Tuysci a Latinis et Gallis.

Two things are of special interest: namely that Noah adopted as his own sons the progeny of Tuisco, which therefore appears in his stemma, and not the descendants of others. In this, the Germani and Sarmatians who are now called Tuischi (Germans) by the Latins and French, outdo all other nations.

The fourth Berosian book then speaks of the division of the earth after the *diluvium*. Tuisco is said to have been given the reign of the European region Sarmatia.⁴²

Tuisco's main achievement, according to Peutingger/Annio, is that he ruled over the Sarmatians, who in antiquity lived around the Black Sea but are presented as being the primordial tribe of Europe.⁴³ On the one hand, this ancient genealogy helps reinforce Peutingger's point that the *Germani* of antiquity are a very old and, more importantly, a culturally high-ranked tribe – in fact, they descended directly from the Sarmatians, the first rulers of Europe. Therefore, they would never have yielded to foreign, that is, Gallic, dominion in later times and could still claim political primacy in Europe in Peutingger's own time. On the other hand, even if Peutingger does not make this link explicit in his text, the eastern origin of the Germani fits the medieval legend of the Trojan origin of the Franks for which Peutingger towards the end of his treatise quotes Pius II as his source (*Sermones convivales* fol. d <1> v):

40 The stemma is reproduced in Krebs C.B., *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus's Germania from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich* (New York – London: 2011) 103.

41 I quote from the edition *Antiquitatum variarum volumina XVII a venerando et sacre theologie et praedicatorii ordinis professore Io. Annio hac serie declarata* ([Paris], Badius Ascensius: 1512). For a good overview of the complex work of Annio, see Lehr, *Was nach der Sintflut* 62–100. On p. 68, he stresses the central importance of Berosus' book 15 ('Von hier aus läßt sich das ganze Werk erschließen, dessen weitere Bücher ihn lediglich vorbereiten, ergänzen oder präzisieren').

42 Annio, *Antiquitates* fol. CXVII v: 'in Europa regem Sarmatie fecit Tuisconem a Tanai ad Rhenum'.

43 On the "Sarmatism" in Polish early modern historiography, see Barbara Arciszewska's article in this volume and the secondary literature collected there.

Pius II Pontifex Maximus in *Europa* sua inquit: 'Franci quidem Troiani Ilio deleto Priamo duce Priami ex sorore nepote Pontum Euxinum in Meotidas et in Scythiam pervenere ibique Sicambriam condiderunt, a qua dicti sunt Sicambri'.

Pope Pius II says in his *Europa*: 'After the destruction of Ilion, the Trojan Franks with their leader Priam, a nephew of king Priam from his sister's family, came to the Black Sea to the region of the Maeotians in Scythia, where they founded Sicambria, from which settlement they received their name, Sicambri'.⁴⁴

These Sicambri, he continues, inhabited Germania before Julius Caesar's arrival in the region.⁴⁵ Peutinger transforms this eastern connection of the ancient Germani into a *leitmotif* of Germany's ancient and medieval history. He needs it as proof that since the era of Charlemagne, Germany has been the new seat of the world's most powerful empire.⁴⁶ This *translatio imperii* always moved from the East westwards (in ancient times, the Empire went from Babylonia and Egypt via Greece to Rome). This means, as a consequence, that the German kings cannot possibly have inherited their power from the (western) French crown. It is therefore not surprising that when speaking of the *translatio imperii*, Peutinger quotes a poem by Sebastian Brant in which the Frankish Charlemagne is said to be the offspring of an eastern tribe.⁴⁷

The eastern connection also serves for a short digression on a local tradition in Augsburg. As noted above, Peutinger pays special attention to his home town, one of the ancient Roman cities in Germany, throughout his text in order to enhance its importance as a cultural and political centre of his time. In the case of the discussion of the eastern origins, Augsburg serves as proof

44 Cf. Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *De Europa* 38 (130); I note the following textual variants from van Heck's critical edition: Troiani] Troiani ab origine *van Heck*; Pontum Euxinum] per Pontum Euxinum *van Heck*; in Meotidas] et meothicas paludes *van Heck*; Sicambriam condiderunt] civitatem edificaverunt quam vocavere Sycambriam *van Heck*.

45 *Sermones convivales* fol. d II r: 'Sicambri ante Caesaris dictatoris tempora sedes suas fixas apud Germanos habuerunt'.

46 On the reception of this *translatio*-idea in fifteenth-century Augsburg, cf. Müller G.M., "Quod non sit honor Augustensibus si dicantur a Teucris ducere originem: humanistische Aspekte in der *Cronographia Augustensium* des Sigismund Meisterlin", in idem, *Humanismus und Renaissance* 237–273, here 242–248.

47 Cf. *Sermones convivales*, fol. <d III v>: 'Germanus quianam nostro quoque natus in orbe / Karolus et vero semine Theuton erat. / Nempe orientalis Francus fuit [...]' ('Because also Charlemagne is born as a German in our part of the world; he was of true Teutonic offspring. And indeed the Frank was of eastern origin [...] [emphasis mine]).

of Germany's ancient importance on the whole. Peutinger tries to explain the existence of a strange local tradition, the sanctuary of a so-called local deity named Zisa (Cisa). She first appears in sources of the eleventh century,⁴⁸ but in Peutinger's time it was believed that the cult had ancient roots. Peutinger starts from Tacitus' remark in the *Germania* that a part of the *Suebi* venerated Isis, but that he does not know the origin for this foreign cult,⁴⁹ and then comments on this piece of information (*Sermones convivales*, fol. b v v):

Ea causa mihi persuadeo nostrates Augustenses falso Cisam deam appellare templumque hoc, quod fuisse credunt, ubi nunc Augustae praetorium conspicimus, non Cisae [...] sed Isidis fuisse, collisque ibi publici carceris non Cisen-, sed Isenberg quasi Isidis montem appellant.

Therefore, I am convinced that our inhabitants of Augsburg have it wrong if they speak of a deity Cisa, and that the temple which, as they believe, once stood where one can see the town hall of Augsburg today, was not dedicated to Cisa, [...] but to Isis. They call the hills of the public prison not Cisenberg, but Isenberg, that is to say, mountain of Isis.

This peculiar piece of information is not only of local interest. Obviously, it is suitable for Peutinger's aim to stress the eastern roots of Germany's past. As Thomas Lehr has shown, the key to this peculiar interpretation is again Annio da Viterbo, who claimed the Egyptian kings Isis and Osiris had long ago come to the *Suebi*. With this additional information, it was possible to give a satisfactory explanation for Tacitus' account that the ancient *Germani* venerated Isis. Consequently, Peutinger could more convincingly connect Augsburg's local Zisa with the Egyptian goddess.⁵⁰

As we have seen, Annio of Viterbo's forged Berosian genealogy was of the utmost interest to Peutinger for his development of a glorious early history of the *Germani*. However, ps.-Berosus could potentially be a dangerous source, too.

48 The medieval sources are collected in Grimm J., *Deutsche Mythologie* (Göttingen: 1835) 269–275; the connection to Isis, which is mentioned on pp. 275–276, is probably influenced by sources like Peutinger's treatise. Cf. Simek R., *Lexikon der germanischen Mythologie* (Stuttgart: 1984) 63, who refers to scepticism about this alleged deity in modern research.

49 Cf. Tacitus, *Germania* 9, 1: 'pars Sueborum Isidi sacrificat; unde causa et origo peregrino sacro, parum comperi'.

50 Lehr, *Was nach der Sintflut* 223–225, where he also shows that Peutinger did not simply copy Annio, but also made creative use of his information: he connects the invention of beer brewing to the early visitor Osiris.

The passages quoted above reveal that, according to Annio's treatise, the reign of Tuisco, enormous as it was, was nevertheless limited by the shores of the Rhine. Annio's commentary to the 'Berosian' sentence 'he made Tuisco king over the Sarmatians in Europe from the Tanais to the Rhine' not only explains the name *Germania* as a Roman invention (another potentially painful remark for Peutingger, according to whom it was a much older name), but explicitly marks a boundary which Peutingger wanted to downplay in his *Sermones convivales* (Annio, *Antiquitates*, fol. CXVIII r; emphasis mine):

Scytharum nomen usque in Sarmatas et Germanos transiit. Nam Germania dicta est sub Romanis teste Cornelio Tacito de situ et moribus Germanorum. Est autem Germania proprie a *Rheno amne, qui dividit Gallos a Germanis* [...].

The name of the Scythians was taken unto the Sarmatians and the Germani. For the name Germania came up under the Romans, as is witnessed by Cornelius Tacitus in his *Germania*. Germania in a proper sense begins at *the Rhine which divides the Gauls from the Germani* [...]

This is the reason why Annio is the main source of only the first part of Peutingger's treatise. As soon as the earliest history has been established, Peutingger has to rely on other sources in order to argue the second step of his case, namely the German roots of Alsace.

5 *Germania cisrhenana*: Peutingger's Philology

Peutingger's treatise gives evidence of the impressive learnedness of its author, who masters a broad spectrum of Greek and Roman sources with ease. Surely this exhibition of antiquarian competence is one of the functions of the text. As someone who had been trained in humanistic historiography, Peutingger knew that the authority of one's written account depended, among other things, on the number of sources one could quote. Surely one of Peutingger's main aims was to inscribe himself into the by then international circles of humanists. His mastery of ancient literature is impressive and covers far more than the usual authorities (Tacitus, Caesar). Moreover, Peutingger regularly quotes his contemporaries, not only German humanists like Conrad Celtis or Sebastian Brant, but also Italians like Enea Silvio Piccolomini or Biondo Flavio (whose *Italia illustrata* also is an important pretext for the *Sermones convivales* on the level

of its cultural-political impact).⁵¹ However, he does so with a critical spirit, especially when it comes to Italians who tried to downplay the achievements of Germany. At one point, he even criticizes his venerated teacher Pomponio Leto in rather drastic terms because Leto, with reference to a passage in pseudo-Cyprian, had ascribed the invention of printed books to antiquity, namely to the god Saturnus.⁵² Even if Leto's spokesman for this claim had been a church father (only recently has the treatise been attributed to an anonymous author transmitted under Cyprian's name), Peutinger considers it to be a lie.⁵³ Among his German contemporaries, it is striking that Peutinger never mentions Conrad Celtis' programmatic text *Germania generalis*. The reason for this lacuna might be that in this poetic work (that was first published in his edition of Tacitus' *Germania* of 1498/1500) Celtis defined the Rhine as Germany's western border (vv. 110–111):⁵⁴

Pulcer ab occiduo quas claudit limite Rhenus
Qui pulchras rapidus †alveo† preterit urbes.

[...] the beautiful Rhine forms the Western border [of Germany's territory], the Rhine that in his bed quickly passes by beautiful cities.

Peutinger's main focus is nevertheless on the large number of ancient sources, among which (not surprisingly) Tacitus and Caesar take pride of place. But Pliny the Elder, Ammianus Marcellinus, Strabo, Pomponius Mela, and many others also are quoted regularly. It is probably no coincidence and is surely intended to impress the readers that the first classical source quoted

51 On the ideological aspect of antiquarian studies as such and of Biondo's works especially, see Enenkel K.A.E., "The Politics of Antiquarianism: Neo-Latin Treatises on Cultural History as Ideology and Propaganda", in Enenkel K.A.E et al. (eds.), *Discourses of Power: Ideology and Politics in Neo-Latin Literature* (Hildesheim: 2012) 43–64.

52 *Sermones convivales* fol. c <1> r: 'movit mihi stomachum praeceptor meus rerum veterarum alioquin solertissimus inquisitor Pomponius Laetus; voluit enim nobis Germanis inventae artis impressoriae laudem praeripere' ('I got very angry about my teacher Pomponio Leto, the otherwise very competent investigator of antiquity; for he wanted to take the invention of the letterpress away from us Germans').

53 Pseudo-Cyprianus, *Liber de idolorum vanitate* 2 (quoted from: *Patrologia Latina* 4, ed. J.P. Migne, cols. 563–582): 'hic [i.e. Saturnus, CP] litteras imprimere, hic signare nummos primus in Italia instituit'.

54 Quoted after Müller G.M., *Die 'Germania generalis' des Conrad Celtis: Studien mit Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Tübingen: 2001) 96.

is not Tacitus' *Germania*,⁵⁵ but Ammianus Marcellinus, who mentions two *Germaniae*.⁵⁶ Additionally, if it seems useful, Peutinger also quotes (local) inscriptions (which he published in 1505) and in two cases even numismatic evidence, thus showing himself to be absolutely up to date with respect to the antiquarian methodology of his time. Peutinger tries to harmonize all these different sources in order to rule out any argument that could question the German claim of the western Rhine regions. To give one example for this tactic: Caesar's fourth book of *De bello Gallico* is quoted only sporadically because there Caesar mentions that the Germani lived on the eastern shore of the Rhine and crossed the Rhine only in order to wage war with the Gallic inhabitants. Instead, Caesar's second book is Peutinger's favourite, in which Caesar speaks of the 'Germani cisrhenani' ('Germani on the western shore of the Rhine', *De bello Gallico* II, 3) and defines the Belgae in the following way (*Sermones convivales*, fols. b III v–b IV r = *Bellum Gallicum* II, 4; emphasis mine):

Belgas [...] plerosque a Germanis ortos Rhenumque *antiquitus* traductos propter loci fertilitatem ibi consedisse Gallosque, qui ea loca incolerent, expulisse.

Most Belgae stem from the Germani and crossed the Rhine in ancient times because of the fertility of the place; they settled there and drove the Galli off who lived in this region.

At a certain point, Peutinger deals with the question of whether *Germania* was a relatively recent name that had come up in the time of Caesar and Tacitus, or whether it was much older. Peutinger is thus given the opportunity to deal with opposing opinions within the ancient authorities (*Sermones convivales* fols. <b VI> v–<b VII> r):

55 Cf. on Tacitus' extraordinary popularity recently Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book*, and Kaiser R., "Lesarten und Funktionalisierung: zum Verständnis der *Germania* des Tacitus in der Kommentarliteratur des deutschen Renaissance-Humanismus in der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts", in: Eusterschulte A. et al. (eds.), *Buchkulturen des deutschen Humanismus: Netzwerke und Kristallisationspunkte* (forthcoming).

56 Cf. *Sermones convivales* fol. b III v: 'pro Germaniae nostrae laude Ammianum Marcellinum referre dixi ambas Germanias (primam et secundam eas ita appellat) inter Belgas et Rhenum sitas esse'. ('I said that for the praise of our Germany, Ammianus Marcellinus has mentioned two *Germaniae* (he calls them the first and the second) and that they are situated between the Belgae and the Rhine'). The reference is to Ammianus Marcellinus xv, 11, 6–7, where Ammianus lists the regions of Gaul among which of those he mentions are the first and the second *Germania*; cf. also xxvii, 1, 2 ('per utramque Germaniam').

Germaniae vocabulum recens esse dicunt libro VII Strabo⁵⁷ et Tacitus 'nuperque additum quoniam qui primi Rhenum transgressi sunt Gallos expulerint at nunc Tungri nunc Germani appellati sunt. Ita nationis nomen non gentis evaluisse paulatim, ut omnes primum a victore ob metum, mox a se ipsis, invento nomine Germani vocarentur'.⁵⁸ Ego autem id magis vetustum credo. Prisco enim Tarquinio Romae et Ambigato supra Gallos regnante in Italiam Gallorum transitum T. Livius libro V primae decadis describit⁵⁹ et de Belloveso Ambigati sororis filio, cui augurio quodam Dii laetiolem in Italiam viam dabant. Ita inquit alia subinde manus Germanorum Elitovio duce vestigia priorum secuta eodem saltu favente Belloveso.

That the word 'Germania' is not old, is asserted by Strabo in book 7 and Tacitus: 'and newly introduced, from the fact that the tribes which first crossed the Rhine and drove out the Gauls, and are now called Tungrians, and now Germans. Thus what was the name of a tribe, and not of a race, gradually prevailed, till all called themselves by this self-invented name of Germans, which the conquerors had first employed to inspire terror'. But I believe that the name is more ancient. For when Tarquinius Priscus was king in Rome and Ambigatus reigned in Gaul, the Gauls entered Italy, as Livy describes in the fifth book of his first decade; he also writes about Bellovesus, the son of Ambigatus' sister to whom the gods with a good omen granted an easier passage into Italy. Thus, says Livy, another group of Germani under their leader Elitovius immediately followed the former group via the same pass; Bellovesus approved their march.

It is typical of Peutinger's eclectic way of treating his sources that in the case of the antiquity of the name 'Germania', he has to argue against Tacitus' *Germania*. It would have been easy to leave the whole question out of the text in order not to question the Tacitean authority, but Peutinger seems almost to enjoy the moment in which he can show his critical spirit – in fact, the passage is one of the very few in which he uses an explicit reference to his own beliefs, 'ego [...] credo'. And it is Livy who saves him. He informs Peutinger's readers that the word Germani existed already around 600 BC, in the era of the fifth Roman king, Tarquinius Priscus.

57 Strabo VII, 1, 2.

58 Tacitus, *Germania* 2, 3.

59 Livy V, 34–35 (modern editions read *Elitovio* instead of *Elitovio*).

I have already hinted at the fact that Peutinger's *Sermones convivales* have elements of a speech in defence of *Germania*. This is especially visible in the argument about Germany's history in antiquity. After the long first part in which the positive arguments for Germany's glorious past in antiquity are piled up in a kind of rhetorical *confirmatio*, a new part is labelled *refutatio* of the counter-arguments. Its first words stress this division: 'Against us, they bring forward the very same witnesses, deserters of our fatherland; we will answer to their charges as well as we can'.⁶⁰ The problem with which Peutinger has to deal in this section is the undeniable fact that in Caesar's time, Gallic tribes settled on the western shores of the Rhine, and that many ancient authors mentioned the Rhine as the border between Gauls and Germani. Peutinger's list of ancient authorities who serve as witnesses for the other party is impressive: Caesar, Pliny, Tacitus, Suetonius, Solinus, Orosius, Eutropius, and Paul the Deacon. Peutinger's contemporaries could easily infer from these that the western Rhine province historically belonged to the French kings. His refutation of their arguments is ingenuous, as it differentiates between (in the words of Franz Josef Worstbrock) 'Siedlungsgeschichte' and 'Herrschaftsgeschichte'.⁶¹ he admits that the Galli once had settled on the western shores, but according to him they did not rule over the Germani, who did not care very much about their neighbours. When, however, the Germani decided to cross the river, they immediately drove the Gauls out of their homeland and took over the dominion.⁶² Thus, the Germani had never been subdued by the Gauls; only after having been free for a long time (Germany's *libertas* is an important concept in Peutinger's treatise, as it was in other texts by German humanists of the time)⁶³ did they bow to the Roman emperors or Germanic kings (*Sermones convivales* fol. c III r): 'nunquam Gallis sed vel Romanis vel Caesaribus Augustis vel etiam regibus vera origine Germanis paruerunt'. The line of Roman Caesars Augusti, however, was still continued in Peutinger's time both institutionally and dynastically through the Holy Roman Empire that was preserved by Charlemagne

60 *Sermones convivales* fol. c II v (emphasis mine): 'Contra nos forte patriae desertores testes eosdem proferent quibus, si poterimus, *satisfaciemus*'.

61 Worstbrock, "Peutinger", cols. 10–11. Kaiser, "Lesarten und Funktionalisierung", mentions that undeniable historical discontinuities in the settlement of *Germania*/Germany formed a major challenge for commentaries on Tacitus' *Germania* in the first half of the sixteenth century.

62 *Sermones convivales* fol. c III r: 'Gallis expulsis Germani cisrhenum sedes proprias fixerunt'.

63 The etymology of the Franks as *liberi* is stressed on fol. d II r, cf. also Piccolomini, *De Europa* 38 (130).

and was in Peutinger's time in the hands of the house of Habsburg and especially in those of his major patron, Emperor Maximilian I.⁶⁴

6 Conclusion

Konrad Peutinger's *Sermones convivales* are an excellent example of an antiquarian treatise with a highly political agenda. He outdoes his predecessors in the completeness of the source material that he was able to produce as evidence, and he radically interprets the sources according to the interests of his patron, the Habsburg emperor. The formal innovation – i.e. the incorporation of symposiastic literature into a politically informed antiquarian treatise – further adds to its effectiveness. In effect, one could say that Peutinger recuperated the Macrobian notion of political urgency for the genre of table talks in a way that was unprecedented in previous humanistic literature.

The treatise has various aims. First, as has been demonstrated above, it wants to legitimize Habsburg supremacy in Europe, and as a consequence the Habsburg interest in Alsace. It was this aspect of the text that seems to have triggered a special interest in the humanistic circle of Strasbourg, as the paratexts of the 1506 edition attest. Second, it wants to demonstrate to the humanist Republic of Letters that Germany's glorious past still is vigorous in Peutinger's own time. Therefore, Peutinger participates in the same intellectual methods as most humanistic historiographers and antiquarian writers: reading and re-arranging ancient sources in order to prove one's own point with the authority of antiquity. Peutinger's text thus becomes a performative proof that German humanists are operating on a level equal to those of their colleagues in other countries (especially Italy). Third, Peutinger wants to enhance the renown of his home town of Augsburg. As a Roman foundation and a powerful city in the present, it functions as a successful example of the rootedness of Germany's glory in the past. What is more, as one of the few free imperial cities, it represents the love for *libertas* that according to Peutinger was so dear to the old Germani and Franks. In other words: it could rightly postulate a special position among the cities of the Habsburgian Empire. Also, its very name is helpful: in early modern times, verbal similarities and alleged etymologies had a hugely persuasive power. At a certain point in his text, Peutinger points to an

64 Cf. Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book* 128, on the stereotypes of the Germani as immediate role models for early sixteenth-century Germans: 'By 1505 the mythical *Germanen* had become exemplary Germans: pure and noble, long-limbed, fair, and flaxen-haired; free-spirited, stouthearted, and straightforward.'

important one: Augsburg, the *urbs Augusta Vindelicorum*, relates to the Roman emperors (the 'Augusti Caesares'), and ultimately also to the contemporary Emperor Maximilian. In order to stress this, Peutinger remarks that Drusus, the son of Emperor Tiberius, had restored the buildings of the city in antiquity ('restituit urbem aedificiis'), whereas Maximilian continued to amplify the town ('amplificaturque in dies ab invicto Caesare Maximiliano').⁶⁵ Antiquity and the present day merge in Augsburg in a way that definitively seals the legitimacy of the Habsburg rulers.⁶⁶ It is little wonder that Peutinger emphasizes this: already since 1491, he himself is a similarly successful example of the close connection between Augsburg and the Habsburg court.⁶⁷ According to Zasius' accompanying epigram mentioned above, with his *Sermones convivales* Peutinger restored Germany's glory, 'restituit rem'. Not by chance does the word 'restituere' link Peutinger's achievements to those of the ancient Roman rulers, in this case Drusus, who restored the city with his building programme. The fourth aim of the text is therefore the self-fashioning of its author Peutinger as a leading authority on antiquity and, by consequence, of politics. This personal interest is surely not of the least importance in Peutinger's quest for an appropriate past.

65 *Sermones convivales* fol. c 11 r. The foundation by Drusus was already mentioned in Otto von Freising, *Chronica* 3, 3 (ed. A. Hofmeister, *MGH SS rer. Germ.* 45, Hannover – Leipzig: 1912) 139f: 'Hic Drusus Maguntiam in Gallia et Augustam in Retia, quae antea Vindelica dicebatur, ex nomine Augusti fundasse vel instaurasse dicitur.' ('Here Drusus is said to have founded or restored Mainz in Gallia and Augsburg in Raetia which before was called Vindelica and which received its name from the name of Augustus.') The idea reappears in the fifteenth-century *Cronographia Augustensium* of Sigismund Meisterlin, cf. Müller, "Quod non sit honor" 253. On Peutinger's vision of the mediating role of the Middle Ages, see Müller, "Konrad Peutinger" 186, and more generally Goerlitz, "Maximilian I.". For Peutinger and Arminius, cf. also Ridé J., *L'image du Germain dans la pensée et la littérature allemandes de la redécouverte de Tacite à la fin du XVI^{ème} siècle*, PhD dissertation (Paris: 1976) 486–487.

66 That Peutinger was interested in increasing the glory of his home town by revealing its antiquity can be deduced from the fact that only one year after he had written the *Sermones convivales*, in 1505 he published his collection of local inscriptions, *Romanae vetustatis fragmenta*, which soon became famous across the whole humanistic world. Cf. Ott M., "Konrad Peutinger und die Inschriften des römischen Augsburg: die *Romanae vetustatis fragmenta* von 1505 im Kontext des gelehrten Wissens nördlich und südlich der Alpen", in: Müller, *Humanismus und Renaissance* 275–289, esp. 289.

67 According to Goerlitz, "Peutinger" 180, Peutinger advised the emperor on his projects to commemorate his own deeds ('gedechtnus').

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