



## DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

In the mid-1490s, following the expedition of the King of France, Charles VIII to Naples an unknown disease spread across the German lands. Immediately associated with the French and their Neapolitan campaign, it became known as *morbus gallicus* and its various vernacular synonyms. These names maintained their popularity all throughout the period under study. “The Politics and Poetics of *Morbus Gallicus* in the German Lands (1495 – 1520)” examines various narratives of origins and causes of *morbus gallicus* in medical and non-medical sources. It argues that *morbus gallicus* was seen as a disease intrinsic to the French and foreign to the Germans and was a composite of various inter-connected narratives of German-ness and French-ness.

The first chapter is dedicated to the discussions of the nomenclature of the disease in medical treatises. In medieval medical epistemology, names had a special role to play in the identification of new diseases, and the correctness of *morbus gallicus* was subject to dispute. The majority of authors, however, accepted it as the new disease’s correct name, reasoning either that this affliction had in fact originated among the French people or that it was the disease’s most popular appellation.

The second chapter examines discussions of the causes of the French pox in medical treatises. It demonstrates that medical authors, assuming that the French people were the first to be infected with *morbus gallicus* during the Neapolitan campaign of Charles VIII, tried to devise explanatory schemes of its French origins based on various medical theories. Thus, some argued that the French had angered God with their proverbial pride and disregard for the German emperor, others that the punishment was sent upon the Germans for their disobedience to the emperor and their lack of support for his campaigns against the French and the Turks. Astrological explanations also pointed to the French-ness of the disease. Some physicians alleged that the French were the first to contract the disease, since their ruling planet had been present at the time of the conjunction, which had given rise to this disease. Finally, humoral causes were also presented as pointing to the disease’s French-ness. Thus, in framing the disease as “French” the medical authors relied on a variety of religious, astrological, political, and medical ideas of French-ness.

The third chapter studies the incorporation of *morbus gallicus* into the discussions of what it meant to be “German,” which were multiplying under the aegis of northern humanism. These narratives of German-ness were constructed in antithesis to the notions of French-ness and foreignness. Over time, *morbus gallicus* was integrated into the discussions of German national identities. It was presented as a consequence of the use of French goods and habits, considered in essence foreign to the German healthy moral and physical climate.

As this dissertation shows, *morbus gallicus* was much more than a matter of the body natural. Religion, politics, medicine, astrology, notions of “self” and “other” all absorbed *morbus gallicus* as an inherently French disease. Once *morbus gallicus* was recognized as the disease of the French, it became inseparable from the inter-reflexive perceptions of German-ness and French-ness.

**CURRICULUM VITAE**  
Brooklyn, NY 917.808.8066  
savinetskaya\_irina@phd.ceu.edu

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**April 2015 to present** Research cataloguer Florence Fearington library New York

**September 2012 to April 2013; January 2012 to April 2012** Source Language Teaching Group, CEU Instructor of the Russian language

**July 2011 to September 2011** Medieval Studies Department, CEU Research assistant to Prof. Tijana Krstic

**September 2010 to December 2010** Medieval Studies Department, CEU Teaching assistant, History of Material Culture (1300-1600), taught by Gerhard Jaritz

**EDUCATION**

**2009-present** Medieval Studies Department  
Central European University (Budapest, Hungary) PhD

**Oct 2014 to Sept 2016** New York University (New York).  
Visiting academic

**January 2014 to April 2014** University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)  
Visiting academic

**2009** Medieval Studies Department  
Central European University (Budapest, Hungary) MA

**2008** Lomonosov Moscow State University (Moscow, Russia) Diploma in History

**GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS**

**July 2013 – September 2013** CENDARI fellowship in Digital Humanities Göttingen Center for Digital Humanities (Göttingen, Germany)

**June 2013** CEU short term research grant Herzog August Bibliothek (Wolfenbüttel, Germany)

**May 2013** Preußischer Kulturbesitz research grant Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Berlin, Germany)

**October 2012** CEU travel grant Sixteenth Century Society Conference (Cincinnati, OH)

**May 2012** CEU travel grant 47th Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, MI)

**October 2011** CEU travel grant Sixteenth Century Society Conference (Fort Worth, TX)

**January 2011-April 2011** Dr. Günther Findel-Stiftung research fellowship Herzog August Bibliothek (Wolfenbüttel, Germany)

**October 2010** CEU travel grant 36th meeting of the Southeastern Medieval Association (Roanoke, VA)

**2008-2009** CEU MA fellowship

**October 2007 to February 2008** Moscow State University exchange student award Medieval Studies Department, University of Bologna (Bologna, Italy)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

“‘Othering’ a Neighbor: Perceptions of the French Body in the Early Modern German Lands” in *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* 64 (2012): 94-104.

“Crusaders’ Motivations and Chivalric Consciousness: French Contribution to the Later Crusades” in *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 16 (2010): 224-237.

## **TRANSLATIONS**

Evgeny Chernykh, *The Steppe Belt Of Eurasia*

Together with Peter N. Hommel (Oxford University), forthcoming by Academic Press

Gerhard Jaritz (ed.), *Medieval Travel In Russian Research* (Krems: Medium Aevum Quotidianum, 2011)

## **PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS**

**2017** Renaissance Society of America. Paper accepted (Chicago, OH)

**2016** 51st Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, MI)

**2015** 50th Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, MI)

**2013** Webmontag, Göttingen Center for Digital Humanities (Göttingen, Germany)

**2013** 20th Anniversary Postdoctoral Workshop, “To Make Dead Bodies Talk” (Budapest, Hungary)

**2012** Sixteenth Century Society Conference (Cincinnati)

**2012** 47th Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo)

**2011** Sixteenth Century Society Conference (Fort Worth)

**2010** 36th meeting of the Southeastern Medieval Association (Roanoke)

**2009** “Late Crusades – Les Croisades Tardives” Conference (Budapest, Hungary)

## **SUMMER SCHOOLS**

**2016** Rare Book School (Charlottesville, Virginia) Introduction to Descriptive Bibliography

**2013** DARIAH-DE International Digital Humanities Summer School (Göttingen, Germany)