

Going to the Dogs: The Foreign and Religious Other in German Renaissance Prints

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Dogs have an enduring symbolism in images and texts that encompass both positive and negative meanings. During the German Renaissance, whole groups of people in remote regions of the world were portrayed with the heads of dogs in both literature and visual culture. This paper examines the monstrous race, the dog-headed *cynocephali*, within the social context of German Renaissance prints. It discusses how the dog-headed motif was used to both demonise and socially marginalise foreign and religious Others from the Western ‘civilised’ world and Christian realm. In turn, this paper illustrates how this motif was able to reinforce unity and identity among the German people, against the backdrop of increasing German national sentiment. While the monstrous races have been widely studied, it has primarily been in general terms, encompassing many types of creatures. Their representation in northern (German) art and visual culture has also not been extensively examined in relation to the social contexts of the Other in German Renaissance art, society and culture.

The prevalence of these hybrid creatures in pictorial prints is evident in late fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century Germany, around the height of the European witch-hunts and Protestant Reformation. They were produced in southern Germany,

where at least half the population remained Catholic and where a third of all executions of witches occurred during the European witch craze, revealing tensions of perceived ‘Outsiders’ within the region (Roper 2004, 19; Midelfort 1972, 58). The prints were predominately created by unknown artists as book and map illustrations in scholarly works authored by people who held respected positions within society. The authors were university educated, physicians, clergymen, academics and explorers – giving credibility to their stories of the monstrous and their accompanying images.

The Dog-Headed Race: Conceptions of Alterity

The cynocephali were located in their traditionally associated location in the mountainous and forested regions of north-eastern Asia in Martin Waldseemüller’s *Carta marina* (1516) (fig. 1). A cynocephalus who is carrying a branch differs from traditional representations of the cynocephali with its hooved feet. This depiction may have been influenced by the *Hippopodes* (‘horse foot’), the hooved monstrous race with the bodies of men who were similarly linked to Asia. The accompanying text notes that it has a human head, the face of a dog, and speaks two words, then barks the third (Duzer 2010, 225). This account derives from the Franciscan missionary, John of Plano Carpini (1182-1252), who stayed with Mongols in 1247, where he claimed to have been told of the dog-headed neighbours by Russian clerics (John of Plano Carpini 1980, 23, 31). This cynocephalus could have further been inspired by *The Greek Alexander Romance* (c.300 A.D.), which stated that ‘their voices were partly human and partly canine’ (Pseudo-Callisthenes 1991, 178). The description and illustration of this cynocephalus clearly stresses its duality as both man and beast. The branch-wielding cynocephalus is similar to the figure on the left resembling a wild man with long pointed canine ears, wielding a club while chasing a hare. This

motif was used to further symbolise the creatures' barbarity and ignorance of more sophisticated chivalric weapons (Friedman 1981, 32-33).

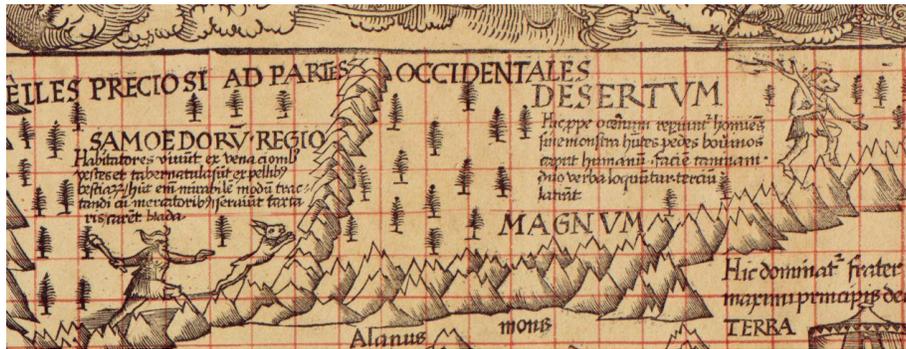


Fig. 1. Martin Waldseemüller, *Carta marina navigatoria portugallen [siorum] navigationes atque totius cogniti orbis terre marisque formam naturamque situs et terminos nostri[s] temporibus recognitos et ab antiquorum traditione differentes eciam quorum vetusti non meminuerunt autores, hec generaliter indicat*, Detail, 1516, Strasbourg, produced by Johann Schott. Woodcut, 128 x 233 cm, each sheet measures 45.5 x 62 cm, Library of Congress, Washington DC, Jay I. Kislak Collection.

The cynocephalus is also presented gesturing with one hand. The hand-gesturing cynocephalus is used to signify its absence of sophisticated language and thus its lack of humanity, despite being portrayed alone (Spinks 2009, 15-16). The barking cynocephali embodied the foreign barbarian, which was derived from the ancient Greek *barbaros* and meant ‘gibberish speaker’ (Strickland 2003, 48). For the ancient Greeks, articulate speech in the Greek language defined humanity and the rational mind over the animal realm (DeMello 2012, 37). This view was shared by the Romans, as most of the monstrous races described by Pliny, who wrote one of the earliest influential accounts of monstrous races, were also said to be without articulate speech (Pliny 1962, 76-77). Even German humanists, such as Conrad Celtis (1459-1508), similarly continued to hold Latin in higher regard over their own ‘barbaric tongue’ (Krebs 2011, 107; Celtis 1948, 20-21). When describing the dog-

king of the people of Ptoeambati and Ptoemphanæ, Pliny stated that the king would make signs with his body, which his subjects would interpret as commandments they would observe (Pliny 1962, 67). This follows from Ctesias of Cnidus (c. 400 B.C.) who stated of the cynocephali that ‘by barking and by making signs with their hands and their fingers like the deaf and the dumb, they can make themselves understood’ (McCrinkle 1882, 22). This motif served to illustrate that the cynocephali relied upon heavy hand gestures to supplement their primary communication of barking (Friedman 1981, 29).

In Waldseemüller’s map, the cynocephali are also shown to wear garments made out of crude animal skins. This offered only a slightly more charitable view in comparison to nude depictions of the cynocephali (e.g. fig. 5). When relating to pagans, nudity was imbued with negative connotations (Mellinkoff 1993, 203-04). While wearing animal skins placed these figures somewhere between animal and human, it also separated them from ‘civilised Christian society’ (Friedman 1981, 32). This account is supported by a sixteenth-century German traveller in Spain who had described captured men from the Canary Islands dressed in animal skins as ‘wild beasts’ (Mercer 1980, 228). However, he further stated that dressing these creatures in European clothing ‘made these beasts in human bodies into tame human beings’ (ibid.). The belief in the absence of humanity of the cynocephali and related creatures is thus evident from their lack of ‘civilised’ European clothing. However, the fact that the cynocephali wear anything at all illustrates that Waldseemüller separated them from the other animals depicted, but nonetheless continued to maintain their separation from humanity, thereby reinforcing their human-animal hybridity. In this way, they are neither wholly man nor beast, but belong along the fringes of society like the mountainous ridge the cynocephalus walks along.

Gog and Magog: Muslim Ottoman Turks and Mongols

Down to the right of these monstrous races is the land of the Mongols (fig. 2). Beside a tent city, men are illustrated in robes or ‘bloomers’ and are wearing exaggeratedly tall hats resembling *fezzes* that have a tassel at the top. Albeit shorter, the *fez* was commonly worn by Ottoman Turks at all levels of society (Chico 2013, 175).



Fig. 2. Martin Waldseemüller, *Carta marina navigatoria portugallen [siorum] navigationes atque totius cogniti orbis terre marisque formam naturamque situs et terminos nostri[s] temporibus recognitos et ab antiquorum traditione differentes eciam quorum vetusti non meminuerunt autores, hec generaliter indicat*, Detail, 1516, Strasbourg, produced by Johann Schott. Woodcut, 128 x 233 cm, each sheet measures 45.5 x 62 cm, Library of Congress, Washington DC, Jay I. Kislak Collection.

One man on the far right appears to be wearing a turban, which was more traditionally associated with Ottoman Turks during this period. Their location suggests that the once feared Mongolian Empire that had managed to capture parts of Eastern Europe during the thirteenth century, had been replaced by the new threat posed by the Muslim Ottoman Empire (Strickland 2003, 193; Jackson 2005, 138). One of the men riding on a horse while holding an arrow demonstrates that at least some of the men are soldiers. He is travelling in the direction of Europe with a dog running behind him, underscoring their expansionist threat. Just as the Mongols touched on the apocalyptic fears of the medieval Christian West, so too did the threat of the new religion of Islam from the East during the early modern period (Jackson 2005, 143). By the time this map was made, Constantinople had already fallen to the Ottoman Empire, where some Christians had been forced to convert (Cunningham and Grell 2000, 1-2; Schwoebel 1967, 163). The tent camps served as emblems of war and apostasy (Wheatcroft 1993, 44).

The mountainous ridges that surround the Ottoman Turks resemble the mountains thought to separate Gog and Magog, the princes of wicked nations in Biblical apocalyptic literature (Arjana 2015, 72). In this way, their location associates them with the apocalyptic enemies, rulers of nations under the dominion of Satan. As stated in Revelation: ‘Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth – Gog and Magog – and to gather them for battle’ (20.7-8). Gog and Magog have been represented invading Vienna as turban-wearing Ottoman Turks and as Mongols below a flying demon representing Satan in the 1530 edition of the New Testament by Martin Luther.¹ Written on a tent

¹ See for example Master A.W. *Gog and Magog* (woodcut, 11.7 x 8 cm), illustrated in Martin Luther. 1530. *Das Neue Testament unsers Herrn und Heilandes Jesu Christi. Wittenberg: Hans Luft*. [Artstor.org](https://www.artstor.org/ARTSTOR_103_41822000979284) (ARTSTOR_103_41822000979284).

amongst their camp are the words ‘Gog’ and ‘Magog’, associating them with the Biblical monsters of the apocalypse. The image recalls the story in Ezekiel in the Old Testament in reference to Gog: ‘You will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a great horde, a mighty army’ (38.15). This threat against the people of Israel was reinterpreted by the contemporary audience as a threat to Germany. It was thought that Germany would especially experience the wrath of God as it was where ‘the Gospel had shone the brightest and been least appreciated’ (Cunningham and Grell 2000, 43).

One figure among the bearded men with long pointy moustaches in Waldseemüller’s map has the face of a long snouted dog. Although similarly dressed, the cynocephalus is distinguished with a contrasting checked pattern on his robes. A checked pattern had often been used to indicate an evil person (Mellinkoff 1993, 21). The cynocephali not only came to represent unconverted pagans in the remote corners of the world, but also Muslims who were often regarded in classical and early Christian writing as ‘a race of dogs’ (Strickland 2003, 159-60). In antiquity, Pliny stipulated that the king of Garamantes in modern day Libya had an army that was literally made up of ‘dog soldiers’ (Pliny 1962, 67). Eulogius of Córdoba (c. 810-859) also called the prophet Muhammad a dog, because dogs are considered impure in Islam and calling Muslims dogs would have been a great insult (Strickland 2003, 159-60). Muhammad and the Muslim ruler, Saladin (1138-1193), were portrayed with the heads of dogs in Alexander of Bremen’s (d. 1271) thirteenth-century illuminated *Expositio in Apocalypsim* (‘Exposition of the Apocalypse’) from Saxony.² In another image in the same source, Muhammad was depicted as a dog standing on

² See for example ‘The Beast and his image as Saladin and Muhammed’ (Alexander, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, Saxony, c.1249-1250. Cambridge University Library, MS Mm. V. 31, fol. 185v), illustrated in Strickland 2003, 223. University of Cambridge Digital Library. Accessed June 25, 2016. <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-MM-00005-00031/374>.

his two hind legs next to the Devil.³ Muslims were also described as dogs in literature in the Middle Ages. In *The Song of Roland* (c.1140-1170), Muslim characters yelped like dogs (Sayers 1957, 185), as did the Muslim army in *Kyng Alisaunder* (c.1275), ‘whose men could neither speak nor shout / But only bark and rage like hounds’ (1934-36) (Weber 1810 vol. I, 84; Friedman 1981, 67). As these sources suggest, the cynocephali were used to underscore the ferocious barbarity of the Muslim Turks.

The Germanic warrior wolf tribes similarly used the image of the ferocious canine to instil fear in their enemies. The image was used by the early Germanic tribe called the Lombards. An early Lombard historian, Paul the Deacon (c.720-799), wrote in his *Historia Langobardorum* (‘History of the Langobards’) that this tribe claimed to have had cynocephali in their army and would drink the blood of their enemies (Paul the Deacon 1907, 20; Speidel 2004, 19). During the early fourteenth century, the Lombards’ emblem was the dog and they were ruled by King Congrande known as the ‘Great Dog’ (White 1991, 61). Marco Polo also wrote of Tartars having cynocephali in their army: ‘Tartar chiefs, with their dog’s-head followers...ate the bodies of their victims like so much bread’ (1871, 276). In this way, Waldseemüller’s map was drawing on this long tradition of associating Muslims with barbarous hounds and creating an enemy to be both feared and hated. Since there is only one cynocephalus who appears to be an Ottoman Turk, it suggests that they were not conceived as a race of dogs in this instance, but like the Lombards and Tartars, had cynocephali as their followers.

Further down Waldseemüller’s map are another two cynocephali described as having the heads of dogs (fig. 3). The pair face each other and the mouth of the

³ See for example ‘The Beast of the Earth, his image, and henchmen’ (Alexander, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*. Saxon, c.1249-1250, University of Cambridge, MS Mm.V.31, fol. 85), illustrated in Strickland 2003, 224. University of Cambridge Digital Library. Accessed June 25, 2016. <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-MM-00005-00031/173>.

cynocephalus on the left is open revealing its long protruding canine tongue. Both are gesturing heavily with their hands raised to signify their lack of sophisticated language. They are further distinguished from the previous cynocephalus with hooved feet above as the text beside them notes that they rely exclusively on barking to communicate (Duzer 2010, 228). This is emphasised with the cynocephalus on the right with his hands raised in an apparent frustrated attempt to communicate.



Fig. 3. Martin Waldseemüller, *Carta marina navigatoria portugallen [siorum] navigationes atque totius cogniti orbis terre marisque formam naturamque situs et terminos nostri[s] temporibus recognitos et ab antiquorum traditione differentes eciam quorum vetusti non meminuerunt autores, hec generaliter indicat*, Detail, 1516, Strasbourg, produced by Johann Schott. Woodcut, 128 x 233 cm, each sheet measures 45.5 x 62 cm, Library of Congress, Washington DC, Jay I. Kislak Collection.

The pair are wearing crude and tattered garments. The text describes them as sheep's skin – not considered a luxury item during its day (Duzer 2010, 228; Ergang 1967, 65). The cynocephalus on the right appears to be wearing a hat that resembles traditional Mongolian fur-lined caps. Mongolian clothing was made out of animal hides and sheep's wool from the herds of livestock they would raise (Chico 2013, 26). Since these cynocephali are further located in the region of Mongolia and had been influenced by Carpini's account of the Mongols' supposedly dog-headed

neighbours, the Mongols and the cynocephali could have been conflated. Therefore, it is quite possible that they represented Mongols who were known for their close relationship with animals. This in turn simplified the process of reducing these foreigners to animals.

The Mongols' representation as dog-heads could have also been the result of their long rumoured acts of cannibalism or come from the belief that they ate dogs (Jackson 2005, 149; Phillips 2014, 178). As written in a letter by Ivo of Narbonne to the archbishop of Bordeaux in 1243: 'The men are inhuman and bestial, they can be said to be monsters rather than men, they thirst for blood and drink it, they tear to pieces and devour flesh of dogs and of men...they drink for their delight blood which they draw from their sheep' (quoted in Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora* 4.76-7, cited in Baraz 2003, 98). Mongols were also unfamiliar with processed food such as bread and wine, a symbol of Western civilisation, consuming raw meat instead (John of Plano Carpini 1980, 16; Baraz 2003, 103). Europeans believed that humans ate refined, cooked food; hence those who did not were likened to animals (Salisbury 1994, 170).

The fact that the Mongols were nomads meant that they did not build a lasting city, which further reduced them to being considered less than human (Jackson 2005, 139). The cynocephali were universally portrayed against a remote landscape. The wilderness held strong symbolic significance in the Middle Ages and the early modern period. It became associated with all things wild and in consequence symbolised anything outside orthodox Christian society (Bernheimer 1952, 12, 20). Being nomads also associated them with the mark of Cain. Monstrous races were commonly thought to be descendants of Cain who was cursed with a physical mark given by God after killing his brother Abel (Genesis 4.3-15). Cain was punished by being hidden from God's presence and to wander the earth like a nomad 'east of

Eden' (4.15-16). For this reason, they represented God's punishment for sins on earth (Strickland 2003, 49). As Cain was hidden from Christ's presence, it associates the absence of faith in the god of the Bible with their physical monstrosity

Their representation as dogs could also be in reference to their perceived violent savagery during their conquests, massacring whole cities indiscriminately. This is coupled with the sexual abuse of their captives, culminating in the cannibalism of their victims (Baraz 2003, 93). The map also appears to have highlighted the trepidation of collaboration between the once feared Mongols (with some converting to Islam) and the new Ottoman force (Tolan 1996, xvi). This is further evident from the print in Luther's *New Testament* of Ottoman Turks and Mongols storming Vienna, discussed above.

The Conception of a Monster

Further separated by another mountainous ridge is a similar lone cynocephalus (fig. 4). Despite being shown alone, he is gesturing to his left with his mouth open in an attempt to communicate. The text that accompanies the lone cynocephalus states that it is men alone in this 'race' who appear as dogs, while the women appear as human (Duzer 2010, 226). This description alludes to bestiality. Ancient sources such as Ctesias have similarly described cynocephali as a tribe of up to 120,000 with visibly male sexual organs. However, he later states in the same source that the women had the tails of dogs (McCrindle 1882, 22, 25). According to Pliny, the Greek historian Duris of Samos (c.350 – 281 B.C.) stated that some Indians had regular sexual relations with animals that resulted in half-human, half-animal hybrid offspring (Pliny 1962, 79).



Fig. 4. Martin Waldseemüller, *Carta marina navigatoria portugallen [siorum] navigationes atque totius cogniti orbis terre marisque formam naturamque situs et terminos nostri[s] temporibus recognitos et ab antiquorum traditione differentes eciam quorum vetusti non meminuerunt autores, hec generaliter indicat*, Detail, 1516, Strasbourg, produced by Johann Schott. Woodcut, 128 x 233 cm, each sheet measures 45.5 x 62 cm, Library of Congress, Washington DC, Jay I. Kislak Collection.

Adam of Bremen, a German historian of the eleventh century, described the birth of cynocephali from the Amazon women of Asia, considered a monstrous race in themselves. In his historical treatise, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* ('History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen'), he writes:

Some, too, assert that they are made pregnant by the merchants who pass that way, or by the men whom they hold captive in their midst... And when these women come to give birth, if the offspring be of the male sex, they become Cynocephali; if of the feminine kind, they become most beautiful women (Adam of Bremen 2005, 200; 4.19).

John of Plano Carpini recounted the tale of a land where the women were all human; however, their men were all dogs (John of Plano Carpini 1980, 23). He further stated that the dogs communicated with the women through sign language, thus underscoring the depiction of the hand-gesturing cynocephali (White 1991, 132).

As the tales of the dog-headed cynocephali were believed to have derived from Indian epics themselves (Wittkower 1942, 159-97), dogs were important in the belief systems of the steppe and East Eurasia. A similar Tibetan story described dogs mating with Turkic women who gave birth to male dogs and to human girls (Aigle 2014, 126). In this way, the association between cynocephali and Mongols could have originally derived from the Mongolians themselves. As David Gordon White has shown, Mongols, Turks, Tibetans and Tartars all have dog or wolf ancestry legends (1991, 135). However, they had become reinterpreted to fit the contemporary fears of Western Europe that linked heresy with bestiality. Regardless of its origins, bestiality was thought to be the cause of the birth of hybrids and the monstrous races, and was accordingly escalated to one of the worst sins of all (Wiesner-Hanks 2009, 29-30). The cynocephali's monstrosity is further underscored by the heading *Monstra* ('Monsters') beside the lone cynocephalus.

Images of canine-human hybrids further attest to the conflicted relationship early modern Europeans had with companion animals. Dogs were increasingly kept as pets and had been used to symbolise faithfulness in works of art (Reuterswärd 1981, 53-69). However, a negative interpretation was still commonly applied. During the Middle Ages, the close relationship of keeping pets, as opposed to the strict utilitarian use of dogs for hunting, was seen as a type of heresy because it threatened to undermine the distinction between humans and animals (DeMello 2012, 150; Cohen 2008, 211). This contributed to the fear of losing superiority over them as God gave man dominion over all animals in Genesis 1.26. Living with animals was thought to reduce humans into beasts (Taylor 2013, 45). During the early modern period, a close relationship with dogs as pets was still regarded with suspicion. For example, Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535), an eminent German astrologer, philosopher and scholar, was thought to derive his occult knowledge from

his companion dog, in other words, his witches' familiar. His pupil, Johann Weyer (c.1515-1588), believed the gossip was because he was 'childishly fond of this dog' (Serpell 2002, 167; Weyer 1991, 113). Furthermore, the suspicion of witches' familiars around the time of the witch craze derived from superstition caused around the height of the bubonic plagues where dogs were immune. Since hundreds of dogs were left homeless upon the death of their owners, dogs were seen eating the unburied dead, which did not help their reputation as harbingers of death (Taylor 2013, 43, 44). Since the Church popularised the idea that the plague was caused by Satan, it helped to create the common belief that the Devil was disguised as a dog during the early modern period (Weyer 1991, 612, note. 38; Taylor 2013, 44). For this reason, canine motifs had become associated with pagans and the Devil (Ferreiro 1998, 65). The close relationship with animals also fostered the connection between the idea of heresy and bestiality (Taylor 2013, 45). The blurring of distinctions between animals and humans from the Middle Ages resulted in increased resistance by the Church, which legislated against and demonised bestiality (Salisbury 1994, 96).

Savage Cannibals of the New World

As exploration grew during the early modern period, the existence of these mysterious creatures was pushed to lesser known corners of the world, including the Americas (Friedman 1981, 1). It was in the sixteenth century that the cynocephali were portrayed in the New World with the publication of *Uslegung der Mercarthen oder Carta Marina* ('Guide and Instructions for the Carta Marina') (1525) by Lorenz Fries (1489-1550) (Duzer 2010, 222). The booklet served as a companion to Fries' map, based upon Waldseemüller's 1516 *Carta marina*. Cannibalistic cynocephali are depicted and described in the chapter 'Of Cannibals' in both the 1525 and 1527

editions (fig. 5). A woodcut in this chapter illustrates a cynocephalus butchering a human into pieces as he holds a cleaver above his head. Another gestures with his arms stretched out towards the butcher on his right to signify his purchasing of the human flesh.



Fig. 5. Artist Unknown, *Cannibals on the Caribbean Island* in Lorenz Fries, *Uslegung der Mercarthen oder Carta Marina*, Strasbourg: Johannes Grüninger, 1525, leaf XVI, Woodcut, handcolouring, 10.5 x 14.4 cm, Archive of Early American Images, The John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

On the far right stands what could be a female, though judging from the profile angle it is more likely male given the similar prominent pectoral muscles possessed by the other males whose only clothing appears to be a stringed loincloth. The cynocephalus chews on a raw and bloodied arm while gesturing to another cynocephalus on the far

left with a whip in one hand used to guide a llama. Another person, whose possible destination is also the chopping block, is tied to the llama. Dismembered body parts hang above the block illustrated in a similar vein as a crude outdoor butcher's shop. As described by Fries:

Cannibals are a grim, slit-eyed people; dog-heads sit right on their heads, so that one gets scared when one looks at them. And they have an island which Christoffel Dauber [Christopher Columbus] of Janua [Genoa] recently discovered. This island is very large and has a lot of other islands around it. The cannibals all go naked except that they adorn themselves with parrot feathers of all kinds of colours, strangely woven together. These people prefer most of all to eat human flesh, and therefore, often in the year they go to surrounding islands in order to capture people. And they grab boys, beef them up all the hours the way we do it to camels, so that they will become fat and strong and all the better for being eaten. They kill the old ones and eat their entrails. They hang up the other meat the way we do with pork. But if they grab women, if these are young, then they keep them, so that they make a lot of children, just the way we do on account of marriage. If they are old, then they keep them as prisoners for their service and work (Fries 1525, fol. XVI, translated by Gerda Dinwiddie).

The dog-headed cynocephali were used to illustrate cannibals for their ferocious appearance and because dogs were used as a symbol for gluttony (Cohen 2008, 212). This symbolism originated in the Bible where dogs were repeatedly referred to with disparaging references as devourers and destroyers (Jeremiah 15.3), even of human flesh (Matthew 7.6). Depicted in profile to elucidate its long canine snout, the print also provided an opportunity to reveal the cynocephalus' long canine fangs, which signified its carnivorous appetite for human flesh (Magasich-Airola and de Beer 2007, 168-69). In this way, the profile view was often used to represent foreign Others, to exaggerate their features and to highlight their otherness (Bale 2010, 66-67; Mellinkoff 1993, 211-12). It is, however, curious that these depictions of a supposedly monstrous race were thought to be cannibals as they munch on human

flesh, suggesting that they thought the dog-headed race were closer to human than animal after all, or at least more than they would like to admit.

Perhaps they were deemed cannibals because they were still half human. Nonetheless they were regarded as monstrosities for this very reason. Monsters were typically represented as half-human, half-animal composites so that people could safely project their innermost fears on these odd figures (Gilmore 2003, 1). For this reason, what people most feared were the ‘demons’ within oneself – the othered self. They revealed the potential for human savagery or the temptation of immorality. They served as an example of what happens when one turns away from or is ignorant of God – the epitome of goodness. Turning away from God has turned them into bestial monsters, and they serve as a warning and provide physical evidence of the corruption of the internal self. The belief that physical imperfection was related to danger and the sin of defying God appears in Leviticus 21.16-23 and Deuteronomy 28. Hence, prints of cynocephali illustrated the German preoccupation with losing their special position with God.

Native Americans were similarly depicted in scenes of cannibalism with hanging body parts and in the act of cooking human flesh. This is demonstrated in the series of prints created by Theodor de Bry (1561-1623).⁴ These cannibalistic scenes became a common motif of Native Americans during the sixteenth century, based upon stories told by explorers such as the recollections by Hans Staden from Hesse (c. 1525-1579) (Staden 2008, 10; Arens 1979, 22-26, 28; Tucker 2011, 28; van Groesen 2008, 182-83). Rather than reflecting the reality of people found in America, this iconography, as well as their descriptions in tales, recycled old stereotypes and folklore of cannibalistic barbarians in order to portray the natives as akin to animals

⁴ See for example Theodore de Bry, *Cannibalism in Brazil* (1590, engraving, New York Public Library), illustrated in Obeyesekere 2005, 7.

(Arens 1979, 28; Colin 1999, 20). They made all foreign people appear interchangeable to the Western viewer and became composites of what was foreign and Other. Such stories brought back by travel writers would have served to reinforce the identity of 'German-ness' and the othering of foreigners, and to marginalise the latter as dangerous. As argued by anthropologists William Arens and Gananath Obeyesekere, the cannibalistic 'savage' was a construction of the Other that had little basis in reality. Rather, it was primarily a preoccupation of early modern Europeans (Arens 1979, 22-26; Obeyesekere 2005, 1-2).

Given their remote location, it is unlikely the image of a dog-headed race chewing on human body parts would have stirred fear of these cannibalistic monsters among its viewing audience. However, it would have caused repugnance of these savages and in turn further inspired national pride, allowing for a renewed sense of solidarity against the outsider. There was an increase in nationalistic writings in sixteenth-century Germany such as that by the anonymous author, simply known as 'the Revolutionary of the Upper Rhine', of *Buchli der hundert capiteln mit vierzig statuten* ('Book of a Hundred Chapters') (1510). The book described the German people as being the 'Chosen People' in the eyes of God (O'Brien 1988, 24; Waley and Denley 2013, 236; Whaley 2012, 122). Lienhard Jost (c.1500s) went further by prophesising that Strasbourg, in which this print was created, would become the New Jerusalem (Cunningham and Grell 2000, 36). This national sentiment resulted in a sense of anti-foreignness (Hughes 1992, 20). Even among the most sceptical of its viewing audience, the print would have functioned as a metaphor for the human condition.

Since the print was created amidst the German Peasant's war of 1524-5, it could have functioned as a reminder of the consequences of savagery at home. As within war, cannibals turn against one another, devouring their own. Peasants were

also often regarded as closer to animals for their ignorance and close connection to animals on the land, in the same way that Mongols were (Evans 1988, 2). The wilderness and outskirts of society were associated with lower order beings, and people who lived outside the city were described akin to savages and beasts, along with the other animals they lived beside in the wilderness (Freedman 2002, 29, 32-33). In this way, during the sixteenth century, the language of 'class' was not used, but rather thought in terms of divine 'order' and rightful and deserved place (Jütte 1994, 11, 15).

According to Fries, the cynocephali were not just savages, but had slit-eyes like goats that recalled images of the Devil. This description likely derived from the belief that the Devil would disguise himself as a dog (Weyer 1991, 612, note 38). For this reason, the iconography of the dog-headed cynocephali was not only used to distance early modern Germans from foreigners by highlighting the animalistic primitiveness of the latter's physical appearance and behaviour. It also demonised the cynocephali by casting them in opposition to Christian doctrine in representing them as a sign of the degenerate nature of humanity and as a portent of the impending apocalypse. They therefore not only personified the representation of the Other, but also functioned as symbols of external and internal threats to the safety and stability of German Renaissance society.

The use of female humans for procreation again suggests that the cynocephali were the result of bestiality and were in consequence heretical beings. The person tied to the llama has a feminine appearance in contrast to the deceased male's head lying on the chopping block. The curvature of her body also suggests a hint of breast hidden from being tied up by her hands and feet. As the text stipulates, she could have been captured for procreation or slavery instead of used as food. This print further reinforces the notion that all cynocephali were male, as evident from the prints

discussed, as well as the notion of their sexual depravity. The image and textual description of slit-eyed dogs also recalled the idea of witches having sexual intercourse with the Devil and demons. The Devil and demons were thought to assume the body of animals, including dogs, thus reflecting the moral panic that women were being corrupted by the Devil during this period (Oldridge 2005, 80; Salisbury 1994, 98).

The Noble Savage

Mandeville's *Travels* was the most popular travel tale in early modern Europe. Although much of Mandeville's tale can safely be regarded as a work of fiction today, this was not the case at the time of publication (Tzanaki 2003, 273). It became an important text for geographers and explorers with Christopher Columbus most likely influenced by Mandeville while looking for the riches of Asia (ibid., 269). Illustrated in Anton Sorg's 1481 German edition of the text is a fierce looking dog-headed man with large fangs, naked notwithstanding a cloth covering his genitals with pectoral muscles exposed, armed with spear and shield that portrayed the image of a serpent-dragon (fig. 6). Just as the club was used to illustrate the lack of sophisticated weapons, so too was the spear that was regularly used to distinguish non-Europeans in early modern representations.⁵

Mandeville described the cynocephali as rational and stressed their piousness, despite the alleged fact that they ate those captured through battle (Mandeville 2011, 121). The cynocephali of Mandeville worshipped the ox as their god. They wore a gold or silver ox on their head as a sign of their devotion. He also described their

⁵ See for example the title page of Hans Weigel. 1577. *Habitus praecipuorum populorum, tam virorum quam foeminarum Singulari arte depicti*. Nuremberg: Weigel. Illustrated in Smith 2014, 127, 128.

pious king who said three hundred prayers each day and wore a ruby around his neck. The ruby marked his leadership, as only with it would others accept him as king (ibid., 67). The ruby served as a sign of the king's strength, as no one was able to rob him of it to take his place. Their land was also safe to travel through since there was no thievery under the leadership and justice of their king. The description of rational and pious dog-heads must have created an uncomfortable realisation of their humanity for the early modern audience. However, these descriptions by Mandeville of just and civilised cynocephali lie in contrast to its illustration.

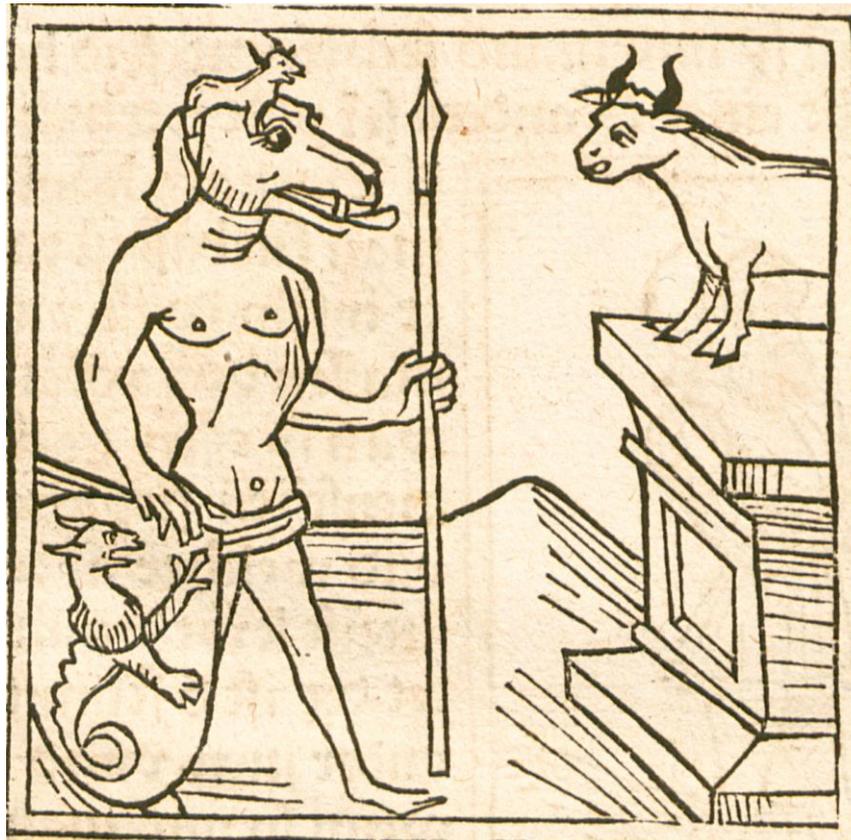


Fig. 6. Artist Unknown, illustrated in John Mandeville's *Das buch der ritters herr hannsen von monte villa*, trans. Michel Velsler, Augsburg: Anton Sorg, 1481, 62 Munich, Bayerische StaatsBibliothek.

Mandeville's *Travels* was written in the tradition of Christianising 'primitive' pagans, including the dog-headed race. For example, in the mid-ninth century, the monk Ratramnus of Corbie (d. c.870) wrote a letter to the German missionary Rimbert of Hamburg-Bremen (830-888), in response to the question of preaching Christianity to cynocephali that he frequently spotted in Scandinavia in his *Epistola de Cynocephalis* ('Letter Concerning the Doghead') (Steel 2012, 268; Orchard 2003, 17 note 97; Lozovsky 2009, 320). While Ratramnus described them as more animal than man, as their heads point to the ground rather than the heavens like man, Rimbert described them as exhibiting human reason. For this, Rimbert cited their modesty by wearing clothes, as well as their living in villages and farming; therefore, he believed they were more man than animal (Friedman 1981, 188). He also recounted a cynocephalus who was christened with the name Christopher, who was revered as a saint from late antiquity in predominately Byzantine art (Steel 2012, 268; Orchard 2003, 17 note 97; Lozovsky 2009, 320). Ratramnus consequently concluded that the dog-heads had potential for humanity and should be converted to Christianity (Palmer 2014, 183). Mandeville, highlighting the piousness of the cynocephali, likewise illustrated their potential to be Christianised.

The account of the dog-headed Christopher was likely derived from the apocryphal stories of the apostles Andrew and Bartholomew, sent on a mission by Christ to Parthia (modern day Iran), whose first meeting with the dog-faced cannibal was remarkably similar (Friedman 1981, 74):

Now his appearance was exceedingly terrible. He was four cubits in height [1.8m], and his face was like unto the face of a great dog and his eyes were like unto lamps of fire which burn brightly, and his teeth were like unto the tusks of wild boar, or the teeth of a lion, and the nails of his hands were like unto curved reaping hooks, and the nails of his toes were like unto the claws of a lion, and the hair of his head came

down over his arms like unto the mane of a lion, and his whole appearance was awful and terrifying (Budge 2012, 173-74; fol. 184a, col.2).

The two apostles laid their hands upon the dog-headed man and prayed the beast out of him saying: ‘In the Name of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, let the nature of the wild beast remove itself from thee, and let the nature of the children of men return unto thee’, and he became gentle as a lamb (Budge 2012, 179; fol. 186b, col. 2). This account underscores the cynocephali’s bestial appearance and nature as having been linked to the lack of Christian faith and demonstrates the civilising nature of Christianity as it further described that ‘he was rejoicing and was glad because he had learned to know the right faith’ (ibid., 173; fol. 184a, col.2). As this tale suggests, there was a long tradition that associated bestial appearance and behaviour to the non-Christian Other.

Further distancing itself from other representations of cynocephali during the German Renaissance, the cynocephalus portrayed in Mandeville’s 1481 Augsburg edition of *Travels* is depicted not in the distant landscape, but before a plinth with a sculpture of an ox, a mark of civilisation. As this image was created before the onset of the Protestant Reformation, it is worth inquiring what was thought of this sign of idolatry. After all, it is plainly stated in several instances in the Bible that one should not create or worship idols (e.g. Leviticus 19.4, 26.1). The production of cult statues was halted in early Christianity for fear of idolatry, but returned during the twelfth century, before their decline during the Protestant Reformation (Gaudio 2008, 124). However, despite the plethora of religious art during the pre-Reformation period, they did not completely lose the taint of suspected idolatry (Kamerick 2002, 1, 5).

The serpent-dragon or lindworm upon the cynocephalus’ shield suggests the worshipping of false idols as it is a symbol of evil and the Devil and was frequently used to depict the Antichrist (Hall 2008, 294). The text does not associate the

cynocephalus with the serpent-dragon and could instead be an addition by the artist to reflect society at the time it was made; a society which sought to demonise the Other in European culture, despite the humanising treatment in the textual source of the cynocephali by Mandeville. However, the dragon and lindworm were also commonly used in heraldry. Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553), for example, used a winged-serpent as part of his signature emblem in prints (Moser 2005, 40). The winged-serpent was illustrated with a ring in its mouth, which represented eternal life in classical mythology (Ozment 2011, 70). While the serpent-dragon on the shield of the cynocephalus could similarly be used in the same vein, it had also been used as an iconographical device to demonise an opposing enemy in battle (Strickland 2003, 181).

The Face of Evil: Enemies of Christ

Mandeville's story of the dog-headed ox worshippers has been shown to be a composite of different stories from Marco Polo. These include the great rubies owned by the King of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and the head of an ox as an idol in 'Manzi' and 'Cathay' (north and south China) (Marco Polo 1871, 256, 208; Bennett 1954, 67). The ox on the pedestal further resembles the golden calf worshipped by Israelites in Exodus 22. Christian writers have often used this story in the Bible to challenge the competing faith by illustrating that Jews did not have a true covenant with God and showing the ingrained depravity of the Jewish people (Alexander 2005, 170). Even Mandeville, who appears to show tolerance of the cynocephali's faith, did not demonstrate the same for Jews, whom he demonised and held responsible for the killing of Christ, and made claims of their attempts to kill all of Christendom (Mandeville 2011, 50, 118, 159). Mandeville must have been aware of the association of the ox with the sin of the Jews as well as with heretics and the Devil more

generally (Cohen 2008, 220). Regardless, the worship of a domesticated animal used widely in agricultural production across Europe would have been deemed repugnant to its European audience (Pascua 2011, 90). Furthermore, at a time when showing too much affection for an animal was frowned upon, worshipping one as a deity was worse (van Groesen 2007, 126).

Jews were also referred to as dogs by medieval churchmen and were depicted with dog-heads before Christ in the ninth-century illuminated manuscript, *Chludov Psalter*, for example (Strickland 2003, 160).⁶ This association was derived from the New Testament that used dogs as a metaphor for Jews in Matthew 15.26. Jews were further associated with the monstrous races from having lived outside cities, their strange dress and diet, incomprehensible speech (Hebrew), and the belief of their physical deformity of a concealed tail, horns and a hook nose (Hassig 1999, 32). The relationship between the cynocephali and Jews was also based on the shared belief in their practice of cannibalism (Gow 1995, 49). Their humanity was further questioned for rejecting Christ as it was thought this revealed their irrationality (Stow 2006, 9). As proclaimed by the French abbot, Peter the Venerable of Cluny (1092-1156): ‘Surely I do not know whether a Jew, who does not submit to human reason nor acquiesce to proof-texts that are both divine and his own, is a human’ (Peter the Venerable 2013, 123). Peter further repeatedly called Jews dogs in his *Adversus Iudeorum inveteratam duritiem* (‘Against the Inveterate Obduracy of the Jews’). During the thirteenth century, it was feared that they were in alliance with the Mongols to exact revenge on their Christian enemies (Jackson 2005, 143). Martin Luther also conveyed the threat of an alliance between European Jews and the Ottoman Turks, a fear dating back to the eleventh century that resulted in a massacre

⁶ See for example Unknown Artist, *Christ Surrounded by Dogs*, (c. 950, illuminated manuscript, *Chludov Psalter*, f.19v, Moscow, State Historical Museum), illustrated in Hassig 1999, 43.

of Jews along the Rhineland and other parts of Europe (Luther 1818, 448; Richards 1991, 90). This alliance again associated them with the monstrous races of the East. The 'Revolutionary of the Upper Rhine' also stated that Alexander the Great drove the Jews up into the mountains, thereby further associating them with the notion of Gog and Magog (Strauss 1971, 239). In this way, the cynocephali and Jews were the embodiment of sin and the enemies of Christ. As a result, the image of the cynocephalus worshipping an ox recalled the corrupted Israelites worshipping a golden calf. This print would have served as a warning to those who were tempted from the 'one true' God at a time when many Jews were being expelled from German cities (Boes 2007, 93).

Apocalyptic Warnings and the Corruption of Man

During the German Reformation, it was not uncommon to see book illustrations of monstrous births resembling a human-animal composite. While some monstrous births were represented with the head of a dog like the cynocephali, some were also inverted to have the legs and tail of canines, with a body and head of a human. An example of this was illustrated in a chronicle published by Johann Wolf (1537-1600) in 1600, entitled *Lectio-num memorabilium et reconditarum* ('Memorable and Recondite Readings'). Among its images was a monstrous birth of a half-human, half-canine hybrid, with a human head and torso and hairy canine legs and tail, framed like an ethnographic portrait (fig. 7). The image accompanied a story of a woman in the year 1452 who was allegedly impregnated by a dog, which resulted in the hybrid who was sent to the pope to be exonerated for the sins of the mother (Holländer 1921, 308-09). Miraculous stories of monstrous births who became completely normal once baptised also existed, but there is no indication that this occurred in Wolf's account (Jackson 2005, 172). Instead, this monstrous birth

functioned as a reminder of the sin it was conceived in. As stated in Leviticus 18.23, bestiality was a sin. The depravity of mixing species was further indicated in Leviticus 19.19: ‘Do not mate different kinds of animals. Do not plant your field with two kinds of seeds’. This doctrine was used to highlight that animals were quantifiably different from humans by defining Christian sexuality within the strict hierarchical system of man and beast (Salisbury 1994, 87-88).



Fig. 7. Artist Unknown in Johann Wolf, *Lectioinum memorabilium and econditarum*, Lauingen, 1600, 911, Woodcut.

However, the fact that humans and animals were believed to produce offspring undermined this fundamental difference. Such stories of mothers giving birth to animals or hybrids were widely traded without question. For example, a broadside published in Strasbourg in 1575 depicted a Jewish mother who had given birth to two

sows. The Jews were also likened to sows and therefore the woman who had given birth to them represented the inner bestial nature of the Jews (Soergel 1998, 138-39).⁷ In this way, the immediate sin of a monstrous birth could be the result of the internal emotions, beliefs and desires of the woman herself leading to a physical imprint of their deformation on the unborn child (Crawford 2005, 18-19). In consequence, these monstrous births reflect the fear of the inner animal that can lie within us all. Like St. Christopher discussed above, his wild appearance was a temporary state. Once he had come to know the right God, he lost his wildness and ferocious exterior. These stories and visual culture reveal that all of humanity had a potential to become like animals. Turning away from God and moving away from the civilising influence of the city had the power to turn man into a beast.

Not only could this print serve as a warning against bestiality, it could also pose as a caution against mixing with other races or religions. As aforementioned, the mating of women with dogs was thought to result in the monstrous races. In Renaissance Europe, sexual intercourse with Jews was equated with bestiality as they were regarded as a race of dogs (Stow 2006, 18-19). Intermarriage between Jews and Christians was also condemned at the 538 Council of Orléans (Richards 1991, 89). The image of the monstrous birth was also created at the height of the witch craze. As discussed above, there was a fear of women mating with the Devil in the form of a dog. Hence, bestiality, witchcraft and the Devil were intrinsically linked. Turning away from the Christian God would turn man into a beast. This could have also been the case with Christians who were in interfaith relationships. Not only was religion at the heart of this, but German nationalism. A romanticised vision of German heritage and its superiority was partly due to the rediscovery of the history of the Germanic

⁷ *Ain Gewisse Wunderzeitung von ainer Schwageren Judin zu Binzwangen vir meil von Augspurg*, (Strasbourg, 1575), illustrated in Soergel 1998, 139.

people in *Germania* by Cornelius Tacitus (56 – 117 A.D.) (Krebs 2011, 17; Hughes 1992, 20). They were described by the Roman historian as ‘unique, pure, and unlike any other’ as they had not been ‘contaminated by intermarriage’ (Tacitus 1999, 39). As a result, marrying an outsider would have not only been an affront to God, but to German nationalism. Furthermore, the monstrous birth’s portrayal in the pastoral landscape and his unclothed body also highlights that he is separated from civilisation like the cynocephali. The text is followed by a description of a meteorite the following year serving as an omen, emphasising the role of the monstrous birth as a warning.

Conclusion

These canine-human hybrid creatures not only came to represent the foreign Other from their mythological origins in antiquity, their physical characteristics were used to both demonise and socially marginalise religious and foreign Others from the Western ‘civilised’ world and Christian realm. The portrayal of these creatures reflected the fear of the degeneration of society at a time of moral reform and strong adherence to orthodox religion. Considering their distant location, it is doubtful that these monstrosities were especially feared in and of themselves. Instead, they became the embodiment of real social and political fears including the fear of the expanding Ottoman Empire and the Jewish Diaspora more closely located at home. They also highlighted the fear and apprehension of an inevitable apocalypse, because they brought with them competing religious beliefs and false prophets. In addition, the cynocephali were read as signs or portents in nature itself. They signified humanity’s reduction to its most bestial and primitive forms for those who did not follow the one true prophet of Christ. Therefore, evil-doers were easily recognisable and the cynocephali illustrated the sin of defying God. Where physical deformity had long

been associated with danger and sin, human-animal hybrids reflected the greatest perversion of God's creation (Strickland 2003, 66, 65).

Associating the cynocephali with foreigners also helped reinforce a romanticised vision of German heritage, and its superiority, thanks to the region's growing national sentiment. By portraying foreign and religious Others with the heads of dogs, they were shown to be less than human and accordingly lower in a hierarchical view of different people in the world. They showed the glory of Germany's own civilisation in comparison, and in turn created greater intolerance of the Other. The prints allowed its Christian audience to unite in their repugnance of foreigners' heathen and demon worship. In portraying the Other with the heads of dogs, the pervasive dog origin stories that existed in many cultures across the world were used against the very people they were derived from.

As people did not think in terms of 'race' during the Renaissance, they thought in terms of development. In turn, there was a drive to maintain strict boundaries within this hierarchical world view, where tales of bestiality served to warn against intermingling with different people deemed Other, which were thought to be the cause of hybrids. This was not only thought to be the result of bestiality as described in Johann Wolf's chronicle, but of women mating with different races, as seen in the tales of Amazonian women and in Martin Waldseemüller's and Lorenz Fries' sources. While these images show the superiority of Christians, and more specifically German Christians' special place with God and in the world, they also reveal their insecurity. This insecurity was fuelled by the long history of being regarded as barbarians by Rome (Stadtwald 1996, 61).

As all the prints investigated in this paper were originally book and map illustrations, their mode of dissemination contrasted with the 'tabloid' nature of pamphlets during the Renaissance. These works also cited ancient authorities such as

Pliny to further attest the authenticity of the authors' claims. Since the monstrosities were depicted in historical chronicles and other sources by authors who held respected positions in society, it would have helped to further serve the Reformation and social reform as the images would have been used as evidence for the degeneration of civilisation. As most of the prints in this paper were illustrated in textual sources, their primary audience would have been the educated classes. They were packaged as analytical 'scientific' accounts, but also offered entertainment as well as moral guidance, allowing the monstrosities to appeal to large segments of society. Although there is no doubt that scepticism existed regarding the cynocephali, with some authors including the monstrous races to appeal to their buying audience, they were treated as if they should be taken as serious and factual accounts, since they stressed facts over explicit moral persuasion. The prints nonetheless contributed to and reinforced the culture of fear of foreign and religious Others in the German Renaissance.

Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor, Dr. Lisa Mansfield, and fellow colleagues and friends Nerina Dunt, Matthew Gray, Andy Smith, and Luke Stange for reading and providing feedback on the preparation of this manuscript. This gratitude is further extended to the anonymous reviewer and the editor of this special issue, Sune Borkfelt, for their advice and guidance.

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