

RICHARD ŠÍPEK

ORCID: 0000-0003-1496-6781

Národní muzeum v Praze

DIARY NOTES OF MATTHIAS STOIUS  
IN *ALMANACH NOVUM* (1552–1562)\*

Prague Nostitz Library and Provenance Research. The Books of Matthias Stoius Jr. The Life of Matthias Stoius Jr. *Almanach Novum* by Pietro Pitati Structure and Types of Stoius's Records. Records about Income, Wife, University. Medical Records about Health of the Duke Albert of Hohenzollern by Matthias Stoius. Stoius's Report about the Last Days and Death of the Duke Albert of Hohenzollern Published in Print.

KEY WORDS: early modern medicine, early modern physicians, Matthias Stoius, Albert of Hohenzollern, Prussia, Königsberg

Since its foundation in 1670, the Nostitz Library in the Lesser Town of Prague (Malá Strana) has preserved a considerable number of fragments of early modern Silesian libraries (Šípek, 2005). The ones moved to Prague as a part of the private library of late Otto Jr. of Nostitz (1608–1665) whose books, originally gathered in the castle of Jawor, were purchased by his brother, Johann Hartwig of Nostitz (1610–1683), German vice-chancellor of Bohemia and founder of the Prague Nostitz library. Traces of the early modern Silesian libraries were identified among other library remainders during the thorough provenance research of the Nostitz Library in the years 2005–2012, which discovered more than one thousand previous book owners, private individuals, families as well as institutions (Šípek, 2015). Gradually, the names, along with biographical and historiographical profiles

---

\* This work was supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic under the programme NAKI (National and Cultural Identity) as an issue of the project “Virtual Reconstruction of Scattered Book Collections of Bohemical Provenance in the Czech and Foreign Libraries” (DG18P02OVV009).

of the book owners, together with a short description of their books, which were identified in the Nostitz Library are being included in the online “Provenance Database of Book Owners Provenio” (Provenio).

Some items coming from Silesian libraries evidence the reading and collecting passion of early modern Silesian burghers, noblemen and clergymen. However, they also hide the surviving parts of even older book collections coming from distant regions. 60 volumes previously owned by Matthias Stoius Jr., the Königsberg ducal physician, containing their owner’s marks and records, were purchased by Otto Jr. of Nostitz, together with the younger library of Stoius’s nephew, Sebastian Hartmann von Königsheim, who converted to Roman Catholicism and, after theological studies in Rome, became a member of the Wrocław chapter.<sup>1</sup> To hide the name of the previous owner, Sebastian Hartmann had pasted paper stripes over his uncle’s signature, usually written on the books’ title pages. The author of the present paper has shortly introduced both Hartmann’s and Stoius’s library elsewhere (Šípek, 2012, pp. 26–27; Šípek, 2015, vol. 1, pp. 93–94, 136–139) and is preparing a detailed analysis of the library fragment for publication. Suffice to say, 40% of Stoius’s books identified in the Nostitz Library concerned philosophy, 23% focused on history and 19% on mathematics, including astronomy.

The most interesting volume from Stoius’s legacy is a Latin astronomical calendar containing information about the current position of the sun, the moon and the five planets known to the people of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The book *Almanach Novum*, compiled by the Italian astronomer Pietro Pitati covering the years 1552–1562 (Pitati, 1552), served as a diary for its owner where he kept records of his everyday activities and other memorable events. The present paper focuses on Stoius’s records preserved in Pitati’s *Almanach* as well as on his report on the last days and death of the Prussian Duke Albert of Hohenzollern. Although the latter was published in print, it was apparently based on his—currently missing—diary records.

Diary records left by book owners of different professions, not only in printed calendars, but in most books in general, are quite common in the early modern period (Jackson, 2001; Sherman, 2008). Bibles or prayer books usually contained records about births (baptisms), weddings and deaths (burials) of family members. Printed calendars, often enriched with astronomical and medical information were, however, the most popular printed medium for daily records and memoir writing, fulfilling the same role as modern printed diaries (Chapman, 2007). An analogy may be observed in the preferred choice of the emblem books published in print for the memory books (*alba amicorum*) (Ryantová, 2007, pp. 160–182).

---

<sup>1</sup> About the history of early modern libraries in Prussia see: Garber, 2018, *passim*, namely pp. 105–107; Walter, 2004; Komorowski et al., 2001; Tondel, 1998.

Matthias Stoius was born in Königsberg in 1526,<sup>2</sup> a year after the 37th Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights Albert of Hohenzollern (1490–1568)<sup>3</sup> converted to Lutheranism and turned the dominium of the knightly order into the secular Duchy of Prussia. His father, carrying the same name, died shortly after his son's birth.<sup>4</sup> Stoius's mother later married Königsberg pharmacist Leonhard Flubach (Anselmino, 2003, p. 59). Stoius first attended the Latin schools of his native city and later, in 1543, financially supported by Duke Albert, began studying at the Wittenberg University (Freitag, 1903, p. 43), enjoying the hospitality of Martin Luther, at whose house, together with other students, he stayed and at whose table he ate. He received his master's degree in Wittenberg on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1546 (Freitag, 1903, p. 18). After a two years' spell back in his hometown, Königsberg, where he enrolled at the local university and became *inspector alumnorum* in 1547, he returned to Wittenberg in 1549 to study medicine and undertake *peregrinatio academica* to universities in Leipzig (enrolled in the winter term 1550/1551) and Nürnberg.<sup>5</sup> On 15<sup>th</sup> June 1552, he became a member of the academic senate at the Faculty of Arts in Wittenberg (Freitag, 1903, p. 19). In the following year, 1553, Stoius accepted the position of *professor extraordinarius* at Königsberg University and left for Italy to finish his medical studies, where he acquired a doctoral degree (most probably in Padua, where he went on the initiative of Duke Albert) (Anselmino, 2003, p. 60).

After his return to Königsberg, he continued lecturing; however, he had to wait for the position of the second *professor ordinarius* of medicine until 1560, after his predecessor in this position, Doctor Andreas Aurifaber (Goldschmidt, ca 1514–1559) (Anselmino, 2003, pp. 41–46), died. Meanwhile, since 1555, Stoius was active as the private physician (*Leibarzt*) of Duke Albert of Hohenzollern (Anselmino, 2003, p. 60) and later also took care of his son, Albert Frederick. Stoius was appointed the first *professor ordinarius* in 1578, after the death of his

<sup>2</sup> Anselmino, 2003, pp. 58–65; Woitkowitz, 2008, *passim*; Herrera, 2014, p. 179; *Acta Borussiae*, 1730, p. 675; Arnoldt, 1746, vol. 1, p. 331; Arnoldt, 1746, vol. 2, pp. 73, 299–300, 307–308, 375; Jöcher, 1751, col. 854; Otter, 1764, pp. 42–44

<sup>3</sup> Kossert, 2008, pp. 51–70; Tondel & Wagner, 2020; Małłek, 2015; Małłek, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> The epitaph of Matthias Stoius Sr., although partly damaged, has been preserved in the outer wall of the Königsberg cathedral to this day. Nineteen hendecasyllabic verses announce to the reader Matthias Stoius Sr. died of “English sweating sickness” (“sudore Britannico”) when the commissioner of the gravestone, his son, was three years old (“Qui raptus puero mihi trienni”). The epitaph itself was carved as late as 1571, perhaps in a time when Matthias Stoius Jr. was rich enough to be able to afford it. (Lilienthal, 1716, pp. 69–70)

<sup>5</sup> Woitkowitz 2008, p. 76, f. n. 70. According to Anselmino (2003, p. 59), the duke Albert of Hohenzollern incited young Stoius during his studies to undertake a journey to Montpellier in order to obtain information and practice skills in apothecary and preparation of medicaments. The journey, however, was never realized, and young Stoius went straight to Italy.

predecessor Simon Titius, and he lectured in geometry, along with medicine, for two years (1578–1579). He was appointed rector of the Königsberg University five times, always in the winter term of the years 1562, 1566, 1570, 1574 and 1578 (Arnoldt, 1746, vol. 2, pp. 98, 99).

Matthias Stoius married Agnes, the daughter of Basilius Axt (1486–1558) (Anselmino, 2003, pp. 29–34), who also served as a personal physician to both Albert of Hohenzollern, and Ave (born von Schönfeld), one of the nine nuns who, being led by Katharina von Bora, fled from Nimbschen under protection of Martin Luther in Wittenberg<sup>6</sup>. Basilius Axt was born in Frankfurt an der Oder, where he also enrolled at the Faculty of Arts at the local university in 1506 and started to study medicine, graduating with his doctor's degree in Wittenberg in 1527, where he made a personal acquaintance with Martin Luther. Basilius Axt worked in the pharmacy of Lucas Cranch the Elder in Wittenberg, where he met his future wife, Ave von Schönfeld, who dwelt in the same house. Martin Luther wrote an intercessory letter to Königsberg theologian Johannes Briesmann in 1531, recommending Axt for the office of the ducal physician. In the same year, Axt was appointed to this position and took his oaths; however, he had to wait for the official confirmation letter until 1548. According to Axt's surviving correspondence, he was subordinate to Andreas Aurifaber.

Matthias Stoius was not only an acknowledged physician, but also a gifted mathematician and astronomer able to compile horoscopes. As typically practiced by and expected from intellectuals in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, he also wrote occasional poetry in Latin. Besides the poems published in print, he composed an epitaph, which was engraved on the tombstone of his father-in-law, Basilius Axt.

Matthias Stoius died in the year 1583, after being promoted to nobility by the emperor Charles V (Anselmino, 2003, p. 60), and was buried in the Königsberg cathedral on the island of Kneiphof. The text of his epitaph in three elegiac couplets, carved at the expense of his sister Catharina, the wife of Balthasar Hartmann and mother of Sebartian Hartmann von Königsheim, brings forward the godly wisdom and knowledge discovered behind the veil of death, which overshadows human science (Lilienthal, 1716, pp. 69–70):

Dum mihi vita fuit, rerum natura decusque  
 Mirantem studiis traxit ad astra suis.  
 Flores decerpsi tantum sapientiae inanes,  
 Et mihi res plene cognita nulla fuit.  
 Nunc coram mundi mysteria cerno, DEique:  
 Idque mihi partum est sanguine Christe tuo.

<sup>6</sup> Katharina von Bora later became the wife of Martin Luther, but, as rumour had it, Luther first intended to marry Ave von Schönfeld (Luther et al., 2006, p. 180, f. n. 4).



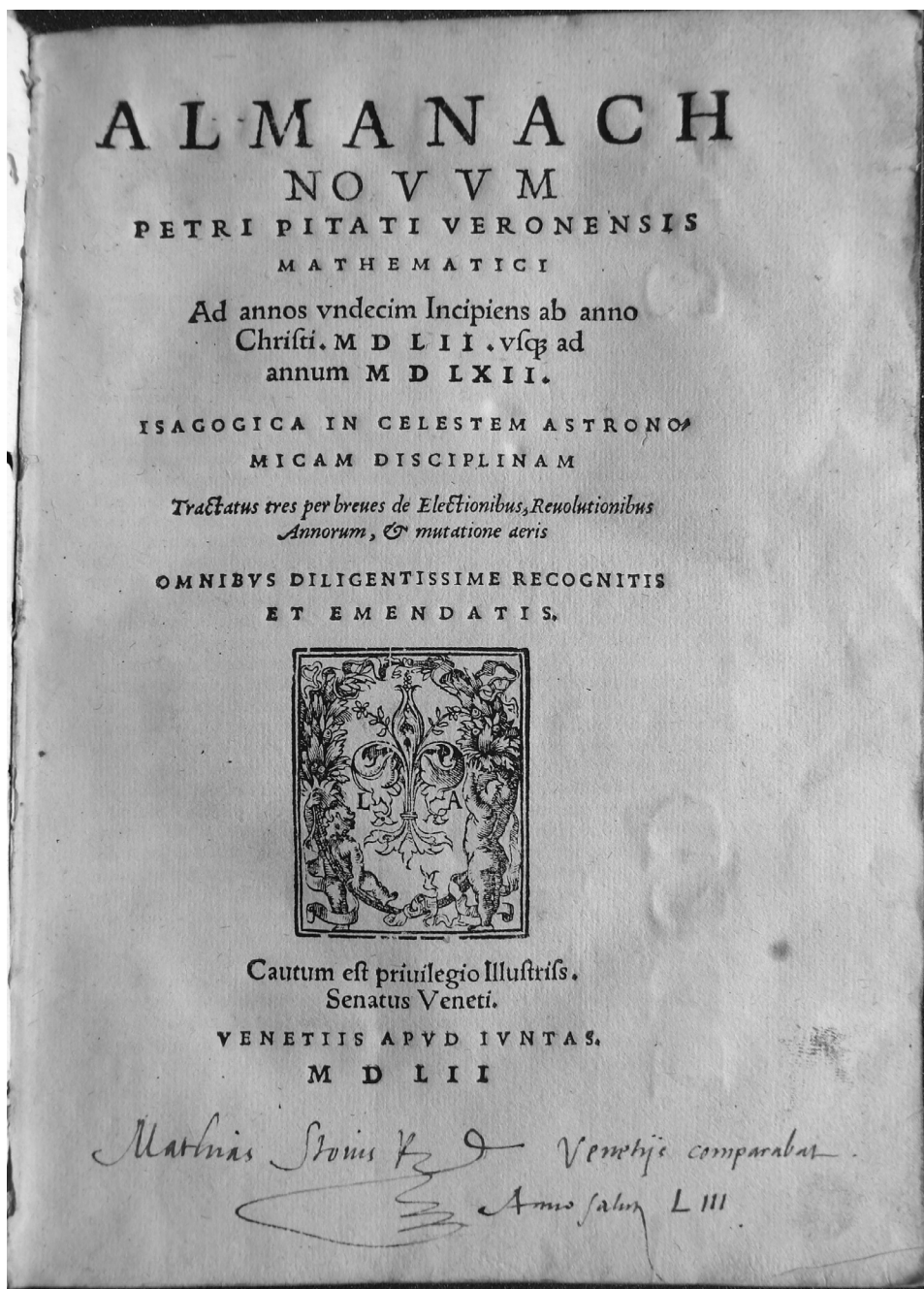


Fig. 1. Title page of *Almanach novum* by Pietro Pitati with possessor's note of Matthias Stoius Jr. In possession of the National Museum Library (Nostitz library). Photo by Richard Šípek

Stoius bought his copy of Pitati's *Almanach novum* in Venice, in its place of publication, a year after its edition.<sup>7</sup> He made a record about his stay in Venice in the *Almanach*, dated 17<sup>th</sup> January 1553, taking note of heavy rains lasting the entire night and following day.<sup>8</sup> It may be assumed that January of 1553 represents the start of his three-year study stay in Italy, which was crowned with a doctor's degree in medicine. After this rather meagre remark, a considerably long time gap exists between the years 1553 and 1557, followed by hardly any record, save for the short lists on the first pages of the years 1552–1555 with names of people who died in the respective years and were either important for Stoius and/or close to him, e. g. Vxor Domini Lutheri, Katharina von Bora, whose death Stoius mentioned on the first page of the year 1552 and who was certainly well known to him as one of the former boarders and diners in Luther's house. Besides Katharina von Bora, other names are mentioned: Wittenberg's Professor of Philology Johann Marcellus, also a native of Königsberg, or Sebastian Münster, Professor of Basel University and author of the famous work *Cosmography* (published in 1544), translated into and published in several languages. Among the names of the deceased in the year 1555 is Sebastian Roth (a professor in Leipzig), whose acquaintance Stoius made during his *peregrinatio academica* in the beginning of the 1550s, who is mentioned as "praeceptor meus carissimus medicus praeclarus."

All the remarks Matthias Stoius left in the *Almanach* can be divided into several groups, according to their content. The most frequent notes concern the weather: humidity, temperature and, especially, winds, appearing in Stoius's notes either under corresponding names of the ancient Greek and Roman gods, e.g. ἀπηνλιώτης, *Vulturmus*, or simply as the northern wind (*ventus septentrionalis*) (Pitati, 1552, April 1558). Although the most frequent, weather records were far from being regular. Stoius apparently had a weakness for cold weather and winds.

Two weather records are also the first daily notes Stoius made in May 1557, after an almost five-year hiatus.<sup>9</sup> Since then, his records again become increasingly frequent up until the end of 1560, apparently following his professional achievements and progress at Königsberg University, as well as in his medical practice. The second most common type of Stoius's notes, dating back to the same period, refers to the financial and in-kind remuneration he most probably received for his educational activity at university. The remuneration mostly consisted of money and wood (either meant as timber or fuel), and were always introduced with the Latin phrase "Decretum est mihi stipendium." The remuneration was to be delivered

<sup>7</sup> Stoius's record on the title page of Pitati's *Almanach*: "Mathias Stoius R[egiomontanus]. Venetiis comparabat. Anno Salutis [MD]LIII."

<sup>8</sup> "Venetiis. Tota nocte [et] sequente die imbres grandes [et] co[n]tinui."

<sup>9</sup> "Fere totus hic me[n]sis siccus erat cu[m] flantibus aq[ui]lonijs ... Ventus occiden[talis] vehemens."

from various places and by various people, as different formulations declare: “in reliquis duabus civitatibus” or a “Kneiphof” or “ab oppidanis circa horam 9.”

The marginal notes commenting on Stoius’s income may have been related to another important event and change in his life. A very simple but clear handwritten remark stands *in margine* of 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November 1557: “Nuptiae,” i.e. Wedding. As previously mentioned, Stoius, at the age of 31, married Agnes, the daughter of the physician Basilius Axt. Agnes’s dowry was more than generous. Basilius Axt handed over his daughter to her bridegroom not only with an appropriate trousseau, but with an endowment of 500 golden coins, and the rights to her mother’s heritage, and Stoius was entitled to inherit Axt’s house and garden and all his laboratory equipment, as well as all medical materials and ingredients stored within. In fact, Stoius had to cope with the heritage claims made after his father-in-law’s death by Ernst, Basilius Axt’s son from a former marriage. The legal dispute was not settled until Stoius’s death. However, Matthias Stoius moved to his father-in-law’s house after his death anyway, and was appointed guardian of Axt’s two under-age sons, Theobald and Albert, from his third marriage (Anselmino, 2003, p. 61).

The word “uxor” (wife) frequently appeared in the marginal notes following the date of Stoius’s wedding. He regularly recorded the date of his wife’s periods for eight months,<sup>10</sup> once, surprisingly, referring at the same time to the period of the duchess.<sup>11</sup> Stoius either awaited his wife’s pregnancy or simply observed her health condition, as a woman’s period was understood in early modern medicine under the influence of Galenic works as a purifying process removing poisons and other harmful substances from the female body, similarly to blood-letting.<sup>12</sup> Only once, on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1558, did Stoius make the remark he had breakfast with his wife.<sup>13</sup>

Stoius’s *alma mater* in Königsberg is mentioned only three times in his *Almanach*. The first record referred to the special privileges granted to the university by Duke Albert on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 1558,<sup>14</sup> which were publicly read aloud eleven days later, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1558, in the presence of the high officials of the city and followed by a ceremonial speech from Andreas Aurifaber, the first professor of medicine at the Königsberg university and personal physician of Duke Albert.<sup>15</sup> The latest marginal remark mentioning the university concerns

<sup>10</sup> “Uxor menstruis laboravit.”

<sup>11</sup> “Uxor laborare menstruis coepit. Et Ducissa similiter.”

<sup>12</sup> Bonnard, Doherty & Cuchet, 2013, p. 27; Rublack, 1996, pp. 93–94.

<sup>13</sup> “Uxori adsto in prandio.”

<sup>14</sup> “Tradita sunt Ab Illustrissimi Principis privilegia Academiae.”

<sup>15</sup> “publice recitata sunt privilegia praesente Domino Cancellario [et] alijs. D. Aurifaber habuit orationem.”

the start of Stoius's lectures on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1560.<sup>16</sup> The death of Andreas Aurifaber (after which Stoius was promoted to *professor ordinarius* of the University of Königsberg) in December 1559 was also recorded in detail in the Almanach; Stoius mentioned not only the exact time of Aurifaber's death, but also the *causa mortis*: apoplexy.<sup>17</sup>

According to the marginal notes in the years 1558 and 1559, Stoius assisted in the annual purification ("purgatio annua") of Duke Albert, which consisted of bloodletting and serving a special purifying potion.<sup>18</sup> Both records refer to March, in accordance with contemporary medical recommendations. The annual purification was thought to relieve the human body of harmful humidity, thus preventing gout (Scholz, 1598, col. 295–297). A few other medications and interventions, such as more bloodletting or the delivery of unspecified "medicamentum purgans", also appear in 1558.<sup>19</sup>

As far as can be judged on the basis of his notes, in November 1559<sup>20</sup> and December 1560,<sup>21</sup> Stoius was most occupied with caring for the Duke's health.

<sup>16</sup> "Inchoavi lectiones meas prima lectio pomeridiana hora 2a..."

<sup>17</sup> "12 Huius mensis D. And[reas]. Aurifaber obiit apoplexia forti quae illum invasit paulo ante quintam horam uespertinam [et] duravit fere ad septimam horam. Eodem die fiebant comitia. et significaverat D. Vergerius q[uo]q[ue] se affuturum eodem die ex Marieburgo."

<sup>18</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> March 1558: "Initium purgationis annuae Illus[trissimi]. Prin[cipis]."

March 1559, under the calendar: "Purgatio Annua Illustris[simi]. P[rincipis]."

6<sup>th</sup> March 1559: "Adhibitum est Enema Illustris[simo] principi no[n] forte."

16<sup>th</sup> March 1559: "Exhibita e[st] prima potio p[rae]para[n]s pro purgatione annua."

24<sup>th</sup> March 1559: "Sub vesperu[m] [et] so[m]nu[m] exhibitae pilulae."

<sup>19</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> June 1558: "purgatio data illus[trissimo] principi... sequenti die clyster..."

11<sup>th</sup> June 1558: "Illustris Princi[ps] venae sectio q[uae] erat exhib[itum] sinistri cruris ad talu[m]."

4<sup>th</sup> September 1558: "Hic nolebam exhibere Illustris[simo]. P[rincipi]. purgans medicamentu[m] cum fere 14 diebus mane [et] vesperi us[us] e[ss]et p[rae]paratus patiens."

<sup>20</sup> November 1559 below the calendar: "15 huius mensis Illustris[simus]. P[rinceps]. usus est manis Myrobatae cond[imentum]. postea exhibuit. E. C. divi Doctor And[reas]: Therianus 32 sudoris gratia ad Balneum – post exhibitum Therianus concessit ut Illustris[simum]: P[rincipem]. in concionem Vogelij iret statim post reditu[m] (erat tunc tempestas austina) in sua[m] Camera[m], coepit vomere [et] subito ita debilitari ut res appareret in principe insolita. Sudabat, vertigo invasit [et] poro... Lypothymia. Die 16. [et] pridie propter... infestante[m] stomate[m] qui iam fluxerat meo consilio exhibebatur Oxymel simpl[ex] de nocte. Mane 16. die exhibebatur drasticum duo propter... eadem die cum vino [?] hora 6 matutina circa [octa]uam vomitus..."

<sup>21</sup> December 1560 below the calendar: "20 Illustris[simus] P[rinceps]. coepit paulo ante prandiu[m] cum mensa[m] assideret infestari dolore capitis. subito prostratis uirtutib[us]: per uomitum, decumbere coepit. 21 Vsus est mane enemate leniente quod bene duxit. 22 summo mane redij ad Illustris[simum] principem quem ualde debilem inueni. Ordinavimus potiss[imas] digestivas quib[us]. seque[n]tib[us] duob[us] dieb[us] usus est / Die natali quieuit / sed 23. [et] 24. p[rae]cedentib[us]: dieb[us]: ita languidus erat pulsu intermittente [et] inordinatissimo ut de uita periculo[m] esset / propter usu[m] Eucharistiae."



The Duke's health troubles involved vomiting and faintness, and Stoius applied an enema and medicine from the Indian tree Myrobalanum (either "Terminalia Bellerica" or "Terminalia chebula") in both years. However, while the faintness in November 1559 was over after two days, the problems a year later seem to have been much more serious, since they lasted for nineteen days and were deemed so dangerous that the Duke received holy communion.

Matthias Stoius once made a note about curing another nobleman, John, the Duke of Mecklenburg (most probably John Albert I, Duke of Mecklenburg, 1525–1576) who visited Albert of Hohenzollern in December 1558. The Duke of Mecklenburg arrived on the 15<sup>th</sup> December and just a day later suffered from colic, which Stoius treated using a purifying remedy ("medicamentum purgans").<sup>22</sup> Matthias Stoius stayed in touch with the Duke of Mecklenburg through letters, which give evidence of Stoius's lasting interest in John Albert's health (1560), represented by the delivery of medicine mixed and prepared specifically for the Duke of Mecklenburg (1568) (Stoius, 1560, 1567).

The Almanach also reflects Stoius's interest in astronomy and astrology.<sup>23</sup> Two of his remarks concern his observation of solar (August 1560)<sup>24</sup> and lunar (January 1562)<sup>25</sup> eclipses, as well as an observation of the comet on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1558 (today referred to as Hesse-Gemma; Carl, 1864, p. 52).<sup>26</sup> Astrological issues also close the book. On the last three unprinted pages and the back paste-down, the ducal physician drew six astrological radices as the starting point for the composition of personal horoscopes.<sup>27</sup> The first of them shows the position of the planets at the moment of Stoius's birth. The second radix concerns his wife Agnes, born Axt; however, her name is written backwards in the radix, as "SENGA."<sup>28</sup> The date of her birth is completed with a note above the drawing referring to the precise date of Agnes's conception, given by her mother, Ave von Schönfeld.<sup>29</sup> The four other radices also concern Stoius's relatives: his father-in-

<sup>22</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> December 1558: "Venit Dux Mekeleburge[nsis]. Ioannes."

<sup>16</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> December 1558: "Incidit dux Ioannes in magnos dolores colicos sequenti die in 7 [et] 8 exhibitu[m] medicamentum purgans."

<sup>23</sup> About his copy of Copernicus's work *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* see Westman (1975, pp. 189–190).

<sup>24</sup> August 1560: "Eclipsis [Sol]lis [!] uisa mihi cum juramentu professo[rum]..."

<sup>25</sup> January 1562 below the calendar but referring to 20<sup>th</sup> January: "Plenilunium Eclipticu[m]."

<sup>26</sup> "Cometam vidi post 9am ut alibi annotavj."

<sup>27</sup> In fact, there is one more unfinished radix which was meant as preparation for the horoscope of Stoius's mother, as it is inscribed with: "Mater mea Caris[sima] nata Anno M D VIII [?] Mense:" The sketched frame right under Stoius's radix, however, is empty.

<sup>28</sup> "SENGA [=AGNES] NATA ANNO SALUTIS 1539 Januarij D[ie] 19. H[ora] 2. M[inuta] 30 A meridie."

<sup>29</sup> "A V E. Anno 1538. 12 Aprilis dixit se concepisse."

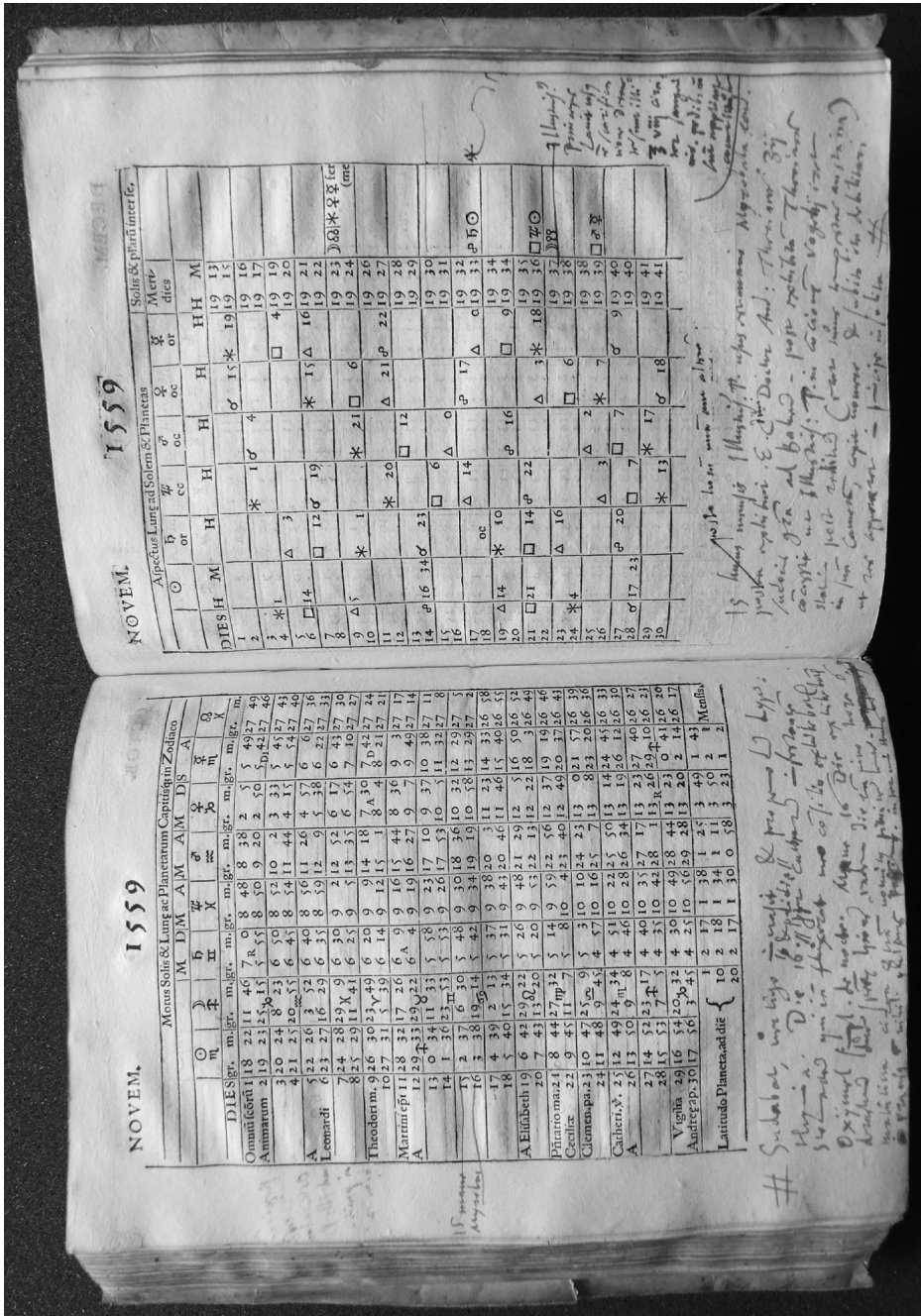


Fig. 3. Stoius's medical records on treatment of the duke Albert of Hohenzollern in November 1559. In possession of the National Museum Library (Nostitz library). Photo by Richard Šípek

law Basilius Axt,<sup>30</sup> his niece Anna,<sup>31</sup> the daughter of his brother-in-law Theobald Axt,<sup>32</sup> Georg Axt—without any further specification, but according to the year of his birth (1552), probably also the child of Theobald Axt<sup>33</sup>—and Johann Axt, also the son of Stoius’s brother-in-law Theobald.<sup>34</sup>

After a considerably long hiatus, we find traces of Stoius’s later medical records on the health and general physical condition of Albert Duke of Prussia in his report about Duke’s last days, death and burial, which was twice published in print,<sup>35</sup> and its text was certainly based on records similar to those in Pitati’s *Almanach*. After an obligatory and habitual eulogy on the Duke’s noble character and his friendly composition, as well as other virtues, which are all compared and related to the form and condition of the Duke’s inner organs,<sup>36</sup> Stoius mentions the most important health problems tormenting Albert of Hohenzollern towards the end of his life. Besides stones (probably kidney stones),<sup>37</sup> the Duke suffered from an ulcer on his left leg.<sup>38</sup> Interestingly enough, Stoius declares himself not guilty of complications in the treatment of the leg ulcer and accuses a nameless wandering physician who allegedly arrived from Strassburg.<sup>39</sup> Another remark is made

<sup>30</sup> “Doctoris Basilij Axt. B. M. soceri mei 1487. C[a]L[endas] Februa[r]ij mane exorto [Sole] ¼ post [septi]mam.”

<sup>31</sup> “Anna filia Theobaldi nata M D LIX quarta hora pomerid[iana]: diei ult[imae] Janua[r]ij.”

<sup>32</sup> Theobald studied theology in Wittenberg and later was active in Elbing (Anselmino, 2003, pp. 33–34).

<sup>33</sup> “Georgi[us] Axt Natus A[nn]o 1552 Martij xxij summo mane inter [...].”

<sup>34</sup> “Iohannes Axt Theobaldi filius. A[nn]o 1556 – 26 Janua[r]ij Mane 8.”

<sup>35</sup> First time as *Oratio in parentalibus anniversariis factis divo Alberto Marchioni Brandenburgensi et I. duci Borussiae etc. XX. Martij Anno M.D.LXIX. habita a v[ir]o cl[ar]o Matthia Stoi d[oc]tore* in the collection of texts concerning life and death of Albert of Hohenzollern edited by David Voit (Voit, 1572, pp. D3b–F2a) and second time as *D[oc]toris Matthiae Stoji Journal, über Marggraff Albrechts Kranckheit und Todt in the first part of Acta Borussica ecclesiastica, civilia, litteraria (Acta Borussica, 1730, pp. 675–707)*.

<sup>36</sup> “Hepar propemodum temperatum, modice tamen ad caliditatem [et] humiditatem declinans. Nam venae satis amplae, molliusculae, sanguinis[ue] copia erat ... Et quod raro observatur, ante paucos annos, talis adhuc erat pulsus, ut hominum multorum aetate longe minimorum [et] corporis robore praestantissimorum tonum superaret.” (Voit, 1572, p. D5a)

<sup>37</sup> “Calculus sibi, iam senex, incommodiore potu cibus[ue], quibus delectari solebat, accersuit.” (Voit, 1572, p. D5b)

<sup>38</sup> “[MD]LXII. cum equo veheretur aestiuo tempore, vlcusculum in sinistro crure ex attritione subortum est, quod Chirurgorum importuna tractatione vsuq[ue] aerium [et] causticorum ita fuit exacerbatum, vt persanari propter intemperiem [et] effluxum humorum diu non potuerit.” (Voit, 1572, p. D6a)

<sup>39</sup> “Cum forte fortuna magno nostro malo circumforaneus quidam Medicus agyrta huc aduolans Argentorato, nescio quorum commendatione Illustrissimo Principi innotuit, eoq[ue] rem deduxit, vt vlcus quod curandum illi committebatur loco incommodissimo circa malleolum interiorem, apertum seruari oportuerit propter effluxiones veheme[n]tius irruentes eoq[ue] decumbentes, Hinc continuo propemodum afflicta fuit valetudo...” (Voit, 1572, p. D6a) Quite recent report on the fes-



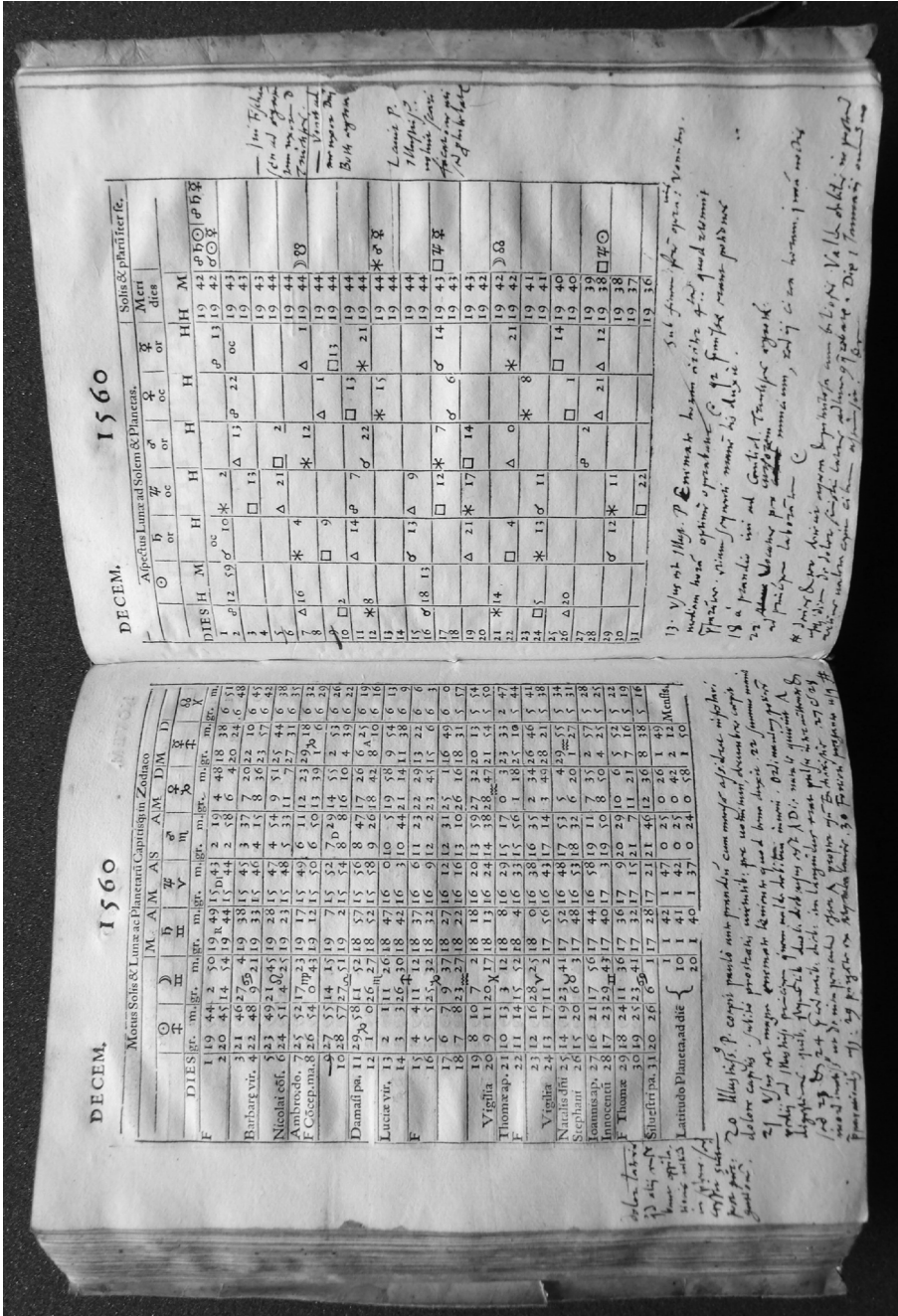


Fig. 4. Stoius's medical records on treatment of the duke Albert of Hohenzollern in December 1559. In possession of the National Museum Library (Nostitz library). Photo by Richard Šípek

about the apoplexy Albert was stricken down with during a military conflict with the Duke Eric II of Brunswick-Lüneburg (1528–1584) in 1563. The upper left side of Albert's body was partly paralysed, but according to Stoius, he recovered considerably fast, with persisting speech difficulties.<sup>40</sup> Albert of Prussia caught a cold during winter hunting in the beginning of 1565. His severe cough lasted several weeks and apparently badly influenced the Duke's health.<sup>41</sup> Concerning treatment, Stoius again blamed anonymous deceivers, who allegedly used strong diuretics prepared from the powder of Trithemius (*pulvis Trithemii*),<sup>42</sup> which again had a harmful impact on Albert's health and caused him serious problems with urinary incontinence.<sup>43</sup> The overview of all the ducal diseases and events ought to be understood as Hohenzollern's general medical anamnesis, a report on his physical condition in his last days, as well as Stoius's effort to defend himself against the possible accusation of medical malpractice.

The Duke's arrival in Tapiau (today Gvardeysk) on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1567<sup>44</sup> marked the last period of his life, although its climate seemed to have had a positive impact on his health, at least during the first six months. On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1568, after dinner, his worsening health condition was observed,<sup>45</sup> ending with his death seventeen days later on 20<sup>th</sup> March. However, Stoius dates the start of the end back to 26<sup>th</sup> February, when Duke Albert undertook a short journey in a sledge

---

tering ulcer on the duke's leg wrote Stoius already in 1563 referring also about arguments among the ducal physicians concerning the cure (Anselmino, 2003, pp. 62–63). Another report on the same affair was written by Stoius's colleague in the medical service to Albert of Hohenzollern Valerius Fidler (1525–1595) (Anselmino, 2003, p. 68).

<sup>40</sup> “Hac perturbatione Senex tum laboribus, [et] odiosis quibusdam tractatibus, qui in idem incidebant, fractus in ἡμιπληγίαν [et] paralyisin incidit. qua superiores partes sinistri lateris resolutae sunt. Sed DEI beneficio ita restitutus fuit, vt exigua saltem in sermone ex minus articulata pronunciatione difficultas obseruaretur. reliqua integritati restituerentur.” (Voit, 1572, p. D6b) See also Tondel & Wagner (2020, p. 80).

<sup>41</sup> “Obambulans enim maxima diei parte in niuibus, cibo potuq[ue] frigidioribus post exercitia illa, nimis pro ea aetate violenta vtebatur. Vnde tussim grauissimam sibi concitauit aliquot septimanas durantem, non sine metu grauiorum Symptomatum.” (Voit, 1572, p. D6b)

<sup>42</sup> The powder was prepared from fragrant herbs and spices, ground red coral and other ingredients (Waite, 1888, pp. 156–157).

<sup>43</sup> “Imo [et] importunissimo quorundam diureticorum vsu (quemadmodum ex puluere Trithemij, quem πανάκειαν quidam adhibuit) ita manifeste offensus est, vt omnis vis καθεκτική τῶν οὐριτικῶν μορίῳ exolueretur.”

<sup>44</sup> “XXII die Septembris Tapiam vna cum comitibus itineris saluus [et] in columis Princeps Illustrissimus caelo sudo [et] mitiore peruenit.” (Voit, 1572, p. E1b)

<sup>45</sup> “Tertia die Martij, Anni M. D. LXVIII. cum coena apparatus esset in cubiculo, non recte habere visus est aliquid cibi tamen degustauit saepius inuitatus, sed paulo post eundem cum lenta pituita vomitu reiecit: Cumq[ue] in lectum se reponi mandasset, rigor superuenit, breuis ille quidem, sed cum insigni pulsus mutatione, ac totius corporis ac mentis quoq[ue] perturbatione. Pulsus vero non solum inaequalis, sed [et] intermittens erat.” (Voit, 1572, pp. E1b–E2a)

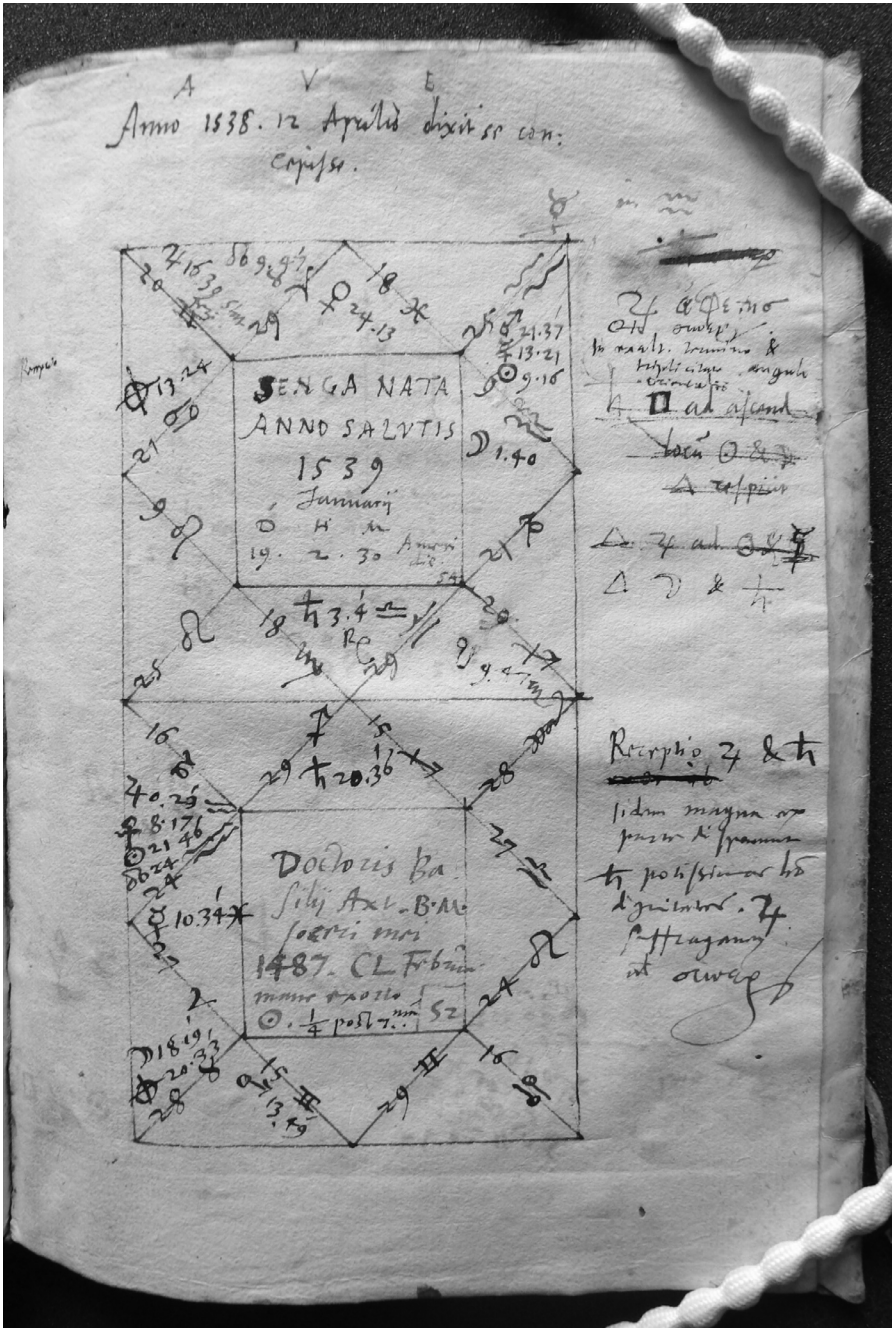


Fig. 5. Horoscopes (radices) of Agnes Stoius, born Axt, and her father Basilus Axt by the hand of Matthias Stoius. In possession of the National Museum Library (Nostitz library).

Photo by Richard Šípek

to a close sheepfold, during which he caught a cold.<sup>46</sup> In the following days, Albert's severe cough was not only followed by blood spewing, which strongly affected the Duke's health, but also by a relapse of the festering ulcer on his left leg<sup>47</sup> and stomach upset. Stoius refers to and describes in detail the development of the Duke's disease every day and every night, painstakingly recording every meal, all sorts of treatment and every dosage of medicine delivered to Duke Albert. It was mostly broth with a mitigating remedy,<sup>48</sup> and bread dipped in wine or clyster. Stoius also carefully recorded everything pronounced by the Duke, whether as a prayer, lamentation or reproach to servants.<sup>49</sup> After the Duke's death,<sup>50</sup> where Stoius enumerates all the people present at the deathbed,<sup>51</sup> the Duke's physician paid attention to two events which immediately concerned the dead body: making a death mask<sup>52</sup> and removing the internal organs from the Duke's body with a detailed description of each of them.<sup>53</sup> Funeral ceremonies, the procession and burial form the end of the account of the last days of Albert of Hohenzollern, the Duke of Prussia.

<sup>46</sup> "Cumque in villam proximam ad ouilia se deuehi mandasset, difficulter eo perductus est, quod iam ferre cum aerem frigidiorum, tum succussionem illam, quamvis exiguam, propter desuetudinem non posset. ... Sic in arce[m] regressis omnibus videbatur valde defatigatus ex itinere Princeps, Ideo priusquam coena pararetur, in lectulo quiescens parumper dormiuit." (Voit, 1572, p. E3a)

<sup>47</sup> "Ab eo Paroxysmo Erysipelas φλεγμονοδες apparere coepit in pede sinistro in quo vlcus apertum seruabatur circa malleolos, maxime vero interiorem, qui tumor ea nocte [et] postridie pedij regionem, calcaneum totamq[ue] plantam occupauit." (Voit, 1572, p. E4b)

<sup>48</sup> "Postridie exhibitum est medicamentum, aluum leniens in iusculo..." (Voit, 1572, p. E3b)

<sup>49</sup> "Erat Paroxysmi illius εἰσβολή omnino similis pridiana calore ad nocte usq[ue] perseuera[n]te, in quo varia obmurmurabat, sed frequenter, Adiuua me DEVS, adiuua, da mihi Spiritum sanctum tuum. Reliqua indistincta, sed precum forma." (Voit, 1572, p. E4b)

"Ac repetijt: Liberate me. Mox quis dies esset interrogabat, an Veneris, Criticum, nescius etiam notans. Cum responsum esset, crastina Veneris erit, nihil amplius adiecit." (Voit, 1572, p. E6b)

<sup>50</sup> "Cumq[ue] immineret hora VI. horologium (quod praecedentibus diebus aliquot nullum campanulae signum ediderat) vno ictu vitae terminum quasi significauit. Itaq[ue] subducto paululus [!] ceruicali, vt decubitus aliquanto supinior esset, velut singultando ex longiore interuallo terue quaterue anhelum spiritu[m] ducens, expirauit." (Voit, 1572, pp. E7a–E7b)

<sup>51</sup> "Aderant placide expiranti animam, qui omnium horum testes fide dignissimi esse possunt: D. Doctor Daud Voitus, Theologus, D. Cancellarius, D. Achatius [et] Abrahamus Burgrauij a Dohn, Nobilis Bernhardus Ludolphus a Schulenburg, VVilhelmus Tusel, Cleophas a Canitz, omnes Camerarij Principis Illustrissimi: D. Matthias Stoius Medicus, duo pueri Nobiles, Caspar Ripp, [et] Ludouicus Rauther, duo pumilij Christophorus [et] Casimirus." (Voit, 1572, p. E7b)

<sup>52</sup> "Postridie cum iam compositum esset cadaver, pictor adueniens gypso facie[m] [et] totum caput vsq[ue] ad humeros expressum diligentissime formauit [et] expressit, quod scalptum marmore pro Epitaphio spectabitur." (Voit, 1572, p. E7b)

<sup>53</sup> "Circa horam secundam pomeridianam corpus exenterari et condiri a Medicis coepit, asta[n]tibus Camerarijs et alijs quibusdam. Erant autem viscera omnia integra et incorrupta, nec vsq[ue]. adeo foetore molesta."

The handwritten daily records of Matthias Stoius, though irregular and concerning a rather short timespan in his professional life, offer an interesting insight into the beginning of a promising career of a significant personality who later played an important role in the history of the recently founded Königsberg University. Thanks to his activity as the personal physician of the first Duke of Prussia, his records partly unveil everyday aspects of his care for the Duke's health and physical condition. Unfortunately, as already mentioned, the *Almanach* only covers a few years of its owner's life, and although we may find traces of Stoius's later records about the physical condition and death of his most significant patient, we still lack information on his private and academic life.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, we may only hope that one day, somewhere in the forgotten dusty corner of an old library hall, a few other volumes of an astronomical calendar will be found, and in them will be the rest of Stoius's life, reduced to his partly illegible marginal notes.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acta Borussica ecclesiastica, civilia, literaria oder sorgfältige Sammlung allerhand zur Geschichte des Landes Preussen gehöriger Nachrichten, Uhrkunden, Schriften und Documenten. Erstes Stück.* (1730). Königsberg und Leipzig: bey Christoph Gottfried Eckart.
- Anselmino, T. (2003). *Medizin und Pharmazie am Hofe Herzog Albrechts von Preußen (1490–1568)*. Palatina Verlag.
- Arnoldt, D.H. (1746). *D. Daniel Heinrich Arnoldts ausführliche und mit Urkunden versehene Historie der Königsbergischen Universität: Erster und zweiter Theil*. Johann Heinrich Hartung.
- Bonnard, J., Doherty, L., & Cuchet, V. (2013). Male and Female Bodies According to Ancient Greek Physicians. *Clio. Women, Gender, History*, 37, 19–37.
- Carl, P. (1864). *Repertorium der Cometen-Astronomie*. M. Rieger'sche Universitaets-Buchhandlung.
- Chapman, A. (2007). Marking Time: Astrology, Almanacs, and English Protestantism. *Renaissance Quarterly*, 60(4), 1257–1290.
- Freytag, H. (1903). *Die Preussen auf der Universität Wittenberg und die nichtpreussischen Schüler Wittenbergs in Preussen von 1502 bis 1602: eine Festgabe zur vierhundertjährigen Gedächtnisfeier der Gründung der Universität Wittenberg*. Duncker & Humblot.
- Garber, K. (2018). *Mare Balticum: Studien zur Kultur- und Bibliotheksgeschichte des Ostseeraums. Herausgegeben und mit einem einleitenden Vorwort versehen von Martin Klöker*. LIT Verlag Dr. W. Hof.
- Herrera, G. (2014). Tradición y originalidad en la "In Aphtonii Sophistae Progymnasmata commentatio" de Burchardus Harbart. *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, 63, 179–195.
- Jackson, H.J. (2001). *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books*. Yale University Press.
- Jöcher, C.G. (1751). *Allgemeines Gelehrten-Lexicon...: Viertel Theil S-Z*. Johann Friedrich Gleditsch.
- Komorowski, M., Walter, A.E., & Garber, K. (2001). *Kulturgeschichte Ostpreussens in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Max Niemeyer Verlag.
- Kossert, A. (2008). *Ostpreussen: Geschichte und Mythos* (Zweite Auflage). Pantheon.

<sup>54</sup> Besides the archival documents kept in the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz. For the reference list, see Anselmino (2003, pp. 326–327).

- Lilienthal, M. (1716). *Historische Beschreibung Des Thums, Oder der Cathedral-Kirchen, der Stadt Kneiphoff-Königsberg*. Reußner.
- Luther, M., Smith, P., & Jacob, C.M. (2006). *Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters: Volume II — 1521–1530*. Wipf & Stock.
- Małłek, J. (2015). *Dwie części Prus: studia z dziejów Prus Książęcych i Prus Królewskich w XVI i XVII wieku*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika.
- Małłek, J. (2016). *Prusy Książęce a Prusy Królewskie w latach 1525–1548 studium z dziejów polskiej polityki księcia Albrechta Hohenzollerna*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika.
- Otter, C. (1764). *Lebens-Beschreibungen derer verstorbenen Preußischen Mathematiker: überhaupt und des vor mehr denn hundert Jahren verstorbenen großen Preußischen Mathematikers P. Christian Otters insbesondere*. Joh. Heinrich Hartungs Erben und J.D. Zeise.
- Pitati, P. (1552). *Almanach novum Petri Pitati Veronensis mathematici, ad annos undecim: incipiens ab anno Christi 1552. usque ad annum 1562. Isagogica in coelestem astronomicam disciplinam Tractatus tres per breues de electionibus, reuolutionibus annorum, [et] mutatione aeris omnibus diligentissime recognitis et emendatis*. Apud Iuntas.
- Rublack, U. (1996). Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Female Body in Early Modern Germany. *Past & Present*, 150, 84–110.
- Ryantová, M. (2007). *Památníky aneb štambuchy, to jest alba amicorum: Kulturně historický fenomén raného novověku*. Historický Ústav Jihočeské university.
- Scholz, L. (1598). *Consiliorum medicinalium conscriptorum a praestantiss[imis] atque exercitiss[imis] nostrorum temporum medicis ...* Apud Andreae Wecheli haeredes, Claudium Maronium, et Ioan[nem]. Aubrium.
- Sherman, H. (2008). *Used Books: Marking Readers in Reinassance England*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Šípek, R. (2015). *Die Jauerer Schlossbibliothek Ottos des Jüngeren von Nostitz: Teil 1 und Teil 2*. Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften.
- Šípek, R. (2012). Knihovny raně novověkých lékařů ve fondu Nostické knihovny v Praze. *Sborník Národního muzea v Praze: Řada C, Literární historie*, 57(1–2), 23–39.
- Šípek, R. (2005). Pražská majorátní knihovna hrabat z Nostic a Rienecka. *Zprávy památkové péče*, 65(1), 28–33.
- Stoius, M. (1560, 1567). *Matthias Stoius an Johann Albrecht I. Herzog von Mecklenburg, Königsberg 1560, 1567* [online]. Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin, Commerc. litt. inter duc. Joh. Albertum I. et Eruditos. Matthias Stoius (2 Briefe 1560, 1567). [https://www.digitale-bibliothek-mv.de/viewer/image/PPNLHAS\\_2\\_12-1\\_24Nr187/1](https://www.digitale-bibliothek-mv.de/viewer/image/PPNLHAS_2_12-1_24Nr187/1)
- Tondel, J. (1998). *Eruditio et prudentia: die Schlossbibliothek Herzog Albrechts von Preussen: die Schloßbibliothek Herzog Albrechts von Preußen. Bestandskatalog 1540–1548*. Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Tondel, J., & Wagner, A. (2020). *Silver Library of Duke Albrecht of Prussia and His Wife Anna Maria*. Lit Verlag.
- Voit, D. (1572). *Libellus continens orationes quasdam de vita, pia et constanti confessione et obitu illustrissimi et inclyti herois divi Alberti senioris, marchionis Brandenburgensis, primi ducis Borussiae*. Johann Schwertel.
- Waite, A.E. (1888). *The Magical Writings of Thomas Vaughan*. George Redway.
- Walter, A.E. (2004). *Königsberger Buch- und Bibliotheksgeschichte: [Beiträge des vom 15. bis 17. Oktober 1999 an der Universität Osnabrück veranstalteten Internationalen Symposions zur Königsberger Buch- und Bibliotheksgeschichte]*. Böhlau.

- Westman, R. (1975). The Melanchthon Circle, Rheticus, and the Wittenberg Interpretation of the Copernican Theory. *Isis*, 66(2), 165–193.
- Woitkowitz, T. (2008). Der Landvermesser, Kartograph, Astronom und Mechaniker Johannes Humelius (1518–1562) und die Leipziger Universität um die Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts. *Sudhoffs Archiv*, 92(1), 65–97.

RICHARD ŠÍPEK

## DIARY NOTES OF MATTHIAS STOIUS IN *ALMANACH NOVUM* (1552–1562)

### Summary

Prague Nostitz Library hides among its 14 000 books 60 volumes from the library fragment once belonging to Matthias Stoius Jr (1526–1583), the personal physician of the first Duke of Prussia Albert of Hohenzollern. The most interesting volume from the Stoius's heritage is a copy of an astronomical calendar *Almanach novum* by Pietro Pitati used by Stoius as a diary containing his handwritten notes and comments about weather, income, his activity at the Königsberg University and, the most importantly, his medical records concerning the health condition and problems of his noble patient Albert of Hohenzollern. Stoius also took detailed notes about medicaments he delivered to the ill Duke as well as about treatments he applied especially in November 1559 and December 1560 when the physical condition of the duke of Prussia apparently worsened. In 1572, Stoius published in print his report about the last days of Duke Albert and although the handwritten sources on which the report is based are missing they were presumably recorded in the similar diaries.

**KEY WORDS:** early modern medicine, early modern physicians, Matthias Stoius, Albert of Hohenzollern, Prussia, Königsberg