

Durham Research Online

Deposited in DRO:

04 December 2015

Version of attached file:

Accepted Version

Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

Citation for published item:

Scales, L. E. (2007) 'Bread, cheese and genocide : imagining the destruction of peoples in medieval western Europe.', *History*, 92 (307). pp. 284-300.

Further information on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-229X.2007.00396.x>

Publisher's copyright statement:

This is the accepted version of the following article: Scales, L. (2007), Bread, Cheese and Genocide: Imagining the Destruction of Peoples in Medieval Western Europe. *History*, 92(307): 284-300, which has been published in final form at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-229X.2007.00396.x>. This article may be used for non-commercial purposes in accordance With Wiley Terms and Conditions for self-archiving

Additional information:

Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in DRO
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full DRO policy](#) for further details.

Bread, Cheese and Genocide: Imagining the Destruction of Peoples in Medieval Western Europe

LEN SCALES

University of Durham

Abstract

Western European society in the Middle Ages is generally perceived as lying, in its modes of thought and action, far remote from those acts of mass ethnic destruction which have been a recurrent element in world history since the early twentieth century. Yet medieval Europeans too were capable of envisaging the violent obliteration of peoples. Indeed, the view that such acts had occurred in times past and were liable to occur again was deeply embedded in medieval thought and assumption. For some commentators, the destruction of certain peoples was inseparable from the making of others, an essential motor of historical change, underpinned by biblical narratives of divine election and condemnation. Such notions constituted a matrix within which medieval writers interpreted real acts of social and political violence, the scale and the ethnic foundations of which they were thus naturally inclined to inflate. Nevertheless, their belief in the recurrent historical reality of ethnic destruction was, in their own terms, well founded – although medieval conceptions of what constituted the undoing of peoples were broader than most modern definitions of ‘genocide’. By the later Middle Ages, moreover, government was increasingly perceived – not without justification – as a powerful agent for re-making the ethnic map.

‘And many Flemings lost their heads at that time, and namely those who could not say Bread and Cheese, but Case and Brode.’¹ The words are those of a London chronicler from the fifteenth century, looking back on ‘the rising of the commons of England against the lords’, in June 1381. And that, apart from a couple of cursory jottings, was that: it was the slaughter of the ‘Flemings’ that, for this particular writer, seemed with hindsight especially to stand out among those tumultuous happenings.² He was in good company. Geoffrey Chaucer, in the hunting scene in the *Nun’s Priest’s Tale*, declares that ‘Jakke Straw and his meynee, Ne made nevere shoutes half so shrille, Whan that they wolden any Flemyng kille’. It is the only specific reference to the rising that Chaucer makes.³ The inter-ethnic violence is recounted more fully in the Latin chronicles which preserve most of the detailed information about

events in London.⁴ ‘For you could see heaps of dead bodies and corpses lying in the squares and other places’, wrote the Monk of Westminster. ‘And so they spent the day, thinking only of the massacre of the Flemings.’⁵

Modern historians of 1381 have thought (or at any rate written) about it somewhat less avidly. In an authoritative collection of essays on the rising, published in 1984, the attack on the Flemings earns precisely one sentence.⁶ Liberal academic distaste doubtless plays a part, in that the socially-progressive elements in fourteenth-century English life are scarcely expected to be caught indulging in acts of ethnic cleansing. When they do, their actions appear, in the words of Steven Justice, ‘the most disreputable of the rebellion’.⁷ The slaughter of the Flemings has also perhaps seemed to modern eyes beyond the pale in a more fundamental way: it does not fit easily into accustomed frameworks for *understanding* pre-modern social disorder. Butchering home-grown lawyers and bureaucrats appears natural and explicable enough; killing foreign merchants and artisans another matter entirely. That, at least, is what must be concluded from the rather baffled tone in which those historians who have considered the incident tend to refer to it.⁸ Medieval reporters are not, it is true, much more forthcoming as to why the massacre happened. The explanation in their case, however, probably lies less with modern-style incomprehension than its opposite: an assumption that the slaughter of aliens did not *need* much explaining, but was self-evidently what was likely to occur when ‘the commons of England’ – or their counterparts in other realms – were allowed to have their will.⁹ In the febrile political climate of the late medieval town, attacks on groups of privileged and unpopular foreigners were a more frequent occurrence than the fragmentary and scattered scholarly literature on the subject might lead readers initially to suppose.¹⁰

Tales of inter-ethnic bloodshed were woven into the basic stuff of medieval thought and assumption to a degree which modern scholarship has been apt to overlook. For just that reason they need to be handled with caution, since they were the kind of tales which grew in the telling, fitting themselves to established patterns, projecting clear-cut ethnic purges onto outbreaks of violence which must often have been both more limited in scope and more complex in character.¹¹ In the case of the ‘Flemings’, the language test which supposedly sealed their fate – the most distinctively ethnic element in accounts of their destruction – is mentioned by just a single, late chronicler.¹² The motif of unpopular outsiders being unmasked and killed after stumbling over tricky native words is encountered repeatedly in historical writings from various corners of medieval Europe.¹³ Often, the words themselves – ‘bread and cheese’ or, in Bruges in 1302, ‘shield and friend’ – seem deliberately to evoke precisely the sorts of taken-for-granted solidarities or everyday domestic artefacts which distinguish the natural and known from the artificial and foreign.¹⁴ They are ‘us’ words. When a revolt among the Germans of Kraków was suppressed in 1312, it is reported that all lost their lives who could not pronounce the Polish names for several comparably homely objects: lentil, wheel, mill. Again, the source is of a later date.¹⁵ The biblical precedent, in the Book of Judges, of the Gileadites forcing the Ephraimites to say ‘shibboleth’, comes to mind, and was probably in the minds of medieval historiographers too.¹⁶ It is likely, then, that at least some such accounts were inspired less by the reputed course of events than by the authoritative, ancient prototypes which were available for recounting acts of inter-ethnic slaughter such as was assumed must have taken place.

Medieval writers seem to have found such happenings all too readily imaginable, even when the known facts may have been few and far between. The killing, on St Brice’s day 1002, of ‘all the Danish men in England’ (as the *Anglo Saxon Chronicle* put it) is a case in point. The earliest records of the event – a brief note in the *Chronicle*, and incidental remarks

in an interpolated charter of Æthelred II – are scanty in the extreme.¹⁷ They offer few reliable clues to the gravity or extent of what Æthelred’s charter termed ‘a most just extermination’. Historians have been inclined, surely with good reason, to play it down.¹⁸ Later chroniclers, however, showed less restraint. William of Jumièges, writing more than half a century after the event, conjured up a nightmare vision of innocent children dashed against doorposts, while their mothers’ breasts were torn off by fierce dogs.¹⁹ If aspects of William’s imagery seem to recall those vigorous portrayals of the Massacre of the Innocents which were such a staple of medieval religious art, then that should at least call to mind just how accessible and familiar images of systematic and ‘total’ mass killing would have been to a learned – and potentially even a non-learned – medieval public.²⁰ The terrible will of the ruler, of which Herod’s bloodbath stood as an archetypal reminder, was readily lent an ethnic colouring in medieval myth-making. The Merovingian Dagobert thus became, in a vernacular history from late medieval Strasbourg, ‘a fearsome and mighty king’ who had ‘conquered the Saxons and killed all boys who were longer than his sword’.²¹

The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, drawn up in 1948, makes reference to ‘acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group’.²² On this definition, it seems at best uncertain whether the bloody deeds so far encountered (except, no doubt, Dagobert’s) would qualify as genocidal. Even when inflated by the imaginations of subsequent reporters, they remained on the whole distinctly limited acts of killing, firmly rooted in the specificities of time, place and particular circumstances.²³ Theorists of modern genocide have readily conceded that instances of extreme ethnic destruction are to be met with from time to time in pre-modern societies too (the fate of the native American peoples is often mentioned), while still, on the whole, insisting that genocide in its fullest sense is a phenomenon no older than the twentieth century.²⁴ It is bound up, suggests Omer Bartov, with ‘the emergence of the

nation-state in Europe and the spread of European empires across the world'.²⁵ The bureaucratic state, colonialism, popular mass mobilisation, and new, more discriminatory ideas about race and nationality: these, it has been argued, are some of the key elements underlying modern genocidal mentalities.²⁶

The capacity of *medieval* government violently to re-fashion peoplehood may have been greater than such perspectives allow. Before considering this question, however, attention must first be given to the conceptual and ideological roots of genocide. Are these really as quintessentially modern as is often claimed? The propensity of medieval writers to expand fleeting or obscure acts of local violence to fill a larger, more avowedly 'ethnic' frame has already been encountered. Yet, when more general utterances on the subject are examined, the tone becomes still more unnervingly familiar. A Welsh chronicler claimed under the year 1114 that Henry I and his henchmen planned 'to exterminate [the Welsh] completely or to drive them into the sea, so that the Britannic name should never more be mentioned'.²⁷ In England, in the thirteenth century, supporters of Simon de Montfort suggested that the foreigners around the king intended 'to blot out the name of the English'.²⁸ Things appear hardly less perilous at Latin Europe's opposite extremity. According to a Polish chronicle from the fourteenth century, Germans close to the princes of Glogów had urged them to exterminate the entire Polish people, especially its spiritual and secular elites.²⁹ In 1307 the bishop of Kraków, to his enemies another German partisan, was accused by one of his clergy of having stated that, were he to fail in his aim of eliminating the Polish people, he would rather die than live.³⁰ In annals from the same city, meanwhile, it was claimed that the Teutonic Knights had in mind to 'exterminate the Polish language'.³¹ This was around the time that Edward I of England was informing his subjects that his French enemies proposed to wipe out the English language.³² The charge was to be repeated nearly two hundred years later by Edward IV, who accused his Lancastrian enemies of joining with the French, the

Scots, and other foreign foes 'to destroye uttarily the people, the name, the tonge and all the bloud englyshe of this owr sayd Realme'.³³

Exterminare, eliminare: the terminology seems starkly unambiguous. Remarks such as these are not especially rare or anomalous in medieval writings and it would be easy to add to them. Taken at face value, they seem to attest patterns of thought which not only understood political organisation in fundamentally ethnic terms, but which viewed political strife as a process of inter-ethnic competition, in which only the fittest survived, with the annihilation of entire peoples the price of defeat. Matters are not, however, quite so clear-cut. As Rees Davies showed, in his magisterial studies of the peoples of medieval Britain, the language of ethnic destruction could in fact bear meanings more complex than may appear at first sight.³⁴ A people might be undone in other ways than by slaughter or expulsion. Henry of Huntingdon's famous verdict on the Norman Conquest was that God had dealt the English their just deserts, commanding that they should no longer exist as a people.³⁵ Loss, not of life or homeland, but of power and independence therefore lay at the heart of this act of divinely-sanctioned extermination. A comparable way of thinking underlies the claim, enunciated in a short political tract from the mid-fourteenth century, that a Plantagenet succession to the Scottish throne must result in the 'destruction, eradication and total extermination' of the Scottish people.³⁶ Nations or peoples were conceived in the Middle Ages as quintessentially political communities; changes in the political landscape thus threatened automatically to affect the standing, indeed the very existence, of imagined ethnic groups.³⁷

Even adjustments to the administrative geography of the Catholic Church might, when combined with more extensive social and political movements, invoke for some the shadow of ethnic obliteration. Jakub Świnka, metropolitan of the Polish see of Gniezno, drew up in January 1285 a vehement protest addressed to several Roman cardinals, denouncing recent

alterations to the provincial boundaries of the Franciscan order in the east, which had seen most of Silesia incorporated into the order's Saxon province.³⁸ Viewed in light of the contemporary influx of German-speaking settlers into western Poland (the broader consequences of which Świnka likewise condemned), terminological shifts might, as he insisted, foreshadow and sanction larger, more sinister transformations. Unless such novelties were annulled, therefore, and 'the land of Poland, ... be regarded, as before, as Poland and not Saxony', 'we will be forced to lament with trembling voices the extermination of our people as well as the evident peril of our churches'.³⁹ Names, language, laws and customs; these were elements which, for medieval observers, constituted the unity of the political and the ethnic community: the obliteration of any one of them as a result of political or even administrative change might thus constitute in itself a form of genocide.

Some characteristic patterns of assumption and argument are revealed in a manifesto issued in 1324 in the name of the Ludwig IV, the German ruler of the western Roman Empire.⁴⁰ Pope John XXII had declared Ludwig excommunicate and his election null and void, and had laid claim to administer the Empire's lands during its vacancy. The pope, fulminated Ludwig, was a malicious subvertor of canons and a violator of rights and customs, who intended totally to exterminate the holy Empire, its liberty and dignity, and also to exterminate and nullify the prince-electors of the Empire, all the Empire's subjects, and all of Germany.⁴¹ The language, once again, is that of absolute destruction. But the writer's concerns are all with rights, status, and dignity: those of the Empire, its ruler and princes; and those, more broadly, of the German people, as the Empire's rightful custodians.

Common political identities in the Middle Ages were defined in ways that were both legalistic and comparative: their essence was expressible in terms of concrete privileges and entitlements; and they were conceived and measured in relation to the rights and titles of other peoples. Privilege was the reflection and consequence of a people's fame – its *reputacioun*, as

the poet John Lydgate put it.⁴² ‘I am born of the famous name of Britons’, declared a Welshman in the eleventh century.⁴³ The ‘famous chivalry of Englishmen’ was taken by Lydgate as a subject for celebration.⁴⁴ ‘It is not without reason that this nation [the French] grew famous above other nations’, insisted the *Grandes Chroniques*.⁴⁵ Collective privileges, it was firmly believed, had been *earned*, through illustrious common deeds in times past. They needed constantly to be vindicated anew through further conspicuous acts, and defended, by watching with a jealous eye for slights and infringements. Peoples, just like great families, subsisted within a public economy of honour and title; and, like great families, they too might be ‘ruined’ by allowing themselves to be shamed, and stripped or robbed of their dignities. The ‘name and nobility’ of the Welsh, according to one fourteenth-century writer, had been destroyed by the English.⁴⁶ The German people had its own collective patent of nobility in its claim to the Roman Empire, made manifest in the power of election exercised by its princes.⁴⁷ To forfeit these titles, or to permit an unjust pope publicly to trample on them, was to court oblivion.

The fact that medieval observers did not always have physical slaughter in mind when they wrote of the destruction of peoples does not mean that they did not regard the prospect as a terrible one. Titles mattered, and their loss had grave material consequences. Of course, Ludwig’s manifesto did not at all mean to suggest that John XXII was seeking the physical annihilation of the Empire’s German subjects. Nevertheless, the same document insisted, the pope did have innocent blood on his hands, since the divisions which he had deliberately sown in Germany created conditions of anarchy in which many were dying.⁴⁸ To strip a people of its identity, in the form of its rights and liberties, was to render it incapable of its own defence, and thus expose it to the gravest of perils. The spectre of mass bloodshed, shut out at one door, thus re-enters by another. This way of thinking can be approached a little

more closely in an observation made by the Bernese chronicler Konrad Justinger, who told how in the fourteenth century the town of Bern had been menaced by its greedy aristocratic neighbours. Their goal, he explained, was to possess the town in perpetuity, killing all the inhabitants, men and women, young and old.⁴⁹ A town, just like a people, was conceivable as a community of a shared identity, rooted in law and privilege. To forfeit these was to stand helpless before an implacably hostile world. From disenfranchisement, and loss of common identity, to physical annihilation, Justinger's remark implies, was but a short step.

An extreme illustration of the peril to which peoples lacking legal rights might find themselves exposed is seen in the call which Bernard of Clairvaux issued in March 1147, for a crusade against the pagan Slavs of the southern Baltic.⁵⁰ Adopting the language of ethnicity which was traditional when referring to heathens, he called on the crusaders to 'take vengeance on the (pagan) peoples – *nationes* – and exterminate them from the land of our Christian name'. They should take up the cross, he urged, 'in order either completely to destroy those *nationes* or definitively convert them'. There should be no peace 'until, with God's aid, either the [heathen] rite itself or the population [*natio*] has been destroyed'.⁵¹ Bernard's call to arms has been a source of controversy among historians, not all of whom have wanted to accept that he really did have in mind the physical obliteration – the killing or expulsion – of recalcitrant Slavs.⁵² But that, surely, remains the most plausible reading of his words. They therefore suggest that while medieval notions of genocide were not confined to those acts of mass slaughter and eviction which we associate with modernity, such deeds were nevertheless quite thinkable, and might even be urged on occasion as desirable.

So readily thinkable were they, in fact, that subsequent generations in some quarters came firmly to believe that they had actually taken place. What above all else fitted Charlemagne for emperorship was, for one German town chronicler, that he had 'forcibly converted the heathens in many parts [of the world] to the Christian faith *or had expelled*

them from Christian lands'.⁵³ Later medieval commentators had none of the modern scholar's scruples about interpreting as ethnic destruction the religious purges of times past. A Hussite manifesto of 1420 warned its Czech audience that 'just as they [i.e., the Germans] did to our tongue on the Rhine, in Misnia, in Prussia, and drove it out, the same they intend to do to us and to occupy the places of the banished'.⁵⁴ Out of a hazy recollection of the contests between Christian and pagan in the northern Europe of the central Middle Ages – and the accompanying advance of German settlement across the region – the compiler(s) had conjured a lurid panorama of epic sweep, taking the form of a series of interconnected historic struggles for ethnic survival. That the Czechs' 'Slav' cousins had, as the manifesto told it, been in every case the losers, and endured the dispossession which inevitably followed, was meant to be understood as both a terrible warning and an urgent call to arms.⁵⁵ With even Bernard's religious underpinnings stripped away, the mythologised historical vision with which its audience was presented was bleak indeed: a bitter and unremitting inter-ethnic fight to the death.

Nor should the opportunities be minimised which could arise in medieval Europe for ethnic groups actually to be targeted for attack. Massacres, and the deliberate terrorising of whole populations, were not uncommon, particularly in time of war. The German king William of Holland (1247-56) dated a document drawn up during a military campaign with the words, 'in camp while depopulating West Frisia'.⁵⁶ In such a climate, violence could quickly take on an ethnic colouring. Language differences, for example, were more than just a learned *topos* for explaining and simplifying acts of bloodshed. They were a real source of distinctions, which could on occasion have grave consequences. When a chronicler claims that William Wallace, on his raids into the north of England, spared no-one who spoke the English language, the reader is surely right to be sceptical.⁵⁷ But other reports in similar vein are less easily dismissed. In 1421, Nuremberg's councilmen wrote to the town of Ulm,

recounting the deeds of a German crusading army which had been sent against the Bohemian Hussites. ‘The common soldiery’, they reported, were ‘running wild’. ‘Anyone who cannot speak German, or who appears to be Czech, is taken captive, beaten to death and burnt, because the men are out of control, since the army is so great and mighty.’⁵⁸ Viewed in light of a sober, matter-of-fact statement such as this, the unreflective readiness with which some medieval writers were able to envisage acts of ethnic slaughter becomes a little easier to understand.

More fundamentally, however, when they turned their minds to the destruction of peoples, they were able to draw upon an inheritance of knowledge and assumption which assured them that such acts of mass slaughter had occurred before – assured them, indeed, that it was inevitable and proper that from time to time they should occur. Within the Judeo-Christian history of salvation, the obliteration and replacement of peoples was a principal motor of advance and historical change:

And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. There were none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel.⁵⁹

Biblical history was ethnic history. Those peoples which did not enjoy divine favour were fated to be destroyed, and their destruction was characteristically a violent one.⁶⁰ From the very start, in Eden, God’s wrath found expression as eviction and purge. ‘Let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech’, God says of the builders of the Tower of Babel. ‘So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon

the face of all the earth.’⁶¹ The creation and the destiny of peoples were inseparable from acts of mass devastation and banishment.

Such messages were not lost upon western Europeans in the Middle Ages, whose own pagan traditions had likewise been capable of envisaging scenes of cataclysmic destruction.⁶² A people’s status and its liberty were given expression in accounts of bloody triumph in the crucial founding epoch of its history. Origin legends did not always look back to primal acts of ethnic slaughter and displacement; but they did so often enough for the fact to be significant.⁶³ Brutus and his Trojans had driven out the giants whom they encountered on arrival in Britain, killing some, banishing others to remote, inhospitable regions.⁶⁴ When Alexander the Great’s disbanded Macedonian followers came into Germany, according to one thirteenth-century account they slaughtered all the inhabitants except for the peasantry, whose labours they planned to exploit.⁶⁵ The Scottish people, claimed the Declaration of Arbroath (1320), had gained its land ‘having first driven out the Britons and altogether destroyed the Picts’.⁶⁶ The continental Saxons, according to their settlement myth, had won their land at the expense of Thuringians, who were there before them – again, partly through slaughter, partly by expelling the survivors.⁶⁷ The *Saxon World Chronicle* claimed that the River Oker, which flows through Braunschweig, had its name from *Overkêr* – crossing over: what the ancient Saxons compelled the Thuringians to do.⁶⁸

The epic, sanguinary struggles of Dark-Age peoples, adumbrated in their origin legends, found corroboration in the fuller, more circumstantial accounts of early medieval historians like Gildas and Bede.⁶⁹ In Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History*, the biblical template of divine destiny made manifest through ethnic destruction and replacement found authoritative expression, encapsulated in his portrait of King Æthelfrith:

For no ruler or king had subjected more land to the English people or settled it, having first either exterminated or conquered the natives. To him, in the character of Saul, could fittingly be applied the words which the patriarch said when he was blessing his son, ‘Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey and at night shall divide the spoil’.⁷⁰

Underpinning the reading of accounts such as this was the commonplace, regularly repeated by medieval commentators, that the natural relationship between different peoples was enmity. ‘As long as the world exists the German will never be brother to the Pole’, a proverb insisted.⁷¹ The British, claimed St Guthlac of Crowland’s hagiographer, were ‘the implacable enemies of the Saxon race’.⁷² So ancient and deep-rooted was the mutual loathing of ‘the German and Czech tongues’, reflected one late medieval observer, that they could no more bear one another than Samaritan and Jew.⁷³ It was necessary only to project onto such primal visions of ethnic antagonism a narrative charting, like Bede’s, the rightful ascent of God’s chosen people, for it to become compellingly clear that separating sheep from goats, by all means necessary, was a pious task, serving the ends of divine providence. By the late Middle Ages, calls to do God’s purifying work might be uttered not only from within the bosom of the Catholic Church but at its contested margins. The Czech reformer Jan Hus was alleged by a witness at his trial at Constance to have publicly declared, shortly after the enforced departure of German masters and students from the University of Prague (1409), that it was God who should be praised ‘because we have got rid of the Germans’.⁷⁴

None of this is likely to persuade those who argue for the quintessential modernity of genocide to adjust their chronologies by a millennium or more. Nor, on the main point at issue, should it: the sheer magnitude of organised ethnic destruction in the modern world

forbids hasty or facile comparisons.⁷⁵ The ‘modernists’, however, typically go further. The defining element of modern mass killing, they argue, lies in its systematic character, and thus its totality; qualities which, it is claimed, are inseparably bound up with the emergence of new forms of bureaucratic government in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁷⁶ Some medievalists, of course, have for a long time been urging a different, altogether earlier, chronology for the ‘modernisation’ of European institutions and political culture. ‘Let me state a certainty’, James Campbell has written: ‘Late Anglo-Saxon England was a nation-state’.⁷⁷ It is not necessary to share Campbell’s certainty on the subject in order to agree that at least one act of late Old-English government – the St Brice’s Day massacre – ill-documented though it is, appears chillingly redolent of the state-sponsored purges of more recent times. The Anglo-Saxon chronicle, despite its terseness, portrays the action both as comprehensive and as originating in royal command.⁷⁸ It is probably wise to treat sceptically Henry of Huntingdon’s much later account, which depicts the king systematically dispatching secret letters to every town in his realm, ordering that the Danes be killed.⁷⁹ Yet it at least underlines how ambitious was Henry’s own view of the capabilities of English royal government (and how sinister his notions of its means and ends), that he judged such a co-ordinated pogrom conceivable.

As the scope of royal government was extended in European kingdoms during the central and later Middle Ages, so also was its capacity forcibly to re-draw the ethnic map. This growing potential found drastic expression in Frederick II’s expulsion of the Muslim population from Sicily and their forced resettlement in the mainland town of Lucera.⁸⁰ More notorious examples of the same princely capability and will are the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290 and the very much larger royally-sponsored purges of the Jewish populations of France and Spain in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁸¹ But royal power was not only being applied to simplify the map of peoples. Kings also acted to draw outsiders

into their realms, in processes which brought their own tensions and conflicts. ‘Hence may the English learn to call in foreigners, if they wish to be exiled by strangers’, mused the *Song of Lewes* bitterly.⁸² Demands that the aliens around the throne be sent packing became a familiar refrain, raised in diverse parts of Europe by aggrieved native elites and their spokespersons.⁸³ The happy example of earlier rulers might here be called upon to shame their descendants. The *Dalimil* chronicle, compiled early in the fourteenth century and probably aimed at a Czech-speaking noble audience, thus recounted a number of edifying tales of princely xenophobia from times past. In one of these, a Bohemian duke had given ‘the Germans’ just three days to get out, the chronicler telling how one well-born member of that group, an abbot, was placed on a cart and unceremoniously dumped in the Bavarian forest.⁸⁴ From time to time, the clamour which such tales nurtured and reflected proved irresistible. A revolt among his nobles forced Duke Ziemomysl of Kuyavya (d. 1287) to withdraw property and privileges from the German knights whom he had invited to his court, and eventually to expel them altogether.⁸⁵

The king who surrounded himself with worthless foreigners while shunning his own loyal subjects was a well-established type for the tyrant. But the consequences of such arbitrary actions seemed to be magnified when they were coupled to the changes in social and economic life, and accompanying population movements, which Latin Europe witnessed between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries. As a result of these, the foreigners who now entered some European kingdoms under the prince’s protection no longer consisted only of small secular and clerical elites.⁸⁶ To contemporaries, the developments taking place could sometimes appear sinister and portentous in the extreme. Annals from Prague report under the year 1257 how the Bohemian king Otakar II (1253-78) – a notable patron of German immigration into his kingdom – ‘expelled the Bohemians from the suburb’ beneath Prague castle, ‘and settled aliens’ there.⁸⁷ The rumour of Otakar’s dark intentions grew, as was the

natural tendency of such tales, in the decades after his death. According to one later chronicler, the king had promised his German protégés that he would give them the entire land of Bohemia to hold in perpetuity.⁸⁸ It became possible for hostile pamphleteers to portray such nightmare visions as imminent and fundamental threats to the ethnic identity, and thus the very existence, of the realm. Given the gravity of the alien menace, it was vital that the natives get their retaliation in first (a familiar refrain among modern ethnic cleansers too).⁸⁹ By the later Middle Ages, Czech polemicists are to be found urging that Bohemia's immigrant German populations be rooted out – like weeds from the garden, as one chronicler put it (and again, the metaphors of parasites and vermin repeatedly to be found in such writings seem disturbingly familiar ones).⁹⁰ The Hussite conflagration in the fifteenth century was to bring, in certain regions at least, a fulfilment of just such longings.⁹¹

Latin Europe in the Middle Ages differed profoundly from those societies which are most associated with modern ethnic purges. And the acts of bloodshed which have been discussed above were of a different character from modern ones: more localised, less thoroughgoing, and less terrible in scale. But the modesty of the coercive resources available to medieval government can be overstated: by the later Middle Ages some regimes were capable of acting against unpopular or inconvenient minorities with a speed and efficiency which left contemporaries fascinated and – sometimes, though by no means always – appalled. ‘You have achieved in one day what the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt failed to do’, marvelled one chronicler of Edward I's expulsion of the Jews. Another observer deemed the king's actions, more ambivalently, to be ‘something most remarkable, that should not be passed over in silence’.⁹² Social change also had a part in facilitating such purges, penning up minorities within the walls of towns, and often within their own distinct neighbourhoods, where in time of disturbance they were easy prey for the aggrieved and the politically opportunistic alike.⁹³

In any case, as recent prominent instances ought to make clear, modern ethnic slaughter does not necessarily depend for its occurrence upon the governmental and technological resources usually associated with modernity: when popular moods and mentalities favour extreme action, the most basic means often suffice.⁹⁴

In its modes of thought and assumption, moreover, Latin Europe in the Middle Ages appears a rather less alien place than modern scholarship has often assumed it to be. The destruction of medieval peoples, it is true, was envisaged – whether with horror, glee, or the calm acceptance of assumed historical fact – far more frequently and characteristically than it was ever enacted. But envisaged it repeatedly was, and such imaginative acts themselves have much to disclose. Images of ethnic purge and replacement were written into the very DNA of medieval religious and political assumption. They supplied, to mix metaphors, a default mode for understanding certain kinds of political violence and upheaval. Whenever people found their essentially static, a-historical notions of community and identity challenged by social dynamism and political change, the spectre of ethnic destruction was able to do service both as a category of historical explanation and as a rallying cry in political struggles. Medieval people did not in every case envisage such destruction as genocidal, at least in post-twentieth-century terms. Nevertheless, they did understand well a truth which their modern European descendants have repeatedly been forced to re-learn: that from stripping a people of its legal and political safeguards, to taking away its dignity, its property, and even the lives of its members, could prove on occasion to be perilously short and easy steps.

This essay originated in a paper read to a conference at the University of Edinburgh in June 2005, on the subject of *Ethnonemesis: The Creation and Disappearance of Ethnic Identities in the Medieval East and West*. I am grateful to fellow-participants for their comments. I also wish to thank my Durham colleagues Professor (Emeritus) Robin Frame and Dr Gabriella Treglia for their help in response to bibliographical queries.

¹ *Chronicles of London*, ed. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (Oxford, 1905), p. 15.

² ‘Fleming’ in late medieval English sources denoted not only natives of Flanders but (with pejorative undertones) inhabitants of north-western continental Europe more broadly: *The Alien Communities of London in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. and intro. J.L. Bolton (Stamford, 1998) [hereafter Bolton, *Alien Communities*], p. 1.

³ *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, (3rd edn, Oxford, 1988), p. 260, ll. 3394-6; Rodney Hilton, *Bond Men Made Free: Medieval Peasant Movements and the English Rising of 1381* (1973), p. 196.

⁴ For the relevant passages see *The Peasants’ Revolt of 1381*, ed. R.B. Dobson, (2nd edn, Basingstoke, 1983), esp. pp. 162, 175, 188-9, 201, 206, 210.

⁵ ‘Monk of Westminster’ in *ibid.*, p. 201.

⁶ ‘There was also the apparently xenophobic killing of Flemings’: Christopher Dyer, ‘The social and economic background to the rural revolt of 1381’, in *The English Rising of 1381*, ed. R.H. Hilton and T.H. Aston (Cambridge, 1984), p. 12. Charles Oman, *The Great Rising of 1381* (Oxford, 1906) offers only scattered references (for London, pp. 59, 69, 199) in a book of over 200 pages. In a more recent general study, the fate of the Flemings commands less than a page: Alastair Dunn, *The Great Rising of 1381: The Peasants’ Revolt and England’s Failed Revolution* (Stroud, 2002) [hereafter Dunn, *The Great Rising*], p. 90.

⁷ Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381* (Berkeley CA, 1994), p. 72. It was ‘the darkest episode of the Great Rising of 1381’: Dunn, *The Great Rising*, p. 90.

⁸ Thus Hilton, *Bond Men Made Free*, p. 198.

⁹ See Bolton’s comments in *Alien Communities*, esp. pp. 3, 39-40.

¹⁰ There is space to mention only a handful of instances here. The summer of 1450 witnessed, among widespread popular disturbances, attacks on Italians in Romsey, Hants.: I.M.W. Harvey, *Jack Cade’s Rebellion of 1450* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 127-8. In 1468 there was an organised conspiracy to attack the ‘Flemings’ of Rotherhithe, provoked by economic and diplomatic discontents: Bolton, *Alien Communities*, p. 1. For a massacre of Hanseatic merchants in the Flemish port of Sluis in 1436, underlain by the tensions of the Hundred Years War, see Volker Henn, ‘Der “dudesche kopman” zu Brügge und seine Beziehungen zu den “nationes” der übrigen Fremden im späten Mittelalter’, in ‘*Kopet uns werk by tyden*’: *Beiträge zur hansischen und preußischen Geschichte: Walter Stark zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Nils Jörn, Detlef Kattinger and Horst Wernicke (Schwerin, 1999), pp. 131-42.

¹¹ For the habit among medieval writers of inscribing ethnic absolutism on political complexity see Richard C. Hoffman, ‘Outsiders by Birth and Blood: Racist Ideologies and Realities around the Periphery of Medieval European Culture’, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, vi (1983), 5. I would contest Hoffman’s assumption (*ibid.*, 1) that such thinking was characteristic only of the *fringes* of medieval Europe.

¹² The manuscript (Julius B II) has been dated to 1435: *Chronicles of London*, ed. Kingsford, ix.

¹³ For a further instance see Steven Runciman, *The Sicilian Vespers* (Harmondsworth, 1960), p. 237.

¹⁴ ‘Scilt ende vrient’. On the attack by elements of the population of Bruges upon French forces in the city on 18 May 1302, and on the sources, see J.F. Verbruggen, *The Battle of the*

Golden Spurs (Courtrai, 11 July 1302): A Contribution to the History of Flanders' War of Liberation, 1297-1305, trans. D.R. Ferguson (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 25.

¹⁵ Joachim Rogall, 'Polen vom Mittelalter bis zu den Polnischen Teilungen', in idem (ed.), *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas: Land der großen Ströme: Von Polen nach Litauen* (Berlin, 1996) [hereafter Rogall, 'Polen'], pp. 77-8; Benedikt Zientara, 'Foreigners in Poland in the 10th-15th Centuries: Their Role in the Opinion of the Polish Medieval Community', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, xxix (1974) [hereafter Zientara, 'Foreigners'], 15. For the source see Jerzy Strzelczyk, 'Die Wahrnehmung des Fremden im mittelalterlichen Polen', in *Die Begegnung des Westens mit dem Osten*, ed. Odilo Engels and Peter Schreiner (Sigmaringen, 1993), p. 213.

¹⁶ Judg.xii.6.

¹⁷ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock (1961) [hereafter Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*], p. 86 (C (D, E)); *English Historical Documents c.500-1042*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock (2nd edn, 1979) [Hereafter Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*], no. 127, p. 591 (for the monastery of St Frideswide, Oxford, 7 December 1004).

¹⁸ Thus Ann Williams, *Æthelred the Unready: The Ill-Counselled King* (2003), pp. 52-4.

¹⁹ *Guillaume de Jumièges, Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, ed. Jean Marx (Rouen, 1914), pp. 78-9.

²⁰ See Laura Jacobus, 'Motherhood and Massacre: the Massacre of the Innocents in late-medieval Art and Drama', in *The Massacre in History*, ed. Mark Levene and Penny Roberts (New York and Oxford, 1999), pp. 39-54.

²¹ *Chronik des Jacob Twinger von Königshofen*, ed. C. Hegel, in *Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, ix (Leipzig, 1870) [hereafter Hegel, *Chronik des Jacob Twinger*], p. 626. Twinger's history, which survives in over eighty mss., enjoyed wide dissemination in southern and western Germany in the fifteenth century: see Dorothea Klein and Gert Melville, 'Twinger,

Jakob, von Königshofen', in Kurt Ruh *et al.* (eds.), *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, 11 vols. to date (Berlin, 1978-) [hereafter Ruh, *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters*], ix, col. 1183.

²² The text of the Convention is printed in *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, ed. George J. Andreopoulos (Philadelphia, 1994), pp. 229-3 (here 230 (article ii)).

²³ For a helpful attempt at classifying different kinds of inter-ethnic violence and coercion see Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge, 2005) [hereafter Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy*], esp. his table at p. 12. None of the incidents so far considered would count on Mann's classification as fully genocidal (*ibid.*, pp. 17-18).

²⁴ Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, 'The Study of Mass Murder and Genocide', in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge, 2003) [hereafter Gellately and Kiernan, *The Specter of Genocide*], pp. 21-6; Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy*, ch. 2. Among the most vocal 'modernist' dissenters from the view which would confine 'genocide' to the twentieth century are historians concerned with the fate of the native American peoples. Their case is put with particular vehemence by Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492 to the Present* (San Francisco, 1997); and see also David E. Stannard, 'Uniqueness as Denial: The Politics of Genocide Scholarship', in *Is the Holocaust Unique?*, ed. Alan S. Rosenbaum (2nd edn, Boulder CO, 2001) [hereafter Stannard, 'Uniqueness as Denial'], pp. 245-90. At the opposite pole of the debate are those who insist that only the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews was fully genocidal: see Steven T. Katz, 'The Uniqueness of the Holocaust: The Historical Dimension', in *ibid.*, pp. 49-69.

²⁵ Omer Bartov, 'Seeking the Roots of Modern Genocide: On the Macro- and Microhistory of Mass Murder' [henceforth Bartov, 'Seeking the Roots of Modern Genocide'], in Gellately and Kiernan, *The Specter of Genocide*, pp. 84-5.

²⁶ Eric D. Weitz, 'The modernity of genocide: war, race, and revolution in the twentieth century', in *ibid.*, esp. pp. 57, 73; Zygmunt Baumann, 'Modernity and the Holocaust', in *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader*, ed. Alexander Laban Hinton (Oxford, 2002), pp. 110-33.

²⁷ *Brut Y Tywysogyon or the Chronicle of the Princes*, ed. Thomas Jones (Cardiff, 1955), pp. 78-81; and see John Gillingham, 'The Context and Purposes of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, xiii (Woodbridge, 1991), esp. p. 110.

²⁸ *The Song of Lewes*, in *English Historical Documents 1189-1327*, ed. Harry Rothwell (London, 1975) [hereafter Rothwell, *English Historical Documents*], p. 903.

²⁹ *Rocznik kapituły Poznańskiej 965-1309*, ed. Brygida Kürbis, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* [hereafter MPH] (*Nova series*), vi (Warsaw, 1962), p. 55.

³⁰ *Monumenta Poloniae Vaticana*, iii, ed. Johannes Ptaśnik (Kraków, 1914), no. 121, p. 90 (testimony of one 'Wlostiborius', canon of St Florian). Similar accusations are recorded from a number of other witnesses: *ibid.*, pp. 82, 88, 92, 93; and see Benedikt Zientara, 'Die deutsche Einwanderer in Polen vom 12. bis zum 14. Jahrhundert', in *Die deutsche Ostsiedlung des Mittelalters als Problem der europäischen Geschichte*, ed. Walter Schlesinger (Vorträge und Forschungen, xviii, Sigmaringen, 1975) [hereafter Zientara, 'Die deutsche Einwanderer'], p. 345.

³¹ *Rocznik kapitulny Krakowski*, ed. August Bielowski, MPH, iii (Lwów, 1878), p. 815.

³² William Stubbs, *Select Charters and other Illustrations of English Constitutional History* (9th edn, Oxford, 1913), p. 480.

³³ *Original Letters illustrative of English History*, ed. Henry Ellis (4 vols., 1827), i. 127-8.

³⁴ R.R. Davies, 'The Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th ser., iv-vii (1994-97): I. 'Identities' (1-20); II. 'Names, Boundaries and Regnal Solidarities' (1-20); III. 'Laws and Customs' (1-23); IV. 'Language and Historical Mythology' (1-24) [hereafter Davies, 'The Peoples of Britain and Ireland [I-IV]'].

³⁵ Henry, *Archdeacon of Huntingdon, Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford, 1996) [hereafter Greenway, *Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, Historia Anglorum*], pp. 412-13; and see John Gillingham, 'Henry of Huntingdon and the Twelfth-Century Revival of the English Nation', in *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson and Alan V. Murray (Leeds, 1995), esp. p. 78.

³⁶ The text of this scholastic tract, the work of one Master William de Spyny, is printed in H.S. Offler, 'Reason in Politics, 1363-4: A *quaestio* from Scotland', in H.S. Offler, *North of the Tees: Studies in Medieval British History*, ed. A.J. Piper and A.I. Doyle (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 1-26 (here 20).

³⁷ For political communities as frameworks for imagining common ethnicity see Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900-1300* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1997), ch. 8.

³⁸ Printed in *Urkunden zur Geschichte des Bisthums Breslau im Mittelalter*, ed. Gustav Adolph Stenzel (Breslau, 1845) [hereafter Stenzel, *Urkunden*], no. 144, pp. 151-3 (17 January 1285). For the background see John B. Freed, *The Friars and German Society in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge MA, 1977), pp. 69-77.

³⁹ Stenzel, *Urkunden*, p. 153 (*gentis exterminium*); and see Zientara, 'Die deutsche Einwanderer', p. 346.

⁴⁰ *MGH Constitutiones et Acta Publica Imperatorum et Regum*, v, ed. J. Schwalm (Hannover and Leipzig, 1909-13), no. 909, pp. 723-44 (22 May 1324) [hereafter *MGH Constitutiones v*,

ed. Schwalm]. The document, attacking John XXII's legal proceedings against the king, was drawn up by his Franciscan supporters; its allegations were repeated with almost identical wording in a second version of the same appeal, bearing the same date, redacted in the royal chancery: *ibid.*, no. 910, pp. 745-54. On these texts see Heinz Thomas, *Ludwig der Bayer (1282-1347): Kaiser und Ketzer* (Graz, Vienna and Cologne, 1993), p. 164.

⁴¹ *MGH Constitutiones* v, ed. Schwalm, no. 909, p. 726: '... intendens totaliter ad exterminium sacri imperii et imperii libertatum et dignitatum et ad exterminium et annullationem principum imperii electorum et omnium imperii subiectorum et Alamanie totius ...'.

⁴² John Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes*, ix, cited in V.J. Scattergood, *Politics and Poetry in the Fifteenth Century* (1971) [hereafter Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*], p. 44.

⁴³ Ieuan ap Sulien, cited in Davies, 'The Peoples of Britain and Ireland [IV]', 20-1.

⁴⁴ Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, ix, p. 44.

⁴⁵ *Les grandes chroniques de France*, ed. Jules Viard, i (Paris, 1920), pp. 4-5. I follow here Colette Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late-Medieval France*, trans. S.R. Huston, ed. F.L. Cheyette (Berkeley CA, 1991), p. 174.

⁴⁶ 'Papers Relating to the Captivity and Release of David II', ed. E.W.M. Balfour-Melville, *Miscellany of the Scottish History Society*, ix (1958), 42, cited in Davies, 'The Peoples of Britain and Ireland [II]', 3. Those of the Irish had likewise been destroyed by the English 'so far as they could'.

⁴⁷ See Len E. Scales, 'German militiae: war and German identity in the later Middle Ages', *Past & Present* 180 (2003), esp. 53-7.

⁴⁸ *MGH Constitutiones* v, ed. Schwalm, no. 909, p. 723.

⁴⁹ *Die Berner Chronik des Conrad Justinger*, ed. G. Studer (Bern, 1871), p. 82; and see Heinrich Schmidt, *Die deutschen Städtechroniken als Spiegel des bürgerlichen Selbstverständnisses im Spätmittelalter* (Göttingen, 1958), p. 98.

⁵⁰ For the Latin text of his letter, with commentary, see Hans-Dietrich Kahl, 'Crusade Eschatology as seen by St. Bernard in the years 1146 to 1148', in *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians*, ed. Michael Gervers (New York, 1992), esp. pp. 42-3. For the development of canon-law doctrines on the rights of pagans see James Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers and Infidels: The Church and the non-Christian World 1250-1520* (Liverpool, 1979), esp. ch. 1.

⁵¹ Bernard's use of *natio* / *nationes* is examined in Hans-Dietrich Kahl, 'Einige Beobachtungen zum Sprachgebrauch von *natio* im mittelalterlichen Latein mit Ausblicken auf das neuhochdeutsche Fremdwort "Nation"', in *Aspekte der Nationenbildung im Mittelalter: Ergebnisse der Marburger Rundgespräche 1972-1975*, ed. Helmut Beumann and Werner Schröder (Nationes, i, Sigmaringen, 1978), esp. pp. 82-7. Although these words are clearly used here primarily with their (well-established medieval) meaning of 'pagans', the idea of those pagans constituting distinct ethnic groups is also implicitly present. On the crusade itself, and the – localised, unsystematic – expulsions of groups of Wends which resulted, see: Hans-Dietrich Kahl, 'Zum Geist der deutschen Slawenmission des Hochmittelalters', *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, ii (1953), 1-14; and, more generally, Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier 1100-1525* (1980), ch. 2.

⁵² Thus Friedrich Lotter, 'Bemerkungen zur Christianisierung der Abodriten', in *Festschrift für Walter Schlesinger*, ed. Helmut Beumann (Cologne and Vienna, 1973), esp. pp. 400-5.

⁵³ Hegel, *Chronik des Jacob Twinger*, p. 403.

⁵⁴ František Šmahel, 'The Idea of the "Nation" in Hussite Bohemia', *Historica*, xvi/xvii (1968/69) [hereafter Šmahel, 'The Idea of the "Nation"'], 222.

⁵⁵ In ‘Prussia’, of course, the main opponents of the German crusaders were not Slavs but a Baltic people, the Prussians (and subsequently the Lithuanians, likewise non-Slavs) – though the Teutonic Order’s history in the region did also involve war with Slavic-speaking Poles and Russians. For ideas of pan-Slav solidarity in the Middle Ages see: Šmahel, ‘The Idea of the “Nation”’, 99-100; František Graus, *Die Nationenbildung der Westslawen im Mittelalter* (Nationes, iii, Sigmaringen, 1980) [hereafter Graus, *Die Nationenbildung der Westslawen*], pp. 130-7.

⁵⁶ ‘In castris in depopulatione Westfrisie.’ *Oorkondenboek van Holland en Zeeland tot 1299*, ii, ed. J.G. Kruisheer (Assen-Maastricht, 1986), nos 1005, 1006, pp. 695-6 (18 May, 21 May 1254).

⁵⁷ *Annales Londonienses*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. W. Stubbs, *Rolls Series* [hereafter *RS*] (1882), i, p. 41, cited in Davies, ‘The peoples of Britain and Ireland [IV]’, 14.

⁵⁸ Šmahel, ‘The Idea of the “Nation”’, 113.

⁵⁹ Josh.xi.21-2.

⁶⁰ As a further example see Deut.ii.20-1; this and similar instances are discussed in Walter Stephens, *Giants in Those Days: Folklore, Ancient History, and Nationalism* (Lincoln NE, 1989), ch. 2.

⁶¹ Gen.xi.7-8. For medieval views about the significance of Babel for the course of history see Arno Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel: Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker*, i and ii (Stuttgart, 1957-9).

⁶² For its commemoration in dark-age literature see, e.g., *Beowulf and the Finnsburg Fragment: A Translation into Modern English Prose*, ed. John R. Clark Hall, revd C.L. Wrenn (1940), pp. 163-4, 167.

⁶³ On origin legends generally see Susan Reynolds, 'Medieval *origines gentium* and the Community of the Realm', *History*, lxxviii (1983), 375-90.

⁶⁴ *The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Neil Wright, i (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 13-14; *The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft*, ed. Thomas Wright, RS (1866), i.21; *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, ed. William Aldis Wright, RS (1887), i.36; *The Story of England by Robert Manning of Brunne, A.D. 1338*, ed. Frederick Furnivall RS (1887), i.63. Robert of Gloucester depicted Brutus driving the giants into Cornwall.

⁶⁵ *Der kunige buoch*, ed. H.F. Massmann, in *Rechtsdenkmäler des deutschen Mittelalters: Land- und Lehenrechtbücher*, ii, ed. A. von Daniels (Berlin, 1863), cxxiii. For this work, probably written in the late 1270s as a historical companion-piece to a vernacular legal compilation, the *Schwabenspiegel*, see Hubert Herkomer, 'Das Buch der Könige alter ê und niuwer ê', in Ruh, *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters*, ii, cols. 1089-92. German tradition more usually made the Macedonians the ancestors specifically of the Saxons; this account is unusual in having twenty-four shiploads arrive, more generally, in 'the German lands'.

⁶⁶ A.A.M. Duncan, *The Nation of Scots and the Declaration of Arbroath (1320)* (1970), p. 34.

⁶⁷ On the Saxons' origin legends see František Graus, *Lebendige Vergangenheit: Überlieferung im Mittelalter und in den Vorstellungen vom Mittelalter* (Cologne and Vienna, 1975), pp. 112-35.

⁶⁸ *Sächsische Weltchronik*, ed. Ludwig Weiland (*MGH Deutsche Chroniken*, ii, Hannover, 1877), p. 260.

⁶⁹ *Gildas, The Ruin of Britain and other Works*, ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom (1978), pp. 25-7, 96-8; *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), ii.20, pp. 202-5: 'With bestial cruelty he [i.e., Caedwalla] put all [Northumbrians] to death by torture and for a long time raged through all their land, meaning to wipe out the whole English nation from the land of Britain'.

⁷⁰ *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, i.34, pp. 116-17. For ethnic destruction as an expression of divine will see Patrick Wormald, 'Engla lond: The Making of an Allegiance', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vii (1994), esp. 15.

⁷¹ Zientara, 'Foreigners', 14.

⁷² *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 108-9.

⁷³ The Silesian abbot Ludolf of Sagan, cited in Konrad Bittner, *Deutsche und Tschechen: Zur Geistesgeschichte des böhmischen Raumes* (Brünn, 1936), p. 101. The differences between peoples (*gentes*) were not, however, in every case so absolute and unbridgeable as to preclude their conjoining in a single kingdom and even a single, composite, 'nation' (*natio*): see the examples discussed in Robert Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, xxxi (2001), 49-51.

⁷⁴ František Šmahel, 'The Idea of the "Nation"', 168. As Šmahel points out, it is unlikely that Hus ever actually said this, at least in these stark terms; but the testimony remains significant as an indication of modes of thoughts among both his supporters and his opponents.

⁷⁵ It has been estimated that between 60 and 120 million people may have perished in mass killings during the twentieth century: Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca and London, 2004), p. 1.

⁷⁶ Bartov, 'Seeking the Roots of Modern Genocide', p. 76: 'The simplest definition of *modern* genocide is that it is mass murder conceived and perpetrated by modern states and organizations'.

⁷⁷ James Campbell, 'The late Anglo-Saxon State: A Maximum View', in James Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London and New York, 2000), p. 10.

⁷⁸ 'And in that year the king ordered to be slain all the Danish men who were in England': Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 86.

⁷⁹ Greenway, *Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, Historia Anglorum*, pp. 340-1.

⁸⁰ Julie Taylor, 'Lucera Sarracenorum: A Muslim Colony in Medieval Christian Europe', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, xxxiii (1999), 110-25.

⁸¹ Robin R. Mundill, *England's Jewish Solution: Experiment and Expulsion, 1262-1290* (Cambridge, 1998), esp. ch. 8; William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia, 1989), ch. 13; J.N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms 1250-1516* (Oxford, 1978), ii.436-53.

⁸² *Song of Lewes*, in Rothwell, *English Historical Documents*, p. 903.

⁸³ For some English examples see Michael Prestwich, *English Politics in the Thirteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1990), ch. 5.

⁸⁴ *Rýmovaná kronika česká*, ed. Josef Jiriček, *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, iii (Prague, 1882), p. 94, vv. 1-6. The chronicle was compiled in Old Czech around the year 1315; see also *ibid.* for the parallel text of the translation into German done later in the fourteenth century. For *Dalimil*, its outlook and audience, see Graus, *Die Nationenbildung der Westslawen*, pp. 92-5.

⁸⁵ Rogall, 'Polen', pp. 52-3.

⁸⁶ For these movements and their reflections in inter-ethnic relations see Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Harmondsworth, 1993), chs 8, 9.

⁸⁷ *Canonicorum Pragensium continuationes Cosmae*, ed. R. Koepke, in *MGH Scriptores*, ix (Hannover, 1851), p. 176; and see Jörg K. Hoensch, *Přemysl Otakar II. von Böhmen: Der goldene König* (Graz, 1989), p. 103.

⁸⁸ *Kronika Neplachova*, ed. J. Emler, *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, iii (Prague, 1882), p. 476.

The chronicle was compiled c. 1360 by the Benedictine abbot Neplach of Opatovice. In similar vein, a Czech pamphleteer of the fifteenth century claimed that Charles IV (1346-78)

had ‘thought to settle the Czech land with the German race, of which he himself came, and gradually root out the Czechs from it’: Šmahel, ‘The Idea of the “Nation”’, 126 n. 118.

⁸⁹ According to the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, Æthelred was moved to act against the Danes by information suggesting ‘that they would treacherously deprive him, and then all his councillors, of life, and possess the kingdom afterwards’: Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 86. A fourteenth-century polemic urging the expulsion of Germans from Bohemia (*De Theutunicis bonum dictamen*) recounted the settlers’ alleged hidden machinations in lurid detail: Wilhelm Wostry, ‘Ein deutschfeindliches Pamphlet aus Böhmen aus dem 14. Jahrhundert’, *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen*, liii (1915), 226-32 for text.

⁹⁰ *Rýmovaná kronika česká*, ed. Jiriček, p. 94, vv. 11-14. According to the fourteenth-century *De Theutunicis*, German immigrants into Bohemia were ‘wolves in the fold, flies on the food, serpents in the bosom, harlots in the house’: Wostry, ‘Ein deutschfeindliches Pamphlet’, 229. Prague’s declaration of the ‘Four Articles’ (July 1420) announced that the city’s inhabitants had purged the kingdom of ‘the Teutonic mange’: Šmahel, ‘The Idea of the “Nation”’, 204 n. 23. King Æthelred’s charter for St Frideswide’s spoke, similarly, of the killing of ‘all the Danes who had sprung up in this island, sprouting like cockle amongst the wheat’: Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*, no. 127, p. 591. For the long history of vermin imagery in post-medieval genocidal rhetoric see Stannard, ‘Uniqueness as Denial’, pp. 264-5.

⁹¹ Peter Moraw, ‘Das Mittelalter’, in Friedrich Prinz (ed.), *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas: Böhmen und Mähren* (Berlin, 1993), pp. 163-4. The accounts of earlier scholars, which envisaged the widespread destruction of the German population, has given way to more cautious judgements, painting a more localised picture. But there is evidence that in Prague and certain other towns the German element declined substantially in the Hussite period.

⁹² Cited in Mundill, *England's Jewish Solution*, pp. 1, 264. Philip IV's expulsion of the Jews from France made a comparable impression on French chroniclers: Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews*, pp. 214-15. Something of the shock experienced by those on the receiving end of such co-ordinated royal set-pieces was registered by the janitor and notary to the community of Christ Church Canterbury in the time of Edward I's punitive action against the English clergy early in 1297. Inspecting the monastic granaries and storehouses, to which the king's officials had barred access, he noted how their locks had been systematically secured with royal seals bearing an image 'as if of a predatory lion': Jeffrey H. Denton, *Robert Winchelsey and the Crown 1294-1313* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 111.

⁹³ For the distribution of foreigners in London, for example, see Bolton, *Alien Communities*, pp. 6 (concentration of Germans in the Hansa Steelyard), 11-15. For the inter-relationship between urban topography, government, and forced re-settlements, expulsions, and massacres, see: František Graus, *Pest – Geißler – Judenmorde: Das 14. Jahrhundert als Krisenzeit* (Göttingen, 1987), part iii; J.M. Minty, 'Judengasse to Christian Quarter: The Phenomenon of the Converted Synagogue in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Holy Roman Empire', in *Popular Religion in Germany and Central Europe, 1400-1800*, ed. Bob Scribner and Trevor Johnson (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 58-86.

⁹⁴ The main weapon of the Hutu militias responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda was the *panga*, or machete. With its aid, they brought about the deaths of approximately 800,000 Tutsis, around eleven per cent of the Rwandan population, in little more than six weeks. See Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis 1959-1994: History of a Genocide* (1995), pp. 255-6, 261, 265.