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Images of ethnicity in later medieval Europe

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New Horizons

Ask a man of letters in thirteenth-century Paris to describe the population of Western Europe, and this may well have been his view: the ports of Flanders are busy with handsome men engaged in the wool trade. The Scots are barbarous warmongers, although their manners have improved since their dealings with the Anglo-Normans. The Irish remain fickle, uncivilized pastoralists, too lazy to reap the benefits of their land, living in a lawless society. The indurate, strong-bodied Thuringians are cruel towards their enemies, whereas the men in Holland can be rated among the more peaceable and devout Germanic peoples. Above all Paris, the new centre of learning, delights in riches, healthy air and refreshing meadows for those weary of study, and the inhabitants of northern France are civilized, courteous men, devout defenders of Christendom.¹

He might have drawn his information from Bartholomaeus Anglicus' encyclopaedic *On the Properties of Things*, compiled in the 1240s, which includes a geographic gazetteer.² We know that between 1284 and 1304, stationers in Paris were supplying it as a textbook to students, and as such it was influential in shaping their perceptions.³ All in all, his encyclopaedia is one of the most

1 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 58, 57, 151 and 165 respectively. Although preparation is underway, a modern edition of book xv of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' encyclopaedia has not been published to date; separate editions of books I-IV, VI and XVII were published in the series 'De diversis artibus', edited by Christel Meier (Turnhout 2007-). See for the new edition Baudouin Van den Abeele and Heinz Meyer, 'Etat de l'edition du *De proprietatibus rerum*', in Baudouin Van den Abeele and Heinz Meyer (eds), *Bartholomaeus Anglicus, De proprietatibus rerum: Texte latin et réception vernaculaire / Lateinischer Text und volkssprachliche Rezeption: actes du colloque international / Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums - Münster, 9.-11.10.2003* (Turnhout 2005), 1-25. I have used by Heinrich Knochlobtzer's print edition published in Heidelberg in 1488. For its reception, see Heinz Meyer, *Die Enzyklopädie des Bartholomaeus Anglicus: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungs- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von 'De Proprietatibus Rerum'* (Munich 2000). A French translation was published by Brent A. Pitts (ed.), *Le livre des regions* (London 2006). A modern edition of Trevisa's Middle English translation appeared as *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation [from the Latin] of Bartholomaeus Anglicus De proprietatibus rerum. A critical text* (Oxford 1975-1988). Excerpts were also printed by Anton E. Schönbach, 'Des Bartholomaeus Anglicus Beschreibung Deutschlands gegen 1240', in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 27 (1906), 54-90. See also H.C. Darby, 'Geography in a Medieval Text-Book', in *The Scottish Geographical Magazine* 49 (1933), 323-331; G.E. Se Boyar, 'Bartholomaeus Anglicus and his Encyclopaedia', in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 19 (1920), 168-189.

2 In Michael C. Seymour e.a., *Bartholomaeus Anglicus and his Encyclopedia* (Aldershot 1992) 29-31, 34, the encyclopaedia is dated between 1220 and 1250, probably between 1242-1247, while Bartholomaeus was at Magdeburg.

3 Seymour, *Bartholomaeus Anglicus*, 12.

influential and extensive repositories of later medieval images of ethnicity. It was indeed a ‘medieval bestseller’, with more than 180 manuscript copies extant.⁴

As a typical example of geographic knowledge, Bartholomaeus’ compendium *On the Properties of Things* will serve as a starting point to examine the employment, relevance and intellectual framework of ethnic stereotypes circulating among educated, religious men in the later Middle Ages. There are three reasons for choosing Bartholomaeus, early thirteenth-century tutor in theology and minister provincial of the Franciscans in Saxony, as our guide in this first section. First, his audience was huge. This is reflected in the vast number of manuscripts, but it might also be inferred from the fact that Bartholomaeus’ encyclopaedia, serving as reference book for mendicant friars, informed generations of preachers addressing laymen in West European towns and villages. On a more general level, geographical representations, in encyclopaedic texts and *mappae mundi*, were influential in expressing and shaping mental images of regions and peoples, and certainly in the later Middle Ages knew a wide audience.⁵ In the twelfth century, geographical descriptions were already

4 Lynn Thorndike went so far as to classify the *Properties of Things* ‘an illustration of the rough general knowledge which every person with any pretense to culture was then supposed to possess’. Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 volumes (London, New York 1959), vol. 2, 406. For manuscript copies, see Meyer, *Bartholomäus Anglicus*, 238. Most manuscripts are held in France (especially Paris, nearly forty manuscripts in total), Germany, England, and Italy. This points to its key areas of influence; cf. Michael C. Seymour, ‘Some Medieval French Readers of *De proprietatibus rerum*’, in *Scriptorium* 28 (1974), 100-103. It remained a highly important source of knowledge in the late Middle Ages; numerous (more than fourteen) printed editions appeared in the fifteenth century. It was translated into French in the fourteenth century under King Charles V, and also into Dutch, English and Spanish. Book XV containing the geographical entries also circulated separately, which is a further indication of its popularity. See David Greetham, *The Fabulous Geography of John Trevisa’s Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus’ De proprietatibus rerum* (unpublished diss. City University New York 1974), 188-190 for Bartholomaeus’ substantial influence on compilers. For late medieval ethnic sentiments in French-English translations of the text, see Michel Salvat, ‘Quelques échos des rivalités franco-anglaises dans les traductions du *De proprietatibus rerum* (XIIIe-XVe siècles)’, in *Bien dire et bien apprendre* 5 (1987), 101-109.

5 For Bartholomaeus’ geographical writing see Bernard Ribémont, ‘L’inconnu géographique des encyclopédies médiévales: fermeture et étrangeté’, in *Cahiers de recherches médiévales, XIIIe-XVe siècles* 2 (1997), 101-111. Important studies on *mappae mundi* are Konrad Miller, *Mappae Mundi: Die ältesten Weltkarten*, 6 volumes (Stuttgart 1895-1898); Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World* (London 1997); Margriet Hoogvliet, *Pictura et scriptura: Textes, images et herméneutique des mappae mundi (XIIIe-XVIe siècle)* (Turnhout 2007); Naomi Kline, *Maps of Medieval Thought: The Hereford Paradigm* (Woodbridge 2001); P.D.A. Harvey, *The Hereford World Map: Medieval World Maps and Their Context* (London 2006). Famous twelfth-thirteenth century *mappae mundi* include the Ebstorf map, cf. Hartmut Kugler, Sonja Glauch and Antje Willing (eds), *Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte* (facsimile Berlin 2007); Matthew Paris’ world maps, and the Liber Floridus. See (among the many publications of) Albert Derolez, *The autograph manuscript of the Liber Floridus: A key to the Encyclopedia of Lambert of Saint-Omer* (facsimile Turnhout 1988); Danielle Lecoq, ‘La Mappemonde du “Liber Floridus” ou La Vision du Monde de Lambert de Saint-Omer’, in *Imago Mundi* 39 (1987), 9-49; and J.B. Mitchell, The Matthew Paris Maps, in *The Geographical Journal* 81/1 (1933), 27-34. Key publications on geographical thought in the Middle Ages are A.H. Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge 2005); Natalia Lozovsky, ‘*The Earth Is Our Book*’: *Geographical Knowledge in the Latin West ca. 400-1000* (Ann Arbor 2000); Sylvia Tomasch, *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages* (Philadelphia 1998); Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (Ithaca 1988). Still a very useful guide to geographical and ethnographical sources in this period is John Kirtland Wright, *The Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades: A Study in the History of Medieval Science*

being produced in the vernacular; geographical description was certainly not exclusive to treatises or encyclopaedias, as it was frequently inserted in poems, romances and especially historiographical writing.⁶ Secondly, its compilation answered the call, articulated during the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, to erase the ignorance of a lay public insufficiently educated by local parish priests. To this end, members of the new Dominican and Franciscan orders were beckoned to go forth and preach to a lay audience about orthodox Church views so as to ingrain Western society more deeply with the fibres of Christianity. To aid them in their teachings, extensive compendia of knowledge were drawn up. The geographical entries in Bartholomaeus' encyclopaedia, arranged alphabetically, offered quick access to information about the world's regions and peoples – reflecting God's creation –, which could readily be consulted when compiling sermons for preaching missions. As such, it was an easy to use reference book, usable in the same vein as the many collections of *distinctiones* (keywords found in the Bible with their literal and allegorical meanings), were increasingly accessed using alphabetical subject indexes.⁷ Thirdly, Bartholomaeus' encyclopaedia contains reasonably up-to-date information, often drawn from biblical, classical and early medieval sources, attune to the contemporary mental landscapes of its wide, especially urban, audience. The value of Bartholomaeus' descriptions lies in the fact that they are both representative and novel, incorporating stereotypical ethnic images circulating among intellectuals in his day.⁸

In this sense, Bartholomaeus was a typical product of his day. As many scholars have remarked, the 'twelfth-century renaissance' witnessed an increase both in ethnographic description and realistic

and Tradition in Western Europe (revised edition, New York 1965). An older study of medieval geography is Beazley, *The Dawn of Modern Geography*, 3 volumes (London 1897-1906).

6 For example, the versified geography of England, based on Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, in Alexander Bell (ed.), 'The Anglo-Norman description of England: An edition', in Ian Short (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays* (London 1993), 31-47.

7 See Voorbij, 'Purpose and Audience', 31-45; for the increasing use of the alphabet see Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, 'The Development of Research Tools in the Thirteenth Century', in Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse (eds), *Authentic Witnesses: Approaches to Medieval Texts and Manuscripts* (Notre Dame 1991), 221-255; Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, 'Statim Invenire. Schools, Preachers, and New Attitudes to the Page', in Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (eds), *Renaissance and Renewal*, 201-225. Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, 'Ordinatio and Compilatio Revisited', in Mark D. Jordan and Kent Emery (eds), *Ad litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers* (Notre Dame 1992), 113-134; Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, 'Tabula Alphabetica: Von den Anfängen alphabetischer Registerarbeiten zu geschichtlichen Werken (Vincent von Beauvais OP, Johannes von Hautfuney, Paulinus Minorita OFM)', in Theodor Schieder e.a., *Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel zum 70. Geburtstag am 19. Sept. 1971* (3 volumes, Göttingen 1972), vol. 2, 902-907.

8 Bartholomaeus' fresh geography draws from many sources of ethnography. To a small extent, his information may also bear relation to his own life's experience. As a tutor in theology and minister provincial in the Franciscan Order, Bartholomaeus enjoyed an international career consisting of much travel, stretching from England, Paris to Magdeburg in Saxony (where he became lector in 1231), to Austria (becoming minister provincial in 1247), and probably afterwards to Bohemia and Poland. It is not unthinkable that some of his remarks were also drawn from his own observations. For the most part, however, his entries are keeping with the traditional, learned knowledge of his day. Notably, Bartholomaeus Anglicus does not describe Greenland and Norse America and the land of the khans. The latter is remarkable, seeing that in 1245 Carpini undertook a papal mission to Kuyuk Khan, and on his return travels probably visited Magdeburg. Cf. Seymour, *Bartholomaeus Anglicus*, 33.

observation.⁹ Dress, hairstyles, eating and drinking habits, sexual proclivities and marriage customs, weaponry and fighting skills, forms of husbandry, trade, languages, laws and religious habits are treated at length in a number of sources. Especially the peoples inhabiting the fringes of the European continent were subject to scrutiny by the educated living closer to Europe's heartland.¹⁰ Gerald of Wales' famous ethnographies of the 'barbarous' Irish and Welsh have thus received considerable attention in recent years, as have Adam of Bremen's description of the Danes and Helmold of Bosau's discussion of the Slavs.¹¹

How, then, did Bartholomaeus describe the ethnic groups inhabiting the regions of North-West Europe in his day, and which elements made up their ethnicity? On what grounds did Bartholomaeus attribute ethnic characteristics to inhabitants of North-West Europe? Crucially, what was the significance of these attributions, which images of ethnicity were invoked and to what purpose?

This first chapter addresses the 'learned' concepts of ethnicity. From the entries in Bartholomaeus' encyclopaedia it will become clear that the twelfth and early thirteenth century marked a turning point in thinking about ethnic character. In the earlier Middle Ages, intellectuals expressed the belief that migratory ethnic groups shared ties thought to be based upon language, law, customs and blood, which might be traced back, through royal dynasties, to Trojan, biblical or Scandinavian origins in so-called *origo gentis* myths.¹² Although this awareness certainly did not disappear off the radar from the twelfth century onwards, with the re-emergence of climate theory (discussed in chapter 2) the process of the 'biologization' of ethnic differences slowly set in in West-

9 Marc Stuart Cohen, *The Ethnographic Dimensions of Conversion: A Study of Conversion Narratives in Northern Europe in the Middle Ages* (diss. University of Toronto 1995), 153-158; M.-D. Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West* (Toronto 1997), ed. and transl. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little, esp. 4-18, containing a selection of nine essays from Marie-Dominique Chenu, *La théologie au douzième siècle* (Paris 1957); Antonia Gransden, 'Realistic Observation in Twelfth-Century England', in *Speculum* 47/1 (1972), 29-51; Józef Babicz and Heribert M. Nobis, 'Die Entdeckung der Natur in der geographischen Literatur und Kartographie an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Renaissance', in Albert Zimmermann and Andreas Speer (eds), *Mensch und Natur im Mittelalter*, 2 volumes (Berlin 1991-1992), vol. 2, 939-951.

10 Marek Tamm, 'A New World into Old Words: The Eastern Baltic Region and the Cultural Geography of Medieval Europe', in Alan V. Murray (ed.), *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier* (Farnham 2009), 11-36, here at 15. Important sources are Arnold of Lübeck's *Chronica Slavorum* (circa 1210); Henry of Livonia's *Chronicon Livoniae* (circa 1224-1227), and the late thirteenth-century anonymous *Descriptiones terrarum*, which describes regions in Eastern and Northern Europe. This text was possibly also produced by someone belonging to a mendicant order. It has been published by Marvin L. Colker, 'America Rediscovered in the Thirteenth Century', in *Speculum* 54/4 (1979), 712-726; see Tamm, 'Eastern Baltic Region', 16-17 and notes 24-26 for further literature.

11 See especially David Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden: Vorstellungen und Fremdheitskategorien bei Rimbart, Thietmar von Merseburg, Adam von Bremen und Helmold von Bosau* (Berlin 2005); Volker Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde: Identität und Fremdheit in den Chroniken Adams von Bremen, Helmolds von Bosau und Arnold von Lübeck* (Berlin 2002). For Gerald of Wales' ethnography, see especially Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, and Jean-Marie Boivin, *L'Irlande au Moyen Âge: Giraud de Barri et la Topographia Hibernica (1188)* (Paris 1993). Some descriptions, such as Gerald's discussion of the Irish bareback riding skills, or the Welsh' musicality or their dental customs (polishing their teeth with green hazel), might be termed realistic. I refer also to, for example, Ralph de Diceto's discussion of the people of Aquitaine and their eating habits; cf. Gransden, 'Realistic Observation', 48.

12 Hoppenbrouwers, 'Medieval Peoples Imagined', 45-50; Geary, *Myth of Nations*, 41-62; Reynolds, 'Medieval *Origines Gentium*', 375-390.

European thought. As will become clear, the influence of the rediscovery of climate theory was to have a fundamental impact on notions of ethnic character. However, as we will see, ethnic characterizations in this body of texts were interpreted and bore significance first and foremost in light of the Christianization of Europe. Below, Bartholomaeus Anglicus' descriptions of ethnic peoples will thus first be discussed in light of the notion of the Christianization and civilization of European peoples, in relation to geographical thought. I will address the purpose of geographical description and the meaning of etymology; the geographical positioning of Western Europe in light of the theological concept that the creation took place in the East; and, finally, the notion that power, learning and civilization eventually coursed westwards, which was reflected in images of ethnicity. Bartholomaeus' depiction of peoples living in the northern fringes of Europe as barbarous semi-pagans might be placed in a broader discourse about the fringes of Europe as Canaan lands of milk and honey and the spread of Christendom from the heart of North-West Europe, which is described as the seat of civilization. Within this discourse, I discuss how representations of civilization or barbarity remain interwoven with degrees of religiosity, which were viewed in geographical terms.

Axes of identity: from East to West

In this first section, the ethnic images will be placed along two axes of identity: the north-middle-south axis, drawn from the Greek-Roman classical tradition of antiquity, and the east-west axis, based upon scriptural tradition.¹³ On the north-south axis of identity, the inhabitants in the North were often classified as headstrong, barbarian peoples lacking civilization, restraint, refinement, or political organization; and the southerners as effeminate, unreliable, fickle people.¹⁴ This concept markedly regained influence from the end of the eleventh century onwards, with the re-emergence of ancient climate theory, especially through the translation of medical Arabic treatises into Latin.¹⁵ This will be discussed further in chapter 2. In this chapter, I shall focus on the east-west axis.

The east-west axis can be broken down into two concepts: first the notion that the world and Christianity arose in the Orient, where Paradise was located, as depicted so many T-O *mappae*

13 For example, Hrabanus Maurus says that the world can be divided into two parts, East and West; cf. *Commentariorum in Genesim* 2, 6, Patrologia Latina 107 Col. 513C, echoing Jerome, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 72 (Turnhout 1959), 63. Suzanne Akbari is, to my knowledge, the first to clearly position the East as mirror for the West in Bartholomaeus' medieval geography. Suzanne Akbari, 'From Due East to True North: Orientalism and Orientation', in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (ed.), *The Postcolonial Middle Ages* (Basingstoke 2000), 19-34, here at 28 and notes on page 33. See also Anthony Pagden, 'Europe: Conceptualizing a Continent', in Anthony Pagden (ed.), *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge 2002), 33-54, here at 35-36. It must be noted that in the Middle Ages, from a northern perspective, east and south are sometimes blurred – the Levant positioned in both the east and the south.

14 For the north-middle-south axis in relation to ethnic identity in antiquity, see especially Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton 2004), chapter 1. As Nicholas Howe remarked, Pliny the Elder's geography was arranged according to latitude, not longitude; cf. Nicholas Howe, *The Old English Catalogue Poems* (Copenhagen 1985), 41.

15 For the reintroduction of climate theory, see Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac and Joseph Ziegler, *The Origins of Racism in the West* (Cambridge 2009), especially Peter Biller's contribution, 'Proto-Racial Thought in Medieval Science', 157-180.

mundi at the top of their maps.¹⁶ At the same time, for learned men in the twelfth century, the Orient might symbolize the future: the East was where the world began, and where it would cease to exist. At the centre – the navel – of the earth rose Jerusalem as the future ‘bride’ of Christ.¹⁷ For some theologians such as twelfth-century Hugh of St Victor, the positioning on the Orient and Occident bore an eschatological meaning, as the world was expected to cease to exist once Christendom had reached the farthest fringes of the West: both time and place thus coursed in a westward direction.¹⁸ Secondly, there was the patristic concept of the east-west translation of knowledge, power, of chivalry (mainly emphasized in vernacular sources) and riches from Babylonia, Greece, Egypt, and Rome to the West, whether France (Paris as a centre of learning) or Germany (as receptor of the imperial power).¹⁹ In addition to the east-west axis, we can also point to the tripartite genealogical-territorial division of Asia, Europe, Africa visualized on T-O *mappae mundi*, which formed the basic scheme of most geographical treatises. In the early Middle Ages, in biblical exegesis (on Genesis), these three continents were often – though not consistently – assigned to the descendants of Noah’s children Shem (who were allotted by far the largest part: Asia), Japheth (who gained Europe, sometimes northern Asia) and Ham (hot Africa).²⁰ On some maps, embracing the world and the whole ecumenicity of human diversity with his hands and feet was Christ the Redeemer.

16 In T-O maps, Asia is always situated on the top half of the globe. For the location of Paradise or the Garden of Eden in the East, see Alessandro Scafi, *Mapping Paradise: A History of Heaven and Earth* (London 2006). For the T-O map, see further references in note 5 of this chapter.

17 Cf. Psalm 73:12; Ezechiel 5:5. The location of Jerusalem in the centre of the earth is a commonplace in medieval thought. See Akbari, ‘From Due East to True North’, 21 for further references. As Suzanne Akbari writes, Jerusalem is more a place of return than of origin – an emotive pull that it has in both Judaism as well as Christianity.

18 In medieval theology the Syrian bishop Severian of Gabala’s *De mundi creatione* v was an early expounder of this notion. In the fourth century, he wrote: ‘God looked into the future and set the first man in that place [the Orient] in order to cause him to understand that, just as the light of heaven moves towards the west, so the human race hastens toward death.’ Cf. Wright, *Geographical Lore*, 233-235 (for translation) and further in chapter 4. In the twelfth century the idea was present in the thought of Hugh of St Victor in *De arca Noë morali* iv 9.

19 David Louis Gassman, *Translatio studii: A Study of Intellectual History in the Thirteenth Century* (2 volumes, micr. dissertation, Ann Arbor 1973); Ulrich Krämer, *Translatio imperii et studii: Zum Geschichts- und Kulturverständnis in der französischen Literatur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Bonn 1996), esp. chapter 5; Herbert Grundmann, ‘Sacerdotium – Regnum – Studium. Zur Wertung der Wissenschaft im 13. Jahrhundert’, in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 34 (1951), 5-21; Édouard Jeuneau, *Translatio studii: The Transmission of Learning: A Gilsonian Theme* (Toronto 1995).

20 Cf. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 1, ‘De orbe’. See John Williams, ‘Isidore, Orosius and the Beatus Maps’, in *Imago Mundi* 49 (1997), 7-32. Benjamin Braude has argued extensively that the division of continents among Shem, Japheth and Ham is by no means consistent on medieval maps. Although he has demonstrated some inconsistencies, still the tradition of attributing Africa to Ham, Europe to Japheth and Asia to Shem is powerfully present in many sources, both visual and textual. Sometimes Japheth is also attributed northern Asia, such as in Isidore’s *Etymologiae* xiv 3, 31. See Braude, ‘The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods’, 103-142. The attribution could be both allegorical or literal. Akbari, ‘From Due East to True North’, 23.

However, if the East was the cradle of mankind, by the twelfth century the North-West was the core of Europe: *dulce* France, merry England, the rich Rhineland.²¹ As Robert Bartlett has established, from the twelfth century onwards, the economic, cultural and intellectual heartland of Western Europe had shifted north-westwards to – in broad terms – the Ruhr area.²² At the same time, northern France was viewed, by intellectuals from this core region, as the homeland of learning and chivalry, where Paris was shaping influential intellectuals, such as Bartholomaeus Anglicus. In his encyclopaedia, the centre of Western Europe is thus pictured as idyllic, full of corn, fruit, and wine, through which rivers course, where precious stones and metals are plenteous. This area, as we shall see, was presented as region of bounty, temperance and civilization. Its inhabitants, especially in northern France and England, were depicted as cultured and courtly. From its own viewpoint, Christianized Western Europe thus held a lofty position, both in religious beliefs and degrees of civilization. To the edges of these idyllic regions, however, wild, cruel pagans or semi-pagans dwelled, squandering the potential benefits of the land, given to sexual licentiousness, and lacking restraint of urges or emotions.

It is from this perspective – the birth of mankind and Christendom in the East – viewed from the new cultural heartland in the West, that we shall explore Bartholomaeus' images of ethnicity. For it is from the heartland of Europe that encyclopaedists such as Bartholomaeus, but also Gervase of Tilbury and Alexander Neckam, set to paper their perceptions of the other.²³ First we must thus establish where Bartholomaeus drew his information from, and offer some insight in his outlook, as a typical product of its day. What did he discuss in the in total 175 entries on the world's regions and to what purpose? These questions bear relation to the significance attributed to ethnic images by Bartholomaeus and to the self-identity of those living in the new heartland of North-West Europe.

Bartholomaeus' entries

Bartholomaeus Anglicus was born in England at the end of the twelfth century. He probably first studied at Oxford and afterward joined the Franciscan Order in 1224 or 1225 and became a Bible lecturer in Paris. In 1230 came the request from the General of the Franciscan Order to send him to Magdeburg in Saxony to lecture theology to student friars in the *studium provinciale*. It was here that he composed his encyclopaedia. In 1247, he was promoted to minister provincial of Austria, and in 1262 to that of Saxony. In between, a 'Bartholomaeus of Prague' was also minister provincial of Bohemia in 1255-1256, leading the eastward expansion of the Franciscan mission, and it is certainly

21 Koht, 'Dawn of Nationalism', 268 sees *dulce France* as a literary topos which we can see 'a real love of the home country'. The concept is, however, much more complicated.

22 Robert Bartlett, 'Heartland and Border: The Mental and Physical Geography of Medieval Europe', in Huw Price and John Watts (eds), *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages: Essays in Memory of Rees Davies* (Oxford 2007), 23-36, here at 26-27.

23 Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor*, ed. and transl. S.E. Banks and J.W. Binns (Oxford 2002), especially book II; Alexander Neckam, 'De naturis rerum libri duo'. *With the poem of the same author 'De laudibus divinae sapientiae'*, ed. Thomas Wright (London 1863).

possible that this is ‘our’ Bartholomaeus Anglicus. In 1257, he was designated papal legate to Bohemia, Poland, Moravia, Austria and then bishop of Lukow, but the Tartar invasions prevented him from taking up this position. He ended his days in Saxony.²⁴

Bartholomaeus’ *On the Properties of Things* can be termed an encyclopaedia of theology and science, arranged in nineteen books. Composed for Franciscan pupils, it was employed as a comprehensive reference tool, a book of the world, to gain knowledge of the hidden messages contained in nature and humanity as manifestations of God’s creation,²⁵ following the Augustinian idea that knowledge of the created world could enhance knowledge of God, even drawing the soul upwards towards God.²⁶ The 175 entries on the world’s regions, ‘De proprietatibus Provinciae’, are seemingly an amalgamation of references to the Franciscan provinces combined with traditional and biblical geography. As said, the new geographical structure of the Franciscan provinces – deviating from the traditional Church divisions – was marked out according to the demographic shifts which had occurred in the previous decades. The new lay-out was intended to cater to the demands of preaching to the lay communities by mendicant friars in Western Europe. As such, the Franciscan territorial divisions were criticized by Paris masters as impinging on traditional (biblical) ecclesiastical geography, yet were legitimized by the papacy.²⁷ Devoid of political meaning though more attune to the demographic reality, Bartholomaeus’ entries might therefore be viewed as a representation of the ‘state of affairs’ of the spread of Christianity among ethnic groups, their culture, customs, and characteristics at the end of the first half of the thirteenth century. We might presume that, in order for his encyclopaedic work to serve as a useful tool for mendicant friars

24 Seymour, *Bartholomaeus Anglicus*, 1-10. For the Franciscans at Paris, see John C. Murphy, ‘The Early Franciscan Studium at the University of Paris’, in L.S. Domonkos and R.J. Schneider, *Studium generale : Studies offered to Astrik L. Gabriel by his former students at the Mediaeval Institute, University of Notre Dame, on the occasion of his election as an Honorary Doctor of the Ambrosiana in Milan* (Notre Dame 1967), 162-203.

25 Seymour, *Bartholomaeus Anglicus*, 13-14. Greetham, *Fabulous Geography*, 193-194. See also D.C. Greetham, ‘The Concept of Nature in Bartholomaeus Anglicus’, in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41/4 (1980), 663-677. For twelfth-century encyclopaedias and the ‘renaissance’, see Bernard Ribémont, *La ‘Renaissance’ du XIII^e siècle et l’encyclopédisme* (Paris 2002); Benoît Beyer de Ryke, ‘Les encyclopédies médiévales, un état de la question’, *Pecia: Ressources en médiévistique* 1 (2002), 9-42. On the structure of medieval encyclopaedias, see Christel Meier, ‘Organisation of Knowledge and Encyclopaedic ordo. Functions and Purposes of a Universal Literary Genre’, in Peter Binkley (ed.), *Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts: Proceedings of the Second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996* (Leiden 1997), 103-126; Peter Binkley, ‘Preachers’ Responses to Thirteenth-Century Encyclopaedism’, in idem, *Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts*, 75-88; and Eva Albrecht, ‘The Organization of Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum Maius* and of Some Other Latin Encyclopedias’, in Harvey (ed.), in Steven Harvey (ed.), *The Medieval Hebrew Encyclopedias of Science and Philosophy: Proceedings of the Bar-Ilan University Conference* (Dordrecht, Boston, London 2000), 46-74.

26 Voorbij, ‘Purpose and Audience’, 35. See further Christel Meier, ‘Grundzüge der mittelalterlichen Enzyklopädie. Zu Inhalten, Formen und Funktionen einer problematischen Gattung’, in Ludger Grenzmann and Karl Stackmann (eds), *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit: Symposium Wolfenbüttel 1981* (Stuttgart 1984), 472-480.

27 Hans-Joachim Schmidt, ‘Establishing an Alternative Territorial Pattern. The Provinces of the Mendicant Orders’, in Michael Robson and Jens Röhrkasten (eds), *Franciscan Organisation in the Mendicant Context: Formal and Informal Structures of the Friars’ lives and Ministry in the Middle Ages* (Berlin 2010), 1-18.

embarking on preaching missions, his representation of ethnic characteristics was in step with his beliefs regarding ethnic characteristics – which, as we will see, were grounded more on learned theory and traditional sources than the ‘proverbial’, cultural images circulating in wider circles of secular clergy and nobility.²⁸

In alphabetical order, the regions stretch from Europe to the ancient Roman provinces of Asia Minor and the biblical lands. Besides geographical information about the regions’ boundaries, rivers and mountains, the entries contain vivid descriptions of the natural products and minerals, towns, and the inhabitants’ character and customs, and in some cases physical appearances, based both on classical, early medieval and contemporary sources, belonging to the fields of geography, etymology, Bible exegesis, historiography and poetry, first and foremost Isidore’s *Etymologies*. Pliny, Orosius, and Bede are thus cited with great frequency, as well as (glosses on) the Old and New Testament.²⁹ These traditional sources are however enriched with fresh details.

This mixture of the old and the new has resulted, it must be said, in a somewhat muddled representation. To give one example: Belgica Gallica seems to stretch across almost the whole of present-day France and is inhabited by a generally fierce people, but it is also a peaceful and quiet land, where many people live and speak different languages. Here Bartholomaeus is quoting both Isidore but possibly also perhaps the otherwise unknown ‘Erodatus’, the ‘*historiographus orbis terrarum*’ who ‘did not refrain from scrutinizing the corners of Germania’.³⁰ Some boundaries are carefully stated, such as Gascony; others, however, are unclear and geographical mistakes occur regarding Flanders, Lorraine, Brabant.³¹ Bartholomaeus also tends to accumulate sources instead of sifting and choosing the most up-to-date information, and therefore includes entries on both ‘Britannia’ and ‘Anglia’, or ‘Francia’ and ‘Gallia’. In this sense, he was typical: by the twelfth century in geography used in non-political sources, Francia and Gallia were used inconsistently and interchangeably, and Francia could refer to either the entire Capetian kingdom or merely the region

28 See especially chapter 6 for proverbial images.

29 In fact, those chapters concerning regions outside of Europe are almost word for word duplications of Isidore’s *Etymologiae*, containing much out-of-date information. Major sources are Isidore’s *Etymologiae* IX and XV, quoted verbatim apart from lemmas referring to contemporary Europe; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* IV-VI; Orosius, *Historiae adversum Paganos* I, and the mysterious geographer ‘Erodatus’. Other references are made to among others Solinus, Augustine, Paulus Diaconus and Petrus Comestor. See Seymour, *Bartholomaeus Anglicus*, 158. Most encyclopaedists followed Isidore’s *Etymologiae*. Thirteenth-century Vincent of Beauvais, for example, integrated Isidore’s accounts of peoples, languages and geography. Another example of a traditional source is Honorius Augustodunensis, *Imago Mundi*, printed by Valerie I.J. Flint (ed.) in *Archives d’Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 57 (1982), 7-153. Versied geographical descriptions such as twelfth-century Godfrey of Viterbo’s depictions of Lombardy, Venetia, Francia and the Alsace in his *Gesta Friderici*, are also remarkably quiet about the peoples living there, contributing little contemporary knowledge.

30 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* XV 166, ‘De Thuringia’: ‘qui nullatenus permisit secreta in Germaniae confinio inscrutata’. This same ‘Erodatus’ is seemingly quoted in the Pierpont Morgan MS 461 (as Erodotos), in a text on the Plinian races, contrasting Europe and Africa. See John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (reprint New York 2000), 55. Peter Biller has suggested that Bartholomaeus might have invented this source, exercising his wit, yet it does seem that this is a source now lost. Cf. Biller, ‘Proto-racial thought’, 171.

31 As remarked by Thorndike, *History of Experimental Science*, vol. 2, 427.

of the Paris basin; Britannia could mean England (excluding Scotland and Wales), Anglia could include Ireland.³² Of the political divisions of power he also remains silent. Instead, displaying little awareness of the political contingents, he discusses Saxon characteristics (he compiled his text in Saxony) in the entry 'De Alemannia' (as if Saxony is the main part of Alemannia), and inserts cross references in 'De Saxonia' to Alemannia and Germania (the latter he seems to have forgotten to enter into his encyclopaedia).³³ Bartholomaeus treats the Thuringians, Saxons, and Franconians of the German Empire separately, as he does the regions of Francia/Gallia (both included); his repertoire would seem, in that sense, little different from the ethnic-geographical denominations employed in much twelfth-century Latin literary verse and vernacular *chansons de geste*: as a patchwork quilt of ethnic groups.³⁴

On what basis does Bartholomaeus make distinctions between regions? Around 900, Regino of Prüm had declared that the variety of peoples was determined by descent, manners, law and language.³⁵ Of these four categories, Bartholomaeus devotes special attention to two: descent and manners. Most entries begin with an etymological explanation of the region's name, sometimes based upon an origin myth, in a few cases upon geographical features, or on pure etymological deduction. Some of these etymologies – usually derived from Isidore of Seville – are drawn directly from the ethnic group's supposed character (or conversely, its character was inferred from the group's name). The name of the Thuringians, for example, is said to originate from *durus*, hard, as they were purportedly hard and cruel towards their enemies.³⁶ Some of the chapters also include biblical or mythological stories, for example the Babylonian confusion of languages or the story of the Amazons. Remarkably little is said about languages, however. Notable, on the other hand, is the extreme emphasis on the environment of the regions, its fertility or lack thereof, the crops and fruits they bear. As shall become clear below, the significance of these environmental descriptions stretches much further than mere praise of the beauty and bounty of the landscapes: it bears a direct relationship to the moral and religious disposition of the region's inhabitants. In order to understand this, we must first address the underlying fabric of Bartholomaeus' geographical description.

32 See Bernd Schneidmüller, 'Nomen gentis. Nations- und Namenbildung im nachkarolingischen Europa', in Dieter Geuenich, Wolfgang Haubrichs and Jörg Jarnut (eds), *Nomen et gens: Zur historischen Aussagekraft frühmittelalterlicher Personennamen* (Berlin and New York 1997), 140-156 and especially Schneidmüller, *Nomen patriae*, 83-84. By the early thirteenth century, King Philip August was calling the whole monarchy *regnum Franciae* in charters issued by the royal chancellery. Nonetheless, in *chansons de geste* of this period Francia could also refer to the entire Carolingian Empire, or merely to the region around Paris. For Anglia/Britannia see further chapter 8 note 25.

33 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 13, 'De Alemannia' and 139, 'De Saxonia'.

34 Schneidmüller, *Nomen patriae*, 191-208.

35 See the Introduction note 10.

36 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 166, 'De Thuringia': 'Gens quidem secundum nomen patriae Thuringia, id est dura contra hostes, maxime et severa.'

Fabric of geographical description

The fabric of these descriptions sheds more light on the religious significance of ethnic characterization in medieval compilations of knowledge. In fact, the vast encyclopaedic works produced in the first half of the thirteenth century, including the works of Thomas of Cantimpré and Vincent of Beauvais, were essentially compendia of Bible exegesis. Bartholomaeus' object was thus to provide the friars with an organized synthesis of biblical knowledge. Based on the scripture as interpreted by Augustine, Bartholomaeus' nineteen books signified universality, or, according to Maurice Seymour, 'a gloss on things and places mentioned in the Bible'.³⁷ This has to do with the fact that within medieval hermeneutics, nature and all things created were viewed as 'legible according to Scripture and understood and interpreted through the Bible and the Church Fathers'.³⁸ The objective was to interpret the literal or figurative signs of scripture; through understanding these signs, God and his word could be understood.³⁹ Thus, half a millennium earlier, Bede had already drawn up a similar though much less detailed alphabetical gazetteer as a companion to his commentary on the book Acts, in the New Testament, the *Names of regions*, topographically portraying the stage for the spread of Christianity in the Near East, and interlarding his *History of the Church* with geographical asides.⁴⁰ Similar gazetteers had been compiled by Eusebius and Jerome, among others.⁴¹ These descriptions of biblical places reflected Augustine's opinion that knowledge of scriptural geography and toponymy was essential to understanding the Scripture's historical meaning.⁴² Accordingly, in the encyclopaedia's introduction Bartholomaeus claims to present 'little or nothing of my own, but instead all that is written in the original texts of saints and philosophers'.⁴³

From a broader perspective, besides unravelling hidden truths, medieval geography served the purpose of placing events on the world's stage as sign posts in the history of salvation. Prior to the twelfth century, most extensive ethnographic passages can be found usually in prefaces to historiographical texts. Although this was a convention in keeping with classical historical writing, in the early Middle Ages it gained a specific religious context. As A.H. Merrills has argued

37 Seymour, *Bartholomaeus Anglicus*, 11-12.

38 Tamm, 'Eastern Baltic Region', 12; Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven 1993), 12 and 52; Lozovsky, *The Earth Is Our Book*.

39 Howe, *Old English Catalogue Poems*, 46-47.

40 Merrills, *History and Geography*, 242, 247. Such alphabetical gazetteers demonstrate that presenting knowledge alphabetically was not a completely new phenomenon in the thirteenth century.

41 In the first quarter of the fourth century, Eusebius had compiled his *On the Place Names in the Holy Scripture* (or *Onomasticon*), an alphabetical gazetteer of place names in the Scriptures.

42 Merrills, *History and Geography*, 241-242.

43 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* (Heidelberg 1488), Prohemium: 'de meo pauca vel quasi nulla apposui, sed omnia quae dicuntur de libris authenticis sanctorum et philosophorum'. Similar claims are made in the introductory words to books XIV and XV, on the world and its regions. In reality, however, he produced geographical descriptions far removed from the realms of scripture and philosophy. Besides the practical reason of creating a tool for mendicant preachers, including 'new' territories in his compilation may have sprung from an urgency to apply biblical truths to a post-biblical era, as earlier twelfth-century reformists had likewise endeavoured in historical theology. See especially the chapter 'Reformist Apocalypticism and the Battlefield of History' in Whalen's *Dominion of God*, 72-99.

extensively, history and geography were viewed as inseparable in historical narrative, as both reflected upon the activity of humanity in time and space.⁴⁴ In early medieval historiography, this temporal-spatial relationship was interpreted specifically through the religious prism of God's divine 'plan'. Geography offered the spatial context wherein historical events occur, which were performed by and viewed in relationship to the diversity of humanity; indeed, only through history and events in which humanity acted, did a geographical space gain meaning. The first religious geographical introduction can be found in Orosius' fifth-century *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, in which Orosius stated that he endeavoured to disclose, both in time and space, the conflicts of humanity and the world, burning with vice, as viewed from a watchtower.⁴⁵ This popular viewpoint was continued in Paul the Deacon's *History of the Longobards*, Isidore's *History of the Goths, Vandals and Sueves*, Jordanes' *Getica*, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Saxo Grammaticus' *History of the Danes*, Adam of Bremen's *Deeds of the Bishops of the Hamburg Church*, and Henry of Huntingdon's *History of the English*, which all include geographical-ethnographical descriptions on the opening pages.⁴⁶ This list is certainly not exhaustive.

If geography formed the setting for historical events, history was acted out by peoples. As such, the bond between a territory, its history and its inhabitants could invite contemplation on the fate of peoples in relation to divine providence. Geography provided the landscape for the conflicts of the human race in relation to the salvation history of the world. As Nathalie Lozovsky writes, 'as such, the earth could become a subject of contemplation, meditation on questions of earthly transience and human sins – an image and purpose demonstrated by biblical commentaries'.⁴⁷ Understanding the significance of peoples and places in relation to earthly transience could be obtained by studying the role of peoples in historical events in accordance with God's plan. One important tool for understanding peoples' behaviour in the history of mankind, and their willingness to embrace Christianity, was etymological deduction, examining their 'core essence'.

Etymologies and ethnicity

In traditional biblical exegesis, gaining knowledge of the historical meaning of regions and their inhabitants in light of God's plan was obtained by searching for the original, inherent core meaning of words.⁴⁸ Understanding a signifier (e.g. a name) meant understanding the meaning of the thing itself. This was the fundament of Isidore's *Etymologies*, one of the most influential books written in the Middle Ages. As Nicholas Howe explains, for Isidore 'a fact is the name or word because from it may be derived knowledge of the thing itself'.⁴⁹ This knowledge was obtained through etymological deduction, 'a hermeneutical principle according to which knowledge of a given thing may be

44 Merrills, *History and Geography*, 8.

45 Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos* I, 1.

46 Merrills, *History and Geography*, 1-4.

47 Lozovsky, *The Earth Is Our Book*, 153.

48 Howe, *Old English Catalogue Poems*, 59. See also Greetham, *Fabulous Geography*, 282-301.

49 Howe, *Old English Catalogue Poems*, 34.

realized from an understanding of its name'.⁵⁰ Indeed, according to Isidore, at the crucial moment of creation Adam had spoken 'true words' when assigning names to things; if two words were similar, they must also somehow be inherently related; names referred to the active lives and behaviour of their owners.⁵¹ Thus, in learned medieval encyclopaedic thought, ethnonyms – one of the six main attributes of an ethnic community according to Anthony Smith and viewed as pivotal to ethnic awareness – were believed to reflect a transcendental entity; by examining the form of a word, one might learn to understand the essence of the entity.⁵² In order to identify names with peoples, Isidore relied on Jerome's alphabetical gazetteer commenting on the peoples mentioned in Genesis.⁵³ This etymologizing tradition, so highly influential because of Isidore's *Etymologies*, remained a familiar element for encyclopaedic compilers such as Hrabanus Maurus, Bartholomaeus Anglicus, Vincent of Beauvais or Gervase of Tilbury.⁵⁴

If names were viewed to reflect divine truths, the tradition of explaining ethnic groups' names etymologically thus formed an essential element of intellectual thinking about ethnicity. In Bartholomaeus' work, etymology seems a key element to his perception of the ties between a region, its geography, inhabitants and rulers. In his *On the Properties of Things* we can distinguish between four categories of etymologies, based on (1) foundation or *origo gentis* (descent) myths; (2) geographical features; (3) outward appearances; and (4) internal character traits. The first category, foundation or *origo gentis* myths, was becoming increasingly popular in twelfth-century Latin (mainly historiographical and vernacular) texts – circulating in intellectual, aristocratic and possibly urban circles, and relating to significant social and political communities of their day.⁵⁵ Such descent myths intimated that the inhabitants of an area descended from an eponymous founder. Francia, for example, was etymologized from Francus, the Trojan who purportedly travelled in Aeneas' company

50 Idem, 60; Michel de Bouard, 'Les encyclopédies médiévales sur "La connaissance de la nature et du monde"', in *Revue des questions historiques* 116 (1930), 258-304, here at 286; Kästner, 'Der großmächtige Riese und Recke Teuton', 75-77. For a discussion of ethnic names, see Ludwig Rübkeil, 'Völker, Länder- und Einwohnernamen', in Walter de Gruyter, *Name Studies. An International Handbook of Onomastics* (Berlin and New York 1996), 1330-1343; W. Haubrichs, 'Veriloquium nominis: Zur Namensexegese im frühen Mittelalter', in Hans Fromm, Wolfgang Harms, Uwe Ruberg and Ernst Friedrich Ohly (eds), *Verbum et signum: Beiträge zur mediävistischen Bedeutungsforschung*, 2 volumes (Munich 1975), vol. 1, 231-256.

51 Friedman, *Monstrous Races*, 110.

52 Smith, *National Identity*, 21.

53 In Genesis 10. Isidore consulted Jerome's *Quaestiones hebraicae in Genesim*, ed. P. de Lagarde, in *Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera* I, 1, CCSL 72 (Turnhout 1959), 1-56. Cf. Patrick Gautier Dalché, *Géographie et culture. La représentation de l'espace du vie au xiiie siècle* (Aldershot 1997), 278-9. Originally published as 'Isidore Hispalensis, De gentium vocabulis (Etym. IX, 2): quelques sources non repérées', in *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 31 (1985), 278-286.

54 Hrabanus Maurus, *De rerum naturis*; Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale*; Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia*.

55 See Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 258-259. Reynolds questions the extent to which laymen were familiar with descent myths, stating that those laymen who were politically active, were probably familiar with descent myths from the thirteenth century. In view of the recurrence of descent myths in historiographical sources, including those in the vernacular, it would seem however that this was a widespread concept.

and afterwards established a Troyes on banks of the Rhine.⁵⁶ Similarly, the inhabitants of Britain, says Bartholomaeus, took their name from Brutus, another Trojan hero; in courtly circles, this was the butt end of a joke about the English descending from brutes.⁵⁷ Referring to Genesis' story about the dispersion of peoples after the Flood, Bartholomaeus also employed biblical genealogy to etymologize.⁵⁸ The name Africa was thus derived from Afer, the son of Abraham.⁵⁹ The second category, names of territories etymologized characteristics of physical geography; Alemannia was named after the river the Alemannus (now sometimes explained as coming from 'alle mannen'); Burgundy from its burgh towers.⁶⁰

More important is the intricate relation between ethnic names and physical characteristics in a number of etymologies derived from the third category – appearance.⁶¹ An ethnic name could be based upon cultural practices relating to dress or haircuts; famously, the Longobards' name was etymologized as stemming from their long beards, possibly one of the few etymological explanations which bore a kernel of truth, although long beards formed part of the Longobards' origin myth.⁶² An etymology of appearance was sometimes used for the Picts, who tattooed and painted their bodies, and were thus *picti*.⁶³ The name of the Albanians was, said Isidore, derived from their white hair: *albus*, white from the incessant snows (their eyes, he writes, were bluish-grey, resulting in excellent night vision).⁶⁴ Skin colour was also considered a determinant: the Mauri (Moors) of Mauretania were said to take their name from *maron*, meaning black in Greek, as they

56 Honorius of Autun, *Imago Mundi* xxvii.

57 Isidore, *Etymologiae* IX 2, 102; see further chapter 8.

58 Greetham, *Fabulous Geography*, 258-260.

59 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 19, 'De Affrica'; cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae* IX, 2, 115. Of course, in many cases it was not possible to employ etymology, such as in the case of Gog and Magog who descended from Japheth, or the Ismaelites as children of Cedar. Some regions were named after a ruler or tribe, such as Crete; Judea, of course, was named after Judas, son of Jacob, founder of the tribe of Judas. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 42, 'De Creta', and 76, 'De Iudea'. Bartholomaeus does not say which king lent his name to the island of Crete.

60 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 13, 'De Alemannia'; 31, 'De Burgundia'.

61 Already in antiquity regions were named after the appearance, dress and hair styles of their inhabitants. The three Gauls – Gallia Togata (Lombardy), Gallia Comata (Burgundia and Francia) and Gallia Braccata (Germania) – were distinguished according to the toga, hair (the long-haired Burgundians and Franks) and trousers (the Germans wearing long trousers). See Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia* II 10.

62 Fredegar, *Chronicle* IV 65 (echoed for example by Honorius of Autun, *De imagine mundi* xxvi and Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia* II 10) said that a voice from above gave them their name when entering into battle with the Huns. The women were said to have tied the hair on their heads onto their cheeks and chins so that they looked like men. Not only did the Longobards' long beards form part of their origin myth, they were also a part of their (elite's) self-presentation (*Selbstdarstellung*). For example, Longobard kings and dukes from the earlier Longobard period liked to have themselves portrayed with long beards on seals or on weaponry. See Rübekel, 'Völker', 1331; Walter Pohl, 'Memory, Identity and Power in Lombard Italy', in Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (eds), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge 2000), 9-28, here at 18-19.

63 Isidore, *Etymologiae* IX 2, 103; Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 152, 'De Scottia'.

64 Isidore, *Etymologiae* IX 2, 65; Honorius of Autun, *De imagine mundi* xviii; Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 7, 'De Albania'.

were burnt by the heat of the sun.⁶⁵ Conversely, white-skinned people lived in Galilea, Galicia (who were said to descend from the Greeks and thus possessed a greater intellect) and Gaul drew their name from their milky-white bodies, for, in a display of iron logic, ‘*gala* is Greek for milk’.⁶⁶ These etymologies are pointers to the strong significance attributed to skin colour from early times.⁶⁷

Finally, there are those etymologies drawn from the fourth category, internal character traits or ‘inner disposition’. In Bartholomaeus’ encyclopaedia, these explanations seem to have been applied especially to the courageous, fear inspiring Germanic groups, who in general, spawned (*germinare*) many peoples.⁶⁸ Thus, Thuringians were ‘hard’, *durus* toward their enemies.⁶⁹ In his partly encyclopaedic *Recreation for an Emperor*, Gervase of Tilbury explains that the name of the Saxons, the strongest of men pursuing their enemies over land and sea, ‘comes from their endurance and strength, in which they resemble rocks’ (*saxa*).⁷⁰ Traditionally, the Franks had been called *feroces*, fierce by nature, hence their name; this indeed would seem to be the original interpretation used by the Franks themselves.⁷¹

Such explanations of peoples’ names point to the belief that ethnic peoples shared a ‘core essence’. However, this is immediately complicated by the fact that throughout history, peoples’ names had changed, and that their names might be interpreted according to various etymological

65 Isidore, *Etymologiae* IX 2, 122.

66 In Isidore, *Etymologiae* IX 2, 110: ‘Galleci a candore dicti, unde et Galli.’ Further, Isidore, *Etymologiae* XIII 19, 5, XIV 3, 23; IX 2, 104 and XIV 4, 25; Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* XV 66, ‘De Gallia’; Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia* II 10; Honorius of Autun, *De imagine mundi* I 26. For Gervase of Tilbury’s text see Michael Rothmann, ‘Totius orbis descriptio. Die “Otia Imperialia” des Gervasius von Tilbury: Eine höfische Enzyklopädie und die scientia naturalis’, in Christel Meier (eds), *Die Enzyklopädie im Wandel vom Hochmittelalter bis zur frühen Neuzeit* (Munich 2002), 189-224. See further chapter 2.

67 Much recent work has been done on the significance of skin colour as an ethnic marker in the Middle Ages; see further references in chapter 2. See for the role of colour (especially white, black, red) in names in Eastern Europe, see Herbert Ludat, ‘Farbenbezeichnungen in Völkernamen’, in *Saeculum* 4 (1953), 138-154. According to Ludat, it is difficult to determine the origin of these colour denominations, although they seem to partly correspond to north (yellow), east (white), south (blue) and west (red). The colour denominations mentioned by Ludat are not however based on ancient Greek or Roman names and therefore seem to belong to a different tradition.

68 For more examples see Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Cologne 1961), 513-514, esp. note 557. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, XIV 4; Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* XV 13, ‘De Alemannia’; Honorius of Autun, *Imago Mundi* XXIII.

69 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* XV 166, ‘De Thuringia’.

70 Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia* II 7, ed. Banks and Binns, 242-243: ‘propter sui fortitudinem et robur quasi saxorum sic appellatur’.

71 Not mentioned by Bartholomaeus Anglicus as an etymology, however. But see for example the Aquitanian ninth-century monk Ermoldus Nigellus’ remark that the name of the Franks brings shudders of fear, in *Carmen in honorem Hludowici* I vs. 378. This was a classical stereotype which might be interpreted, for example in the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, within the Trojan descent myth: Franci were called Trojans by emperor Valentinian after they had driven the Alans out of the Maeotic swamps; cf. Ian Wood, ‘Defining the Franks’, 50. The etymology that Franci were free men, is not mentioned in these encyclopaedic texts, although Alexander of Roes discusses it in his thirteenth-century *Noticia seculi*, saying that the German Franks were free in view of their imperial role, the French Franks referring to their independence. See Scales, ‘France and the Empire’, 408; cf. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, 513-514.

traditions. Indeed, medieval compilers of encyclopaedias were themselves generally aware of this fact, as Isidore acknowledged that ‘there appear to be more names of nations that have been altered than names remaining, and afterwards a rational process has given diverse names to these’.⁷² Nonetheless, although an awareness of the vicissitudes of ethnic names existed, still little attempt was made to reconcile the discrepancies between different names overlapping the same territories, nor were traditional, classical names structurally replaced by newer ones, representing concurrent political or ethnic entities.⁷³ This has to do partly with the Augustinian epistemology that God was the source and goal of all knowledge. For this reason, as Nathalie Lozovsky argues, throughout the early Middle Ages intellectual authority – the written sources – presided over data acquired empirically. Geographers simply could not rely on their senses.⁷⁴ The outcome was that geographical representation was generally out-dated and sometimes muddled.

However, besides bowing to ancient and divinely inspired knowledge, this tombola of etymological explanations might form a convenient store of images to pick from, depending on the author’s ethnic perspective. As a result, Bartholomaeus can, for example, present a whole string of etymologies of the Britons and English, making cross-references between Britannia and Anglia.⁷⁵ The inhabitants of Britannia, or Anglia, may descend from their Trojan founder Brutus, but they were also Angles living in a remote corner, *angulus*, of the world, sometimes interpreted as serving as a corner stone of Christendom; or they were Angles descending from Queen Engelia, daughter of the Saxon duke; or their name was a pun on their beautiful angelic faces, gazed upon by Pope Gregory I at the slave market in Rome.⁷⁶ The range of etymologies might also represent changes within ethnic character over time, as a result of migration, ethnogenesis or acculturation. Nonetheless, the fact that ethnic groups shared characteristics as a ‘core essence’ was an accepted

72 Isidore, *Etymologiae* IX 2, 39.

73 Lozovsky, *The Earth Is Our Book*, 139-141. The Anonymous Geographer of Ravenna is perhaps an early exception, saying for example that Germania and Gallia Belgica were now inhabited by the Franks. On the whole, however, the tradition of retaining old continued into the thirteenth century, but it was supplemented by new information. See also for example Gervase of Tilbury’s explanation that he uses names both old and new, doing both homage to the past and adhering to oral knowledge. Cf. *Otia imperialia* II 25, ed. 524-527.

74 Idem, 141-147. See also Eduard J. Dijksterhuis, *De Mechanisering van het Wereldbeeld* (Amsterdam 1950), 13-45, who wrote, in regards to Plato’s idealism, that so long as the ratio between the value of empirical research and mathematical constructs remained unclear in forming insights in physics, empirical evidence would be underestimated, and information derived from intellectual thought without sufficient knowledge drawn from experience, overestimated. In addition to lacking a clear view of the relationship between empirical findings and mathematical constructs, I add that the religious thought would have impeded the desire and active will to intellectually process information based on empirical findings within a mathematical construct.

75 Bartholomaeus also makes a cross reference between Gallia and Francia. This is a strong indicator that both names were considered as more or less synonymous by the first half of the thirteenth century.

76 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, ‘De Anglia’. The remark about Queen Engelia is repeated by Ranulf Hidgen but does not seem to have been picked up by other writers. Gervase of Tilbury on the other hand, says that the Saxons come from the island Engla in Saxony. See *Otia imperialia* II 17. The story about their angelic faces was related by Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* II 1, ed. and transl. Colgrave and Mynors, 132-135. For the slave boy legend, see Kathy Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World: Geography, Literature, and the English Community, 1000-1534* (Ithaca, NY 2006), 27-28 and 85-86.

belief among intellectuals. In theory, all members of the group might share such a character. However, as discussed further below, this did not imply that members should embrace their ethnic character. On the contrary, pernicious character traits should be wiped out.⁷⁷

Having cursorily established the relationship between etymologies and ethnicity, we shall now review Bartholomaeus' picture of the world's regions in fuller detail in light of the relationship between history, geography, ethnicity and religion on the east-west axis. As we shall see, these strongly interwoven categories formed the core of ethnic identity in view of theological ideas about human diversity and Christendom in this period. It is necessary, in this light, to understand how Christendom was related to geographical space, as this played a significant role in thinking about ethnicity.

The religious landscape

In medieval religious thought, the axis Orient-Occident bore profound significance, as from a theological perspective, the Near East was the stage of the biblical drama. Given that Christianity was a proselytizing religion it had subsequently been the task of the apostles to extend God's rule from sea to sea, with 'all the nations serving him', from the eastern Mediterranean to the West.⁷⁸ Only then would the message from the New Testament seep to all the corners of the world, expanding the *populus Christianus*. Finally, as the farthest reaches of the world succumbed to the apostolic message, salvation would be attained.

Successful proselytization and the firm establishment of Christendom were dependent upon a person's or group's readiness to receive God's word and embrace Christian morals. This readiness entailed overcoming sinful dispositions, whether individual or related to one's ethnicity. As such, we can say that the ethnic groups were actors in the drama of salvation which was to unfold on the world stage, as Christendom spread to the four corners of the world. We can see this clearly in a key quotation from the Epistle to the Colossians (3:5-11), in which the Apostles Paul and Timothy pointedly command the people of Colossae to shake off their sinful dispositions:

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie

⁷⁷ See chapter 3.

⁷⁸ Cf. Psalm 71:8; Lucy E.G. Donkin, "'Usque ad ultimum terrae': Mapping the Ends of the Earth in Two Medieval Floor Mosaics", in Richard J.A. Talbert and Richard W. Unger (eds), *Cartography in antiquity and the Middle ages: Fresh Perspectives, New Methods* (Leiden 2008), 189-218, here at 199-201.

to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

This passage might be interpreted as evidence of the universalizing concept of Christianity, wherein the ethnic differences between the members of the new covenant were irrelevant. However, early Christian texts often employed terms such as *ethnos* to express membership of Christendom, and the religious community remained organized along ethnic lines, as many ethnicities appropriated notions of being God's chosen people. In addition, as Denise Buell has argued, Christian universalism in itself could contain an element of ethnicity, as it might be expressed in terms of rebirth. In the above passage, Christians are urged to 'put on the new self'.⁷⁹ Moreover, the sinful dispositions which the 'barbarian, Scythian or slave' were to overcome retained importance as they continued to make forays on the desired rectitude of mankind. In the twelfth century, these were still being held under scrutiny by Raoul Ardent of Poitou, follower of the school of Gilbert of Poitiers, and master in theology in Paris. Raoul, who was ardently preaching on Christian virtues (199 homilies have come down to us), urged his brethren on the Feast of the Holy Trinity to each try, on his own, 'to rise above the vice of his own people. If you are a Jew, take pains to rise above your innate disbelief. If you are from France, take pains to overcome your innate arrogance. If you are from Rome, take pains to overcome your innate avarice. If you are from Poitou, take pains to overcome your innate gluttony and garrulity, and the likewise applies to the others.'⁸⁰ Especially the Jewish character was represented as stiff-necked, causing and resulting in their refusal to accept the Christian message.

Rather than a centrifugal evangelization from the Levant, however, Christendom was seen, by some intellectuals, to slowly progress from East to West, eventually reaching the farthest islands in the Atlantic Ocean. The westward progression was also present in the territorial-temporal concept of the succession of the four empires, based upon the eschatological prophecies of Daniel.⁸¹ In Orosius' *Seven Books*, the chief kingdoms had thus succeeded one another from Babylonia in the East, Carthage in the South, Macedonia in the North to Rome in the West. When one city fell, another arose. As Bartholomaeus put it in his entry on Chaldea, kingdoms succeeded one another from East to West: 'And when Harbates began to destroy Babylon, so Rome began to be founded; so in one moment of time, one city fell and the other arose, and when the first kingdom of the East fell, the

79 Denise Kimber Buell, 'Early Christian Universalism and Modern Racism', in Eliav-Feldon, Isaac and Ziegler (eds), *Origins of Racism*, 109-131. See further chapter 3.

80 Raoul Ardent, *Homilia* II, 2 'In die Trinitatis', PL 155 1949C-D: 'Conemur unusquisque vitium populi sui superare. Si Judaeus es, stude Judaeis innatam incredulitatem superare. Si Gallus es, stude Gallis innatam superbiam superare. Si Romanus es, stude Romanis innatam avaritiam superare. Si Pictavinus es, stude Pictavinis innatam ingluviem et garrulitatem superare, et similiter de caeteris.' Cf. Meyvaert, 'Voicing National Antipathy', 748.

81 Cf. Daniel 2:31 and 7:2-28.

kingdom of the West began to arise and to thrive.’⁸² According to the *translatio imperii* concept, first applied to Carolingian empire, and later repeated by Otto of Freising about the Holy German Empire, the transfer of power would lay the foundation for the *imperium christianum*. The expiration of the fourth empire, Rome, harkened the end of time.⁸³

The transient nature of power was also evinced in the concept of the transfer of knowledge. In the twelfth century, Otto of Freising wrote in the prologue to his *Chronicle or History of the Two Cities*:

Who can wonder that human power is changeable, when mortal wisdom also is unstable? What great learning there was in Egypt (...) and among the Chaldeans, from whom Abraham derived his knowledge! (...) But what now is Babylon, once famous for its science and its power? (...) A shrine of sirens, a home of lizards and ostriches, a den of serpents! And Egypt is now in large part a trackless waste, whence science was transferred to the Greeks, then to the Romans, and finally to the Gauls and Spaniards. And let it be observed that because all human learning began in the Orient and will end in the Occident, the mutability and disappearance of all things is demonstrated.⁸⁴

Among writers from northern France, the *translatio studii*, the movement of knowledge, was extolled as moving from Athens via Rome to Paris.⁸⁵ Bartholomaeus thus claims that Paris was now the mother of wisdom for all parts of Europe: ‘For as the city of Athens was once the mother of liberal arts and letters, the nourisher of philosophy, and the fount of all knowledge decorated Greece, so in our days Paris is elevated in knowledge and manners, not only above France, but even above

82 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 33, ‘De Chaldea’: ‘Illo anno quo Babylonia ab Arbato inceptit destrui, inceptit Roma fundati. Unde sub una convenientia temporum illa cecidit, ista surrexit, et quando preaseno defecit regnum primum Orientis, inceptit pubescere regnum Occidentis.’ Quoting Orosius, *Historiae adversum Paganos* II 3 2-4 and 6 4-6. Orosius draws more parallels between the histories of Rome and Babylonia. The great difference between the two cities was that Babylonia had fallen as a result of its vices, whereas Rome still stood strong because of its Christian religion and God’s protection.

83 Merrills, *History and Geography*, 51-53.

84 Otto of Freising, *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*, Prologue, ed. Lammers, 12-13, transl. Wright, *Geographical Lore*, 234-235: ‘Sed quid mirum, si convertibilis est humana potentia, cum labilis sit etiam mortalium sapientia? In Egipto enim tantam fuisse sapientiam legimus (...) Abraham, Chaldeorum, disciplinis institutus, scientia preditus, (...)’. Et tamen illa magna Babylon, non solum sapientia preclara, sed et gloriosa in regnis (...) syrenarum facta est delubrum, domus draconum et strutionum, latibulum serpentium. Egiptus quoque magna ex parte inhabitabilis narrator et in via. Hinc translata esse scientiam ad Grecos, deinde ad Romanos, postremo ad Gallos et Hispanos diligens inquisitor rerum inveniet. Et notandum, quod omnis humana potentia seu scientia ab oriente cepit et in occidente terminator, ut per hoc rerum volubilitas ac defectus ostendatur. Moyses Cf. Phillips, ‘Outer world’, 44-45.

85 According to Schneidmüller, *Nomen patriae*, 203, the concept of the translation of learning to Paris was only alive among those originating from northern France. However, he has overlooked Bartholomaeus’ and Alexander Neckam’s texts. Moreover, although he is correct in emphasizing the international character of the university, the emphasis here is on the beneficial influence of Paris’ climate on its inhabitants: students from all over Europe could, according to climate theory, reap the benefits of a mild air. See further chapter 2.

the rest of Europe.⁸⁶ This superior position in letters and manners was not restricted to those born in the vicinity of Paris; in accordance with climate theory, all those who breathed Paris' soft air would reap its benefits.⁸⁷ The Englishman Alexander Neckam thus likened the city to a 'paradise of delights'.⁸⁸ The scholarly supremacy was that of the clerics studying the liberal arts, theology and philosophy there. The inhabitants of Greece, on the other hand, although once the master of many kingdoms, armies and the mother of philosophy, enjoyed the gift of knowledge and science in times gone by, *antiquitus*.⁸⁹

A related strain of thought, adhered to by some twelfth-century theologians, claimed that once all of Christendom had spread to the farthest reaches of the West, the end of time and the extinction of the human race would come about. At the heart of this concept was the biblical notion that once Christendom had spread to the four corners of the world, the day of final reckoning would dawn. This was inspired by Christ's words on his ascension to heaven, when he purportedly said to his disciples that although only God knew when the end of time would come, they 'shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth'.⁹⁰

Christendom, power, and learning thus travelled in westward direction both in time and space. We will now examine in more detail how Bartholomaeus positioned the population of Western Europe on the east-west axis, as the new hub of knowledge and manners, and as the heart of Christendom. By the time Bartholomaeus was compiling his encyclopaedia, Christendom had – although according to the Fourth Lateran Council only lightly – set foot in large parts of Western Europe. If all humanity potentially was a vessel ready to be filled with the Christian message, by the thirteenth century many parts had – through force or voluntarily – accepted its teachings. From the eleventh century, under Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), the boundaries of Christendom, *fines Christianitatis*, had become sharper and clearer, increasingly territorialized within the confines of Europe.⁹¹ How, then, did Bartholomaeus contrast the West with the East? Did he indeed represent

86 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 57, 'De Francia': 'Nam sicut quondam Athenarum civitas mater liberalium atrium et literarum, philosophorum nutrix, et fons omnium scientiarum Graecium decoravit, sic Parisiae nostris temporibus non solum Franciam, imo totius Europae partem residuam in scientia et in moribus sublimarunt.'

87 For an explanation of the relationship between climate and intelligence, see chapter 2.

88 Alexander Neckam, *De laudibus divinae sapientiae* v vs. 563, ed. Thomas Wright, vol. 2, 453: 'Parisius quidam, paradus deliciarum'. See also for example Gauthier de Metz, *L'image du monde* vi, written circa 1245, in Gauthier de Metz, *L'image du monde de Maître Goussouin*, ed. O.H. Prior (Lausanne 1913), 77.

89 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 68.

90 Cf. Acts 1:8.

91 Hay, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea*, 22-29. According to Hay, this process of the territorialization and sharpening of boundaries began roughly in the eighth century, in defence against Muslim forces. Earlier, terms such as *Christiana respublica* were certainly used by for example Augustine and Gregory the Great, meaning all the faithful, over the whole world, or implying the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. Although, according to Hay, 52, by the eleventh century the papacy was claiming universal hegemony over Christians, in reality the papacy's reach was tested in regions beyond Western Europe prior to the 'successes' of the early Crusades.

West European peoples as receptors of the Christian message? How did he review the peoples of Western Europe and their character in his gazetteer? And how did this relate to the character of those dwelling on the outskirts of Europe, forming the outer skin of Christianity? As Bartholomaeus would have been well aware – he was after all a Franciscan friar working in regions of missionary activity – on the fringes of Christendom lived those peoples who had not yet succumbed to the religious mission, or – worse still – rejected it. As we shall see, Bartholomaeus' rhetoric of geography represents Western Europe as a blessed plot of land, of copious benevolence, destined to embrace Christendom.

The core of Christendom and civilization

Despite the fact that Bartholomaeus departs from the traditional schematization of geography whose structure was related to the course of the sun (rising in the Orient, setting in the Occident) and orders his entries alphabetically, still the east-west binary was influential in his work. For Bartholomaeus, the East was the location of Paradise, 'a place with everlasting fair weather and temperate', the cradle of humanity, and direction of prayer.⁹² There are several further clues to the fact the Orient indeed served as a reference point for Bartholomaeus. First, Asia is the opening entry in his world's description – here he departs from his alphabetical order.⁹³ More convincingly, however, is the testimony to Bartholomaeus' ethnocentric pride in North-West Europe, as expressed in his remarks contrasting Europe with both Asia and, in the South, Africa. In keeping with tradition, Ethiopia, *pars pro toto* for Africa, is full of beings with horrible, monstrous faces, wild beasts and serpents and is named after the skin colour of its inhabitants (roasted and toasted in Trevisa's Middle English translation); its heat is scorching.⁹⁴ Beyond the extreme reaches of Ethiopia where the sun sets, lies a region unknown and inaccessible. The Antipodes – where Christendom had not set foot – were beyond the confines of humanity.⁹⁵ In Asia, on the other hand, live 'several or different nations of peoples marvellous in life and manners and wondrous in figure and bodily shape, as well as mental disposition, amazingly different'.⁹⁶ However, Europe's superiority to Asia and Africa is

92 Merrills, *History and Geography*, 237; see also John B. Friedman, 'Cultural Conflicts in Medieval World Maps', in Stuart B. Schwartz (ed.), *Implicit Understandings: Observing, reporting, and reflecting on the encounters between Europeans and other peoples in the early modern era* (Cambridge 1994), 64-97, here at 75. This was based upon the Vetus Latina translation of Genesis, which stated that earthly paradise was located in the East and not, as in Jerome's Vulgate, 'from the beginning'. Scafi, *Mapping Paradise*, 47.

93 Although it is not unthinkable that Bartholomaeus started his geographical description in accordance with geographical tradition, first treating all the regions of Asia, then Europe and Africa, and then simply changed his mind.

94 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 52. Cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae* ix 2, 105 and xiv 5, 14-17. In keeping with tradition, Bartholomaeus locates the monstrous races in Ethiopia and India. Cf. Friedman, *Monstrous races*.

95 Isidore, *Etymologiae* ix 2, 133, who, following Augustine, refuses to give credence to the existence of the Antipodes.

96 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 2: 'diversas gentium nationes, in vita et in moribus mirabiles, figuris corporum, sicut et affectibus mentium, mirabiliter differentes'. Much work has

unequivocal, as Bartholomaeus uses the comparative: ‘This part of the world, although smaller than Asia, is its equal in number of noble men, for as Pliny said, it produces larger bodied peoples, stronger in might, braver, more handsome and shapely than the regions of Asia or Africa.’⁹⁷ Bartholomaeus explains this difference in terms of traditional climate theory and its influence on the bodily humours. The Europeans’ skin is whiter and they are bolder, whereas the Africans are cowardly, black-skinned men with crispy hair.

How did Bartholomaeus describe the regions in Europe’s ‘heartland’? Striking is first the emphasis which Bartholomaeus lays on the regions of Western Europe as copious, urbanized territories full of economic activity. Bartholomaeus paints extensive encomiums of these lands, reminiscent of Pliny’s representation of Italian Campania in antiquity, and in keeping with the rhetorical genre of the topical description of the *locus amoenus*.⁹⁸ Indeed, Bartholomaeus praises Italy as a region of abundance. Yet now the Christian regions in the North-West are on equal par. England is fertile, full of precious stones, deer, and thankfully there are few or no wolves, which is beneficial to husbandry and the wool trade; its inhabitants are urbane, merry, and generous. Saxony is ‘full of fruit and moist with water and many rivers’, a repository of mineral sources. Above all, Paris is a sweet centre of delights, where the air is soothing, and is equipped for a large urban population. Bartholomaeus image of a paradisiacal Paris is a commonplace, also present in vernacular literature, which is directly related to the heart of Christendom. The image of ‘sweet France’, mentioned ubiquitously in the *Chanson de Roland*, conjures up a picture of a land abounding in all kinds of delights, specially endowed by God’s hand. ‘When God created a hundred kingdoms, the best was sweet France’, is a saying, directly linking up the sweetness of the territory with Christendom.⁹⁹

been done on the image of the marvellous other: the Plinian races of dog-heads or Blemmyae on the edges of civilization, and their position as possible receptors of the divine message, as portents, or cursed beings. The ‘hapless savage’, categorized by Paul Freedman as ‘naked, ignorant, subsisting on raw food’, was the epitome of Otherness in the medieval imagination. On the Antipodes, see John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (reprint New York 2000), especially chapter 1; Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (Ithaca and London 1988), esp. chapter 2, ‘The Fabulous East: “Wonder Books” and Grotesque Facts’, 47-86; Paul Freedman, ‘The Medieval Other: the Middle Ages as Other’, in Timothy S. Jones and David A. Sprunger (eds), *Marvels, Monsters and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations* (Kalamazoo 2002), 1-26, here at 3.

97 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 50, ‘De Europa’: ‘Haec mundi particula, etsi sic minor quam Asia, ei tamen par est in populorum numerosa generositate, populos enim, ut dicit Plinius, alit corpore maiores, viribus fortiores, animo audaciores, forma et specie pulciores quam faciunt Asiae vel Affricae regiones.’ All translations are mine unless stated otherwise. Hay, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea*, 37-38, asserted that Europe was, at this time, an empty concept, as it did not appear in polemical discussions. However, it seems a misconception to strip the concept of Europe of any political or cultural relevance in geographical texts or images.

98 Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturalis* xxxvii 77. Cf. Dagmar Thoss, *Studien zum locus amoenus im Mittelalter* (Vienna and Stuttgart 1972).

99 For example in *La Chanson de Roland* vs. 2379, ed. Segre, vol. 1, 212; cf. ‘Quand Dieu fonda cent royaumes, le meilleur fut douce France’, quoted by De Planhol and Claval, *Historical Geography*, 101.

Besides copious benevolence, these regions are inhabited by peoples attaining various degrees of courtliness in a civilizing process. The Normans, says our encyclopaedist, are strong, great warriors (originating from Norway), yet they are elegantly dressed (*urbana in habitu*), sober in wealth, devout in speech, peaceful in company.¹⁰⁰ The men in Picardy are ‘of elegant stature, handsome with pretty faces, audacious of spirit, with nimble and docile minds, bright intellect, devout affection, with a greater vocabulary than other French nations’.¹⁰¹ The men of Tours, the important episcopal seat housing the relics of St Martin, are strong, elegantly built, bold-hearted, beneficent and efficient in deeds, sober of speech. The air is wholesome, corn and fruit, wine and pasture, and many woods abound.¹⁰² The Poitevins, descending from the Picts, Angles and Scots according to Bartholomaeus, are ‘mixed with the French provinces in tongue and manners’. They have got the best of both worlds: strong and well-built as a result of their Pictish roots, sharp-witted and fierce as the French, they are handsome, bold-hearted and smart. The region is full of wine, corn and fruit, fields and strong towns.¹⁰³ Finally, in the south, ‘no province is worthy to be placed before Narbonne in the polish of men, in worthiness of manners, in plenitude of riches, in short, it should be better to call it Italy than a province’.¹⁰⁴

From the above, we can see that Bartholomaeus’ representations of the French territories are, on the whole, full of praise. This laudatory imagery of the south slightly deviates from contemporary representations. Gervase of Tilbury expands on the image of the people of Narbonne by mentioning that they wear such tight clothes in the Spanish and Gascon style that it would seem their bodies have been sewn into their clothes.¹⁰⁵ This remark is typical of late eleventh- and twelfth-century clerical concerns about long-flowing hair and tight-fitting garments worn by the youth as immoral, decadent fashions from the (originally Moorish) south pervading northern Europe.¹⁰⁶ The fact that Bartholomaeus is silent on such matters, probably has to do with the purpose and audience of his encyclopaedia. His object is to present the heart of Europe as the home of Christendom, as a civilized, benevolent territory. His praise for the French territories was, in this sense, in keeping with the already established, traditional, image of the whole of France as a blessed, devout, region which

100 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 106, ‘De Nortmannia’.

101 Idem, xv 122, ‘De Picardia’: ‘elegantis staturae, faciei decentis ac venustae, audacis animi, levis et docilis ingenii, intellectus clari, affectus pii, idiomatis grossi magis aliarum Galliae nationum’. It is not entirely clear what he means by the last remark.

102 Idem, xv 167, ‘De Thuronia’.

103 Idem, xv 122, ‘De Pictavia’: ‘lingua et moribus Galliarum provinciis est permixta’.

104 Idem xv 108, ‘De Narbonensi provincia’: ‘nulla est ei provinciarum praeferenda in cultu virorum, in dignatione morum, in plenitudine opum, breviter Italia potius quam provincia est dicenda’.

105 Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia* II 10, ed. Banks and Binns, 298-299.

106 See Robert Bartlett, ‘Symbolic Meanings of Hair in the Middle ages’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4 (1994), 43-60; Pauline Stafford, ‘The Meanings of Hair in the Anglo-Norman World: Masculinity, Reform, and National Identity’, in Mathilde van Dijk and Renée Nip (eds), *Saints, Scholars, and Politicians: Gender as a Tool in Medieval Studies* (Turnhout 2005), 153-171; Constant J. Mews, *The Lost Love Letters of Abelard and Heloise: Perceptions of Dialogue in Twelfth-Century France* (New York 2001), 76-79; H. Platelle, ‘Le Problème du Scandale: Les Nouvelles Modes Masculine aux XIe et XIIe Siècles’, in *Revue Belge de Philologie et d’Histoire* 53 (1975), 1071-1096.

had entered into a special relationship with God as a chosen people. This image had already been planted in the early Middle Ages. Under Pippin, the revised prologue of the *Lex Salica* spoke clearly of the special Christian bond with the Franks, who were courageous and strong. Alcuin went on to call them a *gens beata*. Especially in the liturgy references were made to the Franks as new Israelites.¹⁰⁷ Bartholomaeus has extended this benevolent representation to the whole territory of Francia or Gallia, as had earlier (before 1029) a Benedictine monk, Theodorik of Amorbach, living in Lower Franconia: ‘And indeed, Gaul, above all other lands, enjoys the gift of the most fertile abundance; in addition the most passionate keenness in the liberal arts and, as I said above, the most careful integrity in the monastic religion (...). Besides Italy, where the Roman summit is continued, one will not find in the habitable area of the whole world a land filled with so many thousands of saints. Wherefore Gaul seems to be the Lord’s treasure-house.’¹⁰⁸ Indeed it seemed to be the key to heaven, containing so many relics, including those of Christ. Thus, according to the eleventh-century *Inventio corporis s. Judoci* (The discovery of the body of Judocus) the Frankish kingdom was seen to precede all kingdoms, both old and contemporary, both in the tallness of its people, its celebrated name, virtue and wealth, and rich supply of relics.

By this time, (northern) France had thus firmly established its reputation as a Christian territory, inhabited by an elect people, chosen by God.¹⁰⁹ In Bartholomaeus’ view, this devout Christian civilization was rubbing off on the other regional inhabitants of the French territories. The peoples of Normandy and Poitou, although originally originating from northerly regions, were embracing the courtly ideals of the French. As Cassandra Potts has argued, the Normans, in this period, had thus successfully shaken off their older image of cruel northern barbarity, under the influence of the ‘civilizing process’, though retaining their traditional fear inspiring character.¹¹⁰ Whether or not this applied to the people populating the German territories, is however another matter.

For most of his life, Bartholomaeus was active as a teacher and later as minister provincial in Saxony. On the whole, his accounts of the inhabitants of German territories put these peoples in a reasonably favourable light. However, there is some evidence of their more troubling ethnic reputation as being courageous, yet violent and bellicose. Thus, the people of Alemannia are noble, huge, and strong, but also ‘fierce, indomitable, occupying themselves with raiding, looting and

107 Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel?’, 125-136, 152.

108 Theodorik of Amorbach’s text is printed in Martin Bouquet (ed.), in *Receuil des historiens des Gaules et de la France* 9 (1757), 143: ‘Est quippe Gallia prae omnibus terris sumptuum copia fertilissima; insuper et artium liberalium subtilitate avidissima et, ut totum dicam, Monasticae religionis integritate cautissima (...). Excepta Italia, quae Romano cacumini est continua, non invenitur in totius orbis habitabili area, tot Sanctorum millium capax terra. Quapropter gazophylacium Domini videtur esse Gallia.’ *De inventione corporis s. Judoci* in M. Léopold Deslisle, *Receuil des historiens des Gaules et de la France* 10 (1874), 366; this and the following source are quoted by Schneidmüller, *Nomen patriae*, 49.

109 De Planhol and Claval, *Historical Geography*, 100. In the thirteenth century, the monarchy presented itself as bestowed with special powers, the king’s blood enjoying miraculous healing powers.

110 Cassandra Potts, ‘*Atque unum ex diversis gentibus populum effecit*: Historical Tradition and the Norman Identity’, in *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1995* 18 (1996), 139-152. See further chapter 7.

hunting'.¹¹¹ On Saxony, where Bartholomaeus probably wrote his book, he adds: 'And especially the Saxons, who surpass the others in the aforementioned things. Isidore says of them that the Saxon people live on the ends and coasts of the ocean, and are accomplished in strength and agility';¹¹² they are 'always extremely bellicose'. They are 'great warriors', occupied with copper digging; the region is full of salt wells, metals and marble stone.¹¹³

However, the German peoples were not only by nature strong, large, bellicose warriors. Bartholomaeus takes pains to emphasize that they – the Saxons, Westphalians, people of Holland, Brabant – are elegant, agreeable and handsome.¹¹⁴ In 'De Alemannia', he thus says of the German peoples that they have 'fair and shapely faces, long, blond hair, free spirits; they are merry and agreeable'.¹¹⁵ Of Westphalia he writes: 'In some books, this province is called old Saxony, which kept itself free from every kind of fornication and severely punished defilement, and held honest wedlock in the highest esteem, although it is held to be enveloped in pagan superstition until 700 AD, as Boniface writes in a letter to the king of England. (...) The people are generally of elegant and tall stature, shapely, strong-bodied and brave-hearted. They have an abundant and wonderfully bold chivalrous spirit, always prepared and ready to arms.'¹¹⁶ The people of Suevia are 'a populous people, very strong, brave and bellicose, tall, and blond-haired, with handsome and fair faces'.¹¹⁷ The Saxons are 'elegantly built, with tall frames, strong bodies, and brave minds'.¹¹⁸

111 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 13, 'De Alemannia': 'Generosos enim et immanes gignit populos, de quibus dicitur in libro IX Isidore. Germaniae nationes sunt multae immania corpora habentes, viribus fortes, audaces animo et feroces, indomiti, raptu, captibus et venationibus occupati.'

112 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 13, 'De Alemannia': 'et potissime Saxones qui in praedictis sunt praecellentes, de quibus dicit Isidore. Saxonum gens in oceani finibus et litoribus constituta virtute et agilitate abilis.'

113 Idem: 'gens enim semper fuit bellicosissima, elegantis formae, procerae staturae, robusta corpore, audax mente'.

114 See further chapter 2 for these characteristics in relation to the north wind.

115 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 13, 'De Alemannia': 'facie decori et formosi, comati et coma flavi, liberales animo, hilares et iucundi'.

116 Idem, xv 170, 'De Westphalia': 'Haec in quibusdem libris dicitur antiqua Saxoniam, ab omni specie fornicationis se mundam praeservans et supra districtissime puniens, ac honesta connubia summe colens, licet pagana superstitione usque ad septingentesimum annum Domini teneretur implicita, ut scribit Bonifacius in epistola ad regem Anglie. (...) Populus communiter elegantis staturae est et procerae, venustae formae et fortis corpore, et audax mente, militiam habet copiosam ac mirabiliter animosam, promptam ad arma continue et paratam.' A letter was sent by Boniface to Ethelbald in the year 745, in which Boniface writes of Saxon marriage customs, possibly holding up a mirror to Ethelbald: 'Sed inter haec una malae aestimationis fama de vita pietatis vestrae ad auditum nostrum pervenit, qua audita, contristati sumus. Et illam optamus non fuisse veram. Multis enim narrantibus, conpertum est nobis: quod numquam legitimam in matrimonium uxorem duxisses. Quod a domino Deo ab ipso mundi primordio constitutum est, ut per apostolum Dei Paulum praeceptum et iteratum, illo docente: Propter fornicationem autem unusquisque suam uxorem habeat, et unaquaeque virum suum.' See 'Bonifacius una cum aliis episcopis Aethilbaldum regem Mercionum ad virtutem recovat', letter 59, ed. Philippus Jaffé, *Monumenta Moguntina* (Berlin 1866), 168-177.

117 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 158, 'De Suevia': 'Gens populosa, nimis fortis, audax et bellicosa, proceri corpore, et flava crine, venusta facie et decora.' Cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae* IX 2, 98: 'Suevi pars Germanorum fuerunt in fine septentrionis de quibus Lucanus: "Fundit ab extreme flavos aquilone Suevos". Quorum fuisse centum pagos et populos multi prodiderunt.' Cf.

Nonetheless, the general overtone is that German peoples are sometimes given to thievery and plunder, which Bartholomaeus relates to the degree in which people have adopted the Christian faith. There seems to be a progression in civilized behaviour, where there is less thievery and plunder among those converted to Christianity. This belief is similar to Henry of Livonia's remarks about the Livs, one of the first Baltic peoples to be forced to convert by the military order of the Sword-Brothers (armed monks) in the early 1200s. In Henry of Livonia's optimistic report, these were 'formerly most perfidious, and everyone stole what his neighbour had, but now theft, violence, rapine and similar things were forbidden as a result of their baptism'.¹¹⁹ The same applied, according to Bartholomaeus, to the Danes, who were once fierce and great warriors, but were now elegantly built, fair haired, handsome men, fierce towards their enemies, but naturally devout and kind to all innocent men.¹²⁰ The same is said of some German ethnic groups. The people of Meissen, 'although of great strength and beauty, and of elegant stature, yet is a friendly and peaceful people, in all aspects displaying less ferocity than the [other] Germans by nature.'¹²¹ The men of Holland, whose chief city is Utrecht – the seat of the episcopacy – belong to Germany 'as regards situation, manners and lordship, and also language. Its people are elegantly built and of great strength; they have brave hearts and attractive faces, an honest character, are devoted to God, trustworthy and peaceable toward men, and less intent upon spoils and robbery than other German nations.'¹²² To the south of the county of Holland, the men of Zeeland are 'of great stature, strong-bodied and brave-hearted, devoted to Gods service, peaceful and calm amongst themselves, generous to many, grievous to none, unless they are forced to withstand the insolence of enemies'.¹²³ The air is beneficial, there are castles and towns, rivers, corn and fruit, wines, and pastures. The Brabanders are also men of seemly

Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos* VI, 9, 1: 'Suebos maximam et ferocissimam gentem quorum esse centem pagos et populos multi prodidere.'

118 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* XV 139, 'De Saxonia': 'elegantis formae, procerae staturae, robusta corpore, audax mente'.

119 Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon Livoniae* X 15, ed. Bauer, 66, transl. Brundage, 67: quondam erat perfidissima et unusquisque proximo suo quod habebat auferabat, et ideo in baptismo huiusmodi prohibita sunt violencia, rapina, furta et his similia'. Cf. Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades* (London 1997), 93-96. This is more or less repeated by Bartholomaeus, *De proprietatibus rerum* XV 171, 'De Vironia': 'gens quondam barbara, saeva, incomposita atque inculta, nunc vero Danorum regibus pariter et legibus est subiecta. Terra vero tota est a Germanis et Danis pariter habitata, quare supra in litera R de Rivalia.' Baltic Livonia was in the clasp of heathen (burial) practices and in the clutches of demons, but had now been converted by the Germans and Danes.

120 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* XV 47, 'De Dacia'. Helmold of Bosau seems to say the complete opposite: they know only internal strife, and are in fear of becoming too effeminate. Cf. Helmold of Bosau, *Chronica Slavorum*, L, ed. Schmeidler, 192.

121 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* XV 102, 'De Misnia': 'Et cum sit populus magnae fortitudinis et pulchritudinis, et elegantis proceritatis, est tamen gens benigna et pacifica, ex natura minus Germanicis habens in omnibus feritatis.'

122 Idem, XV 110, 'De Hollandia': 'Nam ad Germaniam pertinet, quoad situm, quoad mores, et quoad dominium, et etiam quoad linguam, cuius gens elegans est corpore, robusta viribus, audax animo, venusta facie, honesta in moribus, devota Deo, fida hominibus et pacifica, minus praedis intendens et raptibus, quam aliae Germanicae nationes.'

123 Idem, XV 143, 'De Selandia': 'Gens magnae staturae, fortis corpore et audax mente, circa cultum Dei devote, inter se pacifica et quieta, multis benefica, nullis molesta, nisi quando hostium insolentiae resistere est coacta.'

stature, well-built, and bold and hardy warriors in the face of the enemy, but peaceable and quiet among themselves, ‘friendly, devout and kind’.¹²⁴ This is at odds with their more notorious reputation of being brigands, rapists and pillagers common in many twelfth-century sources, originating from the involvement of some Brabanders (but also Flemish and others) in mercenary troops in England and south France.¹²⁵ The Flemish are handsome and strong, ‘mild of will and fair of speech’, honestly dressed, peaceful regarding their neighbours, and rich from the wool trade (although the stench in the region from the burning peat is great).¹²⁶

The peoples in France, England (who are represented as urbane and merry) and, to a lesser degree, Germany had thus according to Bartholomaeus developed degrees of civilization. There was less fighting, a relatively peaceful society, and the men were handsome and kind. For the most part, Bartholomaeus, sketching these regions, picked positive images from the storehouse of stereotypes, where nastier were certainly readily available, especially in the literature produced at the courts. This must be viewed in light of the extent in which, in his opinion, Christianity had set foot in Western Europe. Writing about the fringes of Christian civilization, however, Bartholomaeus falls into step with the prevailing negative images. As Seymour Phillips remarked, Anglo-Normans and Germans could thus view themselves as ‘natural repositories of civilization’, and the countries which they attempted to subjugate or colonize (Ireland, Wales, the Baltic regions) as the backwaters of civilization.¹²⁷ These negative depictions were however countered by images of the fringes as copious regions of abundance.

The fringes of civilized Christendom

Many derogatory remarks were uttered by religious men such as Radulfus Glaber, Otto of Freising, Gerald of Wales, Helmold of Bosau or Bartholomaeus Anglicus about the backwardness of Brittany, the Slavic East, Ireland, and the Scandinavian North – the absence of towns and castles, trade and manufacture, good husbandry, law and order –, populated by inhabitants who were lazy, dirty, and uncivilized (barely discernible from animals). These images were partly prompted by ‘greedy eyes’, as Robert Bartlett put it.¹²⁸ There were vast tracts of relatively empty but potentially fertile land in the north and north-east which might be settled – the call for crusading missions soon met this ‘need’.¹²⁹ Besides colonizing motives such as land expansion, which many scholars have studied, here we will focus on the geography of the fringes in relation to one specific goal of the colonizing

124 Idem, xv 5, ‘De Brabantia’: ‘Gens elegantis staturae et venustae formae, bellicosa, animosa contra hostes, inter se autem placita et quieta, gens benefica, devota et benigna.’

125 Herbert Grundmann, ‘Rotten und Brabanzonen: Soldner-Heere im 12. Jahrhundert’, in *Deutsches Archiv* 5 (1942), 419-492.

126 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 58, ‘De Flandria’: ‘affectu pia, affatu blanda’.

127 Phillips, ‘Outer world’, 43 and 50; A. Simms, ‘Core and periphery in medieval Europe: the Irish experience in a wider context’, in W.J. Smyth and K. Whelan (eds), *Common Ground: Essays on the Historical Geography of Ireland presented to T. Jones Hughes* (Cork 1988), 22.

128 Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 131-132. For the negative image of the Welsh, see Coulton, ‘Nationalism in the Middle Ages’, 32-33.

129 Tamm, ‘Eastern Baltic Region’, 21.

movement: proselytization. For although these peoples were presented as residing on a lower rung of civilization, still they were viewed as destined to enter the Christian community of the faithful. Accordingly, the culture and morals of peoples in the heartland and periphery were positioned along the yardstick of degrees of moral behaviour and religious piety. This was related directly to degrees of civilization which these people had achieved or lacked. In the geography of colonization, however, these degrees of culture were almost invariably set against a stage of extreme fertility and abundance. In this discourse, stretching the boundaries of the frontier was, in short, presented as entering new Promised Lands of milk and honey. In the new Canaan of the West, there lived, however, barbarians, pagans, semi-pagans, who were squandering the fruits of the region.

A whole package of images was applied to those living on the fringes of Europe; in the north-west (Ireland, Wales, sometimes Brittany) and stretching north-eastwards (the Baltic lands). John Gillingham, discussing the image of the medieval barbarian, has arranged the imagery of these peoples into three categories: at work, on the battlefield, and in bed.¹³⁰ These three categories correspond to laziness – an unwillingness to reap the benefits of the land's fertility –, rash, cruel, bellicose behaviour on the battlefield, and sexual promiscuity, as well as bloodthirsty cannibalism, polygamy and incest. Thus, for example, Adam of Bremen says of the people of Courland (in present-day Latvia) that they were 'exceedingly bloodthirsty because of their stubborn devotion to idolatry', although the land was replete with gold and horses.¹³¹ The Estonians, situated on the Barbarian Sea, sacrificed human beings to dragons and birds.¹³² The Sembi, or Sambians, drank blood and milk, and ate meat, living in swamps and not enduring a master, despite the fact that they were human beings.¹³³ This reputation of bloodthirstiness was also applied to fierce men even further north-eastwards. In Ircania, in present-day northern Iran, the men were said to be cruel and bestial, living by man's flesh and drinking blood. The Scyths, descendants of Gog and Magog, Tartars, were also accused of these atrocities.¹³⁴

130 John Gillingham, 'The Beginnings of English Imperialism', in *Journal of Historical Sociology* 5/4 (1992), 392-409. Also published in Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*. For further references to literature about the 'Celtic fringe' see chapter 8 note 53.

131 Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* IV 16, ed. Bernhard Schmeidler, (Hannover 1917), 244: 'crudelissima propter nimium ydolatriae cultum fugitur [ab omnibus]'. Translation in Francis J. Tschan and Timothy Reuter (Introduction), *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen: Adam of Bremen* (New York 2002), 197.

132 Idem, IV 17, ed. Schmeidler, 244.

133 Idem, IV 18, ed. Schmeidler, 244-246. Tamm describes this as 'mythological' description; cf. Tamm, 'Eastern Baltic Region', 14.

134 The people of 'Semi Gaul', a region in Latvia, were also barbarous, 'inculta', 'aspera' and 'severa', despite the fact that they half descended from Gauls or Galatians. For Gog and Magog, see Andrew Runni Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge Mass. 1932); for Gog and Magog on medieval maps see Scott D. Westrem, 'Against Gog and Magog', in Tomasch and Gilles, *Text and Territory*, 54-75; Friedman, *The Monstrous Races*; for Gog and Magog in Middle English literature, see Victor I. Scherb, 'Assimilating Giants: The Appropriation of Gog and Magog in Medieval and Early Modern England', in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32/1 (2002), 59-84.

Some positive characteristics, such as hospitality, or the absence of desire for gold or money were put forward about the Swedes, Rani, Welsh, and Prussians, possibly as a mirror to Western society.¹³⁵ In addition, many scholars have emphasized that the regions on the fringes were also represented as places of the marvellous.¹³⁶ In Gerald of Wales' *Topography of Ireland*, the marvels of nature produced wondrous beasts and half-humans: fish with three gold teeth, wolves who talk to priests, a man who was half ox. To a degree, these marvels mirrored the images of the East or South, where the monstrous dwelled. Likewise, accusations of sexual promiscuity were directed at both the Irish and the Saracen, although the imagery is not identical. Muslims, in the hot south, wallowing in decadence, were seen to live in a place of luxury.¹³⁷ The northerners, however, might be accused of polygamy, wife swapping, and incest.¹³⁸

The images of wondrous, barbarous, primitive societies were from the twelfth century at the same time presented as settled in lands 'rich in deer and fish, milk and herds', woods and pasture; such is said, for example, of Wales and Scotland.¹³⁹ Although Bartholomaeus is slightly milder in his judgment of the Irish than his source, Gerald of Wales, he too uses these common stereotypes of barbarity, combining the wondrous with an uncivilized society living off milk and meat:

There are many other wonders in that land. On Ireland, Solinus says: 'Ireland is an island that approximates Britain in size, and is uncivilized and barbarous through the customs of its people. There are no snakes and birds are scarce. Its people are inhospitable and bellicose; in victory they smear their faces with blood shed by those they have killed, good and evil are the same. (...) The Irish people dress strangely, are uncultured, food is sparse, they have savage spirits, wild and threatening faces, barbarous voices. In their own company, however, they are freehearted, affable and friendly, especially the people living in the wooded areas and swamps, and in mountainous

135 Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 142.

136 Marina Münkler, 'Experiencing Strangeness: Monstrous Peoples on the Edge of the Earth as Depicted on Medieval Mappae Mundi', in: *The Medieval History Journal* 5 (2002), 195-222; Friedman, *Monstruous Races*; Jacques Le Goff, 'The Medieval West and the Indian Ocean', in Le Goff, *Time, Work and Culture*, 189-200; Laura Lunger Knoppers and Joan B. Landes (eds), *Monstruous Bodies/Political Monstrosities in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca 2004) for early modernity. In part, strange regions far away were seen as places where everything is permissible, something which Ribémont calls 'a writing of desire'. Cf. Bernard Ribémont, *Littérature et encyclopédies du Moyen Âge* (Boulder 2002), 144.

137 Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'On Saracen Enjoyment: Some Fantasies of Race in Late Medieval France and England', in: *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31/1 (2001), 113-146; John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval Imagination* (New York 2002), 61-62, discusses the image of Muhammad's large sexual powers, contrary to Jesus' abstinence. For a rhetorical interpretation of Gerald's perversion of nature, see David Rollo, 'Gerald of Wales' *Topographia Hibernica*: Sex and the Irish Nation', in *The Romantic Review* 86/2 (1995), 169-190.

138 Such as the Swedes by Adam of Bremen, the Welsh by Gerald of Wales, the Bretons by William of Poitiers, and Irish according to many sources. See Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 140 for references.

139 Idem, 132.

areas; these men are content to eat meat, apples and fruits and to drink milk. This people occupy themselves more with games and hunting than with work.¹⁴⁰

Descriptions of men living off milk, meat and hunting, carry the connotation of a rudimentary societal organization; the inhabitants are restless, cattle herders roam the countryside, eating perhaps a little bread.¹⁴¹ Similar representations of pastoralism can be found in Adam of Bremen's (died c. 1080) accounts of Norway, Sweden and Iceland, and, earlier, in Radulfus Glaber's (c. 985-c.1047) presentation of Brittany, implying that men live off hunting, plunder, and raids.¹⁴² The same was intimated of the Slavs and Magyars. Although, according to Robert Bartlett, references to Hungarian pastoralism were infrequent, as this was a grain-exporting region by the end of the Middle Ages, Bartholomaeus says the Hungarians came to Pannonia hunting, and the thirteenth-century Italian rhetorician Boncompagno da Signa etymologized the Hungarians as hungry men roaming through the woods.¹⁴³

This pastoral way of life came, these sources suggest, from the fact that the intricacies of urbanization went far beyond their socio-economic capacities; these peoples lacked manufactured goods or a stable agricultural society.¹⁴⁴ They did not have proper houses, occupying empty tracts of land.¹⁴⁵ Gerald of Wales, among others, emphasizes the pastoralism of the Irish, eating oats, meat and dairy products instead of bread, which would require preparation. Rejecting nature over culture, he famously related the 'primitive habits of pastoral living', from which the Irish had not progressed, to a deficient evolution from a rural to an urban society: 'While men usually progress from the woods to the fields, and from the fields to towns and communities of citizens, this people despises

140 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 80: 'Multa alia sunt mirabilia in terra illa. De Hybernia dicit Solinus. Hybernia est insula, quae proximat Britanniae in magnitudine, inhumana, incolarum ritu aspera, ibi anguis nullus, ibi avis rara. Gens inhospita et bellicosa, sanguine interemptorum hausto prius victores vultus suos obliniunt, fas atque nefas ab eodem loco ducunt. (...) Gens Hybernica est habitu singularis et inculta, victu parca, animo saeva, vultu ferox et torva, affatu aspera, erga suos tamen liberalis et affabilis ac benigna, et maxime illa gens quae nemorosa et paludes inhabitant ac montana, haec carnibus, pomis et fructibus pro esu, et lacte pro potu est contenta, gens dedita ludis et venationi potius quam labori.' Cf. Solinus, *De mirabilibus mundi*, ed. Mommsen, 100. Cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae*. xiv 6, 5. Lawrence of Durham's *Dialogi* I 128, ed. Raine, 4, relates milk drinking to the peasantry in the passage where the 'savage Scots' are ridiculed for their boorish palates. Cf. transl. Rigg, 'Lawrence of Durham: Dialogues', 48.

141 Possibly also an allusion to 1 Corinthians 3:1-3: 'Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly – mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?' For the fickle character of the Irish, see also Lydon, 'Nation and Race', 104.

142 Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 132-113; Cf. Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* IV 31-32, 36, ed. Schmeidler, 263-265, 271-274; Raldulfus Glaber, *Historiae* II 4, ed. and transl. France, 56-59; cf; Gunther of Pairis, *Ligurinus* VI 37-43.

143 Ibidem. In the *Annales Altahenses maiores* anno 1042, ed. E. von Oefele, MGH SS rerum Germanicarum 4 (Hannover 1891), 29 the Slavs fight by hiding in the woods, *lupina fraude*; they fight like robbers. Cf. Cerwinka, 'Völkercharakteristiken', 69-70. See further chapter 6.

144 Phillips, 'Outer world', 50.

145 Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 131.

agriculture, has little use for the money-making of towns, contemns the rights and privileges of citizenship, and desires neither to abandon, nor lose respect for, the life which it has been accustomed to lead in the woods and countryside.’¹⁴⁶ This failure to civilize, echoing earlier Norman remarks about the Bretons, was a convenient excuse for colonizing such territories. Moreover, the Irish (and the Welsh and Danes) were said to suffer from political fragmentation and internal strife; blood vengeance, lawlessness and lack of reason reigned.¹⁴⁷ Other accusations included unconventional fighting techniques (including remarks about the Frisians’ technique of using the javelin), riding bareback, not wearing breeches, and excessive drinking.¹⁴⁸

The Irish were a hard nut to crack. According to Rees Davies, the Irish themselves took great pride in their indifference to ‘refined’ English eating habits.¹⁴⁹ On a few occasions, however, contact with the more ‘civilized’ Anglo-Normans purportedly led to progression, especially among the Scots. As Bartholomaeus writes, the Scots, originally from Ireland, were similar to the Irish in language, manners and nature, ‘light-hearted, fierce of spirit, cruel towards enemies, envious, superstitious, deeming nobody of virtue, probity or audacity but themselves’.¹⁵⁰ It was also a society lacking bread; instead they again ate meat, fish, and drank milk. Although quite handsome and well-built, their clothes were shabby.¹⁵¹ However, as a result of their mixings and dealings with the Anglo-Normans, some Scots were actually quite decent and honest, despite of the fact that they clung to the customs of their Irish and Scottish ancestors. No doubt, this had to do with the exploits of King David, himself half Norman, and educated by Henry I, who had brought civilization to Scotland by granting a tax exemption to those who dressed and behaved courteously.¹⁵² Through

146 Gerald of Wales, *Topographia Hibernica* III 10, ed. Dimock, vol. 5, 151, transl. O’Meara, 85-86: ‘Cum emin a silvis ad agros, ab agris ad villas, civiumque convictus, humani generis ordo processerit, gens haec, agriculturae labores aspernans, et civiles gazas parum affectans, civiumque jura multum detrectans, in silvis et pascuis vitam quam hactenus assueverat non desuescere novit nec descire.’ The same is said of the Welsh in the mid-twelfth century *Gesta Stephani* VIII, ed. and transl. Potter, 15, which states that the English had been civilized by the Normans after England was conquered, imposing laws and statutes upon them, and making the land productive; Wales, abounding in deer, fish, milk and herds, breeds men of an ‘animal type’, swift-footed, bellicose, and unreliable. Of the Scots the author says (in XXVI, ed. Potter, 36-37) that they are barbarous and filthy, swift-footed, cruel, and fearless of death. He also mentions the excess of cold, and hunger suffered. See for early Norman remarks about Breton pastoralism note 185 in this chapter.

147 Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 134-135. In Bartlett’s view, there was an element of truth to these claims. France and Germany were more centralized than Ireland or Poland; societies of kinship were subdivided, with tyrannical leadership.

148 Cerwinka, ‘Völkercharakteristiken’, 77. Here the Danes are accused of drinking, but it was, and is, a commonplace applied to most northerly peoples.

149 Robert Rees Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093-1343* (Oxford 2000), 128-129; Lydon, ‘Nation and Race’, 104-105.

150 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* XV 152: ‘levis, animo ferox, saeviens in hostes, invida, superstiosa, nullius virtutis vel probitatis aliquem reputans sive audaciae praetor semetipsos’.

151 A.A.M. Duncan, ‘The Dress of the Scots,’ in *Scottish Historical Review* 29 (1950), 210-212.

152 Cf. Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia*, ed. Banks and Binns, 310-311: ‘Scotland was once inhabited by the Scots, a people of a very low manner of life, but now they have been driven out and knights have settled there, duly enfeoffed and bound by the sacred laws of hospitality. Like the Isle of Man, Scotland has its own kings, who have proved either saints or imitators of saintly deeds in uninterrupted succession down to our times.’

acculturation, it was therefore possible, and desirable from Bartholomaeus' perspective, to adapt one's character. However, for the most part, the emphasis lay on the immutability and absence of true Christianity among the Irish – who were being colonized.

Christians in name, pagan in fact

Most remarkable is that these accusations of a pastoral way of life and the absence of civilization were clothed in religious terms, even when territories had been converted centuries earlier. By the thirteenth century, English authors were claiming some success in Ireland. In Gervase of Tilbury's (c. 1150-c.1228) *Recreations for an Emperor*, written for German Emperor Otto IV, the Irish were now – after the colonization by the English – growing in faith:

This island too used to be inhabited by Scottish tribes, until the time of the renowned King Henry of England, your grandfather, most worshipful Prince. He was the first to drive out the pestilential tribes of Irishmen and turn the land into an English possession, dividing it into fiefs for his vassals; it was paid for, however, by the shedding of much English and British blood. And so it has come about that a land which from the earliest times was contemptuous of religion, living on cows' milk and ignoring the Lenten fast, eating raw flesh and given over to filthy practices, is growing strong in the new faith bought by its settlers; while it was the last country to adopt the true religion, and then only under compulsion, it is now surpassing all other nations in its sacred worship and religious fervour. It rejoices in its own episcopal ties, and in monasteries of dedicated observance, richly endowed with substantial estates and providing generous hospitality.¹⁵³

These astounding remarks about the Irish contempt of religion in relation to their lack of civilization were a commonplace especially among English and northern French writers. A range of intellectuals, including Gerald of Wales, Bernard of Clairvaux and Pope Alexander III, discussing the invasion of Ireland in 1172, thus wrote that the Irish were godless in religion, not observing the Christian faith.¹⁵⁴ In his *History and Topography of Ireland*, Gerald of Wales' tale of the two men of Connaught significantly carries the same religious connotation: these naked men, wearing animal

153 Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia*, ed. 308-309: 'A Scotorum gentibus pereque colebatus, usque ad tempora illustissimi regis Anglorum Henrici, avi tui, princeps sacratissime, qui primus, expulsis obscenis Hiberniensium gentibus, terram Anglis possidendam feodis militaribus distinxit, plurimo tamen Anglorum ac Britonum emptam sanguine. Unde factum est ut terra que, ab antiquissimis temporibus lacte pecudum vivens et quadragesimam ieiuniorum spernens, carnibus crudis utens et obscenitati data, religionis contemptrix erat, nova incolatus sui religione polleat et, sicut ultima veram religionem coacta suscepit, sic inter alias nationes ritu sancto ac religionis ardore plus omnibus ferveat. Episcopalis sedibus gaudet, monasteriis religiosissimis ac affluenter fundatis in copia prediorum et hospitalitate plenissima.'

154 The accusation that the Irish were not 'true Christians' remains remarkable even in light of the early medieval tensions and division between Rome/Canterbury and the Irish Church.

skins, have never heard of Christ or Lent, and are amazed at sight of bread or cheese.¹⁵⁵ John of Salisbury says of the Welsh that they ‘live like beasts and despise the Word of Life and though they nominally profess Christ, they deny him in their life and ways’.¹⁵⁶ In Chrétien de Troyes’ *Conte du Graal*, Perceval has to lose his Welshness in order to become a Christian knight.¹⁵⁷ In proverbial sayings, the Germans were accused of being pagans at heart, and stiff-necked, as were the Jews.¹⁵⁸

Gerald of Wales’ emphasis on a newly introduced Christianity in Ireland might be explained by referring to what is known as Ireland’s ‘insular Christianity’, setting it apart from the Roman Church before its colonization. However, lack of civilization, besides referring to a lack of culture, was clearly also associated with paganism, as the word barbaric had in the early Middle Ages referred to pagan beliefs.¹⁵⁹ As Robert Bartlett wrote, evidently ‘some kind of religious deficiency was a crucial part of the concept “barbarian”’.¹⁶⁰ Especially the peoples on the fringes of northern Europe might thus be represented as partially ‘pagan’ barbarians; even those who clearly had converted to Christianity many centuries earlier, such as the Irish, were thus stripped of their ‘true’ religiosity. This could be a deliberate rhetoric employed to validate subjugation and colonization, to urge missionaries to go forth to the outer fringes. Certainly, some of these Slav, Baltic and Scandinavian peoples had not yet been converted in this period, and their ‘cruelty’ and ‘innate wildness’ was more straightforwardly considered to be related to their lack of faith, which missionaries might eradicate.¹⁶¹ Helmold of Bosau relates the Slavs’ faithlessness to their disgusting smell, and the fact that they were false liars. Where the accusations were targeted at Irish Christians, as Robert Bartlett argues, such slander however served as a political justification for the aggression and subjugation. There was a strong tradition that conversion and political subjugation went hand in hand, and even if a people had been Christian for many centuries, paganism thus seemed to serve as a good excuse as any.¹⁶² Part of the discourse argued that peoples such as the Irish did not share the same social patterns as they were outside the Church.¹⁶³ They did not pay tithes, and their society lacked

155 Gerald of Wales, *Topographia Hibernica* III 26, ed. Dimock, 170-171, transl. O’Meara, 94-95; cf. Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 134.

156 John of Salisbury, *Letters of John of Salisbury, vol. 1: The Early Letters (1153-1161)*, ed. and transl. W.J. Millor and C.N.L. Brooke (London 1955), Letter 87, 135: ‘bestiali more vivens aspernatur verbum vitae, et Christum nomine tenus profitentes vita et moribus diffitentur’.

157 Ehlers, ‘Nationes in mittelalterlichen Europa’, 19 and 24.

158 See chapter 4 note 25.

159 W.R. Jones has argued that the term barbarian, which in the early Middle Ages was often synonymous with pagan, regained its classical cultural meaning in the twelfth century with the spread of Christendom to most parts of Europe. Nonetheless, the set of characteristics of the barbarian often includes a lack of religiosity. See W.R. Jones, ‘The image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe’, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13 (1971), 376-407.

160 Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 139.

161 See for example, Helmold of Bosau, *Chronica Slavorum* XXXVI and CVIII, ed. Schmeidler, 149-150 and 370-371, on the Rugiani or Rani. Cf. Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 139.

162 Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 140.

163 Bernard of Clairvaux for example also said that the Irish were barbarious and beastlike, lacking a proper social order; cf. *Vita sancti Malachiae* VIII, 16-17.

hierarchy.¹⁶⁴ But the Bohemians and Saxons were additionally accused of persecuting the church despite their incorporation within the Church hierarchy.¹⁶⁵

Sometimes this concept of barbaric semi-paganism was explained in relation to the cold climate of the north (see further chapter 2). As William of Malmesbury wrote in his version of Pope Urban's speech at Clermont in 1095, preaching the First Crusade: 'There remains Europe, the third continent. How small is the part of it inhabited by us Christians! For none would term Christian those barbarous people who live in distant islands on the frozen ocean, for they live in the manner of brutes.'¹⁶⁶ In one of the very few remarks about the cold climate in the north, Bartholomaeus also claims that pagan Norway is a 'most sharp and cold country, full of mountains, of woods, of groves. The men of that land live more off fishing and hunting than bread, for corn is scarce there because of the great cold.'¹⁶⁷

Nonetheless, the regions where these barbaric heathens and semi-pagans dwelled were, for the most part, described not only by Bartholomaeus but by many ecclesiastics in terms of great fertility and bounty. In these texts references to lack of culture, nomadic societies, and religiosity go hand in hand with a specific geographical rhetoric, wherein classical ethnography and biblical rhetoric intermingle. The medieval geography of these regions must, from the perspective of the 'civilized heartland', thus be examined within a specific discourse of presenting these territories as Promised Lands. For beyond the boundaries of Christendom, along the outer reaches, lay new lands of Canaan, paralleling the East in the farthest stretches of the West.

Lands of milk and honey

The representation of the fringes of Europe follows two traditions. First, in many sources, including Bartholomaeus' encyclopaedia, in addition to representing the core of Europe as copious and fertile, the outer edges of Christendom are presented as lands of milk and honey, just as in the Orient the mounts of Israel and the regions of Phoenicia and Judea are lands of milk and honey. This was a direct reference to the land of the Canaanites as mentioned in the book of Exodus when Moses sees

164 Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 22-23. The same was said of the Welsh and Ruthenians.

165 Cerwinka, 'Völkercharakteristiken', 69-75; cf. *Historia Welforum Weingartensis*, MGH SS 21, 470; Helmold of Bosau, *Chronica Slavorum* I, ed. Schmeidler, 35-38; the same was also said about the Poles. The Hungarians are cruel and pagan in Otto of Freising, *Gesta Friderici* I 32. Cf. Erich Maschke, *Das Erwachen des Nationalbewusstseins im deutsch-slavischen Grenzraum* (Leipzig 1933); Paul Görlich, *Zur Frage des Nationalbewußtseins in ostdeutschen Quellen des 12. bis 14. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg 1964) for (many) further sources.

166 William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum* IV 347, ed. and transl. Mynors, Thomson and Winterbottom, vol. 1, 600-601: 'Tertium mundi clima restat Europa, cuius quantulam partem inhabitamus Christiani! Nam omnem illam barbariem quae in remotis insulis glatialem frequentat oceanum, quia more belvino victitat, Christianum quis dixerit?'; cf. Hay, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea*, 33.

167 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 105, 'De Norvegia': 'asperrima et frigidissima, sylvestris et nemerosa, cuius incolae plus de piscatura et venatione vivunt quam de pane, nam rara est ibi annona propter frigoris multitudinem'. Adam of Bremen says of Norway and Sweden, that although bitterly cold, the pastoralists are 'the most noble of men, living in the manner of the patriarchs by the labour of their hands', with the Norwegians herding empty tracts of land as the Arabs do. Cf. Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* IV 31-32, ed. Schmeidler, 263-267.

the burning bush – the land of destiny of the Israelites exodus in Egypt.¹⁶⁸ Secondly, in earlier accounts of the expansion of the Church, regions on the fringe were sometimes presented as a ‘microcosm’ of the created world, such as in Bede’s *History of the English Church*. In this work Bede was heavily concerned with Britain’s role in the stages of divine history and the expansion of the Church in the Sixth Age.¹⁶⁹ His famous opening passage thus paints a mouth-watering encomium of a Britain which ‘has good pasturage for cattle and beasts of burden. It also produces vines in certain districts, and has plenty of both land- and waterfowl of various kinds. It is remarkable too for its rivers, which abound in fish, particularly salmon and eels, and for copious springs.’¹⁷⁰ It is full of shell-fish, mussels, salt springs, metals and pearls. According to some scholars, this rhetoric of copiousness was a deliberate construct to present the island of Britain as a microcosm, a blessed plot of land.

Although to an extent Bede was excerpting sources such as Pliny, Orosius and Gildas, Merrills has emphasized that Bede’s exultation of Britain – and intense praise of Ireland – is a carefully constructed narrative – as indeed was Isidore’s ‘Praise of Spain’ (*Laus Spaniae*) in his *History of the Goths*. Bede is careful to emphasize Britain’s location in the Ocean, depicted in medieval *mappae mundi* as liminal.¹⁷¹ Nonetheless, the isolated location of Britain and Ireland in the West was counterbalanced by emphasizing both islands’ salubrious abundance. As such, according to Merrills, Bede was refuting the image of Ireland as a realm of impious barbarity, and proclaiming it an island of evangelism – similar to Britain.¹⁷² Bede describes Ireland’s latitudinal position as more favourable than that of Britain; in Ireland the climate is mild and healthy, and snow never settles for long. Moreover, it is famously immune to the venom of snakes, which die as soon as they breathe the scent of its air.¹⁷³ Both Bartholomaeus and Gerald of Wales also stress Ireland’s temperate climate. Gerald of Wales repeats that poison immediately loses all force of evil and that Ireland – the most temperate of all countries – possessed this quality even before St Patrick arrived.¹⁷⁴

Merrills stresses that Bede’s encomium of Britain and Ireland is not representing a prelapsarian state, but rather that there is a hexameral undercurrent; the sequence of crops, sea animals and birds

168 Exodus 3:7-10.

169 Merrills, *History and Geography*, 238.

170 Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I 1, ed. and transl. Colgrave and Mynors, 14-15: ‘alendis apta pecoribus ac iumentis, vineas etiam quibusdam in locis germinans, sed et avium ferax terra marique generis diversi, fluviis quoque multum piscosis ac fontibus praeclara copiosis; et quidem praecipue issicio abundat et anguilla.’

171 Merrills, *History and Geography*, 255.

172 Idem, 271. There are other references in Bede’s opening chapter alluding to ancient Israel. William D. McCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede* (Toronto 1994), 49.

173 Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I 1, ed. and transl. Colgrave and Mynors, 16-17. The statement that snakes could not survive on the island was drawn from Solinus’ *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* XXII 2-3; cf. Merrills, *History and Geography*, 260-263. For further sources references in Bede’s description of Ireland, see 261, esp. note 125. Bede also attributes the same snake repellent powers to the island of Thanet.

174 Gerald of Wales, *Topographia Hibernica* I 28-31, ed. Dimock, 62-65, transl. O’Meara, 34-38; cf. Merrills, *History and Geography*, 265. Britain, too, has snake-repellent powers resulting from the presence of jet.

reflects the order in the creation story.¹⁷⁵ The purpose was not to paint a second Eden but rather a ‘representation of the created world’, a ‘microcosm of the oikoumene’, a place touched by God.¹⁷⁶ The emphasis lies not so much on the Fall but on the creation of the physical world. The description of Britain can thus be read as a microcosmic representation of the created world.

In addition, Britain, located on the edge of the world, as a recipient of divine favour was the stage for the end of Christian time.¹⁷⁷ Bede’s is indeed a story of the evangelization of Britain; from his perspective, Ireland could be viewed as the next destination in the trek westwards and as such be presented as a new Canaan. According to Merrills, these references to Ireland as Canaan thus served as a counterpoint to Britain.¹⁷⁸ In similar vein, in the first part of his *History and Topography of Ireland*, Gerald of Wales (copying Bede) presents the geographical measurements of Ireland followed by a discussion of its fertility, noting, using the imagery of the Promised Land, that the ‘island is rich in pastures and meadows, honey and milk, and wine, but not vineyards’.¹⁷⁹

Anglo-Saxons presented themselves as God’s chosen people, and as such Britain could indeed be presented as a new Canaan, a new Promised Land. However, this image is not exclusive but instead repeatedly employed in descriptions of other regions on the edge or beyond the boundaries of Christendom. Indeed, to the north-east, in his description of Slavia, Bartholomaeus employs the motif directly. The region, divided into two Slavias, is inhabited by the people of Bohemia, by Poles, Metani, Vandals, Rutheni, Dalmatians, and Carinthians. These share a common language and customs, but differ in their religious rites, for some are still pagan, others adhere to the Greek or Latin Church. The inhabitants of Greater Slavia (Damatians, Serbs, Carinthians), some of whom live high up in the mountains or in dense woods, some of whom till the fields, are fierce and uncultured, and less pious in God’s service, leading the lives of pirates.¹⁸⁰ Lesser Slavia, conversely, where the Prussians, Vandals and Bohemians live, is a highly fertile region bearing crops and fruit, full of rivers and ponds, woods and pastures, ‘abounding with honey and milk. These people are strong-bodied, dedicated to agriculture and fishing, more devoted to God and peaceable towards their

175 Merrills, *History and Geography*, 270-272; Diane Speed, ‘Bede’s Creation of a Nation in his Ecclesiastical History’, in *Parergon* 10 (1992), 139-154, here at 146-151; Calvin Kendall, ‘Imitation and the Venerable Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*’, in Margot H. King and Wesley M. Stevens (eds), *Saints, Scholars and Heroes: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honour of Charles W. Jones* (2 volumes, Collegeville Minn, 1979), vol. 1, 180; Benedicta Ward, *The Venerable Bede* (London 1998), 116-117; Charles W. Jones, ‘Some Introductory remarks on Bede’s Commentary on Genesis’ in *Sacris Erudiri* 19 (1969/1970), 115-198, here at 125-126; Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven 1989), 59; Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 144-145. Both Speed and Kendall interpret the ‘copia motif’ as prelapsarian.

176 Merrills, *History and Geography*, 272. It would be interesting to see if Gerald of Wales’ description of Ireland in the *Topographia Hibernica* also contains such as hexameral undercurrent.

177 Idem, 273.

178 Idem, 262.

179 Gerald of Wales, *Topographia Hibernica* 16, ed. Dimock, 28, transl. O’Meara, 35: ‘pascuis et pratis, melle et lacte, vinis, non vineis’. Gerald continues with a discussion of the fact that Bede had said that Ireland was not completely without vineyards, but that in his days, the wines were imported from Poitou in exchange for animal hides.

180 Trevisa’s translation (on page 806) says: ‘without devotion’.

neighbours than those in Greater Slavia, as a result of their mixing and daily business with the Germans' – here there is some degree of Christianity.¹⁸¹

That this is not an isolated motif becomes clear when we take into account the abundance of sources containing references to lands of milk and honey. In Otto of Freising's description of Pannonia we can additionally read about rivers and streams, wild animals, delightful because of the natural charm of the landscape. It is so rich in arable fields, 'it seems like the paradise of God, or the fair land of Egypt'. Its inhabitants, Hungarians, are however barbarians, crude in customs and speech, 'of disgusting aspect with deep-set eyes and short stature', who have built but few proper stone or wooden houses.¹⁸² Otto marvels at the divine patience that so delightful a land should be inhabited by such monstrous beings. In a *vita* of bishop Otto of Bamberg, the twelfth-century monk Herbord of Michelsberg (d. 1168) offers a geographical description of Pomerania, which was converted to Christianity by Otto. After presenting the geographical dimensions he writes that 'its people, experienced fighters on land and sea, are accustomed to living off plunder and depredation, have always been indomitable due to a natural savageness, and totally alien to Christian culture and faith. But this land offers to its inhabitants a plentiful bounty of fish and animals, and is most fertile with every kind of grain and vegetable or plant. No place is richer in honey, pasture, and herbs. They neither have nor seek wine, but their carefully prepared mead surpasses even the wines of Falernum.'¹⁸³

The many remarks about the bounties of the land, however, were not simply expressions of delight in the fecundity. The implications were, surely, that the inhabitants of these regions were living in a Canaan, or a blessed microcosm of the creation, but refused to make good use of the riches.¹⁸⁴ The potential of agricultural fertility was not maximized, as Gerald of Wales and the author of the *Deeds of Stephen* remarked.¹⁸⁵ This lack of cultivation of the fields was related to a lack of good morals, as William of Poitiers had already remarked about the Bretons in the eleventh

181 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 140, 'De Sclavia': 'melle abundans atque lacte. Gens fortis corpore, agriculturae dedita et piscaturae, magis pia ad deum et pacifica quoad proximum, quam illi qui habitant in maiori Sclavia, et hoc est propter mixtionem et societatem, quam quotidie contrahunt cum Germanis.' His source is the elusive 'Erodatus'.

182 Otto of Freising, *Gesta Friderici I* 32, ed. Schmale, 192, transl. Charles Christopher Mierow (Toronto 1994), 65-66: 'tamquam paradus Dei vel Egyptus spectabilis esse videatur'; 'facie tetri, profundis oculis, statura humiles'.

183 Herbord of Michelsberg (also known as 'of Bamberg'), *Dialogus de vita Ottonis episcopi Babenbergensis* II 1, ed. Köpke, 725, transl. Cohen, *Ethnographic Dimensions*, 162: 'Gens ista terra marique bellare perita, spoliis et raptu vivere consueta, naturali quadam feritate semper erat indomita et a cultu et fide christiana penitus aliena. Terra vero ipsa piscium et ferarum copiosam incolis praebet habundantiam, omnigenumque frumentorum et leguminum sive seminum fertilissima est; nulla mellis feracior, nulla pascuis et gramine fecundior. Vinum autem nec habent nec querunt, sed melleis poculis et cervisia curatissime confecta vina superant Falernica.' Compare also the *Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago*, which uses similar imagery describing the region of Navarra.

184 Tamm, 'Eastern Baltic Region', 20. See Robert Bartlett, *England under Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075-1225* (Oxford 2000), 286 for similar English sources.

185 Phillips, 'Outer world', 51 .

century.¹⁸⁶ Though inhabiting a delectable land, the Hungarians were monsters, not men, Otto of Freising snarled. They were unable – as pagans or wayward Christians – to reap the benefits of the land, to enjoy the fruits of milk and honey as a righteous and obedient people.¹⁸⁷ With the idea of a civilizing process within Western Europe in the twelfth century, emphasis was thus laid upon the regions that were trailing in the evolution from hunting and pastoralism to urbanity.¹⁸⁸ Defining the inhabitants as pagan, cruel, barbarian pastoralists lent the imagery of their regions as Promised Lands a sense of urgency. For Canaan was indeed a region to which man must journey, which his ‘seed would inherit’, just as God had purportedly sent Abraham from Haran to Canaan to inherit that land.

Was the purpose of the rhetoric to urge men – perhaps missionaries – to drive out the idolatrous inhabitants, as the South Afrikaner *voortrekkers* believed to expel the heathens in the great Trek?¹⁸⁹ This might be taking it too far, although according to Marek Tamm, Arnold of Lübeck in his *Chronica Slavorum* used the notion of the Promised Land to urge crusaders to hasten to the land of promised felicity.¹⁹⁰ Len Scales has even argued that ‘within the Judaeo-Christian history of salvation, the obliteration and replacement of peoples was a principal motor of advance and historical change’.¹⁹¹ Such rhetoric might thus have ensconced in men’s minds the urgency to travel to and settle in these regions.

Whether or not this geographical discourse was a deliberate rhetoric to feed greedy eyes, however, at the least we can conclude that it had profound meaning in light of the Christianization from the perspective of the core of North-West Europe. In the ninth-century Donatus of Fiesole, an Irish bishop residing in Italy, wrote the following succinct, benevolent lines on Ireland:

The noblest share of earth of the far western world
 Whose name is written Scottia in the ancient books;
 Rich in goods, in silver, jewels, cloth and gold,
 Benign to the body in air and mellow soil. With
 Honey and with milk flow Ireland’s lovely plains,
 With silk and arms, abundant fruit, with art and men.
 No raging bears dwell there, nor cruel lions, nor
 Were they ever found in Ireland; no poison, snakes slithers
 In the grass, no noisy croaking frog sings in the lakes.

186 William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi* 145, ed. and transl. R.H.C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford 1998), 74-75; cf. Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 39.

187 Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 146.

188 Philippi, ‘Outer world’, 51; Simms, ‘Core and periphery’, 24.

189 Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 81.

190 Arnold of Lübeck, *Chronica Slavorum* v 30, ed. J.M. Lappenberg (Hannover 1868), 214.

191 Scales, ‘Bread, Chees and Genocide’, 294-295. The ground for ethnic cleansing is related to the concept of ethnic chosenness, which was adopted by Western European peoples such as the Anglo-Saxons, Franks, Britons and Normans in the Middle Ages. See further chapter 9.

Worthy are the Irish to dwell in this their land.

A people renowned in war, in peace, in faith.¹⁹²

From the twelfth century, such unequivocal appraisals of the fringes of Europe were few and far between.

In addition, the positioning of the Western heartland on the axis Orient-Occident offered men of letters in the North-West a binary image in which their own identity could be mirrored: Christian 'us' versus 'pagan' or 'heretical' (either heathen or Muslim) them.¹⁹³ Other categories applied were temperate (northern France, England and Italy) versus hot (the East/South) or extremely cold (the extreme North); white versus dark-skinned; civilized and urbanized (northern France, Normandy, England) versus pastoral, lawless barbarian (Ireland, Wales, the Scandinavian and Baltic regions), and virtuous versus sinful (everywhere). However, within the confines of Christendom in the West – where the civilized Christian or potential Christian – shades of otherness also continued to be expressed in terms of degrees of sinfulness or devoutness.¹⁹⁴ Thus, from the outset, it is necessary to keep in mind the relational aspect of these ethnocentric perspectives: not only was the non-Christian other painted in terms of barbarity, within Christendom degrees of Christian otherness also existed. From the core of North-West Europe, the Irish, and to an extent Germans, might be depicted as uncivilized, barely Catholic people. And even within the core of Christendom and 'civilization', where crusading knights could view themselves as epitomes of chivalry in the face of the Saracen enemy (lewd, cowardly, cunning, luxurious), internally the northern French might accuse their more

192 MGH *Poetae Latini aevi Carolini III*, ed. Ludwig Traube (Berlin 1896), 691-692: 'Finibus occiduis describitur optima tellus / Nomine et antiquis Scottia scripta libris. / Dives opum, argenti, gemmarum, vestis et auri, / Commoda corporibus, aere, putre solo. / Melle fluit pulchris et lacte Scottia campis, / Vestibus atque armis frugibus arte viris. / Ursorum rabies nulla est ibi, saeva leonum / Semina nec umquam Scottica terra tulit. / Nulla venena nocent nec serpens serpit in herba / Nec conquesta canit garrula rana lacu. / In qua Scottorum gentes habitare merentur, / Inclita gens hominum milite pace fide.' Quoted by Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 151, transl. by Liam de Paor, in T.W. Moody and F.X. Martin (eds), *The Course of Irish History* (Cork 1984), 91, whose translation I have amended. Cf. also the verse, attached to many manuscripts of Nennius' *Historia Brittonum*, on the marvels of Ireland, 'De rebus Hiberniae Admirandis', probably written in the ninth century. Printed in *Chronica Minora*, MGH *Auctorum Antiquissimi* 13, ed. Theodore Mommsen (Berlin 1898 Berlin) 3, 111-222; also in Thomas Wright and James O. Halliwell (eds), *Reliquiae Antiquae: Scraps from Ancient Manuscripts, Illustrating chiefly Early English Literature & the English Language* (2 volumes, reprint of London ed. of 1841-1843, New York 1966), vol. 1, 1127.

193 For the binary Orient-Occident, see Abari, 'From Due East to True North', 19-34; Norman Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens: An Interpretation of the Chansons de Geste* (Edinburgh 1984) and *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (rev. ed. London 1993).

194 Freedman, 'The Medieval Other', 3-4 writes that 'the medieval Other differs from that of the modern period described by Said in that neither the westward course of history, nor occidental technological superiority, nor a global empire were as yet conceived of, let alone confidently maintained'. This however I believe to be inaccurate.

immediate southerly neighbours of decadence, effeminacy, and over-civilization.¹⁹⁵ Likewise, where the French or Italians could regard themselves to be the measure of civilization and the more northern English or Germans as barbarians in the backwaters of Europe, the latter transfixed the same imagery on *their* northerly neighbours, the Irish or Scandinavians. The blood drinking, flesh eating savage dwelt in remote spaces dangerously close to home: Ireland in the extremities of the West, the Slavs and Tartars in the East. Even the English could be stripped of their humanity as tailed men, a physical deformity mythically materializing – crucially – upon rejection of Augustine’s efforts to convert the Anglo-Saxons in 596.¹⁹⁶ North, centre, east and south are thus relative positions.

These divisions began to sharpen further when, from the end of the eleventh century, another discourse regained influence in the West: the classical theory that environment influenced character and that mild temperatures produced ideal men. This theory positioned ethnic groups on a north-middle-south axis. In the north lived the barbaric, rash, bellicose, in the south the weak, timid, possibly cunning, and sexually lewd, who might also be decadent or effeminate. To an extent, this befitted the contemporary reputation of the heathen northerners or Saracens in the south and east. But for learned men such as Bartholomaeus Anglicus, there was something troubling about this ancient theory. For the area designated as the North in classical thought – characterized as harsh, cold, the abode of the devil – partly corresponded with the new heartland of Europe, whereas the ideal middle zone of classical antiquity, the Mediterranean, was now partly the abode of Islam. Thus, although Europe’s superiority to Asia is slightly muddled, as Bartholomaeus called Asia’s climate more moderate, the Franciscan friar took pains to nurture an image of Europe as environmentally pleasant, and as such producing civilized peoples.¹⁹⁷ Whereas the extreme North – Scandinavia and the Baltic region – might retain its cold, harsh climate – yet the heartland was pictured as a pleasant,

195 The ethnocentric position is of course not restricted to North-West Europe. The French themselves are accused of effeminacy by Geoffrey of Vinsauf in his *Documentum de modo et arte versificandi* (see chapter 5), and for levity in the prophetic verse ‘Gallorum levitas Germanos iustificabit’; cf. Walther, ‘Scherz’, no. 64; Ibn Khaldūn (*Muqaddima* I) wrote a negative report of those in the first and second clime (Abessinians, Sudani) as they were located beyond the temperate zone; Iraq and Syria were the most temperate regions in his viewpoint (writing in Algeria). See also Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews*, 178.

196 See chapter 6.

197 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 50, ‘De Europa’, where he says that the region of Asia is the first in the East, and is ‘mediocriter’ in climate. Akbari, ‘From Due East’, 27, seems to interpret *mediocriter* as meaning mediocre, but here, in the context of the climate theory, which Bartholomaeus is discussing, it would seem to mean ‘moderate’, as in a moderate climate (in Trevisa’s translation: *meneliche*). In the fourteenth century, John Gower drew a sharp distinction between the extreme cold of the west and the extreme heat of the Orient, making it uninhabitable. See *Confessio Amantis* vii 581-588; cited by Akbari, ‘From Due East’, 28-29. Akbari argues that our notion of a ‘European’ West appears in fourteenth-century literature. However, I believe this occurred earlier, in the twelfth century onwards. Moreover, Gower is referring to extreme cold and heat, where regions are uninhabitable – not the core of Western Europe.

fertile stage.¹⁹⁸ The Orient, conversely, was a region where Christianity had lost its grip, as home of the Islam. As such, some intellectuals, notably Gerald of Wales, painted the East as an unhealthy, pestilent region.¹⁹⁹ How Bartholomaeus addressed this dilemma and positioned the North-West on the north-south axis, will be discussed further in chapter 2.

198 Jeremiah 1:14, Isaiah 14:13; quoted by Akbari, 'From Due East', 30, although she believes the development of the Occident only occurred in the fourteenth century, which she relates to more practical, realistic map making. She quotes Alexander Neckam's *De naturis rerum* II 98, who in a discussion of the allegorical meaning of the compass clearly relates the North to the devil and quotes Jeremiah. See also Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden*, 123 for the North as the abode of the devil.

199 Gerald of Wales, *Topographia Hibernica* I 34-40, ed. Dimock, 68-73, transl. O'Meara, 35-38. Although Bartholomaeus does not make any direct reference to apocalyptic scenarios (although he does refer to the translation of knowledge from East to West), in his entry on Cedar, where the Ismaelites live – 'men surpassing the madness of beasts' – Bartholomaeus quotes the seventh-century Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*' revelations that the Saracens were sent as God's scourge for the sexual sins (visiting prostitutes, sodomy and so on) of Christians and as a test for true Christians to overcome before the end of time, known as the time of 'anguish and woe', 'for the wickedness of the Christians at that time'. Cf. Tolan, *Saracens*, 46-50. The time of anguish was characterized by the slaying priests, having intercourse with Christian women, drinking from the holy vessel, and tying beasts to the sepulchres of saints.