CHAPTER 7

Late medieval Germany: an under-Stated nation?

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'Judged purely by its success in creating a nation-state, German history has to be deemed a failure until the nineteenth century.'[1] This familiar view of the historical relationship between power and the German nation gains added significance from the context in which it here appears: in a recent introduction to the political development of late *medieval* Europe. The book's co-authors do, it is true, distance themselves at once from such a narrow perspective. But taken on its own, it seems to encapsulate a piece of well-established common ground among historians of pre-modern and modern Germany – and particularly those writing within the broad Anglophone historiographical tradition. Generally speaking, historians of the modern and the pre-modern nation have been hampered by a failure to pay enough regard to each other's findings and approaches. In the case of Germany, however, the problem has traditionally been, in a way, almost an opposite one, with loosely framed grand narratives and vague, sometimes unvoiced, assumptions and connections being traded freely back and forth between students of different epochs of the German past. Not uncommonly, medievalists have fashioned their accounts with at least half an eye on events far distant in time.[2] Modernists seem at first glance less encumbered, with their bold insistence on the German nation's quintessential modernity. Some are even at pains to declare that there is nothing to say on their subject before, at earliest, the closing years of the eighteenth century.[3] If this sometimes strikes the reader as protesting too much, the suspicion is reinforced by the shades of a more remote German past that have a habit of flitting behind modernist narratives. 'German national consciousness' may have been 'born in the Wars of Liberation from Napoleonic domination', thus emerging 'significantly later' than in neighbouring lands; but the historian who wrote these words still felt the need for an excursion back to the end of the Middle Ages in order to account for this anomaly.[4] Others cover their modernist positions with a parenthetical backward gesture to the effect that 'some form of German identity that one might call national' is here and there to be met with already in more distant epochs.[5]

Why those earlier national stirrings failed in the German case to bear fruit is a question to which medievalists, since their own first nationalist heyday in the nineteenth century, have judged themselves especially well qualified to supply answers. It was the peculiar shape of medieval German political life, and above all the imperial entanglement, which conspired to ensure that Germany 'missed the opportunity for national development' in this crucial formative era.[6] The Germans, on this well-accustomed view, had their place in the ferment of peoples and kingdoms that arose in western continental Europe following the fragmentation of Charlemagne's empire in the ninth century. But a series of colossal outside shocks and self-inflicted false turnings subsequently robbed the Germans of the philosopher's stone that elsewhere in Europe allowed infant political communities to transform themselves into fully grown nation-states.[7] The view of medieval German history as a fateful succession of calamities has for some time now been exposed to a healthy blast of scepticism.[8] But traditional yardsticks and teleologies have died harder in studies addressing the early formation of European states and nations, where we can still read how the Germans in pre-modern times 'failed' to 'achieve' mature state institutions (in contrast to the 'remarkable success' of their French neighbours in the same venture).[9]

But, as readers of Friedrich Meinecke are aware, *Staatsnationen* are not the only nations. The consolation prize of a *Kulturnation* remained a possibility where the framework of the state was wanting.[10] But for the Germans, it is alleged, the medieval legacy proved to be a poisoned one, setting them on that fatal path that led many centuries later to the genocidal nationalism of *ius sanguinis* – into a historical 'toxic waste dump' that, for one medievalist, continues to this day to ooze pollutants into the groundwater.[11] In this chapter I shall argue that this familiar view, of an ethnically and linguistically focused medieval *Kulturnation*, devoid of relationships with power and government, is fundamentally mistaken.[12] I shall also take issue with an assumption often detectable behind both medievalist and modernist accounts of the early history, or pre-history, of European nations, namely that their emergence invariably depended upon the establishment and maintenance of powerful, intrusive and wide-ranging 'state' structures.[13] It concentrates on the decades between the fall of the Hohenstaufen dynasty in the middle years of the thirteenth century and the establishment of an enduring Habsburg presence on the imperial throne in the second half of the fifteenth. This was the period during which, medievalists often contend, the institutions of secular government attained their first mature expression elsewhere in western Europe.[14] In

Germany, by contrast, these two centuries marked, by general assent, the nadir of the medieval *Reich*, viewed as a system of power.[15] But, as will be shown, that disheartening state of affairs did not in fact preclude the articulation of a German identity with a thoroughly *political* character. If medieval nations were 'imagined communities', then relationships with rulership and government were themselves quite capable of being constructed *imaginatively*, in spite of – indeed, sometimes under the direct stimulus of – the all-too-apparent limitations of contemporary structures of power.

I readily concede, at least for Germany, the modernists' claim that the social scope and political consequences of the nation were transformed in the novel circumstances of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I do, however, argue against the view, systematically formulated by Jürgen Habermas, that reduces pre-modern political culture to mere 'representation': the one-sided, unchallenged projection of official messages by small, homogeneous ruling elites onto inert populations.[16] Instead, I will suggest that the articulation of German political identities during the late Middle Ages is to a significant degree explicable in terms of the fissured, contested and polycentric character of imperial power in the German-speaking lands. Late medieval Germany may not have known any social formation broad and inter-connected enough to be called a 'public sphere'; but it did know a considerable range and variety of different ('public') spaces, where political ideas were formulated, and where contesting principles sometimes collided. Out of this diversity there emerged a political public for the German nation which, while unquestionably small if measured against modern criteria, displayed greater social breadth and heterogeneity than modernist approaches often allow. Indeed, another of this chapter's contentions is that, while the late medieval German nation was clearly in most respects a lesser thing than its modern successor, there seem few certain grounds for ranking it below the expressions of national identity and solidarity encountered in other European realms of the same period.

The *Kulturnation* was, we have been taught, first and foremost a community of shared speech.[17] Language therefore provides a natural point from which to begin examining the late medieval German nation.[18] Medieval commentators did, it is true, invoke common tongue quite often as a criterion by which the Germans might be identified.[19] We do not, however, need to look far in order to see just how paradoxical such a view was. Late medieval Germany was home to several different written vernaculars, to say nothing of its rich profusion of spoken dialects. When a fourteenth-century scholar, Conrad of Megenberg, made reference to his

German 'mother' tongue, he did not mean some notional universal 'German' language, but specifically the Franconian form of Germanic speech.[20] The paradox was not lost on contemporaries, the chronicler Peter of Zittau wondering at the fact that the Saxon and the Bavarian, neither of whom understood the other, each passed for a 'German' speaker.[21]

It is hard to see how a supposedly common tongue embracing such a Babel of discordant voices could have served as a foundation for collective identity in any society – still less in one as marked by localism and limited communications as was medieval Germany. The explanatory process needs to be reversed. If the various Germanic tongues that were spoken and written within the limits of the *Reich* came over time to be regarded as constituting, at least in some contexts, a single 'German' language, that was the result of processes in which power and rulership had been centrally involved. The earliest developments took place not in Germany but in Italy, where in the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries a number of Latin terms (*Teutonici*, *Teutones*, and certain derivatives) became current, referring to the northern followers of the Saxon and Salian emperors.[22] Gradually, the new terminology infiltrated writings from north of the Alps, with the Investiture Contest of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries providing a major impetus.[23] 'The Germans' were henceforth, down to the end of the Middle Ages, conceived above all as those speakers of Germanic tongues who were also subject to the emperor.[24]

For Germans, as for other medieval Europeans, what common language represented was not an alternative to a (missing) political identity, but rather one of the elements out of which such an identity was constituted. Language did, it is true, vary considerably in its importance as an element in medieval collective identities, claiming considerable prominence in the articulation of some 'nations', while having only a subsidiary or even a negligible role in others.[25] For literate Germans, the idea of shared language had some utility in demarcating a common identity, though its importance tended to be confined to certain specific contexts, and was never overriding. What a comparative survey of medieval European realms shows above all, however, is the complexity of language's role: its relative prominence in particular cases in itself tells us next to nothing about the relative cohesiveness, maturity, incipient modernity or long-term future courses of different political communities.

The alleged primacy of language to the early formulation of German identity is thus relatively easily discounted. That, however, is only one of the elements which, it is often maintained, distinguish the course of

German nation-making from that followed elsewhere. The other key determining factor – the relative absence of institutional political foundations – is harder to contest. Bernard Guenée, in a wide-ranging comparative study of late medieval political culture, has made the distinction plain. 'In the birth of French national identity ... a political fact – the existence of a king and a kingdom – was of primordial importance.' In Germany, Guenée goes on, things were different.[26]

The qualities that have led historians to discern in the central and later Middle Ages the formation of a French political nation need only the briefest repetition.[27] Myths of sacrality and Christian mission clustered readily around a dynasty of unusual longevity, within an account of western Frankish kingship which had continuity as well as coherence. Royal saints and miracle-working rituals were accommodated readily in such a framework. The descendants of crusader-kings were able to claim the epithet 'most Christian' without a flicker of irony, even while they defied or manipulated popes, suppressed a crusading order, or taxed their clergy for war.[28] Not just the kings but their land too was a 'holy' one, favoured by God, the special home of Christian piety and learning. The French aristocracy, for its part, established a cultural template for the ruling classes throughout Europe. At the same time, French society was drawn to a focus in a political system of striking coherence and power. A great royal city channelled from early on the material and ideological resources of French rulership. Strengthening threads of power linked the capital with the regions and their populations.[29] A rich, articulate tradition of royalist constitutional theory seems, at least in the estimation of modern scholarship, to have folded out a blueprint for the sovereign nation state by as early as 1300.[30] All the pieces were in place for a story of unshakeable power and success, with even the crises bearing a positive witness. Here, after all, was a monarchical nation-state whose sinews penetrated French society so thoroughly and unmistakably that by the fifteenth century even an obscure teenage girl from the eastern marches could tell who was God's lawful king and her own.

If the long-term course of German history has invited rather different tales from the medieval past, the sorry state of the imperial monarchy has seemed well able to furnish the requisite raw materials. It is hard to imagine a starker contrast. We could start by substituting for good St Louis the Hohenstaufen Antichrist Frederick II. Thenceforward it is down-hill all the way – that is, if we do not opt instead for the alternative view, namely that the fate of the imperial monarchy was effectively already sealed long before that time. The *Reich* had little to show in the way of institutional

government. Imperial justice, by the close of the Middle Ages, was hard to get, could not touch the princes, and had little force off the routes of the king's dwindling *iter*. The Empire's ruler could tax only a handful of his subjects, his military resources were puny, and he had few dependable means of making his will known to his subjects, beyond calling to see them in person.[31] There is little here to impress historians of the pre-modern nation-state – especially if they have also imbibed the lesson that what above all made medieval men and women patriotic was the chance to give their bodies to the king's war and their taxes to his coffers, to bear the strictures of his justice and the scrutiny of his officials.

That was not, however, the full extent of the Empire's shortcomings. Where, in Germany, are the miracle-working kings? Where the royal saints? Charlemagne, the most obvious contender, occupies in the medieval German tradition a place too complex to allow him easily to fit the role.[32] Medieval Germany never boasted a temple of monarchy to set beside Paris or Westminster.[33] None of this is surprising when we recall how fully the principle of election by the German princes, established after the middle of the thirteenth century, had obliterated earlier elements of dynastic continuity in the *Reich*.[34] Between Frederick II's death in 1250 and that of his Habsburg namesake in 1493, son followed father on the throne just once.[35] Election helped to encourage the ruler's physical, and in some ways also his ideological, marginality to German political life. For much of the fourteenth century, imperial rulership had its focus in Bohemia. From the fifteenth onwards, its home was in the Austrian duchies of the far south-east. Seen in this way, the period in the 1260s during which Richard of Cornwall affected to rule the *Reich* by remote control from beyond the English Channel seems like only a particularly extreme expression of a distinct constitutional tendency.[36]

If the character of rulership in late medieval Germany seems ill-fitted to nurturing a shared political identity, the traditional conceptual vocabulary of western emperorship appears actively to discourage one. The accustomed terminology in imperial letters and diplomas was, on the whole, Christian and Roman, not German.[37] 'Germany', indeed, had at best only qualified and uncertain significance as a unit of government, within an assemblage of imperial territories that also embraced Burgundy, Bohemia and substantial parts of Italy. A *regnum Alemanniae* is indeed sometimes found in the writings of the chroniclers and, more rarely, in official documents.[38] But it lacks that substance, born of constitutional clarity as well as common repetition, that in the later Middle Ages the 'kingdom of France' or the 'kingdom of England' could command. For some of the

time, this nebulous 'German realm' did not even have German rulers. French and English princes were several times candidates for the imperial crown. An English king's brother was actually chosen, as was a king of Castile. The house of Luxemburg, which supplied four of the Empire's rulers, moved in a world of international dynasticism where ethnic categories meant little. Such effort as the Luxemburgs invested in the politics of collective identity was directed more at winning hearts and minds in their dynastic realms than at the *Reich*.[39]

But none of these seeming obstacles was enough to prevent 'the Germans' and their lands from being invoked, in indisputably political ways, in a rich diversity of late medieval writings. Mention of them is not even *especially* rare in documents from the imperial chancery – in which, however, they are mostly confined to the less 'dignified' and formulaic elements. Far more numerous, though, are the references to land and people to be found in vernacular and Latin chronicles and annals, and in the political songs and verses in which the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were so rich. Easily the fullest and most eloquent formulations of a German political identity come, however, in treatises and pamphlets – often described, misleadingly, as the work of 'publicists' – addressing the character, history, contemporary state and expected fate of the imperial monarchy. These outspokenly imperialist tracts make a telling counterpoint to the relative decline of the *Reich* as a European power between the mid-thirteenth and later fifteenth centuries – the time when most of them were written. Nearly all attest what one treatise-writer, Lupold of Bebenburg, declared was his 'fervid zeal for the German fatherland (*patria Germaniae*)'.[40] What all these different sorts of writing have in common is an outlook which defines German identity mainly in relation to the imperial monarchy, and a view of the Empire which insists on its specifically German roots.

In character, the remarks on the subject encountered in these varied texts cover a wide range, from the programmatic to the off-hand and from the grandiloquent to the workaday. The largest claims were staked by the treatise-writers. Alexander of Roes conjured the full rhetorical span of neo-Roman Christian imperialism, writing of 'the Germans, to whom the government of the world is translated and the direction of the Church committed'.[41] Chroniclers rose occasionally to comparable feats of bombast, with one celebrating the 'world dominion' which pertained to the *Teutonici*.[42] If the Germans ruled the *Reich*, then it could logically be stated that the Empire's home was their lands. In Latin verses, Lupold of Bebenburg had a personified Empire declare that 'I inhabit the Germans'

fatherland for my seat.'[43] The fate of those who occupied the imperial throne was therefore the special concern of the German people, and a number of different, sometimes anonymous, versifiers are to be found urging 'Germany' to rejoice at a ruler's election to the Empire or his victories in battle, or to weep at his untimely death.[44] Sometimes, a German identity enfolded the Empire's ruler yet more tightly. For the Strasbourg chronicler Fritsche Closener, writing in the vernacular towards the middle of the fourteenth century, Conrad I (911–18) had been 'the first German *Kaiser*', ruling for seven years 'in the German lands'.[45] Otto I (936–73), meanwhile, was 'the first *powerful* German *Kaiser*'.[46] The ethnic foundation of Otto's rule was emphasised by Lupold of Bebenburg, who told how the Saxon emperor had subjected Italy 'to the power of the rulership and rulers (*regni et regum*) of Germany'.[47] On one influential view (albeit not one which all German writers accepted), Charlemagne himself, historic renewer of the Roman Empire, was an illustrious German.[48] The ethnic variety of the Empire's late medieval rulers, striking to a modern observer, was less evident to contemporaries, who could, when so minded, fashion 'Germans' from the most apparently unpromising materials. 'Thus, Charles IV and his son Wenceslas possessed the *Reich* and were kings of Bohemia; yet they were of German dynasty – and *had to be* of German dynasty.' If the cosmopolitan, Francophone, Slavophile Luxemburgers seem even to the most optimistic view problematical 'Germans', one chronicler at least felt he knew what custom obliged him to see, and duly saw it.[49]

The stage which framed the imperial monarch's routine acts and movements was, despite its lack of firm constitutional structures, often made an explicitly German one. It was to 'Germany', or in vernacular documents 'the German lands', that absent rulers habitually assured their faithful subjects they would shortly come back – a well-established refrain in Charles IV's communications with German recipients.[50] The ruler's visibility on German soil was for some a basic measure of his government. As one chronicler dismissively put it, Richard of Cornwall 'came nowhere in the German lands except to the Rhine, and was in fact impotent in the *Reich*'.[51] As for the ruler's actions when north of the Alps, imperial documents gave these on occasion an explicitly German frame of reference. A letter of Rudolf of Habsburg dealing with the government of imperial Italy signals in addition a clear order of priorities: 'having resolved all things throughout Germany, we are turning our mind to Tuscany . . . '.[52] It was the chroniclers, however, who most often reported the deeds of kings and emperors within a consciously German setting. War and peace, public

order and its breakdown, were matters which especially moved them to inflate the monarch's deeds to fill an all-German stage. A Bavarian chronicler, reporting Albert I's victory of 1302 over his princely opponents, explained that henceforth, 'with the spectre of war driven away, ... the security and tranquillity of peace spread through all of Germany'.[53] It is the hyperbolic or generalised note that underlines in remarks like these the binding quality of the 'German' frame of reference: 'all of Germany', not just the handful of regions where the monarch actually went, was held to flourish under a good ruler, or disintegrate into pernicious chaos under a bad one.

The language of *Romanitas* customary in both Latin and vernacular documents from the imperial chancery did admittedly limit in some ways the scope for describing the imperial monarchy as a specifically 'German' institution – especially since it was also adopted by other German chanceries and by many chroniclers and poets.[54] Consequently, we only occasionally find German writers referring to the Empire's ruler, in the terminology habitual elsewhere in western Europe, as 'king of Germany'.[55] But, in sharp contrast, the princes who shared the Empire's rule with their monarch were routinely given an ethnic appellation. This included the electors: contemporary reports commonly recount how the new king and future emperor was chosen by the princes of 'Germany' or 'the German lands'.[56] The language of Germanness may have had few fixed locations in the constitutional vocabulary of the medieval *imperium.*[57] But it was not, on that account, absent from the utterances of the imperial monarchy itself, still less from writings reflecting on the *Reich* or recording the deeds of its rulers. The varied and overlapping language of German identity – *Alemannia, Teutonia, Germania* with a rich array of derivatives in Latin, the abrupt switch to the plural *tiutschiu lant* in the vernacular – is bewildering to the modern observer; but there is little sign that its multiplicity left contemporaries feeling especially troubled or confused (any more than the Inuit appear confused about the nature of snow).[58] Nor does the lack of a distinct, legally bounded sphere of 'German' government seem to have been an insuperable obstacle: writers of various sorts deployed the language of Germanness freely in a range of contexts, without following rigid rules, and clearly felt they knew what they meant with enough precision for their own ends. They did not doubt that the 'German' sphere to which they referred had ascertainable limits – even if many would doubtless have struggled to define them precisely.[59]

We could continue at length heaping up examples in similar vein, expressing aspects of a clearly political conception of German identity.

There seems no obvious reason for supposing them to be either less numerous or less expressive of authentic sentiments, notions and assumptions than equivalent utterances from other European realms. But neither, as modernist critics would justly point out, does the mere accumulation of source references take us very far towards judging the social and political role or consequences of the medieval idea of nation. Any attempt to meet that challenge would need to determine as fully as possible its social location, as well as the social, political and cultural factors affecting its reception. The apparently anomalous relationship between power and identity in late medieval Germany opens up, as will become clear, some suggestive routes down which to explore these problems. First, however, a related question must be addressed: why late medieval views of German identity were able, in the comparative absence of institutional structures or stimuli, to sustain such a close imagined relationship with power and rulership.

To understand this means explaining how an institution with allegedly Roman and Christian foundations and a supposedly universal mission was able to be associated specifically with one people and its lands. This requires in turn two distinct approaches, focusing respectively on the outward characteristics of rulership in the late medieval *Reich* and on the particular and distinctive way in which the ethnic basis of monarchical power was conceived in Germany. One reason why imperial rule was so susceptible to being viewed in a German frame is that it seemed to the outward gaze naturally to fit such a frame. Never was that truer than in the two centuries following the death of Frederick II. Kings and emperors in that period may have exercised only a weak and partial rule in their German territories; but most of them spent more time among their German subjects than in any other part of the *Reich*. The concentration of rulership upon the regions north of the Alps became especially pronounced in the decades after the fall of the Hohenstaufen, during which the number and duration of expeditions into Italy declined.[60] In the same period, the Romance-speaking territories of imperial Burgundy fell increasingly under the sway of the French crown.[61] The remaining imperial properties and revenues lay mainly within the German lands, which also supplied most of the monarchy's servants.[62] The armies which the Empire's ruler led on campaign, depleted though they were, were mainly German in composition, and were so perceived by contemporaries.[63] During the fourteenth century, it became increasingly common for the imperial chancery to address German subjects in their own language – even if there was at first some reluctance to employ the vernacular for recipients outside the High

German heartlands.[64] The main acts in creating the Empire's ruler – election, coronation, and the round of legitimising journeys and occasions that customarily followed – took place on German soil, under the control of German high dignitaries.[65] Indeed, apart from Rome, the main centres of public spectacle and political memory for the *Reich* all lay in Germany. The order of priorities signalled in contemporary comment and sometimes in official documents had an objective basis: Germany was the foundation and starting point for rule of the Empire.

Seen in this way, the relationship between common identity and the framework of rulership in late medieval Germany was in practice closer to the pattern found in other European realms – to the kind of solidarity which Susan Reynolds has termed 'regnal' – than first appearances suggest.[66] Yet viewed from another perspective, it does appear distinctive. By the middle years of the thirteenth century the principle was well established that the whole German people (and not merely its ruler) held in trust the Christian Roman Empire. This idea drew sustenance from traditions tracing Trojan ancestry, first for the Franks, later for the German people as a whole, and thus allowing the Germans to claim blood kinship with the ancient Romans.[67] Another Romanising myth, widely disseminated in writings of the central and later Middle Ages, concentrated on the aid which the ancient Germans had allegedly given Caesar in wresting supreme power from the Senate.[68] Most authoritative, however, was the doctrine that there had at some point in the past taken place a constitutionally binding 'translation' of the Roman Empire to the Germans. This notion gained watertight canon-law foundations at the beginning of the thirteenth century when Pope Innocent III ruled in his decretal *Venerabilem* (1202) that the papacy had transferred the Empire to the Germans in the person of Charlemagne.[69] Thenceforth, according to this widely known and influential text, nomination of the Empire's ruler had lain with the German princes.

The doctrine of the Empire's 'translation' emphasised sharply the ethnic foundations of imperial rule.[70] It provides a key to the language of ethnic identification in which late medieval writers habitually enfolded the main bearers of power in Germany – the princes, the nobility in general, the imperial towns – even as they lauded the *Romanitas* of the monarch. This explicitly German constitutional base was laid open to inspection as never before in the troubled decades after the fall of the Hohenstaufen. At a time of crisis for the *Reich*, it encouraged both the Germans and their neighbours and rivals to scrutinise critically the qualifications of the Empire's bearers.[71] Some German writers now strove to defend their people's hold on the *imperium* in detailed, tendentious accounts of German history and

character.[72] They traced a proud tradition, reaching back to Frankish times, of service rendered by 'German' monarchs to Church and Faith. But they also explained why the Germans' innate common qualities, particularly their alleged talent and taste for war, fitted the whole people for the supreme military – more accurately, *political* – charge in Christendom.[73] The matter was now urgent, because Innocent's doctrine made plain that what the pope had transferred once he could transfer afresh, to another, more suitable bearer-people. By the later thirteenth century, rumours were heard in some circles that a new translation was imminent, with the politically ascendant French the likely beneficiaries.[74] In the two centuries that followed, German commentators repeatedly expressed the fear that their people was about to lose the Empire to the French.[75] The dangers in such a prospect were, for patriotic Germans, hard to overstate. Naturally, it imperilled the collective 'honour', and thus the very identity, of the German people.[76] But it also had the gravest implications for the entire Christian commonwealth, since the existence and the specific form of the medieval Roman Empire were, in the eyes of some, embedded within eschatological world-historical schemes.[77] In short, it was argued that tampering with the Empire's constitution risked unleashing on Christian society the lurid terrors of the Last Days.[78]

It is often hard to judge exactly how seriously such beliefs were held. In the hands of imperialist pamphleteers and chroniclers, they were a convenient buttress to arguments defending the status quo. What it seems to me cannot be denied is that there were elements in the political culture of the medieval *Reich* – the 'nationalised' *Reich* of *Venerabilem* and the treatise-writers – that had for their day an unusual potential for social penetration. These elements did not on the whole depend on the strength of the monarchy; indeed, in some ways they fed off its weakness. At the heart of the matter lay a relationship with the Church. It was this more than anything that lent ideas about the Empire an element of distinctiveness in medieval western political culture – the element of urgent controversy and contestation. In making an intermittent enemy of the See of St Peter, the emperors of the central Middle Ages contrived to draw the *imperium* into the fierce spotlight of an institution whose penetrative capacity in medieval society was long without rival.[79] The first shock had come in the Investiture Contest, yielding a precocious crop of what were subsequently to become a familiar accompaniment to imperialism under pressure: 'publicist' tracts.[80] The Hildebrandine message had been for all Christians, regardless of rank; and nowhere did it rouse more troubling echoes than in Germany. But the real transformation came in the thirteenth century.

Frederick II's clash with Rome was not only distinguished by its bitter course and troubling outcome; it also saw novel communications and persuasive media deployed, to touch broader political publics.[81] The Mendicant orders, centrally engaged in the struggle, were a new feature on the European scene. Their milieu was the town, their dramatic growth in thirteenth-century Germany marching in step with the remarkable advance of urbanisation.[82] The Franciscans in particular recruited from middling urban groups – one instance of the expanding audience for the affairs of the 'two powers'. The Mendicants were preachers, with a message attuned to an urban public; but they were also historiographers, whose historical compendia, replete with the sermoniser's improving *exempla*, would feature heavily in any list of late medieval sources for imperial history.[83] Also new was the urgency and febrility of the popular mood. The Mongols, reputedly the biblical scourges of Gog and Magog, menaced Europe in the east, while emperor and pope, in letters dispatched around the West, affected to discern in each other the coming Antichrist. Wildfire rumours took hold and eschatology luxuriated, nourished in some circles by the legacy of the Calabrian prophet Joachim of Fiore.[84] Hopes and fears were further inflamed by the emperor's abrupt and, to many Germans, mysterious departure from the stage in 1250. Meanwhile, excommunications, interdicts and crusading armies, not to mention preaching campaigns, were hurled at Frederick's German partisans.[85] Urban populations were not unmoved. In Strasbourg, Staufer loyalists fell upon the Dominicans, hanging one, casting others in the river. In Oppenheim, a papal crusade preacher was dragged from church to have his nose cut off by a burgher mob.[86]

The point of examples like these should be clear: Frederick's dramatic struggle with the Curia forced people of diverse backgrounds to take sides. Nor were matters allowed to rest with the end of the Hohenstaufen, since contention between the 'two powers' revived in the diminished *Reich* of the fourteenth century, where Ludwig IV ('the Bavarian') for two decades defied the Avignon Curia's wrath. By 1338 papal interdicts, withdrawing the services of the Church from regions loyal to Ludwig, had brought German society to a state of desperation. Dreadful portents were seen, and the Jews attacked.[87] The long arm of the universal Church reached into corners of German society seldom or never touched by the institutions of imperial rule, reminding their denizens that they too were subject to a temporal, as well as a spiritual, head – and that this subjection could have consequences. A co-ordinated wave of protests to Avignon by imperial towns in Germany emphasises the point that papal measures against the

emperor potentially affected everyone.[88] By this date, however, the formal establishment of an elective crown had brought its own additional elements of uncertainty and dispute. Alongside the Curia, alongside the rival claimants to the imperial throne, the German prince-electors – in particular, the wealthy Rhineland archbishops – stepped forward as the guardians of constitutional power-bases and sponsors of claims and doctrines of their own.

The constitutional and political *loci* of the late medieval *Reich* were complex, multiple and periodically contested. That fact, usually invoked to account for the Empire's enfeeblement, also helps explain why the imperial monarchy's grip on German minds did not retreat like the institution itself. We can trace on the map a range of different centres, of varying character, orientation, significance and durability, where ideas about the Empire – and, not uncommonly, about its relationship with the German people – were received, interpreted and propounded in writing. The point is substantiated by the imperialist tracts from German pens in which the period is so rich. In contrast to the picture in neighbouring France, these were usually written at centres remote from the ruler's court.[89] Lupold of Bebenburg, for example, was a protégé of the powerful archbishop of Trier, Baldwin of Luxemburg (d. 1354).[90] Especially eye-catching (not to say paradoxical) is the papal Curia's part in giving board and lodgings to German imperialists. Alexander of Roes had a home in a Ghibelline cardinal's entourage, Dietrich of Niem in the papal bureaucracy itself. Conrad of Megenberg finished the first, most frankly Germanophile of his tracts at Avignon.[91]

The diffuse, polycentric character of imperial political culture in Germany can be shown in another way, by looking at the origins of these treatise-writers. Describing them as 'elite' figures is only in the broadest sense defensible: a tight, socially and ideologically homogeneous 'elite' they were not. Their backgrounds, if respectable, were not illustrious. None came from the higher nobility, though ministerial families did supply a number, while others were of substantial burgher stock.[92] If some later protagonists of German nation or of Empire – the peasant's son Celtis, the miner's son Luther, or Nicholas of Cusa, whose father was a Moselle boatman – were to have yet humbler roots, these 'publicists' were scarcely a starry crowd. Geographically as well as socially, they were provincials, rarely blessed with the quality that Peter Moraw has called *Königsnähe*.[93] Treatise-writers, unlike imperial chancery officials, seldom came from the heartlands of the ruler's *iter*: if imperial government moved in Germany with short and leaden steps, the imperial idea drifted far and wide, impelled

by other motive forces. Two such writers, Conrad of Megenberg and Lupold of Bebenburg, did admittedly hail from Franconia, where the monarchy remained in the fourteenth century a significant presence.[94] But the Cologne of Alexander of Roes saw the ruler only fitfully, and Westphalia, which nurtured several imperialist writers, was largely cut off from imperial government.[95] Instead, it was primarily personal factors, such as the chances of education, friendship and patronage, that drove these and other Germans to engage with the imperial question.[96] A common framework was provided by the Church's career ladder – a frequent objective for the sons of families such as theirs, with (merely) local standing in town or country. It was through the Church, too, that they mainly encountered the stimuli that called their works into being.

A striking aspect of German writings on the Empire is the inability of their authors to agree on its character or proper constitution. Some writers engaged in explicit, though not always acrimonious, contention with their peers.[97] It is known that treatises served on occasion as the basis for oral exposition and disputation.[98] One reason for such disagreements among the specialists lay in the German monarchy's inability to sustain an authoritative doctrinal centre of its own. Without such a centre, rival perspectives, some reflecting the concerns of competing political groups, were able to interact with and condition one another. To cite just a single example, Alexander of Roes unfolded in his writings a tendentious and partisan account of German history and community, reflecting the outlook and concerns of the Rhineland princes, particularly the archbishops of Cologne.[99] Alexander's view of German identity was shaped by regional patriotism and political partisanship – but also, he makes clear, by acquaintance with other viewpoints, which he was moved to oppose.[100] Space is insufficient here to assess the place of the treatise-writers within German political culture more broadly – though we might observe in passing that Alexander's longest work survives in a full seventy copies, and was drawn on by chroniclers as well as more programmatic thinkers.[101] What should, however, be noted is the unmistakable role of imperial crisis and fragmentation in permitting – indeed, nurturing – contact, contention and exchange of ideas within informal groups of literate Germans. The tangible result was a substantial corpus of late medieval writings, from the pens of writers of varied regional and social origin, reflecting in detail on the nature and historical significance of German political identity.

If 'the Roman eagle' in its 'German feathers' was, as one scholar has put it, by this time 'a dead duck', nobody seems to have told the chroniclers, polemicists and poets of the Empire's German territories – or, we must

assume, the patrons and audiences on whom they depended for a livelihood and a hearing.[102] More commonly than the realities of power appear to recommend, it was the Empire that filled their horizon and gave their writings form and significance.[103] Often, it was the imperial monarchy and its deeds that supplied a reason for invoking 'the Germans', their lands, language, institutions or history, and that endowed those concepts with meaning. Late medieval German identity was at its core political: the historian is well advised to leave the *Kulturnation* in the elegant Biedermeier salons where it belongs. What explained and justified being German, to the late medieval mind, was the conspicuous exercise of *power* – in time past and doubtless in time future, if not time present. Not poets and professors, but grim Teutonic warriors had marched south in bloody triumph, rescued popes from their molesters, rebuffed Slav, Magyar and Northman, and carried Christ's Faith abroad at the sword's edge. That the monarchy's power was experienced by literate Germans more as myth, memory, hope and expectation than as institutionalised command and obligation may not have mattered as much as we have been schooled to think. Indeed, it is easy to imagine how for some the idea of supreme sovereign power might have held more appeal than its intrusive reality. Rulership had been present, as fact as well as idea, at the formation of a 'German' political community in the central Middle Ages, and this foundation in legitimate authority and the promise of rule mattered immensely in the centuries that followed. But, once established, the relationship between German identity and imperial power proved sustainable imaginatively, without the umbilical link of mature governmental institutions.

The 'state' may have been weak, but that did not preclude the sustenance, through a range of other channels and media, of a political culture invoking a sense of common 'German' belonging. Those channels became more complex and penetrative, the media more diverse and broadly accessible, between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. For the literate, there was a tradition of historical thought which derived its chronology from the succeeding reigns of Roman emperors, ancient and medieval.[104] The Church, in imperialist thought inseparably bound up with both the Empire and the political claims of the German people, supplied its own, particularly ramified and articulate, networks for communication. Towns provided a new venue and a new, increasingly literate and well-informed, audience for political ideas. The unlettered too might listen – to wild rumour as well as sober report.[105] They could also look at, and thereby register for themselves, some of the host of often 'banal' representations of imperial authority which patterned the German

landscape – from the heraldic eagle above the gateway of the *Reichsstadt* via the sculpted and painted monarchs of gallery, clerestory and façade to the scattered fortresses and palaces of Salians and Staufer, or the monumental Roman remains of Trier or Cologne.[106] In absence too, the Empire was widely present.

The monarch's comparative absence was, against this backdrop, as much a conduit to notions of German identity as an obstacle. The Empire was a 'problem', which many felt impelled to discuss. But it was a problem without official solution. The top-down direction of political discourse, the ruler's authoritarian claim to monopolise legitimate thought – for Habermas and his followers keynotes of the pre-modern European order – were unenforceable in Germany. Instead, there arose a multiplicity of voices, some speaking for powerful and contending vested interests, others addressing themselves to the historical curiosity and political self-consciousness of a growing, particularly urban, public of listeners and readers. Among the literate at least, there was contestation about the Empire's history and its nature, focusing attention and debate on the character and historical role of the German people. The late medieval 'German nation', we might say, found its most visible home in the fissures created by crises of legitimate power and authority. If there was no 'public sphere', there were certainly spaces – at great courts, within networks of acquaintance, patronage and common interest, in the towns and, by the fifteenth century, the universities – where elements of a German identity were received, contested and reproduced. It is not clear to me that these local or group-specific communities of sociability and shared culture were, within their limits, in all cases less 'public' than their successors in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[107]

But the self-same qualities in the German political landscape which facilitated discourse around the theme of German identity also set limits to the scope of that discourse. If the constraining hand of authoritarian rule was lacking among the Germans, so too was the unifying influence of common political institutions, action and experience. Partly in consequence, the most explicit imaginative constructions of 'Germany' and 'Germanness' tended to be made locally, drawing on local perspectives, traditions and resources. Did this make the late medieval 'German nation' a lesser thing than its counterparts in neighbouring, more institutionally unified, European realms? Before answering this question, medievalists will need to be sure that they can trace not merely the documented existence but also the social scope and the material political importance of such allegedly more significant medieval identities. These challenges have still

largely to be met, and meeting them will not prove easy. In the meantime, a study of German identity reveals something of the complexity of late medieval 'national' solidarities, the ramified (but sometimes also fractured) publics which they might address, and the diverse, even contradictory, stimuli from which they drew nourishment. It illuminates the need for a model of the historical relationship between power and nation-making more complex and adaptable, and less unilinear, than those commonly deployed by medievalists and modernists alike.

NOTES

1 Daniel Waley and Peter Denley, *Later Medieval Europe 1250–1520* (3rd edn, Harlow: Longman, 2001), p. 83.
2 An extreme example: Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Origins of Modern Germany* (2nd edn, Oxford: Blackwell, 1947).
3 Examples: Harold James, *A German Identity 1770–1990* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), pp. 1–7; Hagen Schulze, *The Course of German Nationalism: From Frederick the Great to Bismarck 1763–1867* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 43.
4 Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 277. To describe Greenfeld's approach as a whole as 'modernist' would be misleading; however, her reading of the German evidence broadly corresponds to the modernist position.
5 Brian E. Vick, *Defining Germany: The 1848 Frankfurt Parliamentarians and National Identity* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 15.
6 Barraclough, *Germany*, p. 299.
7 For some early classic views see Friedrich Schneider (ed.), *Universalstaat oder Nationalstaat: Macht und Ende des Ersten deutschen Reiches (Die Streitschriften von Heinrich v. Sybel und Julius Ficker zur deutschen Kaiserpolitik des Mittelalters* (2nd edn, Innsbruck: Wagner, 1943).
8 John Gillingham, *The Kingdom of Germany in the High Middle Ages (900–1200)*, Historical Association: General Series, 77 (London: Historical Association, 1971); S. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900–1300* (2nd edn, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 289–97.
9 Hagen Schultze, *States, Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 24 (German 'failure'); Joseph R. Llobera, 'State and nation in medieval France', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 7 (1994), 361 ('remarkable' French 'success').
10 Friedrich Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State* (Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 9–10.
11 For a view combining some prominent modernist and medievalist assumptions about the course of German history, and invoking the spectre of *ius sanguinis*, see Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 108–9. The 'waste dump'

image is in Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 15.

12 The view remains common in Anglophone scholarship: for a recent reiteration see Geary, *Myth of Nations*, p. 19. For the primacy of language in late medieval German identity see F. R. H. Du Boulay, *Germany in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Athlone, 1983), p. 1.

13 For Germany, the connection is suggested by Sylvain Gouguenheim, 'Les structures politiques', in M. Parisse (ed.), *De la Meuse à l'Oder: l'Allemagne au xiii^e siècle* (Paris: Picard, 1994), p. 47: 'Ont manqué à l'Allemagne à la fois le sentiment national et la capacité politique à forger un Etat centralisé'.

14 Michael Jones, 'Introduction', in Michael Jones (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. VI (c. 1300–c. 1415) (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 12–13.

15 See e.g. Peter Moraw, *Von offener Verfassung zu gestalteter Verdichtung: Das Reich im späten Mittelalter 1250 bis 1490* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1985).

16 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), pp. 7–8.

17 Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism*, p. 10.

18 See esp. Peter Wiesinger, 'Regionale und überregionale Sprachausformung im Deutschen vom 12. bis 15. Jahrhundert unter dem Aspekt der Nationsbildung', in Joachim Ehlers (ed.), *Ansätze und Diskontinuität deutscher Nationsbildung im Mittelalter*, Nationes, vol. VIII (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1989), pp. 321–43.

19 For 'German tongue' as a factor uniting different regional communities, see Jansen Enikel, *Weltchronik*, in *Jansen Enikels Werke*, ed. Philipp Strauch, Monumenta Germaniae Historica [henceforth MGH] Deutsche Chroniken 3,1 (Hanover: Hahn, 1891), pp. 532–3.

20 *Das Buch der Natur von Konrad von Megenberg*, ed. Franz Pfeiffer (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1962), p. 325; and see Wiesinger, 'Sprachausformung', pp. 334–5.

21 *Die Königsaaler Geschichts-Quellen mit den Zusätzen und der Fortsetzung des Domherrn Franz von Prag*, ed. Johann Loserth, Fontes Rerum Austriacarum: Oesterreichische Geschichtsquellen, I. Abtheilung, vol. VIII (Vienna: Karl Gerold's Sohn, 1875), p. 52.

22 Heinz Thomas, 'Das Identitätsproblem der Deutschen im Mittelalter', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 43 (1992), 136–8.

23 Eckhard Müller-Mertens, *Regnum Teutonicum: Aufkommen und Verbreitung der deutschen Reichs- und Königsauffassung im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, Cologne and Graz: Böhlau, 1970).

24 Different priorities pertained in those regions of eastern Europe which experienced German settlement, and where law, culture and language were more important than political allegiances in distinguishing 'Germans' from their neighbours. For pertinent examples see Paul Johansen and Heinz von zur Mühlen, *Deutsch und Undeutsch im mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Reval* (Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau, 1973).

25 For its evidently small part in France see Bernard Guenée, 'Etat et nation en France au moyen âge', *Revue Historique* 237 (1967), 17–30. For its more important

role in east-central Europe see František Graus, *Die Nationenbildung der Westslaven im Mittelalter*, Nationes, vol. III (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1980).

26 Bernard Guenée, *States and Rulers in Later Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), p. 218.

27 On this subject, see generally Guenée, 'Etat et nation'.

28 On royal saints see Colette Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late-Medieval France* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), chs. 1–3; on miracles, Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973); for the formula 'Most Christian', J.R. Strayer, 'France: the holy land, the chosen people, and the most Christian king', in T. K. Rabb and J. E. Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 3–16.

29 For the role of royal inquisitions in cementing ties to the centre see Jean Richard, *Saint Louis: roi d'une France féodale, soutien de la Terre sainte* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), pp. 280–303.

30 Jacques Krynen, *L'empire du roi: idées et croyances politiques en France xiiie–xve siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993).

31 For assessments of the late medieval *Reich* as a system of government see Ernst Schubert, *König und Reich: Studien zur spätmittelalterlichen deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979); Karl-Friedrich Krieger, *König, Reich und Reichsreform im Spätmittelalter* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1992).

32 Robert Folz, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'empire germanique médiévale* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1950).

33 There was not even an accustomed mausoleum for the bones of the Empire's ruler: Rudolf J. Meyer, *Königs- und Kaiserbegräbnisse im Spätmittelalter: Von Rudolf von Habsburg bis zu Friedrich III* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 2000).

34 On the elective crown, Ernst Schubert, 'Königswahl und Königtum im spätmittelalterlichen Reich', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 4 (1977), 257–338.

35 Wenceslas of Luxemburg, elected in 1376, becoming sole ruler on the death of his father Charles IV, 1378.

36 Björn Weiler, 'Image and reality in Richard of Cornwall's German career', *English Historical Review* 113 (1998), 1119.

37 For the development of this terminology see Gottfried Koch, *Auf dem Wege zum Sacrum Imperium: Studien zur ideologischen Herrschaftsbegründung der deutschen Zentralgewalt im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, Cologne and Graz: Böhlau, 1972).

38 Schubert, *König und Reich*, pp. 227–30.

39 See generally, Jörg K. Hoensch, *Die Luxemburger: Eine spätmittelalterliche Dynastie gesamteuropäischer Bedeutung 1308–1437* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000). For the attitudes of Charles IV, Franz Machilek, 'Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit', in Ferdinand Seibt (ed.), *Kaiser Karl IV.: Staatsmann und Mäzen* (Munich: Prestel, 1978), pp. 87–101.

40 Lupold of Bebenburg, *De Iure Regni et Imperii Rom[anorum]*, cap. xix, in *De Iurisdictione, Autoritate, et Praeeminentia Imperiali, ac Potestate Ecclesiastica*, ed. S. Schardius (Basel: Ex officina Iohannis Oporini, 1566), p. 409.

41 Alexander of Roes, *Memoriale*, cap. 10, in *Alexander von Roes: Schriften*, ed. Herbert Grundmann and Hermann Heimpel, MGH Staatsschriften des späteren Mittelalters, 1,1 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1958), p. 100.

42 *Liber de Rebus Memorabilioribus sive Chronicon Henrici de Hervordia*, ed. Augustus Potthast (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1859), p. 94.

43 Lupold of Bebenburg, *Ritmaticum Querulosum et Lamentosum Dictamen de Modernis Cursibus et Defectibus Regni ac Imperii Romanorum*, in *Politische Lyrik des deutschen Mittelalters: Texte I (Von Friedrich II. bis Ludwig dem Bayern)*, ed. Ulrich Müller (Göppingen: Alfred Kümmerle, 1972), p. 175.

44 Examples in Alfred Ritscher, *Literatur und Politik im Umkreis der ersten Habsburger* (Frankfurt a.M., Bern, New York and Paris: Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 16, 18, 21.

45 *Fritsche (Friedrich) Closener's Chronik*, ed. C. Hegel, in *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte vom 14. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert* [henceforth *Chron. dt. Städte*], vol. VIII (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1870), p. 34.

46 Ibid., p. 35.

47 Lupold of Bebenburg, *De Iure*, cap. ii, in *De Iurisdictione*, ed. Schardius, p. 339.

48 For medieval German views on Charlemagne see Folz, *Souvenir*.

49 *Chronik des Jacob Twinger von Königshofen*, ed. C. Hegel, in *Chron. dt. Städte*, vol. VIII, p. 422.

50 Examples from Charles's reign in *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Strassburg*, vol. V, *Politische Urkunden von 1332 bis 1380*, ed. Hans Witte and Georg Wolfram (Strassburg: Trübner, 1896), nos. 389, 796, 819, 976, pp. 336, 624, 636, 752.

51 *Sächsische Weltchronik: Sächsische Fortsetzung*, ed. Ludwig Weiland, MGH Deutsche Chroniken, vol. II (Hanover: Hahn, 1877), p. 284.

52 MGH Legum Sectio IV: Constitutiones et Acta Publica Imperatorum et Regum, vol. III, ed. Jacobus Schwalm (Hanover and Leipzig: Hahn, 1904–6), no. 371, p. 353 (1285).

53 *Chronica de Gestis Principum*, in *Bayerische Chroniken des XIV. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Georg Leidinger, MGH Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usum Scholarum, vol. XIX (Hanover and Leipzig: Hahn, 1918), p. 55

54 Koch, *Sacrum Imperium*, esp. pp. 112–13.

55 The term was almost, though not wholly, unknown in official documents: Schubert, *König und Reich*, p. 228, n. 15. It is encountered more frequently (though it is still not common) in narrative sources. Example: *Die Chronik Johanns von Winterthur*, ed. Friedrich Baethgen, MGH Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usum Scholarum (N.S.), vol. III (Berlin: Weidmann, 1924), p. 21.

56 Latin and vernacular examples: *Die Chronik des Mathias von Neuenburg*, ed. Adolf Hofmeister, MGH Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usum Scholarum (N.S.), vol. IV (Berlin: Weidmann, 1924), pp. 10, 46; *Closener's Chronik*, ed. Hegel, pp. 38, 41, 57.

57 There did exist the office of 'archchancellor' for 'Germany' or 'the German lands', held by the archbishops of Mainz. This title, however, conferred no clear role in government in Germany. See Harry Bresslau, *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien* (2 vols, Leipzig: W. de Gruyter, 1912, 1915), vol. II, p. 518.

58 For the Latin vocabulary see Fritz Vigener, *Bezeichnungen für Volk und Land der Deutschen vom 10. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1901); for the plural vernacular form, Rüdiger Schnell, 'Deutsche Literatur und deutsches Nationalbewußtsein im Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit', in Ehlers (ed.), *Ansätze und Diskontinuität*, pp. 275–82.

59 As a single example, John of Winterthur explains how Ludwig IV raised an army to repel the pretender Charles of Moravia 'from the bounds of Germany' ('a finibus Alamanie'): *Die Chronik Johanns von Winterthur*, ed. Baethgen, p. 263.

60 Roland Pauler, *Die deutschen Könige und Italien im 14. Jahrhundert: Von Heinrich VII. bis Karl IV.* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997).

61 See esp. Fritz Kern, *Die Anfänge der französischen Ausdehnungspolitik bis zum Jahr 1308* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1910).

62 For the distribution of imperial properties see Andreas Christoph Schlunk, *Königsmacht und Krongut: Die Machtgrundlage des deutschen Königtums im 13. Jahrhundert – und eine neue historische Methode* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1988). Even Charles IV's government, heavily concentrated on Prague, relied substantially upon Germans: Peter Moraw, 'Zur Mittelpunktsfunktion Prags im Zeitalter Karls IV.', in Klaus-Detlev Grothusen and Klaus Zernack (eds.), *Europa slavica, Europa orientalis: Festschrift für Herbert Ludat zum 70. Geburtstag* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1980), esp. pp. 469–80.

63 As a single example, *Chronica de Gestis Principum*, ed. Leidinger, p. 76, for the 'grandis exercitus Alemannorum' in Italy with Henry VII.

64 Helmut Bansa, *Studien zur Kanzlei Kaiser Ludwigs des Bayern vom Tag der Wahl bis zur Rückkehr aus Italien (1314–1329)* (Kallmünz, Opf.: Lassleben, 1968), p. 89; Ivan Hlavaček, *Das Urkunden- und Kanzleiwesen des böhmischen und römischen Königs Wenzel (IV.) 1376–1419*, Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica 23 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1970), p. 88.

65 For Frankfurt elections see Schubert, 'Königswahl'; for Aachen coronations see Silvinus Müller, 'Die Königskrönungen in Aachen (936–1531)', in Mario Kramp (ed.), *Krönungen: Könige in Aachen – Geschichte und Mythos* (2 vols., Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1999), vol. I, pp. 49–57. The right of coronation was claimed by the archbishop of Cologne: Franz-Reiner Erkens, *Der Erzbischof von Köln und die deutsche Königswahl: Studien zur Kölner Kirchengeschichte zum Krönungsrecht und zur Verfassung des Reiches (Mitte 12. Jahrhundert bis 1806)* (Siegburg: Schmitt, 1987). For other towns with a ceremonial role see Anna M. Drabek, *Reisen und Reisezeremoniell der römisch-deutschen Herrscher im Spätmittelalter* (Vienna: Geyer, 1964), esp. ch. 1.

66 Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, p. 254.

67 Werner Goez, *Translatio Imperii: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Geschichtsdenkens und der politischen Theorien im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1958), pp. 126–7.

68 See Heinz Thomas, 'Julius Caesar und die Deutschen: Zu Ursprung und Gehalt eines deutschen Geschichtsbewußtseins in der Zeit Gregors VII. und Heinrichs IV.', in Stefan Weinfurter (ed.), *Die Salier und das Reich*, vol. III (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1991), esp. pp. 253–7.

69 Goez, *Translatio Imperii*, esp. ch. 7. For *Venerabilem*, Friedrich Kempf, *Papsttum und Kaisertum bei Innocenz III. Die geistigen und rechtlichen Grundlagen seiner Thronstreitpolitik* (Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1954), pp. 48–55.

70 The explicitly ethnic reference is already present in Innocent's text: '. . . ad eos [= the electors] ius et potestas huiusmodi ab apostolica sede pervenerit, quae Romanum imperium in personam magnifici Caroli a Graecis transtulit in Germanos' (*Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. Aemilius Friedberg (2 vols., Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1879), vol. II, p. 80). For an example of the infiltration of this ethno-constitutional mode of thought into German historical writings see *Liber de Rebus Memorabilibus*, ed. Potthast, p. 274.

71 Thus e.g. the contemptuous remarks of the Spanish canonist Vincentius, about the pretensions of a people in whose own land 'every hut usurps lordship to itself': Gaines Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought: Public Law and the State* (Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 489.

72 For the role of late medieval crisis in stimulating programmatic writings about the Empire, Herbert Grundmann, 'Politische Gedanken in mittelalterlicher Westfalen', *Westfalen* 27 (1948), 6.

73 Len E. Scales, *'Germen militiae*: war and German identity in the later Middle Ages', *Past & Present* 180 (2003), 49–50 (service to the Church), 51–4 (military qualities).

74 Such rumours were underpinned by eschatological speculation which identified the king of France as the saviour-emperor of the Last Days: Dietrich Kurze, 'Nationale Regungen in der spätmittelalterlichen Prophetie', *Historische Zeitschrift* 202 (1966), esp. 9.

75 Goez, *Translatio Imperii*, pp. 169–70.

76 See e.g. the words of a singer known as Meißner, in verses composed around the middle of the thirteenth century: 'if the German tongue [i.e. the German people] loses its right [to the Empire], its honour will be undermined' (*Politische Lyrik*, ed. Müller, p. 68, no. XIV.2).

77 For the capacity of medieval prophecy to acquire an ethno-political foundation see Kurze, 'Nationale Regungen', 3–9.

78 Thus e.g. Alexander of Roes: *Memoriale*, chs. II, 13, *Noticia Seculi*, ch. 20, ed. Grundmann and Heimpel, pp. 98, 99, 168.

79 See Heike Johanna Mierau, 'Exkommunikation und Macht der Öffentlichkeit: Gerüchte im Kampf zwischen Friedrich II. und der Kurie', in Karel Hruza (ed.), *Propaganda, Kommunikation und Öffentlichkeit (11.–16. Jahrhundert)* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2002), esp. p. 54.

80 Monika Suchan, 'Publizistik im Zeitalter Heinrichs IV. – Anfänge päpstlicher und kaiserlicher Propaganda im "Investiturstreit"?', in Hruza (ed.), *Propaganda*, esp. pp. 29–30.

81 See generally Peter Segl, 'Die Feindbilder in der politischen Propaganda Friedrichs II. und seiner Gegner', in Franz Bosbach (ed.), *Feindbilder: Die Darstellung des Gegners in der politischen Publizistik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Cologne, Vienna, and Weimar: Böhlau, 1992), pp. 41–71.

82 John B. Freed, *The Friars and German Society in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1977), pp. 21, 52. There is no scholarly consensus on the size of the urban element in late medieval German society as a whole. According to one well-informed estimate, 16 per cent of the German population was by 1500 living in settlements of more than 5,000 inhabitants: Christian Pfister, 'The population of late medieval and early modern Germany', in Bob Scribner (ed.), *Germany: A New Social and Economic History*, vol. I (1450–1630) (London and New York: Arnold, 1996), p. 43.

83 See e.g. Friedrich Baethgen, 'Franziskanische Studien', *Historische Zeitschrift* 131 (1925), 421–71.

84 For rumour, Mierau, 'Exkommunikation'; for eschatology, Bernhard Töpfer, *Das kommende Reich des Friedens: Zur Entwicklung chiliastischer Zukunftshoffnungen im Hochmittelalter* (Berlin: Akademie, 1964), esp. p. 156; for Joachim, Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

85 For the role of excommunication in opinion-forming see Mierau, 'Exkommunikation', esp. pp. 69–70; for preaching and crusade, K. E. Demandt, 'Der Endkampf des staufischen Kaiserhauses im Rhein-Maingebiet', *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 7 (1957), 124, 133–4, and Freed, *Friars*, p. 92.

86 For Strasbourg, Freed, *Friars*, p. 160; for Oppenheim, Demandt, 'Endkampf', 133–4.

87 Martin Kaufhold, *Gladius Spiritualis: Das päpstliche Interdikt über Deutschland in der Regierungszeit Ludwigs des Bayern (1324–1347)* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1994), pp. 210, 236.

88 Kaufhold, *Gladius Spiritualis*, p. 219.

89 The 'publicist' circle around Ludwig IV's court in Munich consisted mostly of non-German controversialists enjoying Ludwig's protection: Alois Schütz, 'Der Kampf Ludwigs des Bayern gegen Papst Johannes XXII. und die Rolle der Gelehrten am Münchner Hof', in *Wittelsbach und Bayern: Die Zeit der frühen Herzöge – Von Otto I zu Ludwig dem Bayern* (Munich and Zürich: Hirmer, 1980), esp. pp. 393–4. For French publicists see Krynen, *L'empire du roi*, ch. 2.

90 Katharina Colberg, 'Lupold von Bebenburg', in Kurt Ruh *et al.* (eds.), *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon* (11 vols. to date, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1978–), vol. V, col. 1075.

91 For Alexander see *Schriften*, ed. Grundmann and Heimpel, pp. 7–10; for Dietrich, Hermann Heimpel, *Dietrich von Niem (c. 1340–1418)* (Münster: Regensbergsche, 1932), ch. 2; for Conrad, Georg Steer, 'Konrad von Megenberg', in Ruh *et al.* (eds.), *Verfasserlexikon*, vol. V, col. 224.

92 Among those of ministerial origin were Lupold of Bebenburg, Conrad of Megenberg and the jurist Rudolf Losse (another of Archbishop Baldwin's ideological mouthpieces). For Lupold see Peter Johannek, 'Lupold (Leopold, Liupold) v. Bebenburg', in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. XV (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1986), p. 524; for Conrad, Steer, 'Konrad', col. 221; for Losse, Friedhelm Burgard, 'Rudolf Losse (um 1310–1364)', in *Rheinische Lebensbilder*, vol. XIV (Cologne: Rheinland, 1994), p. 49. Dietrich of Niem and Gobelinus Persona were sons of leading burgher families, as was in all probability Alexander of Roes. For Dietrich see Heimpel, *Dietrich*, pp. 13–14; for Gobelinus, Katharina Colberg, 'Person, Gobelinus', in Ruh *et al.* (eds.), *Verfasserlexikon*, vol. VII, cols 411–16; for Alexander, Herbert Grundmann and Hermann Heimpel, 'Einleitung', in *Schriften*, ed. Grundmann and Heimpel, pp. 2–7.

93 Peter Moraw, 'Die Verwaltung des Königtums und des Reiches und ihre Rahmenbedingungen', in Kurt G. A. Jeserich, Hans Pohl and Georg-Christoph von Unruh (eds.), *Deutsche Verwaltungsgeschichte* (vol. I, Stuttgart: DVA, 1983), pp. 24–6.

94 Steer, 'Konrad', col. 221; Johannek, 'Lupold', p. 524.

95 For the geographical patterns of late medieval imperial rule see Moraw, 'Verwaltung', pp. 24–31; for Westphalia, Grundmann, 'Westfalen', 5.

96 For the role of these elements in one career see Burgard, 'Rudolf Losse', esp. pp. 49–55.

97 For William of Ockham's reaction to the works of Lupold of Bebenburg see Jürgen Miethke, 'Wirkungen politischer Theorie auf die Praxis der Politik im Römischen Reich des 14. Jahrhunderts: Gelehrte Politikberatung am Hofe Ludwigs des Bayern', in Joseph Canning and Otto Gerhard Oexle (eds.), *Political Thought and the Realities of Power in the Middle Ages / Politisches Denken und die Wirklichkeit der Macht im Mittelalter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), pp. 207–9. Conrad of Megenberg dedicated his *Yconomia* to Lupold of Bebenburg, with whose views on the Empire he nevertheless disagreed: Conrad of Megenberg, *Ökonomik*, in *Konrad von Megenberg: Werke*, ed. Sabine Krüger, MGH Staatsschriften des späteren Mittelalters 5,3 (II) (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1977), p. 15.

98 For a public reading of Lupold's treatise at Eichstätt see Miethke, 'Wirkungen', pp. 207–9.

99 For Alexander's arguments in context of the church of Cologne see Franz-Reiner Erkens, *Siegfried von Westerburg (1274–1297): Die Reichs- und Territorialpolitik eines Kölner Erzbischofs im ausgehenden 13. Jahrhundert* (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1982), pp. 287–8.

100 For e.g. his controversial views on the Hohenstaufen legacy see Alexander of Roes, *Memoriale*, cap. 29, ed. Grundmann and Heimpel, pp. 134–5.

101 Grundmann and Heimpel, 'Einleitung', pp. 40–80, where 63 mss. are listed; Jürgen Miethke, 'Politisches Denken und monarchische Theorie: Das Kaisertum als supranationale Institution im späteren Mittelalter', in Ehlers

(ed.), *Ansätze und Diskontinuität*, p. 134 n. 53, listing a further six; Jürgen Miethke, 'Das Publikum politischer Theorie im 14. Jahrhundert: Zur Einführung', in Jürgen Miethke (ed.), *Das Publikum politischer Theorie im 14. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1992), p. 8 n. 31, for one more. The manuscript tradition makes clear that there were once other copies besides.

102 J. H. Burns, *Lordship, Kingship, and Empire: The Idea of Monarchy, 1400–1525* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 97.

103 A phenomenon noted by Peter Moraw, 'Bestehende, fehlende und heranwachsende Voraussetzungen des deutschen Nationalbewußtseins im späten Mittelalter', in Ehlers (ed.), *Ansätze und Diskontinuität*, esp. p. 107.

104 For universal chronicles in late medieval Germany see Peter Johannek, 'Weltchronistik und regionale Geschichtsschreibung im Spätmittelalter', in Hans Patze (ed.), *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewußtsein im späten Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1987), pp. 287–330.

105 Examples of the circulation of rumours about the monarchy: Ernst Schubert, 'Probleme der Königsherrschaft im spätmittelalterlichen Reich: Das Beispiel Ruprechts von der Pfalz (1400–1410)', in Reinhard Schneider (ed.), *Das spätmittelalterliche Königtum im europäischen Vergleich* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1987), pp. 177–8.

106 For the identity-forming role of 'banal' (i.e. everyday) representations see Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995). For visual representations see Wolfgang Schenkluhn, 'Monumentale Repräsentation des Königtums in Frankreich und Deutschland', in Kramp (ed.), *Krönungen*, vol. 1, pp. 369–77.

107 Contrast with the picture drawn by Geoff Eley, 'Nations, publics, and political cultures: placing Habermas in the nineteenth century', in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), esp. pp. 293, 297.