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Denigrating Ethnic Others as Animals and Monsters in the Middle Ages: the Case of the „tailed English”

Poniżanie ludzi obcych etnicznie poprzez ukazywanie ich jako zwierząt i monstrów w średniowieczu – przypadek „Anglików, którzy mają ogony”

ABSTRACT

The article takes a close look at the opinion that the Englishmen had tails as an example of negative attitudes towards alien ethnic groups held by medieval societies, that manifested itself in describing these groups' members as animals and monsters. The author presents the oldest records mentioning the belief, emphasizing their diffusion already in the second half of the 12th century. He places an emphasis on the references in which the Englishmen are identified with animals because of the accusation of having tails.

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The most interesting account of this kind is *Proprietates Anglicorum*. Its creator advances the logical argument which he concludes that the inhabitants of Rochester punished by God with tails are monsters. The author stresses that this record follows the vigorous debates of the turn of the 14th century about the humanity of so-called monstrous races. In the following part of the article he analyses the explanation of disfigurement described by Jean d'Outremeuse (*Ly myreur des histors*). The author also examines the accounts in which an affiliation of the tails of the English to a species is provided. In this way the pejorative symbolism of the animals is assigned to these people as well. Just as in the cases of other groups accused of monstrosity and having tails, the invective thrown at inhabitants of England determines their identity as a people who are not fully human and hence are fundamentally different from those who offend them. Such humiliation – questioning of their humanity through an accusation of being an animal or a monster must be perceived as especially harsh. It was the very harshness of the invective that was the reason for its popularity.

Key words: tailed English – motif, ethnic invective, ethnic stereotypes, monstrosity – middle ages

STRESZCZENIE

Przedmiotem artykułu jest bliższe spojrzenie na opinię o tym, że Anglicy mają ogony jako przykładowi negatywnego stosunku średniowiecznych społeczności do grup etnicznie obcych, przejawiającego się w przedstawianiu ich członków jako zwierząt i monstrów. Autor przedstawia najstarsze przekazy dotyczące przekonania, podkreślając ich rozpowszechnienie już w II poł. XII w. Jego uwaga skupia się na wzmiankach w których, z powodu zarzutu posiadania ogonów, Anglików utożsamiano ze zwierzętami. Najciekawszym przekazem tego rodzaju jest dziełko *Proprietates Anglicorum*. Jego twórca przeprowadza logiczny wywód, w wyniku którego stwierdza, że pokarani przez Boga ogonami mieszkańcy Rochester są monstrami. Autor akcentuje, że przekaz ów wpisuje się w żywe na przełomie XIII/XIV w. dyskusje o człowieczeństwie tzw. monstrialnych ras. W dalszej części artykułu analizuje zaś wy tłumaczenie zniekształcenia przedstawione przez Jeana d'Outremeuse (*Ly myreur des histors*). Autor rozpatruje też wzmianki, w których identyfikuje się przynależność gatunkową ogonów Anglików, za sprawą czego do członków tego ludu odnosi się symbolikę zwierząt postrzeganych jako negatywne. Podobnie jak w przypadku innych grup oskarżanych o monstrialność oraz o posiadanie ogonów, inwektywa dotycząca mieszkańców Anglii dookreśla ich tożsamość jako osób nie będących w pełni ludźmi, a zatem w sposób zasadniczy odróżniających się od tych, którzy ich obrazili. Poniżenie poprzez podważenie człowieczeństwa za sprawą oskarżenia o bycie zwierzęciem lub monstrum trzeba uznać za szczególnie dotkliwie. To właśnie ta dotkliwość inwektywy była powodem jej popularności.

Słowa kluczowe: Anglicy, którzy mają ogony – motyw, inwektywy etniczne, stereotypy etniczne, monstrialność – wieki średnie

What kind of offence may be graver than one that questions or even denies somebody's very humanity? This remark is particularly true in the Christian societies of medieval Europe, in which the unbridgeable chasm separating human beings from animals was a part of the shared worldview. Thus accusing someone of being a beast was particularly

offensive to him all the more as it implied denying him the chance at salvation. As bizarre as it may strike us today, this kind of abuse could be articulated via indicating physical, beastlike characteristics of certain men and even ethnic groups. And such is the case of the widespread, often defamatory opinion that the English had tails.

This phenomenon at the plexus of ethnic invective, stereotypes of the *nationum proprietates* genre and popular imagination is well recognized by scholars and has been a subject of considerable research¹. Thus, it is this very abundance of academic explorations and detailed surveys concerning the tails of the English that allows us to take a closer, detailed look at several specific issues regarding this topic, ones embodying the more general problem of defaming other ethnic groups with the accusations of

¹ The most important and detailed studies include: C. du Fresne Du Cange, „Caudatus”, w: idem, *Glossarium mediæ et infimæ latinitatis*, red. G.A.L. Henschel, vol. 2, Parisiis 1842, s. 252; F. Godefroy, „Coé”, w: idem, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IX^e au XV^e siècle*, t. 2, Paris 1883, s. 167; P. Meyer, *Ballade contre les Anglais* (1429), „Romania” 1892, 21, 81, s. 50–52; P. Toynbee, „Anglici caudati” – *the Medieval Attribution of Tails to Englishmen*, „The Acadaemy” 1893, 43, 1082, Jan. 28, 1893, s. 83–84; Ch.-V. Langlois, *Les Anglais du moyen âge d'après les sources françaises*, „Revue historique” 1893, 52, 2, s. 298–315, zwł. 309–311; G. Neilson, *Caudatus Anglicus: a Mediæval Slander*, Edinburgh 1896; A. Stimming, *Die 'geschwänzten' Engländer*, w: *Studi letterari e linguistici dedicati a Pio Rajna nel quarantesimo anno del suo insegnamento*, red. U. Hoepli, Milano 1911, s. 475–490; L.A. Barbé, *In Byways of Scottish History*, London–Bombay 1912, s. 291–360; P. Rickard, *Anglois coué and l'Anglois qui couve*, „French Studies” 1953, 7, 1, s. 48–55; D.Th. Enklaar, *De Gestaarte Engelsman*, Amsterdam 1955; L.M.C. Randall, *A Medieval Slander*, „The Art Bulletin” 1960, 42, 1, s. 25–38, zwł. 32–35; B.D.H. Miller, *Anglois coué: Further Evidence*, „French Studies” 1964, 18, 1, s. 24–28; S. Billington, *Routs and Reyes*, „Folklore” 1978, 89, 2, s. 184–200, zwł. s. 190–197; D. Brewer, *Englishmen with Tails: Layamon, „Muggles” and a Transhistorical Ethnic Joke in English*, w: *Medieval Heritage: Essays in Honour of Tadahiro Ikegami*, red. M. Kanno et al., Tokyo 1997, s. 3–15; E. Staffell, *The Horrible Tail-Man and the Anglo-Dutch Wars*, „Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes” 2000, 63, s. 169–186; G. Heng, *Empire of Magic. Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy*, New York 2003, s. 94–96; J. Blacker, *Why Such a Fishy Tale? Wace's Version of St. Augustine's Conversion of the English in the Roman de Brut*, „Romance Quarterly” 2005, 52, 1, s. 45–53; M.A. Penman, *Anglici caudati: abuse of the English in Fourteenth-Century Scottish Chronicles, Literature and Records*, w: *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century: New Perspectives*, red. A. King, M.A. Penman, Woodbridge 2007, s. 216–235; C.V. Weeda, *Ethnic Stereotyping in Twelfth-Century Paris*, w: *Difference and Identity in Francia and Medieval France*, red. M. Cohen, J. Firnhaber-Baker, Oxford 2010, s. 115–135, zwł. s. 122–123, 128–129; M. Bath, *Anglici caudati. Courtly Celebration and National Insult in the Stirling 1566 Royal Baptism*, w: *Le livre demeure. Studies in Book History in Honour of Alison Saunders*, red. A. Adams, Ph. Ford, S. Rawles, Genève 2011, s. 183–194; C.V. Weeda, *Images of Ethnicity in Later Medieval Europe*, [Unpublished doctoral dissertation], University of Amsterdam, 2012, s. 212–217.

bestiality and monstrosity in the High and Late Middle Ages. What are the meanings behind the charge against the English and how were they amplified, developed, and expressed? How did learned authors explain this unusual feature attributed to the English and how did they wield and embellish it according to their own narrative aims? These questions are worth considering in order to sketch a broader picture of the slander's usage, and to place its highlighted meanings and implications in cultural contexts.

The earliest well-developed narratives concerning the tails of the English are included in the story of St. Augustine of Canterbury's mission to convert these people. The first historian to recount it was Wace. In *Roman de Brut* (finished in 1155) the Norman chronicler describes Augustine's visit to Dorchester, where the saint was ridiculed and offended by the locals „*de male nature*” as he informed them about „God's law”. The act of mockery was quite peculiar: the obdurate inhabitants of the town hung the tails of rays (or skates) on the missionary's apparel and chased him away. The mistreated Augustine prayed to God to inflict his anger on the assailants in order to make manifest their misdeed. This in fact happened as the men who had hung tails on the saint became tailed themselves, just as all of their offspring. The fact of possessing tails therefore commemorates the aforesaid mockery, emphasizes Wace².

The story told by the Norman chronicler attributes the physical abnormality solely to the inhabitants of the town in Dorset, not to the English as an ethnic community. This feature is shared by the narrative on the same subject recorded in Laȝamon's *Brut* which is next in chronological order. However, according to the Cotton Caligula A.ix manuscript of the English poet's work (held in the British Library), the fact that only Dorchester men were harshly punished for the misdeed against Saint Augustine didn't mean that the shame was restricted only to them. On the contrary, it affected all the „English freemen” in foreign countries, where many worthy men who never even came near Dorchester were called or spoken of as „tailed”³.

Laȝamon's complaint was by no means unjustified as evidence of the use of invective in 12th century sources is relatively abundant. As Diederik Th. Enklaar pointed out, the earliest instance antedates Wace's *Roman de*

² Wace's *Roman de Brut*. *A History of the British. Text and Translation*, wyd. i tłum. J. Weiss, Exeter 2002, s. 344–345, w. 13711–13744; G. Neilson, *op. cit.*, s. 3–4; J. Blacker, *op. cit.*, s. 48–49; F.H.M. Le Saux, *A Companion to Wace*, Cambridge 2005, s. 83.

³ *Laȝamon's Brut or Chronicle of Britain. A Poetical Semi-Saxon Paraphrase of The Brut of Wace*, wyd. i tłum. F. Madden, t. 3, London 1847, s. 184–187; S. Billington, *op. cit.*, s. 192; D. Brewer, *op. cit.*, s. 6; J. Blacker, *op. cit.*, s. 50, 53. In MS. Cott. Otho, C. XIII of *The Brut* the town where the incident happened is identified as Rochester; G. Neilson, *op. cit.*, s. 4–5.

Brut and comes from Flanders milieu – namely, *Ysengrimus*, a beast-epic by master Nivardus written in 1149 or 1150. He expressed the opinion that the English have tails by way of employing of the epithet *caudatus*. In Nivardus' story *Anglicus caudatus* serves as the negative example of a base person to whom another villain is compared. There is also a case in which the feature of having a tail is implied as a characteristic trait of the English. Thus, as scholars have highlighted, the invective was sufficiently widespread to have been known in Flanders even before *Roman de Brut* was written⁴.

The early popularity of the gibe is confirmed by other 12th-century sources. It was used by Peire d'Auvergne, the Provençal poet active in the period of 1158–1180. He used the epithet „coütz” which, as Peter Rickard argues, was coined from the well-known French „coué” („tailed”) and thus hints at recognition of the invective in northern France at the time⁵. The Latin example of the invective comes from the *Causa regis Francorum contra regem Anglorum*, a poem which might have been written by Matthew of Vendôme (1161 or later in that decade)⁶. In England, the opinion about Englishmen's tails was alluded to by Nigel of Longchamps in his *Speculum Stultorum* (1179–1180)⁷. Very informative is the observation made by Richard of Devizes in his *Cronicon de Tempore Regis Richardi Primi* written between 1192 and 1198. Describing the situation of the English army in Sicily in 1190 Richard emphasizes that Sicilians and Greeks (called Grifones) wanted to avenge the wrongs they suffered at the hands of king Richard's men and thus called them tailards⁸.

It is very telling that even the early records clearly indicate the broad, international diffusion of the invective. Significantly more copious evidence of the wide knowledge and use of the gibe comes from subsequent

⁴ *Ysengrimus*, wyd. E. Voigt, Halle 1884, s. 319–320, zwł. ks. V, w. 1041–1042, „*Prauior Angligena caudate partis inique / Quidam rufus ad hec dogmata clamat ouans*”, s. 161, ks. III, w. 657–660, „*Non habet hic caudam, velut Anglicus alter habebat*”; D.Th. Enklaar, *op. cit.*, s. 3; B.D.H. Miller, *op. cit.*, s. 24–25; E. Staffel, *op. cit.*, s. 169.

⁵ P. Rickard, *op. cit.*, s. 48; P. Meyer, *op. cit.*, s. 51; A. Stimming, *op. cit.*, s. 487.

⁶ B. Hauréau, *Un poème inédit de Pierre Riga*, Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, 44, 1883, s. 11, „*Judices loquuntur: [...] Numquam recta fuit, nunquam meruit sibi causa / Anglica vel potius Anglica cauda fidem*”; F. Liebermann, *Anglici caudati*, „Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen” 1900, 104, s. 124–125; A. Stimming, *op. cit.*, s. 482; B.D.H. Miller, *op. cit.*, s. 26.

⁷ *Ibidem*, s. 26–27.

⁸ Richard of Devizes relation is cited by A. Stimming, *op. cit.*, s. 482; See G. Neilson, *op. cit.*, s. 7; L.A. Barbé, *In Byways*, s. 295; A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307*, Ithaca 1974, s. 247; U.T. Holmes, Jr., *Old French „Grifaigne and Grifon*”, „Studies in Philology” 1946, 43, 4, s. 586–594.

centuries. Especially numerous are French examples⁹ although Scottish, Italian, German and Dutch were also fairly easy to point out. Moreover, the English material is revealing by its own right. Long before Wace the humiliation of St. Augustine of Canterbury was described by Goscelin of St. Bertin, who worked on the saint's biography in Canterbury in the 1090s. In *Vita Major* of Saint Augustine the description of the missionary's abuse is very similar to Wace's and Lazamon's; moreover, the event takes place in Dorset – the county where Dorchester (mentioned by Wace) is situated. Goscelin writes about the divine, hereditary punishment which befell the perpetrators – but he does not specify its nature at all. However, as was already highlighted by Sandra Billington, he uses the phrase „*Fama est*” to introduce the report on the insult and its consequences. Therefore Goscelin explicitly points out that the story belongs to oral tradition as well¹⁰. It can be reasonably assumed that this kind of story, according to its narrative logic, should explicate the means of punishment rather than describe it in general, abstract terms. As scholars have already hinted, Goscelin could have passed over the humiliating punishment in silence¹¹. On the other hand, it was argued that in the case of Wace's story, the Norman chronicler could have used a joke current among French aristocracy¹² or found it in an unidentified source and included it in his narrative to achieve a certain moral effect¹³. However, these explanations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Instead, they illustrate the complex nature of ethnic relations in England where the invective initially may have been used against the Anglo-Saxons¹⁴.

The question if the accusation that all Englishmen possessed tails was the result of a generalization of the Dorchester/Rochester folk's trait to all

⁹ See L.A. Barbé, *In Byways*, s. 304–314; see also below.

¹⁰ *Vita S. Augustini, auctore Gocelino Monacho, w: Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum qui in VII saeculi prima parte floruerunt opera omnia*, wyd. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina*, t. 80, Parisii 1850, kol. 82; S. Billington, *op. cit.*, s. 191; L.A. Barbé, *In Byways*, s. 325–326; R.C. Love [introduction to:] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The Hagiography of the Female Saints of Ely*, wyd. i tłum. ead., Oxford–New York 2004, s. XX–XXI.

¹¹ J. Blacker, *op. cit.*, s. 49. The tale of humiliation of Saint Augustine with the tails of the rays was also narrated by William of Malmesbury in his *Gesta Pontificum*. However, there is no mention about any vengeance for this act. G. Neilson, *op. cit.*, s. 2–3; L.A. Barbé, *In Byways*, s. 327.

¹² D. Brewer, *op. cit.*, s. 8–9; see also C.V. Weeda, *Images*, s. 215–216.

¹³ J. Blacker, *op. cit.*, esp. s. 50–52.

¹⁴ See the analysis of the use of term „muglynges” for perpetrators of Augustine's abuse by „king and his knights” in Lazamon's *Brut*, Cotton Otho C.xiii manuscript (British Library), D. Brewer, *op. cit.*, s. 10–13; see also G. Neilson, *op. cit.*, s. 5; C.V. Weeda, *Images*, s. 215.

their compatriots in the eyes of foreign writers, or perhaps if it was an internationally held, derogatory opinion which affected the story of Saint Augustine's humiliation, remains open. However, it is worth noting that both the tales of the abuse of the Apostle to the English and some of the debasing remarks about the additional appendage of the English share the same, explicitly expressed ideological meaning: becoming tailed is the result of God's action. This aspect is highlighted in the French retellings of the story of the saint's humiliation by means of tails: the *Proprietates Anglicorum*, a satire on the English composed probably during the reign of Philip le Bel¹⁵ and the chronicle of the 15th-century historian Nicolle Gilles¹⁶. However, the explicit attribution of the deformation's origin to the Creator's will may also be found in the short works in which the English in general are considered tailed. The French author of the short poem dated to the period after 1415 which presents the complain of a Frenchman against an Englishman clearly wanted to upset his adversaries with the neatly formulated accusation. He thus went on to state about them „*Qui te caudavit Deus...*”¹⁷.

The explanations of this act are rather straightforward but nonetheless informative. This is especially the case of Wace's narrative where becoming tailed is a sign of God's ire, the manifestation of a misdeed – but also a physical, corporal memento of the committed crime („*Keues ont de tries en la car / En remembrance de l'escar...*”). Thus the moral interpretation of the tails is accentuated as they are signs of God's will exercised because of anger over the transgression. In Wace's eyes, the abnormal feature of the Dorchester folk is the sign demonstrating the action of supernatural force and in this regard it is very similar to the concept of classic and medieval *monstra* which, via „disruption of the natural order” display divine will¹⁸. Quite a different comment on the nature of the malformation is expressed by Lazamon: he describes its origin as the result of prayer for God's vengeance („*hif wreche fende*”) and emphasizes its dishonorable

¹⁵ *Proprietates Anglicorum (Satire Against the Inhabitants of Rochester)*, w: *Reliquiae Antiquae. Scraps from Ancient Manuscripts, Illustrating Chiefly Early English Literature and the English Language*, red. Th. Wright, J.O. Halliwell, t. 2, London 1845, s. 230–237, zwł. s. 231–232; see also below.

¹⁶ F. Godefroy, *op. cit.*, s. 167.

¹⁷ *The Frenchman to the Englishman*, w: *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History, Composed During the Period From the Accession of Edw. III to that of Ric. III*, red. Th. Wright, t. 1–2, London 1859–1861, t. 2, s. 127–128; G. Neilson, *op. cit.*, s. 17; L.A. Barbé, *In Byways*, s. 303–304.

¹⁸ J.B. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, Syracuse 2000, s. 108–112, zwł. s. 109; J.E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within. Animals in the Middle Ages*, New York–London 1994, s. 144–145.

and shaming character¹⁹. The tit for tat logic of punishment is clear but it is significant that while for Wace the tail is a memento of sin and God's anger, for Laȝamon it is a disgracing malformation, a chastisement in its own right.

The opprobrious effect that the tails bring about is sometimes consciously highlighted in works and remarks that mock all Englishmen. The author of a political prophecy ascribed to John of Bridlington (written in the 1360s) who utilized various, chiefly animal symbols to describe persons and nations, chose to suggest that the battle of Poitiers will be won by the English, that is by „*caudatis, pro caudis improperati*” („the tailed, reproached for the tails”)²⁰. More graphic is the account in the short poem of John Skelton who related the argument of Scot George Dundas, his adversary in what appears to be a written form of *flyting*, an official scolding match in which the British men of letters sometimes engaged during the 16th century. An enraged Skelton complained that his wicked and deceitful opponent not only accused the English of having tails. Dundas, once a professor of the Aberdeen university, interpreted the phenomenon, claiming that „*Ex causa caudæ / manet Anglica / gens sine laude*”²¹.

The notion of shame (literally blushing with shame) caused by the insult which Laȝamon expressed was also articulated by Robert Mannyng of Brunne. The latter, a canon regular who worked on his *Story of England* between 1327 and 1338, probably modelled his account on the former's. He commented on the story of St. Augustine's abuse and subsequent punishment with a statement similar to Laȝamon's, albeit more explicit: „In many different lands these tails are turned into an insult against us”²². The shame suffered by the English because of the insult was also mentioned by Stephen of Bourbon. The famous Dominican preacher used the description of emotion as an example illustrating the appropriate behavior that women who wear sumptuous clothing with the „devilish

¹⁹ *Laȝamon's Brut*, s. 186.

²⁰ *John of Bridlington, w: Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History*, t. 1, s. 176; M.J. Curley, *The Cloak of Anonymity and „The Prophecy of John of Bridlington”*, „*Modern Philology*” 1980, 77, 4, s. 361–369; A.G. Rigg, *John of Bridlington's Prophecy: A New Look*, „*Speculum*” 1988, 63, 3, s. 596–613, zwl. s. 596.

²¹ *Vilitissimus Scotus Dundas allegat caudas contra Angligenas*, w: *The Poetical Works of John Skelton with Notes and Some Account of the Author and His Writings*, wyd. A. Dyce, t. 1–2, London 1843, t. 1, s. 192, see also t. 2, s. 224–226; see V. Allen, „*Scot*” as a Term of Abuse in *Skelton's Against Dundas*, „*Studia Neophilologica*” 1987, 59, s. 19–23.

²² G. Neilson, *op. cit.*, s. 15; J. Coleman, *Strange Rhyme: Prosody and Nationhood in Robert Mannyng's Story of England*, „*Speculum*” 2003, 78, 4, s. 1214–1238, here at s. 1214–1215.

tails" should display²³. But as far as this remark could be the result of a reading of Lazamon's work, a similar opinion is hinted at by the author of the Middle English *Richard Coer de Lyon*. He twice describes the king as being disgraced by his enemies by use of the formula „*clepyd hym taylard and sayde hym schame*" and „*hym myssade*", thus emphatically linking the accusation of being tailed with the activities of insulting and shaming²⁴.

That the feeling of humiliation caused by the abuse might indeed have been overwhelming is well attested by James Melville, Scottish diplomat and courtier who served Mary and James VI Stuart. In the well-known passage from his memoirs he described the incident of offering the insult to the eminent English nobles which took place during the three-day celebrations of baptism of James Stewart, later James VI and I (in Stirling in 1566). The affront was caused by the gesture deliberately made in a public manner: during the final banquet in the great hall of the castle there was a performance of entertainers disguised as satyrs and maidens. At a certain point, the satyrs begun to wag their long tails with their hands and this was immediately understood by the Englishmen as derogatory and directed against them. Although Melville considered this misinterpretation (he actually wrote that the English had „daftly apprehended" the satyrs' deed), scholars for the most part have judged the gesture to be a „conscious allusion" though whether it was spontaneous or preplanned is impossible to resolve. However, what is highly significant is the response of the offended. It was made with another, dramatic gesture. As Melville testifies, „they all sat down on the bare floor behind the back of the table so that they could not see themselves scorned as they thought they were". As indicated by the flouting of social conventions involved in this act, the abused experienced a deep feeling of humiliation along with the urge to ward it off. But Melville's account is also very informative about the other emotion stirred up by the insult: anger or even wrath. It was only the presence of the Queen which prevented one of the English noblemen from stabbing the French courtier responsible for the performance in the heart, wrote James Melville citing the former's words²⁵.

²³ *Anecdotes historiques, legendes et apologues tires du recueil inédit d'Étienne de Bourbon, dominicain du XIII^e siècle*, wyd. A. Lecoy de la Marche, Paris 1877, s. 233–234, zwł. s. 234; P. Meyer, *op. cit.*, s. 51.

²⁴ *Der mittelenglische Versroman über Richard Löwenherz*, wyd. K. Brunner, Wien–Leipzig 1913, s. 117, w. 69–70 (version of the manuscripts from the group „b"), s. 187, w. 2000–2006; G. Neilson, *op. cit.*, s. 8; G. Heng, *op. cit.*, s. 94–95.

²⁵ *Memoirs of his own Life by Sir James Melville of Halhill*, red. Th. Thomson, Edinburgh 1827, s. 171–172; G. Neilson, *op. cit.*, s. 26; L.A. Barbé, *In Byways*, s. 291–292; see M. Bath, *op. cit.*, s. 183–194, zwł. s. 184, 189–192. Michael Bath emphasizes that the role that Bastien Pagez, French courtier responsible for the choreography of the masque, played at the

In the attitudes of the English to the insult, the feelings of shame and anger are emphasized – interestingly, both by the witnesses of the abuse and the learned authors outlining its social reception. Significantly, the reason for the dishonor is therefore neither the committed sin nor God's subsequent curse (signified by the tails) but the deformity itself. Although the explanations for this are fairly easy to point out, sometimes they take a very elaborate form. The English who have tails, are like animals: like brute beasts indeed, as wrote the aforesaid French historian Nicolle Gilles²⁶. This is no merely descriptive statement: the association between the two is sometimes described as even more far-reaching. This is the case of the late medieval Latin poem edited by W. Wattenbach which belongs to *proprietas nationum* genre. Its author plainly states that „*Anglicus a terge caudam gerit*” and as a result „*est pecus ergo*”²⁷.

This kind of reasoning is by no means a coincidence. As a matter of fact, the question if possessing tails equals being a beast is the subject of formal discourse in the *Proprietates Anglicorum*, apparently written during the reign of Philippe le Bel (1285–1314) or else dated to last quarter of the 13th as well as to the broad 14th century. Scholars have accepted the first of these propositions together with another opinion of the author, Ch.-V. Langlois. The French historian argued that the *Proprietates* were probably written by a clerk of the Paris University²⁸.

The unquestionable scholastic wit of this intellectual²⁹ targets the precise nature of Rochester inhabitants (who are described as tailed),

James Stewart, later James VI and I baptism was remembered and not at all disapproved by Queen Mary twenty years after the event; on the fête at Stirling as a Renaissance festival see M. Lynch, *Queen Mary's Triumph: the Baptismal Celebrations at Stirling in December 1566*, „Scottish Historical Review” 1990, 69, 1, s. 1–21.

²⁶ F. Godefroy, *op. cit.*, s. 167; The similar opinion is expressed by Jean d'Outremeuse, see *Ly Myreur des histours, chronique de Jean des Preis dit d'Outremeuse*, wyd. Ad. Borgnet, t. 1–2, Bruxelles 1864–1869, t. 2, s. 146, „...et ont cowes al dos enssi com biestes...”; see D.Th. Enklaar, *op. cit.*, s. 6.

²⁷ W. Wattenbach, *Aus einer Humanistenhandschrift*, „Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit” 1874, 21, 7, kol. 214; L. Barbé, *Tailed Englishmen*, „Notes and Queries” 1877, 5th Ser., 8, Oct. 27, s. 326.

²⁸ *Proprietates Anglicorum*, s. 230–234; The manuscript containing this work: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Manuscrit latin 2477 (fol. 84r–86v), was recently made available online by Bibliothèque nationale, see < <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10073322q/f87.item.r=Biblioth%C3%A8que%20nationale%20de%20France%20Latin%202477.zoom>>, [dostep: 1 XII 2020]; P. Meyer, *op. cit.*, s. 51; Ch.-V. Langlois, *op. cit.*, s. 304, 309, 314; L.M.C. Randall, *op. cit.*, s. 33; see also *Catalogue general des manuscrits latins*, red. Ph. Lauer et al., t. 2, Paris 1940, s. 478.

²⁹ Comp. Ch.-V. Langlois, *op. cit.*, s. 309; C.V. Weeda, *Ethnic*, s. 129.

including their place among other species, their reasoning and emotions. Certainly, there is a great deal of deliberate derision included in the work, as the author describes his topic in advance as observations on the „Rochester animals“. What is even more important, he aims to explain of the implied perfidy of all the Englishmen as the result of the influence of the corrupted Rochester inhabitants. But especially interesting about the *Proprietates* is that its author considers his topic on the basis of natural science and uses logical deduction to achieve his desired narrative goal. His point of departure is the interpretation of the tails in light of the reference from Aristotle's *De Partibus Animalium* about the taillessness of man. Albeit invoking this work explicitly, the author of the *Proprietates* presents the Philosopher's idea in the already interpreted way: it is the fact of having tails which is a perceived determinant of Rochester inhabitants as a species, clearly indicating that they are not humans. However, they lack the determinants of specific classes of animals, nor they are wild and hairy as monkeys. On the other hand, they inhabit towns, possess laws, and are able to speak and reason³⁰.

The issues which the author of the *Proprietates* raises, as well as the general question about the very humanity of Rochester inhabitants, are directly related to the discussions about the humanity of the famous monstrous or Plinian races passed from ancient to medieval thought. These were thoroughly examined by John Block Friedman. One of the examples which he examines in closer detail is the *quodlibet* of Peter of Croc or of Auvergne on the matter „If Pygmies are Men“, based on the discussion on the same topic in Albert the Great's *De animalibus* and probably posed in 1301. It is significant that one of Peter's main arguments offered as a negative answer to his question comes also from Aristotle's thoughts on physical features (sizes) of the human body. That the scholar who wrote *Proprietates Anglicorum* was to some degree acquainted with the literature of this kind is confirmed by his own use of the example of Pygmies as a race which is not capable of living in towns³¹. Both the intellectuals decide against positive answers: for the author of the *Proprietates* „the tails disclose that they [inhabitants of Rochester] are not perfect humans“. In his eyes „they are indeed monsters“³².

³⁰ *Proprietates Anglicorum*, s. 230–231; Aristotle on the Parts of Animals, transl. W. Ogle, London 1882, s. 123–124, ks. IV, rozdz. 10.

³¹ J.B. Friedman, *op. cit.*, s. 178–196, zwł. 190–196; see also D.H. Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews. Making Monsters in Medieval Art*, Princeton–Oxford 2003, s. 49–51; *Proprietates Anglicorum*, s. 230.

³² *Ibidem*, s. 230–231, „Sed quod perfecte homines non sunt, caudarum ostendit apposition. Si quidem igitur dicantur homines, hoc enim ut dictum est erit equivoce: monstra enim sunt“.

This term is repeated in the *Proprietates Anglicorum* in a somewhat more informative context. We read that „Whether [the inhabitants of Rochester] are humans or are not, they are transfigured and monstrous”. This corporal otherness necessitates that they also „have perverse and monstrous passions of the soul”, informs the author of the *Proprietates*³³. Thus the concept of monstrosity relates not to the above-mentioned sign of divine will but to the biological sphere of the body: to deformity as the result of human-animal hybridity, a meaning which grew popular in the late medieval era³⁴. Although it is explicitly stated that only the inhabitants of Rochester are this kind of monsters, their „psychological malformation” exerts influence on all Englishmen, as the reader is informed that they corrupt all the regions of the country³⁵. The notion of the monstrosity of Rochester townspeople is thus considered a natural phenomenon and carefully evaluated according to up-to-date knowledge. It is by utilizing the conceptual schemas of current discussions concerning „Plinian races” that the author of the *Proprietates* pinpoints the monstrosity of St. Augustine’s oppressors (and their kin). This allows him to elaborate on its consequence: the vice of treacherousness which, as he emphasizes, concerns all Englishmen. Even the learned intellectual who recognized that only a small part of the English could be accused of having tails nevertheless utilized the notion of their monstrosity to discredit the whole English people.

This kind of attitude is even more evident in the case of the creative description (highlighted by Diederik Th. Enklaar) of the origin of deformity given by Jean d’Outremeuse, a historian working in the second half of the 14th century in Liège. In *Ly myreur des histors* he intentionally reworked Saint Augustine’s legend to make the notion of the „tailed English” autonomous. He elaborated on the phenomenon, constructing an alternative explanation which appeals to the theme of *origo gentis*. The tails were the physical feature of all the first Englishmen, who originally came from *Engle*, „a land situated close to the Tower of Babel”, argues the historian. Interestingly, he also explicates the rarity of this animal feature in his times: only the English who intermarried with one another retained it or, as can be read in another passus, the original English were exterminated by men of other nations who settled in all the country except the town of „*d’Orchiestre*”. A similar geographical identification features

³³ *Ibidem*, s. 232, „*Quoniam enim aut homines non sunt, aut si sint, transfigurati et monstrosi sunt, nullam diligent hominum nationem; ipsis enim transfiguratis et monstrosiis exeuntibus in corpore, necesse est quod habeant perversas et monstrosas animæ passionēs*”.

³⁴ J.E. Salisbury, *op. cit.*, s. 145–150.

³⁵ *Proprietates Anglicorum*, s. 234.

in Jean d'Outremeuse's remark on Saint Augustine's mission to convert the defiant pagan English, among them the already „tailed” inhabitants of „Chantorbie” (Canterbury) and „Dorchiestre” (Dorchester) and their vicinities. Thus the mockery is made especially biting as it concerns the original attribute of the nation: the trait of having tails is depicted as the English folk's shared heritage³⁶.

However, Jean d'Outremeuse's ingenuity in amplifying the sharpness of anti-English satire is even more far-reaching. According to him, the aforesaid first Englishmen descended from „the line of Cain, son of Noah”³⁷. The mistake in the identification of the supposed progenitor, albeit obvious, requires some closer attention in order to understand the meaning which the historian expressed. Although scholars have accepted Cain as the imaginary ancestor of the English in Jean d'Outremeuse's story, the precise information that their forebear was the son of Noah shouldn't be easily dismissed as a simple case of ignorance. It should be considered in the context of recognized scribal practice: the frequent confusion of Cain with Ham (spelled „Cham” or even „Cam”) in medieval Latin, English, but also French writings³⁸. Thus it is very probable that it was Ham who was meant as the progenitor of the English.

Because of his transgression against his father, the youngest son of Noah was widely known as a malevolent character who brought a curse upon his progeny. His lineage was thus described as servile or culturally inferior to the breed of his brothers Japhet and Shem. The schema of repopulating the Earth by the descendants of the sons of Noah supplied a powerful ethnogenetic tradition which was frequently referred to by medieval writers, not only to trace the roots of their own nations back to honorable, Biblical origin (it was Japheth who was considered the ancestor of most of Europe's nations as well as of the nobility in the case of genealogical explanations of the origins of social strata)³⁹. Jean d'Outremeuse knew the tradition about sons of Noah well and indeed

³⁶ Ly Myreur, t. 2, s. 146, 196, 280, zwł. s. 146 „et ont cowes al dos enssi com biestes, enssi com les premiers Englois qui vinrent là habiteir avoient. Et vinrent premier de Engle, une terre qui siet asseis pres de la thour de Babel en Orient...”; D.Th. Enklaar, *op. cit.*, s. 6–7.

³⁷ Ly Myreur, t. 2, s. 146, „...et issirent de la nation Cain, le fis Noe, qui fut malvais”.

³⁸ J.B. Friedman, *op. cit.*, s. 100; D.M. Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era. The Bible and the Justifications for Slavery*, Abingdon–New York 2016, s. 35, f.n. 57.

³⁹ S. Reynolds, *Medieval Origines Gentium and the Community of the Realm*, „History” 1983, 68, s. 376; B. Braude, *The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, „William and Mary Quarterly” 1997, 54, 1, s. 110–115; K. Pieradzka, *Genealogia biblijna i rodowód Słowian w pierwszej księdze „Annales” Jana Długosza*, „Nasza Przeszłość” 1958, 8, s. 85–112; P. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, Stanford 1999, s. 91–94, 96–103.

covered it in his chronicle⁴⁰. It is worth noting however that the aforesaid description of the homeland of the English as situated close to the Tower of Babel situates it in or at least close to the kingdom of Nimrod, Ham's grandson and the builder of the famous tower⁴¹. Thus the explanation of the ancestry and origin of the „tailed Englishmen” serves to denigrate them as ethnically inferior, just as was the case with the other ethne described as descending from Ham: Moorish, Slavic or in early modern thought also black African⁴².

But there is also another aspect of the supposed Hamitic origin of the English which may be seen as the cause of such identification but which should more readily be perceived as the pretext for highlighting the unworthy connection: the tradition about Ham's children's malformation which was indeed invoked by Jean d'Outremeuse⁴³. A similar tradition concerns the offspring of Cain. As a matter of fact, both these Biblical villains were considered to be the ancestors of monstrous races⁴⁴. It is by no means a coincidence that the so-called Monk of Silli wrote in his vicious anti-English verse diatribe about „Cayn” as „ortum Anglorum semine”⁴⁵. Thus the tails of the English are a mark of evil connections reaching back to the primeval history described in the divinely approved source, as well as the sign of otherness and inferiority.

Taking into the account the examples discussed above, to accuse one of being „tailed” (*caudati, coué*) means to defame him via alleging bestiality or monstrosity and thus to question his human status. Examples of such defamations may be found in the descriptions of foreigners or enemies of medieval Christian people: the Saracens, the Tartars and the Jews⁴⁶.

⁴⁰ Ly Myreur, vol. 1, s. 5–7.

⁴¹ See B. Braude, *op. cit.*, s. 114.

⁴² A. Pleszczyński, *Mauritani, id est omne genus Slavorum. Wizja pochodzenia Polaków w Chronicon Imperatorum et Pontificum Bavaricum (XIII w.) – znaczenie i historyczne antycypacje idei*, w: *Scientia nihil est quam veritatis imago. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Ryszardowi Szczygłowi w siedemdziesięciolecie urodzin*, red. A. Sochacka, Lublin 2014, s. 1225–1233; D.H. Strickland, *op. cit.*, s. 84; J.B. Friedman, *op. cit.*, s. 100, 102; D.M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham. Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Princeton–Oxford 2003, zwł. s. 172–177.

⁴³ Ly Myreur, t. 1, s. 5; A. Latowsky, *Pure and impure gestes: the generation of history in Jean d'Outremeuse's Myreur des historis*, „Journal of Medieval History” 2020, 46, 2, s. 191.

⁴⁴ J.B. Friedman, *op. cit.*, s. 89, 95–99, 103–105.

⁴⁵ A. Mussafia, *Über eine altfranzösische Handschrift der k. Universitätsbibliothek zu Pavia*, „Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Classe” 1870, 64, 3, s. 580; A. Stimming, *op. cit.*, s. 484–485.

⁴⁶ D.H. Strickland, *op. cit.*, s. 133–137, 159–160, 184–188, 200, 204–206; J.B. Friedman, *op. cit.*, s. 67–69, 103; P. Savy, „Les Juifs ont une queue”. *Sur un theme mineur de la construction de*

It is especially worth emphasizing this last example as the derogatory image of the Jewish people bears striking resemblances to that of the English. Members of both groups were accused of possessing animal features in their physiques. While the belief that Jews were horned is well known, they were also supposed to conceal tails. Though it may seem far-fetched, scholars have demonstrated the examples of this opinion expressed in the 1940s⁴⁷. Notwithstanding that, it is worth noting that while the image of the horned Jew adheres to and is confirmed by St. Jerome's translation of Exodus 34, the theme of tails seems to be the product solely of antisemitic sentiment and hence was the „mark of the beast” of choice.

This is confirmed by the popularity of derogatory remarks concerning tails which were also used to denigrate groups considered culturally inferior. One interesting example concerns the Cornishmen, described as *caudatos* in the fifth book of the *Codex Calixtinus* – the so-called *Pilgrim's Guide* to the famous sanctuary of Santiago de Compostella. Most probably written around 1140 by a Poitevin monk and albeit referring to the Julius Caesar's era, it no doubts reflects the contemporary belief. It indeed existed in Devonshire shortly before the middle of the 19th century, as testified Sabine Baring-Gould who was acquainted with the belief in her childhood⁴⁸. Another instance concerns the Gascons. According to Benvenuto da Imola, the Italian scholar and man of letters active in the second half of the 14th century who wrote the commentaries on Dante's *Divine Comedy*, because of the Gascons rapacity there was a popular opinion in parts of France that they had wolfish tails. As a matter of fact, Imola is able to cite a proverb which voices the belief, naming the two ethnic groups famous for their additional appendages. The first of them are the English, who bear snake-like tails⁴⁹.

The last example points out one more important advantage of ascribing monstrous status with the motif of a tail: it is possible to elaborate on the vices of the tailed one by describing the species affiliation of his surplus appendage. This is possible because of the existing body of moral interpretations of animals which are to some point familiar even

l'altérité juive, „Revue des études juives” 2007, 166, 1–2, s. 179, 191–195; J.J. Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: on Difficult Middles*, Basingstoke 2006, s. 39.

⁴⁷ P. Savy, *op. cit.*, s. 175–208, zwił. s. 184–185; J. Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews. The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism*, Skokie 2001, s. 46; D.H. Strickland, *op. cit.*, s. 106, 133.

⁴⁸ P. Savy, *op. cit.*, s. 188; D. Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, c. 700–c. 1500*, Basingstoke–New York 2002, s. 23–24; S. Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, London–Cambridge 1876, s. 145–146; G. Neilson, *op. cit.*, s. 35.

⁴⁹ P. Toynbee, „*Anglici caudati*”, „The Academy” 1893, 43, 1083, Feb. 4, s. 107–108; Ch.-V. Langlois, *op. cit.*, s. 309.

nowadays. The affiliation with snakes evoked in the opinion cited by Imola is by far the most frequent one. It is expressed in another medieval *dictum*, published by John Allen Giles from the manuscript located in the library in Douai. „Whether is the Englishman a serpent?“, the question is posed in the adage and no less provocatively answered at the same time: „I don't know, the tail is hidden“⁵⁰. The topic addressed in the saying was considered by the so-called Monk of Silli, who described the English as „a brood of vipers“ („*vipereo genimine*“)⁵¹. But perhaps the most interesting is the remark in the long gloss preceding the text of Adam of Balsham's (Adam of Petit-Pont's) *Oratio de utensilibus ad domum regendam pertinentibus* in the Manuscript Latin 14877 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. As its editor, Barthélemy Hauréau, surmised, it comes from the first half of 13th century and was written by an individual whom Hauréau didn't consider very learned. The remark is in fact one of the etymologies of the word „*Anglia*“ (hence „*Anglicus*“, we are told), which is inserted just after the clearly offensive one („*ab anda, quod est stercus*“). The second explanation derives the country name and ethnonym from the word „snake“ („*ab angue*“). But the reader is also offered the information on peculiar habit of „*Anglicus*“: he stings with his tail like a snake⁵².

Despite some vagueness of the term „*anguis*“ which was translated as „eel“, the word is certainly used in its most widespread sense of „snake“ here. In the bestiaries *anguis* is described as „the origin of all serpents“ indeed⁵³. The ability ascribed to the snake of stinging with its tail may actually be found in Thomas of Perseigne's (Thomas Cisterciensis) commentary on the *Song of Songs* written around 1170–1189, in which he attributes this to asps⁵⁴. The association of the English with snakes bears

⁵⁰ *Ad sanctum Thomam Cantuariensem*, w: *Anecdota Bedæ, Lanfranci, et aliorum*, wyd. [J.A.] Gilles, London 1851, s. 96, „*Est Anglus serpens? Nescio, cauda latet*“; C.V. Weeda, *Images*, s. 214.

⁵¹ A. Mussafia, *op. cit.*, s. 579–585, zwł. s. 580; A. Stimming, *op. cit.*, s. 484–485.

⁵² B. Hauréau, *Notices et extraits de quelques manuscrits latins de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, t. 3, Paris 1891, s. 197–204, zwł. s. 203, „*Anglia; inde Anglicus [...] vel ab angue, quia pungit cum cauda, sicut anguis*“; Ch.-V. Langlois, *op. cit.*, s. 309; C.V. Weeda, *Images*, s. 212–213. Claire Weeda ascribes the work incorrectly to Alexander Neckam; see P. Lendinara, *The Oratio de utensilibus ad domum regendam pertinentibus by Adam of Balsham*, w: idem, *Anglo-Saxon Glosses and Glossaries*, Aldershot 1999, s. 357–378.

⁵³ L.M.C. Randall, *op. cit.*, s. 34; W. George, B. Yapp, *The Naming of the Beasts. Natural History in the Medieval Bestiary*, London 1991, s. 190, the eel is identified with *anguilla* in the bestiaries, see s. 207, 223.

⁵⁴ *Thomas Cisterciensis Monachus et Joannes Algrinus S. R. E. Cardinalis, Commentarium in Cantica Canticorum*, w: Cælestini III. *Romani Pontificis Epistolæ et Privilegia, accedit Thomæ Cisterciensis monachi et Joannis Algrini Commentarium in Cantica*, wyd. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiæ*

clearly negative connotations: the serpent is a recognized symbol of the devil himself. However, it is the notion of this animal's deceptiveness⁵⁵ that in our case should also be highlighted. As a matter of fact, this is the message behind Thomas of Perseigne's reference: in his description the asp firstly deludes into considering her a beauty and then stings.

This trait, albeit uncommon in the case of snakes, is well recognized as a typical behavior of scorpions which was frequently highlighted in the commentaries to the Apocalypse of St. John the Apostle, 9.10⁵⁶. Otherwise known as symbols of treachery and reputed for their satanic connections⁵⁷, these animals could provide a convenient object of comparison serving to amplify the bitterness of the satire on the English. This opportunity was used by the aforementioned „Monk of Silli” who wrote that in treasonous deceiving the English are akin to scorpions. That is why they are called „tailed”, explains the author accentuating their supposed versatility in falsehood, liability to treason, instability, and infidelity⁵⁸. As shows Walafrid Strabo's interpretation of the treacherous nature of the scorpion's attack with sting and venom (indeed compared to the actions of heretics)⁵⁹, the aforesaid vices might also be evoked in the remarks about the „stingy”⁶⁰ or „venomous”⁶¹ tails of England's inhabitants.

The potency of scorpion symbolism as a means of abuse and expressing contempt may be fully acknowledged with consideration of the fact that this animal was a well recognized emblem of the Jews in medieval art⁶². The similarities don't end here: according to the exceptional

Cursus Completus. Series Latina, t. 206, Parisiis 1855, kol. 355, „Filiis Israel occurrerunt tria genera serpentum in deserto, scilicet aspis quæ blanditur facie et cauda pungit...”.

⁵⁵ J.E. Salisbury, *op. cit.*, s. 134, 141–142; K.D. Eckert, *Bad Animals and Faithful Beasts in Bevis of Hampton*, „Neophilologus” 2013, 97, s. 584–585.

⁵⁶ *Walafridus Strabus Fuldensis Monachus, Glossa ordinaria*, w: *Walfridi Strabi fuldensis monachi opera omnia*, t. 2, wyd. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina*, t. 114, Parisiis 1852, kol. 727, „Scorpius blandus facie cauda pungit occulte.”.

⁵⁷ See Y. Pinson, *Bruegel's 1564 Adoration: Hidden Meanings of Evil in the Figure of the Old King*, „Artibus et Historiae” 1994, 15, 30, s. 114, 121, 126–127; V. Plesch, *Not Only Against Jews: Antisemitic Iconography and Its Functions at La Brigue*, „Studies in Iconography” 2002, 23, s. 145, 173.

⁵⁸ A. Mussafia, *op. cit.*, s. 581, „En blandient traitelment / Similant scorpionibus / Scorpionibus similes, / Pour ce sont dit Anglois coué...”.

⁵⁹ *Walfridi Strabi fuldensis monachi*, kol. 727.

⁶⁰ *Complainte en vers rythmiques d'un écolier picard de l'Université de Paris (vers 1280)*, wyd. Ch.V. Langlois, „Revue internationale de l'enseignement” 1892, 23, s. 565; Ch.-V. Langlois, *op. cit.*, s. 310.

⁶¹ *The Frenchman*, s. 128.

⁶² B. Wiedl, *Laughing at the Beast: The Judensau: Anti-Jewish Propaganda and Humor from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period*, w: *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern*

identification of the tails of the inhabitants of Rochester made by the author of the *Proprietates Anglicorum*, these appendages are characteristic of swine tails. It is worth noting that inventing this information required a certain manipulation of data. The well-informed author of the *Proprietates* replaced the ray-fish tails hung on Saint Augustine's garments of the original story with the tails of pigs and cows which enabled him to sketch an appropriate, corresponding penalty⁶³. This association has an obvious disgracing nature. But once again it should be observed that use is made of the familiar material, renowned for its dishonoring potential: the oftentimes mentioned Jews were frequently accused of special relations with sows, sometimes not devoid of sexual overtones⁶⁴. Attributing the supposed tail of an enemy or some alien to a certain, invariably negatively perceived species allows one to amplify the insult by utilizing certain animal symbolism.

However, it is not always the connection with animals that the tails disclose. In the interesting sermon of Gottschalk Hollen, German Augustinian friar of 15th century, they are interpreted as a diabolic attribute (literally as „*currus diaboli*”) which is negated by the very nature of humans. However, the problem which provokes Hollen's considerations is the sin of wearing sumptuous, loose garments with tails of cloth that were dragged behind the one who wore the apparel. The case of the caudal appendages of the English is cited by the friar only as an example: as a warning or even threat to these who deride the saints with their (garment's) tails. Nevertheless, the theme was utilized in the context of the categorical assertions concerning the nature of the tails. „Neither a man nor an angel but a devil is depicted with a tail”, emphasized Gottschalk⁶⁵. The description of this kind of diabolic connotations of the tails of the English are unusual. Nevertheless, it discloses the potency of the motif

Times. Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, its Meaning and Consequences, red. A. Classen, Berlin–New York 2010, s. 334; V. Plesch, *op. cit.*, s. 145, 161–162, 167, 173 (przyp. 28); P. Savy, *op. cit.*, s. 193; D.H. Strickland, *op. cit.*, s. 177; Y. Pinson, *op. cit.*, s. 126.

⁶³ *Proprietates Anglicorum*, s. 231, „...*Deus [...] instituit ut omnes qui ex tunc in civitate Roucestræ nascerentur caudas ad modum porcorum haberent.*”.

⁶⁴ B. Wiedl, *op. cit.*, s. 326–329, 338–344, 348, 352–355.

⁶⁵ [Godescalcus Hollen], *Sermonum opus exquisitissimu[m] [...] sacra[rum] litera[rum] p[ro]fundissimi lectoris patris Gotschalci Eremita[rum] diui Augustini professi...*, Hage[n]aw: Rynman, 1520, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, sygn. 2 P.lat. 756, fol. a7r [skan 33], <reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10148924_00033.html?zoom=0.8500000000000003>, [dostęp: 1 I 2021], „...*Na[m] neq[ue] ho[mo] neq[ue] angel[us] sed diabol[us] pingit[ur] cum cauda...*”; See A. Zumkeller, *Hollen, Gottschalk*, w: *Neue deutsche Biographie*, vol. 9, red. O. Stolberg-Wernigerode, Berlin 1972, s. 541; Gottschalk's reference about the tails of the English probably derived from the aforesaid example of Stephen of Bourbon, see above, przyp. 24.

of linking negative ideas with someone accused of having the surplus appendage.

It may by no means be denied that the many examples of the use of the offensive comments about the tails of the English testify to the willingness to abuse the ethnic other and establish their inferiority. The insult is all the more biting as it questions the human status of the abused as they are equated to beasts or monsters, sometimes explicitly. The monstrosity is often perceived in the sense characteristic of the late middle ages: monsters are human-animal hybrids whose humanity is disputed, rather than portents. Thus the slander communicates the exclusion of the ethnic other from the society of Christian people. The nature of this claimed monstrosity varies but identification of tails with specific species allows the authors to take advantage of animal symbolism. Utilizing it, they associate certain negative traits with the English: the falseness, deceitfulness and treacherousness characteristic of snakes or scorpions. Thus the notion of monstrosity supplies a convenient means for amplifying the insult with negative animal symbolism. But it also lends powerful definitiveness⁶⁶ to the vision of the alien people: demonstrating their sinister character but most of all opening the unbridgeable chasm between them as imperfect beings and members of the group that uttered the insult. The idea that the English had tails and were therefore monsters was considered a subject worthy of use as direct slander or ridicule because of the sheer possibility to denigrate effectively, accusing the ethnic other of inhuman status.

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⁶⁶ See J.J. Cohen, *op. cit.*, s. 40.

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