CHAPTER 20

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Nicholas Trevet's Transnational History

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This chapter addresses Chaucer's chief model for the writing of universal history: the early fourteenth-century Anglo-Norman chronicle of Nicholas Trevet.[1] While many readers have some familiarity with Trevet's work, that knowledge most likely comes through the so-called 'tale of Constance', adapted by Chaucer as the Man of Law's Tale and by Gower (as an exemplary narrative about the sin of envy) in his contemporary *Confessio amantis*. Typically, studies of Trevet's *Chronicle* focus very narrowly on this part of the work as a source text.[2] Much more can be learned, however, through an examination of the ways in which Trevet's larger vision of history is reflected in Chaucer's writings.

To start with, even though it is often assumed that Chaucer used the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth directly, it is clear that Trevet's *Chronicle* was an important mediator through which Chaucer knew the *History of the Kings of Britain*: all the correspondences between Geoffrey's British history and Chaucer's writings also appear in Trevet's work, which makes abundant use of Geoffrey.[3] Trevet digests Geoffrey's British history, however, in some significant ways, especially with regard to national identity. This, in turn, provides a useful context for the reading of Chaucer—but not in the usual sense, where Chaucer's works are classified (in ways that Kathryn Lynch has cogently called into question) as being part of his 'French period' or 'Italian period', before moving into the confidently 'English' literary monumentality of the *Canterbury Tales*.[4] On the contrary, considering Chaucer's engagement with Trevet allows us to approach the question of national identity from another angle, that of medieval historiography, asking the question 'How were notions of national identity articulated in the history-writing of fourteenth-century England'?[5] In Chaucer's case, we are fortunate in being able to look at a universal history that he clearly knew (because it is the primary source of the Man of Law's Tale, including details from Trevet that do not appear in the analogue found in Gower's *Confessio amantis*),[6] and then to consider the ways in which Trevet places the history of England in the transnational frame, before turning to an examination of how national identity—especially with regard to language—is expressed in Chaucer's work.

The first section of this chapter sketches out the overall nature of Trevet's world history, indicating its scope and considering what view it presents of English national identity, especially in terms of genealogical descent and territorial claims ('The River of Time'). It then turns to the Constance narrative that provided a model for the Man of Law's Tale, illustrating how Trevet's version highlights the role of language in the establishment of national identity, and in the mediating of fundamental changes to that national identity. Selected other passages in Trevet's work also illustrate the role of language in articulating the boundaries that separate nations and, sometimes, bring them together ('Language and Nation'). The chapter closes by identifying what it is that Trevet's historical vision offers readers of Chaucer's histories, such as *Troilus and Criseyde* or the Knight's Tale: namely, a capacious temporal scope that makes room for a plural vision of multiple historical contexts—biblical, apostolic, Trojan, Roman, Theban, British, Saxon, and English.

The river of time

Chaucer's sense of history has been studied at length, through a wide range of methodological approaches: New Historicist, psychoanalytic, postcolonial, and so on. These studies most often focus on the ancient histories that lie in the distant past, especially the narratives of Troy and Thebes.[7] Less work has been done on the alternative historiographical models that lie behind his work, including the histories of Geoffrey of Monmouth, Ranulf Higden, and Paulus Orosius. The history of Geoffrey of Monmouth lies behind the evocations of the Chaucer's two 'Britains', the insular Briton land of the Wife of Bath's Tale and the continental Briton lands of the Franklin's Tale.[8] The national history of the English people, couched not only in terms of territorial claims and genealogical descent but also of the English language, is the focus of Higden's *Polychronicon*, especially as it is presented in the Middle English translation of John Trevisa.[9] Finally, in the universal history of Orosius, biblical and imperial histories are intricately intertwined, forming a basic model or template for many later writers of chronicles.[10]

We might think of universal chronicles and national histories as being two fundamentally different kinds of writing, because we do sometimes see national histories that do not aspire to provide an international scope, and we also find universal histories—such as that of Orosius—that carefully avoid privileging any national group in their account of the past. More commonly, however, we find the most powerful articulations of national identity—even a sense of national destiny or purpose—articulated within the framework of the universal history. Examples include the thirteenth-century *Histoire ancienne jusqu'a Cesar*, which celebrates not only the French aspirations to lead a Christian empire, but also the special role of Flanders as a nation;[11] or the fourteenth-century *Polychronicon*, which situates its history of England within the context of universal history, creating a kind of teleological vision of the past that gradually comes to fruition with the emergence of the English nation.[12] A similar convergence of the

national and the universal appears in Trevet's *Chronicle*. Here, however, the nation does not simply emerge out of the framework of the universal history, as it does in the *Histoire ancienne* or the *Polychronicon*. Instead, for Trevet, sixth-century England is a point of origin—not just for his own 'modern', fourteenth-century England, but for Christian Rome itself.

Trevet had a model for this kind of history-writing, in which the nation he celebrates does not simply emerge from the international framework but also profoundly influences that universal setting, in Geoffrey of Monmouth. For Geoffrey, however, the intersection of his chosen nation—Britain—with the mighty empire of Rome is generally combative. There are some successful intermarriages that bring peace, such as the marriage of the Briton Arveragus with the daughter of the Roman emperor Claudius, but usually the encounter of Britain and Rome is a repeated series of conflicts and competition.[13] For Geoffrey, the enhanced status of Britain comes from the nation's willingness to defy and even conquer Rome (if only temporarily). Trevet, by contrast, presents a nation that is able to contribute to the ongoing, vital circulation of goods, knowledge, and—above all—religious law between the metropolitan centre of Rome and its surrounding nations.

The shape of Trevet's *Chronicle* is unusual in its refusal to compartmentalize history into the neat, scholastic building blocks we ordinarily find in universal histories such as Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale* or Higden's *Polychronicon*.[14] Instead, Trevet's *Chronicle* is a prose romance—romance not just in the sense of being in the romance vernacular (that is, 'en romans'), but also in its narrative form. Although we do encounter dividing lines in the narrative (in the form of the six ages, or the sequence of the books of the Bible, or significant turning points in salvation history) what we fundamentally experience is a slow but steady flow of narrative, one that mimics the flow of the stream of time. Trevet uses the standard ordering structure of the six ages popularized by Orosius in the early fifth century and repeated throughout the Middle Ages. The first age extends from Adam to Noah and the Flood; the second ends with the birth of Abraham; the third with the end of King David's reign in Jerusalem; the fourth with the Babylonian Captivity; and the fifth age ends with the birth of Christ. All history from that time onward is the sixth age, a long history of waiting for the great punctuation of the Apocalypse that will herald the arrival of the seventh age.

Trevet carefully identifies each of these transitional moments in his text. In addition, he makes explicit the biblical framework of his undertaking by structuring the first ten parts of his *Chronicle* according to books of scripture, both canonical and apocryphal, following the pattern of Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica*.[15] Significantly, Trevet includes the biblical and apocryphal books that allow him to interpolate non-scriptural history most freely: Genesis and Exodus; Joshua, Judges, Kings, Esdras and Machabees; the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. Just before the Gospels, however, Trevet inserts a non-biblical source, but one which was invaluable in the medieval historian's effort to integrate biblical history with all the other strands of ancient history: that is, Josephus. In his account of the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Roman rulers Titus and Vespasian, Josephus provided a narrative of the intersection of Roman might and

Christian potential, mediated by the dispersal of the Jews from Jerusalem in a parodic inversion of the waves of pilgrims and crusaders that, in the later Middle Ages, would wind their way to the Holy City.

The biblical books (plus Josephus) form less than a third of Trevet's text, just over thirty-three out of roughly 114 folios in the Paris manuscript.[16] What follows is a history of what Trevet invariably refers to as 'Britain, which is now called England' [Brutaigne, qe est ore apelé Engleterre (115; f.55 vb)]. At a superficial glance, a reader might be forgiven for thinking that what we have in the *Chronicle* is a prose vernacular rendition of the Bible, followed by a history of England. This is not exactly correct. Trevet's *Chronicle* does not simply provide an integrated chronology, in which dates in different parts of the world are matched up with one other to provide fixed points of reference. More than an integrated chronology, Trevet offers an integrated narrative, one that is braided or twisted to combine different group identities into an intricately woven narrative pattern.

Continuously throughout the *Chronicle*, rulers from widely different parts of the world are juxtaposed. Early in biblical history—while we are still in Genesis—we encounter the history of the Britons for the first time. Following Geoffrey of Monmouth, but embedding British history within a biblical matrix, Trevet goes on to explain how the settlement of Britain takes place, and the ways in which the territory is divided:

> And then the realm of Britain was divided among five kings, that is to say, of Albania, which is Scotland, Stateryk was made the king; and of Northumbria, Yonan; and of Logres, which is England, Pynece; and of Wales, Rudauk; and of Cornwall, Clotoun. . . . In the time of this Joas, king of Jerusalem, Zacharie the son of Joiada, was made high priest [lit. 'bishop'] of the law, and after him Azarié.
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> [Et donqe estoit le roialme de Brutaigne departi entre cink rois, c'est assavoir qe de Albanie, q'est Escoce, fu fait roy Stateryk; et de Northumbre, Yonan; et de Loegrie, [q'est] Engleterre, Pynece; et de Wales, Rudauk; et de Cornewaille, Clotoun. . . . En le temps cist Joas, roi de Jerusalem, estoient fait evesqe de la ley Zacharie, le fitz Joiada (f.19 b).]

This is typical of Trevet's habit of juxtaposing or intertwining different historical strands: all elements of the past—biblical, apostolic, Trojan, Roman, British, Saxon, and so on—are merged in the romance of the *Chronicle*. In the midst of a history of Judges, we are reminded of the fall of Troy; in an account of Kings, we hear about Romulus and Remus.

What is perhaps most striking in Trevet's history of the nation, embedded within the universal framework, is its heterogeneity. Repeatedly throughout the *Chronicle*, Trevet lays out the complexity that lies within the apparent singularity of the nation. For example, in his account of the early conversion missions on the island and the establishment of bishoprics, Trevet emphasizes the ways in which episcopal jurisdiction corresponds to territorial boundaries internal to the nation:

> To these three [cities, that is, 'Loundres, Ewerwyk, et la cité de Legiouns', or Caerleon] were subject twenty-seven bishops, for to the archbishop of Everwyk was subject Deira (that is, Northumberland) and Albania (that is, Scotland), divided into dioceses

> beyond the Humber, which separated them from Loegres, which now is called England. To the archbishop of London, Loegres and Cornwall were subject.
>
> [A ceux trois estoient subgetz vint et sept evesqes, qar a l'ercevesqe de Everwyk estoit subget Deira, c'est Northumberlond, et Albania, c'est Escoce, divisez par diocises outre Humbre, qe les departe de Loegres, q'ore est apellé Engleterre. A l'ercevesqe de Loundres estoient subgetz Loegre et Cor[ne]waille (f.44vb).]

Here, we are given not only the territorial boundaries upon which the bishoprics were established, but their 'modern'—that is, fourteenth-century—equivalents. A similar inclination to emphasize the heterogeneity within the nation appears in Trevet's account of how the various Germanic populations were diffused among the different British populations:

> And then he granted to the three aforesaid types of people to dwell in diverse counties with the Britons—that is to say, the Jutes in Kent and the Isle of Wight, and in Sussex, and in the Isle of Selsey; and the Saxons in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Dorset, Somerset, and Devonshire; and the English in all the other counties in the land as far as Scotland. And because the English occupied, among the Britons, the greater part of the land, forever afterward the whole island was called 'England'.
>
> [Et puis granta a lez avauntditz trois maners dez gentz pur habiter en diverses countés ove lez Brutouns—c'est assavoir lez Jutes en Kent et en l'isle de Wiht, et en Southsex, et en l'isle de Selseie; et les Sessouns en Hampteshire, Wilteshire, Barcshire, Dorsete, Somercete, et Deveneshire; et les Engleis en totez les autres counteez de la terre jesqe Escoce. Et pur ceo qe lez Engleis occuperent entre lé Brutouns la greindre partie de la terre par touz jours aprés estoit tut le isle apelé Engleterre (115; f.56a).]

He then goes on to give a detailed breakdown of each of these Germanic 'regnes' or petty kingdoms, starting with 'le regne de Kent'" (117), going on to 'Southsex' (121), 'Westsexe' (135), 'Northumbre' (137), and so on.

A similar emphasis on intra-national heterogeneity appears in Trevet's account of Uther Pendragon, the father of Arthur. Trevet describes how in the time of Uther and his brother, Aurelius Ambrosius, an alliance was formed with 'three types of peoples who came from Germany to Britain, which is now called England . . . that is to say, Saxons, English, and Jutes' ['trois maneres dez genz qe venerent de Germane en Brutaigne, qe est ore apelé Engleterre . . . c'est asavoir Sessouns, Engleis et Jutes' (114; f.55 vb)]. So far, this intra-national heterogeneity is familiar. Trevet goes on, however, to couple this emphasis on difference and division with a move to integrate the various strands of his intricately braided history: he gives a genealogy for the Germanic Hengist, tracing his lineage back to Wetta, the son of Woden, who—Trevet declares—was the son of Shem, the son of Noah (115; f.55 vb). While the part of the passage about Aurelius Ambrosius and Uther Pendragon comes from Geoffrey of Monmouth, the discussion of the various Germanic tribes is new in Trevet, as is the descent of Woden from Noah, via Shem. Geoffrey does mention Woden: Hengist states that his people worship Mercury under the name of Woden (157). Trevet euhemerizes the Germanic god, making him into a real man, the

father of Wetta and the son of Shem, and—therefore—a grandson of Noah.[17] The union of biblical and Germanic history is ever more tightly woven.

While Trevet follows Geoffrey of Monmouth in many respects, there are some disjunctions between the two, the most significant of which concerns the distinction between 'Britain' and 'England'. For Geoffrey, British identity is the stable point upon which he can fix the identity of an emergent nation; for Trevet, by contrast, British identity is invariably subordinated to English identity. Perhaps this is at its most striking in Trevet's very first reference to Geoffrey, in which he makes Geoffrey into a celebrant of English national identity: 'Here begins the History of the British Kings of Great Britain, which now is called "England"' [Ci comence l'estoire des Brutouns rois del Greindre Bretaigne, q'est ore 'Engleterre' apellé (69; f.12b)]. There is a passage in the *House of Fame* in which the great poets of antiquity appear as statues on pillars, including the statue of 'Englyssh Gaufride' (line 1470). Some critics have hesitated to identify this figure as Geoffrey of Monmouth, in spite of the fact that Geoffrey was indeed 'besy for to bere up' the fame of 'Troye' (line 1672).[18] If we find, however, that Chaucer's Geoffrey is the same Geoffrey of Trevet's *Chronicle*, it would be almost impossible to think of him as anything other than 'English Geoffrey'.

As noted above, British identity is consistently subsumed within English identity in Trevet's *Chronicle*, through the continuous reference to Britain in this way. Even when quoting Geoffrey of Monmouth, Trevet refers to 'Brutaigne, q'ore est dit Engleterre' or, more simply, 'Brutaigne, q'est dit Engleterre' (e.g. 111–13; ff.55b–va). The effect is to assimilate the British past to the expected, inevitable English future. Not just Geoffrey of Monmouth, and not just Britain in general, but King Arthur himself is assimilated to this all-encompassing English identity. Trevet recounts how 'Arthur, who was . . . full of beautiful virtues and of generosity, and so gracious in every trait and good quality that all people loved him, was crowned King of England after his father, Uther Pendragon' [Arthur, qi fu . . . plein de beles vertues et de largesse, et si gracious de tut nature et de bounté qe totes gentz l'amoient, fu coroné roi d'Engleterre aprés son pere Uter Pendragoun (141; f.60a)]. This is clearly not a one-time mistake, because Trevet goes on to relate how Arthur 'conquered Scotland and all the lands around England, Ireland, and France' [conquist Escoce et totes les terres entour Engleterre, Yrlande, et Fraunce (141; f.60a–b)], and there are several more references to England (without mention of Britain) throughout the passage.

A second striking feature of Trevet's historiography is directly relevant to the role of the Constance story within the *Chronicle*: that is, the presence of highly focused moments of intensification. These are of two types: first, the symbolic space, which can be comprised simply of enclosed space itself or of a physical object, often a monumental structure; and, second, the condensed short narrative. Two representative examples of this symbolic space appear relatively early in the *Chronicle*, both of which are defined in terms of the cardinal directions of North, South, East, and West. Trevet describes how various nations were united under the yoke of Alexander the Great—'Persia and Macedonia and Syria and Greece and Egypt' [Perse et Macedoyne et Surie et Grece et Egipte" (f.26b)]—but with Alexander's death, they were dispersed among his heirs: 'that

is to say, Philip, King of Macedonia; Antigonus, King of Asia; Seleuk [Seleucus], King of Syria; and Ptolemy . . . King of Egypt' [c'est assavoir, Phelipe, roi de Macedoine; Antigonus, roy de Asye; Seleuk, roy de Sury; et Ptholomeu . . . roi de Egipte (f.26va)]. Here, the convergence of cardinal directions and disparate lands marks a turning point in history, one of the great shifts in the history of *translatio imperii* as formulated by Orosius in the early Middle Ages.[19] A comparable example appears in Trevet's account of the division of the tribes of Israel upon their arrival in the Promised Land. They too are arranged according to the cardinal directions, in a long descriptive passage that ends by describing how:

> In the midst of these dwelling places ['habitations'] to the East and the West, the South and the North, Joshua placed the habitation of the tabernacle. And about the tabernacle to the East he placed twelve cities for the habitations of the priests who came of Aaron; to the West he placed the thirteen cities for those who came of Gersan; to the South he placed ten cities for those who came of Caath; to the North he placed twelve cities for those who came of Merari.
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> [En myliu ceste[s] habitaciouns de l'orient et occident, meridien et septentrion, mist Josué l'abitacioun del tabernacle. Et entour le tabernacle a l'orient mist il douze citez pur les habitacions des prestres qe vindrent de Aaron; al occident mist il trezze citez a ceux qe vindrent de Gersan; al meridien mist il dis citez a ceux qe vindrent de Caath; al septentrion mist il duzze cités a ceux qe vindrent de Merari (59; f.10va).]

Here, the convergence of the cardinal directions around a fixed point heightens the symbolic power of that focal centre: that is, the ark of the covenant containing the tablets of the Law.

This scene is mirrored later on when Jeremiah, aware of the destruction soon to befall Jerusalem, decides to conceal the precious items contained in the ark of the covenant: these include the tablets of the Law, the staff of Aaron, and a golden vessel filled with manna. He hides these away within a stone, seals it with an iron seal inscribed with the name of God (76; f. 21a) and hides the stone away in the desert between two mountains, near the site of the graves of Moses and Aaron. Jeremiah declares, however, that the day will come when these hidden items will reappear:

> And Jeremiah said that no one will show forth the ark except for Aaron, and the tablets will not be handled by priest or prophet except for Moses, the elect of God, who will raise them up in his first resurrection; and at that time the ark will issue forth from the stone, and be placed on Mount Sinai, and before the ark will assemble all the saints awaiting the coming of Our Lord.
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> [Et dit Jeremié qe nul purra moustrer l'arche fors Aaron, et les tables ne purra overer prestre ne prophete [forpris] Moises, le eslist Dieux, qi relevera en sa primer resurection, et dont s'en istra l'arche de la pere, et serra mise en le Mont de Synay, et s'asembleront devant l'arche touz les seintz entendaunt la venue Nostre Seignur (f.21b).]

Here, the objects formerly contained in the ark form a new sacred centre, this time not providing a centre of gravity for the new inhabitants of the Promised Land, as in the

scene discussed previously, but rather for those who will be gathered together on the Day of Judgement, in a typological fulfilment of the literal Promised Land.[20]

Another manifestation of such moments of intensification can be seen in the condensed short narrative. Within the narrative flow of Trevet's romance/history, the Constance episode stands out as being by far the longest of the short narratives included in the *Chronicle*. The use of extended narratives is not unprecedented: Geoffrey of Monmouth, for example, has a few of these, most famously the story of Arthur and his father, Uther Pendragon, but also the extended story of King Leir.[21] It is perhaps not too much to say that the Constance story serves an anchoring role not entirely dissimilar from the Arthur narrative in Geoffrey's text: both represent a kind of fixed point, simultaneously a crucial moment of transition and a promise of hope for the future. These stories serve as a microcosm of larger currents in the text, where the didactic function of the work is intensified: for Geoffrey, that didactic function is expressed through prophecy, while for Trevet, it is expressed through the power of conversion.[22]

Before turning to the Constance story in more detail, examining the relation of Trevet's version to that of Chaucer in the light of Trevet's larger aims and practices, I would like to make it clear that I am not arguing that the 'real' historical template for Chaucer's vision of history is to be found in Trevet's *Chronicle*. On the contrary, what I want to suggest is that there are multiple templates, and that their multiplicity is exactly the point. When Chaucer writes about history, he often writes through the medium of Boccaccio, as in the Knight's Tale, the Monk's Tale, and—above all—*Troilus and Criseyde*. This is a vision of history that comes from Latin epic—the *Thebaid* of Statius and the *Aeneid* of Virgil—by way of romance: not just Italian romance, in the form of Boccaccio's works, but also French romance, in the form of the *Roman de Troie* and the *Roman de Thebes*. It is, accordingly, crucial to emphasize that what we find in Trevet is not Chaucer's singular model of history-writing, but rather one in a series of historiographical options, various overlapping templates with which to structure the shape of time. These include the universal, explicitly non-national perspective of Orosius; the English nationalism of Higden; the Trojan ancestry of Britain found in Geoffrey of Monmouth (whether by way of Trevet or directly); the tragic history of Troy, the triumphal history of Rome, and the abjected history of Thebes.

Language and nation

Having outlined the historiographical framework found in Trevet's *Chronicle*, let us turn to the Constance narrative, illustrating how it highlights the role of language in the establishment of national identity, and in the mediating of fundamental changes in that national identity. This can best be accomplished by placing Chaucer's Man of Law's Tale in two different contexts that can highlight some of the crucial issues pertaining to national identity as constituted in premodern literature: first, the transnational, cross-cultural framework that has become increasingly important in the field of medieval Mediterranean studies; and, second, the national framework that is a central preoccupation

of the tale's source—that is, Trevet's *Chronicle*. In considering the competing claims of these two frameworks, and particularly in thinking about the role of vernacular languages in mediating between cultures or—sometimes—erecting insurmountable barriers between cultures, we see almost immediately that the transnational and the national are always intricately intertwined. The national narrative always conveys, I would suggest, an implicit claim about the nature of the wider world.

For Chaucer, very much unlike Trevet, the subject of the Constance story is circulation itself: circulation of the 'tidynges / And tales' (II.129–30) that merchants carry with them from port to port, along with their cargo of goods and currency; circulation of the word—that is, the Word of God—as Christianity is transmitted throughout the world; and, finally, the figure of Custance herself, who travels from port to port, both a desirable object and an agent of change. Her ability to impact the cultures she encounters is mediated not so much through language as through her ineffable ability to make change happen: as the Tale puts it, 'alle hir loven that looken in hir face' (II.532). Analogues to Chaucer's tale of Custance, of which there are a considerable number, sometimes highlight the extent to which the woman functions as a passive commodity, and sometimes the extent to which she functions as an active subject. This distinction can be most succinctly summarized by a comparison with two tales in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the story of Gostanza (Day 5, Story 2) and the story of Alatiel (Day 2, Story 7). Like Chaucer's Custance in Northumbria, Boccaccio's Gostanza is washed up on the shore of an unfamiliar land. For Gostanza, however, language proves to be both an index of familiarity and unfamiliarity, an initial barrier that turns out to be a means of local assimilation. The woman who finds Gostanza on the shore near Tunis addresses her in Italian: Boccaccio writes, 'hearing herself addressed in Italian, the girl wondered whether she had been driven back to Lipari by a change of wind'.[23] Gostanza is soon taken in by a Muslim (or 'Saracen') lady who has a household full of women, into which Gostanza is soon assimilated: 'Her benefactress and the other ladies were remarkably kind and affectionate towards her, and before very long they had taught her to speak their language.'[24]

Gostanza's experience of assimilation, language acquisition, and the generous company of women contrasts sharply with the story of Alatiel, recounted earlier in the *Decameron*. Unlike Gostanza, who is able to make her way in foreign places through the acquisition of languages, Alatiel remains cut off by the barrier of language as she is traded, bartered, and stolen by a sequence of men all around the Mediterranean. Her inability to communicate is repeatedly emphasized by Boccaccio, who relates how Alatiel tries to 'explain' her situation 'by means of gestures' and notes that 'she was unable to make herself understood [except] by way of her gestures'.[25] When Alatiel is seated between two men, Boccaccio states, 'the pleasure of conversing with her was denied them because she understood little or nothing of their language'.[26] When at last her old associate, Antioco, encounters Alatiel and she is finally able to communicate, the end of the language barrier serves to punctuate the repeated cycle of circulation that Alatiel has undergone and to introduce the resolution: '[Antioco] was familiar with her language, and this pleased her immensely because for several years she had been more or less forced to lead the life

of a deaf-mute as she could neither understand what anybody was saying nor make herself understood.'[27]

Turning back to the Man of Law's Tale, we can see that Custance inhabits a linguistic space comparable to that of Alatiel. She is not, like Alatiel, 'Fortune's plaything'; she is, however, the 'sonde' of God, the thing that God has sent. Both Alatiel and Custance are objectified: they are things that are significant for what they are rather than subjects who are significant for what they say or think. The Mediterranean framework of trade and exchange provides one very useful way of contextualizing Chaucer's tale and, in particular, of explicating how Custance's limited language ability can be seen in connection with the Mediterranean language of trade. The 'maner Latyn corrupt' (II.519) that she speaks when washed up on the shores of Northumberland marks her out as the product of the trade and exchange routes of the late fourteenth century, an object that reflects the vernacular of the shipboard rather than a speaker who belongs to any one native land.

The nature of Custance's language ability and its implications for both her individual identity, and for the group identities whose transformation she mediates, is illuminated through a closer look at the source passages in Trevet's *Chronicle*. Here, as in the analogous passage in Gower's *Confessio amantis*, Custance's linguistic ability is highlighted: she is the only child of an indulgent father, who has her taught [enseigner] the Christian faith and educated [endoctriner] in the seven Liberal Arts and 'various languages' [diverses langages] (151, f.63a). This education is what underlies her ability to effect conversions in Northumberland, not just through her knowledge of the Articles of the Faith (which she expounds word for word in the course of her preaching) but through her linguistic range. Trevet's description of Constance's arrival in Northumberland can be seen as an inversion of the scene of linguistic recognition and misrecognition experienced by Boccaccio's Gostanza: shipwrecked near Tunis, Gostanza at first supposes that she is in a foreign land, then hears Italian spoken and thinks she may be back home, then realizes that she has simply encountered a foreigner who speaks her own tongue. In Trevet's scene, Constance is shipwrecked and encountered by a friendly passer-by, Olda (the constable in Chaucer's Man of Law's Tale):

> And this Olda came down to the girl in her ship and asked her who she was. And she responded in Saxon, which was the language of Olda, because she had been taught to speak various languages, as has been said before, and she told him that she was of the Christian faith. . . . And as soon as Olda had heard her speak his language so well, and discovered her with so much treasure, he hoped that she was the daughter of some king of the Saxons over the sea, either of Germany, or of Saxony, or of Sweden, or of Denmark.
>
> [Et cist Olda descendi a la pucele en sa nef, et lui demaunda de son estre. Et [ele] lui respoundi en Sessoneis, qe fu langage Olda, come cele q'estoit aprise en diverses langages, come avant est dit, et lui disoit qe quant a sa creance ele estoit de Cristiene foi. . . . Et puis qe Olda l'avoit oy si renablement parler sa lange, et trova ove lui si grant tresour, esperoit qe ele estoit fille de ascun roi des Sessouns outre mere, come d'Alemay[n]e, oue de Sessoine, ou de Suece, oue de Denemarche (159, f. 64b).]

Here, Constance's speech at first marks her as the same—not a local inhabitant, to be sure, but a 'Saxon' nonetheless. Remembering what we have observed earlier of Trevet's habit of emphasizing the heterogeneity located within national groups, we will be especially attuned to the way that, in this passage, Trevet highlights the range of local inhabitants in the British Isles—not just the Britons and the Germanic pagans, but the subgroups within each of these larger categories. In particular, he divides the non-British inhabitants of the Isles as the Jutes, the Saxons, and the English, each having their own language. These three subgroups are, for Trevet, minorities within the larger category of the English; as he puts it, all three subgroups are said to be gathered together within 'Engleterre' because out of the three groups, 'the English occupied, among the Britons, the greater part of the land' [lez Engleis occuperent entre lé Brutouns la greindre partie de la terre" (115; f.56a)]. At the same time, these subgroups of the Jutes, Saxons, and English are affiliated with larger groups resident outside the British Isles. This is why Olda recognizes—or thinks he recognizes—Constance as a 'Saxon'; not a local 'English' Saxon, but perhaps a Saxon from Germany, or from Saxony, or from Sweden, and so on.

This ambiguous way of characterizing ethno-linguistic groups as both subtypes within a larger group and part of a larger, transnational group is reflected, in Chaucer's work, through his transnational depiction of Britain. The local inhabitants of Northumberland, in the Man of Law's Tale, include both the 'pagan' English and the Christian Britons; at the same time, in the Franklin's Tale, we learn that the Continent has its own 'Britons'. The first line of the Franklin's Tale sets us 'In Armorik, that called is Britayne' (V.729), and the tale's domestic crisis is precipitated when Arveragus goes to 'dwelle a yeer or tweyne / In Engelond, that cleped was eek Briteyne' (809–10). The tale wobbles back between 'Armorik Briteyne' (1061) and the fourteenth-century reader's own 'Briteyne', in a way similar to the familiar yet strange British setting of the Wife of Bath's Tale. Both time and place sever the reader from the unproblematic sense of familiarity, the reassurance of a securely locatable place of origins.

This quality in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is foreshadowed in the apparently—but deceptively—simple nationalism of Trevet's universal chronicle. It is not necessary to look to the Mediterranean context to discover the transnational framework of Chaucer's writings, because an acute awareness of the polyglot, transnational nature of 'England' was already vividly present, as we see here and as we have already seen elsewhere in Trevet's *Chronicle*. Other moments in the text lend emphasis to this transnational quality of Trevet's 'England'. For Trevet, the story of Constance serves as a nexus to draw together the history of Christian Rome and the history of England: he inserts it as a kind of long, digressive back-story to the rule of Moris (Maurice), Emperor of Rome. In keeping with this story's integrative function, it draws together local vernacular languages with the divine, transnational voice of God, as in the scene where Hermengild effects the conversion of the blind Briton who appeals to her for help:

> A poor blind Christian Briton . . . who was entirely unknown to them, but taught by the Holy Spirit, began to cry out before them all: 'Hermengild, wife of Olda and disciple of Constance, I beg you in the name of Jesus Christ, in whom you believe,

> that you make the sign of the cross upon my blind eyes'. At this word, Hermengild, very afraid, was abashed; but Constance, hearing the power of God in the words of the blind man, comforted Hermengild, and said to her, 'Do not hide, lady, the power that God has given you'. And Hermengild, before Olda and the retinue of men that was with him, with good and firm faith, made the sign of the cross upon the eyes of the blind one, and said to him in her Saxon language: 'Bisne man [in] Jhesu name in [rode] yslawe, have thi siht [Blind man, in the name of Jesus who was slain upon the cross, have your sight]'. And he was now illuminated and could see well and clearly.
>
> [[U]n povre Cristien Bruton enveuglés . . . q'estoit de touz estrange mes apris del Seint Esperit, comensa a crier devant touz: 'Hermegild, la femme Olda et la disciple Constance, te pri en le noun Jhesu Crist, en qi tu creiz, qe tu me facet le signe de la crois sur mes eux enveuglés'. A ceste parole, Hermegild, trop affraié, estut abaié, mes Constaunce, entendant la vertue Dieux [en] la parole l'eveugle, conforta Hermegild, et lui dist: 'Ne muscez pas, dame, la vertue qe Dieux te ad doné'. Et Hermegild, devaunt Olda et sa meine qe lui sui, de bone foi et ferme fist sus les euz de lui enveugle la seinte croiz et lui dit en sa langage Sessoine: 'Bisne man [in] Jhesu name in [rode] yslawe, have thi siht'. Et sil [meintenaunte] fu aluminé et regardoit bien / et clerement (163, f.64vb–65a).]

The blind Briton appeals to Hermengild in direct speech, just as Constance encourages Hermengild in direct speech; Hermengild's words, however, come not just in direct speech but in their 'original' language. As performative speech, the speech that serves as the medium of the miracle, her words must be preserved just as they were uttered. It is useful to contrast the other moment in this tale when performative language appears, again unaltered from its original iteration:

> He had hardly finished his speech when a closed hand like the fist of a man appeared . . . and struck such a blow on the criminal's neck that both of his eyes flew out of his head and his teeth out of his mouth, and the criminal fell defeated upon the ground. And at that moment a voice said, in the hearing of all, 'You raised up a scandal against the daughter of Mother Church; you did this, and I have not kept silent'.
>
> [A peine avoit parfini la parole qe un main enclose come [poyn] de homme apparut . . . et feri tiel coup en le haterel le feloun, que ambedeux les eux lui envolerent de la teste et les dentz hors de la bouche, et le feloun chei abatu a la terre. Et a ceo dit un voiz en l'oy de / touz: 'Adversus filiam matris ecclesie ponebas scandalum; hoc fecisti et non tacui' (167, f. 65va–vb).]

In this passage, which reworks Psalm 50:21, the performative language is not a kind of transnational vernacular language (Saxon), but rather the transnational language of God—Latin, the administrative language of the Church and of the Vulgate Bible. Trevet's use of Latin here is not naive: elsewhere, he describes at length the production of the Septuagint and repeatedly discusses the evolution of various liturgical formats and prayers within the Church. The Latin that Trevet's God speaks is an administrative language, a language of institutions: it is therefore appropriate that it is spoken in the

enclosed, formal space of a royal audience hall, in contrast with the sandy beach where Hermengild effects her miracle. For Trevet, the vernacular is complex and polyvalent, the place where boundaries are drawn between peoples and, more rarely, where those boundaries fall away. It is therefore appropriate that Hermengild's Saxon speech is uttered at the wild edge of the seashore.

There are a number of other moments in Trevet's *Chronicle* that also illustrate the role of language in articulating the boundaries that separate nations and, sometimes, bring them together—although none is quite as striking as these moments we have just noted in the tale of Constance. The simultaneous separation and joining of Briton and Saxon identity can also be seen in the account of a law established by Marcia, a female ruler of the realm in the time of Darius of Persia and Alexander the Great. Marcia is, in some ways, a prefiguration of Constance herself, exemplifying similar virtues: she is 'very wise and well educated in all the arts' [trop sages et bien aprisé en touz artz (f.26a)]. She institutes a law that binds both the Britons and the Saxons, unifying them under the law, but the law exists under two different names, reiterating the difference that separates the two communities: 'She established the law that the Britons call "the Marcian", and the Saxons, "Marchenlaw"' [ele controva la lei qe les Brutouns apellent 'leis Marcianes', et les Sessons, 'merchenlawe' (f.26a)]. A similar moment of linguistic convergence appears in the story of how the Briton Vortigern married the English daughter of Hengist, adapted by Trevet from Geoffrey of Monmouth. To cement the union of their two peoples, Vortigern is careful to reply to her toast 'Wesheil' with the correct response 'Drinkheil'; he does this 'just as he had been instructed by the English well before she was joined to him in marriage' [sicom il estoit enfourmé par lez Engleis bien devant q'ele estoit a li esposee (115; f.55vb)].

In those two passages, language brings together two disparate groups, while still preserving their difference, whether under the rule of the law or in the union of marriage. In another passage, however, the difference of language divides—or, we might even say, cuts apart the potential union of two peoples in peace. In an episode adapted from Geoffrey of Monmouth, Trevet tells the story of the treason of Hengist. At a feast to celebrate the 'peace between the Britons and the Saxons' [pees entre les Brutons et les Sessouns], a 'false sign of peace' [faux signe de pees] is used to divide Britons from Saxons: 'When the feasting was at its most joyous for the Britons, such that they suspected no treason, suddenly a cry was made by the Saxons in their language—which was unknown to the Britons—saying "Draweth your sexes!", which means "Take out your knives!"' [[Q]uant la mangerie fut plus lee a les Brutons, qe nul treison penserent, sudeinement fu un crie faite par Sessouns en lour langage, qe fu desconu a les Brutouns, en disaunt/'Draweth youre sexes!' qe fait a dire 'Treietz vez cotels!'" (125; f.57b–va]. A bloody battle follows, and the peace is broken. Language unites, but it also splits.

What can a broader sense of Trevet's historical vision offer us in reading Chaucer's historical romance? I would suggest that he offers a remarkably capacious framework that makes room for a plural vision comprised of multiple historical contexts—biblical, apostolic, Trojan, Roman, Theban, British, Saxon, and English. Differences are not simply elided; they are pulled tightly together, an act that exposes the difference that inevitably

remains. Even in the repeated phrase, 'Britain, which now is England', Britain is always there: we are constantly reminded of the movement of nation from one state of being to another, reminded of the gap that separates disparate moments in time. For Trevet, the episodes that I have identified as moments of intensification—whether depictions of symbolic space or tightly compressed narratives, like the story of Constance—provide a kind of microcosm in which the separation of those discrete moments is collapsed into a geometric form. In this way, Trevet models an historiographical poetics that emphasizes the cyclical nature of time, a departure from the linear and typological modes of other medieval chronicles.[28]

This cyclical quality is evident both in the cosmological points of reference in Trevet's history, and in its integrated chronologies—above all, in the great temporal hinge of the Incarnation. Trevet explains how those who lived in the first generations after Adam lived to a great age, because 'God gave them a longer life in order to seek out and discover the noble sciences of astronomy and geometry, which cannot be acquired in any less than five hundred years' [Dieux lour dona plus longe vie pour enserchir et controver les nobles sciences de astronomie et geometrie, les qels ne poent conquere en meins q'en cynk centz aunz]. Only by achieving that great age can they hope to comprehend the celestial cycle of the 'great year, which is accomplished by the course of the planets, which in so large a period of time return to their initial places' [grant an, qu'est acompli par cours des planetes, qe en tant de temps retornent a lour primer lieu (7; f. 2vb)]. As a counterpoint to the celestial cycles of the planets, we find the 'primer lieu' par excellence in the Incarnation, which Trevet identifies with a whole series of other date markers, forming an intricately integrated time stamp: 'Here ends the fifth age of the world. . . . Here begins the sixth age of the world. The year after God made Adam, four thousand eight hundred and two, Our Lord Jesus Christ was born' [Ci termine le quint age du siecle . . . Ci commence le sisme age du siècle. L'an après qe Dieu fist Adam quatre mil et cent oytantisme second, nasceoyt Nostre Seigneur Jhesu Crist]. Trevet provides the day of the week and the date of Christ's birth, as well as the dominical letter; he states that this was the forty-second year in the reign of Augustus Caesar, and the thirtieth year in the reign of Herod; he gives the number of years since the prophecies of Daniel, and the number of years since the founding of Rome. In this way, Trevet signals the coming together of all timelines to mark this very special moment when all lineages are braided together, marking the transition from the Old Covenant to the New.

Taking stock of the cyclical vision of history in Trevet's *Chronicle* provides a useful final insight into the presentation of historical time in Chaucer's works. It is often the case that Chaucer's historical poetry, especially the Knight's Tale and *Troilus and Criseyde*, is seen as fundamentally based on earlier poetic models of history, especially Virgil, Statius, and Boccaccio. The cyclical quality that is so evident in the temporality of both the Knight's Tale and *Troilus and Criseyde* is attributed to a Boethian overlay, as Chaucer integrates what he had learned through his engagement with (and translation of) the *Consolation of Philosophy*. Without taking away from Chaucer's evident interest in and commitment to Boethian philosophy, it may be the case that Trevet's cyclical vision of history also played a part. We may need to rethink the common wisdom that

the Knight's Tale and *Troilus and Criseyde* have a Boethianism that is overlaid on—is even at odds with—the historical vision of the poem. On the contrary, Trevet's commentary on Boethius was the interpretive filter through which Chaucer knew the rich interpretive tradition of the prosimetrum. It is not far-fetched to consider that Chaucer may have found Trevet's vision of history, as presented in the *Chronicle,* to be fully compatible with the Boethian temporality of Trevet's commentary.

How might this intersection—this temporality that is at once historiographical and philosophical—be reflected in Chaucer? I would suggest that it can be found in the moments of intensification in Chaucer that correspond to the moments of intensification that we have already seen in Trevet, such as the elaborate ekphrases of the Knight's Tale; the cycles of siege in *Troilus and Criseyde*, marked by epistles that track the decline in the fortunes of the city and the despair of Troilus; and the reiterative patterns of descent found in the Monk's Tale and the *Legend of Good Women*.[29] For Trevet—and, at least sometimes, for Chaucer—history is recursive, repetitive, and ultimately circular.

Notes

1. Earlier versions of this material were presented at the University of Pennsylvania (17 March 2011) and at the 15th Biennial Romance in Medieval Britain Conference hosted by the University of British Columbia (16 August 2016). I would like to thank Jonathan Brent for his assistance with transcriptions and translations from Trevet's *Chronicle*.
2. The Constance narrative from Trevet's *Chronicle*, together with an excellent introduction by Robert Correale, appears in *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, volume 2, eds. Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 277–350 (introduction at pp. 277–94; Trevet excerpt, in Anglo-French and Modern English translation, at 297–329; analogue by Gower at 330–50). See also the foundational studies by Correale, 'Chaucer's Manuscript of Nicholas Trevet's Cronicles', *Chaucer Review* 25 (1991), 238–65, and Robert A. Pratt, 'Chaucer and *Les Cronicles* of Nicholas Trevet', in *Studies in Language, Literature, and Culture in Honor of Rudolph Willard*, ed. E.B. Atwood and A.A. Hill (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1969), 303–11.
3. Delany argues that Chaucer draws on Geoffrey of Monmouth directly for the description of the dying Piramus beating his heels on the ground in the Legend of Thisbe (LGW 863); Sheila Delany, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*', *Chaucer Review* 22 (1987), 170–4.
4. Kathryn L. Lynch, 'Dating Chaucer', *Chaucer Review* 42 (2007), 1–22.
5. On premodern articulations of national identity specifically in Chaucer's work, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'Orientation and Nation in the *Canterbury Tales*', in *Chaucer's Cultural Geography*, ed. Kathryn L. Lynch (Basic Readings in Chaucer and his Time. London: Routledge, 2002), 102–34. On the wider context of premodern articulations of English national identity, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'The Hunger for National Identity in *Richard Coer de Lion*', in *Reading Medieval Culture: Essays in Honor of Robert W. Hanning*, ed. Robert M. Stein and Sandra Pierson Prior (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 198–227.

6. Robert M. Correale, 'Gower's Source Manuscript of Nicholas Trevet's *Les Cronicles*', in *John Gower: Recent Readings: Papers Presented at the Meetings of the John Gower Society at the International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, 1983–88*, ed. R. F. Yeager (Studies in Medieval Culture 26. Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 1989), 133–57. For a systematic overview of the distribution of place names, proper names, and other linguistic features in all three texts of the Constance story, including tables, see Hélène Dauby, 'From Trevet to Gower and Chaucer', *Caliban: French Journal of English Studies* 29 (2011), 79–88.
7. On the productive tension of the histories of Troy and Thebes in Chaucer's work, see Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991). A detailed account of the various strands of Theban history behind this tension, including universal histories, the *Roman de Thebes*, and Statius's *Thebaid*, can be found in David Anderson, 'Theban History in Chaucer's *Troilus*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 4 (1982), 109–33.
8. See Chapter 29.
9. On the composition and circulation of the *Polychronicon*, see John Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), esp. 36 ff. On the English reception of the work and its broader impact on vernacular culture, see Emily Steiner, 'Radical Historiography: Langland, Trevisa, and the *Polychronicon*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 27 (2005), 171–211, esp. 174–8.
10. On Orosius's views of Greek history as a context for reading Chaucer, see Patterson's *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, 99–100, and Anderson's 'Theban History' (referring to the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César* as the 'French *Orose*'), 117–18. On the textual connections between the second redaction of the *Histoire ancienne* and Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'Ovid and Ovidianism', in *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature, Vol. 1: The Middle Ages*, ed. Rita Copeland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 187–208, esp. 199–204.
11. On the teleological drive toward Flanders within the *Histoire ancienne*, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'Embodying the Historical Moment: Tombs and Idols in the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 44 (2014), 617–43, esp. 628–31.
12. 'Unlike Orosius's history, however, the *Polychronicon* is not universal because it is polemical or apocalyptic, but rather because it claims totality within a specifically English context. It synthesizes all histories, periods, and genres, and drives them resolutely toward the English present, toward English localities, conquests, and lineages, and even to the deeds of the Chester nobility' (Steiner, 'Radical Historiography', 174).
13. On Geoffrey of Monmouth in the context of Insular historiography, see the still-classic study by Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain: From Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966); also Monika Otter, *Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century English Historical Writing* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), esp. chapter 2, '"Gaainable Tere": Foundations, Conquests, and Symbolic Appropriations of Space and Time.'
14. On the structure of Vincent of Beauvais's encyclopaedia, see Mary Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World: Encyclopaedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012), esp. chapter 2, 'Narrative and Natural History: Vincent of Beauvais's *Ordo juxta Scripturam*'. On the structure of Higden's universal history, see Emily Steiner,

'Compendious Genres: Higden, Trevisa, and the Medieval Encyclopedia', *Exemplaria* 27 (2015), 73–92, esp. 76–80.

15. On the structure of the *Historia Scholastica*, see James H. Morey, 'Peter Comestor, Biblical Paraphrase, and the Medieval Popular Bible', *Speculum* 68 (1993), 6–35, esp. 14–16. See also the provocative account of the text's development in Mark J. Clark, *The Making of the Historia Scholastica, 1150–1200* (Studies and Texts 198. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2015).
16. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 9687 (P). The biblical section runs from the top of f.2a to the bottom of f.35ra. P is the most elaborately decorated of the manuscripts, and one of the earliest. Correale identified it, moreover, as the closest to that used by Chaucer and John Gower ('Chaucer's Manuscript' and 'Gower's Source Manuscript'). Quotations from Trevet are cited in the text by folio number in P and by page number in the forthcoming edition with facing-page translation currently in preparation by Jonathan Brent and myself, based in part on the largely uncorrected transcript of Correale. Note that page numbers are provided only for the passages that will appear in the edition and translation; others are cited by folio number only.
17. On the integration of Noachid genealogy and Germanic descent in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, see Daniel Anlezark, 'Sceaf, Japheth, and the Origins of the Anglo-Saxons', *Anglo-Saxon England* 31 (2002), 13–46, esp. 17–18. Thanks to Jonathan Brent for pointing out this source.
18. 'And by him stood, withouten les, / Ful wonder hy on a piler / Of yren, he, the gret Omer; / And with him Dares and Tytus / Before, and eke he Lollius, / And Guydo eke de Columpnis, / And Englyssh Gaufride eke, ywis; / And ech of these, as have I joye, / Was besy for to bere up Troye' (HF 1464–72).
19. On cardinal directions in Orosius, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'Alexander in the Orient: Bodies and Boundaries in the *Roman de toute chevalerie*', in *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures*, ed. Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 105–26, esp. 106–08.
20. For a comparative reading of the Ark of the Covenant in the Ethiopian *Kebra Nagast* and the depiction of Custance as a 'habitacioun' in Chaucer's Man of Law's Tale, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'Modeling Medieval World Literature', *Middle Eastern Literatures* 20 (2017), 2–17, esp. 8–14.
21. Tolhurst suggests that Geoffrey of Monmouth includes the story of Leir, along with other embedded stories involving women's actual or potential rule, 'to interrupt and critique his epic narrative' (78). Fiona Tolhurst, 'The Britons as Hebrews, Romans, and Normans: Geoffrey of Monmouth's British Epic and Reflections of Empress Matilda', *Arthuriana* 8 (1998), 69–87.
22. On prophecy in Geoffrey, see Paul Dalton, 'The Topical Concerns of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie*: History, Prophecy, Peacemaking, and English Identity in the Twelfth Century', *Journal of British Studies* 44 (2005), 688–712, esp. 692–701.
23. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 5.2; Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Vittore Branca (Florence: Presso l'Accademia della Crusca, 1976) 344; *Decameron*, trans. G.H. McWilliam (London: Penguin, 2003), 380–81.
24. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 5.2; ed. Branca 345, McWilliam 382.
25. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 2.7; ed. Branca 124 ['con atti'], 125 ['co' fatti']; trans. McWilliam 128, 130.
26. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 2.7; ed. Branca 128, trans. McWilliam 134.

27. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 2.7; ed. Branca 133, trans. McWilliam 140.
28. For example, on secular typologies in the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, see Akbari, 'Embodying the Historical Moment', 631–36.
29. On letters in the cycles of siege in *Troilus and Criseyde*, see Akbari, 'Ovid and Ovidianism', 199–204.

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