

CHAPTER SIX

Erasing the Body

History and Memory in Medieval Siege Poetry

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FOR MEDIEVAL READERS, THE experience of crusade could be recollected through two distinct discursive forms: the historical narration of chronicle accounts and the poetic narration found in the literary forms of epic and romance. This distinction is, needless to say, a false binary: as scholars such as Nancy Partner and Gabrielle Spiegel have shown, there is often a strongly literary quality to even the most sober historiography, and as Robert Stein and Robert Hanning have shown, a rich vein of historiography runs through the most elaborately poetic texts of the High Middle Ages.¹ This chapter explores the nexus of historiography and poetics through a particular focus on two Middle English poems, both titled *The Siege of Jerusalem* even though they recount two very different historical moments: one describes the fall of Jerusalem to the crusaders in the late eleventh century, following the historical account of William of Tyre, while the other narrates the fall of Jerusalem to the invading Roman army in the service of Titus and Vespasian in the first century. The essay places these two accounts of the siege of Jerusalem in the context of the literary tradition centered on the violent fall of imperial cities, especially the abundant literature devoted to Troy. The context offered here is a broad one, ranging from antiquity through the early modern period and even — in the case of Ismail Kadare’s novel *The Siege* — as far as the present day. This breadth is necessary in order to bring out the ways in which the siege and fall of a city are used as a kind of narrative shorthand to encapsulate complex moments of historical change. One might describe the function of poetics in this mode of writing as a “crystallization” of a temporal shift, making visible what is normally unable to

be seen. Accordingly, I focus particularly upon this process of crystallization through poetics, as symbolic forms — first, the city itself; second, the male body; third, the tomb that encases the body — are used to mark significant moments in history, points of rupture that mark a discontinuity between one period of time and another.

In earlier work on *The Siege of Jerusalem*, I argued that it is fruitful to juxtapose the fourteenth-century alliterative poem of that name, which focuses on the fall of Jewish-ruled Jerusalem to the invading Roman armies of Titus and Vespasian in the first century, with the fifteenth-century Middle English work of the same name, which is based on the Latin chronicle of William of Tyre (through an Old French intermediary) and recounts the fall of Muslim-ruled Jerusalem in the late eleventh century to the Christian armies of the First Crusade.² While these two works narrate very different historical moments, they share a common focus on the central role of the city in the unfolding of sacred history. In each text, the fall of the city marks a significant moment in the articulation of the divine plan: the fall of Jerusalem in the first century paves the way for the foundation of a Christian Rome and, ultimately, the establishment of papal rule, while the fall of Jerusalem in the eleventh century brings about not only Christian rule of the Holy Land but also — at least in the views of the first generations of crusade chroniclers — the imminent End Times.³ One way of analyzing these works, pursued in my own earlier work as well as (in far richer detail) in Suzanne Yeager's *Jerusalem in Medieval Narrative*, is by viewing them within the multiple and polyvalent traditions of writing about Jerusalem: the holy city was at once the center of prediasporic Jewish community, the site of Christ's ministry and crucifixion, the symbolic center of the world as seen on medieval maps, and the spiritual homeland of every devout Christian soul.⁴ Another way of analyzing these works, which I pursue here, is to displace Jerusalem as a singular, unique phenomenon and instead to examine depictions of the besieged city more broadly to see the common ground of these narratives. In this way, it is possible to develop a fuller understanding of how narrations of siege enabled premodern writers to make sense of historical change.

It is important to emphasize that this is not simply a question of literary genre, studied so well by Malcolm Hebron; instead, what is at stake is the particular notion of time that is articulated in narrations of siege.⁵ In siege literature, time is depicted as being not only cyclical, governed by the

repetitive movement of *translatio imperii*, but also linear, moving in a relentless forward march. This linear motion, moreover, is not continuous but teleological, driven toward a climactic goal. In siege literature, these two modes of temporality are placed in opposition so that the linear forward thrust of time, which steadily builds up pressure only to erupt in the destruction of the city, is perpetually at odds with the cyclical movement of time, in which periods succeed one another in turn, and each climactic moment proves to be simply yet another point in a regular sequence. This tension is expressed concretely in three symbolic forms: the shape of the city itself, bounded by its encircling walls; the body of the warrior, whose wounds reflect the vulnerability of the city he defends; and the tomb of the fallen warrior, which memorializes the site of human death, civic ruin, and imperial change. Bodies, alive or dead, mark points in time: in the form of the tomb, the site of the body remains as a focal point to give structure to historical time after the turning point of the fall of the city; in the form of the dismembered corpse, the body is eradicated in order to emblemize a site of erasure in historical memory.

The next section of this chapter, “The Poetics of Siege,” offers a brief survey of the ways in which *translatio imperii*, or the succession of empires, is expressed in siege literature from antiquity through the twelfth century, including the *Aeneid* and the *Roman de Troie*. “Des-Troying Jerusalem” examines *The Siege of Jerusalem* texts in the light of the Troy literature of the previous section, observing how closely the besieged city of Jerusalem conforms to the Troy model and considering how the treatment of warrior bodies in another twelfth-century siege poem, the *Roman de Thebes*, relates to the depiction of Jewish bodies in the alliterative *Siege of Jerusalem*. Finally, “Suspended Bodies” turns to siege literature that builds upon historical models developed within the tradition of crusade literature centered on Jerusalem. These texts include the fourteenth-century *Sege of Melayne*, which recounts the assault of Charlemagne’s Christian army on Muslim-held Milan, as well as an early modern adaptation of *The Sege of Melayne*, entitled *Capuistranus*. In this sixteenth-century work, the conflict of Christian and Muslim is displaced from Milan to Eastern Europe, while the Arab Muslim adversary is replaced by the Ottoman Turk. The chapter closes with the modern revisioning of these premodern texts found in *The Siege*, a novel by the Albanian writer Ismail Kadare. Like the medieval works, Kadare’s *Siege* focuses on

the borders of Europe and the Islamic world, but this time the text witnesses the phenomenon of siege not only from within the walls but also from without and narrates the experience of siege from the perspective of Christian and Muslim, Eastern European and Ottoman Turk. In Kadare's novel, as in the premodern works discussed here, the walls of the city are refracted through the symbol of the male body, which at once establishes a spatial border and marks the site of historical rupture.

The Poetics of Siege

Siege poetry inhabits a peculiar place in literary history. From the fall of Troy to the fall of Jerusalem, the climax of siege literature — that is, the fall of the city — marks a transitional moment in which two things happen: a nation dies and is reborn, and imperial might passes from the hands of the past into the hands of the future. Siege poetry plays a special role among these fundamentally historical narratives, imposing form upon the memory of past glory and upon the imagined promise of future power. As a genre, siege poetry participates in what we might call an “imaginative historiography,” in which poetic form is coupled with symbolic forms — especially the body — in order to produce a coherent image of the past.

For many medieval readers, the main example of the city under siege was Troy — not the Troy story recounted by Homer (which was known only indirectly) but the one nested inside book 2 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, studied by generation after generation in the schools of medieval Europe.⁶ Safely harbored in Carthage, Aeneas tells Dido about his past, explaining how he escaped from the ravaged city. The whole of the *Aeneid* is situated, temporally, in the liminal space that separates the fall of one great empire — Troy — from the rise of another — Rome. Troy falls before the *Aeneid* begins; Rome rises after the *Aeneid* ends. Aeneas's journey south to Carthage and north to Latium knits together these two civic points of imperial might, creating a narrative of supersession: Troy dies and is replaced by Rome, fathered by “pater Aeneas.” Other historical accounts of Rome produced in antiquity, however, describe the movement of empire in less teleological terms. Most important among these is the universal history composed in the last years of the Roman Empire by Paulus Orosius at the request of his mentor, St. Augustine. Orosius, like Virgil, gives an account of the place of Rome in imperial history. Unlike Virgil, however, who

creates a narrative of supersession in which Rome replaces Troy, Orosius sketches out a four-part model of what he named, influentially, *translatio imperii*: the translation, or movement, of empire.

In Orosius's view of history, *imperium* passes from one great city to the next, following the four points of the cardinal directions: imperial power arose first with Babylon in the east; moved upward into the north, with the defeat of Darius by the Macedonian Alexander; then downward into the south, with the rise of Carthage; and finally to the west, with the rise of Rome. This four-part succession gives way to — is itself entirely superseded by — the birth of Christ, whose new Christian empire is the fulfillment and the replacement of Augustus Caesar's Rome.⁷ In spite of the disjunction between the two-part narrative of Virgilian *imperium* and the four-part narrative of Orosian *translatio imperii*, later historians had no trouble integrating the two, as Lee Patterson has shown.⁸ The fall of Troy was simply inserted, along with the fall of Thebes and the biblical histories of kings and patriarchs, into new universal histories. *Imperium* could be passed on through conquest, as in Orosius's formulation, or through genealogical descent, as in the *Aeneid*; whether mediated through the spilling of blood or through blood inheritance, however, *imperium* was fundamentally portable.⁹ Imperial might was thought to travel from place to place, anchored for a time in a great city, inevitably destined to fall and be replaced by another ruling city. This view of history was manifested not only in universal histories, which set out the whole span of the past within the scope of a single work, and in the "integrated chronologies" that appear in medieval manuscript miscellanies, but also broadly in medieval history-writing. The reader of the popular history of Alexander the Great, for example, would know that this was part of a larger narrative of *translatio imperii*, in which the Persian Darius relinquished his rule to the Macedonian conqueror. Readers of literary texts — the romances of Alexander, of Thebes, of Troy — read with a similar awareness, knowing that this poem was just part of a bigger story, the story of "imperial translation."

In a sense, then, medieval historiography already imposes a form on the past: that of sequence or succession, of *translatio imperii*. The event of the siege marks the transition from one stage of imperial might to the next. But what about the *poetry* of siege? Poetics imposes a different form on our knowledge of the past, as Gabrielle Spiegel has shown in her important work on medieval French chronicles. As Spiegel points out, early

manuscripts of one important universal history, the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, written mainly in prose, include verse sections to express transhistorical, eternally valid moral precepts; later manuscripts generally suppress the verse, but one late redaction of the *Histoire ancienne* actually inserts the whole of the *Roman de Troie* into the text.¹⁰ Clearly, verse and prose were thought to have very different functions in the writing of history. Sometimes, verse was thought to be inferior, even deceptive; at other times, it was seen as desirable and even necessary. Poetry “re-members” the past — that is, it both recalls it through memory and gives it intelligible form. We might wish to describe the narration of history in verse as “imaginative historiography,” recognizing that while historical events form the backbone of such texts, poetic form makes the “matter” of the work accessible to imagination and able to be preserved in memory.¹¹

To illustrate this process, it is useful to turn to the scene of the fall of Troy recounted in the *Aeneid*. Here, the liminal status of *imperium* — suspended between the past rule of Troy and the future rule of Rome — is epitomized in the male body: namely, the corpse of Priam lying before the altar. It might seem peculiar to embody the fallen city in masculine rather than feminine terms; after all, a range of texts, modern and premodern, identify territory as metaphorically feminine. The act of conquest is figured as an act of sexual possession, as we see (for example) in the prologue to *The Book of John Mandeville*, where the reconquest of Jerusalem by Christian crusaders is described as the rescue of a helpless woman.¹² The same option of identifying the city in feminine terms appears in the *Aeneid*, when Aeneas recalls how Ilium, before the Greeks came, was “for many years a queen.”¹³ Once the siege begins, however, not the female body but the male is the object upon which the fall of imperial power is staged. To put it another way, while the female body can be used to represent territory, the male body represents the immaterial power that sustains rule over that territory.

Book 2 of the *Aeneid* expresses the fall of the city in microcosm, through the fall of the individual male body. Moreover, the liminal status of *imperium*, temporarily suspended between Troy and Rome, is also expressed both in the topography of the city and in the description of the male corpse. As the imperial city walls are transformed into the “ashes of Ilium” (*Iliaca cineres*, 2.431), the Greek invaders penetrate as far as the “threshold” (*limen*, 2.441) of the palace. Aeneas tells how he found

his way through a secret passage that winds its way into the most interior, protected space within the Trojan city: “There was an entrance,” he states—literally, a second *limen*, or “threshold” (2.453)—“with secret doors, a passage running from hall to hall of Priam’s palace, a postern gate apart” (2.453–55).¹⁴ In the past, Hector’s wife used to bring their little child to visit his grandfather. Now this secret passage is overrun by the Greeks, says Aeneas, who pour in like rushing water: “Not with such fury, when a foaming river, bursting its barriers, has overflowed and with its torrent overwhelmed the resisting banks, does it rush furiously upon the fields in a mass” (2.496–98). The metaphor of the rushing river comes alive in the floods of blood spilled “amid the altars,” where Aeneas sees Priam “polluting with his blood [*sanguine foedantem*] the fire he himself had hallowed” (2.501–2). Here again, the Greeks are said to be perched “on the threshold” (*in limine*, 2.500), marking the liminal space and the liminal time of this remembered crucible of imperial flux.

The death of Priam, a few lines later, makes it clear that this moment is a temporal threshold. Priam is dragged before the altar and slaughtered: he “lies a huge trunk upon the shore [*litore*], a head severed from the shoulders, a nameless corpse” (*iacet ingens litore truncus, / avolsunque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus*, 2.557–58).¹⁵ The sacred inner room of the palace at Ilium is a deeply interior, hidden space; simultaneously, however, this most interior space is also a “*limen*,” or “threshold,” located at the center in spatial terms but on the margin in temporal terms. The body of Priam lies, metaphorically, upon the shore, the littoral space that marks the dividing line between one era of imperial might and its successor.

There are at least three formal frameworks within which the phenomenon of siege can be expressed: one of these, as we have seen, is the historiographical, in which siege is repeated again and again at each stage of the process of *translatio imperii*. A second framework for siege literature can be found in the philosophy of Boethius, which was widely diffused in medieval culture: in the Boethian tradition, the rise and fall of individual men, as of empires, can be seen as a manifestation of the capricious turns of Fortune’s wheel or—more profoundly—as a manifestation of the fundamental instability of the created world. A third framework within which siege can be expressed is poetic or, more precisely, tragic: as Aristotle puts it in the *Poetics*, the components of the tragic plot include not

just the change in action (*peripateia*) and the change in knowledge (*anagnoresis*) but also the “scene of suffering” (*pathos*).¹⁶ This is the moment of slaughter, of wounding, the moment when tragedy is expressed upon the body: the paradigmatic case, for Aristotle, is the self-mutilation of Oedipus. In medieval siege poetry, the fall of the city is the moment of change, and that moment is simultaneously expressed within these three frameworks: historiographical, Boethian, and tragic.¹⁷ The tragic “scene of suffering” is the moment when change is made visible, and that moment is played out through the medium of the male body.

If we turn now to a widely disseminated Old French version of the Troy story, the *Roman de Troie* of Benoît de Saint-Maure (1160–70), we find that the *Aeneid*’s Trojan “scene of suffering” — that is, the slaughter of Priam — is refracted into a series of such scenes, in which mutilated male bodies serve as temporal markers of the progression toward the final resolution of the siege. The repetition of these “scenes of suffering” mimics the repetition of imperial rise and fall that is fundamental to the process of *translatio imperii*, with the sequence of fallen male bodies serving as metonyms for the sequence of fallen empires. In other words, the whole history of *translatio imperii* is recapitulated in the seemingly endless wait for the fall of Troy. The sequence of bodies described in the *Roman de Troie* begins with the body of Hector, which, after being mutilated by the Greeks, is returned to Priam and enclosed in a “precious tabernacle” (*tabernacle precios*, 16651):¹⁸ here, the wounded body of the king’s first-born achieves the status of martyr, his body preserved like a relic. This process is reenacted with the body of Troilus, which (like Hector’s) has been dragged around the field after death (21447), and the body of Paris, which is encased in a “costly sarcophagus” (*chier sarquel*, 23038).¹⁹ The sequence of mutilated male bodies concludes with that of Priam; unlike the bodies of his sons, however, Priam’s body finds no resting place and is instead left on the ground, before the altar of Ilium.

The sequence of dismembered and then memorialized male bodies in the *Roman de Troie* is not limited to the sons of Priam. The Greek Achilles is also part of the tragic sequence: his body, however, is so badly mutilated that restoring it to a semblance of wholeness proves far more difficult than for the broken bodies of Hector, Troilus, and Paris. The fragments of Achilles’ body are instead burned, and the ashes placed in a remarkable “costly vessel” (*cher vaissel*, 22470) made of a single ruby. This exquisite

reliquary is, in turn, held in the hands of a golden image in the likeness of Achilles' beloved Polyxena. This figure is then placed at the summit of a wonderful monument, surmounting "a little sphere made of a single topaz, clear and beautiful." In spite of the difficulty in reconstituting the broken members of the wounded body of Achilles, this warrior's tomb is the most perfectly beautiful, perfectly shaped, exquisitely begemmed, of them all. As the poet puts it, "it was seen as a marvel" (*A merveille fu esgardee*, 22426).

The tomb of Paris, which comes in the sequence immediately after the sumptuous monument of Achilles, raises the stakes even higher. Instead of being made of gold, this "costly sarcophagus" (*chier sarquel*, 23038) is made of "a single jasper touched with green: / Never in all the history of the world / Was there a richer vessel" (*un vert jaspe goté: / Ainc en cest siecle trespasé / Ne fu veüz plus cher vaissel*, 23039–41). But the magnificence of this tomb is not what sets it apart: the tomb of Paris, in the *Roman de Troie*, actually becomes a resting place or sanctuary for the precious emblems of empire, as Priam removes his imperial insignia and places them upon the body in the tomb. He removes his ring and places it on his son's right hand; he places the crown on the head of the corpse. The poet writes, "Ne vult que Grieu seient seisiz" (23061), not simply that he did not want the Greeks to take the emblems, but literally that they "not be seized of them," not take legal possession of them.

Priam's resistance of the inexorable current of *translatio imperii* is, of course, futile. The poet states that the marble walls of Troy are "as smooth as ice, resplendent in the sun: they are green and blue, yellow and vermillion. They are high and straight, adorned with embattlements; no lance or spear can strike them" (23096–100).²⁰ These mirroring walls, refracting the light of the sun into a spectrum of colors, are only a deceptive image of imperial might: the *Roman de Troie* goes on to recount an interminable series of bloody battles followed by short pauses when the onslaught of siege gives way, however briefly, to a fragile moment of stasis. Ultimately, however, the shining walls of Ilium are penetrated in a bloodbath that finds the Trojan horses "up to their chests in red blood" (*Tresqu'as ventres sunt li destrier / En sanc vermeil*, 24372–73). After another period of truce, the onslaught begins again, in which "the base of the walls and the gates, head on and below and above, are besieged and nearly taken" (24465–67).²¹

After this, the poet states ominously, “the Trojans will never come out again” (ja Troien n’en istront mes, 24468).

Finally, on a “dark night” (oscurs, 26050), the palace is assailed (26055); women and children are slaughtered (26058). The oscillation between active siege and fragile truce comes to its climax, the pavement completely wet with blood (26068) and the altar desecrated by the blood of Priam (26148). Interestingly, in the *Roman de Troie*, the death of Priam is almost anticlimactic: instead of a teleological movement toward a final resolution in the sack of Troy as recounted in book 2 of the *Aeneid*, we find a state of suspension, in which a sequence of male bodies demarcates brief moments of equilibrium in the perpetuation of siege. Each time, the broken male body, marked by many wounds or even dismembered, is carefully reconstituted, restored to a state of symbolic wholeness. Even where the body is so leaky and fragmented that it cannot be embalmed, as in the case of Achilles, the powdery ashes are placed in an urn made of a single gem, placed in a monument that epitomizes the highest achievements of human art. This movement toward the restoration of wholeness, in the poetry of siege, comes to an end only with the death of the last of the warriors, as Priam himself is sacrificed. At this moment, the power of empire is released, to travel forth to the next city on its transnational itinerary.

Des-Troying Jerusalem

The poetics of siege sketched out above is based on the paradigmatic case of Troy, known during the Middle Ages not only through the ubiquitous school text of the *Aeneid* but also through a host of alternative versions, in Latin and in romance vernaculars. Combined with the Orosian model of *translatio imperii*, in which a series of imperial centers—Babylon, Macedonia, Carthage, and ultimately, Rome—succeed one another in a sequence of bloody battles, the case of Troy provided a crucial paradigm for the description of how one order of rule might succeed another. Medieval readers eagerly integrated the history of Troy with the Orosian account of imperial succession, adding Trojan genealogies and even entire narratives of the fall of Troy into late medieval adaptations of Orosius: in one extreme case, a fourteenth-century adaptation of the thirteenth-century *His-*

toire ancienne jusqu'à César actually inserts the whole of the *Roman de Troie* into the sequence of *translatio imperii*. The siege and fall of Jerusalem was similarly integrated into Orosian historiography, with a whole series of medieval chronicles integrating the history of Jewish diaspora (in the version of Josephus, as transmitted by pseudo-Hegesippus) within the sequence of imperial history. The fall of Troy and subsequent dispersal of its inhabitants, who — according to medieval chroniclers and writers of romance — went on to found the ruling houses of Europe, corresponds to the parallel account of the fall of Jerusalem and subsequent diaspora. In this implicit comparison of Troy and Jerusalem, both cities have a supersessionist relationship to Rome: Troy gives rise to Rome in the national narrative first inscribed in the *Aeneid*, just as Jerusalem gives rise to Christian Rome in the ecclesiastical narrative recounted in the many redactions and adaptations of Josephus's history of the Jewish Wars (*Bellum Iudaicum*). The alignment of the fall of Troy with the fall of Jerusalem, and their common participation in the larger trajectory of Orosian *translatio imperii*, is perhaps most fully expressed in the *Flores historiarum* of Matthew Paris, in which the chronologies of Jewish and Trojan history are alternately recounted until both give way to the linear sequence of successive imperial powers as they devolve from Babylon, to Persia, to Greece, to Rome.²²

Writers seeking to provide an account of the crusader conquest of Jerusalem inevitably built upon the foundation of these patterns of historical narration, a tendency that was furthered by the ways in which Christian rule was understood to participate in the sequence of *translatio imperii*. Implicitly in Orosius's history, but quite explicitly in the *City of God*, composed by his mentor Augustine, the empire of Christ succeeds and supersedes the empires of this world, replacing the temporal rule of man with the eternal rule of God. Accounts of the siege of Jerusalem in 1099 and subsequent establishment of the Christian kingdom could readily draw upon Orosian models of imperial succession to make history intelligible, to give a regular pattern to the passage of time. In addition, the supersession of temporal rule by divine rule, implicit in Orosius and explicit in Augustine, added a slightly different sense of time to historical accounts of the crusader conquest of Jerusalem: while *translatio imperii* implies a series of successive periods of rule, each one anchored by a sin-

gle imperial city, the supersessionary model implies a climactic—even apocalyptic—concept of time, in which one mode of being is simultaneously fulfilled and replaced by another. This double chronology, which yokes together repetitive sequence with climactic fulfillment, is highlighted in siege literature centered on Jerusalem.

Like siege literature centered on the city of Troy, the siege literature of Jerusalem highlights the Aristotelian “scene of suffering,” expressed powerfully in the spectacle of the wounded male body. The nature of the city of Jerusalem as depicted in this literature, however, varies widely: it is sometimes envisioned as the specific, historical city, sometimes as the metaphorical Jerusalem—that is, any Christian community besieged by unbelievers or even the individual soul besieged by sin.²³ While in the narratives of siege described previously, the paradigmatic body is the male warrior—whether the aged Priam, clothed in armor and holding his sword, or his son Hector, first in a series of Trojan princes to suffer and die for his city—the paradigmatic body in Jerusalem siege narratives is that of the suffering Christ. In view of these parallels, it is surprising that siege literature centered on Jerusalem has often been seen as distinct from historiographical siege literature, such as the poems of Troy or Thebes.²⁴ This is a mistake, I would argue, because medieval universal histories and integrated chronologies are utterly explicit in their inclusion of Jerusalem within the sequence of besieged cities. Even Orosius includes an account of the siege of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. in his universal history; he does not, however, include Jerusalem in the sequence of imperial cities that have participated in the transmission of *translatio imperii*. For Orosius, Jerusalem is nothing more than a used-up vessel: he likens it to a womb that has served its purpose by giving birth to the Christian Church and is now empty and worthless.²⁵

By the twelfth century, however, the siege of Jerusalem by Titus and Vespasian had become useful as a typological prefiguration of a crucial moment in history: that is, the conquest of Jerusalem by European Christians during the First Crusade. For Lambert of Saint-Omer, whose *Liber floridus* is an early twelfth-century compilation of texts all centering on this climactic moment in salvation history, the siege of Jerusalem by the Christians is both a repetition and a fulfillment of the siege of Jerusalem by the first-century Romans. His integrated chronologies make room for

these repeated conquests of Jerusalem within the sequence of *translatio imperii*.²⁶ Some medieval vernacular texts with the title *The Siege of Jerusalem* describe the capture of the city by the Romans in the first century; others with the same title refer to the conquest of Jerusalem by the Christians in the First Crusade. This double-edged historiographical impulse is evident in the fourteenth-century anonymous Middle English alliterative *Siege of Jerusalem*, which explicitly recounts the conquest of the city by Titus and Vespasian in the first century but implicitly recounts the crusader attack on Jerusalem by consistently depicting the Romans in terms of medieval Christian warriors. Conventionally, in siege literature, those who are within the besieged city are those who suffer, and the reader is invited to experience compassion for them. In *The Siege of Jerusalem*, however, this convention is complicated by the text's ambivalence with regard to the position of the Jews. Trapped within the city, lacking food and water, they are pitiable; as the enemies of Christ and the Church, however, they are contemptible. The extremity of their suffering produces horrible effects, including the cannibalism of a child's body by its mother. This scene is at once repulsive and empathetic, as the mother, insane with hunger, offers up the body of her son for her fellows to eat in a grotesque parody of the Virgin Mary offering up her Son in the Eucharist.

In *The Siege of Jerusalem*, the scene of suffering is ubiquitous: all those contained within the city suffer in mind as well as in body, tormented by the knowledge of the behaviors they have been driven to as much as by their hungry and thirsty bodies. The most spectacular suffering, however, is that of the Jewish high priest Caiphas, who is publicly crucified along with his twelve "clerkes" in a grotesque parody of Christ and his apostles. The poet recounts their horrible fate:

Domesmen upon deyes demeden swythe
That ech freke were quyk-flyn, the felles of clene:
First to be on a bent with blonkes to-drawe,
And suth honget on an hep upon heye galwes,
The feet to the firmament, alle folke to byholden,
With hony upon ech half the hydeles anoynted;
Corres and cattes with claires ful scharpe
Four kagged and knyt to Cayphases theyes;
Twey apys at his armes to angren hym more,

That renten the rawe flesche upon rede peces.
So was he pyned fram prime with persched sides
Tille the sonne doun sette in the someretyme.

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The kyng lete drawn hem adoune whan they dede were,
Bade: “A bole-fure betyn to brennen the corsen,
Kesten Cayphas theryn and his clerkes alle,
And brennen evereche bon into browne askes.”

(697–708, 717–20)²⁷

The body of Caiphias serves as a microcosm of Jerusalem. His body is torn apart and burned to ashes, scattered to the winds; the city walls soon suffer the same fate, beaten down into “*poudere*” (1284). In the end,

Nas no ston in the stede stondande aloft,
Morter ne mude-wall bot alle to mulle fallen:
Nother tymbre ne tre, Temple ne other,
Bot doun betyn and brent into blake erthe.

(1289–92).

Every wall, including those of Solomon’s temple, are broken down and beaten into powder. These fragmented walls, demolished into “black earth,” correspond to the broken bones of Caiphias, reduced into “brown ashes.”

Like the cannibalistic mother who is a parody of the Virgin Mary, Caiphias and his followers are a feeble imitation of Christ and his apostles; they differ, however, in that no memorial or commemorative place remains to recall that they ever lived. The annihilation of the walls of the city, repeated in microcosm in the annihilation of the bodies of the Jewish men, is a visible manifestation of the erasure of the community of the Jewish nation. Superseded by the Church, the community of the Jews could be seen only as the detritus of the past. These powdery ashes, all that is left of the warriors of Jerusalem, are very different from the bodies of the warriors described in the *Aeneid* or the *Roman de Troie*. While Achilles’ body is also reduced to ashes, because it was too badly wounded to be embalmed and preserved, it is placed in a monument so artful, so rich, and so pure — its receptacle made of a single ruby — that the effect is that of a reliquary. Although a reliquary contains only a few physical remnants of

the saint's body, these few bones or teeth are linked across time through the glorified flesh that will ultimately be reunited with the soul: the saint is thus manifested, wholly and completely, through the fragments preserved in the reliquary. Achilles' body is preserved in a similar way, though his "precious vessel" owes its transcendent perfection to art rather than to any link with the divine.

To find a more precise analogue to the treatment of Jewish bodies in the *Siege of Jerusalem*, we must turn to another Old French siege poem closely related to the *Roman de Troie*: that is, the roughly contemporary *Roman de Thebes* (ca. 1150). Narratives of the fall of Thebes resemble narratives centered on Troy, with the important proviso that the imperial lineage of Thebes is a genealogical dead end, very different from the prolific heritage of Troy. The twin sons of Oedipus and his mother, Jocasta, are doomed to be born of a single womb and to end up in a single tomb. Like the *Roman de Troie*, the *Roman de Thebes* is preoccupied with the need to restore the fragmented body of the warrior into a state of wholeness; this effort is complicated, however, by the peculiar genealogy of Thebes.²⁸ The sons of Oedipus, Polyneices and Eteocles, are locked in warfare, each trying to claim his inheritance of the city of Thebes. They are drawn together by love and repelled by hate. This is particularly evident in the scene of their joint death: the "red blood" that flows from the wounded body of Eteocles causes his twin, Polyneices, to be moved by "pity." When Polyneices embraces his twin, Eteocles is correspondingly moved by the reciprocal emotion of "passionate hatred" (*mout iriez*, 9788), and shoves a knife between the joints of his brother's armor. The two bleed to death in each other's arms, glued together by love and hate. The death of the twins marks the moment in which Oedipus's self-mutilation is completed: the poet ends his account of their death by stating, "Now both of the brothers are dead: both because of the sin of their father, which he never ceased to mourn bitterly, and because of his eyes, which he wounded and wrenched out because of anguish, for he had taken his mother as wife" (*Roman de Thebes*, 9811–16).²⁹ The tragic moment begins when Oedipus gains terrible knowledge and inflicts a double wound on his own body; it is completed when the twins destroy one another and the doomed lineage comes to an end.

The ambivalent status of the twins — neither fully united nor fully separated — complicates the usual effort to restore the wounded body of the

warrior to a state of wholeness. Following the battle, Theseus, the ruler of Athens, seeks out the bodies of Polyneices and Eteocles on the field and tries to bury them. The bodies continue to battle even after death, so Theseus has them cremated; two flames leap up from the pyre as the brothers continue to wage war upon each other. Finally, Theseus comes up with a plan to immure the brothers into a single space, a precious “vessel” like that containing the ashes of Achilles in the *Roman de Troie*. The fighting begins again, however, and the vessel ruptures as the powdery ashes “burst forth.” In some respects, the attempt to immure the remains of Polyneices and Eteocles is a special case; in other ways, however, it repeats the standard forms of siege poetry, in which containment and wholeness is the necessary punctuation to the bloody release of the siege.

In narratives of Thebes ranging from the first-century *Thebaid* of Statius onward, the siege and destruction of the city is symbolically expressed through the bodies of male warriors, just as in the narratives of Troy. In the *Roman de Thebes*, however, the male body is not a focus for memorialization as it is in the *Roman de Troie*, marked as whole and perfect even after death: instead, it is characterized by decay and dissolution. This twelfth-century precedent is a crucial background for the depiction of the male body in the late medieval *Siege of Jerusalem*, where the male body is similarly a metonym for the city that does not survive in the form of a memorial tomb but rather is broken down into dust and scattered to the winds. In the *Roman de Thebes*, the ashes of the Oedipal twins, perpetually at war and bursting out of the golden vessel provided by Theseus, represent an only slightly more permanent monument than the scattered ashes of Caiphas. The legacy of Thebes is abjected from the national historiographies of Europe, just as the legacy of post-Incarnational Judaism is abjected from Christian history. The body of the warrior, symbolic representation of the city, and by extension, of the period of rule that ends with the city’s ultimate fall, represents that legacy. For Troy, the enduring wondrous monument to the fallen hero underscores the permanence of the Trojan legacy; conversely, for Thebes as for Jerusalem, the scattered ashes of the Theban warrior or the Jewish priest reflect the rejection of the cultures they emblemize.

The siege literature of Jerusalem, as noted above, is complicated by the many referents that Jerusalem could potentially have in the medieval imagination: the historical city, whether of the first century or the elev-

enth; the community of the faithful, united in the Church; the individual soul, yearning for salvation; or the Heavenly Jerusalem, to be experienced at the end of time. In historiographical terms, Jerusalem has a comparably complex polyvalence. Accounts of Jerusalem in the first century, as in the alliterative fourteenth-century poem I have discussed, also refer implicitly to the events of the eleventh-century siege by the crusader armies; similarly, accounts of the crusader siege carry within them the memory of the early history of siege upon the holy city. This historiographical polyvalence is evident, as Michael Johnston has shown, in the compilation of the alliterative *Siege of Jerusalem* in the London Thornton manuscript, where it is surrounded by a sequence of crusade materials. Johnston demonstrates that this deliberate contextualization “gives voice to a militant Christian historiography,” first recounting “the supersession of the Jewish community, then turning to the threat of Islam.”³⁰ The placement of the siege and fall of Jerusalem just after an account of Christ’s Passion and just before crusade narratives on the destruction of Islam, he argues persuasively, turns the poem into “a piece of triumphalist and imperialist Christian historiography.”³¹ By establishing a historiographical context for reading the poem, the compiler of the London Thornton manuscript capitalizes on what we might call the “double chronology” of siege literature, in which each iteration of the fall of the city is simultaneously an evocation of other moments of imperial conquest.

The ambivalence found in the alliterative *Siege of Jerusalem*, in which the Jews are at once pitiable and contemptible, leads to an inversion of the economy of siege in subsequent accounts of Jerusalem. As we have seen, conventionally in siege poetry, those within the walls are those who suffer; those outside the gates are the aggressors. While those outside the walls may suffer and even die, they are not the victims who are sacrificed in the climactic moments of siege. This balance — victims inside, aggressors outside — is inverted when siege poetry focused on Jerusalem becomes part of crusade literature, so that the suffering of those *outside* the walls becomes the reader’s empathetic focus. This can be seen clearly in a fifteenth-century Middle English work having the same name as the alliterative fourteenth-century poem discussed above, *The Siege of Jerusalem*. This prose text is a Middle English translation of the Old French *Eracles*, an adaptation of the Crusade chronicle of William of Tyre.³² Although the late medieval prose version, published by William Caxton, shares a title

with the fourteenth-century poem, the Caxton *Siege of Jerusalem* inverts the binary opposition of tormentor and sufferer, placing the scene of suffering not within the walls but outside. The Christians who besiege the city from outside the walls suffer the pangs of thirst after the Muslims within the gates “stopped the mowthes of thyse fontaynes and of the Cysternes . . . ffor they thought that the pylgryms for lacke of waters sholde not mayntayn theyr siege to fore the toun” (254.17.20).³³ The Christians also experience severe hunger due to the scarcity of food, as “a cowe was worth four marc weight of syluer, which a man might haue at begynnyng for echt or ten shylyngis. A lamb or a kyd was at sex shylyngis, whiche to fore was worth but thre or four pens” (144.29–32). Through this series of inversions, the Caxton *Siege of Jerusalem* switches around the conventional dynamic of besieger and besieged, in which the besieger is the aggressor and those who are besieged suffer want, deprivation, and—ultimately—death. Here, the pangs of hunger and thirst are experienced by the Christians encamped outside the walls, not the Muslims within Jerusalem. In other words, in the Caxton *Siege*, the dynamics of siege are turned inside-out, so that the scene of suffering is displaced from the central spectacle and instead placed at the periphery.

This displacement of the scene of suffering from center to periphery affects the way in which the suffering male body is identified with the besieged city and, consequently, the representation of historical time in siege literature. Instead of the body of the warrior being made eternal, as in the *Roman de Troie*, through the creation of a monument that marks the fall of the city and the subsequent transit of temporal power from one imperial center to another, the body of the warrior remains permanently in a liminal state, marking the ambivalent relationship of the present moment to that remembered past. In the alliterative *Siege of Jerusalem*, as in the *Roman de Thebes*, the scattered dust of the male bodies represents a culture that is necessarily abjected from the history of imperial succession, whether the post-Incarnational Jewish community or the incestuous lineage of Oedipus and Jocasta. Both lineages continue to remain in historical memory, integrated within the chronicle tradition and in poetic retellings of history; simultaneously, however, they are cut off from lineal participation in the present through the account of dissolution and scattering expressed symbolically through the male body. In the Caxton *Siege*, the precedent established in earlier siege poetry centered on Jerusalem is

inverted, so that the scene of suffering is situated not with the reviled antagonists within the walled city (as was the case in the alliterative *Siege of Jerusalem*) but with the protagonists who tenaciously besiege the walls in spite of their own pain and hunger. This inverted model of siege would prove central to late medieval and early modern depictions of war waged on behalf of Christ against the unbelieving enemy.

Suspended Bodies: Marking the Border of Europe

Late medieval siege literature builds upon precedents developed within the tradition of crusade literature centered on Jerusalem, as can be seen in the fourteenth-century *Sege of Melayne*, which recounts the assault of Charlemagne's Christian army on Muslim-held Milan, as well as in the sixteenth-century *Capysstranus*, an early modern adaptation of the *Sege of Melayne* that displaces the conflict of Christian and Muslim from Milan to Eastern Europe and replaces the Arab Muslim adversary with the Ottoman Turk. The *Sege of Melayne* is part of the Charlemagne cycle of romances, featuring the familiar figures of Roland, Oliver, and Bishop Turpin. Turpin is at once a warrior and a priest, having much in common with the hybrid figures described in the chronicles of the crusades: he expresses his priestly function in conventional terms, offering the sacrifice of the Mass on the battlefield (881–910), but he also throws himself into battle, leading an army of priests in place of the usual company of soldiers. Perhaps Turpin's most striking quality, however, is the way in which he undergoes bodily suffering on behalf of his community, in a dramatic spectacle that at once evokes both the prolonged suffering of Christ in the Passion and the fragmented bodies of the warriors we have seen in other siege poems.

Unlike all the examples discussed thus far, Turpin's body is not a dead body: instead, it is a body suspended between two states of being, perpetually hidden from view. After Turpin is sorely wounded, Charlemagne asks to examine his wounds and to provide a doctor. Turpin refuses, insisting on keeping his body sealed off—deprived of food, of water, and unable to be viewed—until the siege comes to its climax. Refusing to allow Charlemagne to see his wounds, Turpin insists upon imitating the suffering Christ:

Criste for me sufferde mare.
He askede no salve to His sare,
Ne no more sall I this tyde.
I sall never ette ne drynke
Ne with myn eghe slepe a wynke,
Whate bale [pain] als ever I byde,
To yone cité yolden bee
Or ells therfore in batelle dye—
The sothe is noghte to hyde.
(*Sege of Melayne* 1345–53)³⁴

Like the body of Caiphas, the body of Turpin is a microcosm of his community. It represents not only the individual suffering body of Christ but also the collective body of Christ—that is, the Church. This is made apparent in a passage where the bloodied bodies of the warrior host are reflected in the terrain of the battlefield itself:

But one the morne the Cristen stode,
A thowsande, over their fete in their blode,
Of their awenn wondes wane.
Othere refreschynghe noghte many hade
Bot bloody water of a slade
That thurghe the oste ran.”

(1201–6)

The bloody stream running through the host is a eucharistic image that at once evokes the body of Christ in the Passion, the eucharistic host, the bodies of the suffering warriors, and the battlefield itself.³⁵ All these are unified into a single body, a singular warrior of Christ who besieges the heathen city in the course of a Holy War.

The wounds of Turpin become the focus of attention in the *Sege of Melayne*, as Charlemagne repeatedly begs him to remove the clothing that hides them. After the first injury, Charlemagne asks to see the wound (1184–86); Turpin refuses. After the next wound, Charlemagne asks again (1339–42); Turpin remains silent. Finally, the only surviving manuscript of the poem breaks off just a few lines after Charlemagne, brought to tears by the sight of the suffering Turpin, laments this “floure of prest-

hode” who “will no man his wondes late see” (1584, 1589). Turpin’s withholding of the sight of his wounds serves two functions. First, the refusal to uncover is also a refusal of “medicine” (salve, 1188, 1347) that might heal the wounds, and hence part of the overall vow of fasting that Turpin has undertaken, in imitation of Christ’s suffering. Second, the refusal to uncover keeps Charles and his knights in a state of tension: I will not eat or sleep, Turpin declares, until the “city be yielded” (1352). The wounds are hidden, and will stay hidden, until the climax of the siege.

On one level, the body of Turpin is a metonym of the city, his clothing covering his wounds in the same way that the walls cover the city. On another level, however, the body of Turpin is a microcosm of siege itself: not just the geography of siege, but the temporality of siege. In this respect, Turpin’s body recalls the earliest example of the alignment of body and city we have observed here, the liminal body of Priam in the *Aeneid*, which marks a threshold in time. The enormous pressure upon the city walls is simultaneously exerted upon the body of Turpin, and that pressure will be released — either in life or in death — only when the walls finally give way. His speech is the speech neither of the dead nor of the living: it is the speech of one who is suspended between two states of being. Paradoxically, the hidden nature of his wounds is precisely what makes visible his liminal status. In his mirroring of Christ’s passion, Turpin is himself a threshold between the human and the divine.

Although only a single manuscript of the *Sege of Melayne* survives today, the poem must have enjoyed some degree of popularity because it gave rise to an early modern poem with a very similar structure, plot line, and Turpin-like hero. *Capistranus*, named after its own warrior-priest, the Franciscan St. John Capistrano, recounts the siege of Hungary by the Ottoman Turks in 1456.³⁶ The poem survives in fragments of three early printed editions by Wynkyn de Worde, dating from about 1515 and 1530. Where the *Sege of Melayne* inveighed against the “Saracen” threat, *Capistranus* instead condemns “the Turkes” and, in particular, the individual “false Turke” (68) who rules the Ottomans, “Machamyte, that Turke untrue” (58; that is, Sultan Mehmed II).³⁷ Mehmed had captured Constantinople in 1453 and moved northward toward Belgrade in the summer of 1456; St. John Capistrano, together with Hungarian reinforcements, entered Belgrade and successfully held off the Ottoman army. This poem draws upon the *Sege of Melayne* for many elements, including the

warlike behavior of the heroic priest and his tendency to rail against the Virgin Mary when she fails to help the Christian troops (489–500). The striking difference in *Capystranus* concerns the inversion of suffering that we saw in the *Sege of Melayne*, and which also appears in the Caxton *Siege of Jerusalem*: in those works, those outside the walls are the sufferers, and those within the walls remain unknown and unremarked. Conversely, in *Capystranus*, the Christians are within the besieged city, appealing for help from above when it appears that earthly help is not enough. When the walls begin to fall and the slaughter of women and children begins, the only place to turn for help is above. Fleeing to the top of the tower, Capystranus reenacts the desperate flight from siege we saw in Priam's Ilium, recounted in book 2 of the *Aeneid*. But where Priam flees inward, to a private space at the heart of the palace, Capystranus flees upward, to the summit of the tower, to ask for help. Although salvation comes by means of divine intervention, it is striking that the enemy is no longer described in religious terms, as the "Saracen," but in national terms, as "the Turke."³⁸ *Capystranus* thus marks an end point in siege poetry in the crusading tradition, as collective identity begins to be identified in terms of national identity instead of religious orientation.

A similar historical episode of attack on Europe by the Ottomans forms the plot of *The Siege*, a novel by Albanian writer Ismail Kadare, written in 1969 and published in 2008 in an English translation by David Bellos. Even though a novel, strictly speaking, lies outside a study of the poetics of siege, it is striking to note some of the ways in which the temporality of premodern siege literature continues to be manifested in this twentieth-century work. Drawing upon a wide range of historical sources, Kadare situates his siege in an unnamed Albanian town, in the period just before the fall of Constantinople in 1453. In this respect, it complements *Capystranus*, which is set immediately after the fall of Constantinople. Written in the extremely closed society of Maoist Albania, Kadare's novel can be read as a political allegory, a veiled expression of the fear that non-Soviet-aligned Communist nations experienced after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. For our purposes, however, Kadare's *Siege* is useful in the way that it highlights the ambivalence of the scene of suffering. As we have seen, from the *Aeneid* onward, siege literature normally represents the scene of suffering within the walls of the city. Only with the integration of Jerusalem into the genre of siege literature do we find suffering displaced

from within the walls onto the encampments without; crusade literature, both poetic and historiographical, perpetuates this displacement, emphasizing the plight of the Christian invaders of the Holy Land at the expense of the displaced local inhabitants. Texts such as *Capystranus*, reflecting the early modern Ottoman threat posed not just to Christendom but also to Europe, return to the conventional model of siege, where suffering takes place inside the walls.

Kadare's novel plays effortlessly with these conventions, foregrounding the suffering outside the walls by devoting the main narration to the Ottoman court chronicler sent to report on the success of the mission, but integrating the suffering within the walls by including short passages — almost letters in a bottle — from the Christians locked up inside. Resisting any easy judgment concerning right and wrong, good and bad, Kadare instead draws the reader's attention to the inexorable forward thrust of time. When the siege begins, the Ottomans march toward the city along the old Roman road ("Via Egnatia," 4),³⁹ while the defending Christians bring into the city the same icon of the Virgin that had, one hundred years earlier, given a neighboring city "the strength to repulse the Normans" (4). Implicitly, this conquering imperial force is simply one in a series that have come in the past, and the novel's conclusion makes it clear that both the onward pressure of history and the immediate pressure of siege will continue into the future. The Quartermaster tells Çelebi, the Ottoman court chronicler, "Every spring . . . when the green shoots reappear, we will return to these parts" (287). The ultimate success of the siege is inevitable: whether in this iteration or in the next, or in the next one after that, the city will fall, with this particular siege being "a dress rehearsal for [the] onslaught on the Western Rome" (290). At the same time, however, the victims of siege enjoy a different kind of victory: as the Quartermaster of the Ottoman troops puts it, "we are making them immortal . . . by our own hand" (287).

When, in an apparent miracle, the rains come and the Ottoman army retreats, the siege is both over and not yet over: the immediate iteration of siege has ended, but the endless tide of siege presses on. The time of conquest lies ahead, in the future; nonetheless, in Kadare's novel as in the earlier siege literature, the male body continues to stand as a symbol of the movement of power from one imperial center to another. Because the time of that movement of power — that is, *translatio imperi* — still lies in the

future, the body itself also continues to remain merely potential and not actual. The novel closes with an account of the death of the Pasha by his own hand after the failure of the siege (313), followed by an apparently causeless miscarriage that results in the death of the Pasha's unborn male child. The aborted body is never made visible, instead appearing only as a repetitive "bleeding" (319, 321) experienced by the Pasha's concubine. This body is not reduced to ashes or scattered in fragments, like the male bodies of the *Siege of Jerusalem* or the *Roman de Thebes*. Instead, it lies prior to the time of full embodiment, as its potential for coming into being lies in as yet unrealized future. The Ottomans *will* come, the city *will* fall, and a new empire *will* rise. It's just a matter of time.

We might say that the body of the warrior is itself the "matter of time." We saw how, in the *Aeneid*, the body of Priam is described as "a huge trunk upon the shore," a liminal object in a liminal space, concealed behind a secret "threshold" (*limen*, 2453) that offers no protection from the invading host. Priam's body marks the in-between space, the metaphorical shoreline that temporally separates empire from empire in the movement of *translatio imperii*. In the *Roman de Troie*, the fragmented bodies of warriors are sumptuously entombed in an attempt to refashion the broken body into wholeness, to take it outside of time through the eternal power of art. This transcendence of local time is emphasized in the comment on Achilles' tomb that "no knight had ever been interred more richly" and echoed in the description of Paris's marvelous tomb: those who see it say that "no king's son had ever had a more beautiful one." Even without the exquisite art of the craftsman, the powdered ashes of the warrior's body can still be part of an effort to conquer time, if not through memorialization, then through dematerialization. Following the model of the dissipated Oedipal lineage in the *Roman de Thebes*, *The Siege of Jerusalem* provides the symbolic spectacle of the body of Caiphas. Transformed into scattered ashes, his body represents in microcosm the dissolution of the community of the Jews and heralds a new era in Christian salvation history. The wounded body of Turpin, poised between wholeness and dismemberment, moves to a different temporal plane as the scene of suffering becomes eternal. Through identification with the suffering Christ, Turpin is suspended outside time, embodying both the unified community of the Christian host and the temporal weight of the siege itself. The body is at once whole and fragmented, opened up in wounds

but participating in the wholeness of the divine. In each of these works, the matter of the warrior's body is a crystallization of the human attempt to control time. It is a formal, poetic effort to restrain the forward pressure of translation and to hold back the inevitable climax of siege.

Notes

1. Nancy F. Partner, ed., *Writing Medieval History* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2005); Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), and Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Robert M. Stein, *Reality Fictions: Romance, History, and Governmental Authority, 1025–1180* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); and Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966).

2. On the two *Siege of Jerusalem* works, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "Placing the Jews in Late Medieval English Literature," in *Orientalism and the Jews*, ed. Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2005), 32–50; see also Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 124–35.

3. On the imminent apocalypse and its precipitation by the crusader conquest of Jerusalem as expressed in the historical writing of Lambert of Saint-Omer in his *Liber floridus*, see Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 75–89.

4. Suzanne M. Yeager, *Jerusalem in Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

5. Malcolm Hebron, *The Medieval Siege: Theme and Image in Middle English Romance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). On the siege genre, see also Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "Incorporation in the *Siege of Melayne*," *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 22–44.

6. On Virgil as a school text, see Christopher Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England: Figuring the Aeneid from the Twelfth Century to Chaucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 41–83. The *Aeneid* supplemented the chief Latin Troy narrative of the Middle Ages, the *De excidio Troiae* of Dares of Phrygia. See Louis Faivre d'Arcier, *Histoire et géographie d'un mythe: Le circulation des manuscrits du "De excidio Troiae" de Dares le Phrygien (viii^e–xv^e siècles)*, *Memoires et documents de l'Ecole des chartes* 82 (Paris: Ecole des chartes, 2006).

7. On the quadripartite succession of empire in Orosius, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, “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. 106–11, and Fabrizio Fabbrini, *Paolo Orosio, uno storico* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1979), 364–65.

8. On the disjunction of Orosian/Augustinian and Virgilian historiographical modes, see Theodor E. Mommsen, “Orosius and Augustine,” in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Eugene F. Rice Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959), 325–48. In *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), Lee Patterson perpetuates Mommsen’s distinction but points out how twelfth-century chroniclers such as Otto of Freising influentially worked to “subvert” the division of Orosian/Augustinian and Virgilian historiographical modes: “Asserting the primacy of an institutional unity denominated ‘Christendom,’ whose existence was marked by its political formation into the significantly named Holy Roman Empire, Otto declared that historical actuality should be endowed with provisional legitimacy” (90). See also Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 157ff., and Hanning, *Vision of History*, 1–43.

9. On the symbolic function of blood in conceptions of lineal descent as related to *translatio imperii*, see Zrinka Stahuljak, *Bloodless Genealogies of the French Middle Ages: “Translatio,” Kinship, and Metaphor* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), ch. 5: “Translations of Genealogy.”

10. “The verse moralizations [of the *Histoire Ancienne*] are scattered throughout the text in fairly regular intervals, but are notably absent from the sections that deal with Theban and Trojan history and that recount the death of Aeneas and Alexander—that is, from precisely those parts of the work most indebted to romance verse narrative” (Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 108).

11. On “imaginative historiography” and “imaginative geography,” see Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 287–88.

12. On the gendered language of this passage, see Iain Macleod Higgins, *Writing East: The “Travels” of Sir John Mandeville* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 35–36.

13. “The ancient city falls, for many years a queen” (*urbs antiqua ruit, multos dominata per annos* [*Aeneid* 2.363]). Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough and G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 63–64, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916; rpt. 1999).

14. “Limen erat caecaeque fores et pervius usus / tectorum inter se Priami post-
esque relict / a tergo . . .” (*Aeneid* 2.453–55).

15. Note that Aeneas witnesses the carnage but gets away, reassured by his mother, Venus, that she will not rest until she has “set thee safely on thy father’s threshold” (*patrio te limine sistam, Aeneid* 2.620).

16. On the three components of the plot in tragedy, see Aristotle, *Poetics* 11.1–5, in *Aristotle: Poetics; Longinus: On the Sublime; Demetrius: On Style*, Loeb Classical Library 199, ed. and trans. Stephen Halliwell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

17. On the intersection of Boethian, Aristotelian, and historiographical models of change in Chaucer’s “Knight’s Tale” and *Troilus and Criseyde* and in Christine de Pizan’s *Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune*, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, “Small Change: Metaphor and Metamorphosis in Late Medieval Literature” (in preparation).

18. *Le Roman de Troie publié d’après tous les manuscrits connus*, ed. Léopold Constans, *Société des anciens textes françaises*, 6 vols. (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1904–12); cited parenthetically in the text by line number; translations are my own.

19. The monumental scope of this sarcophagus evokes not only the golden sarcophagus said to contain the body of Alexander in the roughly contemporary Anglo-Norman *Roman de toute chevalerie* (ca. 1170) but also the tomb of the Persian king Darius described in the *Alexandreis* of Walter of Châtillon (ca. 1178; 7.42–77). In Walter’s *Alexandreis*, Darius’s fabulous monument is said to include a perfectly accurate rendition of the world map upon a globe surmounting the tomb. Darius’s cartographic monument may have a common source with the *Roman de Troie*’s description of Paris’s sarcophagus, which is followed in the text by an otherwise inexplicable geography of the world.

20. “. . . plus plein de glace, / Vert sunt e pers, jaune e vermeil; / Molt reluisent contre soleil, / Haut sunt e dreit e bataillié: / N’i atendreit lance n’espí” (23096–100).

21. “Li pan des murs e li portal / Entor e amont e aval / Furent asis e bien de pres” (24465–67).

22. For a more detailed account of the alignment of the fall of Troy and the fall of Jerusalem and the place of both episodes within Orosian historiography, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, “Between Diaspora and Conquest: Norman Assimilation in Petrus Alfonsi’s *Disciplina Clericalis* and Marie de France’s *Fables*,” in *Cultural Diversity in the British Middle Ages: Archipelago, Island, England*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 17–37, esp. 20–21.

23. On the metaphorical Jerusalem of the Christian community (or the individual soul), see Yeager, *Jerusalem*, esp. 108–34.

24. A notable exception is Hebron, *The Medieval Siege*.

25. On Orosius’s view of Jerusalem, see Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 119–21.

26. On Lambert’s integrated chronologies, see *ibid.*, 79–80.

27. *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. Ralph Hanna and David Lawton, *Early English Text Society*, o.s. 320 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); cited parenthetically in the text by line number.

28. Parenthetical citations are from the *Roman de Thèbes*, ed. Guy Raynaud de Lage, 2 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1966–1971); cited in the text by line number; translations are my own.

29. Ore sont mort andui li frère
et pour le pechié de leur pere
que il onques nul jor n'amerent,
et pour ses eulz qu'il defolèrent,
qu'il s'avoit tret pour la dolor
que sa mere ot prise a oisour.

(9811–16)

30. Michael Johnston, “Robert Thornton and *The Siege of Jerusalem*,” *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 23 (2009): 130.

31. Johnston, “Robert Thornton,” 128.

32. On the relationship of the Middle English *Siege* printed by Caxton to its French and Latin precursors, see Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 126–28.

33. *Godeffroy of Boloyn; or, The Siege and Conqueste of Jerusalem*, ed. Mary Noyes Colvin, *Early English Text Society*, e.s. 64. (1893; rpt., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926); cited parenthetically in the text by page and line number.

34. *The Siege of Milan*, ed. Alan Lupack, in *Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 1990); cited parenthetically in the text by line number.

35. For a more detailed account of the Eucharistic language of the *Sege of Melayne*, see Akbari, “Incorporation in the *Siege of Melayne*.”

36. For the historical events see Norman Housley, “Giovanni da Capestrano and the Crusade of 1456,” in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century, Message and Impact*, ed. Norman Housley (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 94–115 and 215–24.

37. *Capistranus*, ed. Stephen H. A. Shepherd, in *Middle English Romances* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995; rpt. 2003); cited parenthetically in the text by line number.

38. On the terminology of “Saracen” as a simultaneously religious and national/ethnic category, see Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 155–59, and Katherine Scarfe Beckett, *Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 116–39. On the shift from religious to national alterity in late medieval and early modern Orientalism, see Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 284–85.

39. Ismail Kadare, *The Siege*, trans. David Bellos (Toronto: Doubleday Canada / Bond Street Books, 2008); cited parenthetically in the text by page number.