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SHAZIA JAGOT

Averroes, Islam, and Heterodoxy in the Spanish Chapel *Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas*

Abstract

This article examines Andrea di Bonaiuto's image of Averroes in the *Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas* (Spanish Chapel, Florence: 1365–69), explored alongside Bonaiuto's primary visual source, Lippo Memmi's panel painting, *Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas* (Pisa, *c*. 1323–30), and Dante's *Commedia*. I argue that Bonaiuto's iconography, developed within a Dominican context, is unique to the Spanish Chapel *Triumph* because it propagates Averroes as both a heterodox philosopher and a heretical Muslim precisely at a time when the Arab philosopher was acclaimed as the Great Commentator. Through comparative analysis, I demonstrate that Bonaiuto makes significant modifications to Memmi's *Triumph*, the panel painting which first establishes an Aquinas-Averroes iconographic formula created to uphold the orthodoxy of Thomistic Aristotelianism by casting Averroes into a contemptible position, a formula also utilised by Benozzo Gozzoli in a later *Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas* (Pisa, *c*. 1470–75). I argue that Memmi's image of Averroes can be read as a Dominican comment on the heterodoxy of Arabic Aristotelianism in spite of its widespread reception into Latin scholasticism. This feature is further developed by Bonaiuto who presents Averroes as an indolent philosopher and in a departure from Memmi's formula, as a heretical Muslim. Such a reading is further elucidated when Bonaiuto's *Triumph* is considered alongside Dante's literary treatment of Arabic philosophers, the Prophet Muhammad, and Christian heresy in the *Commedia*, ultimately revealing that the reception of Arabic philosophers is entangled with Islam in a far more complex and ambiguous manner than once considered.[1]

A pensive Averroes sits at the centre of Andrea di Bonaiuto's large scale fresco, *The Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas* (*c*. 1365–1369) found in the chapter house and friary (Spanish Chapel) of Florence's principal Dominican basilica, Santa Maria Novella (cf. Brown; Meiss; Smart; Offner and Steinweig; Gardner; De Marchi and Sisi).[2] Visualised using the generic iconographic markers designating a Saracen in western medieval art – enrobed, turbaned and bearded – the

1. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Dr Anne Marie D'Arcy who introduced me to the Spanish Chapel and its fascinating fresco cycle. Heartfelt thanks also go to Dr Kristin Bourassa and Dr Rosa M. Rodríguez Porto for reading drafts of this paper and providing invaluable advice, support and encouragement, and to the editor and anonymous reviewers for their instrumental suggestions and comments.

2. Hereafter referred to as *Triumph of Thomas*. The chapter house was renamed the *Cappellone degli Spagnoli* (Great Spanish Chapel) in 1540 by Duke Cosimo I de' Medici (1519–1574) in honor of his wife, Eleanor of Toledo and the Spanish community in Florence for whom the space was designated, see Baldini 102–03.

Figure 1. Averroes (detail) *Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas*, Andrea di Bonaiuto (*c.* 1365–69). Florence, Spanish Chapel (Photo credit: Rosa M. Rodríguez Porto).

Figure 2. *The Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas*, Andrea di Bonaiuto (1365–69). Florence, Spanish Chapel (Photo credit: Rosa M. Rodríguez Porto).

twelfth-century Arab philosopher leans against a closed book with his left hand resting dejectedly under his chin. He issues a morose stare in recognition of the ill-fated position meted out to him as he is sits under the feet of Thomas Aquinas (Figure 1).[3] This image draws on an iconographic formula that places Averroes in a hierarchical configuration with Aquinas, which was first established in a panel painting in the church of Santa Caterina, Pisa attributed to the circle of Lippo Memmi (*c.* 1323–30). Memmi's *Triumph of Thomas* set the stylistic and compositional tone for asserting Aquinas' authority over Averroes, a formula adopted by Bonaiuto and copied a century later by Benozzo Gozzoli in his *Triumph of Thomas*, a wall panel commissioned for Pisa Cathedral (*c.* 1470–75).[4] This article argues that Bonaiuto's image of Averroes is distinct from its exemplars and far more complex than recognised thus far. It contends that Bonaiuto adapts a number of Memmi's key stylistic features in order to create an image of Averroes that functions as a narrative device to emphasize not only the heterodoxy of Arabic philosophy, as intended in Memmi's original formula, but to also enforce the heresy of Islam. This builds on the brief remarks on Averroes' 'Mohammadenism' first made by Joseph Polzer in his ground-breaking study on Memmi's *Triumph of Thomas*, which, despite the unfortunate use of orientalist language, continues to remain the most comprehensive examination of the wall painting and subsequent iterations of the iconographic formula (Polzer, "Triumph of Thomas" 48). However, while Polzer underscores the significance of the figure of Averroes, he provides little comment on how the image reflects Islam as a heresy. This article contends that such an examination is vital and crucial for understanding both Bonaiuto's distinct image of Averroes and its implications for the depiction of heresy in the Spanish Chapel fresco cycle.

This study begins with a brief examination of the Spanish Chapel's *Triumph of Thomas* in order to demonstrate its particular concern with heresy. It then moves to a comparison of Bonaiuto's fresco and Memmi's *Triumph of Thomas* with reference to Gozzoli's fifteenth-century adaptation, focusing on the stylistic features used to depict Averroes as a heterodox Arabic philosopher. In particular, it suggests that Bonaiuto's specific representation of a pensive Averroes positions his philosophical heterodoxy with the Christian sin of *acedia* that aligns his spiritual idleness with religious heresy. This is further enforced through an examination of the motif of open, closed and

3. The iconography of a Saracen wearing a turban or a *tortil*, a knotted headband, became commonplace across all forms of visual expression in the Middle Ages. This headgear, whether in mural paintings or illuminated manuscripts, became an instantly recognizable symbol that enforced a stereotypical portrait of the oriental Other that required little or no textual explanation. For a comprehensive study of the iconography of the Saracen, Tartar and Jew in medieval art see Strickland, esp. 174 and 180–81.

4. A late fifteenth-century example also exists in Filipino Lippi's *Triumph of Thomas* (Carafa Chapel: Rome, *c.* 1492). However, a number of substantial changes are made to the iconographic formula that render it outside the scope of this study. For more on Lippi's *Triumph* see Geiger.

overturned books not only in the *Triumphs of Thomas*, but Bonaiuto's *Via Veritatis*, a large-scale fresco that stands on the east wall of the Spanish Chapel. However, in order to better understand the complexity of this image, the study also turns to Dante's *Commedia*. *Trecento* art and literature have long been read together with a particular focus on the interconnections between visual and textual narrative and imagery during a period that witnessed remarkable cultural production.[5] Thus, a visual exposition that is concerned with faith, philosophy and Averroes in Florentine art must be read in conjunction with *Inferno* 4 where Dante deems Averroes the Great Commentator. By the 1360s, this epithet was recognized, affirmed and contended in the early commentaries of the *Commedia*, including Boccaccio's *Lecturae Dantis.* Moreover, the *Commedia* is essential for understanding one key alteration to the Aquinas-Averroes iconographic formula particular to the Spanish Chapel fresco. In Bonaiuto's *Triumph of Thomas*, Averroes is buttressed on either side by a Christian heretic; Arius on his left and Sabellius on his right. Thus far, critics have read this unique configuration as a simple exposition of heresy, where Averroes functions as the philosopher 'arch-heretic', a role accorded to him in Dominican propaganda, in spite of his prominence in Latin university curricula (Meiss 103–04). I contend that Bonaiuto's depiction of a visible Muslim in the company of two Christian arch-heretics is much more precise and targets Averroes' greater heresy – his adherence to Islam. Such a reading is made apparent when the image is examined alongside Dante's treatment of Christian heresy in *Paradiso* 13 and Islam in *Inferno* 28 that draws on recent studies that align Arius with Muhammad in the *Commedia*.

5. The bibliography on this topic is extensive, here I offer a few, key works on Boccaccio, Dante and *Trecento* art see Gilbert, *Poets Seeing Artists' Work*; Gilbert, "Art Historical Period Terms" and Gilbert, "Boccaccio Looking at Actual Frescoes". For more recent work see Dameron 2005.

The Spanish Chapel *Triumph of Thomas* sits within a meticulously composed visual narrative considered "among the most impressive records of Dominican art and thought in late medieval Italy" (Polzer 262). A large scale fresco decorates each wall of the chapter house, the *Life of St Peter Martyr* (south wall), the *Via Veritatis* (east wall) and the *Triumph of Thomas* (west wall). These frescoes are supported by a depiction of the Christological cycle which runs across the four vaults; the *Crucifixion* (north vault) the *Navicella* (west vault) the *Ascension* (south vault) and the *Pentecost* (east vault).[6] The fresco cycle was once considered to have been inspired by the sermons of the prior of Santa Maria Novella, Jacopo Passavanti, whose image can be located in the *Via veritatis*, standing in front of a figural depic-

6. See Baldini 189–221 for high resolution printed images of each mural.

tion of Buonamico Lapo Guidalotti – the Florentine merchant who commissioned and funded the construction and decoration of the chapter house.[7] However, Millard Meiss has suggested that Bonaiuto himself designed the exceptional iconographic programme in consultation with Dominican friars in the *stadium generale* (cf. Meiss 101–02). In following Meiss, it becomes clear that the frescoes assert a potent form of mendicant propaganda designed to enforce the chief purpose of the Dominican Order: the salvation of pagans, heretics and schismatics through the power of preaching and intellectual debate. Since the foundation of the Dominican Order under the Papal bull, *Religiosam vitam* (22 December 1216), its principal concern was the eradication of heresy, but the frescoes also depict specific concerns about heresy in Florence during the 1360s. As Meiss points out, just when Bonaiuto began painting the fresco cycle, "Urban V issued a bull urging inquisitors to be more active against heresy" (Meiss 103). This recurrent bull, *In Coena Domini* (12 October 1363), adopted a stringent stance against heretics and schismatics in particular. This included such lay rulers as the Visconti family, who had been the subject of a papal crusade in 1324 following John XXII's condemnation of Matthew Visconti as a heretic, as well as contemporary concerns regarding the *routiers* or mercenaries then wreaking havoc across Italy and France.[8] During the 1360s, therefore heresy came in many different forms, but what was consistently reiterated was the dogma that no salvation is possible outside of the Church, as in the memorable words of the papal bull promulgated by Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam* (18 November 1302): "extra ecclesiam nulla salus". This doctrine is reinforced across the fresco cycle and in the very fabric of the chapter house; as Julian Gardner notes, the thematic concern with eradicating heresy would have been 'eminently appropriate' for the liturgical and ceremonial functions that took place there, including examining and admitting members to the Order (Gardner 120).[9]

At immediate sight, it may not appear that the *Triumph of Thomas* is explicitly concerned with the theme of extirpating heresy (figure 2). An enthroned Aquinas occupies the centre of the composition, holding the *Book of Wisdom* at a page that aptly reads, "I prayed and understanding was given me; I called and spirit of wisdom came to me" (7.7).[10] This call is heeded by those who surround his figure: he is flanked by Job, David, Paul, Mark and John the Evangelist to his left, while on his right sit Matthew, Luke, Moses, Isaiah and Solomon, all of whom carry scripture. Flying above Aquinas' throne are three

7. Adolfo Venturi first suggested that the fresco-cycle is based on the prior of Santa Maria Novella, Jacopo di Passavanti's *Specchio de vera penitenza*, cf. Meiss 101–02; Norman 233-34 and Polzer 275. Buonamico Lapo Guidalotti commissioned and funded the construction of the chapter house and friary in 1348, after the death of his wife from the Black Death. Buonamico died seven years later, but left an additional four hundred florins in his will to fund the fresco-cycle and requested for both him and his wife to be lain to rest in the chapel. The Florentine merchant is also buried in the chapter house in Dominican habit with an epitaph memorialising his mercantile activity.

8. Housley's work continues to remain the fullest exploration of the later Crusades in Europe, see *The Italian Crusades* and *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades*.

9. The chapter house also functioned as an inquisition space for interrogating suspected heretics, including the mystic, Catherine of Siena, who was brought to the chapter house while Bonaiuto was completing the frescoes, see Borsook 141.

10. "Optavi et datus est mihi sensus; et invocavi et venit in me spiritus sapientiae", identified by Polzer 49.

theological and four cardinal virtues: Faith, Charity, Hope, Temperance, Prudence, Justice and Fortitude (cf. Offner and Steinweg 21). Directly under Aquinas' feet, in a rounded balcony, sit Arius, Averroes and Sabellius; the two Christian heretics are turned to their side, while Averroes is depicted in a frontal image facing the audience.[11] These figures give way to the depiction of the Trivium and Quadrivium in the lower register of the composition. Here, we find the seven sacred and secular sciences depicted as feminine, abstract personifications, and embodied by male historical authorities, as is typically found in late medieval representations of the liberal arts. In terms of the secular sciences of the Quadrivium we find Arithmetic embodied by Pythagoras, Geometry by Euclid, Astronomy by Ptolemy and Music by Tubal Cain. In the Trivium, Dialectic is embodied by Aristotle, Rhetoric by Cicero and Grammar by Donatus. In terms of the sacred sciences, Civil Law is embodied by Justinian, Canon Law by either Clement V or Innocent IV, Holy Scripture by Jerome, and Theology by Plato, Dionysius the Aeropagite, John of Damascus and Augustine.[12]

11. According to Polzer, Vasari was the first to identify the figures as representative of Arius, Averroes and Sabellius. For a discussion on Vasari's *Life of Artists* and the *Triumphs*, see Polzer, "Triumph of Thomas", 49.

12. For a full exposition of the scheme see Norman 226 and Baldini 102–03.

The division of the fresco into two registers asserts Aquinas' dual role as both the divinely sanctioned master of scholasticism and its classical foundation and the Dominican extirpator of heresy. His stance over Arius, Averroes and Sabellius is an overt expression of the latter, demonstrated in the resemblance between his figure and the iconography of emperors in early Christian art who stand in victory above church councils showing their dedication to the condemnation of heresy (cf. Norman 232). However, while critics have largely focused on the image of Aquinas, they have failed to notice that it is a Muslim philosopher and not a Christian heretic who is placed at the very heart of the fresco's composition. If we consider the fresco in this light, focusing on the image of Averroes at the core of the composition's denunciation of heresy and the narrative that celebrates orthodox scholasticism, we can begin to unravel the implications of Bonaiuto's modifications to his primary visual source, Lippo Memmi's *Triumph of Thomas* (*c.* 1323–30). In order to do this, we must first turn to Memmi's wall-painting and consider the position, scale and stylistic features of both Aquinas and Averroes.

Unlike Bonaiuto's *Triumph of Thomas*, Memmi's wall painting is dominated by a large-scale image of an enthroned Aquinas who governs the centre of the composition (figure 3). As the first visual codification of Aquinas' authorial stance *contra Averroistas*, commis-

sioned on the occasion of Aquinas' canonization in 1323, the sheer scale of Aquinas reflects the Dominican propaganda effort to promulgate the nascent saint as the *Doctor angelicus*.[13] This was pertinent at a time when a number of his theses on natural philosophy and theology were embroiled in the consequences of Etienne Tempier's Condemnations issued at the University of Paris in 1270 and 1277.[14] Indeed, the pointed choice of Averroes allowed Memmi to distance Aquinas from the heterodox movement that came to be associated, albeit tangentially, with the Arabic philosopher borne out of the Parisian controversies and instead, to propagate Aquinas's authorial role in reconciling Aristotelianism with Christian orthodoxy. It is important to note that it also reflects the status of Averroes as an Aristotelian philosopher of significance, one whom even Aquinas held in high regard. This is visually asserted with an image of the Bible, which Aquinas holds open at *Proverbs* 8.7 supported on his lap by a number of manuscript folios representing his *Summa Theologiae*, a motif copied by both Bonaiuto and Gozzoli (Polzer, "Via Veritatis" 37). In Memmi's *Triumph of Thomas* however, the Bible emits a series of golden rays representing divine wisdom which are conferred to figures who encircle Aquinas across three registers of the composition. Above Aquinas, we find the four Evangelists and Saint Paul and Moses, all of whom hold out opened pages of scripture. In the middle, divine rays are directed toward the figures of Aristotle and Plato who flank the domineering image of the saint; the twin pillars of classical authority stand with opened books, receiving and transmitting the sanctioned knowledge. Directly beneath them stand two congregations, identified by Polzer as clerics of all orders, some of whom look reverently towards Aquinas, others who are engaged in internal discussions (Polzer, "Triumph of Thomas" 39). One cleric looks disparagingly at the only horizontal figure in the painting, who is turbaned and bearded and occupies the lowest space between the mendicant figures and directly beneath the feet of Aquinas. The oriental figure who reclines desolately is Averroes. In contrast to Bonaiuto's frontal, seated image of Averroes, here, the Arabic philosopher tilts to the left of the composition with his left arm hanging languidly over a pillow. His upturned hand rests on a raised level that bears his name while an overturned book is laid to his right. His head hangs low, and he issues a desolate stare slanted toward the bottom of the fresco (figure 4).

The horizontal, lapsed figure of Averroes and the rays of light which emanate from the Bible are two key features of Memmi's fres-

13. The date has been established by Polzer, "Triumph of Thomas," 29. In *c.* 1270, just on the cusp of Etienne Tempier's official censures issued towards the teaching of Aristotle at the arts faculty of the University of Paris, Aquinas issued *De unitate intellectus*, a treatise that refuted the notion of the unicity of the material intellect, advocated by Averroes in his Long Commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*. Later manuscripts of the treatise appended *contra Averroistas* to the title which explicitly directed Aquinas' refutation toward a group of unnamed thinkers referred to as *Averroistas*, cf. Bianchi 75–76 and Hasse.

14. Cf. in particular, Proposition 40 'that there is no more excellent way of life than the philosophical way' and Proposition 154, which condemned the idea "that the philosophers are the wisest men of this world", *Chartularium Universitatis Parisensis*, I, 545; 552, cf. Flotin and O'Neill 1967 and Grant 1982.

Figure 3. *The Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas*, Lippo Memmi (1323–30). Pisa, Santa Caterina (Photo credit: Rosa M. Rodríguez Porto).

Figure 4. Averroes (detail) in *The Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas*, Lippo Memmi (1323–30). Pisa, Santa Caterina (Photo credit: Rosa M. Rodríguez Porto).

co that assert his philosophical heterodoxy which Bonaiuto radically alters. That these are crucial amendments is clear when we understand the implications of them from the perspective of the image of Averroes and the theme of Arabic philosophical heterodoxy. In Memmi's *Triumph of Thomas*, the rays of light that extend out towards Aristotle and Plato are re-emanated back to Aquinas, demonstrating a diachronic relationship between classical learning, orthodox theology, and its reception into Latin Christian scholasticism. A single ray of light also extends from Aquinas to the overturned book laid at Averroes' feet, but, significantly, not to the image of the philosopher himself. This has been read as a reference to Aquinas' engagement with and correction of Averroes' thesis of the unicity of the intellect, which also acknowledges a line of intellectual transmission from Arabic into Latin (Polzer, "Triumph of Thomas" 47). The nuanced, dialectical relationship between Aquinas and Averroes' Aristotelianism and Arabic to Latin translation process is distilled in Memmi's *Triumph of Thomas* in order to uphold Thomistic Aristotelianism as the orthodox divine wisdom that is master of, and even divorced from, the heterodoxy ascribed to an Arab philosopher. However, it is also suggestive of a wider Dominican comment on the place of Arabic philosophy in orthodox Latin scholasticism, which is not necessarily reflective of the reception of Arabic Aristotelian commentaries in Latin learning. The composition explicitly enforces a sharp divide between Averroes and Aristotle: they do not inhabit the same register nor is there any indication of the deep intellectual relationship between Aristotelianism and Arabic philosophy. The sole ray from Aquinas to Averroes contrasts sharply with the multiple rays emanating back and forth from Aristotle, Plato and Aquinas. The movement of rays suggests sanctioned classical learning is in an exclusive dialectical relationship with orthodox Latin scholasticism, a relationship which is predicated on the exclusion and expulsion of authorized knowledge from Aristotle to an Arab, Muslim philosopher.

This is emphasized a century later in Benozzo Gozzoli's *Triumph of Thomas* (*c.* 1470–75). Even though the wall panel succeeds Bonaiuto's fresco, it is worth considering because it follows the essential architecture of Memmi's composition. Gozzoli's wall panel is divided into three explicit spheres where an enthroned Aquinas dominates the central zone. His opened Bible issues rays to Aristotle and Plato, who likewise, flank the Dominican saint. Unlike in Memmi's painting, the rays fall short of reaching Averroes, who, again is in a

horizontal position under Aquinas' feet. Instead, a single ray extends over Averroes to reach the congregation who occupy the lowest sphere. Explicitly evading Averroes in this manner suggests that by the fifteenth century, his philosophical heterodoxy is viewed with increased severity, specifically targeted towards Aquinas' refutation of Averroes' doctrine of the eternity of the world, as seen by the words printed on the semi-opened book held by Averroes (figure 5).[15] Both Memmi and Gozzoli enforce Averroes' philosophical heterodoxy in schemes that also assert a sharp divide between his oriental figure and the Classical and Christian spheres governed by Aquinas and Christ. However, Memmi in particular demonstrates that this heterodoxy is a result of misguided Christian knowledge. In Memmi's *Triumph of Thomas*, Aquinas and Averroes are positioned in vertical alignment, in a syzygy similar to Bonaiuto's *Triumph of Thomas*, but in Memmi's wall painting this is bolstered by the addition of the image of Christ who stands at the apex of the fresco. The sharp vertical alignment that places Averroes in line with Christ emphasizes that all knowledge is issued from God (cf. Polzer, "Triumph of Thomas" 35). From the perspective of Averroes, however, it issues a stark, blunt warning against falling prey to misguided knowledge. Not heeding to orthodoxy results in exclusion and punishment that manifests in the horizontal, lapsed position meted out to the Arabic philosopher.

15. The words on the page read "Et faciens causas infinitas in primum librum Aristotelis physicorum" cf. Polzer, "Triumph of Thomas" 49.

In Bonaiuto's *Triumph of Thomas*, Averroes' philosophical heterodoxy is not indicated by the use of rays or a lapsed, horizontal figure. Instead, in a stark departure from his primary visual source, Bonaiuto alters Memmi's outstretched Averroes to a seated, frontal image (figure 1). This change is better understood if we consider that the image of a languid, despondent Averroes established by Memmi and copied by Gozzoli with particular vehemence as Averroes is laid out with his face on the ground and trampled under Aquinas' feet, is a manifestation of the sin of *acedia* which causes his indolent philosophy. According to the theological classifications of sin, *acedia* was affiliated with spiritual inactivity which manifested itself in physical changes to the body, defined by Aquinas as "sadness over a spiritual value that troubles the body's ease" (*Summa Theologiae* 84.4).[16] In the Spanish Chapel *Triumph of Thomas*, this is transformed into Averroes' hand resting upon his chin, supporting his head. This distinct gesture draws further on allegorical depictions of *acedia*. The clenched fist supporting the head depicts the physical symptom of Saturnine melancholia, witnessed in thirteenth-century gothic sculp-

16. "[...] et sic est acedia, quae tristatur de bono spirituali propter laborem corporalem adjunctum:" ed. and trans. Gilby *et al*. 74–75.

Figure 5. *The Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas*, Benozzo Gozzoli (1470–75). Pisa, Duomo di Santa Maria Assunta. (Copyright: Réunion des Musées Nationaux Grand Palais).

tures, and which comes to fruition in Albrecht Dürer's sixteenth-century engraving, *Melencolia I*.[17] Moreover, the hand that supports Averroes' head brings attention to the pensive gaze that he issues, which is not as severely downcast as the image of Averroes depicted in either Memmi or Gozzoli's later fifteenth-century painting, but is another indicator of his melancholia borne from his overexerted mental state – a result of his philosophical learning. There is a certain irony to this, considering Averroes himself provides a definition of melancholy in the *Colliget*, where he considers it to be a result of damage to the three faculties of the brain, causing a mental paralysis (cf. Klibansky and Saxl 91). From an orthodox Christian perspective, however, this form of melancholia is also a result of a neglected soul. According to Aquinas, *acedia* is also caused by "neglect in seeking out spiritual good because of the labour involved, and the ignorance capable of causing sin springs from wilful negligence" (*Summa Theologiae* 84.4).[18] Overexertion in philosophical learning has led to Averroes' greater sin – a neglect of his soul. His indolent philosophy is a result of his spiritual idleness. Thus, in transforming the languid Averroes to a pensive image, Bonaiuto is able to allude to the specific state of sin that afflicts Averroes, aligning the Muslim figure with Christian sin in a manner not seen in Memmi or taken up later in Gozzoli.

This comment on Averroes' spiritual deficiency is further emphasized through Bonaiuto's alteration of the symbolic book. It is no longer overturned, but closed shut and situated under Averroes' arm, acting as the scaffold in his *acedia* that holds up the hand resting upon his chin. Averroes' closed book is no longer a recipient of wisdom with scope to be corrected nor does it point to a particular philosophical doctrine. Instead, it underscores his position as both a heterodox and indolent philosopher and is the very cause of his exclusion among the celebrated figures in the lower register of the fresco. This is even more striking considering the images of the sacred and secular arts, which stand in the lower half of the fresco, including the three classical authorities whose writings were known in the Latin West via both Greek translations and Arabic commentaries, Aristotle, the embodiment of Dialectic; Ptolemy, the embodiment of Astronomy; and Euclid, the embodiment of Geometry, are all animated and hold opened books.[19]

Furthermore, the motif of the closed book is also set in dialogue with two scenes in the lower zone of the *Via Veritatis* the fresco that stands opposite the *Triumph of Thomas* in the Spanish Chapel. *The*

17. Here, we find a winged female figure in the foreground of the composition, her blackened head slumped with her fist clenched holding up her head with a range of mathematical instruments laid around her figure. In their pivotal study, Klibansky and Saxl demonstrate that Dürer draws on the medieval '*typus Acediae*' with the female personification of the liberal art, geometry, '*typus Geometriae*' in order to create one of the most visually potent depictions of melancholy, or one born under Saturn. Here, *acedia* is the manifestation of the abstract notion of melancholy as madness bestowed to those born under Saturn who are predisposed to creative genius. See Klibansky, Saxl *et al*., 306–17.

18. The full line reads "Potest tamen dici quod omnia peccata quae ex ignorantia proveniunt possunt reduci ad acediam, ad quam pertinet negligentia, qua aliquis recusat bona spiritualia acquirere propter laborem" ("nevertheless there is some reason to state that all sins resulting from ignorance are reducible to acedia; this implies neglect in seeking out spiritual good because of the labour involved". Ed. and trans. Gilby *et al*. 76–77).

19. Prior to the Arabic commentaries, the Latin West was familiar with Aristotelian natural philosophy through the translations of Boethius (*c*. 480–524/5) and the twelfth-century scholars, James of Venice, Henricus Aristippus and Burgundio of Pisa (*c*. 1110–1193). During the latter half of the thirteenth century, William of Moerbeke (*c*. 1215–1286) was responsible for a number of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic translations, directly from the Greek, made at the request of his fellow Dominican, Thomas Aquinas. The earlier translations from Greek into Latin, particularly those undertaken by James of Venice and Burgundio of Pisa, were "rather haphazard" (Burnett "Arabic into Latin" 373) especially in contrast to the systematic and reliable translations of Arabic commentaries undertaken in twelfth-century Toledo in particular (see Burnett, "Coherence" 2001). William of Moerbeke's fuller translations "quickly established themselves as the most popular, except in the case of the logical works" (Dod 49). The extent to which the Arabic translations contributed to the so-called rediscovery of Aristotle in the Latin West continues to be debated; while translations direct from the Greek were available and widely-used, the Arabic translations continued to influence Latin scholasticism because of the variety of works translated that cut across a range of different genres of Arabic philosophical commentary (see Burnett, "Arabic into Latin" 2004).

Figure 6. Spanish Chapel, *Via Veritatis*, Andrea di Bonaiuto (*c.* 1365–69). Florence, Spanish Chapel (Photo credit: Rosa M. Rodríguez Porto).

Figure 7. Peter Martyr preaching (detail) in *Via Veritatis*, Andrea di Bonaiuto (*c.* 1365–69). Florence, Spanish Chapel (Photo credit: Rosa M. Rodríguez Porto).

Via Veritatis is divided into three compositional zones (figure 6). At the apex stands the figure of Christ depicted with a book in his right hand and a key in his left, emphasizing the importance of the divine word facilitated through Dominican doctrine which holds the key to true salvation. He is attended by the four evangelists in symbolic form and flanked on either side by choirs of the angelic host with Mary to the right of the composition and commands the dynamic and vivid temporal schemes in the two lower zones. The middle zone depicts an earthly paradise reminiscent of the verdant hills of Tuscany, the foreground to a range of lively figures plucking fruit from trees, playing, listening and dancing to music, all of whom are decorated in light hues of maroon, indigo and mustard. The lower zone is dominated by the image of the exterior elevation of the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore under which stand a range of figures considered to represent a cross-section of Florentine society. Among the portraits are a number of recognizable figures who embody the Church Militant and Triumphant, identified as Pope Urban V (1310–1370), flanked by the Emperor Charles IV (1316–1378), and range of papal crusaders, including Amadeus of Savoy (1334–1383) and Peter I of Cyprus (1328–1369).[20]

Of note are the two scenes to the left of Santa Maria del Fiore that depict anti-heretical preaching led by Peter Martyr, and Thomas Aquinas. Here, both Dominican saints address a group of oriental figures in scenes that assert the dichotomy between rational faith and irrational philosophy directed toward Islam specifically. Peter Martyr preaches to an animated crowd, few of whom are listening attentively while several seem to be actively objecting (figure 7). Next to him, Aquinas argues the case of Christianity through the written word to a group of oriental figures, identified through their headgear as Muslims and Jews (figure 8).[21] In this particular iconographic scene, Aquinas, cast upright and exalted, stands with an open book directing the group to the written word on the page, identified by Polzer as the *Summa contra gentiles*: "Veritatem meditabitur guttur meum et labia mea detestabuntur impium" ("My mouth shall mediate truth and my lips shall hate wickedness;" cf. "Triumph of Thomas" 269). As Polzer asserts, this Christian truth seems to make this group more susceptible to Aquinas' means of conversion, in particular a figure who rips "the heretical book to shreds" (Polzer, "Triumph of Thomas" 269). The prominent figure who stands hunched over in the act of destroying his book wears a turban that identifies him as a converted Muslim, which has implications for the damaged book in

20. On the identification of these figures see Polzer "Via Veritatis", Meiss, and Devlin.

21. One of the kneeling figures has been identified by Meiss to be representative of a converted Jew made visible through his kippah, which is thought to be a direct allusion to Aquinas' conversion of two Jews at Molaria; cf. Meiss 98.

Figure 8. Thomas Aquinas preaching (detail) in *Via Veritatis*, Andrea di Bonaiuto (*c.* 1365–69). Florence, Spanish Chapel (Photo credit: Rosa M. Rodríguez Porto).

Figure 9. Heretic ripping book (detail) in *Via Veritatis*, Andrea di Bonaiuto (*c.* 1365–69). Florence, Spanish Chapel (Photo credit: Rosa M. Rodríguez Porto).

hand, possibly representing a Qur'an (figure 9). Having received Aquinas' sanctioned orthodox theology, he can only enter heaven's gate, as depicted in the middle zone of the *Via Veritatis*, if he denounces anti-scripture. The potential representation of a torn-up Qur'an would resonate deeply in the context of a Dominican chapter house considering the particular mendicant pursuit of Arabic in order to refute Islam's holy book. Indeed, one of the most prominent Dominican friars to read the Qur'an in Arabic and Latin, Riccoldo da Monte Croce, once prior of Santa Maria Novella, propagated the notion of Islam as an inherently irrational religion.[22] The irrationalism accorded to Islam and its followers is evinced with force in the body language of the Saracen figure whose hunched stance is indicative of his position as a heretic. Moreover, alongside Averroes, this is the only other prominent depiction of an oriental figure depicted with a book. While the figures stand in two vastly different compositional schemes they both reflect and enforce different means of silencing heretical literature. The oriental figure who rips up his holy book demonstrates he is on the road to a Christian salvation, while Averroes' remains closed with no hope for redemption.

From these two scenes it is unclear whether Islam is represented as a heresy, a schism or as paganism but this ambivalence is reflective of the multivalent classification accorded to Islam and Muslims in Latin Christendom witnessed in Peter of Cluny's famous testimony, "I cannot cogently decide [...] whether the Mohammadan error must be called a heresy, and its followers heretics, or whether they are to be called pagans" (Kritzeck 143–44). From at least the time of John of Damascus who categorized Islam as the last of 101 heresies, Islam was characterized as a form of heterodox Christianity or schism because of its monotheism, its theological claim to Christ and Mary, and its denial of the Trinity.[23] Islam's denial of the divinity of the Logos made it Arian; its denial of Christ's divine nature made it Nestorian, while its attitude toward demons laid it open to charges of Manichaeism as defined as a Christian heresy (cf. Pelikan 2.229). However, by the time Bonaiuto was painting the chapter house frescoes, heresy was used "as a common noun in referring to Islam" encouraged by the Latin translations of the Qur'an, first commissioned by Peter of Cluny in 1144.[24] It was also considered to be a Christian schism, best exemplified by Dante who positions the Prophet of Islam and his nephew, 'Ali in the ninth *bolgia* of *Malebolge* (*Inferno* 28), the circle of schismatics. In *Inferno*, Dante distinguishes between heretics, who obstinately question or deny the truths of the Church, which

22. Following Latin polemic on Islam, Riccoldo da Monte Croce focused on the laws of polygamy and Qur'anic descriptions of paradise as indicators of Islam's inherent irrationality cf. Tolan 252 and George-Trvtkovic.

23. Cf. Sahas, which continues to remain a good introduction to the Eastern Christian monk.

24. On the earlier scholarly division between a popular and learned view of Islam see Daniel *Heroes and Saracens* and Daniel *Islam and the West*, which still stand as good introductions to medieval western views on Islam. More recently, the superfluity of this divide has been demonstrated by Tolan, *Saracens* cf. 10–11.

are to be believed by divine faith, and schismatics, who refuse to submit to papal authority, in communion with the Church. It is worth turning to this scene because Dante consolidates the notion of Islam as a schism through the torturous *contrapasso* that Muhammad and 'Ali are forced to undergo:

> Vedi come storpiato è Maometto!
> Dinanzi a me sen va piangendo Ali,
> Fesso nel volto dal mento al ciuffetto (*Inferno* 28.31–33)[25]

The cloven face of 'Ali symbolizes the effects of schism, while the depiction of Muhammad's mangled, suspended body accords with the type of punishment accorded to a heretical, *pseudopropheta.* The notion of the imposter prophet developed in the twelfth century through a number of Latin *Vitae* of Muhammad which perpetuated the idea of a mutable *pseudopropheta* who encompassed everything from a bellicose, licentious charlatan to a heretical magician and a Christian antipope (cf. Tolan; Yolles and Weiss). Of particular importance was the notion that Muhammad's theological beliefs were a product of his epileptic seizures, a clear sign of his irrational mind, in addition to the distorted idea that the young Muhammad was influenced by a Nestorian or Arian monk rendering him a Christian heretic (Cf. Embrico of Mainz *Vita Mahumeti*; Walter of Compiègne *Otia de Machomete*; Adelphus *Vita Machometi* and Guibert of Nogent *The Deeds of God through the Franks*).[26]

As critics have long noted, Dante's treatment of Islam stands in sharp contrast to his treatment of Averroes who is enshrined as the Great Commentator in *Inferno 4,* "che 'l gran comento féo" ("he who made the Great Commentary" 144).[27] Dante grants the Arab philosopher a place in Limbo to spend eternity as a virtuous pagan, as part Aristotle's philosophic family (4.132). In a reversal of the excluded, disparaged Averroes in the visual *Triumphs of Thomas*, the Arab philosopher sits in honor amongst the Greek philosopher and a range of classical authorities, including Euclid, Ptolemy and Galen, and Avicenna (4.133). While Averroes is not the only Muslim located with such esteemed classical *auctores*, he is the only one accorded an epithet that justifies his location.[28] The divine grace bestowed upon Averroes and the anachronistic positioning of Muslims in Limbo have long perplexed critical readers of the *Commedia.* Brenda Deen Schildgen calls Dante's treatment of the Arabic philosophers a "radical intellectual and theological gesture" on the part of the Floren-

25. "See how Mahomet is mangled! / Before me goes Ali in tears, / his face cleft from chin to forelock" trans. Sinclair, 349. Cf. Resconi, 246 whose focus on the prosodic features of the lines demonstrates that Dante is urging the reader to look, 'vedi'.

26. Gautier, Guibert and Embrico all include the idea that Muhammad was an epileptic, see Tolan *Saracens* 140. Eastern Christian writers distorted the account told in the Islamic hadith that the Prophet Muhammad met a Christian monk, Bahira, who recognised his mark of Prophethood. Bahira is transformed into a Christian heretic, at times a Nestorian or an Arian, who influences Muhammad. Cf. Tolan *Saracens* 52–53; 141 and Wolf, 13–26.

27. See also Inglese's note to the text, "L'onore reso allo Stagirita, attraverso colui che ne redasse il *Commentarium magnum*, chiude circolarmente il catalogo degli spiriti grandi nella virtù intellettuale", (Inglese, 81).

28. Averroes and Avicenna are not the only Muslims to appear in Dante's cosmology. The Ayyubid sultan, Saladin is also included in *Inferno* IV, commended for his chivalric skill. We also find a Muslim Sultan in *Paradise* XI, thought to represent Sultan of Egypt, al-Kamil al-Malik (1180–1238), who appears in Thomas Aquinas' recount of Francis of Assisi's meeting with the sultan in 1219 in order to convert him amidst the Fifth Crusade. For more on the meeting between the sultan and saint, cf. Tolan, *Saint Francis and the Sultan* and "Mendicants and Muslims". We also find a number of "Islamophiles" scattered across the *Divine Comedy*, including Manfred, king of Sicily, son of Frederick II who is found in Purgatory, and Pier della Vigne who is condemned in *Inferno* VIII, cf. Toorawa. For an excellent overview of Muslim and Jewish figures in Dante's *Divine Comedy* see Negròn.

tine poet's wider aim to reconcile faith with reason through scripture (Schildgen 97).[29] Dante is cognizant of the fact that the Arabic philosophers he admires do not have the theological awareness to raise them any further than the highest point in *Inferno*, yet their understanding of reason is an essential component of understanding scripture. As a Muslim, therefore, Averroes falls short of receiving the "luce etterna" (*Paradiso* 10.136), the eternal light conferred upon the condemned heretic and so-called Averroist, Siger of Brabant who, in another radical gesture, is placed with Aquinas in *Paradise*.[30]

Such a nuanced conclusion is not quite reached by the early commentators of the *Commedia*, including Dante's foremost literary devotee, Boccaccio. In 1373, the Florentine civic authorities commissioned Boccaccio to deliver a series of public lectures on the *Commedia* at the church of Santo Stefano di Badia. The short-lived *Lecturae Dantis*, delivered between 1373 and 1374, only covered the first 17 cantos of *Inferno* and included a literal and allegorical reading of *Inferno* 4. While Boccaccio acknowledges the invaluable contribution Averroes makes to the study of Aristotle, he expresses extreme discomfort at his location in Limbo. For Boccaccio, Dante violates canon law in gracing Averroes the status of a virtuous pagan. Averroes, along with Avicenna and Saladin, are irrefutably *ignorantes iuris*, who "must not be given the same punishment that the innocents receive" (*Expositions* 248; cf. Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence*). Similar concerns are expressed by the early commentators of the *Divine Comedy*. For the anonymous commentator of *L'Ottimo Commento* produced in 1333, Averroes "non confessòe Cristo" a contention echoed by Benvenuto da Imola toward the end of the century, who notes Averroes and Avicenna lived after Christianity was revealed and thus, did not believe.[31] The commentators enforce the notion of Averroes as an *ignorans iuris*, as defined by Boccaccio, in spite of his standing as the Great Commentator. Such critique of Averroes demonstrates the multivalent reception that his figure accorded in fourteenth century Italy but more importantly, it sheds greater light on Bonaiuto's melancholic Averroes. In the Spanish Chapel Averroes is silenced and excluded from the philosophic company not only as a result of his function as Aquinas' scholastic adversary, but because as a Muslim philosopher, he remains wilfully ignorant to the Christian *Via Veritatis*. Seen from this light, the image of the pensive and spiritually lethargic Averroes is no longer "topical and pointed" as Meiss remarks, but an image that also resonates with contemporary ambiguous attitudes found outside of a strictly Dominican purview (Meiss

29. Schildgen suggests the philosophers are paralleled with the theologians placed in Paradise 4 in a palinode for *Inferno* 4 where Dante aims to reconcile faith with reason through scripture, cf. 103: "faith is not side lined in favor of reason, nor reason undermined, but both are necessary components of the visionary understanding that scripture reveals".

30. The location of this Parisian Master of Arts has been a perennial problem for critics attempting to ascertain Dante's philosophical position on issues associated with Averroism. In the words of Etienne Gilson: "It may therefore be proved with equal ease either that Dante was an Averroist, since he put a notorious Averroist in Paradise, or that Siger was no longer an Averroist when Dante put him in Paradise, since Dante was not an Averroist and yet put him there" 225. It must be remembered that the term Averroism and Averroist is misleading; they developed as pejorative terms in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and were applied to the thirteenth century by Renan in the late nineteenth-century. The idea Averroism has been untangled by a number of scholars, including Marenbon, van Steenberghen, who advocates instead for the term Radical Aristotelian, and Giglioni, 1-37; cf. also Bianchi for an excellent examination of Dante's so-called Averroism and criticism on the subject.

31. Cited from the commentary to *Inferno* 4. 144 by *L'Ottimo Commento* (Pisa, 1827–29) as found in the Dante Dartmouth Project: "had not confessed to Christ." See also the commentary to *Inferno* 4.144 by Benvenuto da Imola (Florence, 1887) as found in the Dante Dartmouth Project. It is striking to note that a number of commentators do not take issue with Dante's slight theological transgressions, but are careful to note that Averroes was a 'saracenus'. Such a reference is often supported with the mention that Averroes lived in Spain, and in the case of the commentator of the *L'Ottimo Commento*, Spain and Morocco, in a possible allusion to some understanding of Averroes' later exile to Marrakesh, where he died *c.* 10 December 1198. See Guido da Pisa, *L'Ottimo Commento*, as found in the Dante Dartmouth Project. On the historical figure of Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd, cf. Urvoy; Fakhry.

103). Bonaiuto however, further consolidates Averroes' position as an *ignorans iuris* by positioning him between the figures of Arius and Sabellius. Aside from a similar configuration in a panel painting found in the library of the Dominican priory of San Marco in Florence where Averroes sits with Sabellius on his right and William of St Armour on his left, all of whom are identified by name, critics have not explored other potential sources for Bonaiuto's unusual choice and arrangement of arch-heretics (figures 10 and 11). Turning to Dante, however, we find that this has a precise literary equivalent in the *Commedia* which can explain Averroes' position as both a heterodox philosopher and a Muslim heretic.

In Paradiso 13, Dante reaches the pinnacle of the cosmos in ascending the Heaven of the Sun. Composed of four *canti* guided by Thomas Aquinas, who emphasizes the harmony and order of the Christian universe, the Heaven of the Sun positions Aquinas above the crown of blessed souls (*Paradiso* 10.82–148). As a permanent reminder of his position as a champion against heresy, Aquinas overlooks a constellation of blessed figures, including the condemned Averroist, Siger of Brabant, Boethius and the Venerable Bede (cf. Cornish 93). The literary iconography bears a striking parallel to the enthroned Aquinas who sits in triumphant majesty overlooking the sacred and secular arts in the Spanish Chapel *Triumph of Thomas*. In addition, it also provides us with an image of Aquinas standing above the heresiarchs Arius and Sabellius. At the closing of *Paradiso* 13, Aquinas issues a warning against making and taking judgements based on scripture skewed by heretics such as Sabellius and Arius,

> Sì fé Sabellio e Arrio e quelli stolti
> Che furon come spade a le Scritture
> In render torti li diritti volti.
> Non sien le genti, ancor troppo sicure
> A giudicar, sì come quel che stima (*Paradiso* 1.127–132)[32]

Aquinas' warning is predicated on the notion that these Christian heretics take the familiar role of ancient theologians in order to skew scripture like swords striking through and distorting truth, "spade a le Scritture" (128). While Arius and Sabellius are not present in the Heaven of the Sun, the invocation brings to mind an image of Aquinas standing above their figures in a manner that echoes the visual configuration in the Spanish Chapel *Triumph of Thomas*. Furthermore, as the work of Maria Esposito Frank demonstrates, there is an

32. Frank's translation renders a closer meaning, "Thus did Sabellius and Arius, and those fools /Who were to the scriptures like blades, / In rendering straight countenances distorted, / Moreover, let folk not be too secure in judgement, / Like one who should count the ears / In the field before they are ripe" (Frank 171–72).

Figure 10. Dominican Priory (mid-fifteenth century). Florence, San Marco (Photo credit: Rosa M. Rodríguez Porto).

Figure 11. Averroes (detail) in Dominican Priory (mid-fifteenth century). Florence, San Marco (Photo credit: Rosa M. Rodríguez Porto).

even greater parallel between the visual and literary composition that aligns *Paradiso* 13 with *Inferno* 28. In a recent study, Esposito Frank reveals that the same violent imagery of swords striking through scripture that "equate Arius and Sabellius to concave blades that, while mirroring, crook the straight face of the scriptures" (172) is also found in *Inferno* 28. The devil's sword that continues to split open the bodies of Muhammad and 'Ali in the carnal and torturous punishment meted out to them is described using the same imagery as the concave blade that Arius and Sabellius use to strike through Christian orthodox truth: "un diavolo è qua dietro che n'accisma / sì crudelmente, al taglio della spada" (*Inferno* 28.37).[33] Muhammad's affiliation to Christian heresy is reinforced with the 'spada' that splices through him, which is the same blade used to describe the crooked words of the Christian heretics who are invoked beneath Aquinas in a pointed warning against heresy. Moreover, the imagery of deep cuts that reflects religious schism aligns Muhammad and 'Ali with Arianism in particular. The parallels between the figure of Arius and Muhammad, since the time of Eulogius, are conditioned on the notion that they both considered negators of "the dogmas of Trinity and Incarnation" (Esposito Frank 170). In the *Commedia*, the ripped body of Muhammad echoes the image of Arius' unholy death, torn in the torso in a public latrine.

33. Again, Esposito Frank provides a closer translation: "A devil is here behind that fashions us / so cruelly, putting again to the edge / of his sword each of this throne" (166–67).

Esposito Frank's revelatory examination of the imagistic parallels between the depiction of Christian heresy and Islam in the *Commedia* are critical to reading Bonaiuto's assembly of Averroes with Arius and Sabellius. Here, Averroes becomes a purveyor of philosophical "spade a le Scritture" (128), charged with causing a considerable rift in natural philosophy and theology comparable to the religious schism conferred upon Islam in Dante's *Inferno*. Islam's supposed distortion of Christian truth corresponds with Averroes' distortion of Aristotelian philosophy; both notions are predicated on an understanding that faith and reason have been intentionally distorted by the irrationalism ascribed to Islam and to Averroes in particular. It is necessary to note that Bonaiuto consciously chooses to depict Averroes, instead of the Prophet Muhammad, in order to make a visual statement about religious heresy. A reason for this lies not only in the Aquinas-Averroes iconographic formula that Bonaiuto is drawing on, but because medieval western iconography lacked a fixed visual stereotype for the Prophet Muhammad. Few visual depictions of Muhammad exist in medieval western art and when they do appear, they are always underscored with a textual explanation without

which "there is no way of knowing whom the figure represents" (Strickland 190).[34] Of note, however, are the depictions of Muhammad found in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century large scale mural paintings dedicated to visual adaptations of Dante's *Commedia*, including an illustration of *Inferno* produced for the Strozzi di Mantova Chapel in Santa Maria Novella, by Bernardo (Nardo) di Cione, a decade before Andrea di Bonaiuto began working on the Spanish Chapel. Considered to be "the most faithful and complete visualization of Dante's *Inferno*" (Coffey 53), the fresco methodically visualized each canto, including canto 28 and contains a portrait of Muhammad that depicts him in accordance with Dante's literary iconography of the torturous *contrapasso* meted out to the Prophet and his nephew, albeit difficult to observe because of floodwater damage to the decoration in 1966. However, according to Heather Coffey, the image resembles another wall painting of the *Commedia* by Buonamico Buffalmacco, dated *c*. 1366 to 1341, which is significant because here, the artist chose to depict a turban-clad, bearded Muhammad "with the display of such a passive and indifferent demeanour" (Coffey 60) that he resembled the motif of the languid Averroes in Lippo Memmi's *Triumph of Thomas*. The iconographic similarities are so great that critical scholarship perpetually mistook him for the Arab philosopher, suggesting even the most astute of viewers could read an image of a heretical Arab prophet as a heterodox Arab philosopher.[35]

Yet in choosing to depict Averroes, instead of the Prophet, Bonaiuto does not diminish the multivalent meaning ascribed to the image. Julian Gardner's remarks that "learned programmes presuppose learned audiences" (129) is evident in Bonaiuto's distinct image of Averroes and suggests the Dominican friars of the chapter house would have immediately understood that the Arab philosopher represented both a heterodox philosopher and a Muslim heretic. Furthermore, it also brings new light to recent critical scholarship, as Suzanne Conklin Akbari aptly notes:

> In the great age of Islamic learning, when Western scientists looked admiringly on Avicenna … and Western philosophers referred to Averroes simply as 'the Commentator', irrationality could not be imputed to Muslims at large, but only (at best) to the supposed irrationality of their religion (283).

34. Strickland's study examines four of these portraits, each a singular and unique example from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: Muhammad as man in a copy of Matthew Paris' *Chronica Major*, the image of Muhammad as a "human-fish" in the *Liber generationis Mahumet*, Muhammad as the "Beast of the Earth" in a copy of a Franciscan commentary on the Apocalypse and Muhammad as a golden idol found in a copy of Jean de Vigny's French translation of Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale*; cf. "Meanings of Muhammad" 147–51. Strickland suggests that these images were predicated on similar Latin polemical approaches to the mutable *pseudo-propheta*, and produced for the same learned audiences that ascribed, perpetuated and disputed the definition of Islam as a heresy in Latin scholastic writings, which is all the more fitting considering a depiction of a Muhammad as a "monstrous hybrid human-fish" appears in the pseudo-historical *Liber generationis Mahumet*, a treatise contained in Peter of Cluny's Toledan Collection; cf. "Meanings of Muhammad" 127 and 131.

35. Polzer demonstrates that the mural makes explicit assertions of Muhammad's heresy as allied to a portrait of the antipope, Nicholas V; cf. "Aristotle, Mohammad and Nicholas V in Hell".

In spite of the Latin West's appropriation of Arabic literature, philosophy, science and medicine, the contrast between the rational Christian and the irrational Muslim was a consistent trope in polemical tracts and such iconographic programmes as that of the chapter house of Santa Maria Novella. Such irrationalism was often targeted towards portraits of the Prophet Muhammad, vilified as the *pseudo-propheta* in both literary and visual portraits – Arabic philosophers were rarely, if ever, of concern. Yet, the image of Averroes whose mere presence in Andrea di Bonaiuto's *Triumph of Thomas* demonstrates his position as a transcultural figure, also suggests that by the fourteenth century at least, irrationality could be imputed to the Great Commentator.

In reading Bonaiuto's distinct image alongside *the* early commentators of Dante's *Commedia,* it is clear that a similar ambiguous approach to Averroes was current across Italian *Trecento* culture. While Averroes was celebrated as the Great Commentator and held to acclaim by Latin scholastics, including and especially Aquinas, Boccaccio, Benvenuto da Imola and others, could not divorce Averroes' standing as an Aristotelian philosopher from his religion in the same manner that Bonaiuto displays Averroes as both a heterodox philosopher and a Muslim heretic. Indeed, it is important to remember that even Memmi's choice of Averroes speaks to the wider reception of him as a notable and recognizable Aristotelian philosopher, which is ultimately the very reason for his existence in the paintings discussed. Moreover, this is the reason for the scornful treatment he receives exclusively in a Dominican context. Each of the changes made to the figure of Averroes from the iconographic formula established by Memmi, suggests that Bonaiuto intended to target Averroes' religious heresy in a pointed and precise manner suitable to a Dominican chapter house and friary. This speaks to the cultural value issued upon the figure of Averroes, who could garner both praise and in this context, ridicule; whose figure enabled a warning against religious heresy to be made and seen with greater significance than either an image of Muhammad or indeed, the absence of any figure, would allow. Moreover, that Gozzoli turns to the stylistic features established by Memmi and not Bonaiuto in order to create his fifteenth-century *Triumph of Thomas* further demonstrates the unique features of the pensive, condemned Averroes who sits at the heart of a celebration of Thomas Aquinas and Latin scholasticism.

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JULIA VERKHOLANTSEV

Et nata ex etymo fabula: Cosmas of Prague, the Medieval Practice of *Etymologia*, and the Writing of History

Abstract

This article represents a larger project that seeks to understand the function and implications of the use of etymologies in the writing of history in the Middle Ages. I examine the strategy of historians to etymologize within the framework of grammatical theories and historiographic methods of Latin scholarship. I conclude that, contrary to the traditional view that medieval etymologies are literary tropes and wordplay in all contexts, medieval historians used etymology as an epistemological instrument of discovery that helped them verify anecdotal information from oral tradition in order to adapt it to Christian historical discourse. This article focuses on the earliest annalistic narrative about the history of Bohemia, the *Chronica Boemorum* (*c.* 1125), and examines how its author, Cosmas of Prague, utilizes etymologies in the legendary sections of his masterpiece, and what role he ascribes to them in the mechanism of story-telling. Close reading and formal analysis of selected passages with etymological content show that etymologies are used as evidence to recover reality outside language (*i.e.* discover origins), and in that capacity they motivate the story itself and expand the narrative.[1]

1. I am grateful to my colleagues, whose feedback and insightful comments on the earlier drafts of this paper have contributed to its improvement: David Kalhous, Petra Mutlová, Gabrielle Spiegel, Elizabeth Tyler, and two anonymous reviewers.

In a prefatory letter to his *Chronica Boemorum*, addressed to Master Gervasius, Cosmas of Prague, an early twelfth-century dean of the cathedral church in Prague, like many historians before and after him, laments the inadequacy of his verbal art:

> Cum acceperis hanc scedulam, scias, quod tibi transmiserim Boemorum chronicam, quam ego nullo gramatice artis lepore politam, sed simpliciter et vix latialiter digestam tue prudentie singulari examinandam deliberavi, quatinus tuo sagaci iudicio aut omnino abiciatur, ne a quoquam legatur

> aut, si legi adiudicatur, lima tue examinationis ad unguem prius elimetur aut potius, quod magis rogo, per te ex integro latialius enucleetur. Nam id solum opere precium duxi in meo opere, ut vel tu, cui a Deo collata est sapientia, vel alii potiores scientia, sicut Virgilius habuit Troe excidia et Stacius Eacidia, ita ipsi hoc meum opus habeant pro materia, quo et suam scientiam posteris notificent et nomen sibi memoriale in secula magnificent. (Cosmas 2–3)
>
> When you receive this small leaf of paper, know that I have sent you a chronicle of the Czechs. Although it is not polished by any grace of grammatical art but is composed simply and barely in Latin, I have resolved that it should be examined by your exceptional wisdom, so that by your perceptive judgment it might either be entirely rejected and so that nobody could read it, or, if judged worthy of reading, that it might be first perfectly polished by the nib of your criticism; or rather, for which I pray more, that it might be reworked by you afresh in better Latin. For the only value I see in my work is that it may provide material either for you, on whom God has bestowed wisdom, or for others who are more gifted with wisdom [than I], who could use my work to make their art known to posterity and forever glorify their names, just as Virgil did with the *Destruction of Troy* and Statius with the *Achilleid*.[2]

Even though Cosmas's composition and style have been described as not at all lacking in the rhetorical and grammatical sophistication shown by the most erudite of his time (Třeštík, *Kosmova kronika* 130; Pabst 870–75; Švanda), let us not rush to see in Cosmas's words a mere convention of authorial self-depreciation and modesty. From his revisions and his prefaces, we learn that Cosmas indeed took the quality and precision of linguistic expression to heart: he continuously worked on the language of his text and circulated revised versions among the local learned for feedback.[3]

The 'linguistic' and the 'narrative turns' in the theoretical study of historiography have drawn more scholarly attention to the inherent connection between the content of the historical narrative and its form – language (Stein; Spiegel, "Revising the Past" and "Theory into Practice;" Toews; Ankersmit). Medieval authors themselves of-

2. All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are mine: since I worked with the original Latin text it felt appropriate to translate relevant passages into English the way I understand and use them in my close reading. For the most recent Czech translation, see Hrdina, Bláhová, and Moravová. For an English translation, see Wolverton, *The Chronicle*.

3. For a description of the literary environment in which Cosmas worked and the chronicle's supposed readership, see Třeštík, *Kosmova kronika* 44–49; Bláhová, "Historická paměť."

ten speak of rhetoric and grammar as the necessary tools of a historian, and they expressively comment on the paucity and deficiency of their own styles. Looking past the humility topos allows us to recognize that this anxiety is indicative of the special role that historians assigned to language as a locus of historical discourse in its capacity not only to teach, amuse, and affect but also to recover the past accurately.[4] Unlike modern historians, who strive for the possibility of an unbiased historical narrative, medieval authors may have come to terms with the fact that history is trapped in "the prison-house of language" (Jameson) and that such truth-claims are fully predicated on linguistic representation and reflection.

4. Following the principles of classical rhetoric established by Cicero and Quintilian, medieval historians strived to teach, amuse, and affect (*docere*, *delectare*, *movere*) the reader: see Kempshall 8–9.

Etymologia and the Writing of History

From medieval theories of grammar and rhetoric, we know that *etymologia* – a heuristic and metaphysical interpretational tool with its own set of principles and reasoning – was approached by the learned as the foundation of all verbal expression. However, let us not make any direct connection between the medieval practice of *etymologia* and the contemporary scholarly principles and uses of etymology as a sub-field of historical linguistics. While modern historical and comparative linguistics determines genetic relationships between words on the basis of regular phonological change, the medieval theory of *etymologia* is grounded in the a priori axiom that any sound similarities in human language are not coincidental but providential, and, therefore, meaningful and revealing. If modern etymology is a historical discipline, medieval *etymologia* is ahistorical (in our understanding), its object of study being considered ontologically outside of time.[5]

The traces of intuitive etymological thinking are already found in the oral tradition of ancient societies and are described by anthropologists (Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*). As a scholarly concept, the idea of the non-arbitrariness of names, or what we call 'linguistic naturalism', is not the invention of medieval theorists but rather dates back to classical and late antique thought. It is questioned in Plato's *Cratylus* (Joseph 1–89; Sedley 25–50; Baxter); developed philosophically by the Greek Stoics (one of whom – Chrysippus – likely coined the very term *etymologia*);[6] explained formally by the Roman Stoic Marcus Terentius Varro in the *De lingua Latina*; criticized, but also applied to Christian discourse by Augustine in *De dialecti-*

5. For a quick overview and bibliography, see Tsitsibakou-Vasalos. For a succinct account and collection of primary sources, see Copeland and Sluiter, 339–66. For a more detailed history of the development of etymological method in late antique and early medieval grammatical thought, see Klinck; Amsler, *Etymology;* Opelt.

6. See: Allen; Colish 56–60; Long; Struck 131–39; Domaradzki.

ca, *De doctrina Christiana* and *De Trinitate*; and put into biblical exegetical practice by Jerome.[7] In the Christian discourse, the biblical narrative of Creation of the world through naming certainly played a significant inspirational role. Although medieval philosophers and grammarians seemed to know some of the Stoic ideas,[8] most literati learned about *etymologia* from one of the fathers of Latin medieval scholarship, Isidore of Seville (*c.* 560–636), who had passed on to them much of classical and late antique learning. In the twenty books of his encyclopedic *Etymologiae sive origines*, Isidore not only explains in theory[9] but also demonstrates in practice how one can arrive at the knowledge of the ontological nature of things and concepts in human life through interpreting their linguistic signification.[10] Importantly, Isidore discusses *etymologia* as a part of grammar, not as a part of rhetoric, and thus his primary interest in etymological examination is not its ability to be used for enhancing oratory skills but its epistemological potential.

Isidore's approach to language as a repository of human memory influenced the way that all those schooled in the Latin tradition thought about and used language for the next several centuries. Following Isidore, they imagined letters as having symbolic significance and mystical ability to open up the archive of human history, and in their minds, just as Isidore taught, the 'discipline of history' depended solely on the study of language or 'grammar' "because whatever is worthy of remembrance is committed to writing."[11] Noteworthy is that although *historia* does not appear in medieval curricula as a special subject of study, Isidore recognizes it as a distinct field of knowledge and calls it a *disciplina* – "a narration of what happened, by means of which the things that occurred in the past are discerned."[12]

If etymological interpretation started as an erudite method, fit primarily for Christian exegesis, Isidore's *Etymologies* made it a versatile scholarly linguistic tool for centuries to come. Theoretical principles of medieval *etymologia* have been primarily studied in the framework of grammatical theory and related discourses of interpretation and rhetoric; that is, in discourses in which an etymon refers to language, and not to reality outside of language. Besides uses in Christian exegesis, medieval etymologies have earned the reputation of a trope of figurative language and homonymic wordplay, as well as of a mechanism for creating terminology and mnemonic aids.[13] Influenced by the modern notion of correctness of etymological analysis based on words' genetic relationship, modern linguistic and historiographic scholarship largely ignores and even dismisses the se-

7. Amsler, *Etymology* 24–29; 44–55, 100–18; Taylor, *Declinatio* 23–28, 65–73; Făgărăşanu; Den Boeft. For case studies of the use of *etymologia* as a tool of Christian exegesis, see, for instance, Hill; Major.

8. "… a strong genealogical line of linguistic theory runs from the ancient Stoics through the Middle Ages" (Badzell 110).

9. In the chapter "*De etymologia,*" Isidore explains the main principles of etymological technique, which is based on both semantic and morphological criteria. Semantically, etymologies may be motivated by: (i) a cause, reason (*ex causa*), such as *reges* (kings) from *regendum* (ruling) and *recte agendum* (acting correctly); (ii) an origin (*ex origine*), such as *homo* (man), who is from *humus* (earth); (iii) an antithesis (*ex contrariis*), such as *lutum* (mud), which needs *lavandum* (washing); and (iv) names of places, cities or rivers (although Isidore speaks about this derivation separately it may be considered as a subcategory of [ii]). Morphologically, etymologies may be derived from: (i) other words (such as *prudens* from *prudentia*); (ii) other sounds (such as *garrulus* from *garrulitas*); (iii) words in Greek and other languages (*domus*) (*Etymologiae* 1.29.3–5).

10. Fontaine; Engels; Amsler, *Etymology* 133–72; Irvine 209–43. For a more recent bibliography on Isidorian thought and works, see Barney *et al.*

11. "Haec disciplina ad Grammaticam pertinent, quia quidquid dignum memoria est litteris mandatur" (*Etymologiae* 1.41.2). Rabanus Maurus also speaks about grammar as a science of interpreting poets and historians alike: "Grammatica est scientia interpretandi poetas atque historicos et recta scribendi loquendique ratio" (*De institutione clericorum* 3.18).

12. "Historia est narratio rei gestae, per quam ea, quae in praeterito facta sunt, dinoscuntur" (*Etymologiae* 1.41.1). According to Isidore, "*Disciplina* takes its name from 'learning,' whence it can also be called 'knowledge, science, skill' (*scientia*): ("Disciplina a discendo nomen accepit: unde et scientia dici potest:" *Etymologiae* 1.1.1). Isidore, and the Latin scholarship after him, make a distinction between *ars* and *disciplina*, the former translating the Greek *technē*, the latter corresponding to *epistēmē* (Hadot 193–99). For the semantic transformation of the term *disciplina* from the classical to early medieval tradition, see Marrou, and for the perception of *disciplina* as a body of knowledge, see Copeland 141–44.

13. See: Klinck 138–84; Culler; Badzell; Paul Taylor; Reynolds 80–87; O'Hara 102–11; Del Bello; Rydel; Carruthers; Kann.

miotic power of medieval etymologies to perform functions other than emotive and decorative and embody thought of their own.[14] However, the denial of the epistemological objectives in the use of *etymologia* in historiography can hardly be justified, especially given that the largest concentration of etymologies is usually found in passages that deal with the ancient past and questions of origin when other authoritative sources are unavailable. Among practitioners of *etymologia* in the historiographic context are Bede (*Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*), Widukind of Corvey (*Res Gestae Saxonicae*), Adam of Bremen (*Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*), 'Gallus Anonymus' (*Gesta Principum Polonorum*), Saxo Grammaticus (*Gesta Danorum*), and Anonymous Notary of King Béla (*Gesta Hungarorum*), to name just a few. While individual studies point out that *etymologia* has life outside of literary wordplay and Christian exegesis, a comprehensive history of its epistemological usage in medieval historical discourse is yet to be written.[15] This essay is a contribution to a larger project that examines whether medieval historians understood the practice of etymologizing along the lines of Isidore's *Etymologiae sive origines* (that is, as a method of discovering the origins of things), and whether historiographic etymologizing has a function that goes beyond didactic and allegorical.[16]

Specialists in medieval historiography know that no medieval source can be read without critical lenses and that narratological and rhetorical constructs shape and structure the knowledge of the past. Psychologists and cognitive scientists who study mind-relevant aspects of how storytelling works have long established that the human brain perceives and represents its experiences as stories: our mind is programmed to structure events into narratives, choose relevant facts that work logically with each other, and arrange them in space and time. Philosophers of history and literary scholars have argued that historians, too, make sense of the past, indistinct and unstructured as it first appears to them, by applying the logic of a story, or, rather, a sequence of stories. Therefore, to understand how *etymologia*-driven narrative works, I turn to formal textual analysis and to a mind-oriented approach to storytelling. Using Cosmas's *Chronica Boemorum* as an example, I propose that etymologizing shapes not only the language of storytelling but affects the storyline itself, suggesting narrative twists and lively details. In its capacity to motivate, explain, and expand narratives about origins, it serves as an epistemological device in writings about the past.

14. One of the first to dismiss the epistemological use of etymologies was Ernst Robert Curtius, who considered most cases of etymologizing as "insipid trifling" and "ornament of poetry," although he admits that Isidore himself proceeds "from *verba to res"* (Curtius 495–500, esp. 496–97).

15. Among studies that approach etymologizing in etiological and metaphysical terms, see, for example, Mark Amsler's examination of Isidore's and Vico's use of etymology in the interpretations of names (Amsler, "Literary Onomastics"), as well as a series of articles by Rolf Baumgarten on etymology in Irish tradition (Baumgarten, "Placenames, Etymology," "Etymological Aetiology in Irish Tradition," "Creative Medieval Etymology and Irish Hagiography," and an entry "Etymology" in *Medieval Ireland*). In his *Etymologies and Genealogies*, R. Howard Bloch turns to *etymologia* to argue that medieval history, grammar, and theology are conceived in genealogical terms.

16. I have previously written on the use of *etymologia* as an epistemological device in a number of historiographic works of medieval Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary in Verkholantsev, "Etymological Argumentation," and "Language as Artefact."

Between Virgil and the Oral Tradition

Cosmas's *Chronica Boemorum* is the earliest attested annalistic narrative about the history of Bohemia, which became a source and inspiration for all historians who wrote about Bohemia after him.[17] Most of what we know about Cosmas (*c.* 1045?–1125) we know from his own testimony. Born in a clerical or noble family in Prague and educated at home and in Liège, he served first as a canon and then as a dean of the Prague cathedral church. Although Cosmas seems to be well read and possesses a gracefully simple style, the *Chronica Boemorum*, which he started writing at the end of his life, is his only attested work. It begins with the Flood and the Tower of Babel narratives, outlines Bohemia's legendary times, and ends by describing the events of Cosmas's own time, revealing his own particular interest in the history of the Přemyslid dynasty. The *Chronicon* by Regino of Prüm is considered to have been Cosmas's model, although not for the legendary past.[18] The generically diverse concept of the *Chronica Boemorum* – world chronicle, *gesta*, *historia* – makes it similar to other narrative works of its time, such as *Gesta Principum Polonorum* by an anonymous author (*c.* 1115), or slightly later *Gesta Danorum* by Saxo Grammaticus (*c.* 1208) and *Gesta Hungarorum* by an anonymous author (early thirteenth century). Of its three books, our primary focus in this essay is the first, which was finished around 1119 and covers the events of the Bohemian past from the legendary times up to the year 1038.

Everyone who writes about Cosmas's legendary stories is immediately entangled in a complex dispute about Cosmas's sources and historiographic concept. Cosmas's allusion to Virgil and Statius in the preface to his chronicle has been attributed to his ambition to create a work of epic (Kolář), and medievalists generally agree that Cosmas used biblical and classical models to a great extent, both from original works and from florilegia and commentaries.[19] But, did he adjust myths from local oral tradition to Christian historical discourse with the help of these models, or did he entirely invent his legendary stories? Are they sourced from his research, or are they inspired by his imagination and ideological agenda? Cosmas's own reference to the oral tradition as a source for his work has caused animated academic debate:

> Igitur huius narrationis sumpsi exordium a primis incolis terre Boemorum et perpauca, que didici senum fabulosa

17. Scholarship on this work in Czech is truly voluminous and it is impossible to do it justice in the scope of this article. Some of the key monographic studies in Czech are Třeštík, *Kosmova kronika* and *Mýty*; Karbusický, *Báje* (written in the 1960s but published three decades later); Sadílek; Bláhová and Wihoda. Most recently, Petr Kopal has finished his work on a Ph.D. dissertation, *Kosmas a jeho svět*, which, in addition to its research agenda, features detailed bibliography and analysis of preceding research. For literature in other languages, see Karbusický, *Anfänge*; Graus, *Lebendige Vergangenheit* 89–106; Bláhová, "The Function of the Saints." A recent monograph by Lisa Wolverton, *Cosmas of Prague: Narrative, Classicism, Politics*, is the only substantial study of the chronicle in English. While its limited use of Czech-language scholarship has triggered some critical response from Czech historians, it provides important contextualization of Cosmas's work in the Latinate literary tradition. See reviews by Klápště; Wihoda; Bláhová.

18. Although Cosmas was probably familiar with other medieval historiographic works from his years at Liège, Regino's is the only chronicle that historians have established he definitely had at hand in Prague (Loserth; Třeštík, "Kosmas a Regino;" Wolverton, *Cosmas of Prague: Narrative* 47–51, 56–60).

19. See: Kolář; *Jireček*; Třeštík, *Kosmova kronika* 122–26; Spunar, 15–16, 23–26; Sadílek; Švanda; Wolverton, *Cosmas* 36–80.

> relatione, non humane laudis ambitione, sed ne omnino tradantur relata oblivioni, pro posse et nosse pando omnium bonorum dilectione. (Cosmas 3)
>
> And so, I have begun my narrative with the first inhabitants of the land of the Czechs, and I relate for the pleasure of all good people a few things that I learned from the fabled stories of old men, to the extent of my ability and knowledge, not striving to receive human praise but to prevent the stories from entirely falling into oblivion.

Historians disagree about what exactly Cosmas means when he says that he has learned about the early times of Bohemia from "the fabled stories of old men" (*senum fabulosa relatio*). Although most specialists share the view that Cosmas draws some inspiration from the local folk tradition, the extent of its survival in his literary adaptation is questioned. Many studies have contributed to this tricky philological and historiographic question, and the intensity of the scholarly debate is proportional to the extraordinary imaginative force and peculiarity of the stories themselves. If Czech nationalist (Romantic and Marxist) historians were eager to see Cosmas as a mouthpiece of ancient Czech mythologies, scholars who emphasize the agency of literary adaptation consider the folk pedigree of Cosmas's stories more cautiously, and some even attribute them entirely to his imagination. The solution, as it often happens, may lie somewhere in the middle. On the one hand, evidence of comparative mythology and anthropology speaks strongly and convincingly in favor of the argument that Cosmas may have indeed used ancient mythological motifs that are shared by other cultures and are genetically connected to ritual and cult. On the other hand, more diagnostic work is necessary to identify and sift them through the filters of literary and historiographic practices and, not the least, to examine them against Cosmas's authorial design.[20] While my primary goal in this study is to understand how *etymologia* is used to construct a learned historical narrative, my analysis would be inadequate without taking into account the manner in which oral tradition informs the work of a medieval historian, such as Cosmas. What further complicates my task is that even though medieval historians viewed *etymologia* as a scholarly and analytical method, the relationship between the etymological mindset and storytelling seems to be an inherent feature of the oral tradition itself, as Jan Vansina convincingly shows.[21]

20. František Palacký, one of the most influential figures of the nineteenth-century Czech national revival, called Cosmas "the Czech Herodotus", while twentieth-century historians, such as Václav Chaloupecký, František Graus, Záviš Kalandra, Zdeněk Nejedlý and Václav Novotný, focused their study on identifying historical and mythological layers in Cosmas's narrative. See, for instance, Graus, *Lebendige Vergangenheit* and *Dějiny*; Kalandra; Nejedlý. Recently, Dušan Třeštík, who devoted many of his earlier studies to Cosmas, has offered a revised and more nuanced look at Cosmas's legendary narrative, which benefits from Dumézilian comparative mythological approach. (Třeštík, *Mýty*). Also see, Golema, *Stredoveká literatúra*, 31–100 and "Medieval Saint Ploughmen;" Banaszkiewicz, "Slawische Sagen;" Krappe. Among skeptics, Vladimír Karbusický argues that Cosmas, inspired by classical epic models and contemporary events, has invented the whole "Přemyslovská pověst" ("The Tale of Přemysl"), and that any archeological or mythological examination of it is "grotesque" (Karbusický, *Báje*, esp. 157–77). A revisionist look at official Czech historiography, including the interpretation of Cosmas's chronicle, has been cast by Petr Šimík on the Internet website of the *Moravia Magna project*. Lisa Wolverton has argued that the search for sources that inform Cosmas's legends is of secondary importance because having been composed by Cosmas, the legendary stories are a part of his overall authorial design and cannot be interpreted outside of the whole chronicle text (Wolverton, *Cosmas* 19–21).

21. Describing oral tradition as a process, Jan Vansina talks about "popular etymologies" as "the interpretation of experience" and sees in them commentaries and explanations that "arise *ex post facto*." Analyzing examples from African oral traditions, he observes that etymologies go hand in hand with tale creation (Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* 10–11).

The interpretation of legendary stories that draw upon oral tradition in medieval chronicles is a notoriously persistent historiographic challenge, which has attracted specialists in a variety of disciplines, including literary theorists, historians, and anthropologists.[22] It is useful to bear in mind that we have trouble identifying the position of folk material in medieval histories precisely because its integration into scholarly discourse was an equally perplexing task for medieval historians. Those who write about the origins of people and dynasties (referring to them as *gens*) and frame these origins in biblical history, inevitably find themselves grappling with the delicate task of making an adequate transition from biblical antiquity to the events of the recent past. Some immediately jump from the biblical genealogy to the present; those who take up the challenge turn either to the classical tradition, tracing their roots from the Trojans, or to the local oral tradition. But, while classical authors, such as Virgil, Ovid, and Sallust, impart authority to the medieval historian's account, stories about former heroes told by local *seniores* lack credibility and must have presented a methodological problem to a learned scholar who has to decide what historical value these folk stories possess and how to rationalize and cast them in a coherent and linear historical narrative.[23] In questions of verisimilitude, medieval historians operated within the three generic kinds of narration of the Ciceronian triad *historia*, *argumentum*, *fabula*.[24] But was oral tradition even understood within this nomenclature? If they were to use folk legends, they would need a mechanism to verify the veracity of these tales.

Cosmas was by no means the first to face this methodological problem. Several centuries earlier, the Northumbrian monk and historian Bede (672–735) was similarly forced to rely on the stories of old men when he wrote his *Historia Ecclesiastica*.[25] Cosmas's nearly contemporary, eleventh-century historian and ethnographer, Adam of Bremen, admits in the preface to his *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* that along with "scattered records" and "histories and charters of the Romans," "by far the greatest part" of past events he learned "from the tradition of old men who knew the facts," calling truth as his witness that he "prophesized nothing from his own heart"[26] and "asserted nothing without due consideration." Despite the fact that his information comes from *seniores*, he declares that his account is backed by trustworthy authority.[27] As did his European contemporaries schooled in the tradition of Latin grammar and rhetoric, for what Cosmas cannot find in evidence he compensates in in-

22. Literature on the interaction of orality, memory, and literacy is abundant. Some classical works include Ong; Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*. Scholars working on historical writing across Europe ask methodological questions of how to study the adaptation of oral tradition in the writing of history. See, for example, Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*; McKitterick; Clanchy; Goffart; Doane and Pasternack; Mundal and Wellendorf; and, specifically, on Central Europe, Adamska. An important matter in this debate is the question of how anthropologists who study oral traditions can help historians who study written records. See Goody, "What does Anthropology Contribute to World History?" Methodologically related to the questions asked by medievalists are theoretical and practical challenges of history writing in modern societies that have developed literacy only recently. See, for instance, Ajayi and Alagoa.

23. On Virgil's influence, see Ziolkowski and Putnam.

24. The theory of three types of narration (*genera narrationis*) goes back to the anonymous treatise *Ad Herennium* (1.8.12–13) and Cicero's *De inventione* (1.19.27), and is of course explained by Isidore in *Etymologiae* 1.44. It distinguishes between *historia* (account of factually verified events), *argumentum* (verisimilar story), and *fabula* (story with no veracity). For the definitions of *historia*, *argumentum*, and *fabula* by classical and medieval authors, see Mehtonen 149–56.

25. Wright 72–77; McNamara. See Cubitt for a discussion of other works of Anglo-Saxon history that engage with folklore.

26. Reference to Ezekiel, 13.2.

27. "Itaque de his, quae scribo, aliqua per scedulas dispersa collegi, multa vero mutuavi de hystoriis et privilegiis Romanorum, pleraque omnia seniorum, quibus res nota est, traditione didici, testem habens veritatem nihil de meo corde prophetari, nihil temere definiri; sed omnia, quae positurus sum, certis roborabo testimoniis, ut, si mihi non creditur, saltem auctoritati fides tribuatur" (Adam 3).

vention, recognizing verisimilar tales as compatible with historical truth.[28] Cosmas's concern that his readers may not see his work as trustworthy seems to be more than just a traditional topos: his unease about his failure to provide chronology for the legendary times betrays a conviction that otherwise, at least, he has conformed to current standards and best practices of history writing:

> Continet autem hic liber primus Boemorum gesta, prout mihi scire licuit, digesta usque ad tempora primi Bracizlai, filii ducis Odalrici. Annos autem dominice incarnationis idcirco a temporibus Borivoy, primi ducis catholici, ordinare cepi, quia in inicio huius libri nec fingere volui nec chronicam reperire potui, ut, quando vel quibus gesta sint temporibus, scirem, que ad presens recitabis in sequentibus. (Cosmas 3–4)

> This first book contains the deeds of the Czechs, to the extent that I could learn about them, arranged up to the time of Břetislav I, the son of Duke Oldřich. But the years of the Lord's incarnation I began to indicate only starting with the time of Bořivoj, the first Christian duke, because I neither wanted to make up [chronology] at the beginning of the book, nor could I find any chronicle in order to learn when or during what time these deeds, about which you will now read in what follows, had taken place.

Let us, therefore, take Cosmas's words about his commitment to historical truth critically but in good faith, and assume that whatever he does "invent" does not fall, in his mind at least, in the semantic field of the Latin term *fingere*, a parent to the modern term 'fiction'. Despite the acknowledged lack of sources, Cosmas accepts the challenge of discovering the origins of Bohemia and its social order. Where he draws from the oral tradition, he approaches its anecdotal tales equipped with the fact-finding tools of medieval practice of historical typology – the supply of archetypes from biblical history and works of classical authors – capped with the etymological method. If the oral tradition provides the raw material for a story, then the role of etymologies in Cosmas's shaping of a coherent historical narrative is to test its veracity. Before we turn to the examination of how Cosmas uses etymologies in his narrative, let us reflect on the formal relationship between etymology and storytelling.

28. Literature on truth and verisimilitude in medieval historiography is massive. For recent overviews and bibliography, see Kempshall 350–427; Lake.

Et nata ex etymo fabula

From the earliest times, historians have claimed that their primary goal is to tell the truth. Credibility being their objective, they turn to the etymon – literally, a linguistic "true fact" (Greek ἔτυμος means "true") – as an ally in their search for veracity, and employ it as a litmus test to validate legendary and anecdotal tales. Frequently, the function of etymons is just to verify information that names carry about their signified. But even a minimally explicated etymon possesses an inherent narrative energy due to its orientation towards the world outside of language. This generative ability of an etymon to lead to a story is already noticed by the German classical scholar Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812) in one of the excurses to his edition of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Commenting on the origin of the mythical gemstone *Lyncurium* that is associated with amber, Heyne connects its name to a belief that Lyncurium solidifies from the hardened urine of a lynx ('lyncum'):

> Lingurium ex ea, quam supra posuimus, Λιγγεῖς, pronuntiatione nasci potuit; factum adeo Lyngurium et Lyncurium, quod nomen ad lapidis genus translatum, et nata ex etymo fabula de nato lapide ex lyncum urina. (Heyne 8: 4259).
>
> Lingurium may derive from the pronunciation of Λιγγεῖς, which we have quoted above; even becoming Lyngurium and Lyncurium, and this noun translates as a gemstone, thus the story [*fabula*] has been born from the etymon [*ex etymo*] about the origin of amber from the urine of a lynx.

As Heyne puts it, the *fabula* of Lyncurium's origin from lynx's urine is born from the etymon *lynx*. Incidentally, the explanation of how exactly the *fabula* of a gemstone-producing lynx has come to life is provided by none other than Isidore of Seville himself, with some interesting observations about lynx's behavioral psychology:

> Lyncis dictus, quia in luporum genere numeratur; bestia maculis terga distincta ut pardus, sed similis lupo: unde et ille λύκος, iste lyncis. Huius urinam convertere in duritiam pretiosi lapidis dicunt, qui lyncurius appellatur, quod et ipsas lynces sentire hoc documento probatur. Nam egestum liquorem harenis, in quantum potuerint, contegunt, invidia

> quadam naturae ne talis egestio transeat in usum humanum. (*Etymologiae* 12.2.20)

> The lynx [*lyncis, i.e. lynx*] is so called because it is reckoned among the wolves [*lupus*] in kind; it is a beast that has spotted markings on its back, like a leopard, but it is similar to a wolf; whence the wolf has the name λύκος and the other animal, 'lynx.' People say that its urine hardens into a precious stone called *lyncurius*. That the lynxes themselves perceive this is shown by this proof: they bury as much of the excreted liquid in sand as they can, from a sort of natural jealousy lest such excretion should be brought to human use. (Barney et al. 252)

The earliest record of this legend is by the Greek philosopher Theophrastus (*c.* 371–285 BCE), and already many medieval prosaic and versified lapidaries and bestiaries that include entries on amber feature this story with many 'invented' details (Walton 368–72).

At the core of medieval etymologizing is the art of finding and matching connections between etymons. The capacity of the combinations of etymons to generate a story appeals to authors of histories and they gladly turn to *etymologia*. Etymologies not only verify a fact in question but they can occasionally extend their influence further into the narrative itself and serve as its motivator. An insight into this mechanism can be gained from the formal analysis of narration and, specifically, from applying the Russian Formalists' suggestion to differentiate between the two elements of narration – the *fabula* and the *siuzhet*. The Formalist theorists distinguish between the content of the story, its matter ('*fabula*'), and its construction – the manner in which that content is organized and communicated, which they have called '*siuzhet*', often translated into English as the 'plot'. This distinction grows from the observation that a story can be told in many different ways using various literary techniques and that the art of narration is largely the art of arrangement and organization.[29] Although the Formalist principles have been criticized as not being able to account for all types of narratives,[30] the *fabula-siuzhet* dichotomy provides a productive model for the study of the relationship between etymologizing and storytelling in medieval chronicles.

In our model, a situation, act, or quality that are suggested by the etymons become a core of the 'etymological *fabula*'. For example, the sound similarity between the two etymons – the Latin words for

29. For a short discussion of this idea, developed by the 'Opoiaz' group, and especially by Viktor Shklovskii and Boris Eikhenbaum, see Erlich, 239–43.

30. See, for instance, the critique by Frederick Jameson, 43–98.

"lynx" and "amber" – suggests a situation of the physical connection between the two signified objects and generates the emergence of the story about the amber-secreting lynx – the 'etymological *fabula*.' The author then emplots this *fabula* in a narrative in an 'etymological *siuzhet*.' His choices for a *siuzhet* would depend on the context and the goals of his composition. If a tale is borrowed from the oral tradition (such as some of Cosmas's tales might be), we may deal with two equally possible scenarios: (1) the original tale already contains some etymological content that the author develops further, or (2) the original tale does not contain any etymological information and the author identifies an etymon that fits the tale's purpose. In the former scenario, we do not know whether the etymon had inspired the tale or vice versa because the original connection between the etymon and the etymological *fabula* is unknown. Taking into account both cases of causality, our model looks like this:

(*etymon* ↔ etymological *fabula*) → etymological *siuzhet*

Armed with this approach, let us now analyze the use of etymologies in three of Cosmas's most famous narratives – the story of the forefather Boemus; the story of the prophetess Libuše's marriage to Přemysl, who becomes the first duke of Bohemia; and the prophecy of Prague's foundation. In Cosmas's literary adaptation of what seem to be traces of oral tradition, the emplotment of etymologies is one of the loci of his authorial invention. While we will only gloss over the questions of Cosmas's sources, our main goal is to observe how he uses *etymologia* in order to investigate and rescue historically problematic legends from oral tradition.

Father Bo(h)emus

Our first story is an archetypal myth of origin and migration. Cosmas writes that primordial men, ancestors of the Czechs, having wandered across many lands after the Tower of Babel disaster, arrive at the foot of the mountain Říp.[31] The elder delivers a speech to his companions (*socii*), and tasks them with selecting a name for their "destined land" (*terra fatalis*), to which he has led them:

> Sed cum hec talis, tam pulchra ac tanta regio in manibus vestris sit, cogitate, aptum terre nomen quod sit.' Qui mox

31. Cosmas does not use the term 'tribe' or 'nation' to refer to the group of drifters who find themselves at the foot of the mountain Říp, as was customary to do. In his version of the *confusio linguarum* at the Tower of Babel, the humanity separates into seventy two men, who each speak a different language and who beget their respective ethnic and linguistic groups. For detailed interpretation, see Třeštík, *Mýty* 66–67.

> quasi ex divino commoniti oraculo: 'Et unde', inquiunt, 'melius vel aptius nomen inveniemus, quam, quia tu, o pater, diceris Boemus, dicatur et terra Boemia?' Tunc senior motus sociorum augurio, cepit terram osculari pre gaudio gaudens eam ex suo nomine nuncupari. (Cosmas 7)

> 'But now that so beautiful and vast a land is in your hands, think of an appropriate name for it.' And then they, as if moved by a divine oracle, said: 'And whence will we find a better or a more suitable name? Since your name, O father, is Bo[h]emus, let the land then be called Bo[h]emia.' Then the delighted elder, moved by the divination of his companions, began to kiss the land, overcome with joy that it was to be named after his name.

The mythological basis – a story of wandering and discovering a 'promised land' – is common to many national narratives and reveals clear biblical allusions. Two key generic narrative devices power Cosmas's adaptation: the act of naming of a country and the aid of the divine agency in the process of naming. Berthold Bretholz, whose 1923 edition is still a 'go to' source among those who study the *Chronica Boemorum*, provides many useful and insightful annotations and literary parallels. His references to verses from the *Aeneid*, which describe how Romulus founded a nation and gave it his name, have established the tradition of seeing in Boemus's speech a mere emulation of Virgil.[32] Virgil's influences are not to be downplayed, of course, but neither should the etymological method. Many classical Greek, Roman, and Byzantine historians viewed the historical process as a succession of epochs defined by a ruling leader and they organized their narratives around the reigns of their respective emperors. Keeping with this tradition, Isidore shows that ever since biblical times the origin of nations has often been associated with their leaders, while their names derive from their progenitors: Madai was the progenitor of the nation of Medes (*Etymologiae* 9.2.28), Persians are called so after King Perseus (9.2.47), the Hebrews after Heber, the great grandson of Shem (9.2.51), and Romans after Romulus, who founded the city of Rome (9.2.84). And thus the name of the elder Bohemus becomes an etymon, a building block of the historical narrative. Isidore's *ex origo* etymological model of "the naming of the land after its leader" suggests the etymological *fabula*, in which the newly found land is being named 'Bohemia' af-

32. Cosmas 7; Hrdina, Bláhová, and Moravová 218, Wolverton, *The Chronicle* 36.

ter its forefather, Bohemus. In order to transfer this etymological *fabula* of naming into historical narration, Cosmas emplots it into an etymological *siuzhet*, utilizing a familiar biblical template of a speech act assisted by divine agency that evokes the story of Creation and Adam's choice of names for the created. Cosmas's description of early Czechs as primordial people, who lived close to nature and without social organization, shows that he understood the process of naming in the same vein as the Stoics. The centrality of the speech act in the *siuzhet* takes care of the performative mode: the ancestors of the Czechs utter the name of their leader as they decide that it should be used to name their newly-found homeland. Their utterance happens "as if" (*quasi*) impressed upon them by a divine medium (*ex divino commoniti oraculo*). Incidentally, this episode illustrates a crucial aspect of Isidorian thought about national origins: "ex linguis gentes, non ex gentibus linguae exortae sunt" ("Nations originate from languages, not languages from nations") (*Etymologiae* 9.1.14). The plot of an archetypal story is thus enhanced by the etymological method.

It is quite possible that Cosmas worked out of the existing oral tradition, most likely in Czech, which reflects the ancient intuitive etymological thinking. This is supported by the fact that in a number of later Czech sources, the leader is called by the endonym Čech, not by the Latin exonym Boemus, preserving the etymological correlation between the name of the ruler and his land, Čech – Čechy, Bohemus – Bohemia.[33] Cosmas's meta-language – Latin – most likely motivates his choice of a Latin etymon in his Latin chronicle, although we will further see that he easily moves from Latin to Czech and back to Latin in his etymological reasoning. His primary goal is to authenticate the oral legend as he subjects it to the mechanism of etymological emplotment.

33. The name for Bohemia seems of Germanic mediation and draws on the testimony of Roman geographers, who described this region as inhabited by the Celtic Boii tribe (Green, 160–61).

Prophetess Libuše and Plowman Přemysl

Legend has it, narrates Cosmas, that after the death of their leader and judge, Krok (*Crocco*),[34] the people of Bohemia made his youngest daughter, Libuše (*Lubossa*), their judge on account of her fairness and gift of prophecy. Libuše, a fair judge and a trustworthy oracle (*phitonissa*), is one of the most complex characters in Cosmas's legendary narrative, with links to both biblical personages and mythological figures in other heathen traditions. Her remarkable role in the

34. See discussion below.

story about the conflict of the sexes and the emergence of law and order has inspired sizeable research. Studies aim at identifying Libuše's mythical roots and hypothesize about Cosmas's literary and ideological choices in adapting this myth to express his views on the place of gender inequality in the formation of Bohemia's first legal state and royal power. She has been connected to the Old Testament's Deborah, a *phitonissa* of King Saul, Cumaen Sybil, Roman nymph Egeria, Norse goddess Gefjun, Polish maiden warrior Wanda, Irish queen Medb (Maeve), and even to Cosmas's own contemporary – Matilda of Tuscany (1046–1115).[35] The etymological and linguistic dimension in Cosmas's narrative strategy, however, has been left largely unnoticed, even though it is in the language that the main conflict and action are played out. Several etymons and etymological *fabulae* inform the plot of the story.

35. See: Třeštík, *Mýty* 126–31, 157; Geary 34–41; Álvarez-Pedrosa 6–7. On Matilda of Tuscany, see Karbusický, *Báje* 164–67, and Wolverton, *Cosmas* 161–69.

Let us begin with Libuše's name as an etymon, which is rendered in the chronicle as *Lubossa* (variants *Lybussie*, *Libusse*) and is related to the Indo-European root *leubh- that carries the semantics of 'love, like, care for' (cf. Old Czech *l'úbiti*, *l'ubý*, 'to love,' 'beloved'). Although Cosmas does not formally explain his etymology, the semantics of adoration and love is plainly embedded in his description of Libuše and can hardly be accidental – Libuše has a loveable nature and is universally loved by the people:

> Tercia natu minor, sed prudentia maior, vocitata est Lubossa, que etiam urbem tunc potentissimam iuxta silvam, que tendit ad pagum Ztibecnam, construxit et ex suo nomine eam Lubossin vocitavit. Hec fuit inter feminas una prorsus femina in consilio provida, in sermone strennua, corpore casta, moribus proba, ad dirimenda populi iudicia nulli secunda, omnibus affabilis, sed plus amabilis, feminei sexus decus et gloria, dictans negocia providenter virilia. (Cosmas 11)

> The third, younger by birth but older in wisdom, was called Libuše, who also built a most powerful city next to a forest that stretches towards the village of Zbečno, and named it Libušín after her own name. She was a truly unique woman among women, prudent in judgment, clever in speech, chaste in body, virtuous in character, unmatched in resolving people's disputes, likeable by all, but even more loveable, an honor and glory of the female sex, governing the affairs of men wisely.

The whole passage is composed in an etymological key, starting with the name of Libuše's fortress and ending with the wordplay based on the semantics of "liking" that is inscribed in her name and, consequently, explains her character. While the former etymology is fairly transparent, the latter is only understood by those who know both Czech and Latin: Cosmas uses Libuše's name in Czech as a seed for the etymological *fabula* about a likeable and lovable female judge that he tells in Latin. He further converts this *fabula* into an etymological *siuzhet* in which he acts out the content through etymological discourse.

Praising Libuše's talents and qualifications as a wise and fair arbiter in judicial affairs, Cosmas calls her "a truly unique woman among women" (*inter feminas una prorsus femina*), adding another etymon to the *fabula* that would drive the narrative further. A fateful decision changes her life and the balance of gender power among the early Czechs after she resolves a land dispute between two prominent and wealthy fellow citizens, who consider themselves leaders of the people. One of them – the discontented loser of the argument – challenges Libuše's authority as a woman to judge men. If Libuše has successfully judged men before without contest, what evidence does he have now to advance his case? Continuing the narrative thread 'Libuše is a woman of women', Cosmas identifies the evidence for Libuše's gender-based disqualification through etymologically motivated discourse when he describes her during the trial:

> Illa interim, ut est lasciva mollicies mulierum, quando non habet quem timeat virum, cubito subnixa ceu puerum enixa, alte in pictis stratis nimis molliter accubabat. Cumque per callem iusticie incedens, personam hominum non respiciens tocius controversie inter eos orte causam ad statum rectitudinis perduceret. (Cosmas 11–12)

> Meanwhile, with unconstrained[36] softness (*mollicies*) characteristic of women (*mulierum*) who have no man to fear, she was very gently (*molliter*) reclining high on an embroidered bed, leaning on her elbow as if she had given birth to a child. Stepping on the path of justice and taking no notice of the men's rank, she brought the whole controversy that had arisen between them to the state of rightness.

36. The Latin *lascivus* is polysemantic, producing meanings from 'sportive, playful, frolic, unruly' to the negative 'wanton, lustful, mischievous,' to neutral 'relaxed, free from restraint, unchecked.' In my translation, I have decided to go with the neutral connotation.

The mode of Libuše's behavior in Cosmas's description is iconically feminine, from the way she carries herself to the connotations of her pose. The word *mollities* designates 'softness, tenderness, weakness, effeminacy,' while the word *molliter* that describes Libuše's demeanor, has the meaning of 'calmly, quietly, softly, gently, easily' and is connected to the word *mulier*, 'a woman.' *Mulier* and its derivatives act as etymons and add the themes of feminine softness and weakness to the story. Through this etymological thread Cosmas foreshadows what is about to happen: it is precisely Libuše's gender and her 'softness' that provoke and empower the loser in the argument to challenge her suitability to judge and, therefore, rule men:

> O iniuria viris haud toleranda! Femina rimosa virilia iudicia mente tractat dolosa. Scimus profecto, quia femina sive stans seu in solio residens parum sapit, quanto minus, cum in stratis accubat? Re vera tunc magis est ad accessum mariti apta quam dictare militibus iura. Certum est enim longos esse crines omnibus, sed breves sensus mulieribus. Satius est mori, quam viris talia pati. Nos solos obprobrium nationibus et gentibus destituit natura, quibus deest rector et virilis censura, et quos premunt feminea iura. (Cosmas 12)

> Oh injustice, intolerable to men! This crackbrained woman handles trials of men with a wily mind. We certainly know that a woman, even when she sits or stands on a throne, has little understanding. But how much less of it must she have when she reclines on a bed? Isn't it then in fact more suitable for her to receive a husband than to dictate laws to warriors? For certainly, all women [*mulierēs*] have long hair, but short sense. It is better for men to die than suffer such things. We alone have been forsaken by nature and bear shame among nations and tribes because we lack a male leader and manly [*virilis*] judgment, and because we suffer under the woman's law.

In his speech full of gendered clichés and insults, the challenger switches from the neutral *femina t*o the semantically marked *mulier*, which, as Cosmas has already given us to understand, is etymologically compromised by the concepts of softness and weakness. This switch does not seem to be purely stylistic but is rhetorically purposeful and semantically significant. In classical, and even more so,

in medieval usage, the more refined noun *femina* tends to describe women in a theologically and poetically dignified sense. In contrast, the word *mulier* appears in contexts that discuss sexual or marital matters and emphasize the gender and social position of women.[37] In his authorial voiceover, Cosmas's attitude to Libuše seems to be quite impartial, but in direct speech, he has the challenger choose the word *mulier* to suggest that, as a woman-wife, *Libu*še's social position is incomplete without a man-husband. The word *mulier*, acting as an etymon, pushes the story to a new narrative twist, forcing Libuše respond to the challenge by offering to get herself a husband.

As a wise judge and leader, Libuše accepts the demands laid at her door. However, in her reply she rejects the word *mulier* and insists on referring to herself as *femina*:

> 'Ita est,' inquit, 'ut ais; femina sum, femina vivo, sed ideo parum vobis sapere videor, quia vos non in virga ferrea[38] iudico, et quoniam sine timore vivitis, merito me despicitis. Nam ubi est timor, ibi honor. Nunc autem necesse est valde, ut habeatis rectorem femina ferociorem.' (Cosmas 12)
>
> 'It is as you say,' she said, 'I am a woman [*femina*] and live as a woman [*femina*]. I seem to you to have little sense because I don't judge you with a rod of iron, and since you live without fear you rightly look down on me. For where is fear, there is honor. Now it is indeed necessary that you have a leader harsher than a woman.'

Libuše agrees that she should marry a man and lets people choose her a husband. The 'choice of the people', which Libuše manipulates using her prophetic skill and the magic powers of her sisters Kazi and Tetka, falls on a certain plowman, Přemysl by name, whose location and even name she herself foretells. All of these plot details work to create the idea of predestination. Likewise, both the occupation and name of the bridegroom candidate are revealing and justify the choice and occasion. The mythological and anthropological implications of the future ruler's agricultural pedigree and his connection to myths about a sacred deity-plowman have been well analyzed;[39] let us, therefore, focus on the etymological makeup of the story, that is, Přemysl's predestination as a suitable ruler as substantiated by his name, another etymon, the meaning of which Cosmas explicates in detail:

37. In classical usage, the word *mulier* is fairly common and is preferred when an opposition of man and woman (*vir* and *mulier*) is implied without any moral judgment or socially marked attitude. The word *femina* is less common but often fulfills the function of expressing respect. In Ciceronian language, for instance, the word *femina* is used rarely but always with laudatory adjectives or in contexts that denote respect, whereas the term *mulier*, often found in unmarked contexts, may be accompanied by pejorative connotations. If the word *femina* parallels *vir* in that it represents aristocratic moral qualities of a referent, the word *mulier* parallels homo in its tendency to indicate referents belonging to lower classes. The same rhetoric that characterizes Ciceronian language is observed in the comedies of Plautus, in the works of Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger and others (Santoro L'Hoir, especially the chapter "The Obscene *Mulier* and the Not-Heard *Femina*: Cicero's Feminine Terminology and Comic Prototypes" 29–46). From the Augustan period onwards, the usage of *femina* as a neutral term is preferred over *mulier* in poetry, as well as in educated language in general (Adams; also see Hiltbrunner; Polo de Beaulieu; Passera). For example, in her Marian lyrics and the visionary illustrated work *Scivias*, Hildegard of Bingen praises the Virgin Mary for having redeemed Eve's culpability and having made the feminine form an ideal for humanity. When contrasting the two women Hildegard uses the term *mulier* to refer to Eve and *femina* to refer to Mary. Rebecca Garber explains this stylistic choice by the preference of *mulier* to be used in discussing sexual or marital matters and the tendency of the more refined *femina* to mark the subject when it is theological in nature (Garber 50–53). This observation is echoed by the fact that the Latin *mulier* is used with the meaning 'wife' in a number of Romance languages, replacing the former Latin *uxor* (Adams 249–51).

38. A number of biblical and etymological allusions are at play in the use of the *virga ferrea*: Isidore connects *virga* to *vis*, 'vigor' and *virtus*, 'strength' (*Etymologiae* 17.6.18), while it has also been connected to the biblical symbol of authority in Revelation 2:27. Banaszkiewicz has shown that the names of leaders and law-givers in a number of Lithuanian, Polish, Rus, and Serbian legends (*e.g.*, Krok, Krak, Kii, Klukas), are etymologically related to the word for a 'curved stick' or a 'stick, baton,' which in ancient societies belonged to a leader and represented sacral-judicial authority (Banaszkiewicz, "Slavonic Origines Regni" 127–31).

39. See for example, Třeštík, *Mýty* 99–167; Golema, "Medieval Saint Ploughmen;" Oexle; Krappe.

> Viro nomen est Primizl,[40] qui **super** colla et capita vestra iura **excogitabit** plura; nam hoc nomen latine sonat **pre**meditans vel **superexcogitans**. Huius proles postera hac in omni terra in eternum regnabit et ultra. (Cosmas 15)
>
> The name of the man, who will contrive [*excogitabit*] many laws upon [super] your necks and heads, is Přemysl, for this name means, in Latin, 'he who thinks over' [*premeditans*] or 'he who thinks upon' [***superexcogitans***]. His future descendants will rule over all this land forever and ever.

40. Variants in other manuscripts also read, Premizl, Prziemysl, Przemysl (Cosmas 15).

This is one of Cosmas's most elegant and inventive etymological constructions, in which he weaves together Czech and Latin etymons. In the name Pře-mysl, the Czech root *mysl-* carries the semantics of 'thinking,' which Cosmas renders in Latin by the verb *meditor*. The prefix *pře-* (*per-) introduces the semantics of 'over, above, through, again' and adds the meanings of 'a greater extent', or 'doing something anew' to the primary semantics of the verb.[41] Thus, the Latin verb *prae-meditor* that Cosmas uses to interpret Přemysl's name as 'he who thinks over' (*premeditans*) seems like a straightforward choice. However, Cosmas goes beyond a simple task of explaining the meaning of the ruler's name; he embeds it etymologically into the narrative: because the future ruler contrives (*excogitabit*) many laws upon (*super*) the necks and heads of the Czechs, Cosmas suggests that Přemysl's name should also be interpreted as 'he who thinks upon' (*super-excogitans)*. In this way, Cosmas etymologically proves that Přemysl's very name predetermines him as a lawgiver.[42]

41. For the range of meanings and examples of usage, see Kopečný 1:162–69.

As predestined by Libuše's prophecy and the etymology of his name and his gender, when Přemysl becomes Libuše's husband he installs a truly manly rule in the country:

> Hic vir, qui vere ex virtutis merito dicendus est vir, hanc efferam gentem legibus frenavit et indomitum populum imperio domuit et servituti, qua nunc premitur, subiugavit atque omnia iura, quibus hec terra utitur et regitur, solus cum sola Lubossa dictavit. (Cosmas 18)
>
> This man, who indeed deserves to be called a man [*vir*] on account of his strength [*ex virtutis*], restrained this savage people with laws and subdued the untamed people by his rule, and subjugated them to the servitude, by which they are

42. Noteworthy, after his death, Přemysl is succeeded by Nezamysl, whose name, contrasting that of Přemysl, means "not thinking". This has inspired a hypothesis that Přemysl and Nezamysl personify mythological twins, cultural heroes, who are related to the theme of fertility (cf. Přemysl is a plowman who works the land), and often differ in intellect (Ivanov, Ward). The names also suggest a possible parallel with Titans Prometheus and his twin brother Epimetheus, whose roles in Greek mythology are similar (intelligent and dim-witted), and whose names mean 'forethought' and 'hindsight' respectively (Třeštík, *Mýty* 154).

> still oppressed. All the laws, which this land uses and by which it is ruled, he alone with only Libuše composed.

Now let us recap and see how all these etymons work together in the etymological *fabula* and are arranged in the *siuzhet*: by the nature of her name, Libuše is a loveable and extraordinary woman with a prophetic gift, which distinguishes her as a judge. However, Libuše's shortcoming as *mulier* (a woman vis-à-vis a man) comes from her quality of *mollities* (softness and weakness). As such, she is deemed unfit to be a leader-judge, and has to be joined by a man (*vir*) as a husband, whose legitimacy and power come from his manly strength (*virtus)*. She thus teams up with Přemysl, who not only stands as an archetype of a man (*vir, qui vere ex virtutis merito dicendus est vir*), but also possesses extraordinary intellectual abilities, necessary for a law-giver, as is predestined in his name.

No need to look far for Cosmas's inspiration in his handling the gender theme in the Libuše-Přemysl etymological *fabula*. It comes from Isidore's *Etymologies* 11.2.17–19, in which the distribution of gender roles is explained through the interpretation of the nouns '*vir*' and '*mulier*':

> A man (*vir*) is so called, because in him resides greater power (*vis*) than in a woman – hence also 'strength' (*virtus*) received its name – or else because he deals with a woman by force (*vis*). But the word woman (*mulier*) comes from softness (*mollities*), as if *mollier*, after a letter has been cut and a letter changed, is now called *mulier*. These two are differentiated by the respective strength and weakness of their bodies. But strength (*virtus*) is greater in a man (*vir*), lesser in a woman (*mulier*), so that she will submit to the power of the man; evidently this is so lest, if women were to resist, lust should drive men to seek out something else or throw themselves upon the male sex. (Barney et al. 242)

Thus, the gender motifs and terminology that Cosmas uses to support the mythological Libuše-Přemysl story come from Isidore: the weakness of a wife due to her softness and the power of a husband because of his strength.

The Foundation of Prague

My last pick – out of many etymology-infused tales in Cosmas's chronicle – is an episode in which Libuše prophesizes the foundation of Prague. Like her other predictions, it is etymologically motivated and features a recognizable performative ritual of naming. No sooner than Přemysl gets to his lawmaking activity, Libuše has a vision of a future city:

> Urbem conspicio, fama que sydera tanget,
> Est locus in silva, villa qui distat ab ista
> Terdenis stadiis, quem Wlitaua terminat undis.
> Hunc ex parte aquilonali valde munit valle profunda rivulus Bruznica; at australi ex latere latus mons nimis petrosus, qui a petris dicitur Petrin, supereminet loca. Loci autem mons curvatur in modum delphini, marini porci, tendens usque in predictum amnem. Ad quem cum perveneritis, invenietis hominem in media silva limen domus operantem. Et quia ad humile limen etiam magni domini se inclinant, ex eventu rei urbem, quam edificabitis, vocabitis Pragam. (Cosmas 18–19)

> I see a city, whose fame will reach the stars,
> The place is in the forest, thirty stades from this village,
> The Vltava marks the boundaries with its waves.
> From the north, the deep valley of the stream Brusnice greatly fortifies the place; from the south, a wide and very rocky [*petrosus*] mountain rises above it. It is called *Petrin* from the word 'rock' [*a petris*]. In that spot the mountain is curved like a dolphin, a sea pig, stretching up to the aforementioned stream. When you reach that place, you will find a man working on a threshold [*limen*] of a house in the middle of the forest. And since even mighty lords bend over a lowly threshold, because of this event you will call the city that you will build *Praga*.

The people immediately set out to find the prophesized place in old forest, and, having found it, they build the city of Prague, "the mistress of all Bohemia."[43] In this story, the etymon 'threshold' for the Old Czech *prag* forms a motivating narrative nucleus in an etymological *fabula*.[44] Quite literally, it metonymically symbolizes the foundation of a new home and the establishment of a new city. In the

43. "Continuo itur in antiquam silvam et reperto dato signo in predicto loco urbem, tocius Boemie domnam, edificant Pragam." (Cosmas 19)

44. It is hard to tell if Cosmas was aware of an alternative meaning of the Czech *prag*, "rapid," from which the Czech capital is more likely to derive its name, as do a number of other Slavic toponyms, such as Praga, a neighborhood in Warsaw, Praga, a name for Chotin near Kamenets, or the name for the tenth-century rapids of the Dnieper. As a mystical border and an entry into a new world, the concept of a threshold figures prominently in the semiotics of space across ancient societies. For the Slavic case, see for example, Baiburin. Importantly, the concept of liminality has been connected with the rites of passage. Following the conceptualization of the "liminal phase" in the rites of passage by Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner has focused on the role of liminality in the rituals of passage (Van Gennep; Turner 94–111). In our story, the foundation of Prague quite literally signifies a liminal phase.

siuzhet that Cosmas invents, the etymology enters narrative through the act of Libuše's prophecy, which she utters "in the presence of Přemysl and other elders from the people" ("presente viro suo Primizl et aliis senioribus populi astantibus"; Cosmas 18).

The same etymological *fabula* is emplotted in the *Chronica Bohemorum* of Přibík Pulkava of Radenín, Cosmas's fourteenth-century successor in shaping the representation of Bohemia's past, a court historian of Holy Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia, Charles IV.[45] Pulkava takes up Cosmas's *fabula* of the foundation of Prague and develops it into his own etymological *siuzhet:*

45. Pulkava; Bláhová, *Kroniky* 572–77.

> 'Ad quem locum cum perveneritis, primum hominem, quem inveneritis, alloquamini, et id, quod vobis pro primo verbo responderit, ex eiusdem verbi nomine locum eundem vocabitis, idemque castrum eodem nomine instaurabitis et edificiis consumare debetis.' Qui missi implentes domine sue iussa pervenerunt ad dictum locum, in quo invenerunt hominem lignum fabricantem, quem, quid operaretur, interrogare ceperunt, qui respondens dixit: Limen. Nunccii vero missi locum statim signantes eundem, preparaverunt edificia castri, quod Prag, id est limen lingua slauonica, vocaverunt. (Pulkava 8)
>
> 'When you get to that place, speak to the first man whom you come upon, and the very first word with which he responds to you, with that same word name this place, and erect a castle of the same name and complete it with buildings.' Following the order of their mistress, the messengers reached the said place, where they found a man, who was working the wood, and they started to ask him, on what he was laboring. He said in response: 'a threshold'. Surely, the sent messengers, immediately marking that place, prepared to build a castle that they called *Prag*, that is, 'threshold' in the Slavic language.

Pulkava's etymological *siuzhet f*eatures a double speech act performance: in the first speech act, Libuše creates a narrative frame for the second speech act to reveal the name of Prague – the first word spoken to the envoys is the etymon.[46] Both versions, Cosmas's and Pulkava's, grow out of the same etymological *fabula*, according to which Prague receives its name from the Czech word for threshold.

46. Incidentally, Pulkava seems to be partial to the invention technique that uses a speech act: in another episode in his chronicle, he transforms a psalm quote into a "voice from Heavens" to show divine intervention in support of Sts. Cyril and Methodius's defense of the liturgy in the Slavic language (Verkholantsev, *Slavic Letters* 84–85).

Both authors construct their etymological *siuzhets* with the help of the verbal agency of Libuše's prophetic gift in order to dramatize the *fabula* and enact etymology.

Origin Stories in the *Legenda Christiani*

The plot twists and details of Cosmas's etymology-infused narrative are especially striking when compared to the only other, and presumably earlier, account of Bohemia's past, which belongs to one Brother Christian, a member of the Přemyslid family. This late tenth-century composition, known as *Legenda Christiani* and fully titled *Vita et passio sancti Wenceslai et sancte Ludmile ave eius* ("*The Life and Passion of St. Wenceslas and His Grandmother St. Ludmila*"), tells a factually similar but conceptually different story.[47] In *Legenda Christiani*, the early Czechs (*Sclavi Boemi*), who live like "horses unrestrained by the bridle" without law, a city, or centralized autocratic rule, ask a nameless female oracle (*phitonissa*) for prophetic advice on how to overcome a terrible plague. The oracle tells them to build a city and get a ruler. Having built a city and named it Praga, the people find a wise and resourceful plowman Přemysl (spelled *Premizl*), make him a duke and marry him to the oracle.[48]

Christian's account is characterized by a noticeable indifference to the meaning of names and their etymology: he does not mention *phitonissa*'s name and, although he names *Praga* and *Premizl*, he shows no etymological curiosity. The reverse sequence of events in *Legenda Christiani* (*i.e.*, the foundation of Prague precedes the discovery of Přemysl and his marriage to the oracle), as well as the themes of primordial uncultured people and the golden age in these accounts make historians hypothesize that both authors borrowed from the political theory of the city (polis) as a pre-condition of the state that was received from classical antiquity. Specifically, they point to Cicero's *De inventione* (1.2), which was well known as a rhetoric manual in Christian's and Cosmas's times (Chaloupecký 336; Třeštík, *Mýty* 111).

In contrast to Christian, for Cosmas the meaning of Libuše's name as a beloved leader provides an important narrative element: he makes her the epicenter of an etymologically driven account of the social history of gender relations, embedding it in the story of the beginning of the Přemyslid dynasty. He justifies the choice of Přemysl as a wise ruler and lawmaker etymologically, and shows that both the

47. A revised Latin edition and a Czech translation is by Ludvíkovský; English translation: Kantor 163–203. Christian's composition is dated to 992–94 and his dedicatory note is addressed to the second bishop of Prague, Saint Adalbert. However, its peculiar chronicle-like narrative, which stands out among other documents from that period, as well as its idiosyncratic ideological agenda, make some scholars doubt the text's authenticity and suggest a later date. The relationship between Cosmas's chronicle and the *Legenda Christiani* is one of the most debated issues in Czech historiography, which is also connected to the question of dating. See, for instance, Kalhous, *Legenda Christiani*; Třeštík, *Mýty*, esp. 109–10; Kølln; Karbusický, *Báje* 48–53; Králík; Chaloupecký.

48. Ludvíkovský 16, 18 (ch. 2).

location and the name of the political center of Bohemia are likewise etymologically preordained. Through etymologically driven narrative Cosmas not only provides a storyline depth to his account but he also justifies his role as a historian who has to verify "*senum fabulosa relatio*" and support his narration with evidence.

Conclusion: Etymon as a Historiographic Fact and a Narrative Device

In this essay I have undertaken to test the use of *etymologia* as a narrative device in Cosmas's *Chronica Boemorum.* Using Cosmas as a case study, I argue that medieval historians use the etymological method epistemologically and, as a result, it helps them tell a story. I suggest that dismissing passages with etymological content as 'false etymology' or 'trifles of style' deprives us of a valuable tool to analyze narrative strategies in medieval historical discourse.

Etymologies most often occur in the stories of origin that relate the legendary past, often supplied by the "*senum fabulosa relatio*" and obscured by conjecture. We should thus consider how medieval historians approach the oral tradition as a source in general. History being understood as an interconnected sequence of archetypal plots and stories, historians feel the pressure of assimilating oral legends into a narrative that fits the learned historical discourse. The resulting product is an ultimate case of intertextuality: it integrates a multiplicity of texts and is a melting pot of the linguistic mechanisms of orality and literacy. The analysis of narrative elements and structures in such complex intertext must likewise be multidimensional. The mythological layer that reflects a narrative stock of personages, places, and themes is itself intertextual and comes from an array of oral forms – myths, beliefs, rituals, riddles, songs, and sayings that the author has used as source material for his account. All these co-exist, interact, mutate, and sometimes superimpose each other even before they reach the historian writer. It is thus hard to establish which versions the writers of histories encounter. This is when comparative anthropological and mythological analyses prove to be effective. When oral myths and folk legends do reach the medieval historian they are often plain and flat (like the one recorded in the *Legenda Christiani*) and in the learned historian's eyes they require a literary mesh and fretwork to come to life in historical discourse. This is why the historian examines them with the language of knowledge and

frames them in a literary matrix that holds all "true facts" together. Among other devices, the historian turns to *etymologia* especially when other reliable evidence is lacking and language remains the only witness vis-à-vis the oral tradition.

Identifying the role of Cosmas's etymologies in his narrative should also acknowledge what they are not. They are not metaphors or allegories. They are not poetic "trifles of style." They are not employed to create terminology or a mnemonic aid. They do not inform theological exegesis. A close reading of Cosmas's use of the etymological method suggests that he perceives language not simply as a literary means of account-giving but also as an analytical investigative tool of historical scholarship. Cosmas enhances the narrative fabric of oral tales with the emplotments of etymons, resorting, where necessary, to models and archetypes that come from the Bible and classical authors: in the discussed episodes, we have seen that Cosmas borrows from the Old Testament, Virgil, and Cicero. The etymologically motivated narrative thus verifies the truthfulness of the oral tradition, in which language is a locus of legitimacy. Moreover, in two of the above discussed emplotments, the etymon is performed as a speech act, which further emphasizes the Christian belief in the capacity of language to create, act, and effectuate action.

In the question of a source language for his etymological inquiries, Cosmas does not observe any hierarchy in his choice of the vernacular or Latin. As we have seen above, he moves with ease between Czech etymons and Latin narration, and calls on both languages to provide etymological evidence, when appropriate. This is consistent with the Stoic ideas about the linguistic insight of early people and is also characteristic of the etymological behavior of other contemporaneous historians (Verkholantsev, "Language as Artefact").

Cosmas's understanding of language as a natural sign and the mode of naming as a speech act has foundations in two important sources: (1) it is informed by the Christian theological notion of the speech act as a divinely inspired mode of naming, which is illustrated in the biblical stories of Creation and speaking in tongues; and (2) it is linked to the Stoic belief in the power of the etymological method to recover the wisdom of primordial people. Cosmas's language of *etymologia* is not simply mythographic, it is etiological and epistemological. He executes in practice Isidore's theoretical postulate that the deeds of the past (*res gestae*), as a core bone of *historia*, come to life through linguistic expression and could only be known through language. Cosmas's concern about his grammatical skill is

then not merely an anxiety of a writer but it is also a concern about his ability to produce a historically competent work.

Modern scholars hypothesize and argue about Cosmas's ideological objectives in his decision to include the legends of Bohemia's origins. Should we understand his 'Tale of Přemysl' as a carefully crafted allegory and critique of the political order of his own time? Or is it simply a scholarly and critical retelling of oral legends? The role that etymons and their emplotments play in motivating Cosmas's narrative demonstrates that an unbiased historical interpretation of Cosmas's work can be obtained only through the careful narratological analysis of all elements that pervade the highly nuanced, multilayered, and intertextual fabric of medieval historical narratives. Whether Cosmas sets a goal to express his political views or not, we should bear in mind that his purpose and imagination are driven and constrained by many literary, historiographic, and epistemological canons and practices of the medieval historian's craft, and not all of his choices are necessarily ideologically motivated.

In one of his presidential addresses to the Royal Historical Society, Richard Southern observed that medieval historians learned from the classics that "the destiny of nations is the noblest of all historical themes" (Southern 23–28). He comments on the trajectory of historical works, in which authors search for national origins in ancient Roman history and find them in the Trojan pedigree, starting with Widukind of Corvey, who wrote about the origins of the Saxons, and all the way to Geoffrey of Monmouth, who is "looked on as a new beginning in literature which helped launch Europe in a wave of romanticism and fantasy" (23–28). Cosmas's chronicle shares many features that Southern points out as characteristic of the type of historical writing that draws inspiration from Roman history:

> In the tenth century several new peoples – Saxons and Normans in the first place, but also Poles and Hungarians – were beginning to achieve political importance and respectability. With this there came the conviction, or perhaps only the hope, that they were no longer barbarians but belonged to the civilized peoples of Europe. This in its turn bred a desire for a past, and a sense of awe at the providential steps which had brought them out of barbarism. In these circumstances the obvious source for a national history lies in the legends and myths of the people. But the new peoples of Europe were largely cut off from their mythological origins

> by their conversion to Christianity and by the Latin learning which stood between the literate part of society and its native past. Hence it was in Roman history that they found the broken pieces which they could build into a picture of their own origins and destiny. (Southern 23–24)

Although Cosmas is undeniably a literary prisoner of Roman history, Southern's observation that the "new peoples of Europe" shunned their mythological origins in their desire for a Christian past can hardly apply to Cosmas's chronicle, or, for that matter, to chronicles written about the Poles and Hungarians at that time. Similarly to Cosmas, the anonymous author of the early twelfth-century *Gesta Principum Polonorum* (often referred to as Gallus Anonymus, on account of his presumed origin) and the anonymous author of the early thirteenth-century *Gesta Hungarorum* (referred to as Anonymous Notary of King Béla) take great interest in pagan mythological origins of their respective peoples and trace their dynasties to legendary rulers (Banaszkiewicz, *Podanie*, "Slavonic Origines Regni," and "Slawische Sagen;" Kristó). In fact, Paul Knoll and Frank Schaer, the editors and translators of the *Gesta Principum Polonorum*, even remark in one of the footnotes: "The anonymous monk places much less emphasis on the 'discontinuity' between pagan and Christian past than most medieval historians do. Rather, some kind of divine approval is granted already to the pagan ancestors of the dynasty" (Knoll and Schaer xxxv). This observation is also true about Cosmas's chronicle. However, even though central European historians did not discount the pagan origins of their peoples and dynasties, Southern's principal point – that they look at that pagan past through the prism of Latin learning and Roman antiquity – indeed applies to all three authors. In his approach to recovering Bohemia's past, Cosmas understands history as inseparable from the canons of Latin rhetoric and grammar. Confronted with the oral tradition, he handles it as a linguist and a playwright: he verifies legends etymologically and emplots etymons with the help of biblical and classical narrative models.

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JAN RÜDIGER

Orchards of Power

The Importance of Words Well Spoken in Twelfth-Century Occitania

Abstract

Occitan, now a regional language of France, has long been recognized as one of the most important vernaculars of the Medieval West – both for being the language of the troubadours and for being the first Romance (or Neo-Latin) language to develop a fully-fledged *scripta*. This article argues that unlike other regions, twelfth-century Occitania had not diglossia (learned Latin/vernacular) but triglossia. A courtly sociolect, written and spoken, vied with and even outdid Latin in large sectors of cultural production. Under particular circumstances, courtly culture, including courtly love, developed into a political and economic code whose relevance went far beyond the stylization of elite sociability with which French or German courtliness is often associated. The political culture which developed in Languedoc was one of the factors why the Albigensian Crusade (1209–29) was an unusually violent and consequential period of warfare.

The story of Occitan is one of past linguistic splendour, subsequent misfortunes, and present precariousness as well as some interesting future challenges, not least to the way we think of the European linguistic map. A lot of linguistic communities imagine themselves to be more or less coterminous with past or present political entities. Communities less often acknowledge that the reverse can equally happen: that political boundaries can, and nowadays usually will, become linguistic frontiers. The example of France is a case in point: the introduction of modern standard French as the compulsory language of school education, official life (army, politics, law), and subsequently mass media has resulted, in the course of two or three generations, in its generalised adoption by practically all the population within the territory of France, more or less irrespective of previous local or regional linguistic practice. The result is that a number of other languages spoken within France are now uniformly considered 'regional languages' vis-à-vis French. Some are variants of quite large linguistic communities with their centres of gravity in neighbouring nation states, such as Flemish and Catalan, or indeed Alsatian, whose

status as a dialect of 'German' is very much under dispute, hinging as it does on the thorny question of what (if anything) is meant by 'German.' Other languages are solidly regional in the sense that they are confined to, or indeed define, a traditional region, such as Corsican or Breton.

Occitan cuts across all of them. On the one hand, the term 'Occitan,' first generalised in the 1930s, has for long been widely accepted as the blanket term for the variants of Romance spoken in *Aquitània*, *Lemosin*, *Auvèrnha*, *Gasconha*, *Lengadòc* and *Provença*, to give them their Occitan names. This usage reflects a notion of supra-regional linguistic coherence (the language designation 'Provençal,' traditionally employed by Romanists since the nineteenth century, now normally refers only to the dialectal variant *prouvençau*, the language of Nobel prize winner Frederic Mistral and today a source of local pride in Provence proper east of the Rhône), which in turn makes present-day Occitan by far the largest regional language of France. (It also stretches out into a small Alpine section of Italian Piemont and the minuscule Catalan Val d'Aran.) On the other hand the link between language and region is much less straightforward than in Brittany or Alsace, let alone Corsica. There has never been a political or socio-economical entity englobing most or all of the Occitan linguistic area, nor has any political entity ever been called 'Occitania' – until 2016, when a mostly web-based popular vote came down hugely in favour of *Occitanie* as the future name of the fusion of the French political regions of *Midi-Pyrénées* and *Languedoc-Roussillon*. The formal adoption of the name by the regional assembly and its subsequent endorsement by the French Conseil d'État despite right-wing uneasiness about a possible boost to separatism and some unrest in Catalan-speaking Rosselló about its subsumption under *Occitanie* may open a new chapter in the linguistic history of Occitan. It remains to be seen how actively the regional authorities will promote, and seek to profit from, Occitan as its emblematic language, and how this in turn will affect the status of Occitan in the neighbouring mostly Occitanophone regions of *Nouvelle Aquitaine* and *Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur*. After all, while the movement of regional and social reassertion that has given Occitan a boost in the latter half of the 20th century has been strongest in the areas that now form *Occitanie*, the new region only covers about two-fifths of the linguistic area of Occitan, a fact which has been much commented upon during the naming debate.

The recent French regional reform did something else, too, in

terms of relaunching past splendours. In merging *Midi-Pyrénées* with *Languedoc-Roussillon*, it reassembled, probably unintentionally, for the first time in eight hundred years what had been the lands of the Counts of Tolosa/Toulouse until the Albigensian Wars (1209–29). This fact, which as far as I can see has been very little commented upon, may in the long run affect the study of the history of the region just as much as its new name may impact on the study of its language. The counts of the house called by modern historians, after their most frequent male name, the Raimondins and who ruled in the region from *c.* 900 until after the Albigensian Wars have so far been much less in the limelight of medieval history than their princely peers in other parts of France. This may at least in part have to do with the absence of any household regional term with which to label them. It is easy to think and talk about, say, the dukes of Normandy or of Burgundy or the counts of Flanders because there is a general idea of what and where Normandy, Burgundy and Flanders are. Perhaps those ideas are only precise up to a point ('Burgundy' in particular is a slippery term), but at least there is a mental map with them on it ready. In contrast, there is no name, medieval or modern (until the 2016 creation of *Occitanie*), to designate the whole of the lands that were more or less constantly under the more or less effective rule of the Raimondins. The counts themselves had a series of local titles at their disposal for their chancery to make use of; when a single term was needed, contemporaries tended to choose the name of the prestigious town which had once housed the long-remembered Visigothic kingdom: *comes Tolosanus*, *lo comte de Tolosa*. By the same token, the rulers of Normandy or Catalonia were frequently styled princes of Rouen or Barcelona. But whereas in those cases the eminence of the cities did not preclude the formation of regional blanket terms and consciousnesses, no regional term (and possibly no regional consciousness either) developed in 'the lands between the Garonne and the Rhône,' as documents sometimes refer to the ensemble for want of a word.[1]

1. *Cf.* Schmidt; Genty; Déjean.

This lack of regional coherence is one of the salient points in almost any political history of the Raimondins, especially in a comparative perspective. Neighbouring Catalonia is the most obvious points of comparison, but even in a general West Frankish/'French' perspective including Anjou, Normandy, Flanders or Champagne, the Tolosan counts are normally contrasted for negatives. They did not take over the 'peace' concept and use it to form hierarchies of allegiance, they did not curb a series of vociferous vassals, they did not

achieve control of the most important sees and abbeys, in a word: they did not form a principality.[2] Some of these negatives have to do with sources. The archives of the counts of Barcelona are intact but those of the counts of Tolosa are lost; there are numerous richly detailed chronicles from, and about, Normandy and Anjou but none from the Raimondin lands. Some of these lacunae are significant in their turn: the princes of Normandy and Anjou saw to it that their deeds were told but the Raimondins (apparently) did not. The overall result is that the modern regional historiography of the Raimondin lands is quite distinct from most French regions in that it does not normally focus on the history of the princes as an obvious point of reference.

2. Cf. Barthélemy; Fossier; Bonnassie, "Esquisse."

The above negatives which blur that focus are enormously reinforced by the fact that two major themes 'steal the show:' on the one hand, Catharism (a subject I will return to), and on the other hand, the Albigensian War. Of course the Tolosan counts were heavily involved in the latter and also turn up in discussions of the former. But both are quite singular events in general medieval history, and their discussion does to an extent eclipse the regional context. To put it in a mildly exaggerated form, the entire history of the Tolosan counts and their lands has always been one long eve of the Albigensian War. Quite removed from those big stories, regional structural historiography, which has taken some momentum as a result of Pierre Bonnassie's work at the university of Toulouse II in the 1990s, is delving deep into local power relations and has contributed a great deal to the debate on the extent of 'feudalism' in eleventh–twelfth-century Languedoc. The scene is further complicated by the fact that the same region is the setting for a third 'party,' namely literary scholars, to whom it is essentially the land of the troubadours, and questions of regional politics, social relations, and economy are above all the background against which to assess their songs.[3]

3. Armengaud/Lafont provide a 'History of Occitania' from a regionalist scholarly viewpoint. Paterson is an excellent overview from a literary viewpoint; cf. in a similar vein Brunel-Lobrichon et Duhamel-Amado. For milestones in the long debate on Occitan feudal society, see *Structures sociales*; *Structures féodales*; Débax, *Sociétés*; Débax, *Féodalité*; Duhamel-Amado.

In all, it is a challenging situation. The creation of political *Occitanie* and the current general unrest in France, not to mention the processes going on in Catalonia, may lead to new attitudes towards regional history, both intellectually and institutionally. A newly-formed region with a strong notion of the importance of its medieval history may choose to invest in a field that is as yet somewhat fragmented, while elsewhere there may be a renewal of interest in French history, or rather, histories in France. At the crossroads of linguistic-literary and historical scholarships, and with a major theme of religious history currently under ground-breaking discussion, the 'lands

of the Raimondins' may well end up as a subject in their own right. In what follows I want to sketch a possible approach towards such a view. I am going to argue that a major peculiarity of twelfth-century Occitan – its development of a spoken courtly sociolect at a distance to both formal Latin and to 'the vernacular,' everyday speech – and the peculiar situation of 'triglossia' thus created is essentially linked to the political culture in the Raimondin lands and served very much as 'the missing link,' taking the place of the series of negatives with which Tolosan Occitania is normally described. The argument is of necessity partly sketchy and may appear somewhat sweeping;[4] however, it may not be amiss in an *Interfaces* context. This journal aims to bring specialists from various disciplines and areas of expertise into dialogue, and it may be that even a somewhat sweeping discussion of one language area at one period may be of use to experts in other fields, for instance so as to encourage comparative discussion, just as a Romance scholar might welcome a concise discussion of, say, Irish or Georgian court cultures. With this in mind, I should now like to bring up a few questions for discussion: what was actually going on in the 'orchards of power' in twelfth-century Tolosan Occitania; why did the power-brokers put so much store by creating an image of themselves as lovers; and why did they make up such a strange language to do it in?

4. For a fuller discussion of some of the argument presented here, see Rüdiger, *Aristokraten*.

1. Triglossia: Latin, Occitan, and the *parlar cortés*

In linguistic history, Occitan occupies pride of place in the storyline of Western multilingualism as the first properly 'post-Latin' written language, that is, the first Romance vernacular to develop a fully-fledged *scripta* consciously distinct from Latin. In literary history, Occitan also occupies pride of place with troubadour poetry, the first of the 'courtly love' corpora, starting off *c.* 1100 to be followed by the French trouvères and the High German minnesingers about half a century later. These two 'firsts,' though obviously related to each other, are by no means the same thing. Extant troubadour manuscripts date back no further than the early thirteenth century, and the traditional debate about possible written antecedents has been much enriched by the reception of orality scholarship into medieval studies in the past three or four decades. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it is possibly safest to assume that troubadour poetry, its composition as well as its diffusion, relied primarily if perhaps not

exclusively on oral techniques of invention and memorisation. The enormous formal intricacies of much of it – especially its most prestigious form, the *canҫon* ('le grand chant courtois' in Roger Dragonetti's and Paul Zumthor's term),[5] the courtly love song proper – are no argument to the contrary, as a civilisation so imbued with literacy as our own is only too apt to assume. In fact, formal intricacy is, among other things, a useful memorisation device. I will return to this aspect of courtly oratory towards the end of this article; the point I am making now is that the emergence of troubadour poetry is neither dependent on nor constitutive of the development of an independent 'post-Latin' *scripta*, although both phenomena may be aspects of the same intellectual dynamics. It is the purpose of this article to examine different aspects of the culture of 'words well spoken' (*belhs mots*) and its social significance in twelfth-century Tolosan Occitania. Admiring surprise about the seemingly *ex nihilo* creation of both troubadour poetry and the poetic language it came in has to some extent eclipsed the study of early Occitan as a written language outside versified courtly oratory.

5. For an introductory overview of scholarship, see Nichols, "Early troubadours;" criticism is further developed in Nichols, "Et si on repensait."

Common in charters and documents, Occitan pre-dates the proliferation if not the first attestation of written French, Castilian or Italian (though not Sardic) by about a century. Extant pre-1200 charters written entirely in Occitan run up to almost a thousand pieces, coming from all parts of the linguistic area except the Alpine and the Atlantic fringes. To highlight this non-troubadour achievement, Charles Camproux coined the binomy "langue de la poésie" vs "langue de la cité" (Camproux 18). Later scholars such as Max Pfister and Pierre Bec, perhaps feeling that the latter term carried too much of mid-century enthusiasm about the 'rise of urban bourgeoisie,' have preferred to fuse these concepts into the more general one of the emergence of an early Occitan *Schriftsprache* or *scripta*.[6]

6. Pfister; Bec, "Constitution." A short but thorough introduction to Occitan is Bec, *Langue.*

Philippe Martel, taking a look at how Occitan gradually inserted itself into Latinate literacy, noticed that from the mid-eleventh century onwards charters might contain single Occitan sentences, reflecting oral formulas or statements. A typical example reads: *Ego N. iuro te N. ta vida e ta membra e que d'aquesta hora en ant eu non t'enguanarei de ta honor ni de ton haver ni de tos homes. Hoc fuit factum anno*, etc. ("I N. swear to you N. not to kill or maim you and that as from now I shall not plot to take your possessions and belongings and men", plus date, place and witness list).[7] Titles at the beginning and dates and witness lists at the end would typically take Latin guise, whereas the words that might actually be spoken did not. A

7. HGL V n° 19 (charter of the Count of Tolosa, 1174).

generation earlier, Jane Martindale had read a short narrative text which has since become famous among historians as a major source for the political culture of the 'feudal age,' the so-called *Conventum* between Count William V of Poitiers (grandfather of the 'first troubadour') and a local potentate named Hugh of Lusignan, datable to about 1030, as a superficial Latinisation of what really was an early example of Poitevin, or North-Western Occitan. A typical direct speech reads as follows: *Senior meus, valde est mi male quia senior quem feci per tuum consilium modo mi tollit meum fiscum* ("My lord" – complains Hugh – "it is very bad with me since the lord I made on your suggestion has soon taken away my estate").[8] Both specimens represent the tension but no separation between the morphology and (to a certain degree) syntax and lexicon of post-Carolingian learned Latin on the one hand, and spoken formal Occitan on the other.

8. Martindale; cf. Beech, Rüdiger, *Charlemagne*.

Martel's point was that the 'Latin' of such texts tends to deviate from post-Carolingian standards whenever Romance syntactic and lexical proprieties would make it difficult for laymen to follow the rendering of a 'Latin' written charter when it was read out, for instance by a literate local cleric. Latin was not 'bad' because learning had so deplorably declined in large areas of Southern Gaul but for reasons of communicational commodity. "Occitan scribes were perfectly able to write in Latin when they wished to, if not with genius – which was not expected of them – then at any rate with a fluency that makes it clear they were not reduced to using Occitan out of sheer incompetence" (Martel 27f.). It has been noted that Occitania took no part in the Latinate intellectuality that goes by the name of 'twelfth-century renaissance;' in fact, John of Salisbury advised his pupils against attending the schools at Montpelhièr/Montpellier around 1160 on account of the poor Latin they were apt to pick up there. John had a point, but the point was valid for a reason: apparently, there was not much demand for Latinate high-flyers in the far south of Latin Europe.

Why, then, a shift away from this well-established semi-orality of the written documents? Why write charters in Occitan at all? From about 1100 onwards, gifts, sales, inventories, oaths of fidelity are written in Occitan in full. Traditionally, this has been explained as a further step towards 'communicational commodity' in a region with poor Latin. But as Martel and others have shown, it wasn't. In fact, it is rather the opposite: the development of a written standard for a spoken language is an onerous task even if it is necessary, and in the case of Occitan around 1100, it was not necessary, but constituted a

considerable intellectual surplus effort. Neither was it a sectarian pleasure: aside from the fact that it happened at all, the most surprising feature of written Occitan is its early supra-regional uniformity. This cannot be explained (away) by the fact that eleventh-century Occitan had not so much evolved phonologically that the basic rules of Latin graphemism could not longer be applied, because it is precisely the new phonemes, such as final /-tʃ / (<-CTU), typically spelled <g>, and the *mouillé* consonants /ʎ/ and /ɲ/, spelled typically if not uniformly <lh> and <nh> (the two latter graphemes were later borrowed into Galician-Portuguese), which gave the emergent Occitan grapholect its distinguishing features. Quite unlike French, Occitan did not develop different regional grapholects ('written dialects') such as the Anglo-Norman and Picard versions of French, but went the opposite way: early regionalisms, probably reflecting considerable variations in the spoken language, disappeared quickly from the script.

There is a marked difference in preference for either Latin or Occitan in twelfth-century-document charters according to provenance. The higher secular clergy, monasteries, and the chancellaries of the Tolosan counts generally maintained Latin. The usage among the newly established military orders and most laymen, rural and urban, varied, with coastal and lowland areas preferring Latin and more mountaineous and inland regions opting for Occitan. This difference indicates that the shift towards using standardised Occitan fully in documents was by no means inevitable or automatic, but a functional process supposing cultural choices. To give an example, in the large and expanding town of Tolosa/Toulouse in the plain linking the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, mainstay of the Raimondin counts, both urban and private records were generally kept in Latin, while notarial bilingualism started just outside the city boundaries. When the urban elites that controlled the nascent commune until the early thirteenth century had their documents written in Latin, they either had practical reasons to do so (for instance, if they concerned long-distance trading with places like Genoa or Troyes) or, for the most part, emulated the chancellery of their counts, to whose entourages the earlier 'patrician' families had originally belonged and from the proximity to whom they still drew much of their social capital. But they knew the alternatives. When they interacted with their peers and (often) cousins in the adjacent countryside, they drew up their acts in Occitan.

So, before or at the time of first becoming the 'language of the

troubadours,' Occitan was established with a widely used, supra-regional written standard, sporting or even flaunting its grammatical and graphematic conventions. At the time of the first troubadours we know about, apart from documentary prose, Occitan was also used for religious and patristic writing which comprised biblical paraphrase (*L'evangeli de Sant Joan*), homiletics, versified saints' lives (*Cançon de Santa Fe*), as well as *Lo Boëci,* a poetic abridgement of *De consolatione philosophiae*. When handled, or rather mouthed, by the troubadours, the language had to meet an additional, rather demanding set of requirements, in addition to supra-regional standardisation. They concerned lexicon, syntax, and pragmatics. There had to be a vocabulary to allow certain new things to be expressed; there had to be a certain combinatory flexibility in order to link these lexical inventions into increasingly complex patterns of meaning, and there had to be a certain degree of consensus about all these inventions on the part of the 'textual communities' of speakers/singers, listeners, and (ultimately) scribes. A supra-dialectal standard was quick to develop in formal chanted vocal Occitan as much as it had been in written charters. We mostly find it impossible to tell on dialectal grounds, or for other reasons represent dialectally, what region any one troubadour originated from.

Did the emergence of a written *koinè* and ideas about supra-regional linguistic uniformity influence the courtly 'grand chant' (Zink)? As far as we know, the earliest troubadours came from north-western Occitania, although since the manuscripts are at best a century later, it is only partly possible to assess the phonetical and morphological details of the earlier troubadours. At any rate, the most prestigious and elaborate type of troubadour oratory – the *cançon*, the courtly love song – developed a linguistic peculiarity of considerable semantic power. Contrary to the predominant written *koinè*, it highlighted a few hallmark lemosinisms, especially palatalised variants of initial velar plosives, such as <chantar> *vs* <cantar>, probably denoting /tʃ-/ *vs* /k-/. This affected notably some of the key terms of the emergent 'love' vocabulary – alongside the ubiquitous *chantar*, the most notable is *jòi* (*vs* standard *gaug*, both <GAUDIU[M]>), denoting the state of enrapture promised by the (near) completion of the progress of love. By putting these terms as it were into phonetic brackets, the specialised sociolect managed to denote its own appropriations of everyday terms like 'to sing' and 'joy' as concepts within a specialised discourse. It is a technique which presupposes the existence of a fixed enough standard for users to recognise and

appreciate the variant.

Supra-regional linguistic unification did not go unnoticed by its linguistic community either. In the eleventh year of the Albigensian War, Count Raimon VI of Tolosa (1156–1222), having to find a criterium for designating 'collaborators' who had gone over to the crusader invaders, instead of referring to origin, bonds of fealty, or zones of territorial rule, he chose the use of Occitan as the most pertinent common denominator: 'men of our own language.'[9] This early testimony to a common linguistic awareness has sometimes been hailed as proving the existence of an Occitan '(proto-) national' sentiment, especially as it was directed against the 'French' oppressors – who, after having won the war and annexed large parts of the Tolosan domain to the crown, ended up calling the area '*Langue d'oc*' along much the same lines. What this episode shows is that the idea of sharing a common language was plausible enough for people to act upon in life-or-death situations.

9. Limouzin-Lamothe, AA1:94 (Sept 1220): "quicumque homines nostre ydiome, videlicet de hac lingua nostra... pro hac gerra presenti Amaldrici [de Montfort, son of the crusade leader Simon killed in 1218] et cruce signatorum... gerram faciebant vel fecerint..."

It will have become apparent that the linguistic landscape in large parts of Occitania by 1150 cannot be adequately described in terms of the opposition Latin and vernacular. Of course this is a problematic antonymy to begin with, especially when applied to Romance languages, outside as well as inside Occitania, as it is by no means clear where the boundary between 'Latin' and Romance is supposed to run.[10] But subsequent to the language reforms of the Carolingian era, which established and enshrined a linguistic standard for the written language regardless of the Romance spoken in any given place, it is possible notionally to differentiate between 'learned Latin,' to use Rosamond McKitterick's favoured term, and the multitude of other languages spoken, and to varying degrees written, in 'Latin Europe.'[11] They entered into relationship known in socio-linguistics as 'diglossia:' two languages known to, and to some degrees used within, the same community but each with its own typical uses, remits, spheres, and more often than not, adscription of relative social value.[12]

10. *Cf.* Wright; Stotz; Banniard; Lüdtke; Leonhardt.

11. McKitterick; *cf.* my discussion in Rüdiger, *Charlemagne.*

12. For the application of this socio-lingustic term to medieval languages, *cf.* most recently Garrison *et al.*

So far, the situation in Occitania was similar to that in contemporary Northern Spain, France, Flanders, England, or Saxony. Latin was used widely if sectorially, and the fact of its existence as well as its status as a *lingua sacra* were known to and acknowledged by everyone. In many of those regions, of course, the linguistic situation was more complicated than that; while in Spain different Romance communities and the different layers of formal and 'dialectal' Arabic (plus possibly Berber) interacted in always varying admixtures, Eng-

land under Norman rule must for a while have constituted a truly multilingual area, with Welsh, Norman French, regional variants of English, plus occasional Latin, Irish and possibly Flemish interacting on a daily basis (*cf*. Tyler, *Conceptualizing Multilingualism*). The Occitan case, however, is possibly characteristic of its own distinctive 'triglossia.' Vis-à-vis the everyday spoken Romance vernacular, not one but two formalised idioms were emerging, keeping or establishing a marked distance both from each other and from spoken everyday Occitan: Latin and 'courtly Occitan' (*lo parlar cortés*, including the 'langue de la cité'). It may not be saying too much to claim that Occitan thereby became the only of the neo-Latin languages ever to have vied with Latin for pre-eminence, a situation normally known only from some few Celtic or Germanic linguistic zones: Ireland, Anglo-Saxon England, the Norse Atlantic. Occitania, or large parts of it, was the only 'post-Carolingian' region to witness a recession in the use of learned Latin long before what is known as the 'rise of the vernaculars' in the thirteenth century transformed them generally into written languages, re-modelling them on the Latin mould in the process.

There is another key aspect to Occitanian 'triglossia.' As the *parlar cortés* evolved into a spoken sociolect, the insistent self-confinement of themes and diction to matters of what was ostentatiously about love, the lady and the self must at some point have made it impossible to talk about courtly themes – and this is 'courtly' in its literal sense, the twelfth-century equivalent to 'political' – in any way unaffected by the 'grand chant.' Alike in versification, similar in diction, but very overtly different in matter, satires (*sirventés* 'servant songs') about princes and their actions, the ways of the world, general moral decline and so forth, are closely dependent on the *cançon*. In the course of the twelfth century, the range of expressions became more differentiated but never got anywhere near losing its overall thematic and stylistic-lexical coherence. The language of love (or rather, the language around 'love') became, and remained, unchallenged and unparalleled for serious courtly oratory. Nor was it restricted to the high points of performance. The men and women who took pride in acquiring connoisseurship in *fin' amor* probably flaunted their mastery of its verbal and comportmental intricacies, as mastery of those was becoming a prerequisite to 'belonging,' a social code for in-/exclusion. Advice to the noble lady around 1180 included the admonition: "If you cannot bring yourself to remember all of the songs, try to retain at least the best turns of phrase, because they

will come in handy on many occasions. It is a good idea to be able to recognise such quotations when they are being made, and to be able to supply some yourself in turn."[13] Courtly competence was not an optional extra, it was strictly 'must-have.'

13. Garin lo Brun, *Ensenhament*, ed. Sansone, v. 529–38: "Voillas la [*i.e.* vers novels ni chançós] toz saber se·ls podez retener, e si non podez toz, tenez los meillors moz, qu'en massa locs coven. E dic vos qu'està ben cui en pot remenbrar en loc on fai a far, ni en son luec retrai un mot cant si eschai..." – When quoting medieval authors I add accents only where they indicate stress, while proper names and single phrases in the text are normalised according to modern orthography (<è> and <ò> marking open pronunciation). Troubadour songs are referred to by their reference number in the *Bibliographie der Troubadours* (*BdT* number of troubadour: number of song).

2. Latin and the Occitan Church

Besides the troubadours, the outstanding particularism of the region, indeed its main claim to fame, used to be Catharism, or 'the Albigensian heresy.' For three or more centuries – ever since the Huguenot wars in the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries, to which the thirteenth century war on Languedoc 'heretics' could appear as a sinister prefiguration – regional elite sentiment and French anti-clerical political opinion have joined forces in making the Albigensians – hunted down, tortured and burned at the stake by the pope, the inquisition, and the king of France – martyrs of enlightenment avant la lettre. 'The Albigensians' and the 'Crusade' that did for them have become central *lieux de mémoire* of Republican-Laicist France as well as of nascent Occitan regionalism. From the 1960s onwards, Occitan regionalism won both mass popular support on certain issues (migration towards Northern France, infrastructural victimisation, rural crises, nuclear politics) and a leftist intellectual grounding to carry it forward. Against that background, the two outstanding features of the region's medieval history – The Troubadours and The Cathars/ The Crusade – acquired considerable legitimising potential in the struggle for the re-establishment of Occitan in public life and the educational system, and for the re-dressing of intra-French economic and demographic imbalance, all viewed as facets of Parisian *colonialisme intérieur*.[14] At the same time, the rise of post-1968 concerns in the student and academic world internationally brought the same issues, which had so far engaged very limited empathy outside France, to the forefront: the troubadours and their courtly society could engage women's studies, and the Cathars and the 'Cathar War' were a suitable subject for radical re-readings of medieval history in terms of oppression and resistance. Much ground-breaking, now classic scholarship originated in this situation. *Annales*-style regional history produced a great deal of solid work on the Languedoc, while numerous in-depth studies of the scarce material on pre-Crusade heresy plus the vast material of post-Crusade repression, notably the inquisitional registers, have made it possible for Languedoc Catharism

14. *Cf.* Lafont; Larzac.

to occupy a considerable position in the grand narratives of European medieval history.[15]

Their very historiographical and popular success has cost 'the Cathars' dearly. Already in the 1980s and 90s, some scholars expressed their misgivings about what seemed such a huge gap between the supposed importance of the Cathar heresy in Occitan society and the scarcity of traces left by it in pre-Crusade sources from Occitania (as distinct from external clerical criticism). A full-scale revision of the picture was not proposed until 2008 by Mark Gregory Pegg, who claimed that there was never such a thing as 'the Cathars' outside the heads of their clerical persecutors. Pegg's vision of pre-Crusade Occitan society may be somewhat idiosyncratic but the virtue of his hypothesis is that it explains much of the enormous unevenness between local popular discontent with the reformed twelfth-century Church, as has been noted by earlier scholars on one hand, and the image of a fully-fledged Manichean-Dualist counter-Church commanding fervent mass allegiance which was presented in Cistercian writings and the stream of papal bulls from the pontificate of Innocent III (1198–1216) onwards.[16] Pegg's findings are at present being integrated into the *grands récits* of European 'persecutism,' with the Albigensian Crusade and the subsequent institution of the Inquisition marking two decisive steps in the emergence of an apparatus to detect and discipline dissent (cf. Moore, *War*). As for the Cathars, the jury is still out, and it will be some time before a new consensus emerges (if at all); outside academic concerns, much is at stake in both regional self-awareness and more tangible interests such as tourism in *le pays cathare*.

One of the virtues of the 'revisionist' theory as proposed by Robert Moore and Mark Pegg is that it explains the baffling discrepancy between the enormous importance long attributed to 'the Cathars' and the almost complete lack of imprint they seem to have left on the society around them. References to heresy and heretics are rare in pre-Crusade Occitania, and religious practices as reflected in charters and testaments are not significantly dissimilar to anywhere else in Western Europe. If there was one aspect particular to Tolosan Occitania, it was that widespread discontent with a regional Church within which reform from the 1080s onwards had been imposed quite thoroughly was not set off by the impact of newer forms of reform church activity, such as Cistercian spirituality, new pastoral fervour around bishoprics, the promotion of successful pilgrimages or similar such activities that might win hesitant local populations

15. Among the most influential studies of the last few decades were Duvernoy, *Histoire*, and Duvernoy, *Religion*; Moore, *Persecuting Society*; Lambert.

16. Pegg; cf. Magnou-Nortier; Mundy; Rüdiger, *Aristokraten*, esp. ch. 6; on the debate, *cf.* Sennis.

around. On the contrary, reformist monastic and secular clergy found itself increasingly cut off from communities and regional secular elites. One of the many consequences of this situation was that dissenting popular preaching, while maybe substantially no different from many other parts of twelfth-century Western Europe, may have found readier audiences here; another was a relative loss of influence of the higher clergy in regional affairs; yet another one was a kind of 'brain drain' on these institutions. It is perhaps more than a coincidence that the region that produced a highly intellectual style in courtly oratory and went on to make its use mandatory was remarkably inactive in most other arenas of intellectual activity: schools, monastic centres, historiography, Latin literature in general are conspicuously absent from Occitania during the 'Twelfth Century Renaissance.' Intellectual energy was being invested but not into Latin.

How did this affect Occitan triglossia? For one, church reform tightened up standards in Latinity within what became increasingly an institution, 'the Church;' early attempts at including Occitan into liturgical practice were by and large curtailed.[17] With 'the Church' increasingly monoglot and entrenched, there was ample space for both everyday spoken Romance and high-end *parlar cortés* to address the comprehensive questions of what modern scholars call 'the religious sphere.' In poetry, troubadours would have an easy chat with God, who tended to be a hospitable and well-meaning fellow ('The other day, in Paradise...'), or, after the Crusade had hit, bitterly reason with Him as latter-day Jeremiahs.[18] They would also claim that the words of their lady had a taste of honey (*sabor de mel*),[19] a phrase which around 1200 reminded listeners more immediately of the Doomsday Angel and his book that tasted *dulce tamquam mel* (Apc 10.9) than it would do by 1960 when Bobby Scott used the same formula for a to-be hit song. Of course Biblical allusions permeate any medieval writing; what marks the Occitan courtly way of doing it is the seemingly nonchalant matter-of-fact way of including God and his words. The 'grand chant' could include anything and assimilate it to its own rules of style and diction. It is this all-inclusiveness which has led scholars to viewing courtly oratory as 'an enchanted space,' wilfully ignorant of the extra-courtly world outside (Mancini 57f.). The opposite is, however, the case. As a consequence of its monopoly by default, courtly oratory went a long way to extending its rhetoric catchment area to encompass almost any subject, even those which in other parts of Europe were left to different discourses; those subjects

17. As opposed to what happened in French; *cf.* Cazal.

18. Lo Monge de Montaudon: *L'autrier fuy en Paradís* (*BdT* 305,12); *cf.* Gouiran.

19. Peire Vidal: *Be ·m pac d'ivern e d'estiu* (*BdT* 364,11), v. 19.

which could not be safely included were left unsaid and made ineffable (*cf.* Rüdiger, *Aristokraten*, chs. 14 and 15).

In the process, 'the Church' lost the power to lay down the rules, including linguistic ones; or rather, as the post-Reform clergy became 'the Church,' unlike elsewhere in the West, it failed to acquire that power. The famous pastoral foray made by Bernard of Clairvaux into Tolosan Occitania in the 1140s and his complete failure to mobilise the mass support he could normally count on against recalcitrants shows, on the part of his Occitan audiences, a kind of mild surprise at this high-minded and high-handed foreign abbot and above all a lack of willingness to be drawn. Bernard, used as he was to more ardent reactions, could not help but attribute local laxity to sinister forces, thereby setting the tone for future Cistercian reactions in Occitan affairs. When Abbot Henry of Cîteaux led a papal legation into Tolosa in 1178 with the mission to eradicate local elite 'heresy' (a cunning ploy suggested to the pope by Count Raimon V who wished to curb urban opposition), he set up a tribunal in the cathedral, asking a number of locals led by the influential town aristocrat Peire Mauran to declare and defend their faith. The suspected 'heretics' had a document read out that sounded orthodox enough, which in turn made the legation suspicious. Those present were then challenged to declare their faith in their own words but asked to do this in Latin "because we did not know enough of their language." It turned out that the accused, in their turn, did not know Latin: "when one of them tried to speak Latin, he could hardly put two words together, and was deficient in everything." As a result, the legation had "to condescend to them and talk of matters ecclesiastical and the sacraments in the *vulgaris sermo*, although that is absurd enough."[20] In its way, this was a clear linguistic victory of Occitan (which at least some members of the legation obviously did know well enough) though a dearly bought one in view of the considerable penitences imposed on the suspects, including their noble frontman.

Even when professional preachers took to the offensive, a (culturally) triglossic system operated. As far as we can tell, the high spots of pastoral care were public *disputationes*. These took the time-honoured form of lay arbitrage: parties were invited to submit their points in writing as well as to defend them in public dispute before a panel of well-respected notables (*probi homines*). "*Proh dolor!*" exclaimed one clerical participant, "that the state of the Church among Christians should be so reduced that the opprobrium suffered by it should be judged by laymen!"[21] A glance at the rules of courtly show

20. Letter of Henry of Clairvaux, in PL 204, col. 240f.: "quaesimus ut latinis verbis respondentes, suam fidem defenderent, tum quia lingua eorum non erat nobis satis nota; tum quia Evangelia et Epistolae quibus tantummodo fidem suam confirmare volebant, Latino eloquio noscuntur esse scripta. Cumque id facere non auderent, utque qui linguam Latinam penitus ignorabant, sicut in verbis unius illorum apparuit, qui cum latine vellet loqui, vix duo verba iungere potuit, et omnino defecit; necesse fuit nos illis condescendere et de ecclesiasticis sacramentis propter imperitiam illorum, quamvis satis esset absurdum, vulgarem habere sermonem."

21. William of Pueglaurenç, *Chronica*, ed. Duvernoy, §9: "Proh dolor! quod inter christianos ad istam vilitatem status Ecclesie fideique devenisset ut de tantis opprobriis esset laicorum iudicio discernendum!" As the chronicle was only written after the Albigensian Crusade, this 'voice' from an occasion more than twenty years previously needs not be taken as a first-hand report but may yet be an ear-witness' reflection.

disputes (*tençon* <CONTENTIO or *partiment* <PARTES 'parties'), preserved in a number of written pieces, shows enough similarity to both lay arbitrage and to the (few) attested pre-Crusade disputes for the claim to be made that a common social practice underlay them all, and that one of the main points that courtly society was impressing on itself by the countless enactments of the pattern was that a conclusive judgement could and must never be made. Such a judgement would have broken the tie in which competing powers and interests found themselves in an uneasy balance between *pars*, 'peers,' a key term of courtly political language. Written *tençons* as we have them, staged controversies on courtly subjects, are never solved: after an exchange of well-turned *còblas* (verses of typically seven to ten lines; the base metrical unit of troubadour oratory), the judgement is deferred to the imagined audience and/or some explicitly named luminaries. If taken seriously, this lack of resolution implies that actual performance of these show fights led to a kind of *précieux* discussion among the courtly audience present, similar to a modern debating society in that the point discussed is never the real point of an exercise in intellectual sociability. Likewise, the point of 'real' political conflict resolution by arbitrage, especially when the conflict may possibly lead to devastation and bloodshed, is that it studiously avoids producing winners and losers; to be able to obtain a *finis* instead of a *rectum* (that is, an 'end' or dispute settlement rather than a verdict by a judge) is the hallmark of being treated like a peer by the other peers.[22] The (not so) hidden agenda of settlements by dispute, as well as of other 'courtly' kinds of symbolic interaction, ran underneath the issues that were ostentatiously at stake, whether they were disputed rights over pastures or rents, moral laxity and clerical meddling, or the finer points of *fin' amors*.

22. Cf. Rüdiger, *Aristokraten*, chs. 18–20, and the unsurpassed studies by Cheyette, Suum cuique; White, "Pactum;" Geary, "Living with Conflict."

Another series of negatives then: no network of cathedral schools vying with each other for innovatory teaching; no cluster of new monasteries with ideas; a local clergy, severed from their entwinement with lay élites, entrenching themselves in what was left of the upheavals of the reform period rather than produce counterparts to Abbot Suger or Thomas Becket; no centripetal princely power along the lines of the Norman, Angevin, Flemish, Suabian or Catalan-Aragonese rulers; such courts as there were deciding to dispense with Latin historiography – in a word, Tolosan Occitania chose to remain unimpressed with the potentials of refined and 'renewed' Latin. A good deal of consequences went with this choice. Courtly Occitan, the *parlar cortés*, might take (much of) the place elsewhere tak-

en by Latin; it might even refuse to acknowledge the preponderance of the linguistic and literary models of Latin in a way unique in post-Carolingian Europe. But it could not replace Latin. It lacked the syntactic and lexical treasure-house acquired during more than a millennium; it lacked the constant proximity to the sacred; it wasn't permeated with levels and levels of cross-referential meanings, with storyworlds and language patterns ready for the slightest allusion. It had, in a way, to start from scratch.

That is not to say, of course, that its main artists were indeed such *idiotae* as the Abbot of Cîteaux made his opponents out to be. It is clear that a number of the troubadours were grounded in the Latin tradition. Though not many of them chose to flaunt their schooling as did Arnaut de Maruèlh (*fl. c.* 1170–90), sometime court poet to the influential viscounts of the house of Trencavel of Carcassona and Besièrs, it is obvious that much of the troubadour rhetorical style, especially the so-called *trobar lèu* ('light composition'), owes much to the classical toolbox. An acknowledged master of the *lèu/levis* form, Guiraut de Bornèlh (*fl. c.* 1160–1200) was, according to his late *vida*, "a schoolmaster in winter and toured the courts in summer."[23] And though some have thought so, he certainly did not teach at a kind of troubadour poetry school. Apart from the fact that *letras* invariably means 'Latin' in the high middle ages and that any organised schooling invariably was in Latin, the idea that the tricks of the trade could be taught in a classroom was contrary to the very point of courtly oratory: "You need to visit courts to improve yourself, for those are the schools of good men"![24] Learning by doing, catching turns of phrases (as in the advice to the lady quoted above), tuning the ear to the finer points of diction and acquiring the necessary proficiency had a lot in common with what we know of how new generations of medieval warriors ('knights') were trained. Simon Gaunt's wonderful adage – "songs are brandished at other men much as *chanson de geste* heroes brandish swords" – is apt in this as well as in other aspects (Gaunt, *Gender* 149). There were few 'professional troubadours' making a living out of their skill with 'words and sounds' (*los mots e·ls sons*, the nearest troubadour parlance comes to saying 'poetry'), though many caught important ears and eyes and improved their position by it, just as professional duelists or mercenary leaders were less numerous than the many young men from entourages swinging a competent blade and reaping, among other things, rewards. While the latter were common anywhere between Scandinavia and the Sahara, proficiency in a stylised way of making phrases rhyme was

23. Boutière-Schutz, n° 8: "E la soa vida sí era aitals que tot l'invern estava a l'escola et aprendia letras, e tota la estat anava per corts."

24. Amanieu de Sescàs, *Ensenhament de l'escudier* [*Manual for the Squire*], ed. Sansone, v. 273–75: "om deu uzar cortz per se melhurar, qu'escola es dels bos."

prized in very few places, and in fewer still to the high level cultivated between the Rhône and the Atlantic coast.

3. Well-wrought words

Max Pfister has described Old Occitan as 'classicist,' in the sense of the seventeenth-century Académie *classicisme*: it tended towards the reduction of 'licit' vocabulary and syntax and permitted variation only within narrow confines. In fact, one of the outstanding features of troubadour language is the enormous semantic weight it imposes on a fairly limited number of words, rendering interpretation, and especially translation, of single lexemes very difficult. As to syntax, a small number of stereotyped subordinate conjunctions, above all the passe-partout *que*, replaced all the variety and finery of Latin adverbial clauses. Not all of this can be explained by the development of spoken Latin away from the standards of Cicero and Quintilian, for the point is that unlike other 'classicists,' troubadours made no attempt to borrow (back) from learned Latin what their own language could not do. They were content to explore the limited possibilities of Occitan (and limiting it even further, compared to contemporary non-troubadour written documents), turning dubia and ambiguities into virtues. Furthermore, while some key lexemes of courtly parlance, like *valor* or *mercé*, owed much to the language of Augustine in content if not always in etymology, others, like *jòi* loudly disavowed such debts.

Formalism is another unacknowledged Latinism of Occitan courtly oratory. Troubadour poetry is extremely strict in terms of metre (numbers of syllables, rhyme pattern, verse structure). The high intricacy of versification, sometimes pushed to extremes, is unequalled in medieval vernacular poetry except Norse skaldic verse. On the other hand, though quite dissimilar from classical Roman poetry, it vies with it in terms of strictness. In troubadour verse, as in hexametres, it is easy to make (and detect) mistakes. Practitioners knew that a skilled audience would easily catch any infringement of its rules and conventions. The tightness of the poetic form led to the development of filigree virtuosity, which did allow for, for example, the formal sobriety of a Bernart de Ventadorn as well as the linguistic ornamentism of an Arnaut Daniel. The latter's much-cited *L'aur' amara*, which gained him eternal acclaim by way of Dante and Petrarca, shows at a glance how well-wrought (*fabregat* < *fabre* 'smith')

troubadour language can seem:

L'aur' amara
fa·ls bruels brancutz
clarzir,
que·l dous' espeys' ab fuelhs,
e·ls letz
becx
dels auzels ramencx
te balbs e mutz,
pars
e non-pars.
Per qu'ieu m'esfortz
de far e dir
plazers
a manhs? Per ley
qui m'a virat bas d'aut,
don tem morir,
si·ls afans no m'asoma.[25]

25. A literal translation might read: "The bitter air / makes those bough-laden woods / barren, / which the sweet one thickens with leaves, / and the gleeful / beaks / of the wandering birds / it keeps stammering and dumb, / pairs / and single ones, / therefore I endeavour / to act and speak / pleasantly / to many for the sake of her / who has cast me low from high, / for whom I dread to die / if my grievance isn't eased." But though it contains a number of lexical pointers to other levels of meaning, notably the question of parity (*par/non-par*, *bas d'aut*), the literal meaning is only the first of several.

Both the 'classical' and the 'anti-classical' strand of medieval art, to use the terms made famous by Rosario Assunto, are present in troubadour poetry, as are the classics of style debate. The virtues and vices of *trobar lèu* ('light') vs *trobar clus* ('locked') were discussed much along the lines of *ornatus facilis* vs *difficilis*. If Bernart de Ventadorn wants plain form and style for complex lines of reasoning, Arnaut Daniel may look like a true heir to complex Merovingian acrostics or the exploratory lexical inventiveness of the Hiberno-Latin *Hisperica Famina*, though only up to a point. His language may be like precious metal in the hands of the goldsmith; *poema sui varietate contenta augusta atque obscura est*, as Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, writing from the same place but five centuries earlier, had it.[26] But no troubadour song, be it ever so *clus*, departs from the basic linearity imposed by the sequence of the *còblas* (stanzas to the same versification within one song), and ultimately, by vocality. All troubadour songs can be, and are meant to be, sung or chanted in a matter of five to twelve minutes. They were not meant to be deciphered in the timeless tranquility of a reading room (as the *Hisperica Famina* arguably were); their performance was as sociable and competitive as their reception, because the high standards of formalism and the ensuing complexity imposed on audiences a similar kind of strictures as on producers.

26. *De metris* IV 17, *cf.* Assunto 73.

The social and competitive dimension was intensified since the roles of producer and audience were interchangeable, even within the same morning, noontime or evening gathering *en vergièr o dins cambra*, in orchards or chambers.[27] It must have been hard work for any member of the courtly elite to 'find' a *còbla* and to say it, sing it or have it sung more or less ad hoc. The apparently anodyne uniformity of this type of what are supposedly love songs, which has so often disappointed modern readers with a romantic turn of mind, is really the point of the whole exercise (though there was room for some heart-rendingly beautiful pieces of joyful or dolorous subjectivity). Insofar as courtly oratory was a game (not quite) anyone could play though few could excel in, the basic rules had to be strict and exacting but not entirely forbidding.

Troubadour songs typically run to seven *còblas* of seven to nine lines each, plus one or sometimes two or three half-*còblas* tagged on at the end, that is, after the main *argumentum* has run its course (the so-called *tornadas*), often to address individuals – men or women, by name or by *senhal* (a kind of puzzle name) – or to make a debunking punch line. The restrictions imposed by form makes each song a single distinct unit, quite unlike contemporary chivalrous epic or later romance. It is difficult to expand a song, or add on to it, or variegate it in a subsequent performance. This means that it is possible to attribute it 'as is' to a single man or woman: a *trobador* or *trobairitz*, a 'finder,' semantically much in the sense of Ciceronian *inventio*, whatever the (disputed) etymology of the verb *trobar* and its nomina agentis.[28] The troubadours are, in fact, the first continental non-Latin 'authors,' in the sense that their public became used to attributing single pieces of oratory to individuals, who in their turn made statements about the production of their pieces a part of their craft. *E qui belhs mots lass' e lia de belh' art s'es entremés*, sings Bernart Martin around 1150: "To bundle together beautiful words and [then] tie [them together] is to engage in fine art."[29] Once bundled and tied, word packages should not be meddled with. This was a matter of serious concern. The troubadours devised numerous versificatory tricks of linking the seven to nine *còblas* of a piece together in a linear sequence, so that "no man can ever take a single word out of it."[30] There was always a perceived danger that once songs gained currency, subsequent performers might mess them up, thereby giving the original composer a bad name.

Warnings against incompetent performers of *belhs mots* were probably well-founded, but it is worth pausing for a moment to con-

27. There were even 'corridors of power,' to give C.P. Snow his due for the famous catchphrase that prompted the title of this article. In 1174 talks to settle a conflict between Count Raimon V and the viscount of Nimes, mediated by a bishop, took place *in stare comitis predicti... ante hostium illius cambrete* ("in the house of the said count, outside the door of the little chamber," *HGL V n° 655)*.

28. Such is the interpretation given by the thirteenth-century troubadour Guiraut Riquier (*Declaratio*, v. 137f.: "son inventores dig tug li trobador"). Such stratagems, needless to say, did not always succeed and might even go against audiences' own ideas and preferences; cf. Van Vleck.

29. *D'entier vers far ieu non pes* (*BdT* 63,6), v. 75f.

30. *Aujatz de chan, com enans' e meillura* (*BdT* 293,9), v. 3–4: "... lo vers lassar e faire sí que autr' om no l'en pot un mot traire."

template the astounding fact that courtly society put such a great store by speaking properly. "This song is good; I have made no mistake," says Jaufré Rudel in the early twelfth century. Yet he is saying a good deal more here; the verb translated as 'make a mistake' is *falhir*, whose semantic range includes 'to sin.' Jaufré Rudel goes on: "Everything in it is in its proper place, and whoever learns it from me should take care not to shatter it or break it into pieces."[31] Once bundled and tied, the proper order of the *belhs mots* was a matter of integrity, against which it was inadvisable to 'sin.' We should not assume that *falhir* was a light-hearted simile; it was probably meant quite literally, not in the sense that to use the wrong rhyme or metre boded ill for the salvation of the soul but in the sense that serious things were at stake here. One point of this mass exercise in courtly logopaedia was that a *probus homo*/Occ. *pros òm*, a 'gentleman' (or -woman) was, after all, only ever as good as his (or her) word. It will emerge why concerns about making words 'good' were perhaps a little more exacerbated in twelfth-century Occitania than elsewhere.

31. *No sap chantar qui so non di* (*BdT* 262,3), v. 31–34: "Bos es lo vers, qu'anc no·i falhí, e tot sò que·i es ben està; e sel que de mi l'apenrà gart se no·l franha ni·l pessí."

Once the 'textual communities' that formed around each performance of a troubadour song had accustomed themselves to the fact that these pieces of oratory were supposed to be unalterable and individually attributable, the cultural pretensions to which the orators could aspire were high. One reason why there are so surprisingly few direct allusions to the classical heritage (a few mentions of Troy and the *Aeneid*; some motifs from the *Metamorphoses*; a bit of Alexander) is that the troubadours could dispense with them. They did not need to borrow their authority from the classical storyworld; more importantly, they could not afford to do so because it would mean incurring a debt, thus acknowledging authority outside courtly parlance. Of course the courtly orators constantly incurred such debts; their rhetorics and dialectic, their argumentative causality, their disputations which at times go a long way towards *sic et non*, all testify to a profound contemporaneousness with twelfth-century humanism. But it was not allowed to show. *Belhs mots* without flaw or fail must stand up for themselves, without recourse to witnesses to their probity. Again, we will see why.

In order to be able to claim that kind of august authority, courtly oratory had to be careful what kind of words were allowed in; many were blackballed. Occitan is surprisingly poor in a number of 'typical' forms of vernacular literature, for instance, the *pastorèla*, or 'shepherdess song,' later so frequent in French *trouvère* poetry and as a gen-

re certainly as widespread in Occitania as in any society with frictions between agricultural and pastoral labour. But from the very beginning of troubadour *pastorèlas* as we know them, the standard story line (man convinces or overpowers and then lies with sheperdess) is subverted. There is not a single instance of forceful intercourse in Occitan *pastorèlas*; rather often, and in the most famous pieces, the sheperdess is intimidatingly eloquent and makes her pursuer look a fool. Whatever other fine points individual *pastorèlas* were making, the main message is that this kind of song, conceding as it does that there might be such a thing as male force, could only be admitted into courtly society as it were in quotation marks, in fact as a travesty. No display of force untamed by courtly manners was to be given a linguistic expression in terms of courtly parlance.

The same reticence applied to popular narrative. Story-telling was popular enough; in fact, troubadours did occasionally feel slighted if their audiences clamoured for light entertainment rather than their own high-flung work. Guiraut de Bornèlh complains: 'They make no difference between the story of the goose of Bretmar and a good song about important matters (*rics afars*) in times past and present.'[32] But the consensus about what were *rics afars* worthy of cultural canonisation and what weren't was strong enough to prevent any crowd-pulling narrative to challenge the predominance of courtly oratory. Much as we too would like to hear the story of the goose of Bretmar, we cannot; it has not been transmitted, while we do have seventy-six songs by Guiraut de Bornèlh, who would not at all have minded if he had known that his subsequent admirers thought him a *maestre dels trobadors*.

Performers who suffered from *no-saber* ("no-know," or a lack of discernment) would confuse matters and "say things from below in places above" (*d'aval d'amont*).[33] This, of course, was not to be tolerated, and courtly censure didn't. There are hardly any epics or chivalrous romances extant in Occitan; the few we have or know of are geographically marginal and/or late (post-Crusade), and what is more, noticeably indebted to troubadour lyric in subject treatment and development. Subsequent losses cannot explain the entire 'vide toulousain.'[34] The few texts and allusions we have are enough to show that Occitanian audiences liked a good story much like audiences elsewhere, but never decided to invest them with the kind of authority recognised in the courtly chant.

32. *Per solatz revelhar* (*BdT* 242,55), v. 55–60: "c'aitan leu s'er grazitz de l'aucha de Bretmar lo comtes entre lor com us bos chans dels rics afars e dels tems e dels ans."

33. Bertran de París, *Gordó, ie·us fas un sol sirventés l'an*, v. 5–10, *cf.* Meneghetti 75: "que no-sabers vos marrís e·us cofon, soven dizetz sò qu'es d'aval d'amon."

34. The expression is from Pirot 433.

4. Words at work

There is one obvious social reason why this might be so: 'courts' were numerous and small-scale; no princely power emerged to monopolise intellectual energy and substantial audiences and muster the economic potential to sustain both. While the Tolosan counts at first sight seem splendid enough, their actual economic power base was slim and often shaky, their political supremacy widely contested. They did hold courts, and they did deal out arms and plots of land to their entourage, including many who could make *belhs mots*.[35] But so did many other counts and viscounts, some in equally grand style (and with an acknowledged agonistic edge), most on a smaller scale but not substantially different as to setting and form. Occitania lacks the great assemblies in the style of the Hohenstaufen, the Angevin count-kings, the counts of Flanders or Champagne, which were sometimes sumptious, week-long occasions that frequently aroused the interest of the historiographers as outstanding events. There were no or extremely few such huge events in Occitania; one may object that there was no princely historiography to record them either, but then that is the other side of the same coin. As a result, courts weren't 'events' that started and ended at any precise or even noticeable moment. Advice to lords (*ensenhaments*, rhymed didactic treatises) taught the proper behaviour not on 'opening' a court but on 'entering' it, as though it went on more or less continuously. There is no trace of any formal *introitus* or for that matter *exitus* ceremonies. Lords were discouraged from rising early, thereby 'finishing' the court for the day; on the other hand, those present were encouraged even more strongly to keep in mind that there was a time to rise and go to bed *sens tot presic*, "without being asked to."[36]

The absence of formal ceremony required a great deal of informal inside knowledge about courtly conduct, and allowed for ruthless discrimination between more or less *cortés* participants by those in the know. Readers of nineteenth-century English novels will recognise much of the tableaux painted by twelfth-century Occitan treatises, as well as the behavioural rigours required to master the informality. Other courtly or chivalrous societies, however, have preferred more formal rules of conduct; great twelfth-century court spectacles like Frederick I's historical Imperial Diet of Mainz in 1184 or King Arthur's fictional solemn Pentecost gatherings of the Round Table have an altogether different set of stage, props, and script. This type of princely mise-en-scène is conspicuous by its absence in Occitania.

35. Cf. Loeb; Macé; Rüdiger, *Aristokraten* ch. 9.

36. The half dozen or so Occitan verse *ensenhaments* (manuals on courtliness) are edited in Sansone and Huchet. The quotation here is from Raimon Vidal de Besalú (in Huchet), *Abril issia* (around 1200), v. 168.

The few rather incidental descriptions of the physical settings of court sociability (mostly referred to by the near-untranslatable blanket term *bel solaç* "fine pastimes" or "good-mannered ways of spending the day") convey the impression of small-scale cosiness with cushions strewn about in front of upstairs fireplaces, or "after lunch, in an orchard, on the lawn by a stream."[37] This scale lends itself perfectly to a ten-minute performance of a troubadour *canҫon* with, perhaps, a singer and a couple of instrumentalists, or even a staged *tenҫon* controversy with an audience panel. But it is rather less favourable to the formation of a sustained audience as required for the telling of a full-scale epic or chivalrous romance, calculable to an overall running time of eight or ten hours, even (or especially) if the recitation is split up and spread over several days or evenings. In both matter and setting, chivalrous narrative lends itself better to courts on the scale of Camelot than to the many small-to-medium size power hubs that were sprinkled across Occitania.

37. Ibid., v. 76–77: *aprés manjar, en un vergiers sobr' un prat josta un rivet.*

Even when, on occasion, leading rulers convened to make a significant occasion, this does not alter the common law of informality and apparent lack of rules, even to the point that outside observers stand puzzled. We have the account by Geoffrey of Vigeois, following the Anglo-Angevin monarch Henry II to Belcaire/Beaucaire on the Rhône in April 1174, where his lord was to act as arbiter in a settlement between Count Raimon V of Tolosa and King Alfons I of Aragon, Count of Barcelona, over their respective Provençal possessions.[38] Here was an occasion that might have lent itself to some formality. In Geoffrey's description, however, there is no mention of ceremony – such as arrival, mass, tournament, banquet – or any apparent structure. While elsewhere the mark of a good court festival was that it was 'wisely and carefully ordered in all aspects and that everything was taken care of precisely as it had been planned beforehand,'[39] here we never see any master-minding activity. The Belcaire court never even dissolves into individual scenes; it seems from the outset to consist of nothing else.

38. Geoffrey of Vigeois, Chronicle 444–45.

What happened during the court had the chronicler baffled. One Guilhem Gros has dinner for 'three hundred' *milites* ("knights or warriors") prepared over wax candles; a countess hands out an enormously valuable diadem as a prize in a contest of *histriones* ("performers of some sort"); Raimon de Vernol burns 'thirty' steeds on a pyre. We need not believe all of this to recognise a potlatch when we see one. Neither is the chronicler's disgust unique; we know of similar instances of very conspicuous consumption from Aquitaine, Poi-

39. The praise is for chancellor Konrad of Querfurt, Bishop of Hildesheim and Würzburg, on occasion of the 1199 Christmas court of king Philip of Suabia (*Gesta episcoporum Halberstadensium*, ed. Weiland, MGH SS 23, Hannover 1874, p. 114): "sagaciter cuncta disposuit et prudenter et ut ordinate fierent omnia fideliter procuravit."

tou and certainly other parts of Europe. But the overall image of flamboyancy nevertheless remains, especially as Geoffrey of Vigeois has an eye for scenes involving more immediately convertible expenditure. For instance, Raimon d'Agot deals out large sums of money to a hundred knights; Bertran Raimbaut has thirty thousand shillings 'sown' in the furrows of a freshly ploughed field. *Inania festa*, says our chronicler: a senseless and mindless court festival.

What is all this good for? Is it really a mad hatter's court? Perhaps not to regional participants. At the same time, everywhere in Tolosan and mediterranean Occitania, 'fiefs' – in fact property such as fields, pastures, houses, vineyards, and fractions of these – were bought and sold at cash prices much like leasehold property in late medieval England, and it was so unusual for an oath of fealty not to involve material remuneration that in that case it was explicitly stipulated that the act was valid *sine lucro tue pecunie et honoris* ("without transfer of cash or revenue").[40] If 'feudal' bonds ever established long-lasting relationships or structured power relations anywhere in Europe, something the last twenty years' scholarship has increasingly called into question, it certainly didn't in Occitania, where the possible symbolic value of 'holding' a property 'from' someone was completely eclipsed by the free convertibility of *feuda/feva* (Occ. *feus*) which anybody could buy.[41] Such bonds as there were must therefore have been subject to constant renegotiation. We can follow this through the extant documents tracing the alliances and conflicts of local players over decades,[42] and we can see such negotiations at work highlighted on occasion like Belcaire, which worked like a trade fair in fealty.

Seen that way, the *inania festa* make a lot of sense. To 'sow' out *sous*, shillings (and then carefully watch who will pick them up) is to say you are expecting a good crop of *soudadiers*, retainers. To make those deals in public enables participants to choose and pick (up) for themselves, but once they have chosen (and picked up the *sous*), they are, for the time being, committed. To donate a valuable prize in a competition of *histriones* is to say you are someone worth competing for. And Geoffrey of Vigeois even tells us where the money ultimately comes from: Count Raimon V hands over '100,000 shillings' to a retainer of his who then in his turn, acting like a merchant banker placing investments, deals out portions of the lump sum to about a hundred individual *milites*. Elsewhere in Europe, to give, and to give generously, was the hallmark and the prerogative of those placed at the top. In Occitania, the count could or would not even place his in-

40. Reciprocal oaths of fealty between viscountess Ermengarda of Narbona and viscount Rogier Trencavel (HGL VIII n° 11, 1171 – three years before the feast at Belcaire): "Adiutor ero tibi... sine lucro tue pecunie tuique honoris / sine lucro averi et honoris" (Occ. *aver* v. 'to have;' n. masc. ' possession').

41. Cf. Rüdiger, *Aristokraten*, ch. 5, pace Débax, *La féodalité*.

42. For a case study *cf*. Rüdiger, "Mit Worten gestikulieren."

vestments himself. This made it possible for the recipients to avoid taking all too blatantly a position of inferiority in an unequal situation. Accepting money from a *par* was one thing; accepting money from the count was obviously something quite different, something to be avoided.

We would be hesitant to put too much store by this observation if it were not for the fact that documents from later twelfth century Occitania show a surprisingly convergent feature: the complete avoidance of the word *dominus/-a* used as a title. It is reserved for two kinds of people only: women and the clergy. A lay man, even (or especially) the count, is never styled *dominus comes* even (or especially) by the most inconspicuous local leaseholder. On the other hand, *dominus* (Occ. *sénher*) as an appellative is the technical term for 'original lord of a fief,' that is, one party in a real estate deal. Given the free market in real estate, this meant that anyone could become anyone's *dominus* – but no one must ever be addressed as, or even worse, proclaim himself to be, anyone else's lord (*cf*. Rüdiger, *Aristokraten*, ch. 18). There are several ways of constantly rehearsing a societal self-image of basic parity and acephaly; twelfth-century Occitania employed a number of them.

Now what has all this to do with the troubadours? I will try to put it into one sentence: when King Henry II Plantagenet made a show of royal anger, victims to-be literally died of fear; if Count Raimon V of Tolosa had made such a show, he would have been frowned at.[43] There were huge differences between 'political cultures' in different parts of Western Europe in the twelfth century. The Angevin monarchy, for one, operated a system of what has classically been called 'discriminatory protection,' political actors vied for the king's support to further their respective short-term aims and long-term interests, more often than not at the cost of competitors, and feared to find themselves at the receiving end of royal anger when their luck ran out (Jolliffe 89). The game of 'stratagems and spoils' was basically similar (if slightly downscale as to stakes) for players in Tolosan Occitania, but there was nevertheless a huge difference. No princely power ever acquired the standing to monopolise the dealing out and taking away of chances anywhere near the kind of supremacy attained by the Angevin and a number of other rulers in twelfth-century Europe. The Raimondins were just powerful enough to prevent their even more powerful neighbours, the dukes of Aquitaine or their Angevin successors and the count-kings of Barcelona-Aragon, from extending their sway into Tolosan and Mediterranean Occitania, but

43. For a discussion of Angevin kings' political use of anger cf. Hyams, who has the lethal case of the unsuccesful petitioner.

could or would not establish a similar position themselves. One step down the scale, energetic local counts and viscounts (most notably the Trencavels of Besièrs-Carcassona, who later bore the brunt of the 1209 crusade) formed gravitational centres powerful enough to challenge but not eclipse Tolosan comital eminence. The result was a comparatively, perhaps singularly open competition between 'courts,' and comparatively many options for individual members of the ill-defined group of those who counted (in a charter they might be styled *probi homines*, while a troubadour might say *la gent cortesa*) on the 'stock market' of allegiance.

How, then, could anyone in the courtly marketplace make sure that a relationship of friendship or at least non-aggression outlasted the day the deal was made by any span of time? Individual interests may change quickly. But where a Plantagenet king could hold liege men at bay by a skilful combination of the use of resources and of terror, no Occitan count or viscount, however daunting figures they may have cut in the eyes of their nearest entourage, could muster even remotely similar resources or make similarly plausible threats. In fact, in Occitania, the *ira regia* style of lordship was much discouraged and constantly ridiculed. Men who allowed themselves to be *irats* ("angered") were not admired for their capability for purposeful ruthlessness but looked down upon for their incapability to retain the face of courtly equanimity. Not that 'courtly' behaviour did not include the encouragement of similarly 'civilising' manners elsewhere in Europe as well; in fact, the master narrative of the development of European courtliness, from Norbert Elias to Stephen Jaeger, highlights just that potential. I am not taking issue with those overarching observations but wish to historicise them and thus to highlight differences instead of similarities. And one of the differences is that in Occitania the codes of conduct applied to everyone in the same way. One of the many pieces of evidence for the claim that the overall point of the particular Occitan 'way' of courtliness was to rehearse and reinforce a societal self-image of meritocratic parity is that within the universe of *fin' amor*, and it was a universe that recognised no boundaries, all players were equal, except of course the lady. She alone could be approached prostrate. Courtly manners and interaction rites, including the formal oratory to go with it, were a bit like 'deep play:' a society that put much store by telling itself it was acephalous dared try out what might happen in situations of extreme disparity.[44] Every *pros* had for the time being to confirm to the rules, even if he was the King of Aragon. And the King of Aragon did: he

44. *Cf.* the more comprehensive discussion of what can here only be a hint in Rüdiger, *Aristokraten*, chs. 17–20.

participated in *tençons* and duly proclaimed that he was not less worthy as a courtly lover because he was so *ric* (powerful) since he would, of course, never use his *ricor* in the process of 'conquering' a lady. A local audience might welcome his self-renegating attitude; in other parts of Europe this kind of attitude towards conquests might well have been ill-advised for a king to display (cf. Rüdiger, "Kann ein Mächtiger").

5. The firewall

As powerful cultural inventions go, *fin' amor* was among the more consequential ones: it shaped the political culture of (at least) Tolosan Occitania during almost a century before it branched out to embellish select milieux in other parts of Europe, and eventually went on to shape the literary figurations of gender relations for centuries to come. This statement is no revertion to the romanticism of nineteenth-century Romanists and historians, plus their regionalist epigones, who liked to believe in a rose-hued garden of Arcadian courtliness right in the middle of Feudal Europe, all too soon to be crushed by envious ascetics and Northern crusader barbarians.[45] The poetic self-fashioning of the courtly Occitan elite as highly refined, utterly self-denying males, prostrate at the feet of their ladies, to whom it never occurred to do Roland-like feats or even so much as touch a sword is a likeable enough image. Its inventors itself liked it a lot; in fact, they were desperately trying to ignore the 'Roland' alternative. Twelfth-century Occitania was no less violent and dangerous a place than anywhere else. But the way its society organised and ordered its power relations and coped with its propensity towards destructive violence may have been shaped by a specific practice of courtly communication and have acquired some specific traits in the process. A type of courtly sociability where swords are never mentioned except with all the markers of transgression may be no less prone to violence than a type where people talk of practically nothing other than feats of arms. But it may come to handle its propensity to violence differently. Much of what happened during the course of the Albigensian Wars can be explained best in the light of this cultural particularism.[46]

A plethora of more or less powerful magnates in constant competition but with no obvious dominant centre, a real estate market using 'feudal' vocabulary, a society afraid of its own propensity for

45. For an overview of the history of studies on 'le génie d'oc' *cf.* Rüdiger, *Aristokraten*, Introduction. The phrase "barbarians from the North" is the title of a vast essay by Lluís Racionero i Grau first published in 1985.

46. See Rüdiger, *Aristokraten*, chs. 25–28, for a detailed study.

flares of destructive violence, and a political culture which, for lack of any more structurally stable features (such as the power to enforce writs or inspire terror), could with each single conflict settlement only bank on the involved parties' preparedness to be as good as their word for a specific length of time: such is the not all too rose-hued context for troubadour logopaedia. In the figurations of *fin' amor*, too, words had to stand up for themselves, without recourse to external empowerment, without authority outside themselves: just *belhs mots*. To know how to 'fabricate' them according to complex rules, so that they could no more be twisted around, was as important as to be able to recognise them and accept them with all the weight they were intended to carry. Perhaps Occitan men and women relished in courtly manners no more or less than their peers elsewhere. But they had more reason to be afraid of the alternatives. *Fin' amor* was not a gadget, it was a firewall. That in linking the language of love and courtship to women it gave European sentimental history a quite consequential twist was perhaps a coincidence.

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ANDRIA ANDREOU - PANAGIOTIS A. AGAPITOS

Of Masters and Servants

Hybrid Power in Theodore Laskaris' *Response to Mouzalon* and in the T*ale of Livistros and Rodamne*

Abstract

The present paper examines two Byzantine texts from the middle of the thirteenth century, ostensibly unrelated to each other: a political essay written by a young emperor and an anonymous love romance. The analysis is conducted through the concept of hybrid power, a notion initially developed by postcolonial criticism. It is shown that in the two texts authority (that of the Byzantine emperor and that of Eros as emperor) is constructed as hybrid and thus as an impossibility, though in the case of the political essay this impossibility remains unresolved, while in the romance it is actually resolved. The pronounced similarities between the two texts on the level of political ideology (*e.g.* the notion of friendship between master and servant, the performance of power relations, shared key concepts) informing the hybrid form of authority and its relation to its servants is a clear indication that they belong to the same socio-cultural and intellectual environment, namely the Laskarid imperial court in Nicaea around 1250.

The aim of this study* is to examine two ostensibly unrelated Byzantine texts. The first is a 'political essay' by the emperor Theodore II Doukas Laskaris (1254–58) on the relation of friendship between rulers and their close collaborators; it can be plausibly dated between 1250 and 1254, at the time when the author was crowned prince. The second text is the anonymously transmitted *Tale of Livistros and Rodamne*, a long love romance of almost 4700 verses probably written between 1240 and 1260. Thus, both texts were arguably composed around the middle of the thirteenth century at the so-called Empire of Nicaea (1204–61) under the dynasty the Laskarids, the time when the Byzantines were forced to reinstall the Rhomaian Empire (βασιλεία Ῥωμαίων) in exile, while Constantinople was under Latin rule.

In our paper we intend to take a step out of some established approaches to Byzantine literature by attempting a twofold methodo-

* The present paper is a substantially revised and expanded version of a talk given at a workshop on Theodore Laskaris as emperor and author, organized by Dimiter Angelov and Panagiotis Agapitos in Nicosia with the financial support of the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies (University of Cyprus) and the Association of Professional Visual Artists (Nicosia). We are grateful to the participants of the workshop for their comments and suggestions, in particular, Dimiter Angelov, Christian Foerstel and Martin Hinterberger. Furthermore, we would like to thank Nektarios Zarras for his help with matters art historical. Except where otherwise indicated, all translations are our own.

logical experiment. On the one hand, our experiment is comparative in nature. We bring into juxtaposition two texts generically diverse in terms of their *littérarité* – a political, non-narrative essay and an erotic narrative poem. Moreover, the two texts belong to two areas of Byzantine textual production that traditionally are not brought into comparison, namely, so-called learned and so-called vernacular literature.[1] Laskaris' essay belongs to the former linguistic idiom, while the anonymous romance to the latter. On the other hand, the experiment concerns our interpretive approach. We shall be using a contemporary theoretical concept that so far has not been applied to Byzantine texts, namely, the notion of hybrid power as a hermeneutical tool.

1. On this matter see Agapitos, "Grammar, Genre and Patronage" and "Karl Krumbacher."

The paper is organized in four parts. It begins with a brief presentation of our theoretical framework of analysis. It then presents our readings of Laskaris' essay and of the love romance, while in the last part it will offer a comparison of the two texts. Our purpose is to show that, even though the two texts belong to different genres and linguistic idioms, by mapping power as hybrid in a similar manner, both appear to share common ideological and intellectual preoccupations.

1 The notion of hybrid power

Studying the two texts together, one observes that a common reoccurring subject in both is their preoccupation with power and authority, although in a very different way – one text reflecting on the nature of political power at the imperial court, the other betraying such a concern through constructing the fictional sphere of *Erotokratia*, Eros' Amorous Dominion. Such queries, over the nature of power, constitute the main object of research in the field of studies known as Postcolonialism. The term was coined in political theory to describe the nations which had liberated themselves from colonial rule after the Second World War.[2] Since then it has become a tangled and multifaceted term historically, geographically, culturally and politically and has expanded across a broad range of disciplines.[3] One of the main contributions of postcolonial theorists that is of interest here was their insistence upon studying literature as part of the multifaceted political, historical and cultural background that propels its production.

2. On the history and evolution of the term see Mishra and Hodge. For other efforts to define this field of studies see Ahmad; Acheraïou; Hiddleston; Nayar.

3. See, for example, Moore-Gilbert 10 for a discussion of the case of Canada in relation to the many ways that postcolonial situation can be described. Postcolonial theory now operates across diverse disciplines ranging from political economy to environmental studies, sports, religion, linguistics, mathematics, philosophy, anthropology, education, psychoanalysis, art history, cinematography and literature. Indicatively, see also Achebe; Bishop; Grove; Bale and Cronin; King; Nochlin; Said; Suleri; Zabus.

It should be pointed out that postcolonial theory describes pre-

occupations that have to do mainly with discursive forms, and in this it differs from the history of colonialism. The postcolonial idiom could be seen as a reading method engaged with what carries and signifies power and which defies the notion that there exist so-called 'pure' identities of dominant or subordinated nations, races or cultures within a Postcolonial situation. The postcolonial frame brings with it a given authority that asserts itself as dominant but its power is automatically challenged from within.

Given this context, we believe that there exists a certain contextual affinity between the post-traumatic experience and reception of authority as presented in postcolonial theory and the post-catastrophe traumatic situation of thirteenth-century Nicaea as reflected in the literary production of the era, in which the 'State' exists only to become something else: a vehicle of return to Constantinople. This disjunction between the ideal singular Rhomaian monarchy anchored in Constantinople and historical reality – an authority in exile, fractured across three claimant successors and a disrupted, dislocated administrative and ecclesiastical system – resulted in an instability comparable to the postcolonial context. It is exactly this instability that the intellectuals of the Nicaean era attempted to bridge on a theoretical level by reflecting on aspects of power.

Theodore Laskaris himself appears to repeatedly explore the concept of power from various angles. The nature of power, its boundaries, the relation of the one who possesses authority with the one who lacks authority, the performance of power, are topics that run through a number of Theodore's works.[4] Likewise, even though *Livistros and Rodamne* is not a political treatise, it nevertheless acts out power on various levels of its complex plot.[5] This common cultural and political context between, on the one hand, the ideological pursuits of the two works concerning power and, on the other, postcolonial experience and the resulting enquiries allows us to profit hermeneutically by employing 'hybrid power' as discourse.

Hybridity as a category that describes a peculiar coexistence of two (or more) different and/or opposing elements was known in other medieval, eastern and western, contexts and has been studied extensively in the last three decades.[6] However, power as hybridity, as a kind of an unstable, self-conflicting, although apparently concrete form of authority, is a conceptual structure produced within postcolonial theory.

More specifically, we take our starting point from a proposal made by Homi Bhabha.[7] Bhabha suggested that an element repre-

4. For example, his treatise *Explanation of the World* (Κοσμικὴ δήλωσις) or the grand laudatory oration he composed for his father, Emperor John III Batatzes; see Angelov, *Political Ideology* 234–50.

5. It is important to note that postcolonial thinkers challenge divisions between 'high' and 'popular' literature (Moore-Gilbert 8), a fact that brings the idea of postcolonial theory a step closer to what the present article aspires to do.

6. It could, for example denote the coexistence of two separate natures such as the Arthurian Merlin, who was supposed to be half demon and half human (see Hüe). It could also describe a monster, a giant or a person from a certain ethnical descent considered as 'sinful' (see Friedman; Williams; Cohen, *Monster Theory* and *Hybridity*; *Huot*).

7. Along with Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, Bhabha is considered to be one of the 'founders' of postcolonial criticism. Young characteristically calls them the "Holy Trinity of colonial discourse analysis" (163).

senting power in a text can be viewed as hybrid under certain circumstances – whether this is discourse, a character, an object or even the text itself as object. He expressed the concept of hybrid authority most explicitly, if not necessarily in a coherent manner, in his 1985 essay "Signs Taken for Wonders," beginning his analysis from three instances in which 'authoritative' texts – for example the English Bible – were received by the colonized.[8] According to Bhabha, the authority that such a written discourse exerts is hybrid. We should make clear that we do not aim at a one-to-one application of Bhabha's suggestions since we have actually extracted a hermeneutic approach through reassembling and reinterpreting into a concrete proposal Bhabha's determinants of hybrid power, scattered here and there in what could be described as a very obscure essay. What we, therefore, present as hybrid power in what follows is, in fact, our own elaboration of Bhabha's ideas. What we should also mention is that we are not interested in how feasible Bhabha's idea of hybrid authority may be on a practical level. What we are interested in is his idea that hybrid authority might materialize as a form of literature.

Bhabha asserts that the hybrid nature of power derives from the simultaneous articulation of a series of opposed categories which, at the same time, are the authority's constructive parameters. We would, more specifically, view three such interrelated pairs that simultaneously encompass externally superimposing and internally conflicting forces. These pairs can be described as: (i) preexistence *vs* construction, (ii) originality *vs* repetition, and (iii) oneness *vs* twoness. It is not possible for an authority based on the first, externally superimposing, part of the pair to establish a stable identity because this identity is undermined by the second, internally conflicting, part of the pair.

In other words, the stable identity of authority is an impossibility because hybrid power appears as the representative of a superior truth and of a pure concept, in a way that it creates the impression of possessing a *preexistent* and, therefore, *original* identity, externally superimposed on the subject to be dominated. However, this identity image is an illusion since authority is only realized as such at every recurring moment of its continued articulation. Hence, it can only be the result of a *construction* which is formed through *repetition*, that is, through internally conflicting practices (Bhabha 149–53).[9] Furthermore, hybrid authority creates an effect of absolute *oneness*, a sense of mono-polar independence from the subject which it dominates, thus excluding this non-authoritative Other from its identity.

8. The essay has been included in a 1994 collection of Bhabha's essays with a preface and an introduction by the author, republished by Routledge in 2004, and reprinted many times thereafter. All references to the essay follow the 2004 edition.

9. Characteristic in this respect is Bhabha's statement: "As a signifier of authority, the English book acquires its meaning after the traumatic scenario of colonial difference, cultural or racial, returns the eye of power to some prior, archaic image or identity. Paradoxically, however, such an image can neither be 'original' – by virtue of the act of repetition that constructs it – nor 'identical' – by virtue of the difference that defines it. Consequently, the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference" (153).

However, this impression also proves to be invalid since authority must factually presuppose the one who will recognize it as authority, its essence, therefore, being one of relative *twoness* and of bi-polar dependence (Bhabha, 160–62). Thus, the insistence of authority on preexistence, originality and oneness – that is, its claim to externally superimposing forces – is opposed by construction, repetition and twoness – that is, authority's internally conflicting condition. Consequently, these clashing forces reveal power as discourse to be hybrid, while this self-conflicting condition thwarts any attempt of such a discourse at forming a stable identity.

2 The blended statue

The work Theodore Laskaris addressed as a crown prince to his future 'prime minister' George Mouzalon bears the heading "To his lordship George Mouzalon who asked how should servants behave towards their masters and how masters to their servants" (Πρὸς τὸν Μουζάλωνα κῦρ Γεώργιον ἐρωτήσαντα ὁποίους δεῖ εἶναι τοὺς δούλους εἰς τοὺς κυρίους καὶ τοὺς κυρίους εἰς τοὺς δούλους).[10] In terms of its content and as to its historical context the work is a short political essay of twenty printed pages but in terms of genre it is an *apokrisis* (ἀπόκρισις), a 'response'. This is what the participle "asked" (ἐρωτήσαντα) in the heading suggests, alluding to a specific genre of instruction called 'Questions and Responses' (ἐρωταποκρίσεις) and used for various subjects ranging from grammar to theology (Papadoyannakis). This should be kept in mind because the admonitory and didactic parameter is of major importance for a fuller understanding of this complex work. The *Response to Mouzalon*, when hastily read, appears not to display an obvious and clearly marked structure, in the sense of conventional structures offered by rhetorical or philosophical training. Even the central topic – that is, the response to the question formulated in the heading – is expounded in a different way as is revealed at the end of the text (§10). Laskaris discusses only 'how servants must attend to their masters', in other words, only the first part of Mouzalon's question, thus downplaying the supposed bilateral aspect of the relationship. The author tackles his topic by means of two basic concepts, friendship as a philosophical notion in line with the definition of Aristotle, and friendship as a political practice between Alexander the Great and his five captains, later to become the leaders of the kingdoms following the

10. For ease of reference we will use *Response to Mouzalon* as the essay's short title. The text was first edited by Tartaglia, "L'opusculo" with a brief introduction and Italian translation. It was then reedited twenty years later by Tartaglia, *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris* 120–40. The text is quoted from this edition as *RespMouz*. with reference to paragraph, page and line number.

death of the Macedonian king. At the same time, a series of other concepts (political, philosophical and moral) are employed to develop Laskaris' exposition.[11] For the following analysis it will be useful to offer here a summary of the essay's content:[12]

§1 (6–48). Alexander, "king of the Hellenes but also fellow-soldier and commander of the Macedonians" (6–7 Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ τῶν Ἑλλήνων μὲν βασιλεύς, Μακεδόνων δὲ συστρατιώτης καὶ ἀρχηγός)[13] was famous for his military exploits, but as a king he was more famous on account of his five friends (*i.e.* the captains of the Macedonian army), a pentad similar to the five senses. These friends assisted him in everything and were "bound to him through a divine harmony consisting of virtues" (44–45: ἁρμονίας θείας συνισταμένους ἐξ ἀρετῶν).[14]

§2 (49–87). The five friends became in this world "model panels of virtues" (ἀρχέτυποι πίνακες ἀρετῶν) by having been bound through an indissoluble bond. The rulers of the world, in imitating Alexander, offer endless gifts to their servants and friends. For what is equal to the friendship and good-will of a true servant? There follows an exposition of the tripartite relations of friendship, from which spring three rivers: (i) the one is pleasurable to the bodily senses; (ii) the other is finer and cleaner than the first; (iii) the third is the most honest, completely unmixed with earthly mixtures and clearest in itself. These rivers reflect a hierarchy of friendship that moves from true friendship on the highest plane (iii) down to earthly pleasures in this world (i).

§3 (88–120). According to this "exemplifying analogy" (παραδειγματικὴ ἀναλογία), there are three parts in the relation of friendship: (i) one part is devoted to pleasure, (ii) another is devoted to advantage, and (iii) a third one is devoted to what is by nature good. As a result there are three types of friends.

§4 (121–68). <*a*> It is better to honour kings and love them, more so than one's own blood relations and friends since the emperor provides peace, glory of fatherland, victory over the enemies, order, justice and prosperity in society. After God, only the emperor is the governor of all these things. <*b*> We are introduced to the characterization of the friend who is devoted to what is by nature good (*i.e.* §2–3

11. For a broader appreciation of the essay as a political manifesto see Angelov, *Imperial Ideology* 204–52.

12. The summary follows the editor's division into paragraphs; the numbers in parentheses indicate the lines in Tartaglia's edition of Theodore's *Opuscula rhetorica*. The letters in angular brackets and italics, *e.g.* <a> indicate structural subdivisions of the paragraphs, not marked by the editor.

13. On the importance of Hellenism for Theodore see the differing assessments of Kaldellis 368–79; Page 94–107; Stouraitis, "Roman Identity" 215–20. More specifically, see now Koder and Stouraitis, "Reinventing Roman Ethnicity" 85–87. To these studies one should add the pioneering articles by Irmscher and Angold.

14. The importance of Alexander's friends for his judgement as a ruler is pointed out by Nikephoros Blemmydes in his treatise *Imperial Statue* (Ševčenko and Hunger, Βασιλικὸς Ἀνδριάς V.75: 66), which he had dedicated to Theodore as crown prince and which the latter had read and used; see Agapitos, "Laskaris-Blemmydes-Philes" 2–6.

category iii).

§5 (169–251). Then follows the discussion about the friend devoted wholy to "advantage," τὸ συμφέρον (*i.e.* §2–3 category ii). The extended passage presents in a seemingly associative manner all forms of giving and receiving in "best reciprocity" (καλλίστη ἀντιστροφή). Emphasis is placed on the "ineffable knowledge" (γνῶσις ἀπόρρητος) of the master's "ineffable secrets" (μυστήρια ἀπόρρητα). This friend will be mystically received by Christ by obeying and giving to his ruler.

§6 (252–316). <*a*> Finally, the author presents the friend devoted to pleasure (*i.e.* §2–3 category i), who should obey his master and will thus receive what he peacefully desires. There follows a list of all things pleasurable at the "imperial court" (βασιλικαὶ αὐλαί) with explicit and at points detailed references to money, property, food, clothing, music, hunting and riding. <*b*> When the servant is praised and loved by his master, his fellow servants honour him, but when the master casts at him a grim glance, his fellow servants avoid and detest him. Therefore, the servant's wish has to follow his master's wish, and so everything will be performed according to "nature's order" (313 ἡ τῆς φύσεως τάξις). It is "through natural sequence and lordly inclination of the creator" that the "senior state official" prevails over his fellow servants (314–16).

§7 (317–59). <*a*> It is "dire necessity" (ἀνάγκη πᾶσα) that the servant should naturally follow his master's will according to the "higher models" (ἄνωθεν τύποι) and he will receive pleasure. There follows a list of pleasures and advantages, the greatest of which is the master's true love and affection: the ruler is like a "royal root" (βασιλικὴ ῥίζα) giving birth to all that is good, beneficial and pleasurable, while the servant receives all this as if from a river (ποταμηδόν). <*b*> For this reason, love of the master is better than love of family and friends.

§8 (360–420). <*a*> The author returns to Alexander and his five friends; there follows a list of everything that Alexander's friends gave to him; emphasis is placed on the renunciation of pleasures. <b> That is why the noble king turned his friends into the senses of his own semidivine body (405: ὡς αἰσθήσεις τοῦ οἰκείου ἡμιθέου σώματος) and crowned them to

serve as his co-rulers by his lordly grace.

§9 (421–82). <*a*> The master, as if united with his servants into one statue (συναγαλματωθείς), represents (εἰκονίζει) both the governor and the governed;[15] direct address of the author to rulers and servants to look up to this "beautiful artifact of a statue" (καλὴ ἀγαλματουργία) and "to imitate the best, the most beautiful reciprocity of this image" (ἀρίστην καλλίστην ἀντιστροφὴν εἰκόνος μιμήθητε). <*b*> The author proposes something paradoxically novel (καινοπρεπέστερον): The true love of servants is far stronger than that of important blood relatives. Therefore, if the master's friendship (φιλία) is mixed together with the servant's good-will (εὔνοια) and they are fully blended together through reciprocity (ἀντιδοτικῶς διόλου ἀνακραθεῖσαι), their love reaches heaven. This mixture of the extremes raises the most beautiful virtues of love and esteem up high, and invites the friendly powers (*i.e.* the cardinal virtues of justice and prudence) to stay with them "in the mind's splendid and critical chamber delighting in the divine concepts" (451–52: ἐν τῷ τοῦ νοὸς λαμπρῷ κοιτωνίσκῳ τῷ κριτικῷ τοῖς θείοις ἐντρυφῶν ἐννοήμασιν). <*c*> There follows a first direct address to an audience (453–54: ὑμεῖς οἱ τοῦδε τοῦ λόγου τρυφηταί τε καὶ ἀκροαταί), leading to the insertion of the speaker's "benevolent admonition" (ἀγαθὴ νουθεσία) in which hierarchical order and the angelic state of the servant's friendship is underlined.

§10 (483–98). Address to Mouzalon; the author emphasizes that for the love of his addressee he has composed all the expounded topics as if they were "original panels of virtues" (ὡς πρωτοτύπους πίνακες ἀρετῶν). He reformulates the topic of the essay as "How must servants attend to their masters in everything and how they must bear worthily their wishes." The text ends with a sentence in the valedictory style of a sermon.

From the above, the impression of the text's structural fluidity becomes manifest. The progression of the author's thoughts is organized around a series of key concepts that relate to each other in an associative manner. For example, in §1 the concept of the pentad generates a series of reiterative images based on the number 'five' (21: κατὰ τὰς πέντε αἰσθήσεις, 23–24: πέντε καὶ αὐτὸς... φίλους, 37:

15. On this image in Theodore see *Encomium on emperor John Doukas*, § 9, ed. Tartaglia, *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris* 19.424–26: τοιγαροῦν καί σοι τῇ θείᾳ κεφαλῇ ὁ νῦν λόγος εἰκόνα πραότητος ἀγαλματώσας ἀνέστησεν, ὥσπερ θείου λαοῦ κοσμήτορι ("therefore, the present discourse has set up for your divine head an image of meekness in the form of a statue, since you are the leader of a divine people").

πενταχῶς), in §2 the number 'three' has a similar function (67+68: τριττῶς... τριττῶς, 70: τρεῖς ... ποταμοί, 89: τριχῶς), while in §1 the pair of "union" (ἕνωσις) and "harmony" (ἁρμονία) leads in §2 to "union" (ἕνωσις) and "interweaving" (πλοκή) by means of which the 'model panels of virtues' are framed. Just as the pentad resurfaces at §8, so does the image of the model panels resurface at §7 (317: ἄνωθεν τύποι), leading at §9 to the imposing image of the blended statue, and reappearing for the last time in §10 at the very end of the text.[16] Furthermore, a number of key concepts – such as natural order, faith, love, goodwill, esteem, judgement, imitation, friendship, the ruler as 'image of God' (φυσικὴ τάξις, πίστις, ἀγάπη, εὔνοια, ὑπόληψις, διάκρισις, μίμησις, φιλία, εἰκὼν Θεοῦ)[17] – seem to exist in advance as a set of axioms, in other words, they reflect a condition of *preexistence*. This impression is enforced upon the recipients because these crucial key concepts are not explained at any point of the exposition but are taken for granted, although their meaning proves to be rather different from their conventional use in older texts and quite specific to the author's imperial *Weltanschauung*.

Despite the appearance of scientific logic expressed through numerical analogies of an astronomical character and syllogistic patterns of exposition,[18] major issues are presented through a mystical, ritual, performative vocabulary and imagery. For example, the passage which describes the thoughts of Alexander's friends connected to each other in a five-part manner (πενταχῶς) and thus supporting their ruler is phrased in purely ritual and neo-platonic terms (§1: 30–41), while the characterization of the third type of friendship – "on account of what is by nature good" (διὰ τὸ φύσει ἀγαθόν) – is elevated to a mystical language that leaves any concreteness behind.[19]

As noted already, the most important tool for Theodore's definition of friendship is his version of the Aristotelian tripartite categorization of friendship in Books 8 and 9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[20] However, the apparent conceptual hierarchy of the three types of friendship – goodness, benefit, pleasure (ἀγαθόν, συμφέρον, ἡδονή) – is undermined by Theodore through his textual exposition. The high type (§4b) is described most briefly and in the purely mystical style just mentioned; the middle type (§5) is presented through a ritualistic style but the admonitions expounded are quite concrete as to the service offered; the low type (§6a) is described through the most concrete examples of pleasurable pursuits in a more conventionally organized rhetorical passage.

Often in his works and for various purposes, Theodore employs

16. See also the *Satire against his Tutor*, ed. Tartaglia, *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris* 183.706–07 (πρωτοτύπους ἀρετῶν καὶ παιδείας εἰκόνας) for an ironical version of this image, so important for Theodore.

17. For appearances of these concepts see: φυσικὴ τάξις or ἀκολουθία (313, 314, 317), πίστις (370), ἀγάπη (182, 209, 437, 442), εὔνοια (61, 425, 438, 455), ὑπόληψις (57, 245, 430, 470, 472), διάκρισις (181), μίμησις (53, 428), φιλία (61, 249, 368, 437), εἰκὼν Θεοῦ (167–68). A massive appearance of these concepts can be found in *RespMouz*. 8, 135.370–75.

18. On this blend of astronomy and logic in Laskaris see Agapitos and Angelov 69–70.

19. *RespMouz*. 2–4: 123.72–79, 124.102–05, 124.111–25.120, 126.156–68.

20. On friendship in the *Response to Mouzalon* see Angelov, *Imperial Ideology* 215–26.

numerical and verbal symmetries.[21] In the case of the *Response*, these symmetries constitute an essential technique for structuring the text. The most impressive application of such structural devices can be found in §5 and §6.

In §5 (169–250) Laskaris expounds the type of friendship "on account of benefit" (περὶ τὸ συμφέρον). The essential parameter of this friendhip is "reciprocity" or "interdependence," ἀντιστροφή or ἀναστροφή (178–82):

> But because <the servant> is amorous of that best reciprocity, let him give what is desired and let him receive what is arduously achieved. Foremost, let him consciously give the interdependence of a most sincere judgment and let him thence receive sincere love.

The reader/listener is then confronted with a vertiginous litany of a pair of imperatives ("let him give and let him receive," δότω καὶ λαβέτω) that lists the full spectrum of a servant's offer of services and the benefits received from the ruler; this intense ritual repetition is the very textual performance of reciprocity. Approximately in its middle (at 35 out of 80 lines), the litany is interrupted by a pause introducing a different pair of imperatives related to the master's innermost thoughts: "But let him never hide away the questions placed to his master and he shall obtain the ineffable knowledge of his lord's ineffable secrets" (204–07). The litany resumes in the same mode as before the pause. It culminates in an extended last set of 'giving and receiving' (now in the style of *gorgotes*, 'swiftness', through shortening of the cola and acceleration of rhythm at 231–41)[22] with the master appearing at the very end as the only true friend of his servant. Thus, §5 is structured in five units: introduction (169–75), first part of the litany (175–204), pause (204–07), second part of the litany (207–41), conclusion (241–51). In terms of length we are confronted with a symmetrical pattern of A1 (6 lines) + B1 (30 lines) + C (3 lines) + B2 (34 lines) + A2 (10 lines). This spirally labyrinthine passage forms the nucleus of the admonitory response to Mouzalon's question, expounding Theodore's concept of the ideal servant with the ruler placed at its centre (unit C) and at its end (unit A2). The conclusion of §5 coincides with the very middle of the text, at line 250 out of 500 lines – surely not a structural coincidence.

After this explosion of ritual-performative discourse, we are offered in §6a the characterization of friendship "on account of plea-

21. See, for example, treatises two (*That the Being is One*) and three (*That the Being is Three*) of Theodore's collection On Christian Theology, ed. Krikonis 88–94 and 95–98; two passages from the treatise *Explanation of the World*, ed. Festa I, 115–14 and Festa II, 6-10; chapter two of the treatise *On the Natural Communion*, ed. Patrologia Graeca 140, 1279–1300.

22. On these rhetorical techniques and their ritualistic, quasi mystical, use by Theodore see, for example, his oration *On the Names of God* (no. 4 of *On Christian Theology)*, ed. Krikonis 99–108; or a passage from the third chapter of the Explanation of the World, ed. Festa II, 21–29.

sure's delight" (252–53: διὰ τὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς εὐφραντόν). It is arranged as a paratactic sequence of alternating questions and answers that slows down the rhythm of the previous passage. In contrast to the ritualistic discourse of §5, §6a is highly rhetorical in a more traditional style since the listeners/readers are not confronted with an unexpected structure wherein they would get literally lost. The imagery of the section is concrete and specific, obviously reflecting the luxurious pastimes to be found at the imperial court of Nicaea and at Nymphaion. This passage leads to an important statement (§6b) concerning the social standing of the servant at court in direct relation to his master and to his fellow servants, wherein Theodore explains the hierarchic and hieratic progress of benevolence or malevolence emanating from the ruler to his servants. All of this culminates in a crucial passage about natural order and dire necessity (307–20):

> δεῖ καὶ γὰρ τοῖς θελήμασι τοῖς δεσποτικοῖς πᾶν δοῦλον θέλημα δουλικῶς ἐπακολουθεῖν ὥσπερ καὶ τῷ συντόνῳ τοῦ πνεύματος ῥεῦμα τὸ τῆς θαλάσσης ἀκολουθεῖ, καὶ ἡ νίκη τῷ νικήσαντι στρατηγῷ, καὶ ἡ εὐθυμία τῇ εὐφορίᾳ, καὶ τῷ πλῷ ὁ πρωρεύς, καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἡνιόχου ὁ ἄξων ἐπιτηδειότητι, καὶ ἁπλῶς πάντα τὰ κατὰ φύσιν τελούμενα ἑπομένως τῇ τῆς φύσεως τάξει φυσικῶς ἐπακολουθεῖ. καὶ γὰρ φύσεως ἀκολουθίᾳ καὶ δεσποτικῇ τοῦ κτίστου ῥοπῇ ὁ ἄρχων τῶν ὁμοδούλων ἐπικρατεῖ. Ἀνάγκη γοῦν πᾶσα κατὰ τοὺς ἄνωθεν τύπους φυσικῶς τῷ βασιλικῷ ἐννοήματι πᾶν δοῦλον θέλημα ἐπακολουθεῖν, κἀντεῦθεν ὁ δοῦλος ἑλκύσει τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ συνάξει τὸ ἀρεστὸν καὶ κατατρυφήσει τοῦ εὐφραντοῦ.
>
> (For indeed every servant volition must follow in a servant-like manner the lordly volitions just like the sea current follows the intensity of the wind, victory the victorious general, contentment follows abundance, the captain the ship's course, and the axle follows the dexterity of the charioteer. Thus, simply everything that is accomplished according to nature consequentially follows natural order in a natural manner. For it is on account of natural sequence and the sovereign inclination of the Creator that the senior official prevails over his fellow servants. It is dire necessity, therefore, that every servant's volition follow the emperor's concepts according to the higher models in a natural manner,

for it is thence that the servant shall draw pleasure, gather what is pleasing and fully delight in what is enjoyable.)

Towards the end of the essay, the author addresses his audience for the first time, defining them as "you who delight in and listen to this oration" (453–54: ὑμεῖς... οἱ τοῦ λόγου τούτου τρυφηταί τε καὶ ἀκροαταί). Explaining to these recipients that for the preparation of their progress in the path of wisdom they need to understand his "good advice" (ἀγαθὴ νουθεσία), Theodore directs at them an admonitory speech (§9c = 458–82). This encased speech is explicitly delivered in the emperor's 'own' voice: "these things I say, so indeed listen to me" (458: ταῦτα λέγω καὶ δὴ καὶ ἀκούετε) he states. The speech is composed in the austere style of the advices delivered by the Hebrew prophets in the Bible, for example, the books of Micheas and Malachias. In fact, Theodore's prophetic discourse also draws its imagery from the Old Testament, accentuating the importance of this 'direct speech' through the abrupt stylistic and iconographic shift. By assuming the voice of an authoritative past, the author as speaker and crown prince enforces upon his audience the summary of his 'good advice' as *the* preexistent, original and unique admonition on the relation between master and servant.[23]

The encased speech leads to the last section of the text (§10: 483–98), which constitutes a direct address to Mouzalon. Theodore as the admonishing voice of authority employs a well-known rhetorical device. The speaker asks his addressee to formulate his petition, but then the speaker takes upon himself to do that.[24] In expressing what the addressee had asked, he reformulates it as "How must servants attend to their lords in everything and how they must worthily support their wishes of their lords" (491–92: πῶς δεῖ τοὺς δούλους θεραπεύειν τοὺς δεσπότας ἁπανταχῆ καὶ πῶς ἀξίως στέργειν τὰ αὐτῶν θελητά). In contrast to the 'bilateral' heading at the beginning of the work, the topic has now become within the text explicitly 'unilateral' since all burden of the relationship rests on the servants. "If you remember, this is the topic, and thus receive now the fruits" (492–93: εἰ μέμνησαι τοῦτο ἦν καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀπόλαβε τοὺς καρπούς), states the crown prince to his future minister, suggesting that it is the former who controls the latter's memory.

All of the above makes clear that in the *Response to Mouzalon* stability and fluidity manifest themselves as a tense antithesis within the structure, imagery and style of the text; as a juxtaposition of the logical to the mystical and of the concrete to the abstract; as the hybrid-

23. For some thoughts on the particular hieratic image of the emperor in late Byzantium see Hunger 49–61.

24. This is a technique sometimes used by orators to 'control' their audience's voice; see, for example, Eustahios' of Thessalonike *Funeral Oration on the Archbishop of Athens Nicholas Hagiotheodorites* (1175) in Wirth 7.63–8.73.

ity of the imperial statue representing at once the governor and the governed (421–28):

> Διὰ ταῦτα πάντα τοῖς οἰκείοις δούλοις ἐξ ἀρετῶν ὁ δεσπότης συναγαλματωθεὶς εἰκονίζει τὸ ἄρχον καὶ τὸ ἀρχόμενον. ἀλλ' ἀτενίσατε, ἡγεμόνες καὶ δοῦλοι ἅπαντες, πρὸς ταύτην τὴν καλὴν ἀγαλματουργίαν, ἀναμάξασθε ἀρετάς, ἀντλήσατε ἰδιώματα, γνῶτε δουλικὴν εὔνοιαν, γνῶτε δεσπότου εὐμένειαν φίλον τε δεσπότην θεάσασθε καὶ δούλους φίλους δεσπότου αὐτῶν, ἀρίστην καλλίστην ἀντιστροφὴν εἰκόνος μιμήθητε.
>
> (Because of all this the master, having blended himself to his servants as a statue made out of virtues, he represents both the governor and the governed. Indeed, you rulers and servants all, gaze at this beautiful artifact of a statue, receive virtues, draw distinctive features, know a servant's good-will, know a master's benevolence, see a friendly master and servants being friends of their master, imitate the best, the most beautiful reciprocity of this image.)

We can thus observe that in Theodore's text the three interrelated pairs of conflicting forces are fully acted out:

> (i) Preexistence *vs* Construction. The preexistent character of natural order conflicts with the effort to define the basic temporal relation that upholds this order, namely, the 'friendship' between master and servant. The conflict shows that this natural order and the relation expressing it are, in fact, a construction.
>
> (ii) Originality *vs* Repetition. While natural order and the resulting imperial power as expression of a divine hierarchy are represented as a condition of originality (for example, the image of the 'imperial root' in §7a), their manifestation in the text is expressed through massive repetition (for example, the 'river' in §7a). Similarly, while the text attempts to present an 'original' syntactic structure through its use of scientific vocabulary and linear patterns of thought, in fact, it uses a highly 'repetitive' style and circular patterns of thought that accentuate its own performativity.
>
> (iii) Oneness *vs* Twoness. Imperial power and its divine na-

> ture is characterized in the text by oneness, in other words, it supposedly exists on its own, as is expressed by the images of stability describing it: model panel, root, statue. Yet, in fact, it can operate only in twoness, that is, through its true servants as its chosen subjects. The latter are a formative part of power since their services result in the authority's benefactions by means of which power is defined as to its character and becomes apparent. This can be seen most clearly in §5 when the master's ineffable secrets, communicated to the servant, become the conceptual and literary centre of the text.

Consequently, the whole system of power proposed by Theodore is self-referential because the identification of the emperor with God as a governing principle is logically untenable (God is an unmeasurable principle) and is therefore internally self-conflicting (the emperor is not a 'principle'),[25] just like the image of the emperor as a blended statue is logically false. In other words, an authority that seeks to represent simultaneously 'the governor and the governed' is hybrid, undermining its claim to autonomous stability through its internalized conflicts of fluidity.

25. On the relation of the imperial office with the divine in early and middle Byzantium see Dagron.

3 The hybrid *erotideus* and *basileus*

We turn now to *The Tale of Livistros and Rodamne* (Ἀφήγησις Λιβίστρου καὶ Ροδάμνης, abbr. *L&R*) to investigate the presentation and function of the figure of Eros as the powerful monarch of *Erotokratia*, in other words as the holder of absolute power. With its 4650 verses, *L&R* is the longest among the surviving love romances. It was most probably written around the middle of the thirteenth century at the Laskarid court of Nicaea.[26] The romance displays an extremely strong performative character. We find the continuous use of first-person narrative distributed among five different characters, an intricate 'Chinese box' narrative structure, a high presence of letters and songs, as well as an impressive open-ended epilogue by the main narrator inviting any later readers to retell the story according to their taste. *L&R* emphatically adheres to major structural features and rhetorical typologies of the twelfth-century novels, such as: division into books, first-person narrative perspective, *in medias res* narrative structure, night-and-day narrative sequences, the presence of a leading and a supporting couple of lovers, extended dream sequences,

26. The romance is composed in 'city verses' (πολιτικοὶ στίχοι), that is, in a free-flowing accentuated fifteen-syllable metre. The text survives in three independent redactions (*alpha* [= **SNP**], **E**, and **V**), of which *alpha* represents the oldest text (*ca* second half of the fourteenth century) which will be used here. Redaction alpha is quoted from Agapitos, *Ἀφήγησις Λιβίστρου καd Ροδάμνης*. The romance was traditionally dated to the end of the fourteenth or the early fifteenth century, while it was suggested that it was written in Latin dominated lands like Cyprus, Rhodes or Crete. For the new dating and localization of the romance see Agapitos, "Χρονολογικὴ ἀκολουθία" 130–31 and *Ἀφήγησις Λιβίστρου καὶ Ροδάμνης* 48–66. For a different date and place of composition (Constantinople, late thirteenth century) see Cupane, "In the Realm of Eros" 101. We use the forthcoming English translation by Agapitos, *The Tale of Livistros and Rhodamne.*

artfully crafted descriptions, the rhetorical system of organizing the discursive mode and the inclusion of amorous soliloquies, amorous letters and songs, the use of a different metre than that of the main narrative for encased songs, finally, the use of a poetological metalanguage to describe the craft of writing and the art of the poet. At the same time, *L&R* presents us with a series of wholly new features, such as: a contemporary aristocratic setting, a set of characters whose ethnic origins are Latin (*i.e.* French), Armenian and Saracen but not Byzantine, elements of 'Latin' chivalric practice (oath of vassalage, jousting, hawk hunting, dress), the presence of allegorical characters and allegorical exegesis. It is this apparatus that led previous scholars to believe that the romance was composed in a Latin dominated but Greek speaking territory of the Eastern Mediterranean, but this is decidedly not the case.[27]

It is notable that in the *L&R* we are confronted with the most detailed exploitation of the motif of Eros in Medieval Greek romance, especially as regards Byzantine imperial rhetoric and ritual.[28] Once again, we should keep in mind the discrepancy between the two parts that form our theoretical pairs – the externally superimposing claims that validate an authority as such and the internally opposing condition that thwarts the concretization of this authoritative status. More specifically, hybrid power is established as the symbol of a superior, pure and natural authority and claims, therefore, an inherent authoritative quality which excludes its subordinate. At the same time, these claims are left unrealized since every form of power has to be repeatedly articulated to and assessed by the subordinate, exactly the one excluded from the authoritative privilege.

The action of the romance unfolds in a geographically fluid Eastern Mediterranean, without any explicitly signalled appearance of Rhomaian characters. A summary of the complex plot will be helpful at this point:[29]

> At the court of Myrtáne ("Myrtle-scented"), queen of Armenia, a young man (who had himself fallen in love) starts to narrate "the tale about the love between Lívistros the deeply suffering and the maiden Rodámne" (*L&R* 25–26). Lívistros, the young king of the Latin land Lívandros, refuses to fall in love. As a consequence of a sad incident (Lívistros shoots a turtle-dove and its mate commits suicide), his Relative instructs him about the power that Eros, the 'sovereign ruler of amours' (*erotokrator*), holds over the animate

27. See more broadly Agapitos, "In Rhomaian, Persian and Frankish Lands." For fiction in the Eastern Medieval Mediterranean see now the various chapters in Cupane and Krönung.

28. See Agapitos, "The 'Court of Amorous Dominion.'"

29. For more detailed outlines of the plot see Agapitos, Ἀφήγησις Λιβίστρου καὶ Ροδάμνης 45–48 and Lendari 72–82. In the summary we have added accents on the names of the characters in order to familiarize readers with the pronounciation of these "strange" words.

and inanimate world.[30] In a long dream, Lívistros is arrested by the winged guards of the Amorous Dominion (*Erotokratía*) and is taken by a Cupid Guard (*erotodemios*) to the court (*aule*) of Eros. The awe-inspiring three-faced ruler is angry at Lívistros' rebellion against love. With the mediation of Póthos ("Desire") and Agápe ("Love"), the ruler's powerful ministers, Eros forgives Lívistros but demands of him to swear an oath of vassalage and forces him to fall in love with Rodámne ("Rosy-hued"), daughter of the Latin Emperor Chrysós ("Gold") of Argyrókastron ("Silvercastle"), a huge triangular fortified town. Lívistros narrates his dream to his Relative, who informs him that Rodámne is a real person and advises him to go find the princess. In a second dream, Eros presents Lívistros with Rodámne; the young king, astonished by the sight of the princess, falls in love, but wakes up in agony. In a further dream, the lord of the Amorous Dominion in the guise of a flying boy also forces the princess to fall in love with the young king.

After having wondered for two years with his hundred companions in search of Rodámne, Lívistros reaches the impressive Silvercastle and camps under the balcony of the princess. Aided by his Friend, who enters the castle dressed as a peddlar, and by Rodámne's trusted eunuch servant Vétanos, the king succeeds in an extended exchange of amorous letters, songs and love tokens to convince the princess of his love. However, Rodámne has been promised by her father as wife to Verderíchos, the menacing emperor of Egypt. In the meantime Verderíchos has also camped outside the Silvercastle. In a joust demanded by Rodámne from her father, Lívistros wins her hand from Verderíchos who is forced to leave humiliated. The couple marries, and Lívistros is formally proclaimed co-emperor of Chrysós.

However, Verderíchos returns two years later to Silvercastle dressed as a merchant from Babylon and succeeds with the help of a Saracen Witch to trick Lívistros and steal Rodámne. Lívistros sets out to find his wife. On the way, he meets a stranger who proves to be prince Klitovón, nephew of the king of Armenia. Livistros tells his story up to that point and, then, Klitovón tells his: he had fallen in love with the king's daughter, and was forced to flee the country because she was already married, and because her father

30. The appellations Relative, Friend and Witch are capitalised because they are used as the names of these otherwise anonymous characters of the romance.

intended to kill him after he had thrown him into prison. After this exchange of stories, Lívistros and Klitovón discover the Witch on a deserted beach, where she had been abandoned by Verderíchos. By providing the two young men with specific advice and with two flying horses, the Witch helps them to cross the sea to Egypt and find Rodámne. Successfully avoiding Verderíchos' wooing, she has been running an inn for two years attending to the needs of strangers. Klitovón leaves Lívistros in a meadow and visits Rodámne at the inn, where she narrates her story to him. Following her narration Klitovón agrees to narrate his as well, including Lívistros' story but without disclosing his name. However, he ends up revealing Lívistros' name and he helps the two protagonists reunite. The three of them flee Egypt and, after Lívistros has decapitated the Witch, he takes his wife back to Silvercastle, where Klitovón marries Rodámne's younger sister Melanthía ("Dark-blossom"). However, after the latter's premature death, Klitovón returns to Armenia and to Queen Myrtáne. It is thus revealed that Myrtáne was in fact Klitovón's first love; both of them are now widowed. The narrator, who proves to be an important character of the romance, turns to the audience to bring his story to a conclusion.

Eros is introduced in the *L&R* as the personification of erotic and political power, two almost incompatible practices, the first driven by desire, the second by logic. As a character of the plot he is both the sovereign of amours (ἐρωτοκράτωρ), and emperor (βασιλεύς) of the Amorous Dominion (ἐρωτοκρατία).[31] Scholarly research has recently drawn attention to the correlation between Eros the emperor and Byzantine imperial imagery and ritual.[32] More specifically, the fictive hegemonic ideal as illustrated in the *L&R* presents many stylistic and rhetorical affinities to the imperial portraiture and ceremonial practice of the Laskarid court, for example, the formalized expressions employed to describe Eros invoke the laudatory poems and acclamations addressed to the Nicaean emperor. We also observe this correlation in the ritualistic appearance of Eros in front of Livistros, in the rituals of Livistros' petition to Agape and Pothos, Eros' chief officials, to mediate on his behalf at the emperor's court and also during the ritual of Livistros' public repentance at the hall of the Amorous Tribunal (429 ἐρωτοδίκη), his forgiveness by Eros the emperor and, finally, in Livistros' ceremonial subjugation to Eros.

31. See, indicatively, *L&R* 190, 250, 3291 (ἐρωτοκράτωρ), 540 (ἐρωτοκρατῶν); 507, 688 (βασιλεύς); 267, 284, 292 (Ἐρωτοκρατία).

32. Agapitos "The 'Court of Amorous Dominion,'" but also Pieler. In her seminal study of 1974 Cupane "Ἔρως βασιλεύς" had argued for a link between Eros in the *Livistros* and the Western *dieux d'amour.*

On the one hand, Eros appears as the representative of an authoritative past, the idea of the *erotideus* or Hellenistic god of love that is validated from literary Greek antiquity. The creation of this entity is placed at some indeterminate moment, outside the textual frame, in a remote mythological past. In fact, when Livistros first enters Eros' court, he is confronted with a sculpted arch in whose vaulted roof is represented Aphrodite giving birth to Eros (323–27). Immediately after, this Hellenistic cupid, born in the faraway past, proves his power by shooting his own mother with an arrow of love. Eros is, therefore, presented as *preexistent* and *original*. On the other hand, Eros is fashioned as an ideal Byzantine emperor, the representative of Rhomaian monarchy, who is validated through the will of God. Both of these analogies set a boundary between Eros and human nature, rendering this boundary as holy order and as the natural status quo. It is for this reason that Eros appears in a standstill, frontal pose in front of Livistros, to highlight the ruler's supra-human, holy quality – in the manner in which a holy portrait in Byzantium is depicted.[33] Eros' status is acknowledged by Livistros, who signs a formal vow (586a–609), submitting himself as a slave (δοῦλος) and vassal (λίζιος) to the will of his master (δεσπότης).

33. Agapitos, "The 'Court of Amorous Dominion'" 400 and n. 31 with examples from Byzantine art. For an analysis of the emperor's frontal pose in Byzantine art see Maguire, "Style and Ideology."

Being such, however, Eros is from the beginning a conflictual double. He holds an ambivalent status, lingering between erotic power, this generally negative force associated with sexual desire in the romances, and the political power as order. At the same time, the imagery and rituals that accompany Eros' performance do not constitute aspects of any vague imperial ideal, but are instead anchored at the very specific context of the Nicaean court and recognizable by the romance's primary audience. In this way, a very particular ideological code that refers to the present is projected 'anachronistically' onto the Hellenistic past, absorbing, on the one hand, the authoritative status that this past encompasses. On the other hand, by being recognizably 'modern', this ideological code reveals that the alleged preexistent, original and natural idea of Eros as erotic and political authority is an illusionary construction and repetition.

This tension between Eros' quality as preexistent and natural versus constructed is also revealed by the ambivalent way the romance constructs the manifestation of Eros' power upon the subject he dominates. A characteristic reflection of this statement is the episode in which the Relative informs Livistros of the great power of Eros. Among other examples the Relative tells Livistros (166–78):

"Βλέπεις το τοῦτο τὸ πουλίν," λέγει με, "τὸ τρυγόνιν;
Πάντως εἰς ὄρος πέτεται καὶ εἰς ἀέραν τρέχει,
καὶ ἂν φονευθῇ τὸ ταίριν του καὶ λείψῃ ἀπὲ τὸν κόσμον,
ποτὲ εἰς δένδρον οὐ κάθεται νὰ ἔχῃ χλωρὰ τὰ φύλλα,
ποτὲ νερὸν καθάριον ἀπὸ πηγὴν οὐδὲν πίνει·
πάντοτε εἰς πέτραν κάθεται, θρηνεῖ καὶ οὐκ ὑπομένει,
τὴν στέρησίν του ἀνιστορεῖ καὶ πνίγει τὸν ἐνιαυτόν του.
Καὶ μὴ θαυμάσῃς τὸ πουλὶν τὸ ᾽στάνεται καὶ βλέπει,
ἀλλὰ ἰδὲς καὶ θαύμασε τὸ δένδρον τὸ φοινίκιν,
πῶς ἂν οὐκ ἔχει ἀρσενικὸν τὸ θηλυκὸν φοινίκιν,
ποτὲ οὐ καρπεύει εἰς τὴν γῆν, πάντα θλιμμένον στέκει.
Ἄφες αὐτὸ καὶ θαύμασε τὸν λίθον τὸν μαγνήτην,
πῶς ἕλκει ἀπὸ τοῦ πόθου του τὴν φύσιν τοῦ σιδήρου."

(He told me: "Do you see this bird called turtle-dove?
It always flies over mountains and speeds through the air,
and should its mate be killed and vanish from the world,
it never again sits on a tree with green leaves,
it never again drinks clear water from a spring,but always sits
on a rock, laments and cannot endure the pain,
tells of its loss and drowns in its own sorrow.
Yet do not wonder at the feeling and intelligent bird,
but look and wonder at the palm-tree:
should the female plant not find a male
it never bears fruit and always stands bent in sorrow.
Put the tree aside and wonder at the magnet-stone,
how by its desire it draws near the very nature of iron.")

As the passage shows, it is considered natural for creatures, or even for fruits and elements to fall in love, or in other words to subject themselves to Eros' authority since this authority is considered to be inherent to and thus to precede the animate and the inanimate world. The same statement is repeated a few verses later, when Livistros is arrested by the cupid guards, and he is reminded that no person or thing can live outside the rule of Eros (251–53). However, it seems that what is presented as a natural law is thereupon rendered ambivalent. After the Relative has compiled his list with the examples that prove Eros is a natural attribute of every creature, he presents the mystery of love as a skill that can be actually taught (185–90). Once again the same opinion is repeated by the Cupid Guard addressing Livistros with the advice that he should "be educated in the matters

of love and learn it as it befits' him" (271 νὰ παιδευθῇς τὰ ἐρωτικὰ καὶ μάθῃς τα ὡς ἁρμόζει).

Thus, subjection to Eros' authority is both presented as man's natural attribute and a socially acquired skill especially 'suitable' for nobles. There is, therefore, an ambivalent attitude governing the conception of Eros in this romance. It is a supposedly preexisting, that is, past condition but is also revealed as a skilled acquired in a particular moment of man's present when certain circumstances arise which guide him to become capable of such a skill, among which man's social class. What complicates even more the perception of Eros' power in the romance is that, even though the two conflicting views of subjection to Eros as a natural fact and an acquired attribute are conjoined, a third conflicting view is introduced. The inscription in front of the gate of Eros' court informs Livistros that either he becomes Eros' vassal or he dies (295–301):

ἂν δὲ καὶ θέλῃ νὰ ἐμπῇ νὰ ἰδῇ καὶ τὴν αὐλήν του, 295
ἂς ὑπογράψῃ δοῦλος του καὶ ἂς γίνεται ἐδικός του,
καὶ τότε νὰ ἰδῇ χάριτας ἂς ἔχει ὁ ποθοκράτωρ·
ἂν δὲ μουρτεύσῃ νὰ ἐμβῇ, μὴ ὑπογράψῃ δοῦλος,
ἂς ἐγνωρίσῃ δήμιός του γίνεται τὸ σπαθίν μου
καὶ ἐγὼ πικρός του τύραννος, μετὰ ἀδιακρισίας 300
νὰ κόψω τὸ κεφάλιν του, νὰ λείψῃ ἀπὸ τὸν κόσμον.

(Yet should he wish to enter and see the court of Eros,
let him sign as his slave, let him become his companion;
he then shall see what charms the Sovereign of Desire possesses.
But should he rebelliously refuse to enter and not sign as slave,
let him know that my sword shall be his executioner,
and I his bitter tyrant; I shall with cruelty
cut off his head that he might vanish from this world.)

Hence as the story goes on, initiation to the power of Eros appears simultaneously not only as a natural fact and an acquired taught skill, but also as an enforced condition. These possibilities, all articulated together, create an ambivalent conception over the nature of Eros' power.

Moreover, Eros' power is articulated *only* in the context of a dream, an explicitly *mental* world. Thus, it is perceivable only to the one who has access to the dream – Livistros. Eros' physical extension into the textual *reality* is, in fact, Livistros. Therefore, while Eros is

rendered as a supra-human and quasi-holy figure, it is impossible for him to function without the human. Eros' power is consequently revealed to be one of necessary twoness, inextricably linked to and dependent from his 'servant'.

According to our theoretical model, the identity of authority which is deconstructed as hybrid constitutes an impossibility. Hybrid Eros in *L&R* is absolutely inconceivable as a whole entity. First he appears as a three-faced ruler (479–99):

καὶ μέσα εἰς τούτους, φίλε μου, μάθε τὸ τί ἐξενίστην,
τὸ εἴδασιν τὰ ὀμμάτιά μου ἐξαπορεῖ το ὁ νοῦς μου.
Ἔρως τριμορφοπρόσωπος κάθηται εἰς τὸν θρόνον,
τὸ πρῶτον του τὸ πρόσωπον βρέφος μικροῦ παιδίου,
ἁπαλοσάρκου, τρυφεροῦ, καὶ εἶχεν ξανθὴν τὴν πλάσιν,
ἐὰν τὸ εἶδες νὰ εἶπες ἐκπαντὸς χέρια καλοῦ ζωγράφου
τεχνίτου τὸ ἐστόρησαν, ψέγος οὐδὲν βαστάζει·
τὸ δεύτερον ἐφαίνετον ὡς μέσης ἡλικίας,
νὰ ἔχῃ τὸ γένιν στρογγυλόν, τὴν ὄψιν ὡς τὸ χιόνι·
καὶ τὸ ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνου πρόσωπον γέροντος νὰ εἶδες ὄψιν,
σύνθεσιν, σχῆμα καὶ κοπὴν καὶ πλάσιν ἀναλόγως·
καὶ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον πρόσωπον εἶχεν ἐξολοκλήρου
τὰ χέρια, τὰ ποδάρια καὶ τὸ ἄλλον του τὸ σῶμα,
τὰ δὲ ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνου πρόσωπα μόνον ἀπὸ τοὺς ὤμους.
Ἐθεώρουν τα ὅτι ἐκείτονταν ὡς ἦσαν κατ᾽ ἀξίαν,
ἔβλεπα τὴν τριμόρφωσιν, ἔλεγα: "Τίς ὁ πλάστης
<καὶ> τί τὸ ξενοχάραγον τὸ βλέπω, τί ἔναι ἐτοῦτο;
Τίς νὰ μὲ εἴπῃ τὸ θεωρῶ, τίς νὰ μὲ τὸ ἀναδιδάξῃ;"
Καὶ ἐνόσῳ εἰς τέτοιαν μέριμναν ὁ νοῦς μου ἐτριοκοπᾶτον,
ὁκάποτε καὶ ἡ ζήτησις γίνεται ἡ ἐδική μου.

(In the midst of them, my friend, learn now what I wondered at –
my mind is even now astonished at what my eyes saw.
Eros the Threefaced was sitting on his throne,
his first face was that of an infant baby,
soft-skinned, tender and with a fair complexion;
had you seen it, you would have said that a good painter craftsman's
hand had wholly depicted it – no blemmish is attached to it.
The second face appeared as if of middle age,
having a rounded beard, a countenance like snow,
while the third face had the countenance of an old man,
its features, form, shape and appearance fashioned accordingly.

The first face had fully apportioned to it
the hands, the feet and all the rest of its body,
while the other two faces were visible only from above the
[shoulders.
I noticed that they were placed according to their rank,
I looked at the trifacial form and said: "Who is the creator
and what is this strangely drawn creation I see, what is it really?
Who shall tell me what is it I behold, who shall interpret it
[for me,
what friend of beauty shall instruct me about it?"
While my mind was split in three by such worries,
I was at some point summoned to appear.)

We are faced here with the coexistence of three distinct and mutually exclusive natures. Eros' three identities, that of the child, the middle-aged man and the old man coexist without mingling. His three faces reveal the three stages of man's life-span but each of these phases normally excludes the other. Actually, this depiction of Eros brings to mind Byzantine depictions of Christ as 'the Ancient of Days' (ὁ παλαιὸς τῶν ἡμερῶν), sometimes represented as a figure with three faces, that of a youth, a middle-aged man and an old man.[34] Eros' inconceivable nature is underlined through the astonishment it effects upon Livistros. Eros' impossibility as a hybrid figure is again revealed a few verses later, when Livistros is unable to determine from which of Eros' mouths the voice he hears originates (526–32):

Ἐπροσηκώθην ἐκ τὴν γῆν, ἐπροσεκύνησά τον,
εἶδα φρικτὸν μυστήριον, φίλε μου, εἰς ἐκεῖνον·
τὴν μίαν φωνὴν ἐμέριζαν τὰ στόματα τὰ τρία, 529
ἐλάλει οὗτος καὶ νὰ λὲς ἐφώναζεν ἐκεῖνος, 528
καὶ ἤκουες τὸ τέλος τῆς φωνῆς ἐκ τῶν τριῶν τὸ στόμα, 530
καὶ ἁπλῶς οὐκ εἶχες τὴν ἀρχήν, οὐδὲ τὸ τέλος πάλιν,
τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐφώναξεν πόθεν νὰ τὸν εἰκάζῃς.

(I rose up from the ground, I payed obeisance to him and, then,
my friend, I beheld an awe-inspiring mystery concerning Eros.
The one and single voice was divided among the three mouths,
there spoke the one and you thought the other cried out as well;
you heard the closing of the speech from the mouths of all
[three faces,
but – simply said – you could not guess where the beginning was

34. On the imagery of Christ as the Ancient of Days, which goes back to Daniel 7 (and was picked up in Apocalypse 1.12–18), see McKay. On the three-faced Christ (an image appearing in the eleventh and twelfth century on frescoes in the churches of Saint Sophia in Ochrid, of the Virgin Eleousa near Skopje and in St Panteleimon in Nerezi, all of them buildings in which the paintings were executed by Constantinopolitan artists) see Lidov; Miljković-Pepek 192–96 and 204–06; Sinkević 40–43 and figs. xxi–xxv.

or where again the end, and whence came the discourse he
[declaimed.)

Now we find a simultaneous and inconceivable articulation of speech making definition and comprehension simply impossible. The ambivalent condition caused by Eros' hybridity is intensified by the fact that he changes shape in every appearance, so he seems capable of shifting between his various forms without ever settling down to one of them. In Livistros' second dream, Eros appears as an infant holding a bow. In the third dream he appears vaguely as a winged creature, while in the last dream he is a winged boy. In a painted depiction he appears as a naked youth with sword and torch. Hence, Eros does not have a standard shape but 'puts on' different identities separately or at the same time, even when these identities exclude each other.

Livistros' second dream presents a very impressive illustration of Eros' hybrid identity. Livistros reports that in this dream he met Eros "but only the little infant" (700) and thereupon adds (713–15):

Συναπαντῶ τὸν Ἔρωταν, τὸν γέροντα, τὸ βρέφος,
τὸ βρέφος τὸ παράδοξον τῆς μέσης ἡλικίας,
ἐκεῖνον ὁποὺ ἐκαθέζετον μετὰ προσώπων δύο. 715

(I meet Eros, the old man, the infant,
the astonishing infant who was middle-aged,
the one that sat on the throne with its two other faces.)

Livistros does not know exactly how to define Eros' nature because the simultaneous coexistence and performance of his various identities is impossible. Moreover, in this same dream, the garden belongs to Eros *the emperor* (688–89), while it presents many similarities with the ideal thirteenth-century garden – a contemporary setting.[35] However, in the genre of romance a garden of this type is usually associated with the sexually charged space of the Graces, thus, a Hellenistic past.[36] One should add that, despite Eros *the emperor* being the owner of this garden, in fact, Eros appears in the shape of the mythological god, with the result that we are confronted with multiple levels of meaning which construct Eros' domain and identity as highly complex. In this ambivalent past-present geographical dimension and fluidity of identity within the dream, Eros acts out his erotic power – he offers Rodamne to Livistros as a suitable companion –

35. On this see Agapitos, "The 'Court of Amorous Dominion'" 403 and n. 40. It is actually a fenced garden, on which see also Maguire, "Paradise withdrawn" 23–35. On the function of the garden in Byzantine romance see Littlewood.

36. On the function of the garden and water as a sexually-charged motif in the romances see Agapitos, "The Erotic Bath" 264–73; see also Barber, who approaches the subject from a different angle.

and, simultaneously, his political power – he grants the princess as a gift to his vassal. Similarly ambiguous is Eros' performing sphere since the dream is an uncertain space between the real and the imaginary, a liminal space that in Byzantine ideology hosts the action of both holy and demonic powers.[37]

37. See the papers collected in Angelidi and Calophonos.

In Livistros' third dream, Eros appears as a winged 'creature' (897–99), whereas when he later appears to shoot Rodamne with his bow, he is a winged infant (1411). In the various depictions that Livistros sees inside Eros' court, Eros appears as either a naked child holding a bow and a torch, or without any description. Hence, the hybrid Eros flows around the images that are supposed to depict him without being captured in any of them. His hybrid shape is simply inconceivable as one can also conclude from Livistros' explanation of Eros to Klitovon, which runs as follows (924–39):[38]

38. The passage starts with a two-verse rubric written out with red ink in the manuscripts; such rubrics accompany the whole story and form an integral part of the romance's text. On this matter see Agapitos and Smith.

Τοῦ πόθου τὴν ἰσότηταν ὁ Λίβιστρος διδάσκει
ἐκεῖνον τὸν παράξενον φίλον τὸν Κλιτοβῶντα.
Εἶπεν με· "Τὸ τριπρόσωπον τὸ ἐρωτικὸν τὸ βλέπεις,
ἄκουσε, μάθε, Λίβιστρε, τὸ τί ἔν᾽ διδάχνω σέ το.
Ἔρως εἰς τὴν ἀσχόλησιν πρόσωπα οὐ διακρίνει,
ὁ δεῖνα γέρων ἄνθρωπος καὶ μὴ ἀσχολῆται πόθου,
καὶ ὁ δεῖνα μέσα τοῦ καιροῦ καὶ πρέπει νὰ ἀσχολῆται,
καὶ ὁ δεῖνα πλήρης βρέφος ἔν᾽ καὶ οὐ πρέπει νὰ ἀγαπήσῃ.
Ἀλλὰ κἂν γέρων, κἂν παιδίν, κἂν μέσης ἡλικίας,
ἐπίσης ἔνι ὁ Κρεμασμὸς καὶ ὁ Πόθος ἴσος ἔνι,
καὶ οὐδὲν ἔχει {τὴν} προτίμησιν <εἷς> τοῦ ἄλλου τὴν Ἀγάπην·
< >[39]
Καὶ πᾶσαν φύσιν, γνώριζε, κἂν γέροντος, κἂν νέου,
κἂν ἔνι μέσον τοῦ καιροῦ κἂν βρεφικοῦ τοῦ τρόπου,
οὕτω καὶ εἰς τοῦτο καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ καὶ πάλιν εἰς ἐκεῖνο
ὁ Πόθος τρέχει, γνώριζε, τὸν εἶδες μετὰ σέναν·
καὶ μάθε, οὐκ ἔν᾽ προτίμησις τῶν ἐρωτοπροσώπων
εἰς τίποτε, νῦν ἐγνώριζε, μὰ τὸ σπαθὶν τοῦ Πόθου."

39. There is a gap of one verse in the main manuscript; redaction E transmitts a garbled verse, which introduces a different point than the one made in redaction *alpha*.

(*Livistros lectures on the equality of desire*
to Klitovon, the wondrous friend of his.
He [*i.e.* the Seer] said: "The amorous trifacial being that you see,
Livistros, listen and learn about it; I shall instruct you what it is.
Eros does not distinguish persons when it comes to amorous
[concern:
one face is an old man who should not concern himself with

[desire,
one is a man of middle age who must concern himself,
and one is truly an infant who must not fall in love.
Yet, be it old man, child or mature man,
equal to all is Longing, Desire is the same for all,
and no one takes precedence over the other in Love;
< >
To every human nature (know it!) – be it of an old man, a
[young one,
be it of a man of middle age, be it of childish ways –
Desire, who accompanied you (know it!), rushes to them all,
he rushes likewise to the one and the other and the next.
Learn, then, that the amorous faces do not give precedence
to anyone – know it now by the sword of Desire!")

The fact that Klitovon interrupts Livistros so that they may return to the subject of Eros, joined to the fact that the poet puts in Livistros' mouth this 'treatise' concerning the nature of Eros (supposedly delivered by a Seer within Livistros' first dream), reveals both the attraction and the awe that this hybrid creature causes to those who hear about him or are able to witness his curious form but also the astonishment that his peculiar appearance causes. Eros' faces are proclaimed as equal; none of them is considered to be his primary form. Consequently, Eros is understood as hybrid, while his image remains uncertain, incomplete, elusive despite the detailed description. This feeling is intensified by the unstable presence of Eros within his sphere of action, but also by the sphere of action itself. Eros appears only in the context of dream, a liminal sphere somewhere between the real and the imaginary hosting the action of both holy and demonic forces; thus, both saints and the devil exploit this sphere as their center stage. The levels of reality and imagination as regards Eros' presence become even more tangled by the fact that Eros 'wakes' Livistros 'up' within the dream.

But maybe the most characteristic example of Eros as an absence in presence is the moment when Livistros enters the Amorous Chamber of Desire's Oaths (582 τὸ κελλὶν τὸ ἐρωτικὸν τῆς ποθοορκομωσίας) to declare his submission to Eros (569–609). Eros' presence in this space is specified in the following ways: (i) with his depiction on the double door as a naked boy holding a sword and a torch (572–75), (ii) with an inscription that reveals the identity of the painted boy and his power to arrest every rebel (576–80), (iii) with

Eros' wing and bow (587–88) and (iv) with Eros' oath, which begins as follows (587–89):

> "Ἐγὼ εἶμαι ὁ νόμος τοῦ Ἔρωτος {καὶ} τοῦτο ἔνι τὸ πτερὸν μου
> καὶ τοῦτο ἔναι τὸ δοξάριν μου, καὶ ὀμνύετε οἱ πάντες
> λίζιοι νὰ εἶστε δοῦλοι του, νὰ μὴ τὸν ἀθετεῖτε."
>
> ("I am the law of Eros! This is my wing
> and this is my bow. Vow all of you
> to be the vassal slaves of Eros, never to disobey him.")

The oath is the form of the writing that refers, on the one hand, to a religious authority, and, on the other, to an official legal system (the Byzantine official system, thus, a contemporary situation), both of which commit the person to act according to what the oath concerns. However, the oath also denotes here the owner of the wing and the bow which, to make things even more complicate, point to the Hellenistic conception of Eros as a winged boy. The wing and the bow were described immediately before this passage through Eros' depiction and the accompanying inscription that Livistros sees (572–80) and are declared as the medium through which Eros acts out his power. But these two 'objects', a literal part of Eros' body and power, also denote metonymically their one and only owner through the absence of their owner. Eros is both present and absent through his symbols, through inscriptions, through his oath: he is the ruler of writing inside the texts that 'write' him. Thus, Eros is an elusive presence that stresses his relation and contribution to the human through his difference and absence from the human, in other words, a hybrid.

As noted before, Eros' hybrid nature holds him confined in the sphere of dreams. Having served its function, this device is withdrawn at the time when the identity of another, non-hybrid, authority is formed. This authority is that of Livistros, king and lover, who has been initiated to the ideals that Eros' erotic and political power represents, but who is firmly rooted in textual reality. Livistros is initiated to the mysteries of love and power through Eros' teaching. This instruction, as a force that runs from Eros to Livistros, entails Livistros' absorption of Eros' authoritative function: the young king acquires the attributes that define the ideal sovereign in the thirteenth century. Hence, Livistros serves as a reflection of the ideal Nicaean ruler. Given that Livistros' figure is not constructed as hybrid, a narrative shift from a clearly mental sphere, Eros' court, to a textu-

ally real sphere, the Silvercastle, is enabled.

It appears then that the hybrid formulation of Eros' power in this text results in impossibility. However, the poet of *L&R* has managed to neutralize the impossibility of Eros' hybrid power by intertwining it with the figure of Livistros. Eros is made perceivable for the secondary characters and the readers/listeners through Livistros. So, while Eros fades away in the macrostructure of the text, he is partialized: he loses his borrowed bodies gradually. From three-faced being (first dream), to winged infant (second dream), to winged presence (third dream), to linguistic reference (oath, paintings), to symbol (bow and wing), to memory, while, simultaneously, there emerges the ideal 'Latin lover' and sovereign ruler firmly bound to Silvercastle and through it to thirteenth-century Nicaea.

It should be pointed out that the only time in Byzantine romance that Eros appears as a hybrid form of power is in *L&R*. In the previous tradition of the genre, Eros personified appears in the twelfth-century novel *Hysmine and Hysminias* by Eumathios Makrembolites.[40] In this novel (acted out in a utopian antiquity), Eros has, differently from *Livistros*, a very clear and concrete shape, which he maintains throughout, that of the Hellenistic *erotideus* ('cupid'). He appears for the first time in a painting as described by the novel's hero Hysminias (2.7.1–3; Marcovich 17):

> Μετάγομεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπὶ τὴν μετὰ τὰς παρθένους γραφὴν καὶ δίφρον ὁρῶμεν ὑψηλὸν καὶ λαμπρὸν καὶ ὄντως βασιλικόν. Κροίσου δίφρος ἐκεῖνος ἢ πολυχρύσου Μυκήνης τυράννου τινός. Τῷδ᾽ ἐπεκάθητο μειράκιον τερατῶδες, γύμνωσιν παντελῆ καθ᾽ ὅλου φέρον τοῦ σώματος [...]· Τόξον καὶ πῦρ τὼ χεῖρε τοῦ μειρακίου, φαρέτρα περὶ τὴν ὀσφὺν καὶ σπάθη ἀμφίκοπος· τὼ πόδε μὴ κατ᾽ ἄνθρωπον ἦν τῷ μειρακίῳ, ἀλλ᾽ ὅλον πτερόν.
>
> (We turn our eyes to the picture that came after the maidens, and we see a lofty throne, that is brilliant and truly imperial – the throne of Kroisos or of some lord of Mykenai rich in gold. On this was seated an awesome young lad, with every part of his body naked [...]. There was a bow and a torch in the lad's hands, a quiver at his loins and a two-edged sword; the lad's feet were not human but were entirely winged.) (Jeffreys 188).

40. Marcovich 1–152, quoted by book, paragraph and period numbers, as well as by the page numbers of the edition. Translation quoted from Jeffreys 157–269. On the Komnenian novel see Nilsson.

Similarly stable is the nature of Eros' power in *Hysmine*. Eros is presented and perceived as a straightforward *religious* sovereign, who is made recognizable for the primary audience through various stylistic and rhetorical affinities to Christ's portraiture and to the Bible.[41] An illustrative passage in this respect is the following (2.9.1):

41. Agapitos, "Aesthetics of Spatial Representation" 122–24 on *Hysmine and Hysminias*.

> Βασιλεῖς, τύραννοι, δυνάσται, κρατοῦντες γῆς ὡς δοῦλοι
> παρίστανται οὐκ ἴσα καὶ βασιλεῖ ἀλλ' ἴσα θεῷ.
>
> (Emperors, usurpers, lordlings, masters of the earth, stand
> like slaves around him not as if he were an emperor but a
> god.) (Jeffreys 189)

In the later tradition, the conception of Eros as fictive ruler is so fluid and abstract, that a schematic understanding of his shape, even a hybrid one, proves impossible, while a similar fluidity characterizes his power. Eros as a personified figure appears in the late thirteenth-century romance of *Velthandros and Chrysantza.*[42] Eros, who is referred to as a ruler, appears to the Rhomaian prince Velthandros with some of the Byzantine imperial apparel but in a vague form (491–94 and 667–70):

42. See Cupane, *Romanzi cavallereschi bizantini* 227–305; English translation quoted from Betts 1–32 (but with revisions); on this romance see briefly Cupane, "In the Realm of Eros" 110–14.

> Ἀνέβη τοῦ ἡλιακοῦ καὶ πρὸς τὸν θρόνον εἶδε
> τὸ πῶς ἀπέσω κάθητο ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἐρώτων
> στέμμα φορῶν βασιλικόν, βαστάζων σκῆπτρον μέγα,
> κρατῶν καὶ εἰς τὸ χέριν του μία χρυσὴν σαΐτταν.
>
> Βλέπει ἐκεῖ καθήμενον Ἔρωτα τοξοφόρον
> εἰς κεφαλὴν πάνυ ψηλὰ ἐκείνου τοῦ τρικλίνου,
> εἰς λίθον ἕνα λαξευτὸν λυχνιταρὶν σουπέδιν·
> τριγύρωθεν νὰ στέκουνται τάγματα τῶν Ἐρώτων.
>
> (He climbed the terrace and look towards the throne,
> how on it sat the emperor of amours,
> wearing an imperial crown, holding a mighy sceptre,
> and in his hand he held a golden arrow.) (Betts 14).
>
> (There, he saw Love with his bow sitting
> on a seat carved from a single ruby,
> high up at the end of the dining hall.
> Around him stood ranks of Amours.) (Betts 17).

Eros is here an elusive presence that goes beyond hybridity into abstraction.[43] Actually, it is not even possible to tell if Velthandros witnesses the presence of Eros within a dream or in the textual reality.

The different conception of Eros' authority in the three romances is also betrayed by the different reaction of the characters to this authority. In *Hysmine*, as also the passage quoted above reveals, the characters maintain the same stance concerning Eros' authority: his power is perceived as a destructive force that causes fear, his face is so beautiful that it looks real, while his power is acknowledged by everyone. He is not perceived as a ruler but as a god. That is why he is only compared to various pagan gods throughout the novel and appears not only in dreams but also in the textual reality. In *L&R*, on the other hand, Eros' power is perceived by the characters in an ambiguous way: his human subjects reveal his hybridity through the simultaneous expression of admiration and repulsion, desire and fear, certainty or doubt over Eros' honesty and even over the actuality of his power.[44] Hence, in *L&R* Eros' authority is continuously scrutinized, challenged, admitted, reflected upon – a practice which reveals this power not to be self-evident but to be instead part of a cycle of repetitive manifestation and reassessment. In *Velthandros*, where Eros' presence and authority moves towards abstraction, we see part of his supposed power be rendered to Velthandros. For example, Velthandros is in the position to choose who, from the great number of maidens he is presented with, he wants to fall in love with (369–98). By granting some of Eros' authoritative functions to Velthandros, who also holds Eros' wand (βεργίν, 673), the distinction between self and other as regards Eros and the hero becomes rather blurred. Thus, in *Velthandros* we observe a corrosion of boundaries between pairs such as self and other, textual reality and textual imagination, ruler and ruled to such a degree that the figure of Eros and the parameters that define his authority reach the limit of decomposition.

To sum up, in *L&R* the Hellenistic god is used as the signifier of a preexistent, well-established notion which validates Eros as a natural authority, but this same notion is also enriched with the ideal of Byzantine rulership, also validated as holy and natural but at the same time contemporary and socially specific. Thus, Eros acquires a hybrid quality of erotic power on the one hand, political on the other, while each aspect of his identity can be performed separately on the basis of recognizable Byzantine codes and according to the narrative

43. Agapitos, "Χρονολογικὴ ἀκολουθία" 124 and 133.

44. For example, after Livistros' unsuccessful attempts to win Rodamne, the hero starts to doubt whether Eros was honest regarding his promises (1329, 1584–86).

or ideological function which each time is deemed necessary.

Therefore, we should understand the appearance of hybrid Eros in *L&R* as a narrative device, intentionally and very consciously formed through the creative juxtaposition of two established authority markers, the *erotideus* and the *basileus*. Eros the god is dressed up in a contemporary *loros* (the Byzantine coronation garment), while he still preserves his mythological wings. This happens, in our opinion, because the particular literary taste of the Laskarid era, the highly complex and multi-level organizing principles of *L&R*, Eros' partial employment as vehicle of a political-ideological propaganda impel the formulation of a hybrid figure whose conceptual instability holds together the text's semantic and narrative stability.

4 Concluding remarks

In our paper we examined together two thirteenth-century Byzantine texts very different from each other. The analysis, in which we used the notion of hybrid power as a hermeneutical tool showed that hybridity in the two works is indeed realized in a different way, while the exposition of an ideology as a form of rulership is attempted in both texts. In Theodore's *Response to Mouzalon* it takes the form of a political theory to be applied in practice, while in *Livistros and Rodamne* it takes the form of a fictive ideal kingship. Yet both forms are hybrid and thus impossible. Theodore's essay constitutes an impressive case study in failure because his system is self-referential and inapplicable if removed from its textual space. In the romance, the hybrid conflict is successfully cancelled through its flow into the figure of Livistros and, thus, into narrative textual reality.

Furthermore, we have shown that the two texts reflect a strong common ideological and conceptual nexus that places them side by side in the same socio-cultural and intellectual environment. The two texts have in common the following ideological parameters: the notion of friendship between master and servant (Laskaris and Mouzalon, Eros and Livistros); the performance of power relationships as instruction; a group of shared key concepts such as Esteem, Judgement, Servitude, Friendship, Love; the gaze towards an authoritative (biblical or mythological) past and an equally authoritative (Byzantine imperial) present; finally, the hybrid figure of the ruler as an artifact (Theodore's blended statue and Eros' three-faced figure), simultaneously animate and inanimate, stable and fluid, highly rhetor-

ical and highly ritualistic.

In our opinion, what we have described above is a reflection of the Laskarid era in its political and cultural pursuits. The looking back and looking forward in search of the appropriate representation of a society in an immigrant condition (to paraphrase the Nicaean scholar and monk Nikephoros Blemmydes),[45] the simultaneous presence of conservative and innovative elements in administration, financial policy, religious practices, literature, manuscript production and the arts, the expression of new and nuanced forms of collective identity capture the image of a state in transformation, a state to a certain extent unstable and, thus, hybrid.[46]

If the concept of hybrid power revealed hidden affinities between these two different texts and their era, a further comparison by means of this method between Theodore's literary production as a whole, *Livistros and Rodamne* and other texts written during the Laskarid era (for example, the works of Blemmydes) or looking back at it (for example, George Akropolites' *History*) could open up new interpretative perspectives in other areas of Byzantinist and more broadly Medievalist research.

45. See a remark in his autobiographical *Partial Account* (Μερικὴ διήγησις) II.7.2.

46. On Nicaea see now the forthcoming volume edited by Papadopoulou and Simpson.

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FRANCIS INGLEDEW

Whose Troy? Whose Rome? Whose Europe?

Three Medieval Londons and the London of Derek Walcott's *Omeros*

Abstract

What does it mean that so many medievalists, especially in the United States and in Canada, study the European middle ages without being from or of Europe? What does it mean if we specify, further, those who don't come from the United States or Canada either, but from areas of the world that experienced western European empire, as most of the globe did, as a systematic political and psychological subordination to Europe? I take the Caribbean poet Derek Walcott's depiction of late twentieth-century London in his long narrative poem *Omeros* as a way to pose the question of what Europe might look like from the other side of the relationship of domination, that is, to define Walcott's Europe. Walcott's London repudiates Europe, and with it what he calls History, exactly the kind of history made by the European epics of Homer, Virgil, and Dante in the form of the world-destinies they constructed for Europe in the cities of Troy and Rome, and made by their would-be successor London. But he does so with difficulty: the Troy of Homer and Virgil has long sought to seduce him into rendering his own island into its terms, elegiac and nostalgic. He seeks instead a poetry of the local, the small, the unvarnished, and the present tense. In doing so, he constructs a point of view that exposes the presumption and the brutality that sits inside medieval texts offered to the reader as celebrations of London and the history it contributes to making; but his perspective also brings out of the same texts their half-conscious efforts, repressed in the name of History, to speak for the local, the small, the unvarnished, and the present, on behalf of the desire for human adequacy to self, sociality, and community without war. Roughly speaking, desire, or history, shows up in the view from Walcott's St. Lucia in the face of the History for which Europe is a metonym. Medieval texts read from outside the European frame are liable to be different from those read from within that frame; we need medieval readings from underneath and outside the European matrix that can put Europe in question, though it may be that History, and the project of a dominating Europe, remains too seductive to renounce.

This article originated in a conference on the topic "Theorizing Medieval *European* Literatures" held at York, England, from June 30 – July 2, 2016, co-sponsored by the University of York and the Centre for Medieval Literature at the University of Southern Denmark. It would seem a good thing if the challenge of the conference to turn around upon the word Europe in our definition of our field of study catches European medievalists/medievalists of Europe off balance. It does me: when I make the word Europe visible as a defining term in what I study and teach, a process that seemed straightforward in the experience of becoming a medievalist looks less simply motivated on review. As someone born in pre-independent Khartoum, Sudan who grew up in Jamaica with English parents who arrived there in 1960 (before Jamaican independence in 1962), who made his professional life in the U.S.A., and who identifies himself as Jamaican more than anything else, why did I make that profession the study of medieval European, chiefly English (from England; in English), texts? How is it that I have come to study a past that is the past of a part of the world with which I do not identify as a citizen or in my primary engagements, allegiances, attachments, or commitments? What is Europe to me, as a constituting object of a lifelong scholarly career?[1]

Those are personal questions. Their institutional form would ask, what is Europe to those many medievalists, mostly in the U.S.A. and Canada, who study Europe without being part of the European community (however defined)? That we were born, grew up, were educated, and today live (most of us) somewhere else is the mark of many other gaps between us and our subject: at root, of our removal from the scene of our study variously by different ancestries, ethnicities, citizenships, domiciles, circumstances generally – our removal, then, by engagements, attachments, allegiances, and commitments that inform our existential horizons. In short, our spatial removal is a mark of our own personal and communal pasts, presents, and futures. Under these circumstances, what is happening when we spend the decades of our professional lives on the artifacts of where we do not live, and what we are not existentially engaged with? It is not that answers are hard to come by: a commitment to a common humanity would provide a good first answer, and a commitment to some version of genealogical thinking if the U.S.A. and Canada are seen as derived from (even if developing over and against) Europe, a good second one. But further response to the condition of studying a world as alternative as medieval Europe to the one we live in can point in other directions too: for my purposes here, to the possibility of a double split in the European medievalist

1. This thumbnail provides the principal coordinates that I think are in play: the Caribbean, Britain, and the United States, two of the three being areas in the so-called New World, two of the three with deeply imperializing structures past and/or present. If as scholars we ask the question "why Europe?" seriously, each of us will have more complex circumstances to account for. I have British citizenship through my parents; I went to Reading University in England for undergraduate study, but did not otherwise ever live in the United Kingdom; I had never visited the U.S.A. until I came here for graduate school, in 1981 (aged twenty-five); in 2010, past mid-career, I became a U.S. citizen to make a move to the U.S.A. possible for my German partner (now wife). We were a devout Catholic family, though I have long since ceased to be Catholic; as a universalizing creed dissolving national borders, though also centered in a locality with the utmost historical salience, Rome, my parents' Catholicism taught us as children that our first membership was of a community deeper than any nation or empire, in which everyone was on the same essential plane. We inhabited the parallel universal structure of the dissolving British empire much more unconsciously, and, of course, its most enduring global legacy, English; unlike our Catholicism, this inhabitation – again, expressed most economically in speaking the language – was profoundly unegalitarian, carrying many assumptions about national, racial, and ethnic hierarchies across the world and bestowing many privileges, notably (for the issue at hand) political.

I would like to thank the discussion group we (its members) call the New York Meds for their responses to an early version of this paper, especially Bob Stein of affectionate and grateful memory, and Anne Schotter, both of whom caught me playing my political cards close to my chest, and encouraged me to have at a scholarship that

said more about its motivations. Thanks, too, to Jill Levin, for her long-ago certainty that the Caribbean would out one day in one medievalist's work. Finally, to the two anonymous readers for *Interfaces*. One, for his/her caution lest, when all was said and done, using Derek Walcott to resituate medieval Europe maintains the European project in its premise that it is always Europe that compels resituation, so that we are left still waiting to break out of Europe's gravitational field as the subject of history. Other actual and possible histories are potential in the thick of medieval Europe, for example, descriptions of medieval London posed against Abbasid, Indian, or Chinese cities, the Thames against the Ganges, Nile, or Yangtze. (Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis* trilogy dramatizing the three-way trading relationships among Britain, India, and China in the early nineteenth century has illustrated for me a far wider canvas polarized in quite other ways than by Europe, the intimations of which other polarities surely abound in the medieval texts we study.) The other reader, for such sharp attention and thoughtfulness point by point, for the prompts to valuable further reading and bibliography, and most of all for sending me back to Walcott's own "The Muse of History."

who is not from or of Europe, or at least in myself, a split that is both psychological and political. If I trace this split to its source, I find that source in desire, namely a desire of community; but, in that case, a desire that, from within the Englishness I inherit and the English I speak, collides with that form of coerced collective humanity that has been western European empire.

If a spatial separation from Europe distinguishes medievalists of Europe from beyond Europe from those within it, we share with our European colleagues our removal from medieval Europe by time. That temporal distance is also a function of space, however: the temporalities of those in regions once dominated by Europe, and so inserted into European time (the time of the development of the nation-state quite apart from the time of empire, for example), are not the same temporalities as those whose medieval Europe is broadly ancestral. Perhaps some of us were attracted by a sense, knowing or unknowing, that we could do an end-run around the narrative of domination that Walcott will call History in distinction from history, or around the also-dominating modernity that is the existential style of a supposedly post-imperial Europe; by a sense, then, that we could make contact with forms of the masters' worlds that were more like the world we lived in (simply: poorer, less literate, even themselves postcolonial in the shadow of the Roman empire as fact and idea, and in the shadow of the various colonizations across western Europe documented by Robert Bartlett). Perhaps scholars from the United States or Canada and many postcolonials intuited in the western European middle ages a vernacular world in the making in the presence of Latin, as was the case of the local vernacular worlds being made, often in polyglot conditions, in the presence of English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and so on. If these suggestions have merit, medieval Europe can pull on us who study it from outside because we find something of ourselves already there, and exactly in Europe's own pre-imperialism or the self-making of its many parts in the face of and in the wake of Roman empire (even though, if our eyes are open, we will find imperial Europe already there from before the start, as it were, and we might impute to Europe only more deeply the source of the diminishment of the colonized parts of the world). For readers of medieval English texts on a Caribbean island, there's an allegory of the creole condition to find in Chaucer's demotic English, meaning an allegory not only of the local language condition, but of the generation of human stories in that condition, more broadly of the generation of the representation of desire in written language, all the way to the project of making a community or building a nation.

Whose Idea of Europe?

To bring this line of thinking into focus, I wish to ask, *of whom*, in the sense of possession, is this past Europe that those of us who are doubly removed from it investigate, teach, write about? This question should be uncomfortable, because of the concept of possession in the pronoun. Possession connects and attaches, turning into the gospel of private property that underpins so much of western law and culture, and into ethics, in notions of the propriety and the proper. Possession is a legitimating ground for action. Its direction of power, from the owner to the owned, creates accountabilities and responsibilities, and carries within it the potential, often the appeal, of violence, either to the owned thing (my pounded computer) or in its name (my country, perception, belief, action).

Possession can be put into relationship with being. For Bruno Latour, the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde's emphasis on the lexical resources around 'to have,' far richer than around 'to be,' is decisive. 'To be' contains no connection to the world; from 'I am,' I can deduce only myself. If only philosophy, says Tarde, had grounded itself on 'to have,' not 'to be;' as Latour puts it, 'having' involves attachment, and "to be attached is to hold and to be held. Possession and all its synonyms are thus good words for a reworked meaning of what a 'social puppet' could be. The strings are still there, but they transport autonomy or enslavement depending on *how* they are held" (*Reassembling*, 217).[2] The concept of having has the virtue also of coming to within one step of identifying the basic psychological motivation of having, namely, desire, so that desire is a motif in the following discussion. My points are two: first, that Europe has been the most massive ownership conglomerate the world has ever seen. It took literal or effective possession of most of the land surface of the globe (see the rising arc of European power, till western Europe, its colonies, and its former colonies constituted about eighty-five percent of the land surface of the planet by 1914, most of it under one form and degree or another of western European power; Magdoff 29, 35).[3] To what extent is the western Europe we have in mind when we study Europe this Europe? Second, the question 'whose Europe?' puts me on notice that I am at stake when I identify *my* Europe. As in the reference to perception or belief above, the relationship of possession holds for ideas as well as objects: much is at stake in the question of what idea of Europe we possess. In asking what my (idea of) Europe is, I enter a debate about violence (among other

2. Latour grounds an entire ontology of the human and non–human, let alone a comprehensive academic methodology, on the concept of the network within which the "social puppet" finds itself and in relation to which it experiences its freedom or unfreedom.

3. Cf. Fieldhouse 178 (Magdoff's essay, originally published for Encylopaedia Britannica, contains no footnotes). Fieldhouse and Magdoff specify that the landholding figures apply not to Europe exclusively, but include land constituted by former colonies of Europe – as Magdoff notes, chiefly in North and South America. This matters, because in Pagden, ed., both Pagden ("Introduction" 10) and Tully (335) cite these numbers, but derive them from Kennedy (150) and Said (8) respectively, both of whom miss this significant qualification.

things: for example, desire and community), the violence latent or active (like desire) in the claims of possession.

By "Whose Europe?," then, I don't mean who possessed the Europe that we study. I mean whose idea of Europe is it that informs our scholarship, as a question directed to all of us who study and teach medieval Europe. A first answer is readily found in the ideas of Europe of the two entities already indicated – roughly, those medievalists native to or citizens of Europe, and those who are native to or citizens of other places. Speaking now of my own domain of study, English medieval studies, the combined institutional world of the U.S. and Canada alone dwarfs that of the United Kingdom, even before we add those of Australia and New Zealand, and the much slighter presence of medievalists in English medieval studies from India, the Caribbean, Africa, or east Asia (as in the case of South Korea and Japan). On the premise that an academic's ideas and material circumstances have mutual causal relationships, I assume that, when we ask 'Whose Europe are we speaking of when we study Europe?', we will – broadly speaking – describe different Europes on either side of this rough and ready divide between two classes of possessors of the concept 'Europe.' At the moment of this broad distinction, another, equally broad, has to be made: roughly between western and eastern regions of most any territorial definition of 'Europe' as distinct from 'Asia.' The imperial Europe I refer to above is located in the western regions, while most of the eastern regions, far from participating in global empire, have instead had long histories of subjugation by European conquerors external to them, most recently within an internal European empire centered in Moscow (the U.S.S.R.); and its Franco-German center of gravity gives the European Union today features of imperial domination for member-countries on its southern and eastern peripheries – as in the economic crisis in Greece since 2007, the handling of which by the Union came at heavy costs to Greek sovereignty. Here too, the 'Europes' of those on either side of this rough east/west (sometimes north/south) dividing line will be very different, with much of Europe able to think of its own abuse by Europe.

From New Zealand, the historian and theorist of political thought J. G. A. Pocock describes the very *concept* of "the continent of Europe" as "the product of the exceptionally self-centered and world-dominating outlook developed by a civilization that took place in those lands" (Pocock 57).[4] That domination goes under the title of European empire: British, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Belgian, Dutch, Danish, German, Italian, Swedish.[5] These quite distinct in-

4. "I am conscious that as a New Zealander I am not a European. I am, therefore, looking at 'Europe' from the outside; I am not committed to it" (Pocock 56). A short-list of scholars whose generation of productive conceptual frameworks for British history might be, like Pocock's in his life-long work (cf. his 1975 "British History: A Plea for a New Subject"), a function of their oblique or once-removed relationship to England/Britain/the United Kingdom would include, in my view, Geoffrey of Monmouth, who I think can be demonstrated to be of a committedly Breton background, and Wace, a reworker, as well as translator, of Geoffrey's insular history, writing out of his birth and early upbringing in Jersey in the Channel Islands in the time of the Norman-Angevin empires, and out of his clerical career in Caen (Blacker).

5. It can be an education to pause over each European nation in this list. In the image of Africa in the *Norton Anthology of World Literature*'s map of the world in 1913 (Puchner 1006–07), textual labels assign to each demarcation of African land its European power, with a comprehensiveness that can still stun; meanwhile, the European powers themselves are visible on the same map as a kind of appendix to Africa's vastness. As an image in a mass-market textbook, this map confronts teachers with an oblivion in students so near to total that it baffles pedagogy, challenging virtually all students and many teachers to a cognitive and imaginative leap that not many can make. A parallel map of the Caribbean would reproduce in miniature the interest in offshore domination of the same multiplicity of western European nations. This catalogue of nations confirms that the Europe of so much of the non-European globe is actually western Europe, the violence inflicted by Europe actually by western Europe. As Pocock insists, what in our academic discourse we most have in mind when we talk of Europe is its far west; we have so torqued our use of the word 'Europe' that we have come to call "an Atlantic peninsula... a continent" (Pocock 60; this sounded strange to me until I looked harder at the maps).

stances of Europe spread themselves in various degrees, and according to various chronologies, across all of North and South America – the western hemisphere – and all of Asia, Africa, and Oceania; western European empire has been experienced outside Europe therefore by vast numbers of the world's population, either directly in the age of empire (whether from the end of the fifteenth century, or from the late nineteenth century, to about fifty years ago), or indirectly in the age of ebbed empire, in the form of a power that has shaped their present lives in in-grown and complex ways. This phenomenon has not yet had its terminus, and is unlikely to; from another angle beyond Europe, the anthropologist Talal Asad remarks that:

> Europe's colonial past is not merely an epoch of overseas power that is now decisively over. It is the beginning of an irreversible global transformation that remains an intrinsic part of 'European experience' and is part of the reason that Europe has become what it is today. It is not possible for Europe to be represented without evoking this history, the way in which its active power has continually constructed its own exclusive boundary – and transgressed it. (Asad 218)[6]

The western European empires brought with them not only the idea that they were 'Europe', but the idea that that Europe was the incarnation of history itself. "[W]hen did it begin to be implied that all history was the history of Europe?" (by virtue of his own insight cited above, Pocock might have asked when history began to be seen as the history of "an Atlantic peninsula"). Pocock finds the answer in Enlightenment thought (62). The Canadian political scientist James Tully argues in turn that what he calls in shorthand "the Kantian or federal idea of Europe" (331) based on Kant's concept of cosmopolitanism, has become in the last two hundred years the normative template for a global vision of cosmopolitan federalism that influences much contemporary statecraft and much western academic scholarship. This normative template he calls Eurocentric. It assumes the sins of European imperialism and deplores them, but sees what imperialism did to the global map as irreversible, and bound to condition the terms of development of the new cosmopolitan federalism (see especially Tully 335–36). Tully argues that this assumption is prejudicial and premature. For one thing, the next hundred and fifty years and more after Kant's *Perpetual Peace* in 1795 belied Kant's confidence that Europe's tendency and future lay in cosmopolitan

6. This is a highly topical issue, as in an impassioned major article in *Die Zeit* on August 2, 2018, by Gero von Randow and the rejoinder to it by Jochen Bittner et. al. two weeks later (among many other recent articles on German colonialism in Africa in German print media in 2018), attempting to adjudicate to what extent European colonialism, in particular German, not only provides an explanatory model for such phenomena as the current immigration and refugee crises in Europe, but imposes a duty of restitution.

federalism. On the contrary, it saw the *acceleration* of empire. For Tully, the political, economic, and constitutional forms that are entwined with Europe's age of empire should *not* be assumed as part of the matrix for the forms of the global future; forms of development from outside that matrix must be developed. Tully's portrait gives a kind of objective correlative for the relative invisibility of medieval western Europe as the future bearer of domination across the globe when we study its texts. In both cases, medieval studies and contemporary political thought, a particular paradox may be too convenient: if empire is a given, "it's already there." If it's already there, it's presumptively visible; so we don't need to recall it to our attention, which easily becomes, we don't see it in front of our noses. Some such dynamic has something to do with why Europe as a summary word for global domination was not one of the Europes much on view at the York conference I refer to in my opening above.[7]

That Europe is today, for so much of the world beyond it, a metonym for a distribution of power that drew the global maps we know, and for history as the history of power and force, even though this is to elide the experience of eastern Europe, is to say one thing in particular: those who study Europe from outside Europe do so from places in greater or lesser degrees formed by the violence of the imperial powers and their colonists. There is obviously nothing special to Europe about violence in itself, endemic as it is to all human cultures from within them (cf. Robert Bartlett on violence *within* Europe, that is, by 'Europeans' against 'Europeans;' or drop in at any synchronic moment in the human history of any of the continents). But at this point, the political aspect of the study of western Europe from outside Europe can become visible; and if politics is always a function of desire, that study shows its psychological aspect too. Violence inflicted from outside, domination by various kinds of others-to-the-community, produces special effects: not only exploitation of local resources by those external to the community, but a psychological subordination, as the locus of power damages local self-concepts, even sliding into the assumption *often on both sides* of an intrinsic superiority of the invader to the invaded, that has an afterlife of many generations after the manifest structures of empire have disappeared.[8] About such effects, here on African peoples or their descendants, there should not be much surprise. The case of the Belgian Congo is notorious, though not notorious enough; Sven Lindqvist's *Exterminate All the Brutes* convincingly lays at the door of several western European lands what is commonly confined to

7. On a participant by participant basis, there is of course no reason on earth why it should have been; in the conference as a whole, however, the absence of attention to how many centuries of actualization of Europe as the exporter of domination might affect study of some of its earlier texts caught me by surprise. Beyond the conference, postcolonial approaches make strong and expanding contributions to medieval studies, of course. I cannot develop the thought here, but for my taste a lot of postcolonial medieval scholarship work is politically driven to a degree that denatures literary operations (as vexed as the word 'literary' may be), and can look like a scholarship of ressentiment (not resentment, but a kind of moral reflex that cuts off inquiry into the phenomena, in this case the literary phenomena, the evidence of the texts, too soon).

8. Cf. "The Negro and Psychopathology," especially, for their special pertinence to an essay on Europe, 109-19 and 144-57, and "The So-Called Dependency Complex of Colonized Peoples," chapters in the Martiniquean psychologist Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*; or consider the "wound in our soul" that Chinua Achebe writes of on behalf of "the thinking African" (44).

Germany's: planned genocide and the concentration camp, models for Hitler's Third Reich. Western Europe has reckoned with its empires mostly on its own terms. Amnesia is one evasion; another is a preference to talk in quantitative terms, economic, for example, of the malign effects of imperial Europe rather than of its psychic effects, from trauma to an everyday diminishment of local being (not that the two domains are unconnected).

The idea that Europe is history, an idea that keeps company with the on-the-ground history of the empires that radiated outward from the western edge of Europe, is epistemologically and ontologically a particularly ambitious and therefore potentially particularly devastating idea to implant in human heads, an intensification of the psychological wounds empire inflicts on its objects. If at the moment, this seems a long way from relevance to reading a medieval text, one might think of reading Dante's *Commedia*, with its mystique of the Roman empire, from the other end of the experience of European imperialism; or reading a medieval celebration of London as a capital city, as we shall shortly, from the perspective of an early immigrant from Jamaica to the United Kingdom arbitrarily today denied British citizenship in the current Windrush affair (cf. United Kingdom Parliament, *The Windrush Generation*).

Having tried to take two steps in one leap by an insistence which to some will seem unnecessary, either because the voice of anti-empire seems to them alive and well, or because it seems outdated, I will now take one step backwards. It matters to what I want to say in the substance of the article below that the same absence at the York conference of Europe as a word for empire and for violence done to the world beyond Europe means that something else was necessarily missing: the nature of empire as not *only* violence, but as desire. Here, in the minor key of my purpose, lies something to my eyes underexplored, including in postcolonial criticism, namely that empire overlaps with kinds of desire that are not malign, as is the *libido dominandi* made diagnostic of the human political sphere by Augustine, but that are constructive of the world in ways that answer to common human needs, and that are expressed in Freud's view that, in the face of an implacably opposed aggressive instinct, Eros drives the human species to expand its communities:

> civilization is a process in the service of Eros, whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity,

> the unity of mankind. Why this has to happen, we do not know; the work of Eros is precisely this. (Freud 122)

The recognition that the structures of empire can open as well as close doors to human desires is one of many things to like about Dipesh Chakrabarty's nonetheless radical (as accurately reflected in the title) *Provincializing Europe* (4, an approach expanded upon in his Preface to this 2007 edition). This minor key on desire in relation to empire's violence is, then, important to what I'd like in this essay to do. At the same time, I should be clear that my principal concern in this discussion is, what medieval European texts can look like when the Europe of the reader (in that possessive sense of his or her idea of Europe, based on an epistemology and ontology that are necessarily different from those of the European medievalist of Europe) is the active and aggressive force that imposed itself, both bloodily and psychologically, on the world he or she lives in.

Troy, Rome, and Europe, Homer, Virgil and Dante in Derek Walcott's *Omeros*

My avenue for pursuing this question is *Omeros*, the long narrative poem of the St. Lucian poet Derek Walcott. He is not the only Caribbean Anglophone poet who might inform a Caribbean medievalist's studies; Kamau Brathwaite offers a poetics of Caribbean history and culture in his verse trilogy *The Arrivants* that filters Europe out of his discovery, invention, and construction of the Caribbean in some sense more radically than Walcott does (though, like Walcott, he also retains a Europe).[9] I don't have the same Caribbean identity as Walcott's or Brathwaite's (nor do they have each other's), but both have helped to form me as a reader of medieval texts. In the case at hand in this essay, *Omeros* has the quality of being irreducibly European in many ways, variously redirecting, taking flight on the wings of, and ruling out of court Homeric, Virgilian, and Dantean poetics and (because all three function as inventors of history in the present context), historiography. Walcott's uses of them serve for the making of a Caribbean history and poetics that feed on the literary genre of epic while rejecting that genre's premises by making the local world of the small place, an island in the eastern Caribbean, on nothing more than its daily scale, sufficient to the demands of epic for memory and fame (recognition by others) and for a communal iden-

9. As further and profound exemplars of a radical Caribbean poetics, Walcott himself cites St.-John Perse and Aimé Césaire from the Francophone Caribbean ("The Muse of History," 37–43, 48–54).

tity, or more plainly for sufficiency of being. Walcott's is an existential response to the experience of empire from the side of subjects whom it made its objects, subjects of whom it took possession in real senses.

Walcott's engagement with imperial forces ranges from British to European, and by the usual unhappy *translationes*, to the "new empire" of the United States (169.11, 206.1 – where he's its servant),[10] all of which continue to maintain their effects on island life. I select here, as a center of gravity that enables our return to texts of the middle ages bearing Walcott's Europe in our train, his depiction of London in *Omeros*. His London is the primary manifestation in the poem of his multiply imperial western Europe (though he catches up Soviet empire in Poland, 210–12.1–48). The subject, the metropolitan city of the most extensive of the western European national empires, allows us to string a series of medieval Londons on a single line running more or less backwards, from the poem "In Honour of the City of London" in 1501 often attributed to William Dunbar to that of the biography of Edward the Confessor in the *Vita Edwardi Regis* in 1065–67. Each case is a test case of western Europe, by virtue of the premise that London centers England, that England centers Britain, and that Britain (in the form of the Victorian empire) was the most consequential part of that western Europe that bred the global empires and came to be taken by many to be Europe.[11] This relay of premises is implanted in a metonymics of history whose principal figures are cities that reach from off the continental European coast in London through Rome to the Mediterranean and into Troy, whose location in Asia threatens to weaken the membrane of the myth of Europe. So Walcott's London is a port of entry into a world as wide as what Walcott calls, with contempt but also fascination, History; and medieval Londons are ports of entry into both History and history (if we take Walcott's wished-for local focus as the correlate of the lower case).[12]

St. Lucia was just one of many Caribbean islands to be crisscrossed by the western European empires once Columbus chanced there. The Caribbean experienced Europe, was *made over* by it, and *made* by it, was *constituted*, through the activities of Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and of course Britain (with marks left also by Denmark and Sweden). Conquest, more or less genocidal, in spirit or in deed, was the crime that depopulated the island (reflected in the memories of the Aruacs in *Omeros*); slavery was the crime that re-

10. The line counts, lacking in the published edition, are mine, made chapter by chapter.

11. This is a rough logic for sure, the last proposition being preposterous in the time of Brexit, but thereby carrying its own message.

12. This essay may be related to Svend Erik Larsen's advocacy of a new post-national 'comparativity' that dissolves the spatial and temporal borders erected by a 'comparatism' founded on the model of national literatures. His chief illustrative text for application to European (and other) texts is the great novel by Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*. I have found Bruno Latour's model of a single plane on which connections across time and space can be made to be the richest and deepest-reaching body of thought for making the kinds of 'comparativity' that Larsen proposes and I attempt here. Like (I believe) Larsen, I would express the joining factor across time and space on this single plane to be 'the literary,' which I would define as the power of language to dissolve the world of things as we experience them in their facticity in order to recreate other worlds of objects, in an unending loop (what Latour calls the unending process of reassembling the social). That is, the literary functions as a solvent in which history can be constituted and reconstituted by a kind of brokering of what we call things or facts in the presence of desire and invention through the medium of language, so that history and fiction meet as life; Walcott is a poet of such procedures, most of all in one of his most reflexive strategies, his play on the sounds and etymologies of words and his play with metaphor which together compose a poetics of ceaseless metonymic substitutions. This quality of metonymy constantly breaks down semantic borders all the way to the borders between history and fiction, or between now and then, or here and there, as each pole in each pair shuttles with its other: language dissolves and reconstitutes the world according to its own operations. Regarding the reversibility which is nonetheless a non-identity of history and fiction, I have found Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* a uniquely satisfying encounter with ways of thinking about what the writing of history and the writing of fiction share: the two great narrative forms refigure, rather than refer to, the human experience of time, Ricoeur argues.

populated it. Several of the empires just mentioned – French, Portuguese, and Dutch, as well as British and that of the United States – make their promiscuous presence vividly felt in *Omeros*, leading to a world that, as small as it is, produces a medley of peoples, languages, and faiths. France and Britain, especially, fought over St. Lucia, so that Walcott's characters continue to speak a French creole and to mix Catholic and Protestant. The poem's principal characters are the descendants of enslaved Africans, together with a white couple, the Englishman Dennis Plunkett, now a local pig-farmer, and his Catholic southern Irish wife Maud; Major Plunkett carries memories of his time as an officer in the British army of World War 2, including in the north Africa campaigns, a trauma for which his life on St. Lucia is a healing antidote. The poem's engagement with these characters' history is necessarily an engagement with the imperial Europe to which they owe where they find themselves.

The engagement with western Europe is a double one, because in taking on the subject of a people who have been at the mercy of this Europe's use of them, the poem mediates and modifies, as well as side-steps and undoes, European genres, styles, and contents: Europe's ways of constructing itself in historiographical and literary texts, and Europe's self-representations. Here, epic is central, for its use of narrative verbal art to arrive at the civilization of peoples. Europe, empire, and epic converge in a discussion of Virgil's *Aeneid* by Sanford Budick. Budick carries out a full-fledged reading of "a certain characteristic moment" in Hegel's philosophy of history (750), decisive for Hegel's concepts "both of history and of mind" (751).[13] This moment, Budick argues, is Hegel's reading of a scene in Virgil's *Aeneid*: Aeneas's killing of Turnus at the poem's end. At the scene's root, in its recollection of the *Iliad*'s duel between Achilleus and Hektor, lies *the fall of Troy*, to be redeemed by the foundation of Rome (756–57). For Hegel, says Budick, the scene has to do at the same time with the constitution of "universal self-consciousness" and with "virtually the emergence of Europe" (754). In it, as Budick puts it, "one might say that... Virgil discovered empire" (755). Nothing could make violence more internal to the nature of the idea of Europe than such formulations. In his own fine distillation, Frank Kermode lays bare T. S. Eliot's correspondingly pivotal Virgil, involved in empire, Europe, and universe, who is then sublimated in Dante (Kermode, 13–46).[14] Eliot sees, for example, that to work outside the Dantean/Virgilian frame is to work in the provincial (26), the provincial being the antithesis of the classic, because it inhabits time and change,

13. Rodolphe Gasché, writing on Europe, invokes Heidegger on a relationship of "difference and reciprocity" between thought (philosophy) and poetry in "the saying of an originary world" (150) and the founding and disclosure of Being as that in the presence of which a people finds its historical existence (*Dasein*) (151–52). For Heidegger, Homer is the locus of this founding of Being "'for occidental thought;'" but "'contemporary historical Dasein can nonetheless not return to [the Greeks]'" (152): it must "found its destiny in an originary world of its own," in Gasché's words. For Heidegger, Hölderlin is the poet of the new originary world of a German people who had been deserted by their gods and awaited the naming of the absent God who would constitute a home for them in that new originary world. As such, the poet Hölderlin is a figure of beginning, including a beginning in "the destiny of Europe in its entirety" (given the place of the German people in Europe); he is so much a beginner that he is even, in Heidegger's present moment, a foreigner to the Germans themselves (153). In this function of poetry in relation to the function of philosophy, namely to bring an originary world into being for a people, in this poetry's task of a new foundation that cannot return to Homer while remaining in touch with him, and in this poetry's capacity to be unrecognized by the people on whose behalf it is written, I understand to be expressed the force of the poetry of Walcott and Kamau Brathwaite.

14. I take Kermode's birth and childhood on the Isle of Man to have something substantial to do with his astonishing suggestiveness on the literature of empire.

instead of dwelling in permanence. For Eliot, Rome continues to define the order of history – in the Christian/Catholic Rome that emerged from the pagan empire (25–26), one universal structure from another, it even defines an *imperium sine fine*. Altogether, Dante is for Eliot "the most *universal* of poets in the modern language," but "first a European" (Kermode's citations of Eliot, 24).

Message lies in the medium of *Omeros*' as-if epic cast. Through allusion and imitation, but also through confrontation, the poem inhabits to the point of saturation with them the literary worlds of Homer's two epics, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Dante's *Commedia*. This is to put to the side *Omeros*' evocations of the biblical epic, with its own world-encompassing, world-community-making, imperative, and of Milton's related *Paradise Lost* and Joyce's *Ulysses*.[15] To say this is to say equally that in epic, Walcott engages Europe, and in Europe epic, and that that functional identity of epic and Europe for him (the identity is not inherent) is inseparable from the words and images of Troy and Rome. In echoing the European epics, Walcott must be understood to make echoes of them in turn: he invokes their constitution of History, but also voices the local and the small in a displacement of that constitution, so that the local and the small can sound in those epics as what is lost in the name of History. Where form and matter are concerned, Europe is for Walcott's *Omeros* both a point of entry into the local and material for Caribbean transformation while *also* the measure of what is separately and distinctly Caribbean.[16] In involving this literary history composed by Homer, Virgil, and Dante, Walcott, as we are about to see, works his way through but also around the latter two, Italian and Latinate poets of Rome, to the Greek Homer, curiously also the poet of Asian Troy; this identification with a more easterly Europe rather than with Rome, to the extent of crossing the Mediterranean into Asia, and orienting his vision from the perspective of smoking Troy, already declares a sympathy with the victims of European domination.

The narrative, encompassing a period of about three years (323.73; carefully documented in the poem's temporal signals) intertwines the stories of a handful of villagers (or townspeople; the textual clues play on the border between both scales) on the island and of the Plunketts who have settled among or alongside them with the story of the poet-narrator over this period, partly as he comes and goes on the island, partly as he lives or travels in North America and western Europe. Those villagers announce the Trojan-epic approach: the fishermen Achille and Hector, the woman they compete for, Hel-

15. Watching rural performances of the Hindu epic the *Ramayana* in Trinidad, Walcott will later reproach himself for leaving out of account the continuing enactment of epic recollection among the south Asian diaspora in the formerly British Caribbean, or for seeing in it only (poor) theater instead of a living faith (Walcott, "The Antilles," 65–66). *Omeros*' relationship to the epic mode and to the indicated epics among such others as Joyce's *Ulysses* has been much discussed. Between them, Farrell, Davis, Hamner, Hogan, Dasenbrock, Breslin, and Jay provide both a rich systematic exposition of this relationship, and rich provocations on its literary and ideological implications (on the former, the question especially of whether Walcott makes something new or not). See also considerations of *Omeros*' relationship to Dante's *Commedia*, n. 18 below.

16. The push and pull of the double-consciousness indicated here is reflected in Walcott's impatience with descriptions of *Omeros* as an epic, and I think recognition of what he is up to depends on understanding why he is impatient. Walcott has talked at length about the function of all of the epics identified here in *Omeros*; at the same time, he execrates exactly the History of war, domination, and their legacy in monuments that epic in Homer, Virgil and Dante in such large part serves. His homage to them is one with a freedom from them. The dual attitude is partly a function of a reverence that is more deeply for the figure of the poet than for the poet's literal work, and perhaps for the poet of Walcott's imagination rather than the one who inhabits literary history. Farrell has written brilliantly about Walcott's radical option for a vagrant 'Homer' who figures an oral poetics proper to the Caribbean, as reflected in the very name Omeros, which puts a vernacular distance between him

and the 'Homer' of the classical tradition; it is revealing that the narrator-figure for Walcott in *Omeros* tells Omeros he never did finish reading the *Odyssey* (Farrell 252–57 and 263–65). Breslin 268–69 isolates the astonishing quality of this revelation of not-reading, so flagrantly opposed to reading to adapt, purposefully misread, or subvert your predecessor. With a typical perversity, however, at the moment Walcott avows the incompletion of his reading of Homer, he also calls himself "the freshest of all your [Omeros'] readers" (283.111). Walcott's poetics rejects any hint of secondariness in favor of the placement of works of art on a plane of timelessness in which they move back and forth among each other "without a tremor of adjustment," as he says of another Caribbean 'epicist', St-John Perse ("Muse", 38).

en, and their fellow-villagers Philoctete, who bears an incurable and foul-smelling wound on his leg, and the blind Seven Seas, or St. Omere, point to Homer's *Iliad* and, in the traveling narrator and in the former sailor Seven Seas, *Odyssey*; "[Helen's] village was Troy," Plunkett muses (31.175). The love triangle cuts directly to the Homeric narrative, but St. Lucia itself, called Helen in the eighteenth century because it changed hands so often between French and English, is the profounder Helen and love object. Most explicitly, independently of blind St. Omere (a St. Lucian surname) who is Seven Seas, and who thus doubles and sometimes merges with him, Omeros, the Greek name for Homer, is himself a figure in the narrative, appearing variously as the poet's muse (12–13.88–112), in the form of a bust real (14.115–16) or imagined (279–80.1–22), in the flesh or in vision or dream as a character (193–96.1–72), or as a guide to the narrator (279–84); but also appearing independently to nineteenth-century Catherine Weldon, who had left the north-east United States to join the Sioux in the Dakotas in the period of the Ghost Dance Movement (216.64–72, 217.90–96). There is, further, "our age's Omeros," James Joyce (200–01.58–87 at 65), sighted by the narrator in Dublin, another islander athwart the British empire, though from within western Europe. Whether by surrogacy, analogy, anti-type, or misprision, this will be a Homeric and Trojan tale. From beginning to end, attending innumerable moves large and small, is the reflex by which island life, from its smoke to its middens to a boy riding a horse on a beach, recollects to the poet Homer's Troy; in tension with this reflex is his effort to train himself out of it, and break the spell of History in favor of nothing more than his own locale.

As a Trojan tale, *Omeros* is not only Homeric, but Virgilian and Dantean. The *Aeneid* is of course itself Homeric, symmetrically divided into the first six books of Aeneas' and the Trojans' wandering that paid homage to and competed with the *Odyssey*, and the six books of war led by Aeneas the commander and father-figure of empire that did the same to and with the *Iliad*. Troy being as yet unfallen in the *Iliad*, the motif of burning Troy (31.175–76, 35.57, 99.107–10, 297.71), is fundamentally Virgil's. So is Achille as a wandering counter-Aeneas (301.48). More thematically, the poet's two meetings with his dead father (67–76; 186–188.96–138), and these meetings' role in clarifying the poet's mission, tap Aeneas' meeting with his father Anchises in the underworld at Cumae in *Aeneid* vi, as does a pervasive explicit sibyllic presence, chiefly in Ma Kilman, proprietress of No Pain Café, and healer. Most of all, a critical reference to a

fog that "hides the empires: London, Rome, Greece" (196.72) cannot be other than to Virgil's Rome, as confirmed when in the reference just noted, Achille is imagined "like another Aeneas, founding not Rome but home" (301.47–48): Virgil's Rome is a constant subliminal presence as an exemplar of the abstract as well as concrete empire that is History. *Omeros'* last chapter begins with a sequence of three "I sang"s that refigure the *Aeneid*'s opening words (320.1–10) in the poet-narrator's pointed subversion, in the fisherman Achille, the fishing tackle of his necessity, the wide country of the Caribbean sea, of the three things that Virgil sings in i.1–8: the man, the arms, Rome.[17]

If Virgil's *Aeneid* invests *Omeros*, so does Dante's *Commedia*, which took up the baton of History Virgil had taken from Homer.[18] The *Commedia*'s Virgil functions as a principal character in his person and as the voice of pagan Rome's role in history, and as Dante's mentor and guide till Beatrice takes Dante where a Virgil enclosed in the limits of pagan vision could not: to Paradise. The case of the pilgrim-poet Dante, seeker and wanderer, which includes the search for a mission at once personal and historical, ensures that Virgil's merging of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is maintained by Dante. As Homer appears in the very first word of Walcott's poem, its title, Dante appears in its first three lines, saluted by the first of the irregular but disciplined *terze rime* (the verse form invented by Dante for the *Commedia*) into which Walcott shapes the roughly hexametrical lines associated with classical epic.

This four-cornered body of texts, the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Aeneid*, and *Commedia*, together makes a surpassing contribution to whatever one might mean by Europe in its historiographical and literary monuments. This is partly so because they function not alone as literary texts, but as declarations of the nature of history as the human condition, even to the point of declaring the human condition properly to be European. For Walcott, the category of History encompasses Rome as the expression of the experience of time and human purpose in the language of force; his project is to deplore History in favor, at most, of history: preferably, of a kind of naturalization of history into a fusion of the human and the human's land, sky and seascapes. So for Walcott the motifs of History and of the wanderer stamp Homer, Virgil, and Dante. All of this is to say that *Omeros* engages Europe and the European literary tradition. In solution together are the agon between Asia and Europe in Homer's Troy, Virgil's movement of world history from Asian Troy to Rome, and

17. See Farrell 261 for the way Walcott's lines here also play precisely off and radically *against* the opening lines of the *Iliad*. Despite the details of its intertextuality, the simultaneous rewriting of both epic invocations at once reads as a freedom from them, not a homage to literary bonds; correspondingly, Farrell 265–67 reads deeply into Walcott's scrambling of the chronological time of paternity, genealogy, and ancestry, all of which are indispensable to classical epic, in a temporality discovered and invented for the Caribbean.

18. As well as Fumagalli (in particular), Hogan, and Dasenbrock, Austenfeld and Loreto are rewarding on the intertextual relationships of *Omeros* to the *Commedia*. Loreto's discussion is especially fine, finding Dante in *Omeros'* language and images, most of all of the image of light, rather than in the plot, themes, narrative, and characters; from my perspective, this allows her to separate a Dante, the poet of History, whom Walcott could only have deplored had he commented on Dante's imperial vision, from a Dante whose unforgettable voice and visionary imagery Walcott does not stop hearing and seeing throughout his poetic life.

Dante's poetics of universal Roman empire and universal Roman church (and of course the gods were always universalizing by underwriting the Homeric and Virgilian worlds).[19] This solution sits within the conceptual frame of a purported universal history understood in the Christian era to be structured by *translatio imperii* on its westward course from Old Testament Mesopotamia and then Asia. Altogether, in engaging Homer, Virgil and Dante, Walcott engages Europe's surrogacy for History, within which Rome's empire was in turn to be seen to migrate to France, and then Spain and Britain (before much later crossing the Atlantic to the USA as western Europe's progeny). Of the four texts, Walcott's relation to Dante's *Commedia* tells us most about his model of history in *Omeros*, in relation to which many medieval texts, with their incipient 'Europe,' look quite different from the view from within that Europe's making or madeness (as in the *Commedia*).

We have seen Walcott's fixation with Troy and Rome as markers of History in Virgil. So it is illuminating that where the *Commedia* is concerned Walcott shows no interest whatsoever in Dante the great poet of papal and imperial Rome as the fulfilment of a divine plan that issued from the fall of Troy.[20] Nonetheless, Walcott draws abundantly from Dante's poetic universe. *Omeros* is populated by figures who appear out of the past within a universe that reaches from hell (with its own imprecatory Malebolge and infernal circles, 59–60.121–59, 289–90.1–39) to paradise (where is the poet's dead father? See 187.107–08, 70–71.77–87), and furnishes its own "charred ferryman" on whose boat the poet sits in "weightlessness" to see a spectral French fleet preparing to fight over Helen, the island (285–88 at lines 55 and 5).

One motif will have to be enough here to indicate the drive behind Walcott's use of Dante: the relation of fathers/ancestors to sons/descendants. This is partly because this device is a strategy for building temporality into the poetic vision at the same time that this vision is turning its back on History; and partly because it catches Walcott's focus on the personal and local. Together, these elements produce the engagement of a person with the historical (not Historical) world. In *Omeros*, the poet's father's two appearances to his son are closer to Dante's encounters with shades of the dead than to Aeneas's encounter with his father in Virgil, being focused on the formation of a poet, not of a maker of History. In the first, Warwick's charge to his son cuts to the bone: as a boy, he had watched the local women carry coal by the hundredweight basket on their heads: "'the

19. The dialectic of Europe and Asia was well underway in Virgil's time; Troy was part of what was by then the Roman province of Asia, though that label referred at this stage only to today's western Asia Minor (western Turkey). At the same time, the dialectic is capable of disappearing when Troy's Asianness seems to be replaced by a retrospective Romanitas conferred on Troy when Rome is traced back to it, as in Dante's *Commedia*, or by a similar reverse genetic logic in the proliferating medieval derivations of western European peoples from Troy (Ingledew, "Book of Troy"), which seem to make Troy western instead of these peoples eastern.

20. Davis and Mazzotta provide definitive statements of Dante's commitment to this plan, a plan for History, for readers less familiar with it than with Dante the literary artificer.

endless repetition as they climbed the / infernal anthracite hills showed you hell, early'" (73–74.64–87 at 74.86–87). The chapter-section following (74–76.88–129), can be read as Walcott's own utter repudiation of the project of Dante the pilgrim-poet, to grasp the beyond; his father charges him simply to

> 'Kneel to your load, then balance your staggering feet
> and walk up that coal ladder as they do in time,
> one bare foot after the next in ancestral rhyme.
>
> Because Rhyme remains the parentheses of palms
> shielding a candle's tongue, it is the language's
> desire to enclose the loved world in its arms;
>
> or heft a coal-basket; only by its stages
> like those groaning women will you achieve that height
> whose wooden planks in couplets lift your pages
>
> higher than those hills of infernal anthracite.
> There, like ants or angels, they see their native town,
> unknown, raw, insignificant. They walk, you write...' (75.103–14)

The poet's trajectory is the opposite of Dante's: to turn towards a literal earth.

When, nearing the end of *Omeros*, the poet meets his father for the second time, we can hear Dante's meeting in *Paradiso* with his ancestor Cacciaguida. In *Paradiso* xvii, Cacciaguida offers his descendant a prophecy of the latter's life of exile and of his final triumph as a poet; the poet-narrator's father closes the encounter with the following words:

> 'Once you have seen everything and gone everywhere,
> cherish our island for its green simplicities,
> enthrone yourself, if your sheet is a barber-chair,
>
> a sail leaving harbour and a sail coming in,
> the shadow of grape-leaves on sunlit verandahs
> made me content. The sea-swift vanishes in rain,
>
> and yet in its travelling all that the sea-swift does
> it does in a circular pattern. Remember that, son.' (187-88.127-34)

The scene has designs on Virgil's leave-taking of Dante in *Purgatorio* xxvii.142, at which Virgil crowns (*corono*) and miters *te sovra* ("over yourself") a pilgrim-poet finally fully prepared for his entry with Beatrice into Paradise. In the language of travels and sails, Walcott merges himself as Dantean soul/poet with Dante's Odysseus (Ulysses), the explorer condemned for traveling in search of too much, who was also Homer's home-finder. By affirming the poet's travels, by picturing to him home instead of (like Cacciaguida) exile, and by seating him in a barber-chair in St. Lucia instead of crowned in the amphitheatrical rose of the divine court, Walcott reverses the direction in which one poet of Troy and Rome passes a baton to his Christian successor as a poet of universal history, or of empire and Europe. The local place, empire dissipated, suffices: though empire has gone to make what it leaves behind.

The spatial dimensions of Walcott's radical reorientation of Dante's universe from a view outside Europe appear when the poet-narrator and his father prove not the only versions of Dante and Cacciaguida. Achille has a long visionary return across the Atlantic and three centuries to a village upriver on the Congo (133–52; so undoing Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* too); "[h]alf of me was with him," says the biracial narrator (135.58), who thus meets a forefather far deeper in time than his father, a closer parallel to Cacciaguida.[21] There, Achille meets his ancestor, Afolabe (136–39.67–132) – the man whose son had left as a slave so long ago – who asks him what his name means (Achille does not know), and challenges him to recover the language, or the faith that language can name things and, decisively, people, that was lost in the Atlantic crossings. "Are you the smoke from a fire that never burned?" asks Afolabe, in his own Trojan commentary (139.129). Achille's encounter in the same visionary experience with a blind griot echoes Dante's with Cacciaguida in another way, the griot prophecying the past of Achille and his people, as Cacciaguida did Dante's, and charging him with historical memory (139–40.1–30, 148–49.1–24). When Achille returns to himself at sea in his boat and makes for his village, healed and renewed, he becomes another Homer: "I'm homing with him, Homeros, my nigger, / my captain, his breastplates bursting with happiness," says the narrator-poet (159.73, playing on the painting *The Gulf Stream* by Winslow Homer that he sees later in a museum, 183–84.28–40). The poet's identification with Achille (see what is entailed in this identification by another look at 301.47–48) means that a Virgilian-Dantean *topos* of the meetings

21. Achille's journey to the continent of Africa is the geo-spatial expression of a break, but also a splice, with Europe that runs throughout *Omeros* in innumerable ways to produce a Caribbean derived from Africa, but no longer of Africa; and a Caribbean also permanently inflected with Europe, but not of Europe: altogether, a new community. Africa in *Omeros* thus dramatizes a change in the axis of vision that demands more attention than I can give it here, and that would in my view call up the epical poetic trilogy of Kamau Brathwaite in his *The Arrivants* (written as Edward Brathwaite), a work that weighs in the balance equally with *Omeros*. There, his litany of cities – "O Kano Bamako / Gao" – and villages ("Prelude", 5) records an imagined migration of Caribbean ancestors across west Africa to nominate a radical alternative genealogy to that from Troy. Baugh (192–94) brings home another revolutionary African axis when he discusses the sibyl figure Ma Kilman's discovery of the healing root transplanted from Africa that cures Philoctete: a biological remedy to the illusion of urban Troy.

across the border between the living and the dead of ancestor/father and descendant/son, in particular the Dantean turn on that *topos*, works to undo the dedication of the *Aeneid* and the *Commedia* to a History that is the history of empire/Europe, and at the same time to found a poetics from outside Europe's gravitational pull in a way that makes Europe outside the gravitational pull of the Caribbean.

Since the pulse of *Omeros* is the figure of the narrator-poet on a visionary journey towards the light and the prophetic declaration of his craft, even if that craft's object is a St. Lucia seen in a light free of Troy, the case is there to be made that Dante is for Walcott a resource, as well as a provocation to resistance still deeper and massier than his resistance to classical Homer in Omeros. Within a few lines of the opening of the last book of the poem, the poet is in Omeros' company at the top of a cape on his island:

> I could hear the crumpling parchment of the sea in
> the wind's hand, a silence without emphasis,
>
> but I saw no shadow underline my being;
> I could see through my own palm with every crease
> and every line transparent since I was seeing
>
> the light of St. Lucia at last through her own eyes,
> her blindness, her inward vision as revealing
> as his [Omeros'], because a closing darkness brightens love,
>
> and I felt every wound pass. I saw the healing
> thorns of dry cactus drop to the dirt, and the grove
> where the sibyl swayed. I thought of all my travelling. (282.71–81)

Here, the poet confirms in the imagery of a new incorporeal sight that he has learned a Dante-like capacity to see, but whose object is not paradise, nor the earth and its history from paradise's perspective, but his small piece of the globe in the island named after the blind saint whose name means light, and who, with the Virgin Mary, had prompted Beatrice to stir a lost Dante towards that light.[22] For the ideas that Troy can be found in St. Lucia, or that History should be looked for in St. Lucia, are illusions, and the narrator's struggle is to be dispossessed of them and of their fabricators. Several pages earlier, the poet-narrator had uttered his frustration:

All that Greek manure under the green bananas,

22. Walcott has discussed the reference to the last cantos of the *Paradiso* here, "Reflections," 234. But he does not mention there what seeing in shadowless light meant for Dante: that he (Dante) was right to read history in the light of the fire of Troy, and so commit himself to an eschatologized History.

> under the indigo hills, the rain-rutted road,
> the galvanized village, the myth of rustic manners,
>
> glazed by the transparent page of what I had read.
> What I had read and rewritten till literature
> was guilty as History. When would the sails drop
>
> from my eyes, when would I not hear the Trojan War
> in two fishermen cursing in Ma Kilman's shop?
> When would my head shake off its echoes like a horse
>
> shaking off a wreath of flies? When would it stop,
> the echo in the throat, insisting, "Omeros;"
> when would I enter that light beyond metaphor? (271.82–93)

This lament prepares the way for the final book, which, via repeated statements of the false lure of Troy (312–13.57–87, 322–23.43–75), seeks to secure the poet's arrival at a new poetics, stated and exemplified in the poem's final chapter, with its three-part rejection of Virgil (cited earlier). Along the way, the shadow of another great medieval figure is discernible. Referring to Achille, the narrator writes that "History has simplified / [stanza break] him. Its elegies had blinded me with the temporal / lament for a smoky Troy..." (297.69–71). This implicates Augustine seduced by *Troiae incendium* ("the burning of Troy") and weeping over Dido and Aeneas in Carthage in the *Confessions* (I.13.34–40 at 40), a scene that for T. S. Eliot marked out that north African on the same shoreline as Carthage as, before his conversion, a mere provincial (see Kermode 26). But in seeking to extricate himself from Troy's embrace, Walcott is as anti-Dantean as he is in his effort to find his destination in the local; both mean, in direct opposition to Dante, freeing himself from empire, from Europe, and from History.[23]

The propulsion behind such a project is of the order of Frantz Fanon's call in *The Wretched of The Earth*, cited by Tully, "Let us decide not to imitate Europe;" "we must invent and we must make discoveries" (Tully 338).[24] Walcott illustrates what such invention and discovery might look like. Resituating his locality in a lower-case history means a new, lower-case, poetics as well. "Art has surrendered / to History with its whiff of formaldehyde," he writes of a visit to a museum (182.5–6), going on to accuse himself of seeking to hold the lives of the poor "in amber, / the afterglow of an empire" (227.83–84);

23. My attempt to do justice to *Omeros*' figuration of history can only be partial. Much else contributes to the depth of the poem's historical field, for example the story of the eighteenth-century midshipman Plunkett as both ancestor and newly discovered son for Dennis Plunkett, or in the deepest temporal reach, the pre-Columbian Aruacs of the Caribbean basin (3–8.1–126, 161–64.26–93); looking into the future, the island is slipping away from itself through local political corruption and the economic power of local and global capital (289–90.1–39).

24. Walcott's own essay "The Muse of History" opens up what such invention and discovery might be, as he refuses the options readily imposed on him of an assimilation to Europe or revolutionary rejection of it in favor of Africa; Walcott here pulls off a nearly impossible task, it seems to me, arguing for not less than a certain veneration for a European poetic legacy while holding nothing back in his disgust for European empire and racism, and locating a new poetics in the Caribbean somehow unrooted in European poetics while honoring that poetics and even sharing something with it.

"Art is History's nostalgia" (228.96). Hence the poetics of small spaces, not "the weight of cities that I found so hard to bear," nor the sighs for "a place that was not mine," nor statues, but "the bird in the statue's hair" (204.72–78), or, as Omeros tells him later, "'the love of your own people'" (284.132). Walcott's poetics means, then, stripping proper names of their accretions over time: especially the words Troy, Rome, and, as we shall see, London, but also personal names, not only Achilles or Helen but Homer, and most fundamentally History and Art, whose accretions are the build-up of discourse under the aegis of official power. Walcott's extra-European perspectives in the creation of a Caribbean history and art can thus illuminate perspectives internal to Europe, both Europe's own captivation by History and its proper names, and its own desire for lower case history and art.

Omeros' London

Walcott's London, which appears about two thirds of the way through the poem, is marked out in the poem's system. At the end of Book Four of the poem's seven books, on a beach at Marblehead, Massachusetts, the narrator's father, in his second appearance to his son, commissions him to visit the cities of History that for him had been so impossibly elsewhere and had once so diminished him on his small island. But he warns the poet that "'there is pride in cities'" (187.126), and, as we have seen, asks him, once his travels are over, to "'cherish our island for its green simplicities.'" The poet takes up his pious commission immediately, at the opening of Book Five: "I crossed my meridian," he reports, leaving the U.S.A. to place himself in "this mud-caked settlement founded by Ulysses:" Ulissibona, Lisbon (189.1–5). From its wharves, he gazes out as the "clouds read backwards" across the Atlantic till they arrive at the wharves facing Lisbon in Port of Spain, Trinidad (long a home of Walcott's; 189.13).

Once upon a time, Pope Alexander (VI) had split the world like a calabash, and given half to Lisbon along with the seeds of its races, and half to Imperial Spain (191.43–44, 193.93–95). It is their commerce in sugar and slaves (190.37–38), across "waves like welts from the lash" (191.41), that join the wharves facing each other across the Atlantic. "Across the meridian, I try seeing the other side," the poet remarks drily (as if there really were two sides), from "this port where Europe / rose with its terrors and terraces" (191.40, 62–63).[25] His is

25. In another image of antipodality, Dennery in St. Lucia faces Dakar (224.5–9).

a "forked shadow" (191.51), split, as he arrives in a place he felt he somehow already knew: "My shadow had preceded me. How else could it recognize / that light to which it was attached, this port where Europe / rose ...?" (191.61–63). This is the narrator of his European forefathers. Lisbon had once been one of History's sites, but History has receded from it (193.90–91), lingering on only in its deteriorating monuments (192–93.64–65, 80–85, 92–93); meanwhile, History had never arrived in Port of Spain (192.67–72), which, "the ebbing market in slaves / and sugar declining below the horizon" (190.37–38), has lapsed now, into "an infinite Sunday" (192.73). This is the narrator's first view in *Omeros* of Europe across the line drawn by the papal meridian between two worlds, that of, let us say, the medieval T and O maps which had no space for the Western hemisphere, and that of today's maps situating many of us who do our work on medieval Europe off those medieval maps.

Directly from Lisbon, Walcott's scene passes to London, where the shaggy figure of Omeros arises as a bargeman from the Underground at Charing Cross to sit on the steps of the church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, hunched over a paper manuscript of the *Odyssey* till a warden from the church chases him away. The bargeman steers himself towards the Thames; in echo of the just-given admonition of the poet's father, "London rustled with pride" (195.39). At the Embankment, he "curled up on a bench... / He saw London gliding with the Thames around its neck / like a barge..." (195.40–42). It is Omeros who lies on the bench. But it is Walcott who sees with the eyes of his master: he makes it clear later that he was on the spot in person to see Omeros make his appearance (282.82–86), and the distinction between the two fades when the poet takes up the thread in the first person plural pronoun on behalf of "our island people" (196.83) to indict the city Omeros scrutinizes for its assumption of the power to measure all things. What does Omeros/Walcott see? Like Lisbon, London's monuments are caught at a disadvantage, and soiled (195.43–46), but unlike Lisbon, the London Walcott now launches upon is full of menace, or the realities of a brute power that is contemporary.

Omeros/Walcott sees bridges, piers, boats, tugs, barges – the river traffic of the Thames – tour buses, churches, spires, bells, many monuments, landmarks, and buildings: the Thames and its Embankment, Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Westminster Bridge, St. Paul's, All Hallows, St. Martin-in-the-Fields and other churches, the Tower of London, Greenwich, Shoreditch, the

Corn Exchange, the National Gallery, Brixton, the Serpentine in Hyde Park and other parks, Madame Tussaud's. The imagery into which all these are set converges on money, especially trade and banking, and power. The Thames itself is coin (195.58, 197.106), the corn of the Corn Exchange is alchemical (196.78); London sets prices and scans bank-rates (197.88, 99). That coined river applauds the Houses of Parliament (195.58, 196.67–69), but brings to the observer's mind a "devalued empire" (195.57) and "the wash of far navies" (196.66); hard power is also suggested by the spears of the park railings and the menace of "the Tower" (195.49–50). Another kind of power accumulates in the progressive emergence of Christian, liturgical, evangelical, scriptural London. The function of the references to All Hallows church, Westminster Abbey, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, St. Paul's, Michaelmas, and "the Saints' litany" (196.83) is devastating. Punning on Jesus' address in the Sermon on the Mount to his disciples as the salt of the world (196.84), and the light of the world (197.100; cf. Matthew 5.13–14), an oracular voice finds a Christian city and church indifferent to the poet's island people (196–97.73–111), its touch with the gospels lost (in the previous section, a church warden has chased the vagrant-looking Omeros from the steps of the St. Martin that appears again here at 196.80).

The most persistent imagery threads the description of London with the institution in which the ubiquitous money and the powers temporal and spiritual had cooperated: slavery. London pulls the Thames as if the yoke of Time lay on its neck; the sounds of the tinkling Thames are those of its ankle-irons, its barges are chained to it "like our islands" (195–96.41–42, 51, 77). A pun made by a line break noted by Roy (148) gives us "the City that can buy and sell us / the packets of tea stirred with our crystals of sweat" (197.101–02), in an image that compounds slavery with the two great crops of British empire, including that of the Caribbean, sugar. Another, earlier, pun darkens the image of London from across the antipodal divide: Omeros sees "where a couple suns / near the angled shade of All-Hallows by the Tower" (195.49–50), an image of easy local eros in the shade of English/Anglican spiritual and political authority. The indictment of England (metonym for Britain) deepens at the end of this section: though the day seen from Omeros' bench has been one of midsummer heat, "the sunflower sets after all... / ... as a gliding fog hides the empires: London, Rome, Greece" (196.70–72). Altogether, it is London "rustl[ing] with pride" (195.39), in Augustine's term of radical opprobium for the Roman empire (Latin *superbia*; see *Con-*

cerning the City of God Book One, chapters 1–6) that leads back to Rome and Greece (where Greece is metonymized in *Omeros* by Homer's Troy).[26]

So Omeros and Walcott see the London that the fog of empire would have it be, the measure of all things. In this vision not from the perspectives that London arranges for itself, however, but from those of a bargeman-cum-vagrant and of the "Outer / Provinces," from under the scrotum of the rearing bronze stallions, or in upside down form in the reflections from the river (195–96.59–60, 46, 67–9), empire is belittlement, a ransacking of the local psyche in the ransacking of the local economy, underwritten by a diminishment of the provincials' language (picked up, as is the motive of money, in Plunkett's London, 251–52.1–30). It is clear that, in the 1980s of the poem (as in the 2010s of the present moment), *empire is not a past thing*. Walcott's London continues to core the humanity from the objects of its past imperial power. It measures them according to another reduction crucial to Walcott's Europe, and coincident with the reductions made by trade, navies, parliament, and church, namely History and Art. London is in "[t]he meridian of Greenwich" the measure of time (196.73; see also 195.43) and of desire (figured as the light of the world that is Art, as in the reference to the National Gallery, 197.100).

26. Robert Hamner notes the strong echoes in 195–96.59–72 of the description of London and the Thames at the opening of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*; the fog recalls the terrible gloom brooding over that London (Conrad 3–4). The Polish Conrad's dismal and terrifying London is of course seen from an eastern European perspective, from outside the cluster of western colonial powers; he'd have had his own relation to Walcott's reference to the dialects of the shadows from the Outer Provinces (195.59–60).

Medieval Londons: The London of "In Honour of the City of London" (*c.* 1501)

This London of Walcott's is in a dialogue, across a level plane of time and space that is mutually reversible, with medieval Londons. Omeros/the poet-narrator sees the usual stuff of the city of Westminster area and the present face of the earlier medieval cities of London to Westminster's east: All Hallows by the Tower was founded in the seventh century, St. Paul's in the seventh, Westminster Abbey in the tenth century, Westminster Palace in the eleventh, the Tower of London in the eleventh, the Bloody Tower in the thirteenth. Back behind the Thames, Omeros, himself from an even remoter age, seems to see the marshlands that preexisted Westminster, in a passage alluding (I take it) to Conrad's evocation of early Roman days on the banks of the Thames and Rome's own far navies (196.62–66; cf. Conrad, 5–7). But the residence of medieval London in Walcott's London gives rise to an explicit moment as well, in his reference to it as of "cities all the floure" (195.48), a citation, with a change in the

word order, from a poem commonly attributed to William Dunbar, "In Honour of the City of London" (*c.* 1501).[27] The first two stanzas forge strong links to Walcott's London:

LONDON, thou art of townes *A per se*.
Soveraign of cities, seemliest in sight,
Of high renoun, riches and royaltie;
Of lordis, barons, and many a goodly knyght;
Of most delectable lusty ladies bright;
Of famous prelatis, in habitis clericall;
Of merchauntis full of substaunce and of myght:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Gladdith anon, thou lusty Troynovaunt,
Citie that some tyme cleped was New Troy;
In all the erth, imperiall as thou stant,
Pryncesse of townes, of pleasure and of joy,
A richer restith under no Christen roy;
For manly power, with craftis naturall,
Fourmeth none fairer sith the flode of Noy:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all. (Quiller-Couch 26.1-16)

The author's charge is eulogy of a chief city in a monarchical, aristocratic, and parliamentary order (lines 4 and 5–6 effectively constitute the houses of Parliament), not to mention in the current of universal time since Noah's Flood. In the political sense, time makes some difference to Walcott's London. Otherwise, the two Londons have much to agree on. 'IHCL''s London, like Walcott's, is a city of money and of religious as well as of secular power; it is a city that declares epochs, as in that since the Flood (cf. Walcott's London's "somnolent sphinxes," 195.47), a city that recalls Troy, and a city at a global zenith (26–27.2, 11, 31–32). The rest of the poem builds on this salute. The city is "Strong Troy in vigour and strenuytie / ... / Empress of townes, exalt in honour, / In beawtie berying the crone imperiall" (26.19–22). There is no mistaking the force that underlies the face that London presents to the world: an early pledge of domination under the aegis of the god of war, Rome makes its appearance through the Tower actually built by William the Conqueror:

By Julyus Cesar thy Tour founded of old
May be the hous of Mars victoryall,

27. It is doubtful that Dunbar wrote this poem, but it was regularly anthologized under his name until well into the twentieth century, including in the *Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250–1918* edited by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch; it is likely enough that Walcott encountered the poem as Dunbar's, and I cite Quiller-Couch's 1940 edition. The poet was Scottish; even in the absence of more knowledge about the author, his recognition of an imperial Troy in the capital city of the southern kingdom that had by 1500 sought so hard and so long to establish its dominion over Scotland is a striking feature of the poem. See Hanna 19–22 for a rich discussion of the poem within a rich essay on medieval Londons.

> Whose artillary with tonge may not be told:
> London, thou art the flour of Cities all. (27.37–40)

Political power is the corollary of military. London is the epitome of mastery, "Soveraign of cities" (26.2): the epitome of, first, mayoral (the entire last stanza), then baronial, then royal, and finally imperial, power. Economic power is abundantly on show in its merchant class ("Rich be thy merchauntis in substaunce that excellis," 27.45).

The Thames is recognizably Walcott's Thames: fair streams "under [its] lusty wallys" (26.27), barges, ships and other vessels, sails and oars (27.29; Walcott 193.7, by association, and 194.25), the swans on the Thames (26.28) that respond to Walcott's on the Serpentine (in Hyde Park; 197.94); there are the places of religion and their bells ("Blith be thy chirches, wele sownyng be thy bellis," 27.44; cf. 195.48), and the clerical dress of the prelates (26.6), echoed in the "soutane" of Walcott's church-warden at Saint Martin-in-the-Fields (194.31). The knights' "cheynes of gold" (27.36) echo Walcott's metaphors evoking both slavery and the money motive, as does the appearance of the "sovereign" of St. Paul's (197.103) in 'IHCL''s first line. The atmospheric correspondences in the auras of wealth and power are supplemented by an erotic touch. In a narrative thematically interested in Edens ("'It's like Adam and Eve all over,'" Maud Plunkett says to her husband of the St. Lucian landscape, 63.217; cf. also 97.59), Walcott's own faintly paradisial allusion, immediately on citing 'IHCL', to a couple sunning in a park by a tinkling river (195.49–51) glances at a civic erotics more firmly stated by the late-medieval author ("Fair be [the merchants'] wives, right lovesom, white and small; / Clere be thy virgyns, lusty under kellis [their headdresses]," 27.46–47).

In this variety of ways, the poets' Londons are in their constituting objects the same. Walcott doesn't dispute even London as flower. But from Omeros/Walcott's perspective, the earlier poet's celebrated and prosperous London is a brutal place, its flower either Time as iron in the clock face of Big Ben (196.76), or, as Hamner points out (110), the sunflower of the empire that claimed its sun never set (196.70). London in 1501 is of course not London of the Victorian imperial Britain that invests Walcott's London; there are as yet no analogous "shadows... multiplying from the Outer / Provinces, their dialects light as the gingko's leaf, their / fingers plucking their saris as wind picks at water" (195–96.59–61). 'IHCL' intimates a civics, and its picture suits what the narrator who opens the *Heart of*

Darkness terms "[t]he dreams of men, the seeds of commonwealths, the germs of empires" carried outward on the ebb of the river Thames, a schema that has the advantage of making London a city constructed not out of the motive of domination alone, the germ of empire, but of many motives, some of which, the dreams and the seeds, it may share with Walcott's St. Lucian villagers and villages.[28] But the dreams and commonwealths have soured in *Omeros*. In his Houses of Parliament, Walcott's London's is a debased citizenry. Walcott's disposition of London's elements ensures that the Eden-touched scene of the sunning couple takes place in a park enclosed by spear-shaped rails and shaded by a church whose name, All Hallows by the Tower, refers to one of London's most enduring and ominous expressions of central power; the river's tinkling that accompanies the scene is the sound of the Thames' ankle-irons. Turning to 'IHCL' from *Omeros*, we are likelier to see less the civic eulogy, and more the city's imperial brutality, which can be rendered as a boast in the images of London as another Troy (26.9-16) and city of Julius Caesar's Tower, beneficiary of the house of Mars (27.37–38). From the Omeric perspective, the *laus urbis* is an indictment.

28. Cf. Maljo's eccentric candidacy in national elections as founder of the United Force party, to launch a "new age" in repudiation of the alternatives, Marxist and Capitalist (sic; *Omeros* 104–09:1–135, at 8 and 27).

Trojan London is the invention of the *De gestis Britonum* (*DgB* hereafter) by Geoffrey of Monmouth, the first text to identify the long-recognized city of Trinovantum as London (Clark, "Trinovantum" 138–41) and to see in the name a corruption of *Troia Noua* (Geoffrey 31.22.493-96).[29] In arriving at *DgB*, we arrive at the great insular British textual monument, in its assumption of and response to Virgil's *Aeneid*, to the force of imperial Rome as the measure of worldly history (for this most seminal text, see Ingledew, "Book of Troy"). It is bold enough to offer a counter-imperial history for Britain based on Britain's descent, commonly with Rome's, from Troy but with the New Troy, future London, built some four centuries in advance of Rome. If Walcott could not help seeing Troy in the details of daily life in St. Lucia, neither could Geoffrey not hear, or claim to hear, something like the language of Troy in Welsh (28:21). Geoffrey's account of earlier British history, preemptive until beyond the time of 'IHCL,' assigned London's foundation as *Troia Noua* to that figure only three generations removed from Homer's *Iliad*, Brutus, great-grandson of Aeneas, who thus fulfilled Diana's prophecy to him of an *altera Troia* and an imperial future that was to be approached in Arthur's reign – in a rare medieval use of the word, he aims to conquer *totam Europam* (Geoffrey, 205:154.235) – and fulfilled in Victoria's reign: "'From your descendants will arise kings, who / will be

29. See Reeve in Geoffrey of Monmouth lix and 3 on the correct title of this work, usually cited as *The History of the Kings of Britain*.

masters of the whole world'" (20:16).

Having named the island *Britannia* after himself, Brutus prospected the entire land for the site for a city; coming upon the Thames, he treads its banks (*deambulauit littora*, 31:22.492), as Omeros will later, and sees the spot he seeks; he supplies the city with citizens, and provides the code of law that will keep the peace. Lud will later supply walls and towers (30:22). The first paragraph of the *DgB* has already remarked the Thames' role (along with the Severn and Humber) in bringing *transmarina commercia ex uniuersis nationibus* into Britain (7:5.37; "foreign goods... from every land" in Wright's translation, 6:5). British history thus becomes a function of a city as much as the Roman empire's will later be (Pagden is forceful on a significance of the city as city that is peculiar to Europe, "Conceptualizing" 39–41). In the fourth century before Christ, in accordance with a widely known datum of Roman historiography, (the British king) Belinus, with his brother Brennius, conquers Rome; on Belinus' death, his ashes are placed in a golden container on the top of a tower he had built, in a clear evocation of the well-known obelisk in Rome containing Julius Caesar's (Geoffrey, 58:44; Master Gregorius, 34–35:29). Similarly, the bronze statue of Cadwallo as horseman, containing the king's body, parallels a statue thought at the time to be of the emperor Constantine – in the *DgB* half-British through his mother Helena – and recorded in a description of Rome contemporary with the *DgB* (Keene 73 and 71; *DgB* 276:201). Later, in Book iv, Geoffrey will signal his own attitude to Rome in the light of its Trojan origins by recounting at length Caesar's two failures to conquer Trinovantum: the British, and even their Norman successors, can see present London in the glow cast ultimately from Troy, in a manner that Walcott in St. Lucia strains to turn away from.

If the *concept* of cities, Rome and London, that trace to Troy helps to center the *Aeneid* and the *DgB* alongside *Omeros*, the *particulars* matter too. Keene draws attention to the multiple spatial and monumental features of twelfth–century London which appear as early as in Geoffrey of Monmouth's London. Long before Lud's walls and towers, Belinus builds in Trinovantum a marvelously made gate since called Billingsgate after his name, set in a great tower with a shipping port at its feet (Geoffrey 58–59:44; Keene observes the accuracy of this last reference to a modification to make access to ships docking there in the Thames easier). Keene points to Geoffrey's interest in St. Paul's as a royal mausoleum and in its neighbor church at St. Martin (on Ludgate Hill; not Walcott's St. Martin-in-the-

Fields; but the play in words in Walcott means there is no loss in the difference); to Geoffrey's hint at an engineering project to control the waters of the Thames that came to be attempted in 1190, a project Walcott might be seen to roll back at 196:62–64); and to the heroic history he attached to London's western gate by St. Martin's, Ludgate (Geoffrey 276:201) as well as to Billingsgate (Keene 73–74, 77–79). If we follow Walcott's lead once again in placing Londons contemporary and ancient on the same level plane of time and space, then Geoffrey's Trojan London is sculpted into Walcott's. When Omeros/Walcott looks at London from under "the balls of rearing bronze stallions," he might as well be looking at the bronze horse *mirae pulcritudinis* ("of marvelous beauty") on which the last great British king Caduallo sat on that west gate (Ludgate) in Geoffrey's history (277:201.508–09), its beauty fatally besmirched.[30]

30. An image that doubles the shat-upon bronze horseman monumentalizing the wharves of imperial Lisbon, in parallel with imperial London (*Omeros* 192.64–72).

'IHCL' and the *DgB* evaluate London differently, the one pro-Roman, the other anti-. But both celebrate power and empire, and the violence that sustains them, and derive them from Troy. We reach back into a medieval endorsement of a more or less unrestrained *libido dominandi* of the sort Augustine indicted in the Roman empire and in the earthly city in itself. The capacity of Britain's and London's Trojan origin not only to form contemporary knowledge of the island (for knowledge is what it counted as), but to enter into contemporary thinking about and shaping of the realities of the present is abundantly witnessed in the wake of Geoffrey's work. It can even be that Walcott helps us to take the *DgB* seriously in this way (though why would we not, on the grounds of its factitiousness, when we are able to take seriously the magisterial Virgil and, two hundred years after *DgB*, the magisterial Dante, masters of all discourses, and their factitious Troys and Romes?). A tight conceptual logic binds the idea of Troy in the *DgB* to the inheritors of the Norman conquerors to whom Geoffrey variously dedicated his history (Ingledew, "Book of Troy" 691-92). At the same time, that is not the whole story of the *DgB*; it is also an appeal for the making of a polity by a people bound by blood and law and the arts of civil life, emotionally so in the first person lament that we mostly take to be Geoffrey's own voice (according to himself, he is only the translator of his source) at the British inclination to civil war (Geoffrey 256:185).

In *Omeros*, then, the Homer who is the bargeman on the bench looks from underneath it at the London monument of a figure in the history of an island whose chief city had been founded by the people whose defeat in Troy he had told in the *Iliad*. For us to see such

intertextual connections in Walcott's poem is to respect his own methods, in which History is undone and Homer, or rather Omeros, can appear to the poet in St. Lucia as he does in London: it is to recognize that for Walcott poetry, if it eludes official power's efforts to conscript it to construct History, can create our history more fundamentally than our historiography does. Tutored by Omeros and his father, the narrator-poet comes to view the call of Troy as the call to surrender to the fixing of time and its investment with value by History. Cancelling time as a force of separation and distinction, to the point of allowing texts to talk in either direction to one another, enables 'IHCL' to gloss today's London, or Omeros to see a horseman who is metamorphically one of his Trojan progeny on the Thames Embankment (the space of London is the same by definition; the time is a constant uninterrupted by the breach between pre-modern and modern that Latour seeks to dissolve in *We Have Never Been Modern*). If this is so, 'IHCL', and medieval texts in general, are synchronous with Walcott's, and call in turn for readings that can undo their service, much of it unconscious, of official power in favor of the ordinary history that we see glimpses of in 'ICHL.'

Medieval Londons: The London of *Leges Anglorum Londoniis Collectae* (*c.* 1215)

I turn now to a medieval construction of London within a Trojan framework that strikes the note not only of imperial desire, the desire for History, but also of the more benign desire of human community. Walcott's confrontation of London's darker history can clarify also how a London can give expression to the same desires that motivate the villagers on his island: a desire to create a community that functions to realize ordinary human wishes to make a living, to form connections to other people who constitute communities, to have a voice in government, to take pleasure in the arts of social life. At the same time, this vision is set within one of the most ambitious statements of an empire ruled by the actually existing English monarchy (as against the projection of such a vision backwards, as in the *DgB* and its translators and mediators) in the medieval period. This construction takes place within a larger project: the massive collection called the *Leges Anglorum Londoniis collectae* by its editor Felix Liebermann.[31] This compendium of laws and legal treatises, assembled and framed in London by an unknown cleric over the years lead-

ing to the crises of John's reign that produced the Magna Carta (1206–15, O'Brien *GPKP* 118) purports to lay out five hundred years of English law from Ine, *c.* 690, into the reign of Richard I. The perspectives and interests of London motivate the entire collection (O'Brien *GPKP* 118, Keene 69), and from it London emerges as the realm's political and civic center of gravity. What is missing in O'Brien's and Keene's characterization is that this centrality is embedded within the framework of Galfridian, that is, Trojan-derived, history: London is the center of the kingdom of the English when this kingdom is, the collector and editor of the materials tells us, what was formerly called the *regnum Britanniae* (e.g. Liebermann *Gesetze* 1:635.11.1.A4), for which, as the collection makes clear, Anglia is the current name. The collector – the Londoner, as Liebermann calls him – defines this *regnum Britanniae* at the collection's opening as the unitary insular and archipelagic kingdom of the *DgB*, encompassing Loegria, Cambria, and Albania and offshore islands, and he sustains this usage at critical points throughout the collection.[32]

If the *regnum Britannie* defines in principle though not in fact the *territorial* reach and *political* character of the contemporary realm of England under John, it is also the collection's *ethical* fulcrum. The enumeration of the parts of the *regnum Britannie* in the collection's opening – from its *provinciae*, *patriae*, and *insulae* to its seventy shires and next its hides – closes by evoking the three archbishoprics the island once had, that is in the British history of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and its twenty-eight bishoprics put into place *per constitutionem bonorum patrum et praedecessorum; ut expedit, et decet, et oportet, ad utilitatem, et ad salutem, et ad profectum animarum populorum totius regni praedicti* ("through the founding activities of the good fathers and predecessors; to effect, and befit, and be proper to the utility, and health, and advantage of the souls of the peoples of the entire aforementioned kingdom;" Riley 2:ii.626).[33] This is the first sounding of the ethical idea of the *regnum* as a Christian community that will pervade the Londoner's adaptations of his sources throughout the collection. The territorial, political, and Christian-communitarian drives of the *Leges* come clothed in, such that we may say constituted by, an appeal to Trojan temporality, a time-since-Troy. The burden of this editorial work is to forge from three separate laws across the island and beyond into its adjacent islands (Ireland excepted out of obedience to the model of the *DgB*, despite being since 1177 attached to John as *dominus Hiberniae*), namely those of Wessex, Mercia, and the Danelaw, one law and to establish it as the

31. Liebermann's intimidating body of work on the materials of this collection remains indispensable, uniquely rigorous and penetrating. Six manuscripts are extant (O'Brien *GPKP* 205-06).

32. The article by Derek Keene on this collection, exactly because it is so fertile, makes an economic foil for this case. Keene's map of the collection (84) begins with folio 3v; for what is thereby cut out, see Riley 2.ii.624–26 (the earliest and best manuscript is online: Manchester, John Rylands University Library, MS Lat. 155). It is basic to my point in this essay that the function of the phrase *regnum Britannie* that unfolds from Troy is not simply *missing* in Keene's map, but is *in effect not visible*, either to him or, in its implications, to any other commentator on the collection. These commentators are, as it were, immune to that spell that Troy can cast not only on the collector seeking to know and make his world, but on Walcott seeking to know and make his (though for one Troy is a necessity and for the other something to liberate oneself from). What the commentators on the *Leges Anglorum* miss or dismiss is the depth of the drive for an imperial vision that is variously the drive for participation in History, the drive for an encompassing community, and the drive for an intelligible world, in this case one with its necessary violence alongside whatever community-making desires may also be at work.

33. Translations from the *Leges Anglorum* are mine unless otherwise indicated.

ancient law *of the island and its islands*: this burden is to civilize the island and the archipelago it centers; it is also to imperialize it, because to rule over dominions with separate laws is to rule an *imperium*, as the writer explicitly notes (Riley 2:ii.624).

From the opening of the *Leges Anglorum*, the phrase *regnum Britannie* provides the hinge at point after point in the diachronic survey of the laws of the realm that follows. At the end of each of the first three reigns covered, those of Ine, Alfred and Aethelstan (all three already by 1215 iconic figures in medieval English historiography, and the last of them the point figure of *translatio* for the *DgB* 281:207.597), the Londoner announces how long the respective kings ruled over the *regnum Britannie* (the relevant passages are transcribed in Liebermann, *Über die leges* 12–14:6–8 [Ine]; 19–20:11,1–12 [Alfred]; and 22–23:15 [Aethelstan]; they can be read in context in Rylands 155, at 10v, 20r–20v and 34r respectively). He also alters his source so that both Ine and Alfred are made to speak in their legal codes of the *regnum Britannie*: it is a concept they are made to know and assert. Similarly, it is this Trojan-derived *Britannia* and the territories that belong to it, not *Anglia*, that Knut conquers and with which he enfeoffs his followers (*Über die leges* 26–27; Rylands 155 34r). With Knut's law codes for the *regnum Britannie* that he rules duly entered into the *Leges Anglorum*'s record, the next links in the chain of references to the *regnum Britannie* are the collection's most decisive, binding Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror, that is the great *translatio* into the present, into its legal, political, and community-of-the-realm-making model. At the center of this section lies the Londoner's version of a text of the *Leges Edwardi* (the Confessor; so I will refer to it as *LEC*) first written in *c.* 1130, in a fourth redaction that I will refer to as *LEC4*. As by far the most intensively reworked text by an editor thinking systematically, this work carries the brunt of the ideological project during these years of constitutional crisis.[34] It is this text within this ambitious summa of English and would-be insular law that does most to make London the center and fullest expression of the imperial *regnum Britanniae*.

34. For a concise and revealing introduction to this redaction of the *LEC*, see O'Brien, "Forgers."

In its first appearance in *c.* 1130, the *LEC* was part of an Anglo-Norman project to bridge the rupture of the conquest of 1066 by claiming that William the Conqueror had ratified traditional English law (see O'Brien for and on this text, *GPKP*; for William's explicit reconciling of Norman, English, and Norse-Danish interests, 190–92). It is therefore a document in the long *translatio* from English to Anglo-Norman rule: a work constituting as well as flexing power. By

the beginning of the thirteenth century, it is well circulated and established in three versions under the name of the English king and saint. In the context of this discussion, the first thing to know is that in these three versions, *there is not a single mention of London*. In *LEC4*, London now becomes centripetal: national law, which is the law of a multiethnic polity, is made *metropolitan* at the same moment as it is made insular (made to apply to the entire island, and not England only), where insular means imperial. Cutting athwart Walcott's London, however, the *LEC4* is also a statement of liberties, an effort to build human collectives protected from arbitrary power, and, quite remarkably, an effort to construct a realm constituted by a multiethnic citizenship. It represents London as a city of desire as well as of domination.

The redactor treats of London most directly and explicitly under his new rubric *De heretochiis et libertate Londoniarum et uenationibus regni Britannie* ("Of the commanders and liberty of London and of the [laws/rights of] hunting of the kingdom of Britain;" Liebermann *Gesetze* 1:656.32.B).[35] *Heretoches* is the Angles' word, he explains, for what the Romans (by implication) called the *ductores exercitus* ("leaders of the army") and the French *capitales constabularii uel marescalli exercitus* ("the heads of the militia or marshalls of the army"), namely *barones nobiles et insignes, sapientes et fideles et animosi* ("noble and distinguished lords, wise, faithful, and courageous"); they are the heads of the militia, in this case of the city of London. This means that this rubric foregrounds the function of force and the function of liberty together, the militia and its practices of hunting that serve as training for fighting, and the liberties of the citizens of London. It spells out London's place in these regards in an imperial British context, that of the *regnum Britannie*, and much of the drive of what follows is to lay out procedures that should apply across the realm. The editor-compiler had to work hard to make this London, the product of force (one expression of desire) and of the desire for a space of liberty, into a feature of the laws of Edward as the laws of an Anglia that is *in principle* (he knows that, *de facto*, it is not) the *regnum Britanniae*. He begins by universalizing the heretoches' elections across the *regnum*. The heretoches were elected, one per county, *in pleno folkesmot* ("in full assembly of the people"), as sheriffs (*uicecomites*) had to be, through *commune consilium pro communi utilitate regni* ("common counsel for the common benefit of the kingdom"). The system applies throughout the kingdom of Britain, in its *patriae*, *provinciae*, and *comitatus* (counties), a literal recollection of

35. Regarding Liebermann's formidable mise-en-page: he prints the compiler-editor's interpolations into the *LEC* in this fourth redaction under the rubric *Leg. Angl. Lond s. XIII coll. zu E. Cf. retr.*

the definition of the kingdom of Britain with which the collection opens (Riley 2:ii.624).

At this point, as a mark of his effort to compose the real of his own day, he must draw from one of the other texts in his compendium, the *Quadripartitus*, that is, on a separate work that appears in its own right earlier in his collection, in order to insert a series of laws of Knut into what he purports to be the laws of Edward. These laws concern among other things the vicissitudes of war (desertion or death) and hunting rights. In the process, he modifies several of them, and places them as a body inside a rhetorical frame derived from the distinctive political scheme and vocabulary of the collection's opening regarding the kingdom of Britain, and its core territorial, administrative, constitutional, and honorific features (1:657.32. B2-B7; cf. 1:365, 367, central columns). In this new section picking out London, into which the earlier laws of Knut are now inserted, the compiler identifies laws and constitutional practices defining the kingdom of Britain, especially concerning the regular assemblies called folkmoots. And then he invokes Troy. On every Monday in this London which is the head (*caput*) of the kingdom and the laws, and always the court of the lord king – the compiler continues – the husting (the central court) must sit: [*f*]*undata enim erat olim et edificata ad instar et ad modum et in memoriam ueteris magne Troie; et usque in hodiernum diem leges et iura, dignitates, libertates regiasque consuetudines antique magne Troie in se continet* ("For [London] was founded and built in time past in the image and manner and memory of the great Troy of old; and it contains within itself continuously up until today the laws and rights, dignities, royal liberties and customs of that ancient great Troy"). The thrust of this passage is visible in its explanatory conjunction, *enim*: what is done every week in the Monday husting is to be explained by laws and customs unchanged since the foundation of the city on the model of Troy.[36]

This claim is not made because the author believes there has been no interruption in these laws and practices; quite apart from the knowledge he must have of London's vicissitudes in its most recent decades, he has already been strong-worded about the suspension for several centuries of a fundamental Arthurian law that entailed London (Liebermann 1:655:32.A.8), and he follows the *LEC*'s reference in its earlier versions to a sixty-eight year hiatus of similarly realm-wide law in the late-tenth and early-eleventh centuries that accounts for the rule of the Danish kings as an illegitimate interregnum (Liebermann *Gesetze* 1:662:34.1.b). The editor-compiler can make

36. Abigail Wheatley provides a rich treatment of London as Troy at exactly this period (52–64). Gervase of Tilbury (therefore presumably from Essex, but destined to be an aristocrat in Provence; cf. Banks) documents that the Tower is to London as the citadel of Ilium to Troy, the two castles opposing it on the west replicate Pergama, and all were built by Brutus to this end (Wheatley 57–59; along with Pergamum, Pergama is a Virgilian synonym for Troy or part of Troy). His work, the *Otia Imperialia* (*c.* 1211-14), written for the Roman emperor Otto IV, completed a project originating thirty years earlier, when Gervase was in the service not only of Henry II (Otto's grandfather), but of his heir Henry the Young King too, whose significance for London we shall see more of below (Banks, *ONDB*); in its treatment of Britain, it is heavily invested in Geoffrey of Monmouth's history. Most illuminating of all is Wheatley's attention to the civic seal of London, ancient in its temporal claims, radically new in its production; cf. 64–65 (the urban seal) and 68–74 (for the London seal in its precocity and its influence on several later graphic representations of London by Matthew Paris and in a manuscript of the *DgB*). Wheatley's discussion, together with Derek Keene's (esp. 76–78), makes it clear that in the time spanning Geoffrey's invention of London as New Troy *c.* 1138 and John's reign, an ambitious and deeply motivated project to produce a new status for London, both profoundly ancient and surpassingly new (in the form of the commune developing at this time especially in Italy, see below), was underway, reflected in an array of texts and artifacts; this amounts to a spell cast by Troy.

his statement about unchanging law deriving from Troy in good faith because he appeals not to a literal but to an abstract idea of London. This idea combines three features: London is the central royal court; the royal court is the fount of an unchanging law and custom; but London possesses liberties in relation to the throne and in this (he makes clear), it is only the most celebrated instance of fundamental liberties across the realm. The first two ideas are expressions of authority and force, the third is an expression of a different desire. The husting enters this overdetermined program into historical action. At this moment in the *LEC4*, the author's concern is that the husting embodies an authoritative structure within which operates a single process unchanged in principle in the encompassing history of the kingdom. Most binding among these constitutional arrangements is the annual oath of fidelity to the king by all his subjects that makes them *fratres coniurati*, as provided for in a law instituted by none other than king Arthur, the fullest expression of the Galfridian idea of insular history who, we have learned two pages earlier, thus *consolidauit et confederauit regnum Britannie uniuersum semper in unum* ("consolidated and confederated the entire kingdom of Britain [so that it is] always one;" 1:655.32.A.7). Though competing interests are being complexly mediated, in a manner that reminds us that there are many Londons, one of which is that of Londoners anxious to limit royal power, the ideational drive is toward a political unity measured in normative language of federation, consolidation, and above all (the reference to *fratres* appears several times), of brothers. This is the community of the kingdom as an ethical ideal.[37]

The author closes out the London-oriented segment of the *LEC4* by clinching this vision of unity in his final sentences (1:657.32.B.13). He imports phrasing from another set of laws within his collection, *De primo Henrico rege*, to create a simple economy: in the face of three discrete legal orders on the island, again, those of Wessex, Mercia, and the Danelaw (Liebermann *Gesetze* 1:555.9.10), the figure of the royal court ensures an unchanging practice in law and custom (*i.e.* over time) wherever the king is (in space): *usus et consuetudines suas una semper inuiolabilitate consuerat, ubicunque ipse rex fuerit* (compare 1:657.32.B.13 with 1:555.9.10.a). Echoing the ethos of the *regnum Britanniae* asserted at the opening of the collection, this law in London keeps faith with *ueteres consuetudines bonorum patrum et predecessorum et omnium principum et procerum et sapientum seniorum tocius regni predicti* ("the old customs of our good fathers and predecessors and of all the princes, nobles, and wise senior men of the whole king-

37. See Reynolds 262–302 on "kingdoms as communities," much of which is focused on the period of English constitutional history being reassembled by the *Leges Anglorum*; it is crucial to Reynolds that medieval concepts and forms of community-making were more various and more deeply motivated than constitutional and political historians have recognized.

dom aforementioned;" 1:657.32.B.13). The dovetailing of London with the *regnum Britanniae* in the section's heading is key to establishing the operation of History. That last point – *a Trojan identity now putatively vouched for by the Anglo-Saxon Edward* – is the thin edge of a Galfridian wedge that embeds Edward's laws in Geoffrey's British history and, as we have seen, even makes Arthur one of their authors. Troy seems to be necessary as the guarantee of an order that can defeat both contingency (by being constant) and division (by being one): it is the name of a mythology, or a mystique, or a spell. Anglia is the current case of a constant kingdom as London is the current case of a constant law and custom; both call on Troy to override local time and space, so that Troy becomes an abstraction outside history (much as a citizen of the United States might use the word "America").

The Londoner now passes directly from the London unit that images a unitary law to the second theme that calls on the idea of Troy, the question of who, legally, should people this kingdom of Britain: *De illis, qui possunt et debent de iure cohabitare et remanere in regno Britannie* ("Of those who are able to, and ought by law to, live and dwell/remain in the kingdom of Britain;" 1:658.32.C). The basis of the answer is the exemplary case of the first and founding king of the Anglia that is the *regnum Britannie*: Ine. By bigamously marrying Wala, after whom Cambria's name was changed to Wales, he acquired Wales, Cornwall, and the *coronam benedictam Britannie* held last by Cadwallader (the epithet *benedictam* is a mark of a blessed community; it is axiomatic to the *Leges Anglorum*, though I don't have the space to expound it here, that the *regnum Britannie* is a Christian institution). Ine's act first makes one out of two, Angles and British; but the principle quickly embraces the Scottish, and, in Rylands, the earliest manuscript, the Picts (fol. 69v). A fundamentally binary conception obtains in each case: whatever the combinations, *ita fuerunt tunc temporis per uniuersum regnum Britannie duo in carne una* ("there were in this way at that time throughout all the kingdom of Britain two people in one flesh;" 1:658.32.C.5); a few lines later, the product of intermarriage is *gens una et populus unus* ("one race and one people;" 1:659.32.C.6.a). At the base of the compiler's model of the two peoples who become one is his phrase's citation, noted by Liebermann, of Genesis 2:24, the foundational text for the institution of marriage: when a man leaves father and mother for wife, *erunt duo in carne una*. This is Adam speaking in the unfallen Eden of what God has done in making Eve and so instituting marriage.

In the compiler's use of Genesis, marriage recuperates an original separation (we might say, with Eve's partition from Adam's body, a division). When he and Eve are naked, and not ashamed, Adam sees marriage; the editor's citation of this moment for Ine's historical act in an ethnically split land is paradoxical, since the fall has consigned that moment to the other side of time, a pre-lapsarian time that cannot be restored. The Londoner appeals thus to an innocent moment in Eden to construct the history of a multiethnic reality at the level of the community of post–Babel peoples. The principle of citizenship of this polity applies to the named peoples *cum ueniunt* (1:658.32.C.1 and 1.a); as at 1:658.32.C, the tense of residence and citizenship is the present. The compiler-editor has the community of his own day in mind, as a community of communities (or peoples). The Edenic principle of *duo in carne una* is thus affirmed as politically foundational for the present polity. For the editor-compiler to cite Eden under these circumstances is no less fantastic than for him to cite Troy; or to cite Troy, no less thoughtful, knowledge-seeking, or efficacious than to cite Eden (we might recall Walcott's uses of Eden). The argument is part of a stunning expansion of the community of the realm. Bretons, Jutes, and Saxons all constitute, *sicut coniurati fratres* and as *proprii ciues*, *populus unus et gens una*, the Bretons because they are of British blood, the others because they are of Angle (1:658.32.C, C.1, and C.1.a).

This community of five ethnicities proceeding from two bloods, British and Angle, then expands in turn, since Angles married Scots and Picts, and Picts and Scots married Angles (again, the Picts appear only in Rylands 155, fol. 69v); and so emerged *per uniuersum regni Britannie duo in carne una* (actually so far seven in *carne una*). This is not the end of it. In one final torque to the ethnic plot, Arthur conquered the Norwegians, Christianized them, and made them part of the kingdom; they married noble British women. When by right of this blood relation they sought residence and citizenship in Britain – the island being described at length shortly before this point virtually verbatim from the opening of the *DgB* – the Angles fought them bitterly, a reference presumably to the era of the Viking raids: but eventually, the Norwegian-British and the Angles married each other, and the Norwegians too are considered by the English barons reporting to William – in the fiction of the dramatic framework of the *LEC* – to be *coniurati fratres nostri et sicut proprii ciues regni* ("our sworn brothers, such that they are properly citizens of the kingdom;" 1:659–60:32.E.1–E.6). Since William responds to the barons' presen-

tation by conceding them Edward's laws over the laws he thinks are superior, those of his *antecessores... de Norwegia* (1:664.34), that is, the Danelaw, an ironic circle closes: the Northmen fought off by the Angles have become the inheritors of the *regnum Britannie*, and join the seven other ethnic groups identified in the *carne una* that compose the community of the realm (the moment gives Walcott's reference to the outlandishness of the dialects of those from 'the Outer Provinces' a confounding irony).

Power is not dissipated in this resolution of the *regnum*'s differences and samenesses. As important to the compiler as the realm's polyethnicity is an asymmetry of power that ensures that the English remain dominant. This is the implication of pursuing the Londoner's history of the island's peoples. In the course of explaining why Malcolm III of Scotland had been only a *princeps*, no king, the laws of Edward now explain that whereas the Picts had been led by a leader called Pictus, and the Scots by Scotus, neither gave their names to the land of Albany; [*e*]*st enim Albania pars monarchie regni huius, quod uocabatur regnum Britannie. Dicuntur enim et uocantur Britones a Bruto rege, qui Troianus fuit, ex quo regnum uniuersum nomen suscepit. Britones enim quasi Bruti Troiani sunt; et uenerunt et exierunt olim a Troia magna* ("for Albany is part of the monarchy of this kingdom that is called the kingdom of Britain. For the Britons are called that from Brutus the king, who was a Trojan, from whom the entire kingdom took its name. For Britons, called this as if they were of Brutus, are Trojans; and they came and left long ago from great Troy;" 1:664.35.1.A.2). As the London of the Londoner's day correlates with the London founded in the image of *magna Troia*, which gives London its political and legal primacy, only rather more paradoxically, the one flesh and one citizenship of the many ethnicities of the kingdom of Britain commences with a first and single people. At the other end of this unitary beginning is the fantastic expansion of Arthurian empire all the way, named land by named land, up to Russia (1:659.32.E). The *LEC4* is both the imagining of a reconciled multiethnic community, and the rationalization of insular and extra-insular war and domination in the hands of the kings of England. At this point, the model is under considerable strain: as the one place, Troy/London, and the one people, the Trojans, are called up to guarantee Britain's eight ethnicities and many locations, we see a forced compounding of History, the imperial narrative, with history as the narrative of desire for an expanded community of peace.

As the foregoing illustrates, it is the present that compels the 'fan-

tasy' of what the compiler-editor reaches for. His Trojan London is in close dialogue with 'real' or contingent London (see also Keene 87–88). The institutions of violence weigh heavily in this practical anatomy of the city's workings, especially in the form of the city militia. The tactical responsibilities of the heretoches (Liebermann *Gesetze* 1:656:32.B) must reflect London's activity in the civil war of 1135–41, and its alliance with the Young Henry's rebellion against his father Henry II in 1173–74. In 1191, John, not yet king, entered London with an armed force in the course of a power struggle with Richard I's chancellor, who controlled the Tower of London (Williams 2); and as king he lost the city at the beginning of the baronial rebellion that led to Magna Carta and then threatened his deposition. Keene documents similarly many ties between the *Leges Anglorum*, especially the *LEC4*, on the one hand and commercial London of *c.* 1200 on the other. These are a matter of the local trading concerns of specific London interest groups and families, in the context of royal and European-wide interests, especially those of merchants from Germany and France (Keene 91–93). The *LEC4* is notably preoccupied with Denmark, Norway, and the Baltic region that matches Arthur's conquests, all of which figure strongly and often contentiously in the regulation of trade in contemporary London (Keene 94–97). In an indication of just how alert to its moment the collection was, the *Leges Anglorum* has a way of glancing at specific commercial and other matters which, as far as we know, were unresolved at the time of writing, but led to regulatory action in the decade or so after the collection was completed (Keene 97). As in 'IHCL' and Walcott, an energetically active commercial, trading, and civic London shows through, but with no hint of Walcott's judgements.

Most fundamentally in its efforts to construct a corporate body that remains constant over time through contingency and accident, London was already employing the political and constitutional vocabulary of the commune which had been developing in northern France and northern Italy from the eleventh century and was founded on the performance of an oath of fellowship for purposes that became increasingly civic, an oath much like that fraternal oath legally imposed by Arthur.[38] Henry II reined London's ambitions in, but under Richard and John, the city gained new areas of independence, in particular the election of sheriffs (reviving an earlier concession) formally recognized in the first year of John's reign, the election of their aldermen (the governing council), and the position of mayor (recognized in practice two decades before formal royal confirmation in

38. Brooke 34–35; on the London commune more generally, see Williams 1–25.

1215; cf. Brooke 41, 45–47, Williams 2–5, 33–34). Acting while Richard was away, his brother John, at the folkmoot site at St. Paul's in response to the sounding of the cathedral bell, conceded to London the status of commune in 1191; a communal oath from 1193 survives (Williams 1, 3). Some such oath shows up in William fitz Stephen's description of London, discussed below, the *sacramentum* sworn by the citizens of London that solves all conflict (Robertson 4.8). On the other hand, Richard never officially granted commune status, and when John became king himself, his charters did not identify London as a commune (Brooke 50). The London commune existed, then, in "a shadow world of semi-legality" (Williams 4), as an idea propelling much of what was happening politically in the city between 1190 and Magna Carta. Not only are these efforts to wrestle a new urban entity into being not inconsistent with the *LEC4's* Troy; Troy, and the Galfridian history derived from it, appears a necessary tool. It is still a relatively new one, an instrument of innovation, not a regression. This Trojan temporality, then, grounds a startlingly original and precocious text: ahead of, not behind, its time. This means that the most fantastic isn't at odds with the real but can be the condition of understanding the real: in the case of the *Leges Anglorum*, part of the making of History as both force (empire) and of history as community (a different desire).

Medieval Londons: The London of William fitz Stephen's *Vita Sancti Thomae* (*c.* 1173–74)

Buttressed as it is within the Galfridian framework of the entire *Leges Anglorum* collection, the *LEC4* counts as the most ambitious effort to establish in history a London that can tap the figure of Troy to ground an imperial London and an insular kingdom of Britain, that is, to ground England in History; the text interests doubly, because Troy is basic too to its model of a united and 'fraternal' community, meaning here a largely homosocial community of the well-to-do. The description of London (hereafter the *Descriptio*) that William fitz Stephen had written some thirty or forty years earlier in his *vita* of his master, Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, understood to have been murdered in response to the words of Henry II, king of the Angevin empire, touches similar bases, again in ways usually remarked only in passing[39] but which I take to constitute his historical vision and perhaps inflect even the archbishop's.[40] It offers an antic-

39. As in Jaeger's careful recent discussion, nonetheless limited by blinders over the text's Galfridian material, reflected in 314n10. Hanna's discussion (23–24, 31) is most suggestive; his distinction throughout this essay between a mercantile and a royal London at odds with one another is especially helpful for the relations between forms of power and forms of community.

40. For the date, cf. Duggan. Five manuscripts of the *Descriptio* exist, Kleineke 117–18.

ipatory version of the project of the *Leges Anglorum*, as it were, but even so shows, like that collection, the faces of both power/History, and of desire/history. In short, it is as permeable as 'IHCL,' Geoffrey of Monmouth's *DgB*, and the Londoner's texts to a view from prostrate on Walcott's Embankment bench.

The writer's description of London pitches the reader immediately into relationship with Walcott's London (as well as the London of 'IHCL'):

> Inter nobiles orbis urbes, quos fama celebrat, ciuitas Londoniae, regni Anglorum sedes, una est, quae famam sui latius diffundit, opes et merces longius transmittit caput altius extollit. Felix est aeris salubritate, Christiana religione, firmitate munitionum, natura situs, honore ciuium, pudicitia matronali... (Robertson, 2)

> Among the noble cities of the world that are celebrated by [f]ame, the [c]ity of London, seat of the [kingdom] of England, is one that spreads its fame wider, sends its wealth and wares further, and lifts its head higher than all others. It is blest in the wholesomeness of its air, in its reverence for the Christian faith, in the strength of its bulwarks, the nature of its situation, the honour of its citizens, and the chastity of its matrons. (H. E. Butler's translation in Fitz Stephen 48, with my emendations in square brackets; all translations of the *Descriptio* following are Butler's)

Walcott's and William's texts touch at expected points: Westminster Palace (two miles outside the city proper in William's day, in emblem of Hanna's point about, in effect, two Londons, 20); St. Paul's; 'the' bridge (though the London bridge of Fitz Stepehen 68–69, not Walcott's Westminster Bridge), the Tower of London (Becket has a role in rebuilding the Tower Omeros/Walcott would later see, and in increasing its military staffing, Robertson 19, 20), the estuarial river in its ebb and flow (3.4–5, 10.15). Other items are less predictable. William is already celebrating the fertility of Walcott's "alchemical corn" in two citations from Virgil's *Georgics* (3.6; cf. *Omeros* 196.78, 197.88, 106, 110); when fingers pluck their saris in Walcott's London (196.61), they pay homage to the Asian silks whose importation William marvels at (*Seres purpureas uestes*, "from China crimson silks," Robertson 7.12). A serendipitous conjunction even offers us Walcott's

"pleasant pastures" (197.89) in the *pascua* ("meadows") and *grata planities* ("pleasing plains") of 3.6. Throughout, what coincides has a mutually contrapuntal force reflected in the function of the weather in each: for William, the mild skies of London ensure that its people are no beasts, and slave to no lust (Robertson 2.3); Walcott's London lies in "scorched summer light" (193.1), and "[i]t was summer. London rustled with pride" (195.39).

William's London is built, first, on the idea of Rome. When, among the *nobiles orbis urbes*, London *caput altius extollit* ("lifts its head higher"), William alludes to the standard gloss of Rome as *caput mundi* ("the head of the world") to lift London above that city, at least in its contemporary form. Rome is a constant in this text's construction of an ideal human community in its politics, civic order, and above all its religious cult, showing up as the city Romulus and Remus built, as the golden city of Augustus Caesar and papal seals, the city Constantine handed over to the papacy, and as the Petrine city of the papal keys (12–13.9, 19.12). Rome appears more subliminally too. The London *matrones* are Sabines (4.8). The allusion points to William's understanding of the appropriation by early Rome of the Sabine women as husbands for Roman men in order to populate the city. Since the allusion clearly functions as praise of the women alongside that of London's leading men, we are left to infer not the rape of the familiar *topos*, but a voluntary process that does credit to both women and men. This does not explain the implication that two populations are involved, males from inside and females from outside the city, however. The use of *matrones* instead of *mulieres* points to the women's role in reproduction: I would conclude that William, then, as his name suggests an Anglo-Norman serving in the upper reaches of the Anglo-Norman and Angevin order, sees Norman-English intermarriage by analogy with Roman-Sabine (see also Keene 77–78, making a link between William's Sabine women and the representation of Roman-dressed women of London on a civic seal of *c.* 1220). Along with William's earlier reference to the chastity of the city's women, the allusion sounds erotic themes that, since Aeneas and Dido, regularly attend Rome when it takes the measure of human historical being and achievement in the secular realm. Rome permeates William's description as its ground of comparison for London.

As an expression of the depth of the Roman idea, Virgil figures prominently in the *Descriptio*, with two references from the *Aeneid*, and at least eight from the *Georgics* (two of them remarked upon

above). Most telling is a strenuous reworking of three passages from the latter. *Ex omni natione quae sub caelo est* ("from every nation that is under heaven"), William writes, come the trading ships indicated in Walcott's London of *Omeros* 195–96.56–72:

> Aurum mittit Arabs; species et thura Sabaeus
> Arma Scythes; oleum palmarum diuite sylva
> Pingue solum Babylon; Nilus lapides pretiosos;
> Seres purpureas uestes; Galli sua uina;
> Norwegi, Russi, uarium, grysium, sabelinas. (7)

> Gold from Arabia, from Sabaea spice
> And incense; from the Scythians arms of steel
> Well-tempered; oil from the rich groves of palm
> That spring from the fat lands of Babylon;
> Fine gems from Nile, from China crimson silks;
> French wines; and sable, vair and miniver
> From the far lands where Russ and Norseman dwell. (Butler 54)

Here, late-twelfth-century London is not fitted to Virgil as much as Virgil is to London, his text jerry-rigged to fit the new times of a city that might indeed rival twelfth-century Rome; London eclipses Rome rather than shadows it. In the passage from the *Georgics* closest to this (ii.114–23), the references to Arabs, Sabaean incense, and Seres appear; in another passage (i:57–62), echoing William's first one and a half lines, appears *India mittit ebur, molles sua tura Sabaei / at Chalybes nudi ferrum*. In both passages from the *Georgics*, wine appears in the form of *Bacchus* (ii) and *uuae* (i).[41]

In his retooling of Virgil's three passages, William adapts what suited Rome's place in the world in Virgil's day to what suits London's in his (which is the London of his masters Becket and Henry II). William turns the references to Bacchus and grapes into London's importation of French wine; the reference to the Norwegians and their furs reflects contemporary trade in London, as we have seen, and Williams documents early London's trading relations with Novgorod, Russia and Persia (10–11). When forty years later, in the *LEC4*, Arthur embarks on his conquest all the way through Norway to Russia, he gives William's lines in retrospect a quite literally imperial flavor: the furs arrive in London from a form of Walcott's "Outer Provinces," along, undoubtedly, with their peculiar "dialects" (195.59–60). In William's use of Virgil as raw material for a refined London product,

41. Several echoes come from a passage some lines after the first noted here, ii.136–39, strengthening the sense that William grapples with the Virgilian text, and testifying to Virgil's role for William as both inspiration and symbolic capital.

it would seem probable that his references to Babylon and the Nile, like the choice of *Arabs* instead of *India* for the verse's first line, reflect the impact of the crusades on geo-political consciousness in London. The lines of William's verse are no less a claim to a global centripetality for London than are Virgil's for Rome in the *Georgics*, through his homage to Augustus Caesar in the close vicinity of the passages William works on (at i.25, where the praise is extreme, depicting an imperial godhead to come for Caesar, and at ii.170). Meanwhile, Venusian London is Virgilian London: Jaeger notes that a reference to Cytherea's role in young love in the city (11.16) likely exploits connections between that goddess and the foundation of London, as in Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia imperialia*, where Brutus builds Trinovantum [*i*]*nstinctu Veneris* ("[a]t the prompting of Venus"), who had favored the Trojans since Paris had awarded her the apple (398–99; Brutus can point, too, like Virgil's Aeneas, to ancestry from Venus, so sharing this symptom in fundamental imperial texts of the eros of history-making). This Virgilian city is commercial and civic, but it is predicated on a military one, William making sure to state that the city turned out 20,000 horsemen and 60,000 footsoldiers on Stephen's behalf in the civil war thirty years earlier.

The historical anchor of this displacement of today's Rome by London in *LEC4* arises out of deep time, namely a British history that is longer than the English, and still more deeply a pagan history that extends beyond its Christian one. William's discourse radically redates history. Immediately upon his Virgilian praise of London, he writes, *Urbe Roma, secundum chronicorum fidem, satis antiquior est. Ab eisdem quippe patribus Trojanis haec prius a Bruto condita est, quam illa a Remo et Romulo* (8.12; "London, as the chroniclers have shewn, is far older than Rome. For, owing its birth to the same Trojan ancestors, it was founded by Brutus before Rome was founded by Romulus and Remus," Butler 55). Showing through here is the reflexive phrase for dating so much of human history in the middle ages, *ab urbe condita*, a phrase that points to Rome as not only the effective starting point of contemporary history, but also that history's effective definition of civilization as an urban order. William subverts this phrase.[42] For this cleric in his service, Becket's London had been founded by Trojans long before Rome, with which younger kin-city it shared many (pre-Christian, therefore) laws and institutions – its senatorial system, its sheriffs (equivalent to the Roman consuls), its administrative divisions, its scheduled assemblies. London, then, is an *altera Troia*, a maintenance of Troy; the Trinobantes who drove

42. Though his effort dooms itself in its own syntax. If he could presume upon his historical model, he would begin with London, and have Rome built next; but the comparative ablative *Urbe Roma* makes Rome the point of departure, just as the citation of Virgil is the point at which he turns to London's founding. Troy is built much earlier, but it only gains its status by tapping the phrase *ab urbe condita*; it is a global center, but to depict that you must call on Virgil. Rome is discursively prior; and William's head is not freer of Rome than Walcott's of Troy.

back Julius Caesar were Londoners before the name (12.19; 12.18; William does not specify the Galfridian etymology of *Trinouantum*, but he surely assumes it). This moment is set up by several pages praising the competitive energies of young London men in many varied activities in the language of mock-battle, as Jaeger details, concluding with a salute to Londoners' wide-ranging hunting practices (in several counties in London's surrounds). This is to use the language of war without the war. At this moment in a continuous paragraph, we learn of Caesar's repulse, for all that he delighted in the spilling of blood (*sanguine fuso*). The logic of this textual moment is compelling. It is again a displacement of Rome, not a tapping of it (London's military is less bloody, and more effective). London is practised in the arts of defence and aggression through its *ludi*, and its ludic quality is basic to its supercession of Rome.

William fitz Stephen's description ends by saluting a city whose progeny have ruled *regna plurima et Romanum sibi subdiderunt imperium* (12.19; "subdued many nations and the Roman Empire to their sway," Butler 59), and so fulfilled the prophecy of Apollo to Brutus that the world would submit to his descendants. Fittingly, the worked-over passage from the *Georgics* of Virgil is here answered by a citation of a verse from the *DgB*; as poetic stanzas, the two verse-passages, Virgilian and Galfridian, bookend each other in an imperial key that again is not aimed merely to raise London to Rome's level. It is not certain that William slips when he has Apollo make the prophecy to Brutus, not Geoffrey's Diana. In the *Aeneid*, it is Apollo who had made the same forecast of a new Troy and empire to Aeneas (iii.11.80–98; noted by John Clark, "Trinovantum" 144). If the change is not deliberate, it would be an apt error, another mark of a preoccupation with Virgil, and signal William's ambitions to preempt Rome through London.[43] With the *DgB* preceding William's *Descriptio* in designating London – at a time when the matter was not necessarily decided – as the principal city of an imperial realm and a renewal of Troy, and the *LEC4*'s London following it, Troy emerges in high-profile texts to make Walcott's History, or at least to illuminate the present.

Troy, in turn, is not the *Descriptio*'s last stop. That role falls to Christian, not Trojan London, which, as Christian, eclipses pagan Rome and exists in relation to a new Rome, papal, not imperial, or papal-imperial. William's observation that London and Rome share variously political, legal, administrative and civic practices derived from Troy leads seamlessly into an array of cultural practices that, as

43. Or since Geoffrey places a temple of Apollo in Trinovantum, the future London, from very early in British history (Geoffrey 36.30), William might seek to transpose the original prophecy of another Troy in London to that god.

Christian, separate London from pagan Rome: church-going, observation of God's law, the acts of mercy, hospitality to strangers, weddings, funerals (8.12). The impulse of comparison becomes explicit: where Augustus Caesar was lauded for the spectacles and games of Rome, William makes the point that London's theater includes *ludos... sanctiores, repraesentationes miraculorum quae sancti confessores operati sunt, seu repraesentationes passionum quibus claruit constantia martyrum* (9.13; "holier plays wherein are shown forth the miracles wrought by Holy Confessors or the sufferings which glorified the constancy of Martyrs," Butler 56). It is true that the point is cursorily made, and from this moment on London's secular *ludi*, performed overwhelmingly by its young men, alter the description's tone, depicting a city youthful and vital. But a longer textual perspective is in order. From the lines just quoted, *passionum* and *martyris* focus the entire *vita* of Becket as it is represented in the first sentence of its prologue (1), and supply the heading for the *vita* proper (13); that *vita* then ends with several pages illustrating the third word that founds a superior urban theater in William's comparison with Augustus' Rome, the *miraculi* that attest Thomas' sanctity, including a vision of the crucified Jesus (150–53).

In between the operation of these words at the beginning and end of the *vita*, the body of the text countervails the ludic tone of much of the *Descriptio*. The *vita* is unreadable other than as a text that seeks to take the measure of the *sanguinis effusio* ("pouring of blood") that William witnessed at Canterbury (*passionem ejus Cantuariae inspexi*, 2; "I beheld his martyrdom at Canterbury," Butler 47). Correspondingly, for Becket's consecration as archbishop, William describes the replacement of the secular man in him by the Jesus of the passion, in a passage prefiguring Becket's end (36–37), and describes Jesus' appearance to Becket to speak of the coming shedding of his blood (83). The end of the *vita* reports another cleric's ambitious allegory once a third passion is invoked, that of Becket's namesake the apostle Thomas in India; the apostle was martyred in the far east and his feast-day falls on December 21; the archbishop was martyred in the far west and his feast-day is December 29. Christ's nativity falls in the exact middle. Meanwhile, Christ's passion took place in Jerusalem: the exact middle of east and west. All three together signify the centrality of Jesus's birth and passion to the ends of the earth. The *Descriptio*'s ludic quality notwithstanding, the *vita* makes good William's claim in it that dramas of miracles, passions, and martyrdoms ensure London's superiority to the entertain-

ments of old imperial Rome (154).

The thematic thread that ensures that a Christian London succeeds pagan Rome just as pagan London preceded pagan Rome is completed by the text's closing salute to four great Londoners in Christian times: the emperor Constantine, the empress Matilda (Henry II's mother) and Henry III (Henry's son and heir, crowned three years earlier in 1170, with whom Becket formed strong connections indicated in the *vita*, 121–22),[44] and, finally, Thomas Becket. Constantine's case more than eight hundred years earlier presses the point already made by London's religious theater: that London surpasses Rome not only by greater antiquity, but by its role in the new Christian order. In Constantine, it is a Londoner who gifts *urbem Romam et imperialia insignia omnia* to God, Peter, and the papacy, performs the office of the pope's groom, prefers the title of *defensor* (of the church) to that of *imperator*, and then, to clear Rome for the pope, builds and moves to Byzantium. This deference of the secular power to the spiritual corresponds to Augustan Rome's inferior status to papal Rome. The problematic goes to the heart of Becket's story to follow. What Christian Constantine's example means for a Christian city in a Christian kingdom is deference of the Christian king to the church. So, Constantine's service as the pope's groom is echoed in the *uita* following when, in a short-lived reconciliation between the two, Thomas dismounts to kneel before Henry, and Henry hastens to head the gesture off, instead holding the stirrup for Becket to remount (110–11). Henry II's mother, son and archbishop form a triangle that closes Henry II out, to match the verdict of the subjunctive of William's comment on London as *Urbs sane bona, si bonum habeat dominum* (4.7; "In truth a good City when it has a good Lord!" Butler 50), a subjunctive that has long made clear to readers William's judgment of Henry II.[45]

In short, London's significance in the Christian order of history is overdetermined. Constantine shows what the *vita* teaches: that having put Christian before pagan, we must also put papal before royal, though both are Christian; that means, archbishop before king. Still further: Constantine spells out that Rome takes precedence over the Byzantine church; the *Descriptio* has already ascribed a papal seal featuring Peter's primacy of the keys to Leo IX, who was the first pope to use the Donation of Constantine diplomatically to assert authority over the patriarchy of Constantinople. With William's London grasped within this order of secular and religious global history, we can now ask the most basic question of all. Why, for a

44. I will continue to refer to Henry II's son as Henry III instead of as the Young King, as is the usual convention, because this designation seems material to William's argument about insular history laid out below.

45. In the *uita*, Henry III thanks God that none of his men were present at the murder (Robertson 149).

uita of the archbishop of Canterbury, did William write a description of London *at all*, especially when it produced such a generic disjunction between its not only encomiastic but ludic tone and the passion that followed (C. Stephen Jaeger poses the question and its challenges especially sharply, 310).[46] It is odder still that London figures mostly only incidentally, certainly not structurally or thematically, in the *uita* proper that recounts Becket's life. As Jaeger asks, why not a description of Canterbury, city of the metropolitan see that Becket occupied and scene of his passion? As I observe above, the miracles described after Becket's death establish *Canterbury* as the locus of the marvels most to be wondered at.

46. Cf. further the distinction between the classical style of the *Descriptio* and the barer prose of the *vita* (Jaeger, 309, citing a stylistic study by James Butrica).

Jaeger develops William's opening citation of Plato's *Republic* (along with Sallust)[47] to explain why he focuses on *rem publicam Londoniae occasione beati Thomae* (Robertson 2; "the constitution of London on the occasion offered me by the Blessed Thomas," Butler 48) into a reading of the *Descriptio* as a kind of aristocratic utopia (*Adelsutopie* or *adelige Utopie*) coaching a secular code of conduct embracing a social spectrum wider than the aristocratic and distinct in its emphases from the *urbanitas* of court culture. I propose instead that *rem publicam* here has a fully political meaning, making London the *res publica*, roughly state, as Rome was, or, better suited to London, something like commonwealth. William so signals that he presents not simply the ideal of an urban community and its codes but a quasi-allegorical representation of the realm in its combination of its secular center (we have seen how far this concept had been developed by *c.* 1215 in the *Leges Anglorum*) and its Christian primate.

47. Butler states that William had read neither text (63 n. 2).

A textual crux directly out of the *DgB*, specifically that part of it known as the *Prophetia Merlini*, that is, out of the book of Troy that has occupied us since taking up Walcott's *Omeros*, may explain how the two parts of this allegory interlock. Only three paragraphs into William's description of the city, we learn that London used to be the metropolitan see. This knowledge William owes to the *DgB*, where London is (with York and Caerleon) an archibishopric from the time of the second-century conversion of the British king Lucius (Geoffrey 88.72). The *DgB* meanwhile utterly elides Canterbury's status as an archibishopric, even in the wake of the papal missionary Augustine, whose appointment as the first historical archbishop of Canterbury (597 C.E.) receives no notice (258–60.188–89). William then notes that it is believed that London will be a metropolitan see once again: *et adhuc futura creditur, si remeauerint ciues in insulam* (2.4; "and it is thought that it will be so again, if the citizens return to the island,"

Butler 49). Christopher Brooke notes that the last five words cite the *Prophetia Merlini*'s *reuertentur ciues in insulam* (Geoffrey 149:108–09; Brooke 120–21), and suggests that William refers vaguely here to a millenial future. But the citation's context in the *Prophetia* encourages the view that William is urgently invested in topical affairs. He appears not to be the only one. In his *vita*, when Becket excommunicates Gilbert Foliot, bishop of London, who took Henry II's side in the king's struggle with the archbishop, Gilbert at first refuses to conduct himself as an excommunicate, claiming on the grounds of the same historical argument that Canterbury does not have precedence over London (88). Becket knows the argument too, then, and likely Henry II as Gilbert's ally and Henry III as Becket's.[48]

In Merlin's *Prophetia*, one of the events triggering the return of the citizens will be the conferral of *pallia* (the vestments of archepiscopacy) on two cities by a figure designated as *sextus* (Geoffrey 149:114.99–104). Encapsulating an argument that needs more space, I suggest that William raises the possibility that Henry III as the sixth king after the conquest will renew the sees of London and Caerleon, this being why he has designated the young king as if he were already Henry II's successor. William's own stated agnosticism on the issue – he notes that both Canterbury and London could claim the stronger argument – may be caution; everything else suggests to me that his motive for combining a description of London with his account of the martyred primate lies in the notion that a more ancient and original order might return to make London the first city of the English church as well as of the English state: like Rome. The otherwise counter-intuitive matching of London to an archepiscopal Thomas is stunningly replayed on one of the two sides of the civic seal of *c.* 1220 (illustrated Keene 77), an image that perhaps dates to a design from the short-lived moment of London's recognition as a commune in 1191 (Wheatley 68–69). Both William's text and the seal meet in the city descriptions and archepiscopal status of London in the *DgB*, as both Wheately, citing the work of John Cherry (69), and Keene show. This is simply to say that the order of history caught in the island's Trojan narrative guides William's thinking as a clerk close to great events and people who is making sense of his world.

The Omeric view from the underside of the Thames Embankment throws an unsettling light on the ambition of William's description, which is laden with the issues of power from its Christian universalism to its doubly imperial cast, both secular and ecclesiastical – both claims to global primacy – and on to the question of the

48. In 1605, John Stow is reporting at some length on the foundation of London, York, and Caerleon as the first three archbishoprics on king Lucius' conversion to Christianity in the late second century; he refers to a table still in St. Peter's at Cornhill in London, upon which it is written that Lucius had founded St. Peter's to be the metropolitan see of the kingdom of Britain, which it was for four hundred years up to the arrival of Augustine. Stow then ascribes to a work by Jocelin of Furness (fl. 1199–1214) on the British bishops a list of fourteen archbishops of London through 587 C.E., which he provides in full (36–37). He is at best agnostic about Jocelin's sole testimony, but Jocelin himself wrote precisely between the time of William fitz Stephen and the Londoner of the *Leges Anglorum*, and can be taken as a further witness to agitation on the issue of London's status a generation after Becket's death. Gervase of Tilbury bears witness to the same tradition, with possible hints of protest at London's and Caerleon's loss, though he notes that Caerleon originally had insular primacy (as in *DgB* 210.156), with London second and York third (310-15).

claims of London to be the metropolitan see. William does nothing less than order the globe in ordering London. His description of London is an exhibit in the human effort to make History, an effort that never rests, and has its victims, as in the allusion to London's Sabine women, and in the unsavory picture of any attempt by a community to lift its head over all others; or even as in the rationalization I am suggesting of the shedding of the archbishop's blood. But a view from that Embankment bench would not be what it is if it did not also give voice to another kind of history, and there are sounds of this voice in the *Descriptio*, possibly despite itself. This has to do with that ludic voice of the work already remarked upon, to which I return.

Though it is likely not William's own heading (Butler 62), and though it contrasts sharply with the tone of the *vita*, the phrase *De ludis* that governs the last third of the description of London in Robertson's edition accurately represents not only its content but its tenor. A city must be *dulcis* and *jocunda* (Robertson 8.13). The tone is made by those of whom the text speaks: *juuentus*, *pueri*, *filii*, *ephebi*, *adoloscentes*; *puellae* (one glimpse of the latter, dancing in the moonlight); the apprentices and the unknighted. These participate variously in school exercises that are contests of wit, language, rhetoric, grammar; they horse-ride, or joust, including in boats on the Thames, they ice-skate pell-mell. The older participate vicariously as they watch, in memory of their own youth. There is delight (*delectantur*, 12.18), laughter at those who fall in the river (10.15), humor at the expense of the boars who will soon be bacon (11.17). An unforgettable passage praises the pleasures of the public cook-shop down by the river (5–6.10). The cumulative picture is that London is a city of imperial stature *quite different* from Rome: *Christian*; and *ludic* in a manner quite other than Augustus' imperial games.

Perhaps we hear in this voice or tone, and its application not to the city's mature generations but to its coming one, local history, the history of men (always this limitation) before their names are made, breaking the surface of official history. Comparing the *Descriptio* with three classic works of Roman city description, the *Mirabilia urbis Romae* (*c.* 1143–44), its second version in the *Graphia aureae Urbis* (*c.* 1154–55), and Master Gregorius' *Narracio de Mirabilibus urbis Romae* (early thirteenth century), which I have written about elsewhere (Ingledew and Mora-Lebrun, "The Roman Story-World"), however, leads me in a different direction. Those works are heavy with the monuments and often the ruins of Rome; uniquely, London in the *Descriptio* is a city peopled: let alone that those people give

such an effect of youth. This leads me to think that the emphasis on youth is less the mark of local history than part of the work's ambition to replace old Rome with new London, more a matter of the future makers of History. Nonetheless, if William's emphasis on the city's games is in this sense motivated by the spell of empire spiritual and secular, the games do not any less open up a different kind of history, in which, at least for the moment, the local and the everyday (the here and the now) might surpass the burden of History of being about there and then. The people of the town of Gros-Îlet enter their day in their own various rituals:

> These were the rites of morning by a low concrete
> parapet under the copper spears of the palms,
> since men sought fame as centaurs, or with their own feet,
>
> or wrestlers circling with pincer-extended arms,
> or oblong silhouettes racing round a white vase
> of scalloped sand, when a boy on a pounding horse
>
> divided the wrestlers with their lowering claws
> like crabs. As in your day, so with ours, Omeros,
> as it is with islands and men, so with our games.
>
> A horse is skittering spray with rope for its rein.
> Only silhouettes last. No one remembers the names
> of foam-sprinters. Time halts the arc of a javelin.
> (*Omeros*, 33.1–12)[49]

49. Cf. *Materials* 11.16.

The duplicating of worlds from city to village can be close, and differences, especially those of economics and class, illuminating:

> Far down the beach, where the boy had wheeled it around,
> the stallion was widening. Helen had heard its hooves
> drumming through her bare feet, and turned, as the unreined
>
> horse plunged with its dolphining neck, the wheezing halves
> of its chest distended by the ruffllling nostrils
> like a bellows, as spray fanned from the punished waves,
>
> while the boy with an Indian whoop hammered his heels
> on the barrel of the belly into thick smoke

where its blur spun, whinnying...

... Troy burned... (*Omeros* 35.46–60, at 46–57)

Compare Butler's translation of the young horse-riding Londoners (the internal quotation marks reflect William's citations from Horace, Ovid, and Virgil): "Every Sunday in Lent after dinner a 'fresh swarm of young gentles' goes forth on war–horses, 'steeds skilled in the contest,' of which each is 'apt and schooled to wheel in circles round'... The fierce horses neigh, 'their limbs tremble; they champ the bit; impatient of delay they cannot stand still.' When at length 'the hoof of trampling steeds careers along,' the youthful riders divide their hosts..." (57).[50]

50. See also Walcott's description of racehorses on the savannah in Port of Spain, *Omeros* 221–22.

It is hard not to come away from the section *De ludis* without an impression of what it might mean to live momentarily in ignorance of History, or even of the burden of citizenship that the young people's parents are busy about. Hints of a more demotic and communal desire can amount to a pathos of the local in William's description of London, which, by calling on Troy to figure itself as Walcott had done for St. Lucia, confesses it cannot see itself as merely local; it's even an oddly creole moment, as the local insecurity shows itself in its recourse to an imported imperial Virgilian vision. But there's no doubting that the youthful energy and play of William's urban London serves the French-speaking Anglo-Norman citizen rulers, and the Latin of a universal church. The text's final turn to Constantine, Matilda, Henry III and Becket makes sure that the great poles of the secular and spiritual order are invoked, and their passional costs; and that what Becket represents, which is underpinned by Troy, Rome and London, signifies for the world, which is a Latin world: *omnibus bonis totius orbis Latini* (13.19; "to all good men in the Latin world," Butler 60). The spell of Troy holds over William as Walcott would have it not hold over him.

Coda: London before Troy: the London of *Vita Edwardi Regis* (1065-67)

Medieval Londons had a life before Troy: before Geoffrey of Monmouth. In the anonymous *Vita Edwardi Regis* of 1065-67, at the moment of the *translatio* of the Norman conquest, we learn that late in his reign, the holy king Edward invested heavily in an insignificant

monastery *in honore beati Petri*, located *extra muros urbis Londonie supra predictum amnem Temesin*: namely, *Westmonasterium*, Westminster (Barlow 66). He is drawn to it by its location next to the *famose et opulente urbi* of London, in its "delightful spot, surrounded with fertile lands and green fields and near the main channel of the river, which bore abundant merchandise of wares of every kind for sale from the whole world [*toto orbe*] to the town [*ciuitati*] on its banks" (Barlow 67-69; my square brackets). Moved by his love of the first apostle, Edward elects to be buried here. His building project, described in detail, is to make Westminster Abbey worthy of the apostle Peter, always a metonym for Rome, and of the adjacent city. The passage connects the precincts of Westminster, a compound of the palace and its rebuilt abbey, to a globalized city in a way that anticipates the Norman inheritance of London in William fitz Stephen and endures into Walcott's vision of London: a compound of spiritual and secular power with universalizing claims. Troy does not yet invest the vision of the city that would one day enclose Westminster, where Omeros would gaze at a monumental horseman from beneath the horse's belly; but had Omeros shown up as Edward rebuilt Westminster Abbey, he would still see the far navies on its river, and intuit the construction at the same time of the History that would conscript in the name of the formation of communities by power. Troy and Rome occupy and, echo in, so much medieval textuality. I propose the Walcott of *Omeros*, seeing from below (from lying on a bench), or from beyond (the Outer Provinces), as their diagnostic poet.

If he is diagnostic, however, where Europe is the object of diagnosis, he is also a maker in his own right, in Fanon's sense of an inventor and discoverer of new things. In their inventing, these new things make the old things look other than they do once the occasions of their own inventing have become invisible. In his Trojan and Roman materials, William was inventing and discovering London in his own present; with the same materials on a massive scale, Geoffrey of Monmouth was inventing and discovering an island and an empire. Both constructions can look absurd once the factitiousness of the materials is exposed, meaning their loss of credit as either History or history. But through Walcott's eyes on contemporary London and on St. Lucia, both the malign and all-too-real forces of History, and the benigner possibilities of communities of desire, become visible again in William of Stephen's London, and Geoffrey of Monmouth's Britain. In the end, William's London is no St. Lucian *res*

publica; it is constrained by its own legacies and by its construction within the social languages and political structures of its own time and place, and this means it opts for History and so reduces itself.

Walcott's "The Muse of History" articulates a poetics that at moments seems to free itself from Europe by freeing itself from cultural signs like those of Troy, Rome or London as these have figured in European poetry. The thrill of this poetics is there to be sensed in miniature, in my view, in one of Walcott's early poems, "Ruins of a Great House." The plantation house of the Caribbean era of slavery that is the titular Great House, prompted by remains in Guava Ridge, Jamaica (King 100–01), may as well be Troy, or Rome, or London, imperial Britain or imperial western Europe, and its ruin sufficient diagnosis and comment. So the poem is richly Dantean in its atmospherics (e.g. "The mouths of those gate cherubs shriek with stain"), while Walcott cares not in the slightest for the imperial apologetics dear to Dante; he reviles "the leprosy of empire" (7). This is an aesthetic in which homage is not debt or secondariness; in which, instead, Walcott might dare Dante to recognize in Walcott his fellow-poet's centeredness elsewhere. But repudiation is not where the poem's motions come to rest. The poet is enraged at the stench of the slave ships that led to this spot, his eyes burn with ashes, but "still the coal of my compassion fought / That Albion too was once / A colony like ours" (8). Nor is Albion sufficient to itself: the poem resolves into a citation of John Donne's *Meditation xvii*, from which the poet takes the lesson that the island of Albion is part of the main of Donne's Europe in this text, in analogy with every man's (*sic*) membership in mankind.

This is the moment when the heart is taken by surprise: "All in compassion ends / So differently from what the heart arranged: / 'as well as if a manor of thy friends...'" (8). The last line too, ending the poem, cites Donne's meditation, its "manor" set up by the great house's "manorial lake" some eight lines earlier, in which the poet has envisioned a slave body rotting. Compassion suspends rage, the logic of the chain of citations and analogies ordaining that the poet as a person is of a piece somehow with the manor, the manor with Albion, Albion with Europe, Europe being humankind; not so as to take the rot and stink from the poem, but so as to undo politics by art through the movement of language, especially metaphor, analogy, and a spray of citations, allusions, and references to poets and writers that makes the poem a kind of intertextual, word-playing mobile. Refusing ideology in favor of art's larger capacities of statement,

something of which Walcott has much to say in "The Muse of History," isn't to refuse politics. The poem's final elision of a decisive difference between the manor of one's friends and that of one's enemies, with the radically disturbing implication that you may find your friends in your enemy's manor, and your enemy may find his friends in yours, is a deeply political one, in which history has the last word in response to History; or, perhaps, in which neither history nor History succeeds in silencing its other. In this poetics, signs, from personal names (Homer/Omeros, Achilles/Achille, Helen/Helen) to places (London; Troy, Rome, Europe), are not fixed; in *Omeros*'s last words, as Achille brings his day to its close, "the sea was still going on" (325.126).

A Medievalist's Europe

About thirty years ago, the first two stanzas of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, with their beginning in Troy and triangulation of Troy, Rome, and Britain, caught hold of me. They seemed underread. *SGGK*'s opening lines told of origins, these origins were as if made-up, and I took them seriously, as Walcott could seriously see the smoke of Troy in St. Lucia. Now, I see them to put western Europe on the table, the Europe that did so much to corner empire and History. I think that *SGGK* reads mostly in the other direction, rejecting History's claims for the soul's (Ingledew, *"Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" and the Order of the Garter*). The *SGGK*-poet sees his location in relation to the fires of Troy; in Aeneas' treachery and in the fissures in Arthur's court of Trojan descendants, he sees Troy's faultlines or split from itself and the disintegration of its genealogical claims to History. Though the poet does not share the premise, the poem's dramatic energy is predicated on the ambition of the claims of British empire in the forms of Arthur and the Edward III who invested in Arthur without reserve, an ambition that the poet empties of its rationale. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *DgB*, *SGGK*'s opening *topos* of Troy systematized, and then, eight years ago, the *Leges Anglorum*, continued to put to me the question of how to read the material of Troy in medieval European literature.

When I came across the *Leges Anglorum*, I had not read *Omeros* yet. *Omeros* suggests to me why I took the first stanzas of *SGGK* seriously: because words are generative in ways that their denotation cannot keep under control, so that a word for a non-existent thing, a

Troy that gave birth to Britain, can compose history, or seduce us into thinking so. With their assistance, we can build empires: forms of force that coopt desire. Western Europe has done it; today the United States does it, using its own spell-casting words (*Mayflower*, Founding Fathers, Constitution; America), whose denotative reference has long been lost under the accretions of their use in discourse over time. Empire *is* easily seductive, sometimes even for those it makes its objects; it organizes the event within a frame of significance that *can* seem to answer to human desires for significance, including the simple desire to belong to communities on a great scale, as in religious ideas of global community. In the face of this seductiveness, my experience of reading *Omeros* is that the poet of that poem does not shake himself free of Troy, and I don't think I do either; its seductions linger, spells remain to be broken.[51]

Finding oneself outside Europe may simply mean that a different discursive habitat makes the words that compose the spell look and function differently. If it is unavoidable that we write the past as a function of our present, the fact that most medieval scholars inhabit spaces and times made from inside the western European and U.S. imperial enterprises means that the present of the medieval text in its own time is limited by our presents: which means in turn that medieval texts continue to be read in line with the premises of the European imperial age, as Tully says of the prevailing models of political thought, including cosmopolitanism. One way back from such a limitation in our reading of such texts may lie in the nature of the imperial project as also a version, if mostly a bent and abusive one, of two incongruent human wishes, one, to find enough in one's own locality, and two, to feel connected to more people rather than to fewer. If the second wish gets fatally compromised in the project of empire, a poet like Walcott who would break with empire can show the possibilities of the first wish even in the heart of empire. There, we might glimpse in the horse-riding and ice-skating boys, apprentices, and young men, or in the food-sellers on the bank of the Thames of William fitz Stephen's London, as we do in *Omeros*' Helen, a local being who moves freely of the poet's (and Plunkett's) efforts to invest her with History, another possible history, of a locality that might be enough for itself if it weren't for their elders, inducted in the social languages of History.

51. See Breslin for a fleshed-out argument that *Omeros* does not entirely succeed in laying its Homeric burden, the burden of the Homer of History, to rest in favor of a new poetics.

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