

**THE AMBIGUOUS GREEK
IN OLD FRENCH AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE**

by

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates how the Greeks of the Trojan War and Alexander the Great are presented in Old French and Middle English literature. These ancient Greeks are depicted ambiguously: they share some of the characteristics of Jews and Saracens as they are portrayed in medieval literature. The thesis begins with an overview of the frameworks used to define ancient Greek identity. These include the philosophical heritage Greece left to the medieval West; the framework of Jewish identity, encompassing “variable characterization” and the hermeneutics of supersession; and the historical template, seen through the Orosian paradigm of *translatio imperii* and the Trojan foundation myth.

The first chapter examines the Roman de Troie of Benoît de Sainte-Maure. The Greeks of the Trojan War are noble and valorous, but through their gift of the Trojan horse and sack of Troy, they display the treachery associated with post-Incarnation Jews and the cruelty and violence associated with Saracens. Due to the myth that the Trojans founded the Roman people, through their siege of Troy, the Greeks seem like the movers of *imperium*, the authority to rule, from Troy to Rome, which will eventually become a Christian empire.

In the second chapter, I turn to the depiction of Alexander in Thomas of Kent's Roman de toute chevalerie and the Middle English Wars of Alexander. In the Roman de toute chevalerie, Alexander is ambiguous: he is chivalrous, learned, and even a proto-Christian, though he himself assumes some typical Saracen characteristics. Alexander participates in *translatio imperii*, holding the right to rule in its Orosian succession and providing a model of empire to Rome. The Wars of Alexander witnesses the changes wrought to Alexander's depiction in the fourteenth century due to revised views of chivalry, eschatology and crusade.

The third chapter investigates the depiction of the Greek Diomedes in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, a depiction informed by classical ideas and Chaucer's depictions of Jews and Saracens in his other works. Diomedes is both treacherous and cruel, seen in his seduction of Criseyde, rather than in battle. The ending of the tale posits a proto-Christian identity for Troilus and the Trojans, and suggests that Diomedes participates in the supersession of the Greeks by the Trojans. Greeks function as movers of *imperium*, and are necessary for the beginnings of Christian empire.

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Introduction

Jews, Saracens and Greeks in the Medieval West

The depiction of ancient Greeks in medieval literature includes several paradigmatic characters. Among these is Sinon, the epitome of the ingenious betrayer, who participated in the siege of Troy. The character of Sinon in works by Virgil, Dante and Chaucer is one of the best known representations of ancient Greeks in literature, and represents a commonly held literary stereotype about the treacherous nature of the Greeks. Virgil's account of Greek Sinon in his Aeneid is the earliest available to a medieval audience and is particularly vivid. Here, Sinon gains the trust of the Trojans and convinces them to allow the wooden horse within the city walls. Because the Greeks seem to have sailed away, the Trojans are convinced that the siege has ended. When the Trojans have drawn the horse within the walls and are sleeping after their celebration of the war's end, Sinon frees the Greeks hiding within the horse, who kill nearly every Trojan. Virgil argues that one can learn of all Greeks by examining the actions of just one, Sinon. Based on the example of Sinon, who epitomizes Greek treachery, all Greeks are liars and traitors.

Virgil's paradigm of Sinon also appears in Dante's Divine Comedy where he is placed in the Inferno in the circle of the falsifiers in the bottom of the eighth *bolgia*, where he suffers with a burning fever for the deceit of the Trojan horse. Near Sinon in the Inferno are Judas, who betrayed Christ, and Brutus and Cassius, who murdered Caesar (Canto 30, 98-129). Chaucer's references to the treachery of Sinon in four of his works, the "Squire's Tale," "Nun's Priest's Tale," House of Fame, and Legend of Good Women, show that he was influenced by Virgil's attitude. The "false Sinon" appears in

a telling way in the “Nun’s Priest’s Tale,” where Chaucer calls the fox who conceals himself and lies in wait for the rooster “False dissymulour, o Greek Synon” (3228). The character of Sinon, in Virgil, Chaucer and Dante, represents a commonly held literary stereotype about what Greeks are like: lying, treacherous, and unscrupulous.

Alongside the negative expectations for ancient Greeks, based on the model of the treacherous Sinon, is the pair of Aristotle and his pupil, Alexander, who are, respectively, the epitome of philosophical wisdom and princely power. The great Greek philosopher Aristotle, whose works were influential in Western Europe beginning in the twelfth century, is Alexander’s main teacher, and Alexander’s education is emphasized in many medieval works on his life and deeds. He is an ideal and idealized leader, as the recipient of Aristotle’s wisdom and a model of medieval chivalry. Alexander was viewed by many authors in the Middle Ages as “a perfect ruler whose conduct can be imitated.”¹ In the paradigmatic Greek characters of medieval literature, we can see not only treachery and deceit, but also exemplary knowledge and just power. This binary is epitomized by Sinon on one hand, and Alexander and Aristotle on the other: Sinon is the epitome of the ingenious betrayer, while Alexander presents a paradigm of enlightened leadership, and Aristotle, whose works were crucial to the philosophy of the medieval West, is the epitome of philosophical wisdom.

In this dissertation, I examine the ambiguous depiction of ancient Greeks, concentrating specifically on the depictions of the Greeks who besieged Troy and Alexander the Great. Towards this end, I investigate several works of medieval

¹ Martin Gosman, “Alexander the Great as the Icon of Perfection in the Epigones of the Roman d’Alexandre (1250-1450): The *Utilitas* of the Ideal Prince,” in The Medieval French Alexander, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 176.

literature spanning the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries, including the Old French Roman de Troie, the Anglo-Norman Roman de toute chevalerie, the anonymous Middle English Wars of Alexander and Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde. The twelfth-century Roman de Troie and Roman de toute chevalerie work particularly well together as they are thought to have been written approximately ten years apart at the same place, the court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine; the audience reading about the Greeks sacking Troy would also have been thinking about another Greek figure, Alexander the Great. The fourteenth-century Wars of Alexander, written significantly later than the Roman de toute chevalerie, is a useful point of comparison with the earlier work as it shares certain episodes, like the visit of Alexander to Jerusalem, but portrays Alexander in a different light, reflective of the changed attitude of the author and audience towards Alexander and his deeds. Troilus and Criseyde was also written in the late fourteenth century; while its subject is the Trojan War, making it a fruitful text to examine alongside the Roman de Troie, it shares a concern for some of the same issues found in Alexander texts. Chaucer mentions Alexander in several of his works, and may have known Alexander texts like the Wars of Alexander.

Central to my examination is the model of "variable characterization" in which a religious or national community can be typologically recognized *in bono* (as a prefiguration of the Christian community) or *in malo* (as the post-Incarnation Jews, or as Saracens). Using "variable characterization," I argue that the Greeks at Troy, though they are noble, can be seen as being *in malo* due to their innate treachery, reminiscent of the treachery often associated in the Middle Ages with post-Incarnation Jews. Alexander, conversely, can be seen *in bono*, as he rejects treachery and, in some texts, even reveres the God of the Jews. Like the Greeks at Troy, Alexander is ambiguous, for

he is chivalrous and learned, but takes up characteristics associated with Saracens as he ventures into the Orient. In the Greeks who besieged Troy and Alexander we can see the binary of bad Greek/good Greek epitomized by the characters of Sinon on one hand, and Aristotle and Alexander on the other. The hermeneutics of supersession and the Orosian paradigm of *translatio imperii* are also important to my discussion, as they provide a framework for seeing Greeks as central to the foundation of Christian empire, but redundant and dangerous once Christian empire has been established.

The depiction of ancient Greeks in Old French and Middle English literature is a largely unstudied field. Compared with works on Jews and Saracens, on which I ground my arguments about Greeks, there has been comparatively little written about the depiction of Greeks in medieval literature. While there is a considerable body of secondary literature on Troilus and Criseyde, on Alexander the Great in medieval texts, and a growing number of articles and books on works that feature ancient Greeks, such as the Roman de Troie, there is little consideration of the characters as “Greeks.” Much of the work specifically on Greeks that has been done to date centres primarily on Byzantine Greeks rather than ancient Greeks. Most recently, Sylvia Huot has examined the construction of the ethnic categories of “Greek” and “Trojan” as seen through Alexander’s conquest of Britain in the Roman de Perceforest.² Sharon Kinoshita provides valuable insight into Byzantine Greek identity, using Robert de Clari’s La Conquête de Constantinople, a chronicle detailing the sack of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade.³ Also examining Byzantine Greeks, Rebecca Wilcox compares the

² Sylvia Huot, Postcolonial Fictions in the Roman de Perceforest: Cultural Identities and Hybridities (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2007).

³ Sharon Kinoshita, Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

events of Guy of Warwick to those of the first five crusades.⁴ Byzantine Greeks in this romance are similar to those portrayed in crusade chronicles and contemporary documents: wealthy, treacherous, and potentially dangerous, both to the crusaders as well as to the protagonist of the romance. Krijnie N. Ciggaar, who also examines Byzantine Greeks, gives historical bases for the appearance of these Greeks in Western literature.⁵ In this dissertation, I offer a new perspective on ancient Greeks, specifically the Greeks who sacked Troy and Alexander the Great, by examining their national characteristics, the traits that make them “Greek,” and by investigating how their depictions are similar to and based on the depictions of Jews and Saracens in medieval literature.

There are a series of templates that are used to define Greek identity in medieval literature. These include a philosophical framework, in which Greek learning, epitomized by Plato and Aristotle, is seen as the wellspring of enquiry in the West. Greek philosophy, science and medicine were valued in the Middle Ages, a fact which could lead to a positive depiction of Greeks. The second is the Jewish framework, in which Jews are understood by the Christian community to epitomize treachery. This framework involves the key concepts of “variable characterization” and supersession, and, as some scholars argue, it is on this model of Jews that the literary depictions of Saracens are based. In the historical framework, seen particularly in Orosius, *translatio imperii* includes as a crucial phase the realm of Alexander, which is a placeholder in the series of world empires and is, in Orosius’ view, a typological precursor to Augustus’

⁴ Rebecca Wilcox, “Romancing the East: Greeks and Saracens in Guy of Warwick” in Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 217-240.

⁵ Krijnie N. Ciggaar, Western Travellers to Constantinople: The West and Byzantium, 962-1204: Cultural and Political Relations (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1996).

Rome. *Translatio imperii* is also key to understanding the importance of Rome, and the role of the Greeks in the movement of *imperium* from Troy to Rome. I will expand on these three frameworks below, beginning with Greek science and philosophy.

In the Middle Ages, philosophy, medicine and science were associated with ancient Greece. Greek philosophy came to the Middle Ages, a time when the Greek language was largely unknown, through Late Antique translations from Greek to Latin and through the concerted translation efforts of the twelfth century. The Greek philosophy that was available before the twelfth century was comprised of the Late Antique translations of parts of the works of Plato and Aristotle. In the fourth century, Calcidius translated the first part of Plato's *Timaeus*, which would be a significant philosophical text for the Middle Ages.⁶ In the sixth century, Boethius translated several works of Aristotle, the *Categories* and *De interpretatione*, which came to be known in the Middle Ages as the Old Logic. After the Late Antique period, translation ceased for six hundred years, though medieval scholars knew of the existence of further works of Aristotle and Plato. For much of the Middle Ages, very few people could read Greek, but it was not unknown. David Lindberg notes that "Knowledge of the Greek alphabet and the ability to employ a few Greek phrases may have been rather common among scholars and churchmen, but competent Hellenists were very scarce."⁷ For example, half of Priscian's sixth-century *Institutiones*, a grammar textbook, was in Greek, and continued to be copied, if not understood, throughout the Middle Ages. Medieval people, therefore, had examples of Greek grammar, and a smattering of Greek thought.

⁶ See Paul Edward Dutton, "Medieval Approaches to Calcidius," in *Plato's Timaeus as Cultural Icon*, ed. Gretchen J. Reydam-Schils (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2003), 183-205.

⁷ David C. Lindberg, "Transmission of Greek and Arabic Learning," in *Science in the Middle Ages*, ed. David C. Lindberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 54.

Scholars and translators of the twelfth century remedied the deficit of Greek philosophy in the West through translations done in Spain, Italy, North Africa and the Middle East of ancient Greek works, many of which had been translated into Arabic. These scholars translated most of the works of Aristotle, including the Prior and Posterior Analytics, as well as those of Plato and many works of Greek science and medicine. According to Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "The translators were conscious instruments of the recovery of Greek science, with its Arabic additions, and of much of Greek philosophy. . . . The desire to recover Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Galen, and Ptolemy was the main incentive that provoked the flood of translations from Greek and Arabic into Latin."⁸ The importance of Greek thought to the Latin West can be seen in the fact that translators of the twelfth century often gave the same formula when explaining why they translated from the Greek: "Latinorum cogente penuria" [compelled by the penury of the Latins].⁹ The West's reverence for Greek thought meant that medieval people were sometimes willing to consider influential works as being Greek, even when they were not. The letter purportedly sent by Aristotle to Alexander the Great containing advice on statecraft, ethics and astrology, the Secretum Secretorum, was known to the Middle Ages as Aristotle's, though it was actually Arabic in origin.

Along with philosophy, medicine was associated in the Middle Ages with ancient Greeks. Like Greek philosophical works, the Greek medical texts of Galen, Hippocrates and Dioscorides were translated into Latin in the fifth to seventh centuries, especially in Ravenna. There was little translation done from that point until the eleventh century, when Constantinus Africanus translated more Greek medical works

⁸ Marie Thérèse d'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," in Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable with Carol D. Lanham (Toronto: Medieval Academy of America, 1991), 422.

⁹ Ibid., 426.

from Arabic. Greek science also came to be widely recognized and respected in the Middle Ages. In the twelfth century, the works of Euclid and Ptolemy were translated and disseminated in the West. Medicine, science and philosophy were associated in the Middle Ages with ancient Greeks; because they were linked with these branches of knowledge, Greeks could be seen in a positive light, though there were also influential historical and literary works by authors such as Virgil, Juvenal and Orosius that characterized ancient Greeks in a negative manner.

The ambivalent portrayal of Greeks in medieval literature can be best explored by examining the model provided by the depiction of Jews, who were at once the first, and fundamental, enemy of Christians, and simultaneously the people whose example was needed by Christians. Western medieval authors mapped their own ambivalent view of Greek national identity on the template of religious identity in which Judaism was the foundation for the Christian covenant, but modern (medieval) Jews were seen as degenerate and irredeemable, outside of conversion to Christianity. The portrayal of Jews in medieval literature is ambiguous: they can provide both a positive typological model for Christians, and a negative one when they are identified with Saracens.¹⁰ The depiction of Greeks in medieval literature relies on the example set by the depiction of Jews; central to this discussion are an exploration of the “hermeneutics of supersession,” formulated by Daniel Boyarin, of the theory of diaspora, *translatio imperii*, and the centrality of Rome in the self-fashioning of Europe.

The ambivalent depiction of Jews in medieval literature, where they can be identified as Christians or as Saracens, rests on medieval theological ideas about Jews.

¹⁰ See Suzanne Yeager, “The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis: Writing About Romans in Fourteenth-Century England,” *The Chaucer Review* 39.1 (2004): 70-102, and Suzanne Conklin Akbari, “Placing the Jews in Late Medieval English Literature,” in *Orientalism and the Jews*, ed. Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2005), 32-50.

While post-Incarnation Jews who refused to accept the divinity of Christ were worthy of condemnation and sometimes even violence, there were persuasive arguments to keep Jews in the world to remind Christians that the Jews' "Old Law" had been superseded by Christianity. Elisa Narin van Court notes an "ambivalent instability in [Christians'] response to or representation of the Jews" in fourteenth-century literary works.¹¹ The ambivalence in the depiction of Jews in literature is, she argues, a reflection of the "dualistic Christological perspective inherited in Christian doctrine," a doctrine based on the Pauline injunction: "As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers" (Rom. 11: 28-29).¹² This injunction, along with a reading of Psalm 59:12 ("Slay them not, lest my people forget"), was developed by Augustine and others into what some call the "doctrine of relative toleration."

At least until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the doctrine of relative toleration provided a formula whereby Jews had a place and role in Christian society: they were to be kept alive, but economically and socially oppressed, as symbols of Christ's passion. Bernard of Clairvaux argued that "The sword is not to be raised against the Jews, yet they are not to be granted the same rights and privileges given to Christians."¹³ Jeremy Cohen, in his controversial but influential thesis, has claimed that medieval Christian theologians constructed a "hermeneutical Jew," the Jew "as constructed in the discourse of Christian theology, and above all in Christian

¹¹ Elisa Narin van Court, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Augustinian Historians: Writing About Jews in Fourteenth-Century England" in Chaucer and the Jews: Sources, Contexts, Meanings, ed. Sheila Delany (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 169.

¹² Ibid., 170.

¹³ Ibid.

theologians' interpretation of Scripture."¹⁴ Medieval Christians, according to Cohen, saw Jews not how they were, but how they were supposed to be: as witnesses to the truth of Christian doctrine and Scripture, whose conversion will signal the second coming of Christ. Beginning in the thirteenth century, however, Cohen states that Christian theologians and Dominican and Franciscan friars "awakened to the disparity between the Jew they had constructed and the real Jew of history" and construed "the latter's failure to serve the purposes allotted him as an abandonment of his Judaism"; the Jews who did not function as they were supposed to were less worthy of protection in a Christian society.¹⁵

The Augustinian doctrine of relative toleration created a situation in which Jews in Christian communities were to be degraded and shunned, but preserved, a situation that influenced the depiction of Jews in literature. Suzanne Conklin Akbari has noted a particularly vivid instance of this ambivalence in the fourteenth-century Middle English Siege of Jerusalem, a text that shows some compassion for the Jews in Jerusalem, besieged by the anachronistically Christian Romans. The fate of the Jews is "paradoxically double": they must be destroyed so that Christianity is clearly seen to be superior, but they must be preserved in some way "in order to articulate a notion of Christian identity that both takes Judaism as its model and eradicates it utterly."¹⁶ In Narin van Court's view, the "complexities and ambivalent gestures of the Augustinian position, in which toleration is yoked inextricably with persecution, dominated most

¹⁴ Jeremy Cohen, Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 2-3. See especially pp. 23-65. Cohen's "hermeneutical Jew" has been used and discussed by Sylvia Tomasch and Lisa Lampert, among others.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁶ Akbari, "Placing the Jews," 42.

medieval Christian writing about the Jews, at least until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries."¹⁷

One of the aspects of the doctrine of relative toleration was a belief that Jews were a witness to the supersession of their religion by Christianity. Viewed from the vantage point of the "hermeneutics of supersession," pre-Incarnation Jews are at least potentially good, since they are potential Christians who have not yet had the chance to know Christ, and post-Incarnation Jews who decline to convert to Christianity are bad. In his not-uncontroversial formulation, Daniel Boyarin argues that the hermeneutics of supersession, which "richly informed both the early writings of the Church Fathers and subsequent developments in Christian theology," is grounded in the Pauline interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures.¹⁸ The Jews, according to Paul, used a literal interpretation of Scripture, whereas Paul favoured a figurative, allegorical reading.

Emblematic of this type of figurative reading is Paul's interpretation of the Jewish rite of circumcision, a testament to the Jews' covenant with God, as referring to spiritual matters, a "circumcision of the heart" (Romans 2:28-29) rather than a physical necessity. For Paul and the Church Fathers, the spiritual is privileged over the physical: the body, physical needs and desires, "fleshly language," are superseded by the soul, the spiritual and allegorical meaning, to bring about a transcendence of physical, bodily life.¹⁹ While for the Jews, circumcision symbolizes and effects an excision of excess pleasures that cloud the mind, Paul "'ties the removal of the fleshly desires exclusively

¹⁷ Narin van Court, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Augustinian Historians," 170.

¹⁸ Suzanne Conklin Akbari, Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450 (forthcoming), Ch. 3, p. 1. Boyarin's formulation of the hermeneutics of supersession has been much discussed and criticized in work on Jewish and Pauline studies; see, for example, John David Dawson, Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

¹⁹ Daniel Boyarin, "'This We Know to be the Carnal Israel': Circumcision and the Erotic Life of God and Israel," Critical Inquiry 18.3 (1992), 482.

to the believer's crucifixion with Christ."²⁰ A carnal reading of the law is replaced by a spiritual reading, just as a physical practice, circumcision, is replaced by a spiritual one, circumcision of the heart and belief in Christ:

The flaw in the Jews who reject Christianity is that they refuse to accept the true meaning of their own Law and history, not that the Law and history are themselves rejected. "Supersession" can thus itself be understood in two ways. It means either that Israel has been contradicted and replaced by the church or that Israel has been "continued" and fulfilled in the church. What is common to the two is that after Christ there is no further positive role for Israel in the flesh.²¹

Events in the Bible are, for Paul, no longer historical events that happened to a specific people, the Jews, at a specific time, but rather have meaning for all people for all time and form part of an "unchanging ontology."²² Being a member of the new, "true" religion does not require membership in a specific people, or the performance of an act on the body, but simply being baptized: "[f]or Paul, descent according to the flesh and circumcision in the flesh have been superseded by their spiritual signified, baptism in the spirit."²³ Biblical events and people now typologically signify events and people in the Christian New Testament; they predict and prepare the way for Christ and Christian understanding. Jews refuse to read scripture in this way, preferring the literal meaning, making them blind to the fulfillment of scripture in Christ.

Paul's insistence on the figurative over the literal reading of scripture makes it possible for Christianity to become a world religion, no longer that of one tribe in one part of the world:

By substituting a spiritual interpretation for a physical ritual, Paul was

²⁰ Peder Borgen, "Observations on the Theme 'Paul and Philo': Paul's Preaching of Circumcision in Galatia (Gal. 5:11) and Debates on Circumcision in Philo," *The Pauline Literature and Theology*, ed. Sigfred Pedersen (Århus: Forlaget Aros, 1980), 99. Cited in Boyarin, "Carnal Israel," 487.

²¹ Daniel Boyarin, "The Subversion of the Jews: Moses' Veil and the Hermeneutics of Supersession," *diacritics* 23.2 (1993), 27.

²² Boyarin, "Carnal Israel," 482.

²³ Boyarin, "Subversion of the Jews," 27.

saying that the genealogical Israel, "according to the Flesh," is not the ultimate Israel; there is an "Israel in the spirit." The practices of the particular Jewish People are not what the Bible speaks of, but of faith, the allegorical meaning of those practices. It was Paul's genius to transcend "Israel in the flesh."²⁴

To Paul and the Church Fathers, the Jews are no longer the Chosen People because they interpret Scripture literally rather than figuratively; "the fleshly, literal interpretation of the Torah only becomes illegitimate when its true meaning is revealed through and in Jesus Christ."²⁵ Christianity supersedes Judaism in that it can be practiced by all peoples who have faith in Christ, not merely members of one people who have undergone a physical ritual. In Paul's hermeneutic theory, the second model of supersession mentioned above in which Israel is continued and fulfilled in the Church, means that "the literal Israel, literal history, literal circumcision, and literal genealogy are superseded by their allegorical, spiritual significations."²⁶ This is, as Elisa Narin van Court calls it, a "supersessionist model of fulfillment."²⁷ Christ gave a new covenant to the world, and the Jews, by reading Scripture literally rather than figuratively, by denying the divinity of Christ, refuse to acknowledge it; the Christians rather than the Jews become the Chosen People of the Bible. Judaism had a "role as Christianity's origin, but Judaism's temporal priority is superseded by Christianity's claims to truth. . . a vital spiritual essence has been drained from its Jewish source to be more properly used by Christians."²⁸

²⁴ Boyarin, "Carnal Israel," 502.

²⁵ Daniel Boyarin, A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 81.

²⁶ Boyarin, "Subversion of the Jews," 27.

²⁷ Elisa Narin van Court, "The Hermeneutics of Supersession: the Revision of the Jews from the B to the C Text of *Piers Plowman*," Yearbook of Langland Studies 10 (1996), 49.

²⁸ Lisa Lampert, Gender and Jewish Difference From Paul to Shakespeare (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 25.

The hermeneutics of supersession, as used by Boyarin in the field of Jewish studies, are useful not only for an understanding of Paul's reading of Scripture, but also for an understanding of the depiction of Jews in literature. Lisa Lampert and Elisa Narin van Court illustrate the usefulness of the term in application to medieval texts. Narin van Court uses Boyarin's formulation of supersession in her discussion of Piers Plowman. Her argument centres on the revisions made in the C text of the work in relation to the B text which "reveal a shift in the theological position vis-à-vis Jews and Judaism that can be correlated with known theological positions."²⁹ The B text, she argues, "demonstrates in its trajectory of Christian history the concordance between Old and New, and the fulfillment of Scriptures in the figures of Abraham, Moses, and Piers."³⁰ The C text, however, "systematically excises Judaism from the trajectory of Christian history in a revisionary historiography where all tends towards the singularity of Christ."³¹ Narin van Court sees a parallel structure between the revisions of the work and Boyarin's two models of supersession: the first model, like the treatment of Jews and Judaism in the B text, means that "Israel has been 'continued' and fulfilled in the church."³² The second model of supersession means that "Israel has been contradicted and replaced by the church," providing a pattern for the treatment of Jews in the C text. For Narin van Court, some of the poet's revisions from the B text to the C text are "a movement away from the supersessionist model of fulfillment toward the supersessionist model of replacement."³³

²⁹ Narin van Court, "The Hermeneutics of Supersession," 48.

³⁰ Ibid., 48.

³¹ Ibid., 48-49.

³² Ibid., 49.

³³ Ibid., 49-50.

Narin van Court also uses Boyarin's supersession to further an understanding of the Siege of Jerusalem, a text I treat more fully below. In its subject matter, the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE, she sees the text as participating in the "discourse of displacement and supersession" directed specifically against the Jews that was active in the fourteenth century.³⁴ Narin van Court points to specific moments in the poem which recreate "a dramatic and exegetically perfect scene of supersession," such as when, before battle outside the walls of Jerusalem, the High Priest of the Jews reads the Hebrew Scriptures to his troops, specifically the story of the Exodus, to inspire them (473-482).³⁵ Immediately after this scene, the anachronistically Christian emperor Vespasian encourages his troops with a reading of Christ's passion (493-496). In Narin van Court's view, "the Jews and their texts are superseded in the chronology of the poem by the Christians and *their* texts."³⁶ Perhaps more importantly, "the Exodus is a prefigurative type of the Passion, just as Moses is a prefigurative type of Christ. . . . the Jewish narrative is fulfilled and superseded by the Christian."³⁷

Lisa Lampert also uses the hermeneutics of supersession, specifically to discuss Jewish and gender difference in literature. For Lampert, formulations of supersession incorporate both exegesis and the "symbolism of the body as hermeneutical paradigms are 'made flesh.' At the moment of the Incarnation, the Word becomes Flesh, and Christian understanding is seen as freed from the tyranny of the letter."³⁸ Lampert also argues that the "moment of spiritual awakening" and supersession is an embodied one, "taking place through the body of a woman who is both virgin and mother, Christian

³⁴ Narin van Court, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Augustinian Historians," 167.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 168.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 169.

³⁸ Lampert, Gender and Jewish Difference, 11.

and Jew.”³⁹ Among other texts, Lampert uses supersession to analyze Chaucer’s “Prioress’s Tale,” arguing that the triumph of the new over the old, of the child (the clergeon) over the Jews, of the clergeon’s mother, the “newe Rachel” who is a Christian and who is offered divine consolation in Christ, over Rachel weeping over the Slaughter of the Innocents, echoes the triumph of Christianity over Judaism.⁴⁰ Supersession “shapes a Christian understanding of gender difference”: Philo, Jerome, and others have argued that the feminine is “linked to the body and a type of spiritual immaturity that must be outgrown,” while the masculine is linked with the soul and with proper reading and understanding.⁴¹

The model for my theoretical framework uses this hermeneutics and builds on both Lampert’s and Narin van Court’s work, and the recent work done by Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Suzanne Yeager. Both Akbari and Yeager use the Middle English Siege of Jerusalem to examine the place of Jews and Romans, respectively, in medieval literature. The work narrates the bloody and horrific siege and sack of Jerusalem in 70 CE by the Roman emperor Vespasian and his son, Titus, who in medieval tradition are anachronistically Christian, converting over two hundred years before Constantine legalizes Christianity in the Roman Empire. The depiction of the Jews in the Siege of Jerusalem, following the hermeneutics of supersession, should be unfavourable, because the Jews live after the time of Christ but refuse to accept his divinity. As Akbari has shown, however, the portrayal of the Jews is in fact ambivalent, “designating both *in bono* Christian identity and *in malo* Muslim identity.”⁴² As Akbari states, the Jews are characterized both in terms that evoke the Muslims of Crusade chronicles, and in terms

³⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 95.

⁴¹ Ibid., 30.

⁴² Yeager, “The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis,” 71.

that “explicitly identify them with the Christian protagonists of the Crusade chronicles.”⁴³ Among the points of identification of Jews with Muslims, the description of the Romans’ siege of Jerusalem and slaughter of the Jews is highly reminiscent of Crusade chronicles that tell of the Crusaders’ entry into Jerusalem and their slaughter of the Muslims within. Muslims are also equated with Jews in terms of the religion: Islam is often portrayed in medieval texts as a return to the “old law of Moses,” a rejection of the “new law of Christ,” entailing a return to the circumcision of the flesh that Paul had rejected in favour of circumcision of the heart through baptism.⁴⁴

These post-Incarnation Jews of the Siege of Jerusalem, though, are likened as well to Christians of the same Crusade chronicles: the tactics of stopping and poisoning waterways to the besieged city that the Romans employ against the Jews in Jerusalem are the same as those that the Muslims use against the Christians in Crusade chronicles. Due to their ambivalent depiction, being at once a Muslim menace and a source of Christian identification and compassion, “the Jews are simultaneously the object of identification for the Christian reader and that which must be abjected.”⁴⁵ As discussed above, Christians need the religious example that the Jews embody, but must at the same time reject the Jews as individuals and as a people. The hermeneutics of supersession, which explains the way in which Christianity is understood to fulfill and replace Judaism, does not play out in this work, as the post-Incarnation Jews are viewed both favourably and unfavourably.

⁴³ Akbari, “Placing the Jews,” 36.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 35-36.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 37.

As Akbari shows, the Jews in the Siege of Jerusalem can be seen both *in bono* as Christians, and *in malo* as Saracens.⁴⁶ Akbari has argued persuasively that the medieval depiction of Saracens was modeled on the depiction of Jews: Saracens, like post-Incarnation Jews, can be seen as *in malo* in terms of variable characterization: both groups reject the divinity of Christ, even though they live after the Incarnation and have access to salvation through belief in Christ.⁴⁷ Islam was seen by some as a return to the Mosaic Law of the Jews, even after its fulfillment in Christianity.⁴⁸ In the Middle Ages, Saracens were considered to be polytheistic idolators, or Christian heretics; Peter the Venerable did not know whether to call Saracens pagans for their false belief, or heretics for their deviant practice.⁴⁹ Saracens in medieval literature were often depicted worshipping idols, especially those of Mahomet, Apollin and Tervagant, in a mockery of the Christian trinity.⁵⁰ According to Akbari, the depiction of Saracens as idolators is linked to the depiction of Jews, as it draws upon “the prototypical episode of pagan idolatry: the forging of the golden calf at the foot of Sinai while Moses received the laws up above.”⁵¹

Unlike characteristics ascribed to Jews, the traits of Saracens derive more from their nationality than their religion; where Jews were often seen in medieval texts as treacherous because of their denial of the divinity of Christ, Saracens were characterized

⁴⁶ I use the term “Saracen” instead of “Muslim,” as this was the term used in the medieval West for this group, categorized by both nation and religion.

⁴⁷ See Akbari, “Placing the Jews,” esp. 35-36. See also Sheila Delany, “Chaucer’s Prioress, the Jews, and the Muslims,” in Chaucer and the Jews: Sources, Contexts, Meanings, ed. Sheila Delany (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 43-57, for a discussion of Western Christian ideas about the links between Muslims and Jews.

⁴⁸ This can be seen in Alexandre du Pont’s thirteenth-century Roman de Mahomet. See Akbari, “Placing the Jews,” 35-36; and Akbari, “The Rhetoric of Antichrist in Western Lives of Muhammad,” Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations 8.3 (1997): 297-307.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 34. See John V. Tolan, Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), esp. Ch. 5, “Saracens as Pagans.”

⁵⁰ See Akbari, “Imagining Islam: The Role of Images in Medieval Depictions of Muslims,” Scripta Mediterranea 19-20 (1998-1999): 9-27.

⁵¹ Ibid.

in a certain manner because of their nationality or ethnicity. Saracen traits are inherent in them because of their heritage; as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen notes, “the otherness of the Saracen is racially marked.”⁵² In medieval literature, Saracens are often depicted as lecherous, luxurious, treacherous and cruel. Norman Daniel, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and others have written about the “imagined excesses” attributed to Saracens, both in terms of sexuality and in the pleasures of food and wine, even though alcohol was prohibited in Islam.⁵³ In both crusade chronicles and literary works, Saracens were depicted as cruel and brutal, killing not only on the battlefield, but also raping women, killing children and taking innocent people captive.⁵⁴ While some Saracens were depicted in literature as being physically and morally monstrous, they could, paradoxically, also be characterized as honourable, valiant, and desirable, as critics such as Daniel, Cohen, Jacqueline de Weever and Lynn Tarte Ramey have noted.⁵⁵ Saracens, both male and female, were sometimes depicted as white and well-proportioned, especially if they were open to conversion to Christianity.⁵⁶ Just like Jews, and like Greeks, as I will demonstrate, the depiction of Saracens in medieval literature was ambiguous: they could be monstrous killers, or attractive, noble knights and ladies, depending on their proximity to Christian conversion.

The model of “variable characterization,” where Jews can be seen positively and negatively (identified both with Christians and with Saracens), is built upon by Yeager

⁵² Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “On Saracen Enjoyment: Some Fantasies of Race in Late Medieval France and England,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (2001), 120.

⁵³ Norman Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens: An Interpretation of the Chansons de Geste* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984), esp. 50; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “On Saracen Enjoyment,” 125.

⁵⁴ See Paul Bancourt, *Les Musulmans dans les chansons de geste du cycle du roi*. 2 vols. (Aix en Provence: Université de Provence, 1982).

⁵⁵ Norman Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens*; Cohen, “On Saracen Enjoyment”; Jacqueline de Weever, *Sheba’s Daughters: Whitening and Demonizing the Saracen Woman in Medieval French Epic* (New York and London: Garland, 1998); Lynne Tarte Ramey, *Christian, Saracen and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

⁵⁶ Ramey, *Christian, Saracen and Genre*, 11.

in her argument regarding the place of the Romans in the Siege of Jerusalem. As she shows, “variable characterization” is a formulation that can be used to understand national identity (the Romans), as well as religious (Christians and Jews); this reading has been especially helpful to my examination of the depiction of Greeks. Yeager notes that the portrait of the Romans in the Siege of Jerusalem, like that of the Jews, is ambivalent. The Romans, according to Yeager, represent the pagan persecutors of the Jews, who are typologically seen as Christians, as medieval exegetical interpretations of the siege of Jerusalem had the Romans playing the role of Antichrist. Medieval exegetes understood the Jews as representing Christians and Jerusalem as representing the Christian Church, making the Romans enemies of Christ.

Taken literally and typologically, though, the Romans are also Christians who are righteously slaying the enemies of Christ, as, in this version of this story, Titus and Vespasian are both baptized, and lay siege to Jerusalem in revenge for the Jews’ killing of Christ. Like the crusaders, the Romans use siege and starvation to precipitate the fall of Jerusalem; in keeping with this motif, the Jews are even called “heathens” (line 613).⁵⁷ These Christian Romans take away both the treasures of Jerusalem, precious metals, stones and books, and also take away the status of the Chosen People from the Jews. By leveling Jerusalem and removing its treasure and even the fixtures of the Temple, they forcefully claim the legitimacy of the “old” religion and covenant, and move it to Europe:

Through the Christianization of the early Romans the poet relocates Christian genealogy, moving it from the East to the West. . . . Readers witness the utter obliteration of the Holy Land as all of its spiritual and material riches are taken away to Rome; so too are the early roots of Christianity pulled from Palestine and spirited to Italy via the written

⁵⁷ The Siege of Jerusalem, ed. Ralph Hanna III and David Lawton, EETS OS 320 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

word.⁵⁸

The seat of Judaism's fulfillment, Christianity, will be in Rome at the Holy See, where the Romans take their treasure and status, since "[a]long with Christianizing the ancient rulership of Rome, the poem asserts Rome's place as a holy city."⁵⁹ Yeager also explores how the destruction of Jerusalem was seen as a precondition for the rise of Rome by medieval exegetes and religious writers, as they saw that the historical fall of Jerusalem fulfilled biblical prophecy.

Using Akbari's argument as a starting point, Yeager asserts that the Romans in the text can be seen in a similar manner: they are at once pagan enemies of the Jews, who are interpreted as Christians, and can also be interpreted as Christians taking revenge upon the enemies of Christ, the Jews. The ambivalent depiction of the Jews is the forerunner for the ambivalent depiction of the Romans. These two arguments about the place of the Jews and the consequent place of the Romans, combined with Daniel Boyarin's formulation of the hermeneutics of supersession, are the basis upon which my discussion of the ambivalent depiction of Greeks is based, using especially Yeager's model of supersession in terms of national and religious identity to look at the nationality of the Greeks. The idea of supersession, that Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism and Jerusalem is left spiritually empty after the advent of Christianity, leads profitably into a discussion of diaspora, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and dispersal of the Jews which signals Jerusalem's supersession by Rome as the centre of Christianity.

"Diaspora" is a Greek term coined by Josephus in his De bello Iudaico (Jewish War) to refer to the exile and scattering of the Jews after the siege of Jerusalem by the

⁵⁸ Yeager, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis," 73.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 72.

Romans in 70 CE.⁶⁰ In many medieval works, including the Latin translation of Josephus' Jewish War by Hegesippus, the apocryphal Latin Vindicta Salvatoris, the Old French Vengeance de Nostre-Seigneur, the Middle English Titus and Vespasian as well as the Siege of Jerusalem, the Jews are killed, sold, and scattered throughout the world by the (anachronistically) Christian Romans after the fall of Jerusalem. In some texts the Jews are simply described as being dispersed by the Romans, while in others, the six groups of thirty Jews that remain alive are sent forth in three ships, directionless, by the Romans, and land by the will of God in three European cities to serve as a reminder to Christians of Christ's suffering and Passion, which were orchestrated by the Jews. As Akbari asserts, "Jerusalem is precisely not the place of the Jews in the medieval imagination: they are thought to be displaced from Jerusalem by the will of God, their right to the holy city revoked by their own rejection and persecution of Jesus."⁶¹ The diaspora represents the supersession of Judaism by Christianity and was a persistent topic of discussion: as Elisa Narin van Court argues, "the destruction and dispersion are a favorite theme of patristic literature offered as testimony to Jewish apostasy, the supersession of Judaism, and the triumph of Christianity."⁶²

The diaspora of the Jews from Jerusalem signals Jerusalem's emptiness as seat of religion. The followers of the "old," illegitimate, empty religion are scattered, never to return to Jerusalem, and the spiritual power that their city once held, as the home of the patriarchs, virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews and Christ, is moved by the Romans to the Holy See. Though the fleeing Jews are not themselves the agents through which the

⁶⁰ As well as referring to a historical event, as I use the term, "diaspora" can have a political sense, as recently used by Daniel Boyarin to mean "a theoretical and historical model to replace national self-determination." A Radical Jew, 249. See esp. 333n28.

⁶¹ Akbari, Idols in the East, Ch. 3, p. 3.

⁶² Narin van Court, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Augustinian Historians," 167.

new religion, Christianity, is spread, nor are they the movers of spiritual *imperium* from Jerusalem to Rome, their flight represents the destruction and emptiness of Jerusalem, empty both of people and of religious authority. Christianity comes from Jerusalem, from the artifacts and the writings that the Romans took to Rome, rather than from the Jews who refuse to convert. The *translatio imperii*, or movement of the seat of empire, in which the diaspora plays a major part, signals the supersession not just of Judaism by Christianity, but of Jerusalem by Rome.

The Jewish diaspora and the hermeneutics of supersession are central to an understanding of national and religious *translatio imperii*, and to the role of the Greeks in the Trojan War. Understood using the hermeneutics of supersession, post-Incarnation Jews who did not convert to Christianity, who clung to a religion that was no longer valid, were flawed. Boyarin's hermeneutics refer to the supersession of Judaism by Christianity, but can also apply to Greeks in literature. Though it may at first seem that this model is not appropriate to exploring the role of the Greeks, this theoretical framework is useful because of the Greeks' siege of Troy and the Trojans' subsequent deeds. Supersession and *translatio imperii* help to make sense of the relationship between the Greeks and Trojans in light of the Trojan foundation myth found in Virgil's *Aeneid*, wherein Aeneas and others escape the burning city, land in Italy and found the Roman people. Medieval chroniclers built upon this myth, and wrote that other Trojans founded other European nations such as Britain and France.⁶³ The hermeneutics of supersession and diaspora are useful because they provide a model of redundancy: just as Judaism is superseded by Christianity, so Greeks, though they win the war, are superseded by Trojans. In order to see how supersession and

⁶³ See especially Richard Waswo's article "Our Ancestors, the Trojans: Inventing Cultural Identity in the Middle Ages," *Exemplaria* 7.2 (1995): 269-290.

diaspora function in relation to Trojans and Greeks, it is necessary to explore the religious and ethnic place of Rome.

Medieval retellings of the Trojan dispersal use the template of Jewish diaspora found in Hegesippus' translation of Josephus, and even supersede it. The Trojan diaspora can be seen as a recollection of the Jewish diaspora in Paulus Orosius' universal history, the Historiarum adversum Paganos Libri Septem or Seven Books of History Against the Pagans. In his influential universal history, the fifth-century historian tells of the Roman siege of Jerusalem in which the emperor Vespasian and his son Titus blockade the Jews inside the city, wear them down by a long, close siege, and finally make a breach in the walls by means of a siege engine. Titus sets fire to and destroys the Temple, and levels the walls of the city to the ground. Orosius uses the account of the siege by the eyewitness Jewish historian Josephus, who says that the Jews who were not killed by the sword or by famine brought on by the siege were "reliquias uero Iudaeorum diuersis actas condicionibus toto Orbe dispersas" [and the rest of the Jews were forced out in various conditions and scattered throughout the world (3.39; 7.9.7)].⁶⁴ Orosius describes the siege, sack and destruction of Troy by the Greeks using similar terms: "In quo bello per decem annos cruentissime gesto quas nationes quantosque populos idem turbo inuoluerit atque adflixerit" [And in that war, fought bloodily for ten years, what nations and how many people that whirlwind picked up and threw down!]; "eursionis atrocitatem caedem captiuitatemque" [an atrocity of destruction, slaughter and captivity (2.67; 1.17.2-3)]. The Trojan Aeneas escapes the city and flees to Italy, where he founds the Roman people. The similarities between these

⁶⁴ Paulus Orosius, Historiarum adversum paganos libri vii, in Orose: Histoires (Contre les Païens), ed. and trans. Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, 3 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1990). Citations refer to the volume and page number of this edition, followed by book and chapter numbers. Translations mine unless otherwise noted.

two accounts are suggestive: Jerusalem is sacked by the Romans, who destroy the Temple and the seat of Judaism; they scatter the Jews, emptying Jerusalem of its people and religious authority. The fall of the Second Temple and the subsequent diaspora are a punishment meted out by Vespasian and Titus. Although Orosius knows that the Romans were not Christian, they were nevertheless acting as tools of God, taking revenge on a people who had rejected Christ: “patrem et filium uno triumphali curru vectos gloriosissimam, ab his qui Patrem et Filium offenderant, victoriam reportasse” [father and son were brought in on one triumphal chariot, attesting to the most glorious victory over those who had offended the Father and the Son (3.39; 7.9.8)]. Just as Jerusalem is emptied and its authority is removed, Troy is besieged, sacked and burned, emptied of its people, and its political authority, in the form of Aeneas, moves to Italy, and specifically Rome. Since the Church had already been founded, the Temple in Jerusalem, like Troy, was no longer necessary or useful. Orosius makes the case for Titus destroying the Temple, since the Church had been born and there was no further use for Jerusalem: “hoc [Templum] tamquam effatum ac uacuum nullique usui bono commodum arbitrio Dei auferendum fuit” [the Temple, worn out, empty and suitable for no good use, should be destroyed by the judgement of God (3.39; 7.9.5)]. From the standpoint of a medieval writer, looking back at the Trojan diaspora may have recalled the Jewish diaspora: the two were linked by the language of siege and diaspora, and therefore had similar importance. These two narratives of supersession and dispersal, in which cities are destroyed and emptied of their treasures, religious or political, both relate closely to *translatio imperii* and the place of the city of Rome.

Rome is the central point at which the twin diasporas of Jerusalem and Troy meet and form the religion and ethnicity of Europe. With regard to the place of Rome,

Orosius' ideas about *translatio imperii* and religion will repay examination. Orosius' work, "the first universal Christian history," makes the claim for the primacy of Rome in Christian history.⁶⁵ The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans was very popular in the Middle Ages, with 250 manuscripts extant; Orosius himself was so well-regarded that Dante placed him in the paradise of his Commedia.⁶⁶ He is often credited with presenting the first influential formulation of the concept of *translatio imperii*, "the gradual movement of imperial domination from the kingdom of Babylon to the rule of the Caesars in Rome."⁶⁷ In his world-schema, adopted by many medieval chroniclers, "[b]etween the might of eastern Babylon and western Rome. . . came the short-lived empires of Macedonia in the North and Carthage in the South";⁶⁸ not all of these empires are of the same stature, however, as "Macedonia and Carthage are not true heirs to the Babylonian empire, they hold its authority in custody until the true heir, Rome, reaches maturity."⁶⁹ Rome supersedes and is the fulfillment of the other empires. Alexander's Macedon is a temporary placeholder of *imperium* on its way to Rome, and provides a model which Rome, in its Christianity, will fulfill: as I argue in Chapter 2, Alexander's empire can be seen as a typological precursor to Augustus' Rome.

Orosius' Rome is not just a temporal power, reclaiming its rightful *imperium* after the destruction of Carthage, but a Christian one as well; as Alfred Hiatt notes, "[w]hat emerges from his history is an optimistic refiguration of Roman imperial space, based

⁶⁵ Robert W. Hanning, The Vision of History in Early Britain: from Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1966), 33.

⁶⁶ The Old English Orosius, ed. Janet Bately, Early English Texts Society, SS 6 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), lv.

⁶⁷ Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "Alexander in the Orient: Bodies and Boundaries in the Roman de toute chevalerie" in Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures, ed. Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 106.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 108.

on the universalized potential of Christianity.”⁷⁰ Rome is not only the inheritor of empire, but also the religious centre of the world, a status removed from Jerusalem by Titus and Vespasian. As noted above, Orosius does not share the common medieval belief that Vespasian and Titus were Christian, but rather sees them as the tools God used to punish the Jews and help smooth the way for the spread of Christianity. To Orosius, Rome is destined to be the cradle of Christianity, as the victory of Augustus and the cessation of wars brought about a world in which Christ deigned to be born and save mankind.⁷¹ The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans reestablishes the “traditional parallel” between Roman and biblical fulfillment in the time of Caesar Augustus and Christ.⁷² Rome is guided by God’s will throughout its history: through the transferral of empire, Rome becomes the seat of empire; later, through the destruction of Jerusalem and Judaism’s supersession by Christianity, the church comes to be founded in Rome, making the empire religious as well as temporal.

Hence, Orosius’ project is to demonstrate how “[t]he history of Rome, before and after Christian empire, is linked with sacred history and the history of the church through providence.”⁷³ Orosius chronicles not only a transfer of authority from empire to empire, but also from Jerusalem to Rome, with Rome as the new site of covenant: “God had elected Rome, and despite her rebelliousness and preference for evil she

⁷⁰ Alfred Hiatt, “Mapping the Ends of Empire” in Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures, ed. Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 53.

⁷¹ J. G. A. Pocock, Barbarism and Religion, Volume Three: The First Decline and Fall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 85. See also Dorothy Whitelock, “The Prose of Alfred’s Reign,” Continuations and Beginnings, Studies in Old English Literature, ed. E. G. Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966), 90. Cited in Bately, ed. The Old English Orosius, xcv-xcvi.

⁷² Hanning, The Vision of History in Early Britain, 41. In Hanning’s words, Orosius constructs a “history of salvation” for Rome in which the twin pinnacles of Roman and biblical history happened in the reign of Caesar and the birth of Christ (39).

⁷³ Pocock, Barbarism and Religion, 86.

moved through history towards Christ, guided by God.”⁷⁴ Rome’s career “serves notice to all the world of the new dispensation, as we look back on it with Christian eyes. Israel has been succeeded by Rome, which provides universal evidence, in the peace it brings to earth, of the role of Christ, whose reign is shortly to begin.”⁷⁵ The centrality of Rome, temporal and spiritual, established by Orosius and used by chroniclers such as Otto of Freising in his Two Cities, can be further expanded by the Virgilian myth of the Trojan foundation of Rome.

Jerusalem, through its supersession by Christianity and diaspora, plays a central role in the religious legitimization of Rome; we must now return to the place of Troy in Rome’s history. Rome is not only the inheritor of empire and the locus of Christianity, but was founded by Trojans fleeing the Trojan War. This myth, constructed by Virgil to provide a worthy heritage for the Roman emperors, contends that Aeneas, escaping Troy, came to Italy with other Trojans, and founded the Roman people. The Trojan foundation myth provides another kind of *translatio imperii* for Rome: its legitimacy and right to govern come from Troy, not just from Babylon, Macedon and Carthage. As noted above, Orosius uses similar language to describe the Jewish and Trojan diasporas, both of which had a role in the foundation of Rome: the religion of Rome comes from Jerusalem by way of the destruction of the Temple; the Roman people come from Troy through that city’s sack. The destruction of Jerusalem and diaspora result in a Jerusalem empty of truth, while Rome is full, as the seat of Christianity. In religious terms, Rome supersedes Jerusalem, just as Christianity supersedes Judaism; in national terms, Rome supersedes Troy. The Greeks, in sacking Troy, force some of the

⁷⁴ Hanning, The Vision of History in Early Britain, 40.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

inhabitants to flee; these Trojans who escape do not die, but found what becomes the Roman empire.

Medieval histories combine Orosius' universal Christian history with the Virgilian story of the fleeing Trojans. Chroniclers from European nations wished to provide Trojan origins for their own people; for example, the Trojan Brutus founds Britain in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia regum Britanniae.⁷⁶ Seeking to make the Trojans even more noble and irrefutably legitimate their own national (European) origins, several chronicles also combine Trojan origins with the genealogy of Noah. According to biblical accounts, the post-diluvian world was divided into three parts, Asia, Africa and Europe, ruled over individually by the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth. The chronicle of Fredegar and the anonymous Historia brittonum claim that the Trojans are of the lineage of Japheth, who inherited Europe: the "Frigiiae" (Trojans) and "Macedones" (Macedonians) are of this stock, as are the "Latini, qui et Romani" (Latins, who are the Romans), the "Hellenes" and "Greci." (Greeks).⁷⁷ Because they are direct ancestors of Noah, the Trojans, Romans and Europeans therefore bypass having ethnic origins in the post-Incarnation Jewish people, namely the Jews who fled Jerusalem in the diaspora. In fact, in one medieval text, the Trojan Antenor is named as

⁷⁶ According to Hanning, "Accounts of the barbaric past of nations whose conversion to Christ was a social as well as a religious landmark often fell into the Orosian . . . pattern—a national history of salvation organized around the triumph of Christianity. . . . The theology of history had become a multipurpose garment which Franks and Anglo-Saxons, as new Israelites, could wear as easily as Romans." The Vision of History in Early Britain, 42.

⁷⁷ Fredegarii et aliorum chronicon, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH, *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum* II (Hanover: Hahn, 1888), 21. See also Vincent of Beauvais, Speculum historiale (Douai, 1624; rpt. Graz, 1965), 1.62; Bartholomaeus Anglicus, De proprietatibus rerum (Frankfurt 1601, rpt. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1964), 15.1; and Isidore of Seville, Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX, ed. William Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911, rpt. 1989), 9, for discussions of the distribution of continents to the sons of Noah. See also Benjamin Braude, "The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods," William and Mary Quarterly 54 (1997): 103-142; and John Williams, "Isidore, Orosius and the Beatus Map," Imago Mundi 49.1 (1997): 7-32.

founding Jerusalem, a fact which would also distance Rome, and Europe, from Jews.⁷⁸

And since Trojans, and Europeans, are the descendants of Japheth, this further separates them from the lineage of another son of Noah, Shem, whose descendants are the Saracens.⁷⁹ Romans supersede and fulfill Jewish identity in religious terms; in national terms, they remain untainted by Jewish identity.

There is, however, a link between the Trojans and virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews, which is reinforced by the chronicle of Fredegar, who even goes so far as to make the description of the fleeing Trojans similar to that of the Jews wandering in the wilderness after escaping from Egypt: “Nam et illa alia pars, quae de Frigia progressa est, ab Olexo per fraude decepti, tamen non captivati, nisi exinde eiecti, per multis regionibus pervacantis cum uxores et liberos” [For also the other party, deceived by the trickery of Ulysses, went forth from Frigia. Nevertheless they were not captured, but were expelled from there, (and) were wandering all around through many regions with their wives and children (46)]. The image of refugees wandering through many places with their wives and children, seen here in reference to the Trojans, can point to the plight of the virtuous, pre-Incarnation Jews who with the help of God flee from Egypt. This suggestive similarity links the Trojans with “good” Jews, which is fitting, as the Trojans are depicted in terms of virtuous, pre-Incarnation Jews in some works of medieval literature. This similarity between pre-Incarnation Jews and fleeing Trojans also has ramifications for the enemies of both peoples: in some texts, the Egyptians, enemies of the Jews, are equated with the Greeks, enemies of the Trojans. Both pre-Incarnation

⁷⁸ See the fifteenth-century *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, ed. Carol Falvo Heffernan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), 10-11.

⁷⁹ However, the Turkish and Trojan lineages are joined in the chronicle of Fredegar, pp. 46 and 96. On the complicated medieval ideas on the origin of the Turks, see Waswo, “Our Ancestors, the Trojans,” 270 and Margaret Meserve’s “Medieval Sources for Renaissance Theories on the Origins of the Ottoman Turks,” *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, ed. Bodo Guthmüller and Wilhelm Kühlmann (Tübingen: Max Niermeyer Verlag, 2000), 409-436.

Jews and Trojans are *in bono*: the Jews as virtuous potential Christians, the Trojans as future founders of the mighty Roman empire, which will become a Christian empire. The Egyptians and Greeks, then, as enemies of the potential Christians, can be seen as Saracens, the typical medieval persecutors and enemies of the Christians.⁸⁰ The expansion of the Virgilian Trojan foundation myth in medieval chronicles and literature to include nations such as France and Britain provides an ethnic heritage for Rome and Europe not connected to the post-Incarnation Jews of the diaspora, and one that bypasses the instigators of the Trojan diaspora, the Greeks, and even makes them appear to be Saracens.

The two strands that make up Europe and Europeans, its ethnicity and religion, one from Troy and the other from Jerusalem, are formed in the crucible of Rome, the new seat of empire, temporal and spiritual. These are the beginnings of the European peoples: pagan Trojans, forced out by Greeks, move from Rome to Europe, then are Christianized by Roman missionaries—the transformation to a Christian Europe is complete. Because of the Trojan foundation myth, Europeans are not ethnically Jewish, but their faith is founded on and supersedes Judaism, just as the Roman empire supersedes Troy, and Christian Europe supersedes pagan Europe. Taken in the context of the Trojan foundation myth, Rome signals both the ethnicity of Europe, and its religion. Just as Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism, Rome is the fulfillment of the Trojan diaspora, and the sieges of Jerusalem and Troy become Christianized. Sieges are transformative and liminal events: the siege of Jerusalem is how Christianity becomes rooted in Rome, and hence spread to Europe; the Trojans need to be besieged by the Greeks before they can go on to found Rome and Europe. Aeneas, to found a nation

⁸⁰ See my discussion in Chapter 1 on the parallels between Egyptians and Greeks, and Saracens and Greeks, in the Roman de Troie.

that will be Christianized, is like a patriarch: he is, in the Virgilian model, “pius Aeneas,” upstanding and faithful. Conversely, the Greeks who besiege Troy, though the outcome of the war is actually the foundation of European society, must be viewed unfavourably. Like the Jews, the Greeks are superseded by Rome, both in terms of ethnicity and religion: Troy and Jerusalem feed into Rome, which becomes Europe, then in turn Christian Europe.⁸¹ The Greeks facilitate the founding of Europe: they are merely tools, and in this Christian, European lineage, do not have a place. The Greeks, like the Jews, have “now vanished from sacred and (as far as could be told) secular history.”⁸²

Philosophical, historical and religious templates, including classical learning, *translatio imperii*, “variable characterization” and supersession, shape how we are to see Greeks in medieval literature, and help to understand the role of the Greeks in the formation of Rome and Christian Europe. In the Middle Ages, negative attitudes towards Greeks, seen in Virgil, could coexist with appreciation for Greek scholarship. Correspondingly, the depiction of ancient Greeks in literature is ambiguous: the Greeks who besieged Troy and Alexander can be noble, valorous, treacherous and cruel. Greeks can be seen in terms of “variable characterization,” *in bono* as virtuous, pre-Incarnation Jews, and *in malo* as post-Incarnation Jews and Saracens. The ambiguity of depictions of Greeks can be seen especially clearly through the lens of supersession and *translatio imperii*: like the Jews, the Greeks are superseded, the Jews by Christianity, the Greeks by Rome, which will eventually become Christian. Like the Jews, the Greeks are

⁸¹ See Alfred Hiatt, The Making of Medieval Forgeries: False Documents in Fifteenth-Century England ((London and Toronto: The British Library and the University of Toronto, 2004), 89-91 for a discussion of European universities, especially the Universities of Paris and Cambridge, deriving legitimacy and antiquity through *translatio studii* and imagined connections to Rome.

⁸² Pocock, Barbarism and Religion, 95.

necessary for the fulfillment of Rome: the religion of the Jews is fulfilled in Christianity, which finds its centre in Rome; the Greeks, through their sack of Troy cause the Trojans to found the Roman people, while Alexander provides a political model that will be fulfilled in Rome. In medieval literature, Greeks, like Jews, are necessary transitional groups, but are redundant and even dangerous after they have performed their role.

Chapter 1

The Depiction of Ancient Greeks in the Medieval Troy Story:

the Roman de Troie

The depiction of ancient Greeks in medieval literature is complex and varied. One view of these ancient Greeks can be found in works on the Trojan War, in which Greeks are treacherous and deceitful, though valorous and noble. Of the many medieval versions of the Troy story, I will examine Le Roman de Troie of Benoît de Sainte-Maure, the first Troy story in a vernacular language, and Geoffrey Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, the first Middle English work set during the Trojan War. Another, contrasting, view of ancient Greeks is to be found in texts featuring Alexander the Great, a popular subject of medieval romance. Alexander, unlike the Greeks of the Trojan War, eschews treason and can be seen as a proto-Christian in some traditions; his is a more positive portrayal, though he is not without significant faults.

Though ancient Greeks are sometimes portrayed negatively and sometimes positively, there is a consistent ambivalence and ambiguity in their depiction. Ancient Greeks do not have a set scheme of “national characteristics” or traits inherent to the Greek nation, but share aspects of the depictions of Jews and Saracens, groups that are always shown as Others in literature and chronicles. This “variable characterization” is a mode of identifying a religious or national community within a binary framework in which the group can be typologically recognized *in bono* (as a prefiguration of the Christian community) or *in malo* (as the post-Incarnation Jews, or as Saracens). With regard to the depiction of Greeks, as holds true for Jews and Saracens, it is important to remember the religious and social milieu of the authors and audiences of these

medieval works: they are Western Christians, and the Others they see portrayed in literature are judged by their differences from, and similarities to, Western Christians. How Greeks are depicted also seems to depend on whom they are set against: if their enemies are lesser people than the Greeks, if they are fundamentally flawed, the Greeks appear virtuous and noble; if their enemies are upstanding and noble, the Greeks appear treacherous and cruel. I will discuss in this chapter the complicated nature of the ancient Greek Other.

The Greeks of the Trojan War

Modern readers frequently turn to Homer for his authoritative account of the Trojan War, but the Greek language and Greek dramatists were not commonly known in medieval Europe. Before Benoît de Sainte-Maure's vernacular adaptation, the most widely read versions of the Troy story were to be found in several different Latin sources; the vernacular texts with which I am concerned draw heavily on these Latin sources. Though the original Greek text was scarce, there was a well-known Latin translation and condensation of Homer's *Iliad*, the *Ilias Latina* or *Homerus Latinus*. It was of poor quality and has been called a "crude Latin redaction,"⁸³ but was popular, especially as a school text, perhaps owing to its brevity rather than its quality.⁸⁴ Written *ca.* 65 CE, it comprises 1070 hexameter lines and is now attributed to Baebius Italicus. Like Homer's text, it is concerned with only a small part of the ten-year war at Troy, beginning with the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon over the possession of a captive woman, and ending with the death of Hector; neither text treats the wooden

⁸³ C. David Benson, *The History of Troy in Middle English Literature: Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae* in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 1980), 3.

⁸⁴ Kathryn L. McKinley, ed., "The Medieval Homer: The *Ilias Latina*," *Allegorica* 19 (1998), 3.

horse built by the Greeks or the fall of Troy. The Ilias Latina was read widely and frequently catalogued as “Homerus.”⁸⁵

Virgil’s Aeneid, written *ca.* 19 BCE, contains a partial account of the events of the Trojan War and was highly influential and widely circulated in the Middle Ages.⁸⁶ As well as being used as a text in schools to help children learn Latin, it was a source for scholars: John of Salisbury, one of the most famous scholars of the twelfth century, used verses from the Aeneid in his Policraticus, written in 1159.⁸⁷ Christopher Baswell notes that

from the late-classical period onward, Virgil was among the most frequently mined sources for examples of elegant Latinity. At almost any period, and in almost any educational center of the Middle Ages, a student of grammar and rhetoric would gain an intimate knowledge of great swaths of Virgil’s text.⁸⁸

As further proof of its influence and popularity, there are nearly two hundred extant medieval manuscripts and fragments of the Aeneid.⁸⁹

The Ilias Latina and the Aeneid both cover relatively brief, and different, spans of time within the Trojan War. The sole description of Troy and the Trojan War occurs in Book II of the Aeneid, which offers Aeneas’ tale of the treacherous Greeks, the famous character of Sinon, the Trojan horse and the sack of the city, but does not contain many other details of the Troy story. Told from the point of view of Aeneas, one of the few Trojans to escape the burning city, the Aeneid’s characterization of Greeks is necessarily negative. This depiction of the Greeks is also present in an anonymous Old French

⁸⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁶ See L. D. Reynolds, ed. Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 433-436 for a discussion of Virgil’s manuscript tradition and his transmission to the Middle Ages.

⁸⁷ Francine Mora-Lebrun, L’«Enéide» médiévale et la naissance du roman (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994), 14.

⁸⁸ Christopher Baswell, Virgil in Medieval England: Figuring the Aeneid from the Twelfth Century to Chaucer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 33. See especially Chapter 1.

⁸⁹ Mora-Lebrun, L’«Enéide» médiévale, 11.

adaptation of the Aeneid, written *ca.* 1160, possibly at the court of Henry II. The influential Roman d'Enéas is one of the three *romans antiques*, or vernacular adaptations of classical Latin texts, along with the Roman de Thèbes and the Roman de Troie.

Two well-known and influential Latin documents tell a more complete story of Troy, and were the basis of most medieval Troy material. These are the short prose narratives De excidio Troiae of Dares Phrygius and Ephemeridos belli Troiani of Dictys Cretensis. Some critics believe that both works were originally written in Greek in the first century CE and translated into Latin in the sixth and fourth centuries, respectively.⁹⁰ Little is known about the composition of the texts, though a papyrus fragment of the original Greek Dictys has been found, and it has been suggested that Dares was originally written in Greek as well. Dares and Dictys claim to have been eye-witnesses to the events at Troy, unlike Homer; medieval authors and readers accepted their versions as historically accurate and it was not until 1702 that Jacob Perizonius revealed them as pseudo-historical⁹¹.

Adding to their credibility for medieval readers was the fact that, unlike Homer, both authors “banish the gods from the fighting and instead provide character portraits, precise battle accounts, and other realistic details that convinced the Middle Ages that each was indeed a true history.”⁹² According to Dares and Dictys, their accounts are more accurate than Homer’s, since he lived after the time of the Trojan War. They often contradict Homer, though he is “obviously the ultimate source of much of what they

⁹⁰ R. M. Frazer, trans, The Trojan War: the Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1966), 3.

⁹¹ Joseph of Exeter, The Iliad of Dares Phrygius, trans. Gildas Roberts (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1970), x. Though Roberts calls Dares and Dictys “forgers,” Alfred Hiatt’s explanation of forgeries in The Making of Medieval Forgeries suggests a more restrained use of the term.

⁹² Benson, The History of Troy, 4.

report.”⁹³ In his Etymologies, Isidore of Seville states that Dares, who was considered to be one of the “founding fathers” of history, was as trustworthy as Moses and Herodotus.⁹⁴ As C. David Benson states, “Moses was the first historian in the Judeo-Christian tradition and . . . among the Gentiles the first was Dares Phrygius.”⁹⁵ This claim about Dares is also found in Hugh of St. Victor’s Didascalicon.⁹⁶ There was no reason for medieval authors and readers to doubt the historicity of these accounts, especially that of Dares: Orderic Vitalis cites Dares as a moral exemplar and Ranulf Higden states that the account of Troy with which he begins his Polychronicon is that of Dares.⁹⁷ We have forty-six extant manuscripts of the De excidio Troiae spanning the ninth to the twelfth centuries, a fact which attests to the popularity of Dares’ version of the Troy story; there are considerably fewer manuscripts of Dictys’ work from the same period, suggesting that it was less popular.⁹⁸

As eyewitness accounts, Dares and Dictys purport to have written their works as journals of the Trojan War, but often disagree with each other and are written from different points of view: Dares, a follower of the Trojan Antenor, favours the Trojan side, while Dictys is partial to the Greeks since he says he went into war with Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans. Dictys’ work is the longer, beginning with Paris, who

⁹³ Frazer, trans., The Trojan War, 5.

⁹⁴ Benoît de Sainte-Maure, Le Roman de Troie: Extraits du manuscrit Milan, Bibliothèque ambrosienne, D 55, ed. and trans. Emmanuèle Baumgartner and Françoise Vieliard (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1998), 9. See Isidore of Seville, Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911). “Historiam autem apud nos primus Moyses de initio mundi conscripsit. Apud gentiles vero primus Dares Phrygius de Graecis et Trojanis historiam edidit” [According to us Moses first wrote a history of the beginning of the world. But according to the Gentiles Dares Phrygius first published a history of the Greeks and Trojans (1.42)].

⁹⁵ Benson, The History of Troy, 11.

⁹⁶ “divinam historiam Moyses scripsit. Apud gentiles primus Dares Phrygius Troianam historiam edidit” [Moses wrote divine history. Among the gentiles, Dares Phrygius was the first to write the history of Troy (3.2)]. Hugh of Saint Victor, Didascalicon: De studio legendi. A Critical Text, ed. Charles Henry Buttimer (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1939).

⁹⁷ Benson, The History of Troy, 11.

⁹⁸ Mora-Lebrun, L’«Enéide» médiévale, 20.

is here called Alexander, seeing Helen at Sparta, falling in love with and abducting her. Dictys ends his work with a description of how the Greeks return to their homeland and gives an account of the death of Ulysses. As he is admittedly pro-Greek, Dictys frequently calls the Trojans “barbari” (barbarians) and tells of their treachery.⁹⁹

Dares’ work is far shorter and in poorer Latin. It begins with Jason and the Argonauts seeking the Golden Fleece. The Argo lands on the Trojan shore, which worries King Laomedon and prompts him to eject the Greeks from his lands. Hercules, angered by Laomedon’s lack of hospitality, comes back to Troy with a Greek force and destroys the city, taking away Laomedon’s daughter, Hesione. As Dares sees it, this abduction is the root cause of the Trojan War. The text does not include, as Dictys’ text does, the episode of the Trojan horse; instead, the Greeks are let into Troy by Aeneas and Antenor at a gate on whose exterior is carved the head of a horse. The account of Dares ends rather suddenly with Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, slaying Polyxena, and Aeneas being forced to flee the city. Curiously, Dares and Dictys both reject the characterization of Aeneas found in Virgil’s Aeneid: instead of being a Trojan hero who is forced to flee the city, in Dares and Dictys’ accounts he, along with Antenor, is one of the traitors responsible for the betrayal of Troy and its royal family to the Greeks. This view of Aeneas as traitor appears in literature written before the Aeneid, according to J. P. Callu,¹⁰⁰ and as Christopher Baswell argues, the “counter-tradition” of Dares’ and Dictys’ depiction of a treacherous Aeneas was “particularly strong in the Middle

⁹⁹ Dictys Cretensis, Ephemeridos belli Troiani, ed. Werner Eisenhut (Leipzig: Teubner, 1958). “[Graeci] tradi eos [Troianos] popularibus atque ante conspectum barbarorum [Troianorum] produci iubent,” 4.21; “Graeci . . . impensius pacem atque amicitiam agitavere nullo exinde barbarorum [Troianorum] interfecto aut vulnerato,” 5.11; “Hoc modo consumptis cum civitate barbaris [Troianis],” 5.13, et al.

¹⁰⁰ J. P. Callu, “Impius Aeneas? Echos virgiliens du Bas-Empire,” in Présence de Virgile. Actes du colloque de décembre 1976, ed. R. Chevallier (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1978), 161-174. Cited in Mora-Lebrun, L’«Enéide» médiévale, 21n1.

Ages.”¹⁰¹ Though they differ on details, most medieval versions of the Troy story use the descriptions given by both Dares and Dictys to round out their stories.

Benoît de Sainte-Maure based his 30,300 line romance of Troy on Dares, using some material from Dictys to fill in the conclusion of the story. Benoît’s Roman de Troie was written *ca.* 1160-1165, possibly at the court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine.¹⁰² Though he claims to have followed his Latin source text to the letter, Benoît adds a considerable number of scenes and details not present in Dares or Dictys.¹⁰³ He adds battles, romantic scenes, courtly details, the episode of Troilus and Briseida (to become Criseyde in later texts), and even Christian details to his *roman antique*. Benoît begins his poem, as does Dares, with Jason and the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece. Using this journey to begin the tale complicates the issue of blame for starting the war: while the Trojan king Laomedon should not have been so ungracious and hasty in ejecting the Greeks from his lands, the Greeks should not have wreaked such vengeance on Troy. The Greek abduction of Priam’s sister Hesione during the first sack of Troy seems to be a more immediate cause of war than Helen’s abduction; according to Benoît, if the Greeks had returned Hesione to Troy when Antenor had asked them to, Helen would never have been abducted. Dictys, on the other hand, begins his story with the sudden and unprompted abduction of Helen by Paris, leaving the reader no choice but to blame the Trojans for the war. None of the medieval Troy stories begin with this scene, however; Dares, Benoît, Joseph of Exeter in his Ylias Daretis Phrygii (*ca.* 1184) and the Historia destructionis Troiae of Guido delle Colonne (*ca.* 1287) start with

¹⁰¹ Baswell, Virgil in Medieval England, 18.

¹⁰² Le Roman de Troie, 18.

¹⁰³ For a discussion of Benoît’s changes to the works of Dares and Dictys, see Penny Sullivan, “Translation and Adaptation in the Roman de Troie,” in The Spirit of the Court: Selected Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society (Toronto 1983), ed. Glyn S. Burgess and Robert A. Taylor (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985), 350-359.

Jason and the Argonauts accidentally landing at Troy while seeking the Golden Fleece. By beginning the story with the Fleece Benoît sets up an expectation that the Greeks are by nature treacherous and cruel, despite also being noble, brave, courteous, handsome and intelligent.

The Greeks of the Roman de Troie are ambiguous: they are powerful, valiant, and handsome, though proud, vicious and ultimately treacherous. Their depictions encompass typical aspects of both Jewish and Saracen characterizations. The Greeks are not only treacherous like the post-Incarnation Jews who have denied the divinity of Christ, but can also be seen as Saracens because of their typically Saracen cruelty in battle, and because they appear, like Saracens, to be besieging a Christian city. Adding to the ambiguity of the Greeks is the fact that, unlike Jews and Saracens, whose religions are what set them apart from Christians, the Greeks share the same polytheistic system as their enemies, the Trojans. Through legends that the Trojan Aeneas founded the Roman people, who later become Christians, the Trojans themselves can be looked back on as a proto-Christian ethnic group, a term I use to refer to groups or individuals whose actions, values or style of worship suggest that they would be open to conversion to Christianity had they been born after the Incarnation. Most of the Greeks, on the other hand, are killed during or after their return home to Greece from Troy, and do not have the same potential to be Christians. Their nation does not survive and flourish as does that of the Trojans: they disappear, die and do not go on to become Christians.

Benoît introduces ambiguous Greeks before the events of the Trojan War even begin. The characters of King Peleus and his nephew Jason set up negative expectations for the reader about all Greeks, though it is probable that readers of the Roman de Troie

would have had some knowledge of or presuppositions about the Greeks of the Trojan War already. There was a shared cultural assumption in Western Europe that the Greeks of the Trojan War were treacherous, a notion that perhaps came from reading Virgil's *Aeneid*, and which resonates in Otto of Freising's *Two Cities*. Virgil's depiction of Greeks is necessarily negative: the protagonist of the text is a Trojan refugee fleeing the rampaging Greeks during the sack of the city. Virgil makes several sweeping statements about the character of Greeks, though he presents only one Greek figure, Sinon. The Trojan Laocoon exemplifies the Virgilian attitude toward Greeks, when he states that "timeo Danaos et dona ferentis" [I fear Greeks, even when they are bearing gifts (2.49)], referring to his mistrust of the gift of the Trojan horse. Virgil has Aeneas describe Sinon's act of treachery as typical of all Greeks: "accipe nunc Danaum insidias et crimine ab uno disce omnis" [take now the plot of the Greeks and from one crime learn everything (2.65)]. Otto of Freising's chronicle has an explanation for Virgil's assertion about the treachery of the Greeks, who are necessarily treacherous because of their lineage:

Anno ab imperio Nini DXXXV quinquaginta parricidia inter Egisti Danaïque fratrum liberos una nocte commissa feruntur. Danaus autem, tanti sceleris auctor, ad Argos cedens et a Tenelao rege ipsorum humane susceptus, postmodum eum infideliter regno expulit et ipse pro eo regnavit. A quo Danaum genus tractum puto, ab eoque perfidiae scelus ad illos derivatum esse. Unde est illud Virgilianum: "Accipe nunc Danaum insidias et crimine ab uno disce omnes." Et rursum: "Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes." (1.19)

[In the five hundred and thirty-fifth year from the reign of Ninus, fifty murders are said to have been committed on one night among the children of Aegyus and Danaüs, two brothers. But Danaüs, the instigator of this horrid crime, withdrew to Argos and was kindly received by Sthenelus their king; afterwards Danaüs treacherously drove Sthenelus out of his kingdom and himself reigned in his stead. It is from this, I think, that the race of the Danaï is descended, and from him the crime of perfidy was disseminated among them. Whence comes Vergil's well-known line: "Hear now the

Danaäns' snares, and thus from one wicked action learn all," and again this; "Danaäns ever I fear, even with gifts in their hands."]¹⁰⁴

Virgil categorically condemns the Greeks, making one deceitful Greek representative of all Greeks, and Benoît's readers may have been influenced by such an opinion. Though Sinon does not play the same role in Benoît's work as he does in Virgil's, and though Benoît adds positive qualities to their characters, Greeks are still fundamentally flawed and treacherous, a claim made clearer by Otto of Freising.

Greeks as Jews: treachery

Though the expectation of treacherous Greeks may have been gained from a reading of the Aeneid, there is another facet that can be added to this depiction of treachery, one that would have been especially resonant for a medieval reader. The treachery shown by the Greeks is highly reminiscent of the treachery associated with another group, the Jews. In both medieval literature and religious polemic, Jews were assumed to be deceitful, owing to the fact that Judas, the prototypical medieval traitor, had betrayed Christ to the Romans, and had done so for money. In fact, Antenor, one of the Trojans who betrays Troy to the Greeks, is called "li cuiverz Judas" [wretched Judas (26135)] by the narrator, which serves to link some of the worst treachery in the Roman de Troie, betrayal of one's own people to the enemy, with the Jews.¹⁰⁵ Over a century and a half later, Dante would put Judas in the lowest, darkest *bolgia* of his

¹⁰⁴ Otto of Freising, Otonis episcopi frisingensis Chronica; sive, Historia de duabus civitatibus. Editio altera, ed. Adolfus Hofmeister, Scriptores rerum germanicarum in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae historicis separatim editi (Hanover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1912). Translation found in Otto of Freising, The Two Cities: A Chronicle of Universal History to the Year 1146 A.D., ed. Austin P. Evans and Charles Knapp, trans. Charles Christopher Mierow (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 140.

¹⁰⁵ Quotations from Benoît de Sainte-Maure's Roman de Troie are taken from the partial edition and translation of Emmanuèle Baumgartner and Françoise Vieliard, Le Roman de Troie: Extraits du manuscrit Milan, Bibliothèque ambrosienne, D 55 (Paris: Le Livre de poche, 1998). Passages not in this edition are taken from Le Roman de Troie, ed. Léopold Constans, 6 vols. Société des anciens textes français (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1904-1912). Translations mine.

Inferno, where Brutus and Cassius also suffer for their betrayal of Caesar.¹⁰⁶ The treachery of the Jews is not simply a literary or biblical trope: Canon 67 of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, “De usuriis Iudaeorum,” calls Jews treacherous in reference to their usury (“Iudaeorum perfidia” or “treachery of the Jews”).¹⁰⁷ Built into the word “perfidia” is the notion of “faithlessness,” “breaking a vow,” “acting against faith”: many Jews practiced usury, and this treacherous act was linked to their faith, which was in itself a denial and negation of Christianity.

Treachery is also a typical Saracen behaviour in literature. This characteristic can be seen in many medieval works including the Chanson de Roland, where the Saracen king Marsile treacherously promises to surrender Saragossa to Charlemagne and accept baptism at Aix, making a false pledge of fealty and vassalage. Marsile, however, plans with Charlemagne’s vassal, Ganelon, to attack the rearguard of Charlemagne’s army when they are in a vulnerable position. In reference to Marsile and the Saracens of the Chanson de Roland, Gerard J. Brault notes that Saracens “characteristically resort to cunning and ruse to achieve their nefarious ends.”¹⁰⁸ Jacqueline de Weever also notes Saracen treachery in medieval literature, but her focus is on Saracen princesses who betray their own families, and religion, to the Christian Franks. For instance, in Fierabras, Floripas hides and protects Frankish knights, including the famous Oliver and Roland, in her room, then betrays her father the emir by actively helping the Christians overthrow the Saracen fortress. De Weever argues that the

¹⁰⁶ Dante puts Antenor in the Inferno as well, though slightly higher: while Judas is in the lowest *bolgia*, Antenor is in the second of the four regions of the ninth level of Hell, that reserved for political traitors.

¹⁰⁷ Lateran IV, c. 67, De usuriis Iudaeorum. Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta, ed. Josepho Alberigo, et al. 3rd ed. (Bologna: Istituto per le scienze religiose, 1973), 265-266. For English translation, see Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, trans. Norman P. Tanner, 2 vols. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 1. 265.

¹⁰⁸ The Song of Roland: An Analytical Edition, ed. and trans. Gerard J. Brault, 2 vols. (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), 2.55.

definition of traitor . . . fits the characterization of the Saracen princess so well that it is impossible to imagine that her characterization was not deliberate. She abandons both the political and social groups to which she belongs by assisting the Franks to capture the citadel; she actively collaborates with them by ordering their release from the dungeons.¹⁰⁹

While treachery is often a Jewish trait, it is also seen in literary portraits of Saracens. We see the same kind of broken pledges of fealty and broken bonds of loyalty to family and religion in relation to Saracens as we see regarding Jews, especially the prototypical traitor, Judas.

Greeks, like Jews and some Saracens, can be expected to be deceitful and treacherous, but Benoît complicates his depictions of Greeks by making them good-looking, chivalrous and noble. The first Greek the reader encounters is Peleus, king of a large part of Greece. He at first seems an exemplary man in the Roman de Troie: “Peleüs iert uns riches reis/Mout prouz, mout saives, mout corteis” [Peleus was a rich king who was very noble, very wise, and very courteous (715-715)] who rules “Bien e en paiz e saivement” [well and in peace and wisely (720)]. Though he himself is a good ruler, Peleus also has a “cuer felon,” a traitor’s heart (753), since to his list of good attributes is added an overpowering hatred for his nephew, Jason, a noble and powerful young man.¹¹⁰ Fearful that Jason has such a reputation for bravery that he will eject Peleus from his lands and usurp kingship, Peleus treacherously plots to rid himself of his nephew:

¹⁰⁹ Jacqueline de Weever, Sheba’s Daughters: Whitening and Demonizing the Saracen Woman in Medieval French Epic (New York and London: Garland, 1998), 114.

¹¹⁰ The terms “felon” and “felonie” have a range of meanings. According to the Tobler-Lommatzsch Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch, “felon” can mean “tückisch” (insidious), “treulos” (treacherous) and “grausam” (cruel), while the Anglo-Norman Dictionary’s definition of “felon” is “treacherous,” “perfidious,” “disloyal,” “false” and “wicked.” “Felon” seems to encompass both “treachery,” treason or a willful betrayal of fidelity or trust, and “deceit,” a misleading falsehood or deception. See Adalbert Dessau, “L’idée de la trahison au moyen âge et son rôle dans la motivation de quelques chansons de geste,” Cahiers de civilisation médiévale 3 (1960): 23-26 for a discussion of different medieval understandings of treason. Dessau links the words “fel” and “felon” in the tenth-century Passion du Christ to Jewish treachery: “[ils] servent généralement à caractériser les Juifs, qui, selon l’opinion médiévale, avaient trahi leur seigneur.” “L’idée de la trahison au moyen âge,” 23.

Peleüs fu de mal porpens:
Ne vit engin ne lieu ne tens
Com faitement poüst ovrer
De son nevo a mort livrer. (781-784)

[Peleus had evil intentions; he perceived neither the manner (ruse) nor place nor time by which he could work to deliver his nephew to death.]

Peleus soon hears of the Golden Fleece, a ram with golden wool surrounded by many deadly traps, the quest for which no one has survived. Wishing to conceal his hatred for Jason from everyone, Peleus tells him about a deed that will bring him even more honour than he has now, the capture of the Golden Fleece from the island of Colchos. Not only will Jason have even more admiration, Peleus says, but a kingdom, too, since Peleus swears by the gods that he will make Jason his heir when he returns victorious. Peleus trusts that Jason will never return from Colchos and when Jason confidently accepts his uncle's challenge, Peleus feels saved and is satisfied that Jason is no longer a threat. When Jason returns to Greece with the Fleece, however, Peleus must honour his promise to Jason and give no indication of his hatred and dismay. The fact that such a seemingly courteous and good man can also plan the death of his nephew is typical of the Greeks of the Roman de Troie: they are deceitful and treacherous but also troublingly noble and often good-looking, their outward appearance often covering inner treachery.

Jason, the seemingly doomed nephew of Peleus, is similarly a noble, valiant, yet flawed man. He is described in glowing terms by Benoît, whose repeated use of the words "mout" and "grant" speaks to a hero of exaggerated merit:

De grant biauté e de grant pris
E de grant sens, si cum je truis.
Grant force aveit e grant vertu
E par maint regne iert ce seü;
Mout iert corteis e genz e prouz
E mout esteit amez de toz;

Mout par demenot grant pröece
E mout amot gloire e largece. . . (729-736)

[He was very handsome, very renowned and very wise, as I find in my source. He had great strength and great might and this was known in many kingdoms; he was very courteous and noble and valiant and was well-loved by everyone; he acted very courageously and loved glory and generosity.]

Despite all of these exemplary qualities, Jason is in his way just as treacherous as his uncle. When he arrives at Colchos to win the Golden Fleece, he meets the young and beautiful daughter of King Aeëtes, the sorceress Medea. She is consumed by love for Jason and offers to help him win the Fleece if he will promise to marry her; she explains that only through her knowledge can he both gain the Fleece and escape the perils of his quest with his life. Jason pledges his fealty, swearing by all the gods that

“A femme vos esposeraï,
Sor tote rien vos ameraï.
Ma dame sereiz e m’amie,
De mei avreiz la seignorie:
Tant entendrai a vos servir
Que tot ferai vostre plaisir.
Menrai vos en en ma contree,
Ou vos sereiz mout honoree.” (1433-1439)

[I will marry you, I will love you above all. You will be my lady and lover, you will have mastery over me: I will try hard to serve you so that I do all that you please. I will take you to my homeland, where you will be greatly honoured.]

Medea shows him how to capture the Fleece through various magical items, prayers and spells. Jason follows Medea’s instructions, and returns triumphant and unscathed to Colchos.

We learn that Jason, though a noble and courteous young man, never had any intention of keeping his promise to Medea: having taken her virginity and used her magic to obtain the Fleece without harm to himself, Jason feels no compunction about betraying her. Benoît states that “Jason ensi li otreia,/ Mais envers li s’en parjura;/ Covenant ne lei ne li tint” [Thus Jason pledges (himself) to her, but he perjured

himself; he upholds neither his promise nor the law (1635-1637)]. Though Medea is described as having “folie” (2030) for loving Jason too much and foolishly leaving her family to go to Greece, it is clearly Jason’s deceit that is to blame. Benoît leaves out the bloody conclusion of the Jason and Medea story, as told in Euripides, Ovid and other sources, where Medea kills their children out of revenge for Jason’s infidelity. He merely states that Jason left Medea after they had arrived in Greece: “Puis la laissa, si fist grant honte” [He left her, and it was a very great shame (2036)] and “Laidement li menti sa fei” [He wickedly betrayed his oath (2040)]. Even before the action of the siege of Troy begins, Benoît sets up an expectation of what the Greeks will be like through the characters of Peleus and Jason, whose actions precipitate the first destruction of Troy and the Trojan War. Following the expectation set by Benoît’s description of Peleus and Jason, the Greeks who besiege Troy are noble, handsome, brave, courteous, and frequently possess the stereotypically Jewish characteristic of treachery.

Many of the Greeks who besiege Troy are described by Benoît as deceitful, especially Ulysses and Diomedes. Though modern readers would be familiar with the character of the “crafty Ulysses” from Homer and the Greek dramatists, medieval readers did not have access to these texts; they may, however, have had expectations about Ulysses’ character based on their reading of two widely-read works, the Aeneid, where Ulysses is deceitful (“pellacis Vlix,” 2.90) and devises the plan to build the Trojan horse, and the Ilias Latina, where his epithet is “commentor fraudis,” [deviser of deceits, 527, 279].¹¹¹ Virgil’s influential depiction of Ulysses, and Greeks in general, was one of the sources Dante used for his Ulysses, who as a fraudulent counselor, is

¹¹¹ McKinley, ed., “The Medieval Homer.”

engulfed in flame in the eighth circle of the Inferno.¹¹² The Ulysses of the Aeneid “came to dominate the Latin and later medieval tradition, producing the conventional stereotype of a treacherous and sacrilegious warrior that leads directly to Dante’s fraudulent counselor.”¹¹³ The figure of Ulysses in Ovid’s Metamorphoses is depicted in a similar manner: Ajax Telamon says that Ulysses is related to Sisyphus and exactly like him in tricks and fraud (“sanguine cretus/Sisyphio furtisque et fraude simillimus illi,” 13.31-32). Ovid’s Ulysses is also eloquent, as he surpasses even Nestor in eloquence (“Qui licet eloquio fidum quoque Nestora vincat,” 13.63). The best indicator of Ulysses’ character, however, is from Ajax’s indictment that Ulysses “qui clam, qui semper inermis/rem gerit et furtis incautum decipit hostem” [who always does things stealthily, always unarmed, relying upon tricks to catch the enemy off guard (13.103-104)]. Troy falls “not because of military superiority but because of the stratagem—the Ulyssean stratagem—of the Trojan horse.”¹¹⁴

In Benoît’s version of the Troy story, however, Ulysses does not have as many chances to show his duplicitous nature as in other works. Benoît uses and takes advantage of the epithets of treachery attached to Ulysses over many centuries, but does not exploit Ulysses’ character fully. Benoît depicts Ulysses as courteous, intelligent and eloquent, but mendacious and deceitful:

Merveilles esteit biaux parliers,
 Mais en dis mile chevaliers
 N’en aveit un plus tricheor:
 Ja veir ne desist a niul jor;
 De sa boche isseit granz guabeis. (5205-5209)

¹¹² See Appendix B, “Ulysses in the Medieval Troy Tale,” of W. B. Stanford’s The Ulysses Theme: a Study of the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963) for a discussion of medieval depictions of Ulysses.

¹¹³ Teodolinda Barolini, “Ulysses,” The Dante Encyclopedia, ed. Richard Lansing (New York and London: Garland, 2000), 842.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 843.

[He was extremely eloquent, but among ten thousand knights there was no one more deceitful: he never told the truth; boasts came from his mouth.]

This description sets up the expectation that Ulysses will be sly and cunning, though he is also a skilled warrior and participates in many battles. It is when he speaks with the Trojan traitors that his true nature shows through: he is one of the Greek leaders, along with Agamemnon, Idomeneus and Diomedes, who agree to treachery with Antenor and Aeneas. Ulysses is also the character who demands payment of tribute from the Trojans after a false peace treaty between the Trojan traitors and the Greeks has been concluded. The Trojan people believe that the payment of an exorbitant amount of riches means that the Greeks will lift the siege. In reality, Ulysses makes this demand so that the Trojans will not change their minds and hastily repair the breach they made in the city walls before the Trojan horse can be pulled into the city and the goods that the Greeks demanded can be safely taken out. Ulysses, like Diomedes, is calculating and cunning in order to achieve his aims.

Diomedes, too, is a character depicted as bold, strong, and talkative, but deceitful. Along with Ulysses, he helps to take the Palladion from Troy, the statue of Minerva that protects the city from harm. Antenor, the Trojan traitor, bribes the priest who guards the Palladion and delivers the statue to the Greeks. Ulysses and Diomedes help to steal secretly the Trojans' source of hope for the survival of their city, a dishonourable deed. Like Ulysses, Diomedes is depicted as deceitful in Benoît's list of Greek heroes: "La chiere aveit mout felensse: / Cist fist mainte false pramesse" [Deceit could be seen in his face: he made many false promises (5214-5213)]. These false promises are mostly to do not with military trickery, but with another type of deceit: falseness in love.

In a story most familiar from Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, which is examined in Chapter Three, Diomedes becomes Briseida's suitor when she is forced to leave Troy

for the Greek camp at the insistence of her father, the Trojan traitor Calchas. Diomedes, immediately smitten, assails her with flowery speech. It is apparent that Diomedes does suffer the pains of love for Briseida, as she is known in this work, though when Diomedes has finally gained Briseida's affection, she laments that she has been susceptible to flattering speech; she has abandoned her noble Trojan lover, Troilus, for a Greek who speaks incessantly of his love for her. In Diomedes's courtship of Briseida and Ulysses' theft of the Palladion and demand for riches we can see representations of Greek treachery: both characters take undue advantage of situations where it is not honourable to do so. As he does with the other Greek traitor, Sinon, Dante puts both Ulysses and Diomedes in his *Inferno*, this time in the eighth *bolgia* of the eighth circle of hell, where their souls suffer in fire for the theft of the Palladion and the deceit of the Trojan horse. Though the crime punished in this *bolgia* is not treachery, but rather the actions of deceivers who give fraudulent counsel, treachery and fraudulent counsel are here interrelated. Greek eloquence, epitomized by Diomedes and Ulysses, manifests itself as deceptive, flattering counsel, undermining and leading to the destruction of those who are misled by the words of the Greeks.

The episode that most clearly demonstrates Greek treachery, for modern readers as well as medieval, is the use of Trojan horse. In Benoît's version of the Troy story, it is Calchas, the Trojan traitor and soothsayer, who tells the Greeks to build the horse, while in the Aeneid, it is Ulysses who formulates the plan. In most works on the Trojan War, including the Roman de Troie, the wooden horse is built by the Greeks and offered to the Trojans as a (false) repayment for the Greek theft of the Palladion, the protective statue of Minerva that had ensured the security of Troy. The Trojan traitors Aeneas, Antenor and others make a secret agreement with the Greeks by which they gain riches

and safety in return for their help against Troy, which is clearly an act of treason:

“Porparlee ont la traison” [They discussed treason (24915)]. Consequently, Antenor and Aeneas sway the opinion of the Trojans towards accepting a false peace accord with the Greeks despite King Priam’s misgivings, a peace that Diomedes and Ulysses swear to Priam they will uphold.

The Greeks, with the help of the traitors, convince the Trojans to accept the wooden horse into the city as an offering to Minerva from the Greeks, an act that Benoît laments: “Ha! las, com mar l’ont porparlee!” [Alas, they have negotiated badly! (25893)]. The horse is so large that the Trojans have to tear down part of the city walls to accommodate it, leaving a gaping breach in the walls that had protected them for the ten-year-long siege. Thinking that the representatives of the Trojans, Antenor, Aeneas and the rest of the traitors, have negotiated a peace with the Greeks, and seeing that the Greeks have burned their tents and have apparently sailed away, the Trojans drag the horse into the city, then spend the night in revelry. The Greeks sail back to Troy during the night, and Sinon, a Greek hidden within the horse, signals for the troops to enter the city. The Greeks then slaughter nearly all Trojans, burn and raze the city. This is the prototypical example of Greek treachery: the Greeks take advantage of the treason of their enemies, conclude a false peace treaty which they pretend to uphold, and then in the night fall upon their unsuspecting opponents, many of whom have never taken part in battle. The fault inherent in the Greeks is that they are dishonourable: they will stop at nothing to claim victory, and are not strong enough to win by military means, but need the “inside help” of the Trojan traitors.

Cruel Greeks as Saracens

The kind of violence perpetrated by the Greeks in their sack of Troy is typical of them. Apart from the massacre of nearly all Trojans, there are many other instances throughout the Roman de Troie which show their cruelty and barbarity: the killing of Hector by Achilles; the treatment of Penthesilea's body; the slaughter of Priam, Polyxena, and Hecuba. In their penchant for cruelty and violence, Greeks are like Saracens. Intolerance and cruelty are "qualities [that] are frequently present in the treatment of the Saracens at the hands of the Christians."¹¹⁵ The cruelty attributed to Muhammad is detailed in Vincent of Beauvais' Speculum historiale a widely-read and very popular work: Muhammad himself or one of his followers would "proditorie" (treacherously) cut the throats of those followers, be they sleeping or awake, who dared criticize or contradict him and "his evil doings."¹¹⁶

In literature, the theme of Saracen cruelty can be seen especially in texts about Saracen raids into Christian lands, which were sometimes based on historical incursions of Muslims into France and Italy.¹¹⁷ In texts such as the Chanson de Guillaume and Les Narbonnais, the Saracens cruelly beat already chained Christian prisoners. In the Destruction de Rome, written in the thirteenth century, Saracens set fire to churches, fortifications and cities, accepting no ransom but massacring everyone, men, women,

¹¹⁵ William Wistar Comfort, "The Literary Role of the Saracens in the French Epic," PMLA 55.3 (1940), 647.

¹¹⁶ Vincent of Beauvais, Speculum historiale (Douai, 1624; rpt. Graz, 1965). "Faciebat etiam quod peius est, ut si qui ei in istis suis maleficiis contradicerent, vel in aliquo eum reprehenderent statim eos ubicumque sibi contingeret, aut per se, aut per suos, dormientes sive vigilantes proditorie iugularet" [He also did something that was worse, that if any should contradict him in his evil deeds, or chastise him about anything, wherever this happened to him he would immediately slit their throats, be they sleeping or awake, in a treacherous manner, either by his own hand or through his men (23.43)]. See Michel Tarayre, "L'image de Mahomet et de l'Islame dans une grande encyclopédie du Moyen Âge, le Speculum historiale de Vincent de Beauvais," Le Moyen Âge 109.2 (2003): 313-343.

¹¹⁷ According to Paul Bancourt, the violence inherent in the *chansons de geste* becomes cruelty when it is gratuitous and exercised on the innocent: "Devenue gratuite, elle s'exerce sur des êtres sans défense, des enfants, des femmes, des prisonniers. La violence s'appelle alors cruauté." Les Musulmans dans les chansons de geste, 1.114

children and even religious. They rape women and nuns, and commit sacrilege by breaking icons and crucifixes. The Chanson d'Aspremont details similar carnage, as Saracens from Africa invade Italy and decapitate noblemen, kill children, mutilate women and sell maidens into slavery.¹¹⁸ According to Paul Bancourt, "Le raid sarrasin est devenu un cliché épique dont l'âme est essentiellement la conception dramatisée du Sarracin inhumain, violent, cruel."¹¹⁹ Stereotypical Saracen cruelty can also be seen in scenes of rape in Floovant¹²⁰ and La Chevalerie d'Ogier,¹²¹ and in scenes that take place in Saracen prisons in many texts. Saracens are frequently, though not always, depicted as cruel because they practice unnecessary violence upon the innocent or defenseless. Greeks play a similar role in the Roman de Troie, where they commit gratuitous acts of violence on the unprotected and unwary. As we shall see later, the violence of the Greeks stands in opposition to that of Christians, which is always justified and usually necessary.

This kind of Greek cruelty, highly reminiscent of Saracen cruelty, is apparent in the treatment of the body of Penthesilia, the Queen of the Amazons, by the Greek hero Diomedes. After the Greeks have killed Penthesilia, who had fought on the side of the Trojans, Diomedes agrees with Neoptolemus and opposes the suggestion that her body be buried and have funeral rites:

Sor toz en est fels e engrés.

¹¹⁸ "A maint Franc home orent colpé les ciés / Et les mameles ostees des molliers," 2954-2955; "Et homes mors et enfans decolpés / Prisons amainent qu'il ont encaenés, / Enfans e dames loiés et acoplés; / Assés en ont et mors et desmembés," 2966-2969. La Chanson d'Aspremont, ed. Louis Brandin, 2 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1919-1920).

¹¹⁹ Bancourt, Les Musulmans dans les chansons de geste, 1.130.

¹²⁰ In one scene, the hero Floovant sees three Saracens abducting a young girl in order to rape her: "Se vit une pucelle que Sarrazins an guient. / Aus espees, des plaz, mout forment la maitriënt, / Et ele crie et hue et plore," 259-261. Floovant, ed. Sven Andolf (Uppsala: Almqvist, 1941).

¹²¹ "XX. Sarrasin, Dex confondre lor geste! / Ensus de l'ost ont la puchele traite; / En un boscel li vorent force fere. / Mahomet jurent et le loi que il servent / Tot lor voloir feront de la pucele," 11187-11191. La Chevalerie d'Ogier de Danemarche, ed. Mario Eusebi (Milan and Varese: Istituto editoriale cisalpino, 1963).

A toz vout fere otreier
Qu'a chiens la dongent a mangier
O en un des flueves gitee.
...
Damedeus trestoz les confunde,
Car molt i firent que vilein. (24452-24461)

[More than any other he (Diomedes) is cruel and ferocious. He wants all to agree that (Penthesilea's) body should be given to dogs to eat or thrown in one of the rivers. . . . May God confound all of them [the Greeks] since they all behave like wicked men.]

In calling down the wrath of God, Benoît clearly condemns Diomedes's and the other Greeks' actions, including those of Achilles.

Like Homer's Achilles, the character of Achilles in Benoît's work is brave, handsome, cruel and proud: "Achillès fu mout orgoillos, / Cruëus e fel e aïros" [Achilles was very proud, cruel and treacherous and angry (14182-14183)]. Unlike the story of the Iliad, Benoît's Achilles does not drag Hector's body, tied to his horse's tail, before the walls of Troy; in the Roman de Troie, he does this to Troilus' body. This scene, though featuring Hector's body, appears in the Ilias Latina, so Benoît's reader would not be unduly surprised: Achilles' actions, mad with rage, have been seen before. It would be a surprise to the reader, however, that Achilles would do such an indignity to the body of Troilus, since the mutilation of Hector's body made much more sense: it was Hector who killed Achilles' friend, Patroclus. When Achilles drags Troilus' body behind his chariot, it is an act of wanton cruelty.

Achilles, though he does not drag Hector's body around the walls of Troy, does kill him in a cruel and underhanded way: when Hector has his back turned in battle, Achilles takes advantage of Hector's inattention and stabs him. At the moment when Hector is not on his guard, he can be regarded as an unarmed opponent; it is neither valorous nor fair to slay him. It can be argued that the character of Achilles in Benoît's story is even crueller than that in the Iliad: he does an indignity to the body of a person

who does not deserve it, and kills the most valiant of men in a treacherous, cruel manner.

For Benoît, the worst grief caused by the sack of Troy comes from the crimes committed by Pyrrhus, or Neoptolemus, son of Achilles. Led by the Trojan traitors, he and other Greeks find the Trojan king Priam at the altar of Apollo in his palace. Pyrrhus mercilessly slaughters the helpless man, even before his god's altar, which becomes totally covered in blood (26143-26150). After the fall of the city, Pyrrhus cruelly slits the throat of the innocent Polyxena, a daughter of Priam; it was to bargain for her hand in marriage that Achilles entered Troy and was ambushed and killed by Paris and others. Pyrrhus kills Polyxena to avenge his father and to speed winds favourable to the Greeks on their homeward journey (26375-26549). Pyrrhus is a merciless killer, bent on revenge; like the stereotypical Saracens of some texts, he does not spare the helpless. Pyrrhus' murder of Priam is paralleled in a passage in the Destruction de Rome in which the Saracen Fierabras kills the helpless pope at the altar of St. Peter's: "Fierenbras dejuste l'auter ad l'apostoile trovee,/ La teste tost luy coupa ove le brand asceree,/ Et Jhesu receut l'alme, le Roi de magesté" [Fierabras found the pope in front of the altar; right away he cut off the pope's head with his sharp blade, and Jesus, the king of majesty, received the pope's soul (1263-1265)]. The violence against the helpless and the holy in these two scenes makes the identification of Greeks with Saracens clearer.

The cruelty of individual Greeks is not as outrageous as the violence of the Greeks in general. Like the Saracens, cruelty seems to be a trait inherent in their nation. The Greeks are savage in their sack of Troy: they slaughter the long-suffering Trojans who believe that they are at last able to rest after they have concluded a peace treaty with the Greeks and their enemies have apparently sailed away. The attack is of a

severity that Benoît claims had never been seen before nor ever will be seen again until the end of the world. On a signal given by Sinon, the Greeks use the breach in the city walls, made to accommodate the Trojan horse, to enter the city after nightfall and kill twenty thousand Trojans before daybreak:

Li granz palés de marbre bis
Sunt asailli e depecié,
cil dedenz tuit detrenchié.
N'i espargnerent riens vivanz,
Ocïent mere e enfanz. (26054-26058)

As bras des meres alaitanz
Sunt detrenchié lor biaux enfanz;
Aprés funt d'eles autretant.
L'ocise par i est si grant. (26081-4)

[The great palaces of brown marble are assailed and destroyed, those within are all massacred, they (the Greeks) do not leave anyone alive, they kill mothers and children.]

[Beautiful children are massacred in the arms of their nursing mothers; afterwards the Greeks do the same to the mothers. Here the slaughter is great.]

In these two instances of shocking brutality to innocent mothers and children, we can see a link between the cruelty of the Greeks sacking Troy and the cruelty of the Saracens invading Europe.

This Saracen cruelty is exemplified by the actions of Fierabras and the other Saracens in the Destruction de Rome. The Saracens kill pregnant women and their unborn children, ["Quant trouvent femme gros le queor li one crevee,/Et son petit enfant ont mort et enfondree" (472-473)], a scene reminiscent of the Greeks' slaughter of the Trojan women and infants. Similarly, when Fierabras' forces enter Rome, Fierabras commands

qe tutz seient detrenchee,
Femmes et enfanz, moigne et abbee,
E prestres et nenals, ne seit un ransonnee:
La lei as cristïens huy serra abeïsee. (1248-1251)

[that all should be slaughtered, women and children, monks and abbots, and priests and nuns, none will be ransomed: the law of the Christians will be shamed.]¹²²

While Fierabras kills innocents to harm Christianity, and the Greeks do not have a religious motive for their slaughter, both nations use gratuitous violence and do not spare noncombatants in war.

Crusade Framework

As well as their use of cruelty, there is another, perhaps more striking area in which Greeks and Saracens are similar: Greeks in the Roman de Troie can be seen as a typological substitution for the Saracens of the crusades, fighting against Trojans, who seem like Christians. Evidence for a Saracen-Greek reading of the text can be found in the genre of Benoît's work, events contemporary to its composition, and several of its characters. These elements are suggestive of crusades, crusade literature and works featuring conflicts between Christians and Saracens. I shall discuss in the chapter on Alexander how, alternatively, Greeks are crusaders in the Roman de toute chevalerie, as witnessed by the characteristics of its hero, Alexander the Great, and villain, King Darius of Persia, as well as by links between the romance and other works of crusade literature. We can here see Alexander in a positive light because he is identified *in bono* with virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews, and himself becomes a proto-Christian. The Roman de Troie and Roman de toute chevalerie provide examples of the variable characterization of the Greeks: in this typological framework, the Greeks are both *in bono* Christians and *in malo* Saracens. Observed from this vantage, Greeks are both virtuous, nearly-Christian heroes and violent enemies of the Christians.

¹²² La Destruction de Rome, ed. Luciano Formisano (London: Anglo-Norman Texts Society, 1990).

Though the Roman de Troie is necessarily not set in the historical period of the crusades, and does not feature crusader heroes or religious zeal, there are several reasons why we can see it in a “crusade framework.” The first reason is its genre: it is a siege poem. As Malcolm Hebron has argued, in some medieval texts, “The siege itself becomes a model of Christendom defending both its secular and spiritual identity against invasion by heathendom.”¹²³ “Spiritual identity” and the conflict between “heathendom” and Christianity do not play a part in the Roman de Troie; in fact, both sides ostensibly worship the same gods, such as Apollo, Minerva, and many others. The Roman de Troie does not feature the religious conflict we find in crusade literature, that of Islam versus Christianity. But if, as Hebron argues, the genre of siege poem is associated with crusade, it is possible to identify the defending Trojans as Christians, and the besieging Greeks as Saracens, without necessarily having the expected religious conflict.

There is another reason for seeing the Roman de Troie as having a “crusade framework”: romances, such as this one, often reflect contemporary events and concerns.¹²⁴ Though it is a much later example, romances written in various Western countries during the Ottoman Turkish incursions in the Mediterranean in the fifteenth century reflect this expansion into Europe.¹²⁵ There was a desire then, as in the twelfth

¹²³Malcolm Hebron, The Medieval Siege: Theme and Image in Middle English Romance (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 90.

¹²⁴ For example, the twelfth-century epic Le Siège de Barbastre describes the siege of Barbastro by the Duke of Aquitaine in 1063.

¹²⁵ According to Nancy Bisaha, the romance L’Aspramonte, written by Florentine Andrea da Barbarino, ca. 1371-1431/1432, “seems to draw much of its inspiration from the Turkish advance, mirroring Italy’s growing fear of Ottoman designs in the Adriatic. This is reflected in the plot line’s considerable focus on struggles against the Saracens.” The work deals Charlemagne repelling Saracens attacking Sicily, southern Italy and Vienna, which was perhaps “intended as a message of hope to Barberino’s countrymen.” Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 31. In a similar vein, Stephen Shepherd describes the sixteenth-century romance Capystranus as a reworking of the Sege of Melayne in the light of Ottoman Turkish military activities. See Stephen H. A. Shepherd, “‘This Grete Journee’: The Sege of Melayne,” in Romance

century, for literary chivalric heroes to defend Christendom. The Roman de Troie was written in an earlier state of unrest, between the Second and Third Crusades. The wildly unsuccessful Second Crusade was spurred on by the taking of the Latin Christian city of Edessa in Palestine by a Seljuk Turkish siege. The failure of the Second Crusade to take back Edessa, and the concurrent strengthening of the Seljuk Turks in the Holy Land, would have been sources of anxiety in Europe; perhaps these contemporary events served as impetus for the way Benoît wrote parts of the Roman de Troie. Medieval readers, having heard of the recent, successful, Turkish siege of a Christian city, and the failure of the Second Crusade, may have had reason to identify with the embattled Trojans, invaded and besieged by a cruel and treacherous force. They were meant to take sides, and empathize with the Trojans. The popular myth of European national descent from the Trojan diaspora, discussed in Chapter Two, contributes to the empathy for the Trojans felt by these Western readers.

Both historical and allegorical sieges point to how Greeks can be Saracens and Trojans, Christians. These allegorical sieges, the “sieges of the soul,” are found in St. Cyprian’s Liber de zelo et de livore, written in the third century. St. Cyprian uses the image of a besieged place when explaining sin, “where he compares the approaches of the devil to those of an enemy attempting to break into a protected place.”¹²⁶ Sieges of the soul are featured in twelfth-century homiletic writings like that of Honorius of Autun, who uses the image of a fortress under siege to talk about vices.¹²⁷ In these

in Medieval England, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows, and Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 113-131, esp. 121.

¹²⁶ Hebron, The Medieval Siege, 137. “Circuit ille nos singulos, et tamquam hostis clausos obsidens, muros explorat, et tentat an sit pars aliqua murorum minus stabilis et minus fida, cujus aditu ad interiora penetratur.” St. Cyprian, Liber de zelo et livore, II. Cited in Hebron, 137.

¹²⁷ “Cujusque autem fidelis corpus hujus civitatis castellum praedicatur, quod ab anima principe et populo virtutum inhabitatur, in qua contra exercitum viciorum decertatur.” Honorius of Autun, Speculum ecclesiae, “In conventu populi.” Cited in Hebron, The Medieval Siege, 145.

works, the image of a besieged stronghold represents a soul threatened by the devil and sin. In fact, in the twelfth-century commentary on the Aeneid attributed to Bernard Silvestris, Bernard spiritually or morally interprets the Greeks attacking Troy as vices attacking the body: he defines the Dardanide, or Trojans, as “qui corpus quod per Troiam intellegimus contra vicia deffendere volunt” [those who wish to defend the body (by which we understand Troy) against vice” (6.482)], while “Danaos Troiam infestantes diximus esse vicia vel corporeas necessitates corpus vexantes” [the Greeks attacking Troy are vices or bodily necessities vexing the body (6.489)].¹²⁸ The Greeks take the city when the body yields to vice, in the same way that the soul yields to the devil in the “siege of the soul” of St. Cyprian and others. Greeks are personified as carnal vices by Bernard Silvestris; in this, they share a characteristic with typical Saracens of *chansons de geste* and romance. Just as Greeks represent vices attacking the body, Saracens were often accused of practicing carnal vices.

According to Norman Daniel, “the condemnation of Islam by some Christians [follows] two chief categories, *luxoriosus* and *bellicosus*.”¹²⁹ The stereotypical Saracen trait of cruelty and wanton violence falls into the category of *bellicosus*, examples of which we have already seen. *Luxoriosus* is sometimes misunderstood to refer to the modern sense of “luxury.” It is better understood here in its medieval sense: the bodily vice of lechery. Mark D. Jordan gives a thorough treatment of this term in his book The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology, noting that *luxuria* is “the source of

¹²⁸ Commentum quod dicitur Bernardi Silvestris super sex libros Eneidos Virgilii, ed. Julian Ward Jones and Elizabeth Frances Jones (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1977). Translation found in Commentary on the First Six Books of the Aeneid by Bernard Silvestris, trans. Earl G. Schreiber and Thomas E. Maresca (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979).

¹²⁹ Norman Daniel, Heroes and Saracens, 16.

sinfulness in diverse acts, many of them having to do with the genitals.”¹³⁰ The word is also one of those that is “referentially and genetically connected to some terms that we use, such as ‘homosexual activity’ or ‘Sodomy.’”¹³¹ Saracens are accused of *luxuria* both in literature and in theological writings. The imagined sexual appetite of the Saracen was enormous, including homosexuality and bestiality: as Daniel states, “The accusation was, as it still is, frequently made, that Islam either permits, or else that it encourages, unnatural intercourse between people of the same or of opposite sexes, and, indeed, any sexual act whatever, for its own sake.”¹³² Jeffrey Jerome Cohen notes that “Anti-Islamic polemic and literary texts alike agreed that the Saracens permitted polygamy, adultery, concubinage, and sodomy.”¹³³ John Boswell documents the Christian preoccupation with Saracen sexual deviance and sodomy, noting especially the works of Guibert of Nogent and Jacques de Vitry.¹³⁴ This imputed behaviour was

¹³⁰ Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 29.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³² Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: the Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960), 141. Vincent of Beauvais includes claims of Muhammad’s lechery in his *Speculum historiale*, esp. 23.44: “quadraginta viros in coitum potentissimos fortitudine libidinis adaequare.” Medieval lives of Muhammad share in this legend: the thirteenth-century Old French *Roman de Mahomet* of Alexandre du Pont has Muhammad tell his followers that every man should take ten wives and every woman ten husbands (1813-1822). Alexandre du Pont, *Le Roman de Mahomet*, ed. and trans. Yvan G. Lepage (Louvain and Paris: Peeters, 1996). The supposed lechery of Saracens was reported by medieval writers and churchmen such as Jacques de Vitry in his *Liber orientalis* (see note 139). Riccoldo da Montecroce notes this in his *Disputatio contra Saracenos et Alchoranum* (“concedit sodomiam tam in masculo quam in femina,” Disp. 6), who all claimed that “unnatural vice” was not only permitted in the Qur’an, but also practiced at Muhammad’s command (Paris, BnF, Ms. Lat. 4230, unpublished, cited in Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 143).

¹³³ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “On Saracen Enjoyment,” 125.

¹³⁴ John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 279-281. “Per hoc latenter vitium Sodomiticum hotis nature in populo suo introduxit. Unde ipsi et ex maxima parte non solum in utroque sexu, sed etiam in brutis turpitudinem abusive operantes, facti sunt, sicut equus et mulus quibus non est intellectus.” Jacques de Vitry, *Libri duo, quorum prior orientalis, sive Hierosolymitanae; alter, occidentalis historiae nomine inscribitur*, ed. Franciscus Moschus (Douay, 1597, rpt. 1971), vol. 1, ch. 5, p. 18. “Et quum si miseris permissa suo ipsorum arbitrio multiplicitas feminarum, parum est apud eos nisi et dignitas tantae spurcitiae volutabro commaculetur marium.” Guibert de Nogent, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, 1-5, in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens occidentaux* (Paris: l’Académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1879), 4: 131-132. Boswell argues that “Serious early polemics against Islam had sometimes criticized Muslim marital

scandalous to medieval readers, and served to set Saracens even further apart from Christians, who, at least in their own minds, would by no means take part in such activities.

In Malcolm Barber's view, Islam was presented as an enemy in Christian writings in several ways: "Muslim belief had to be disproved or mocked, and Muslim social behaviour distorted and denigrated. If the stories could be enlivened by an appeal to listeners' sexual prurience, then so much the better."¹³⁵ In her poem about the Christian martyr Pelagius, *ca.* 1000, Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim describes how the Saracen king Abderahemen ('Abd al-Rahmân) lusts after the Christian boy, Pelagius. When Pelagius rebuffs his advances, Abderahemen decapitates the boy: "For Hrotsvitha, 'Abd al-Rahmân's homosexual desire is directly inspired by the demons whose idols he worships: his subsequent desire to destroy the beautiful young boy he cannot possess shows him as a quintessential despot."¹³⁶ The Saracen king is shown to be a "demonically inspired despot whose 'barbaric rite' consists of idolatry, homosexuality, and the destruction of his enemies."¹³⁷ The Saracen trait of lechery, according to Tolan's reading of Hrotsvitha, is linked to the practice of the Saracen religion; it is integral to being a Saracen. Bernard Silvestris' spiritual reading of the Greeks as carnal vices, though it does not have to do with the religion they practice, provides a strong connection between Greeks and a trait inherent to Saracens.

While the link between Saracen and Greek bodily vices and the genre of siege poem present clues to the crusading sentiment of the poem, the best evidence for its

practices but did not focus on Islamic tolerance of homosexuality. From the time of the First Crusade, however, accounts of Muslim sexual mores increasingly concentrated on behavior which was atypical or repugnant to the majority of Christians." *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, 279.

¹³⁵ Malcolm Barber, "How the West Saw Medieval Islam," *History Today* 47.5 (1997), 45.

¹³⁶ Tolan, *Saracens*, 107.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

“crusade framework” is Benoît’s addition of several notable characters to his story. In addition to the usual cast of heroes, duplicitous and courtly, the Greeks have on their side “Huners, fiz Mahon” [Hunier, son of Muhammad (9495)]. This character is original to Benoît, and is a striking and anachronistic addition to the Troy story. As Muhammad was born over one thousand years after Homer wrote the Iliad, there were necessarily no Saracens at the siege of Troy. The character of Huners brings a crusade feeling to the poem, and suggests that the Greeks should be seen if not as Saracens, then allies of Saracens besieging a Christian city. The word “Mahon” appears in other works featuring crusades and Saracens, including the crusade poem La Chanson d’Antioche, where the term refers to one of the Saracen gods, or an idol of one of these gods: “Et sor icels envoit male confusion/Ki croient et aorent Apollin et Mahon!” [May (God) confound those people who believe in Apollin and Muhammad! (64-65)].¹³⁸ As well, in the Vie de Saint Georges by Simon de Freine, written in the late twelfth century, “Mahon” is used to mean Mohammad (“Ren ne vout vers Deu mesprendre/E en Mahon ne vout crere,” 10-11).¹³⁹ Aymeri de Narbonne, written by Bertrand de Bar-sur-Aube in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, also features “Mahon,” here meaning a Saracen idol (“Des synagogues fist les Mahons oster,” 1224).¹⁴⁰ Having the son of Muhammad on the side of the Greeks leads the reader to make assumptions about the two parties fighting the Trojan War: the Greeks, with a character such as Huners, look like Saracens. By the same token, the character of Huners being on the Greek side can make the Trojans look like besieged Christians.

¹³⁸ La Chanson d’Antioche, ed. Suzanne Duparc-Quioç, 2 vols. (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1977-1978).

¹³⁹ Simund de Freine, “La Vie de saint Georges,” Les Oeuvres de Simund de Freine, ed. John E. Matzke (Paris: Librairie Firmin Didot, 1909).

¹⁴⁰ Aymeri de Narbonne, ed. Louis Demaison, 2 vols. (Paris: Librairie Firmin Didot, 1887). There are many more examples from medieval literature of “Mahon” referring to a Saracen idol, including the Old French Chanson de Roland and Jeu de saint Nicolas, and the Middle English Sowdone of Babylone and Digby Mary Magdalen play. For in-depth discussion, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, “Imagining Islam.”

As well as Huners, there is another character in the Roman de Troie that suggests a Greek-Saracen link. This is another Greek ally, the Pharaoh of Egypt who drowned in the Red Sea while chasing the Hebrews, “[un] riche pharaon/ Qui fu neia en la mer Roge” (13820-13821); again, he is original and unique to Benoît’s work. Though this character does not provide as direct a connection to Christian-Saracen conflicts as Huners, his presence repays further examination. He is obviously not a positive figure in the Bible, where he is the enemy of the Jews and is a polytheist attacking monotheists, the typological precursors of Christians. As the enemy of the Trojans in this text, the Pharaoh can be seen as a pagan assaulting the Christians.

The presence of the Pharaoh in the Roman de Troie is noteworthy, as it recalls the Egyptian slavery of the Jews in Exodus. In the flexible typology of “variable characterization,” one group represents another: the Old Testament framework of the Hebrew exodus makes the Greeks Egyptians, as they are allied with the Pharaoh, and the Trojans, whom the Greeks are fighting, Jews. Since these Jews whom the Pharaoh oppressed in Exodus lived before the Incarnation, they can be seen by medieval Christians as virtuous: they did not have the benefit of Christ’s life or death, having lived before his birth, and are therefore righteous monotheists. In medieval literary and theological texts, pre-Incarnation Jews are often seen as the prefiguration of the Christian community.¹⁴¹ In the presence of the Pharaoh, one can see three levels of identification: the first, the literal level, has the Pharaoh being allied with the Greeks against the Trojans; the second level of identification has the Pharaoh’s enemies in this text, the Trojans, look like Jews since this Pharaoh oppressed the Jews in the Bible; the

¹⁴¹ Christians, through these texts, see themselves as the *verus Israel*, the true descendents of the patriarchs. See Akbari, “Placing the Jews,” 36-37.

third level identifies the pre-Incarnation Jews with Christians, making the Trojans Christians, and their enemies, the Greeks, Saracens.

As well as having typological significance, Huners and the Pharaoh are inserted into the Troy story in the Roman de Troie in order, perhaps, to give the Trojan War more contemporary resonance. The Pharaoh's Egyptian birth would have been a reminder to the reader of the Saracen identification set up by the paternity of Huners and elsewhere: Egyptians of the twelfth century were Muslim and fighting the crusaders in the Holy Land. Egyptians figure frequently in the Saracen hordes of literature: for instance, the Saracens in Aymeri de Narbonne include "Li rois d'Egipte" (3607). As well, Cairo is often called "Babylon" in medieval literature.¹⁴² According to Gerard J. Brault, "Babylon" in the Song of Roland "and in most other medieval French epics refers to Old Cairo in Egypt, the residence of the Fatimite caliphs."¹⁴³ This could serve to make the Egyptians, as "Babylonians," seem even more like the enemies of Christians, since it was the Babylonians who blasphemously constructed the tower of Babel. Also, seeing the Pharaoh and Huners as Saracens makes sure the reader sides with the Trojans, who, set against characters like these, must be identified with Christians.

The fact that Huners is a Saracen who appears anachronistically in a text about the Trojan War is a reminder that Saracens function in synchronic time; that is, they are the same throughout time, during both the war at Troy, and in the twelfth century, during the crusades. Catherine Sanok has investigated different modes of time in her article about the appearance of Saracens in another *roman antique*, the Roman de Thèbes.

¹⁴² For example, Cairo is identified as "Babylon" in lines 78 and 204 of the thirteenth-century Destruction de Rome, and in Jean, Sire de Joinville's Vie de saint Louis, section 144.

¹⁴³ The Song of Roland, ed. Brault, 1:61.

She notes “the syncretism characteristic of many Western medieval representations of Islam” where “Muslims occupy a homogeneous temporality that does not distinguish past from present.”¹⁴⁴ Edward Said also explains that synchronic time is a “key representational strategy of Orientalism: it portrays Islam in a homogeneous time, in which past and present are not differentiated. A synchronic perspective excludes Islam from the narratives of historical progress that define the West.”¹⁴⁵ When Saracens, like Huners, are the same throughout time, they are shut out of this “progress”: they do not change, whereas Christianity arises from Judaism, and the West eclipses the East in temporal, and religious, power and legitimacy. Not only does Huners operate in synchronic time, but his Greek allies do as well, a topic that I shall treat further.

Though he is not a Saracen, there is another character in the Roman de Troie who points to a Saracen identity for the Greeks, and a crusade framework for the text. The description of one of the typical Greek heroes, the crafty Ulysses, is very similar to that of Blancandrin, the Saracen who in the Chanson de Roland plots with Ganelon to deceive Charlemagne and kill Roland. Both Ulysses and Blancandrin are cunning (“saives”) and good knights (“Blancandrins fut des plus saives paiens,” Chanson de Roland, 24; “Ulixés, li buens parlers, / Li saives e li engignos,” Roman de Troie, 26292-26293). Like Blancandrin, who shrewdly plots the death of Roland and the Twelve Peers, Ulysses plots with the Trojan traitors to bring the horse inside Troy. The Chanson de Roland, as it features religious fervour and Christian-Saracen conflict, has been called a crusade poem by numerous critics. As John V. Tolan argues, “The ideology of the Chanson de Roland is the same as that of the crusading chronicles with which it is

¹⁴⁴ Catherine Sanok, “Almoravides at Thebes: Islam and European Identity in the Roman de Thèbes,” Modern Language Quarterly 64.3 (2003), 282.

¹⁴⁵ Edward W. Said, Orientalism (New York: Vintage, 1994), 240. Cited in Sanok, 277.

roughly contemporary.”¹⁴⁶ This crusading ideology can be seen in the fact that in both crusade chronicles and in the Chanson de Roland, the Saracens worship idols of Mahomet, Apollin and Tervagant, which prove to be powerless against the Christians; the Saracens themselves are often depicted as monstrous; and the poem ends with Christian victory over paganism. The best and bravest Saracens in the Chanson de Roland are quite similar to the best and bravest Greeks in the Roman de Troie: they are physically well-formed, great and valiant warriors, but deficient; the Greeks because they are treacherous and cruel, and the Saracens because they refuse to accept the Christian faith. Through an examination of the genre and characters of the Roman de Troie, it is possible to view the text in a “crusade framework” and see the Greeks as Saracens besieging the Christian city of Troy.

The crusade framework of the poem is complicated by some of the descriptive terms that Benoît uses to illustrate the sack of Troy by the Greeks: not only can the Greeks be Saracens, they can be crusaders as well. In the description of Trojan blood running through the streets of the city, there is an echo of the violence and cruelty of the crusaders of the First Crusade taking the Temple of Jerusalem in 1099¹⁴⁷:

N'i remeint povre n'orphenin,
 Jovne ni viell cui il ateignent.
 De l'ocise li palés teignent,
 Tuit decorent li pavement:
 De sanc sunt moillié e sanglent.
 N'i a rue, n'i a sentier
 Ou l'om n'entrast tresqu'al braier. (26064-26070)

[The poor, orphans, young and old whom they (the Greeks) find do not survive. The palaces are stained from the slaughter, all the pavements stream: they are wet and

¹⁴⁶ Tolan, Saracens, 125.

¹⁴⁷ This similarity is also noted by the recent editors and translators of the Roman de Troie as a “Possible écho, comme au v. 24372, de la prise de Jérusalem par les Croisés en 1099 et du bain de sang qui marqua alors la prise du Temple.” Benoît de Sainte-Maure, Roman de Troie, ed. and trans. Emmanuèle Baumgartner and Françoise Viellard, 657, n. for l. 26066.

bloody with blood. There is neither a street nor a path where men do not wade up to their thighs.]

The motif of wading through deep blood also appears in a scene where the Greeks are defeating the Trojans in the last battle: “Tresqu’as ventres sunt li destrier / En sanc vermeil” [The war-horses are in red blood up to their chests (24372-24373)]. The conceit of wading through the blood of enemies originally appears in crusade chronicles.

Details like this are present in the chronicles of Raymond d’Aguilers, Fulcher of Chartres, the anonymous Gesta Francorum and others; they also appear in vernacular romances based on crusade chronicles. In these texts, the crusaders walk and ride in Jerusalem through enemy blood up to their ankles, knees or even bridle reins.¹⁴⁸

Scenes like this are also typical to later medieval siege stories. For example, the Romans besieging Jerusalem in the Siege of Jerusalem are described as riding up to their reins in the blood of the slaughtered Jews (566-572).¹⁴⁹ In texts like the Siege of Jerusalem, the reader is meant to sympathize with the victims of the slaughter. This is also the case in the Roman de Troie, as it seems that Benoît means for the readers to identify briefly with the Greeks (as crusaders), but also link the spilling of innocent Trojan blood to the spilling of the blood of innocent Saracen women and children within Jerusalem by Christian crusaders. That the description of the Greeks invading Troy would be so similar to that of the crusaders taking the Temple is curious: perhaps the echoes of blood running through the streets were meant to show disapproval for the atrocities that the crusaders committed.

¹⁴⁸ From the chronicles of Raymond d’Aguilers and Fulcher of Chartres in The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Material, ed. and trans. Edward Peters, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 91, 260. These chronicles depict Jerusalem as a place of riches and luxury, parallel to Benoît’s description of Troy as luxurious and gem-studded. Perhaps this is meant to foster the idea that Oriental luxury, present in such admirable cities as Jerusalem and Troy, need not be undesirable.

¹⁴⁹ See Akbari, “Placing the Jews,” 37-38.

As the Greeks are the obvious enemies in the Roman de Troie, and in nearly every Troy text, the fact that they are here linked to Christians who are reclaiming the Holy Land complicates our understanding of the crusaders who killed nearly everyone in Jerusalem, regardless of their sex or age. We as readers are supposed to disapprove of the Greeks when they slaughter the Trojans; are we then supposed to approve of the Christians when they kill the inhabitants of Jerusalem in a very similar manner? This ambivalence regarding the identity of the Greeks is similar to the ambivalence in the Siege of Jerusalem which “creates a peculiar economy in the poem in which the Jews are simultaneously the object of identification for the Christian reader and that which must be abjected.”¹⁵⁰ Greeks are at once linked with Saracens attacking Christians, and must be abjected; but Greeks can also be seen as Christians attacking Saracens, a situation that might provoke a Christian audience to identify with the Greeks. One explanation for this ambiguous situation is that in both cases, Greeks besieging Trojans and Christians besieging Saracens, siege and slaughter are transitional moments in a providential framework and are indicative of major cultural change. In the first case, the Greek siege of Troy makes possible the beginning of Christian empire; in the second, the reclaiming of a lost good for Christians, Jerusalem is the heart of a hoped-for Christian empire. Cultural *translatio imperii* is effected through the shedding of blood: the centre of Christian empire moves from Rome to Jerusalem, and the *imperium* of Troy moves to the soon-to-be-Christian Roman Empire. The motif of siege and wading through the blood of innocents is meant to be horrifying, and urges the reader to wonder why it happens. In these two cases, it happens to make a better thing, namely Christian empire, come about.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 37.

Qualities of the Greeks

Ambivalence pervades the depictions of Greeks in terms of both their nation and their individual characters. As a group, Greeks are portrayed neither wholly positively, nor wholly negatively. For instance, Sinon, Aristotle and Alexander, as we have seen, are all paradigmatic Greeks and participate in the binary of good Greek/bad Greek: Sinon is a representative of treachery, while Alexander and Aristotle are paradigms of chivalry and learning. In the same way, there are certain qualities that Greeks possess, preeminently *engin*, that are ambiguous and can be used in a positive, constructive or negative, treacherous way, as I shall discuss below. The Greeks at Troy themselves are depicted ambivalently, not only as treacherous Jews and cruel Saracens, but also, in some scenes, as crusaders. The fact that most of the Greek characters in the Roman de Troie have good, if not outstanding, qualities brings this ambivalence to a more personal level: we can see these traitors as men who could, in certain circumstances, be admirable. The good qualities of the Greeks are presented most vividly in Benoît's catalogue of the Greek and Trojan heroes. Here, nearly every Greek possesses, along with his expected trait of treachery or cruelty, some worthy characteristic. Ulysses, for instance, is not only treacherous, as has been discussed earlier, but intelligent and extraordinarily handsome: "De grant biautié, ce dist Daires, / Les sormontot toz Ulixés. / N'iert mie granz ne trop petiz: / Mout par iert de grant sens garniz" [As Dares says, Ulysses surpassed all the others in his great beauty; he was neither too big nor too small. He possessed a great intelligence (5201-5204)].

Nestor, another of the Greek heroes, also has both defects and good traits:

Nestor fu granz e lons e lez;
Force deveit avoir assez.

Le nés ot corbe; de parler
Ne pouüst om trover son per.
Mout donot bien un bon conseil
A son ami, a son feeill,
Mais quant ire le sorportot,
Niule mesure ne gardot. (5225-5232)

[Nestor was big and tall and large; he was very strong. He had a curved nose; no one could find his equal in eloquence. He gave good counsel to his friends and those who were loyal to him. But when anger overcame him, he could not keep his temper.]

Nestor is physically powerful and imposing, though he has an impairment that makes him physically imperfect, his curved nose; he is also unable to master his anger. As one of the oldest and wisest Greeks at Troy, Nestor is an eloquent and intelligent man and a source of counsel for the Greeks. Nestor and Ulysses are representative of most of the Greek characters in the Roman de Troie: they are noble, wise, valiant, strong in arms, handsome and well-built. Like the other Greeks, though, they have physical or behavioural flaws that set them apart from the Trojans and mark them as the enemy. These character flaws seem normal to the Greeks, as if they were a trait of their nation.

It is useful to speculate on the presence of these good characteristics in the Greeks: perhaps their nobility makes their treachery and cruelty appear even worse, or perhaps their nobility explains their ability to engage in war with the Trojans, in order to make the siege a “fair fight.” The Greeks are not utterly Other: they are, on the whole, handsome, valiant and brave, though treacherous and cruel. The presence of good qualities combined with defects is reminiscent of the good qualities of some Saracens in *chansons de geste*. While many Saracens have monstrous physical features, a few Saracens look and act almost like Christians. John V. Tolan explains the presence of the “good” Saracens in literature with reference to the Chanson de Roland:

Yet he [the Saracen] cannot be made too other, for it is not valorous to slaughter mere beasts. Hence the paradoxical, mixed nature of the Saracen host in Roland: alongside the monstrous creatures are virtuous

knights who seem to be mirror images of their Christian adversaries, for whom the poet can proclaim (of Baligant): 'God! What a knight, is only he were Christian! (l. 3164).¹⁵¹

These Saracens, like the Greeks, are assimilable: their behaviour and appearance are so similar to those of the Christians, that they become hard to tell apart from the Christians; they remain other because they continue to reject the truth of Christianity and many would rather die than convert.¹⁵² "Good" Saracens, and Greeks, become worthy adversaries in a fair fight when they possess the same admirable qualities as the Christians or Trojans.

One of the problems with good Greek and Saracen qualities, especially positive physical traits, is that they give the reader a sense of closeness to the Other. Neither physical appearance nor even behaviour can reliably indicate who is the Greek or noble Saracen and who is the Trojan or Christian. The spectre of an enemy who is hard to tell apart from the hero provides a (probably enjoyable) frisson of fear and curiosity for the reader; it can be enjoyable to be frightened of an enemy one cannot detect.¹⁵³ In the end, though, the similarities must be exploded: the too-close Other must change, die or disappear. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen explains this moment of "disidentification" with reference to Christians and Saracens: "When pagan and Christian subjectivities seem close enough almost to touch, violence erupts to redraw the faltering self/other boundary."¹⁵⁴ The disidentification, when the Trojans definitively separate themselves from the Greeks who are so similar, and even related to them, comes after the fall of

¹⁵¹ Tolan, *Saracens*, 126.

¹⁵² In fact, the best-looking and noblest Saracens are often those susceptible to Christian conversion. Unlike Saracens, Greeks do not have recourse to Christian conversion—they live before the Incarnation and do not have the chance or choice to become Christians; they will certainly be damned for their actions.

¹⁵³ This convention of *chanson de geste* and romance holds true for many horror and suspense movies: it is most frightening, and most enjoyable, when the "bad guy" looks like the "good guys" and it is difficult to tell them apart.

¹⁵⁴ Cohen, "On Saracen Enjoyment," 123.

Troy. The Trojans who do not die in the siege form communities outside Troy, while most of the Greeks perish during or after their return to Greece. Though the Greeks ostensibly win the war, they die off, while the ancestors of Europeans, the Trojans, live on: according to the Aeneid, the Roman de Troie and many other medieval texts, the fleeing Trojans go on to found the Roman people, and their descendents found most European nations. Many of the Greeks, though, die in storms when sailing back to Greece, or are killed through plots if they do make it home. Because the Trojans are Europe's ancestors, they are part of the reader's "we"; the Greeks, who were so similar, have died off and are no longer a threat.

The (intertextual) history of the Greeks can also help to explain their nobility in the Roman de Troie. Some of the Greek heroes at Troy are actually the sons of the Greeks who fought at the siege of Thebes, as recounted by Statius in his Thebaid (ca. 80-92 CE) and in the *roman antique* based on it, the anonymous Roman de Thèbes, written shortly before the Roman de Troie (ca. 1150-1155). The Greek hero Diomedes is the most obvious example: he is referred to in the Roman de Troie as "li fiz Tideüs" (12459), the son of Tydeus, the most important of the Greeks at the Theban war. These Greeks, though they died in the siege of Thebes, were mighty warriors and worthy conquerors of the doomed Thebans, implying that their sons are now worthy opponents of the Trojans.

Dominique Battes writes that for the Roman de Thèbes, written ca. 1150-1155, "the political and strategic oppositions characteristic of the military chronicles of the First Crusade provide the historical paradigm, and the poet reconfigures the Theban

war, structurally and morally, as a crusade.”¹⁵⁵ The genre of crusade chronicle gives the work a particular narrative structure and gives the siege of Thebes “the flavor of a crusade.”¹⁵⁶ In light of the “eastern connection” of soldiers on the Theban side¹⁵⁷ and the similarities of the Greeks to characters in the crusading epic the Song of Roland,¹⁵⁸ Thebes becomes an eastern city besieged by a crusading army, the Greeks.

While Battles construes the Greeks besieging Thebes as crusaders and the Thebans inside as Saracens, it is the opposite for the Roman de Troie: in this work, the Greeks outside the walls can be seen as Saracens, and the Trojans inside as Christians fighting to preserve their city. The position of the Greeks is ambiguous: sometimes they are good, sometimes they are bad, depending on whom it is that they are set against. In the case of the Roman de Thèbes, the Thebans are polluted because they are members of the incestuous lineage of Oedipus and need to be destroyed; though they die as well, their opponents, the Greeks, are conquering heroes and crusaders. According to Battles, “each of the medieval adaptations of the Theban legend constitutes some attempt to understand the ancient Thebans as a cursed race, as a people with a hereditary propensity for violent and distorted relationships.”¹⁵⁹ The main characters in the siege of Thebes are the warring sons of Oedipus, Etioles and Polynices. Because of the deeds of their famous father, who murdered his father and married his mother, they are of a tainted stock that were doomed to be, and had to be, destroyed. The Thèbes poet is clear about the source of the evil:

¹⁵⁵ Dominique Battles, The Medieval Tradition of Thebes: History and Narrative in the OF Roman de Thèbes, Boccaccio, Chaucer and Lydgate (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), xiv.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 45.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 26. Joining the Theban side are knights from the “Orient” (4721), Dukes of Persia (5539, 4695), a Duke of Tyre (6291), as well as Moors (5438, 8416), Petchenegs (7501, 7505, 7543, 7528) and Turks (3730).

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 28-29. The Greek hero Tydeus is likened to Roland in fighting capability (“de prouesce sembla Roullant,” 772) and has, like Roland, a sword containing holy relics (1680).

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., xv.

Li uns ot non Ethÿoclés,
 et li autres Pollynnicés;
 rois Eduppus les engendra
 en la roïne Jocasta.
 De sa mere les ot a tort,
 quant ot son pere le roi mort.
 Pour le pechié dont sunt crié
 felons furent et enragié;
 Thebes destruistrent, lor cité,
 et degasterent leur regné;
 destruit en furent lor voisin
 et il ambedui en la fin. (Roman de Thèbes, 21-32)

[One was named Etiocles, and the other, Polynices. King Oedipus fathered them on the queen, Jocasta; he wrongly had them by his mother after he had killed his father the king. Because of the sin in which they were created, they were treacherous and wrathful; they destroyed their city, Thebes, and ravaged their realm; their neighbours were destroyed and in the end, both of them were as well.]¹⁶⁰

The Greeks fight on the side of Etiocles, who has a strong reason to battle his brother, but both brothers are killed in battle and the walls of Thebes are razed in the end by the duke of Athens, Theseus. The polluted royal family of Thebes, a “royal line with its characteristic brand of criminality,” is gone and the city itself is destroyed; though the Greek heroes, the Seven Against Thebes, died, they participated in the purification of Thebes. The Thebans disappear from history, and the descendents of the Greek heroes carry on to their next conflict, the siege of Troy.

In the Roman de Troie, conversely, Benoît sees the Trojans in a way that we can call proto-Christian and proto-European; the Greeks, as their enemies, look like Saracens. The shifting of identities, where the Greeks are crusaders in one context and Saracens in the next, is reminiscent of *translatio imperii*, the transfer of imperial power from one kingdom to another: the Greeks are seen positively when fighting the degenerate house of Oedipus, but then the goodness and might of the Greeks are

¹⁶⁰ Le Roman de Thèbes, ed. Guy Raynaud de Lage (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1966).

transferred to the Trojans, the next enemies of the Greeks, and the Greeks, set against the worthy, noble, Trojans, are seen in a negative light, as Saracens.

This ambivalent portrait of the Greeks extends to their heritage as well. There are two instances in the poem where the shared lineage of Greeks and Trojans is mentioned; both of these cases have detrimental effects on the Trojans. During the second battle at Troy, Hector recognizes the Greek Ajax Telamon as a relative. He asks Ajax's name and realizes that they are in fact cousins: Ajax is the son of Hector's aunt, Priam's sister Hesione, who was stolen by the Greeks during the first siege of Troy. On Ajax's request, Hector halts the fighting, stopping the Trojan troops from burning the Greeks' ships and routing them completely. Benoît laments that Hector shows this kind of familial duty, since it is to the great detriment of the Trojans. The Trojans will never have this kind of advantage over the Greeks again; they would have won after only a few days of battle had it not been for Hector's kind treatment of his kin.

The second time the Trojans acknowledge their ties to the Greeks happens immediately before the sack of the city. Antenor, when telling the assembled Trojans about the false peace he and the other traitors have concluded with the Greeks, makes the plea that they should not be at war, since Trojans and Greeks are related, as they are all descendents of King Pelops:

"Trestuit somes d'un parenté,
Tuit descendons d'une ligniee
Que sor totes est essauciee,
Tuit venimes d'un ancessor.
Mout deüst avoir grant amor
Entre Grezeis e Troïens." (25030-25035)

[“We all belong to one family, we all descend from one lineage that is honoured above all others. We all come from one ancestor. There should be great love between Greeks and Trojans.”]

Antenor uses this argument to secure the Trojans' assent to the treaty concluded with the Greeks, a treaty the Greeks have no intention of upholding. The Trojans accept Antenor's counsel and ratify the peace treaty, leading to an unmerited trust in the Greeks and the destruction of Troy.

It is an uncomfortable fact that these enemies share ancestors, and complicates the way we look at the Greeks: how can they be so bad when they are related to the heroes, the Trojans? Familial relations also shape the way we look at the Trojans, since it is when they confront the truth, that they are related to the Greeks, that they lose battles and eventually the city itself. When the Trojans admit their shared ancestry, the fact that they are more than similar to their enemies, they fall prey to the wiles and treachery of the Greeks. This recognition is reminiscent of the relationship between Christians and Jews in the Middle Ages: Christianity sprang from Judaism so it was necessary that Christians tolerate and encourage the presence of Jews to remind themselves where they came from. It was equally important, however, that Christians deny the validity of Judaism, the old law that had been superseded by the new covenant, Christianity. Suzanne Conklin Akbari explains this paradox succinctly: "on the one hand, they [the Jews] must be annihilated so that the superiority of Christianity can be clearly demonstrated; on the other, they must be preserved in order to maintain the authenticity of the model they offer to Christians."¹⁶¹ It was important that Christians not dwell inordinately upon the similarities between their religion and that of the Jews: the Jews might convert Christians or influence and use them in the commission of deeds harmful to Christianity, such as stealing the Host for magic rites.

¹⁶¹ Akbari, "Placing the Jews," 42. See also Elisa Narin van Court, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Augustinian Historians," esp. p. 170, and Jeremy Cohen, Living Letters of the Law, esp. Ch. 1, "The Doctrine of Jewish Witness."

If the Trojans had followed this advice, not to treat the Greeks as brothers even though they were related, the second battle would have been the last, and the Greeks would have been routed. The Greeks in the Roman de Troie are similar to Trojans, both in terms of good qualities and of lineage. Greeks have inherent flaws that set them apart from Trojans, but they remain ambivalent and uncomfortably close to the Trojans, and to the medieval reader.

Just as Jews and Saracens have specific traits with which they are associated, the Greeks of the Roman de Troie have an attribute that applies almost exclusively to them, *engin*. *Engin* and related adjectives and verbs are from the Latin word *ingenium*, meaning, among other things, inborn qualities. In Old French, these words can mean “to make something artfully,” “ingenuity,” “ability,” “wit,” “artifice,” “guile,” “ruse,” “fraud,” “trickery,” “deceit” and “perfidy.”¹⁶² When *ingenium*, as a facet of the human mind, is directed towards good, it is used for creative, positive ends; when directed towards negative ends, it is used to trick and betray.¹⁶³ *Engin*, as Robert W. Hanning writes, “can deceive, improve, or educate, depending on the intent of the *engigneor*.”¹⁶⁴ The notion of *ingenium* as being complex was prevalent in the time when the Roman de Troie was composed: according to medieval neo-Platonic thought, it is a faculty “neither wholly good nor wholly bad, but readily tending in either direction.”¹⁶⁵

When *engin* is used by the Greeks, it means treachery and deceit; when it is used in a

¹⁶² Tobler-Lommatzsch, Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch.

¹⁶³ See Petrus Alfonsi for a discussion of *ingenium* as an inborn trait used for constructive, creative, or deceptive ends. *Ingenium* is the faculty by which humans are able to understand God: “humanum quidem ingenium inveni ex praecepto conditoris ad hoc esse deputatum, ut quamdiu est in saeculo in sanctae studeat exercitatione philosophiae, qua de creatore suo meliorem et maiorem habeat notitiam.” Die Disiplina Clericalis des Petrus Alfonsi, ed. Alfons Hilka and Werner Söderhjelm (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1911), p. 1, 18-22. Conversely, the *ingenium* of women is nefarious and to be avoided: “ab ingenio feminae perversae custodiat se homo,” p. 14, 27-28.

¹⁶⁴ Robert W. Hanning, The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1977), 111.

¹⁶⁵ Winthrop Wetherbee, Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century: The Literary Influence of the School of Chartres (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 94.

positive, constructive way, it most often refers to the buildings of Troy, or cleverly made items such as a war machine (7120). The exotic *Chambre de Beautés* inside Troy, where Hector is healed of his wounds, is also called “engeignos,” or ingenious (14878), since it was constructed with such art and skill. The *Chambre* is filled with splendid jewels and carvings, and Benoît wonders at the automata there, one of which offers advice to the occupants of the *Chambre*. A similar sense of *engin* is used to describe the three wise engineers (“trei saive engigneur”) who construct Hector’s wondrous tomb (16650).

Just as *ingenium* can mean an inborn trait, *engin* when applied to Greeks in this text also has the force of an innate characteristic, something Greeks are born with, of treachery and cleverness.¹⁶⁶ As we shall see later, Alexander has a type of *engin* unlike that of the Greeks of the Trojan War. Alexander uses his *engin* to devise battle strategies, a constructive, creative use, unlike the deceit and trickery of the Greek *engin* we will see in the *Roman de Troie*. “Greek *engin*” appears frequently, and is present from the beginning of the narrative: King Peleus take great pains to trick Jason (“Mout se penot de l’engigner,” 760); Jason and Hercules seek the Fleece “[p]ar engin e par traïson” [by deceit and treason (157)]; Jason deceives Medea when he promises to wed her and never leave her (“Trop l’engigna,” 2039); the Greeks trick (“engeigné”) and surprise the Trojans by coming to Troy by night (6979); the crafty Ulysses is called “reis Ulixés l’engignous” (24546). When the Trojans are rejoicing over the false peace

¹⁶⁶Likewise, in the thirteenth-century *Livre de la Conquête de la Morée*, medieval Greeks, Byzantines, are described in the same terms as ancient Greeks: “Li Grec, qui ades sont sutil et engignoux” [The Greeks, who are always cunning and wily]. In *Collection des chroniques nationales françaises écrites en langue vulgaire du 13^{me} au 16^{me} siècle: avec notes et éclaircissements*, ed. Jean Alexandre C. Buchon, 48 vols. (Paris: Verdrière, 1824-1828), vol. 46, p. 429. See Michele Gueret-Laferte, “Le discours de Sinon dans l’*Enéas*: engin et traïson,” in *Romans d’antiquité et littérature du nord: Mélanges offerts à Aimé Petit*, ed. Sarah Baudelle-Michels et al. (Paris: Champion, 2007).

concluded the Greeks, the narrator exclaims: “He! las! cum se sunt engignié!/Comunement sunt deceü!” [Alas, how they are tricked! They are all deceived (25924-5)]. The Greeks deceive Priam (“Ensi s’engignent,” 25976) by telling him they were leaving Troy for Tenedos, only to return by night and slaughter the inhabitants of Troy. *Engin* seems to be the means the Greeks use on a regular basis to get what they want: when they cannot triumph by force, they use their *engin* instead. This use of the trait is characteristic to the Greeks and seems to be their birthright. When non-Greeks use this kind of *engin*, they are in a way becoming “Greek,” which is detrimental to some.

When characters other than Greeks use their *engin* to deceive, they are acting in a shocking and uncharacteristic, desperate manner. For instance, Medea, madly in love with Jason, uses her magic and cunning to help him win the Fleece. She knows much of tricks and artifice (“Mout sot d’engin e de maistrie,” 1217). Her use of *engin* in the form of cunning and trickery brings her harm when Jason uses her knowledge and magic to win the Fleece, then betrays her. To use *engin* to plot, deceive or manipulate brings harm to non-Greek characters. The most telling examples of “Greek *engin*” used by non-Greeks involve the Trojan royal couple, Hecuba and Priam: in the instances where they are “engeignos,” they are specifically using the very treachery that they deplore in the Greeks. The usurpation by Trojans of a trait that seems to come naturally to Greeks, “deceptive, manipulative wit,” is doomed to fail: Hecuba, made unreasonable by sorrow, wants to avenge the man who killed her sons, so plots to kill Achilles by treason and *engin* (“S’el engigne par traison,” 21849).¹⁶⁷ She is successful in having Achilles killed in an ambush, but her cunning plan fails dreadfully: in retaliation for

¹⁶⁷ Hanning, *The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance*, 121.

Achilles' death, his bloodthirsty son, Pyrrhus, kills Hecuba and Priam's daughter, Polyxena, the object of Achilles' affection and the bait in the trap set by Hecuba.

Priam's use of *engin* against the Trojan traitors results in a similar situation. When they suggest peace with the Greeks, Priam knows that Antenor, Aeneas, Anchises and Polydamas are perfidious: "Engignos sunt, ce set, e fels" [He knows that they are cunning and treacherous (24674)].¹⁶⁸ Priam fears them—after all, Antenor and Aeneas both had a part in beginning the war: Antenor recommended the Trojans go to Greece and fight them before the Greeks destroyed Troy, while Aeneas was with Paris when he took Helen and could have prevented her abduction. Like Hecuba, Priam plans uncharacteristic treason against the plotters, his own vassals: using *engin* he formulates a plan to murder them at a banquet. In this regard, Benoît's version of the story is similar to Joseph of Exeter's, where, as Barbara Nolan notes, Priam's

courage and, implicitly, his commitment to truth are undermined by the "suspicious inconstancy of Antenor and Aeneas." In this situation, Priam prepares "to dislodge treachery with treachery and to banish deceit with deceit." The Trojan world just before it falls is, as Joseph puts it, one in which "everything [is] cloaked in secrecy, nothing [is] out in the open."¹⁶⁹

Priam's plot comes to light, though, and he sees that the plotters have taken precautions against his treason: "Veit qu'il ne porrent estre ocis/Ne engignié por nul rien" [He sees that they cannot be killed or tricked on any account (24794-24795)]. When they learn of his plan to kill them, the group feels angry and betrayed, and it is only then that they are open to the idea of betraying the city to the Greeks. Antenor, Aeneas and the others then conclude the false peace treaty with the Greeks that will have Troy destroyed and

¹⁶⁸ Antenor and Aeneas especially use *engin* to deceive: see Aeneas' "*engin*" (25251) and Antenor "*Qui engeignos fu e mout sot*" [Who was treacherous and knew a lot (25508)]. The Trojan traitors who use "*Greek engin*" do not have the same disastrous endings as Medea, Hecuba and Priam; perhaps they actually become Greek themselves by their dealings with the Greeks.

¹⁶⁹ Barbara Nolan, *Chaucer and the Tradition of the roman antique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 210.

its inhabitants killed, including Priam. Non-Greeks in desperate situations use their *engin* in a Greek manner, but their cunning, treachery and manipulation fail: *engin* is an inborn Greek trait, and does not “work” for Trojans, who are supposed to use their *engin* to build, innovate and create.

Devotion and Diaspora

Not only do Trojans and Greeks differ in their ability to use *engin*, but in their religious practices as well. In this section, I treat Trojan devotion in relation to Greek devotion. Though their practices are similar, there are details included by Thomas of Kent that make Trojan devotion seem proto-Christian. Linked to the Trojans’ religious practices is the prevalent myth that the Trojans were the founders of the Roman people and other European nations. Depicting the Trojans as having proto-Christian traits fits well with the Trojan foundation myth, as the Trojans go on to populate Europe, which will be a Christian continent. While they were seen as the founders of European nations, the Trojans were also connected to the Turks, an additional level of identification increasingly noted in the Early Modern period, which complicated premodern European views of Europe’s relationship to Troy and to the Turks.

Surprisingly, there is no religious animosity shown by Benoît in his depiction of the Greeks, though they share characteristics of Jews and Saracens, who are the subjects of Christian religious polemic. In fact, the Greeks and Trojans share the worship of the same gods and goddesses. The pagan religion of the Greeks and Trojans is deplored by Joseph of Exeter, who damns both sides for their polytheism and superstitious veneration of oracles and statues. One of the few ways of telling the Greeks and Trojans apart in terms of their religion is based on very small indicators. Benoît has added

Christian details to his work, including noting that it is Easter when Paris brings Helen to Troy (4807), and, anachronistically, that Patroclus is the best outfitted knight since the Incarnation: “Des que Deus vost le mond sauver” (8359). The religious practice of the Trojans, though not that of the Greeks, is also given Christian details: Troilus mentions “mostiers” or churches (4006); Calchas, who defects to the Greeks, was the bishop (“evesque”) of Troy (13738); all the priests and clergy in Troy hold vigils at Hector’s death (16557-16564); and Priam orders that funeral services are performed for Paris by monks: “Au cors volt que l’on chant e serve,/Car molt par i a grant covent/E molt i a de sainte gent” [He wished there to be singing and services for the body, since there was a large monastery there where there were many holy men (23034-23036)]. The Christian details associated with the Trojans make the religion of the Greeks, though it is ostensibly the same as that of the Trojans, appear to be pagan.

Though there is no religious animosity against the Greeks on the part of the Trojans or Benoît, religion remains important to the Greeks’ depiction. Unlike the Saracens, with whom they are linked in characterization, the Greeks are irredeemable: they do not have the choice or chance to convert to Christianity because they live before the Incarnation. The Saracens of the *chansons de geste* and romances are at least given the chance (or rather forced) to convert. The Greeks do not have the opportunity to become Christians, while their enemies, the Trojans, are proto-Christians. Though Trojans are pagan in the Roman de Troie, because they were believed to be the founders of European nations, they are the ancestors of Christian Europe, and the forebears of the readers of this romance. Perhaps this is why Christian details are associated with the Trojans’ religious practice: the reader wants to see that his ancestors were Christian-before-the-fact. The Greeks, though they conquer Troy, are left behind in time: most are

killed on their return to Greece, they do not have survivors and descendants who build cities and nations, and they do not have the chance to become Christian in the future, as the Trojans do. Religion is, on the surface, not at issue in the Roman de Troie: both Trojans and Greeks are pagan and there is no religious polemic specifically aimed at the Greeks. The Greeks are not at war with the Trojans based on a religious conflict, but that having been said, the fact that the Greeks are at war with the proto-Christian Trojans makes them into religious enemies.

The myth that Trojans fleeing the war founded European nations is important to the medieval reader's view of the Greeks: according to Terence Spencer, "In telling the tale of Troy divine, medieval sentiment was generally favourable to the Trojans and hostile to the Greeks. This bias was due, of course, to the legendary descent of many of the nations of Europe from Trojan exiles."¹⁷⁰ The Troy story related by Dares, who favoured the Trojans, was much more popular than that of Dictys, who sided with the Greeks, since, as R. M. Frazer notes, "the Latin-speaking West had inherited a pro-Trojan bias from the Romans, who claimed descent from the Trojans."¹⁷¹ The Trojan foundation myth is found in an influential form in Virgil's Aeneid; though the myth pre-dated Virgil, the Aeneid was the earliest of the texts available to a medieval audience to assert the claim of Trojan heritage.¹⁷² Here, Aeneas, fleeing the Greek destruction of Troy, sets off with other Trojans to find a land in which to settle. After sailing to many other lands, they come to Latium, or Italy, where Aeneas founds the Roman people. Virgil's motive for writing of Aeneas' deeds was to give the Roman emperor Augustus, his patron, imperial legitimacy and a place in the Trojan genealogy.

¹⁷⁰ Terence Spencer, "Turks and Trojans in the Renaissance," Modern Language Review 47 (1952), 330.

¹⁷¹ Frazer, trans., The Trojan War, 3.

¹⁷² For the traditions of the Trojan foundation myth, see Andrew Erskine, Troy Between Greece and Rome: Local Tradition and Imperial Power (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

This Trojan lineage is used in a similar way by many nations of Europe who claimed, embellished and expanded Virgil's account of Aeneas in their histories.

The universal chronicles that feature Trojans are derived from the Bible, Eusebius, Jerome, Isidore of Seville, Gregory of Tours, and Virgil; they could include matters of both church and state, and detailed year-by-year happenings. It was in these compilations that the expanded Trojan foundation myth first appeared, the earliest instances of which are the mid-seventh century Chronicle of Fredegar and the anonymous Liber historiae Francorum of the early eighth century. These two chronicles, though they differ in details, tell of the Trojan diaspora and the founding of the Franks: in the Chronicle of Fredegar, the fleeing Trojans split into two groups, one going to Macedonia and the other wandering around Europe. This second group elects Francio as their king and settles between the Rhine, the Danube and the sea, and take their name, the Franks, from that of their king, Francio. The version of the Liber historiae Francorum follows the Aeneid more closely: after the fall of Troy, Aeneas leads some people to Italy, while Priam and Antenor lead others to the Roman province of Pannonia. They become powerful and help the Roman emperor Valentinian in his military exploits, "upon which he named them Francos—which means 'fierce, of hard and bold heart.'"¹⁷³

Many other European nations claim Trojan ancestry, and their chronicles differ from those of Fredegar and the Liber historiae Francorum to include other Trojans who founded other peoples and nations. For example, the English historian Geoffrey of Monmouth writes in his Historia regum Britanniae, ca. 1138, of one Brutus, great-grandson of Aeneas, who founded Britain and named it after himself. Geoffrey traces

¹⁷³ Waswo, "Our Ancestors, the Trojans," 271.

the royal lineage of England from Adam up to the founding of London: Adam, Noah, Priam, Aeneas, Ascanius, Silvius, and Brutus, who “In an adventure narratively structured on Virgil’s Aeneas’ journey from Troy to Rome, . . . traveled from Rome to England to establish Troynovant, later named London.”¹⁷⁴ The Trojan foundation myth is used by chroniclers and their royal patrons to add weight to their nation’s claim to legitimacy, for what could connote more nobility and rightful governance than origins in the fabled city of Troy?

Sylvia Federico describes European nations’ desire for political legitimacy through Trojan origins: “Scores of European states and their rulers claimed Trojan precedent in efforts to achieve, consolidate, and maintain their power in relation to other states and often in relation to their own fractious constituencies.”¹⁷⁵ This point is echoed by Heather James: “The political authority inscribed in Virgil’s epic and its Trojan myth awaited only transcription into the culture, history, and language of European governments in need of a legitimate history. France had its Francus, son of Priam; Denmark claimed Danus; Ireland, Hibernus; Saxony, Saxo.”¹⁷⁶ Since most Western nations claim descent from the Trojans, readers of accounts of the Trojan War would probably side with the Trojans: the existence of their nation depends upon the defeated Trojans. The Trojan foundation myth colours what readers must have thought about the Trojans, their ancestors, who are the predecessors of Christian Europe. It would also shape their views of the Greeks, who would have been seen as un-Christian simply for the fact that they were the enemies of the Trojans.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Heather James, *Shakespeare’s Troy: Drama, Politics, and the Translation of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 15.

¹⁷⁵ Sylvia Federico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages* (Minnesota and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xii.

¹⁷⁶ James, *Shakespeare’s Troy*, 15.

¹⁷⁷ For the different Aeneas traditions, as traitor and founder, see Mora-Lebrun, *L’«Enéide» médiévale*, 21.

The idea of the Trojan foundation of Christian European nations is complicated by the idea that the Turks were descended from the Trojans as well. The first association of Trojans with Turks comes in the Chronicle of Fredegar, where the Turks are the descendants of the Trojans, and a sister people of the Franks: following the Trojan War, the surviving Trojans split into two groups, one going to Macedonia to become the lineage of Alexander the Great, and the other group wandering around Europe. This group splits into two, one part elects Francio to become the Franks; the other part of the group stays on the Danube, elects Torcoth as their king, and becomes Turks. Margaret Meserve asserts that “The story was frequently repeated in the following centuries, with the result that when the Seljuk, and later the Ottoman Turks came to the notice of European historians, they were easily identified with these earlier «Turks» who had escaped from Troy.”¹⁷⁸ The identification of Trojans with Turks was relatively easy to see: Troy was a powerful nation in Asia Minor, where the Turks had ruled for a long time. The easiest way to associate the two, though, was to compare the name Virgil gave the Trojans in the Aeneid, *Teucri*, to *Turci*, or Turks.

In the later Middle Ages, though the Byzantine Greeks were considered to be the “descendants of the contemporaries of Socrates and Dionysius the Areopagite,” their conquest at the hands of the Ottoman Turks in 1453 was felt by some to be deserved, since “the modern Greeks had so far degenerated from their glorious ancestors that they merited their present subjection.”¹⁷⁹ Terence Spencer notes that it was felt by some in the fifteenth century that the schismatic Orthodox Greeks had deliberately surrendered to the Turks to spite the Roman Church; according to Spencer, a more widespread notion was that the sack of Constantinople and Byzantium by the Turks

¹⁷⁸ Meserve, “Medieval Sources for Renaissance Theories,” 410.

¹⁷⁹ Spencer, “Turks and Trojans,” 330.

was actually in revenge for the Greek sack of Troy.¹⁸⁰ This was a much more felicitous way to look at the relation between Trojans and Turks: though it was a shame that Byzantium fell to the Ottoman Turks, the West could feel some satisfaction that the Greeks had finally gotten what they deserved for destroying Troy, and from the kin of the Trojans, no less.

The notion that the Trojans and Turks had descended from the same people was troubling, though; the myth of Trojan origins implied that since Europeans were descended from Trojans, they also descended alongside Turks. As Margaret Meserve remarks,

The theory of Trojan origins sat uncomfortably . . . in the mind of any prince or prelate whose policy was hostile to the Turks, since it suggested an affinity between Turk and European which might allow the two to coexist. Moreover, to call the Turks Trojans suggested that they had been resident in Asia Minor for quite a long time indeed—and that they might have a valid claim, perhaps even a right, to possess it.¹⁸¹

The prevalence of the Trojan foundation myth meant that there were compelling reasons to see the Turks and Trojans as related, such as the final revenge of the Trojans/Turks on Greece/Byzantium. It may have been disconcerting, though, that the same myth that provided legitimacy to European nations could backfire: if the Turks and Trojans were coeval, the Turks could have a claim to Asia Minor and, perhaps, to Europe.

Another aspect of the Trojan foundation myth, and one that gave further claims to the legitimacy of European nations, is the Orosian idea of *translatio imperii*, “the gradual movement of imperial domination” from East to West.¹⁸² *Translatio imperii* coincides with the Trojan foundation myth and also influences medieval thought about

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 330-333.

¹⁸¹ Meserve, “Medieval Sources for Renaissance Theories,” 411.

¹⁸² Akbari, “Alexander in the Orient,” 106.

Troy and Trojans, and consequently about Greeks.¹⁸³ There were different formulae for *translatio imperii* modeled on Orosius' plan, some asserting that political power came originally from Babylon, to be transferred to another nation when the might of Babylon was spent; another kind of *translatio imperii* claimed that Charlemagne and his descendents, as Holy Roman Emperors, were the heirs to the imperial power of the Byzantine Empire, which was defunct and unable to sustain itself.¹⁸⁴ In his romance Cligès, Chrétien de Troyes claims that nobility and military prowess came originally from Greece, then to Rome, and finally to France, where it still resides, a trajectory that strips the Greeks and Romans of their power. All of these plans begin in the East and end in the West, the locus for real, inherited imperial power. We can understand the transfer of power from Troy to Rome to the West, a shift that mirrors Aeneas' travels and the legitimacy he and his offspring give to Rome and European nations, as being based on Orosian *translatio imperii*. The Aeneid and the Roman d'Enéas are both concerned with the flight of Aeneas from Troy to Italy, and the translation of power from Troy to Rome.

Since many Western nations have Trojan founders, it is not surprising that there was a transfer of political power from Troy to the West to legitimate the authority of the Western royal lines. Greeks are integral to this process, as they make war on Troy and it is because of their siege that Aeneas and his companions flee the city. Greeks are in an unenviable state: they are needed, for Europe grew out of their conflict with the Trojans, but they are also expendable once the seat of empire moves from Troy to Rome to the West. After they have performed the bloody task, they die by each other's hands.

¹⁸³ See Alfred Hiatt, "Mapping the Ends of Empire," for an exploration of Orosius' ideas of empire, esp. p. 53.

¹⁸⁴ For a brief discussion of Charlemagne and *translatio imperii*, see Janet Coleman, A History of Political Thought: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 18-19.

The return home of the Greek heroes, taken from the account of Dictys Cretensis, makes a rather long and interesting postlude to the Roman de Troie, but it seems like action for the sake of action. The Greeks self-destruct after their success at Troy, suspicious and fearful of each other; it is as if, with the Trojans gone, the only way to use their natural *engin* is against each other. They do not represent the knowledge and wisdom, whether philosophical or medical, associated with ancient Greeks. For a medieval audience, the place of the Greeks in the Troy story is primarily as the catalyst for the foundation of Western European nations.

Despite the fact that the Greeks of the Roman de Troie can be seen as Saracens and are villains who move along events of history, it would be a mistake to categorize them, and the Trojans, in a binary, East vs. West paradigm. Edward Said's archetype of the exotic East, structured by and structuring a stern but progressive West, its mirror opposite, should be applied with caution to ancient Greeks, Saracens and Christians in medieval texts. Suzanne Conklin Akbari has argued persuasively against using a simple Orientalist model to explain how medieval people thought of the Other; as she states, "the binary opposition of East and West, fundamental to Said's theory, cannot be projected back onto a Middle Ages which seldom conceived of the world as bipartite."¹⁸⁵ Most often, people conceived the world as being divided into three parts: Asia, Africa and Europe, rather than simply East and West. Many medieval texts present a dichotomy of "good Christian" and "bad pagan," but, as Akbari posits, "[i]t would be a mistake, however, to conflate a binary overtly based on religious differences with the binary of Orient and Occident."¹⁸⁶ The locations of "right" and "wrong" are

¹⁸⁵ Akbari, "Alexander in the Orient," 105.

¹⁸⁶ Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "From Due East to True North: Orientalism and Orientation" in The Postcolonial Middle Ages, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 20.

sometimes unstable: Saracens can be found outside the East, Christians can be found in many locations other than the West. The Roman de Troie, like other texts, participates in a complex scheme of medieval Orientalism: Eastern things are luxurious but not necessarily bad, and not all Western things are good.

The Trojan War as described by Benoît is not a simple case of East vs. West, a good Western “us” vs. a bad Eastern “them.” It is the Trojans in the Roman de Troie who are Oriental and luxurious, but this is desirable, rather than a Saracen trait to be avoided. The exotic, Oriental qualities of the Troy rebuilt by Priam are most evident in its monuments, architecture and decoration, especially the *Chambre de Beautés* (14631-14936). As described above, the *Chambre* abounds with Oriental excess: it is constructed of marble and ebony, there are many sculptures, automata, precious metals, and gems that provide light. The *Chambre* contains specifically Eastern touches, such as “l’ors d’Araibe” (14632, 14650); perhaps these signify the most exotic, valuable things that Benoît could think of. It seems that everything practical in the city is made luxurious. For instance, the whole city, even the most modest buildings, is made of cut marble (3033-3035); the marble of the fortress walls is of beautiful colours and carved designs, and the streets of the fortress contain gold and silver; the people of the city never get their feet wet outside since the streets are covered with vaults, on the ceilings of which are mosaics (3036-3040). The tomb of Hector is so finely designed and decorated that its description claims over 150 lines, and two “mestre d’Orïant” (23047) come to help build Paris’ tomb. Though Troy is exotic and rich, the Western reader must identify with the Trojans, since it was the descendents of these Trojans who founded Western nations.

The portrayal of the East as both luxurious and good can be found in other cases with which the medieval reader would be familiar: the biblical accounts of Persia and the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, and the Queen of Sheba's Ethiopian servant. In the first case, Persia, though Eastern and exotic, ended the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews when the Persian king Cyrus overthrew the Babylonians and let the Jews return to Israel. He allowed them to practice their religion and rebuild the Temple, which the Babylonians had destroyed; Cyrus even gave money from the royal treasury to help with the rebuilding. God works through the Persians to save the Jews: according to the book of Isaiah 44:28-45:7, Cyrus is the foreordained, though unwitting, servant of God and through him will be Babylon's downfall and Israel's deliverance.

When Oriental people, the Persians, save the Jews, it can be seen as a positive act towards proto-Christians, since these are virtuous, pre-Incarnation Jews. Eastern people can also show an openness to conversion to Christianity. In Acts 8:26-39, Queen Candace of Sheba's court official, an Ethiopian eunuch, comes to Jerusalem to worship; he is met on the road by Philip the deacon, who explains to the eunuch a passage of the Prophet Isaiah the eunuch was reading. Philip tells the eunuch about Christ, the eunuch accepts Christianity and is baptized in some water on the side of the road. The fact that an Ethiopian, a member of an Oriental nation, so readily accepts the divinity of Christ (he is the first non-Jew to do so) proves that an Easterner can be open to the revelation of Christianity if it is explained to him.

It is clear that in cases like that of the Persians and the Babylonian captivity, the Queen of Sheba's eunuch, and Troy itself, the East can be both luxurious and good. At some points in the Roman de Troie, however, the dichotomy of East and West, Trojan and Greek is confused. At the beginning of the poem, Hector divides the world

according to various nations' allegiance to Troy or Greece: he says that the Greeks have Europe as an ally, and the Trojans have Asia. It seems, though, that the opposite happens throughout the text: Westerners and Easterners, such as the Amazons, fight for the Trojans; Easterners, such as Huners fiz Mahon and the Pharaoh of Egypt, and Westerners fight for the Greeks. Both Trojans and Greeks use Turkish bows; some Trojans have horses from France and Hector is cured both by an Oriental doctor (10245-10246) and a doctor who seems to be from France, "Brot li Puillanz" (14605).¹⁸⁷ Perhaps the confusion of allegiances is in part a result of the bonds between Greeks and Trojans: they are, as Hector acknowledges, related, so it is possible that each side has a claim to the arms and allies of the other. This permeability of Trojan and Greek identity is also reminiscent of the relationship between Christians and Jews: they are inextricably related, but enemies.

Though Troy's luxuries and exoticism are desirable, it is arguable that they are not durable. The Trojans' "Orientalness" resides in their city itself; when it is destroyed, some Trojans flee, leave behind the soft luxuries, and turn into stern Europeans. Westerners, descended from Aeneas, have left behind these decadent things and rejected the Oriental parts of Troy: "Troie orientale, la ville trop séduisante, est morte, mais ressuscitée par l'écrivain, elle devient désormais, pour tout l'Occident, préfiguration et modèle d'un «nouveau monde»."¹⁸⁸ The luxuries of Oriental Troy recall medieval perceptions of Saracens: as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen states, the "superabundant wealth, plentiful luxuries, and hedonism of the Saracens were medieval

¹⁸⁷ It is entirely possible that these are the best armaments and medicine that Benoît could think of, and that they are not representative of the allegiances of the Trojans or Greeks.

¹⁸⁸ Emmanuèle Baumgartner, "Benoît de Sainte-Maure et le modèle troyen," *De l'histoire de Troie au livre du Graal. Le temps, le récit (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)* (Orléans: Paradigme, 1994), 111.

commonplaces.”¹⁸⁹ In literature, Saracens who partake in Oriental pleasures like feasts and luxuries must be destroyed or converted to Christianity so that they no longer enjoy their abominable Eastern pleasures; perhaps the Trojans who are not destroyed in the siege of Troy are, like the Saracens, “converted” to Westernness and no longer enjoy their own Eastern pleasures. It is useful to return here to Cohen’s insightful article, where he refers to Mladen Dolar’s work on occidental fantasies of the luxurious Orient.¹⁹⁰ The Occidental fantasies of Oriental people enjoying boundless luxuries “provide a ‘subject supposed to enjoy,’ a figure who consumes and hoards the enjoyment that ‘we’ as Westerners have renounced *in order to be Westerners*.”¹⁹¹ It seems that the Trojans fleeing luxurious Troy, like the “subject supposed to enjoy,” successfully renounced their Eastern wealth, escaped the Western fantasy, and were therefore able to become “us.” We as Westerners must side with the Trojans since they are our forefathers, but we are not Oriental, as they were. The Greeks, Oriental and occidental as well, force the exoticism from the Trojans by sacking Troy, and effectively create the abstemious West.¹⁹²

Perhaps by making Greeks like Trojans in many respects, including their comportment and nobility, Benoît was trying to understand the Greeks. Though he makes the Greeks’ otherness parallel the reader’s familiarity with the Trojans, Benoît’s effort fails, because this Other is the enemy not of some far-off or imaginary people, but of the Trojans, of Europe itself. There is no way to overcome the slaughter and cruelty, not to mention the treachery of the Greeks. Because they cannot be “civilized,” Benoît

¹⁸⁹ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “On Saracen Enjoyment,” 125.

¹⁹⁰ Mladen Dolar, “Introduction: The Subject Supposed to Enjoy” in Alain Grosrichard, The Sultan’s Court: European Fantasies of the East, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 1998), ix-xxvii. Cited in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 125.

¹⁹¹ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “On Saracen Enjoyment,” 125.

¹⁹² On the development of the binary of luxurious Orient and abstemious Occident in the fourteenth century, see Akbari, “From Due East to True North,” 19-34, esp. 29-30.

gives his Greeks Jewish and Saracen traits to put up a further boundary between Troy / Europe and the Greeks who deceived and massacred the Trojans, and inadvertently made Europe. Because it showcases the violence, cruelty and treachery of the Greeks, the Roman de Troie reinforces cultural and racial suspicions, animosities and boundaries.

Chapter 2

The Depiction of Ancient Greeks in Medieval Alexander Texts:

the Roman de toute chevalerie and the Wars of Alexander

Medieval depictions of ancient Greeks include those of Alexander the Great, a popular subject of Latin works and vernacular romances.¹⁹³ Those written in the twelfth century alone include the Latin Alexandreis of Walter of Châtillon; the earliest vernacular Alexander text, the Franco-Provençal work of Alberic of Pisançon; the Anglo-Norman Roman de toute chevalerie of Thomas of Kent; the lengthy and complex Roman d'Alexandre; and the Middle High German Alexander of Lamprecht. In my examination of the characterization of Alexander, I will use two vernacular works that share some of the same important episodes: the Roman de toute chevalerie, written in Anglo-Norman *ca.* 1170-1175 by Thomas of Kent, and the Wars of Alexander, an anonymous Middle English work of the late-fourteenth century.

Medieval authors, including Thomas of Kent and the anonymous author of the Wars of Alexander, did not have access to early accounts of Alexander's deeds. These include the now fragmentary work of Callisthenes, Alexander's official historian; the memoirs of Alexander's companion, Ptolemy; and the later Anabasis of Arrian and Vita Alexandri of Plutarch. This deficit was unavoidable, as Martin Gosman illustrates: "Le grec utilisé comme véhicule de leurs pensées rend cependant leurs travaux inaccessibles aux auteurs du Moyen Age: *graeca non leguntur*."¹⁹⁴ The sources on Alexander that were available to medieval writers were written in Latin, some of the most important of

¹⁹³ For a thorough overview of medieval Alexander texts and sources, see George Cary, The Medieval Alexander (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956).

¹⁹⁴ Martin Gosman, La légende d'Alexandre le Grand dans la littérature française du 12^e siècle. Une réécriture permanente (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997), 29.

which are the first century CE Res gestae Alexandri Magni of Quintus Curtius and Justin's Epitome of Trogus Pompeius' Historiae Philippicae (ca. 200 CE). Walter of Châtillon drew on Curtius' work for his popular Alexandreis, and Orosius used Justin's Epitome for the Alexander portion of his widely-read world history, the Seven Books of History Against the Pagans.

For the more legendary aspects of Alexander's adventures, medieval authors relied heavily upon a Latin translation of a Greek romance, written some time after 200 BCE, and known as Pseudo-Callisthenes, as it was sometimes attributed to Alexander's court historian, Callisthenes. This influential text, a composite of historical and legendary materials, was translated into Latin in the fourth century, abridged in the ninth, and "affords the essential elements of the vernacular image of Alexander that emerges shortly after 1100 and thereafter looms large in both Latin and vernacular texts."¹⁹⁵ The Latin translation of one of the four proposed recensions of the Pseudo-Callisthenes romance made ca. 320 CE by Julius Valerius, the Res gestae Alexandri Macedonis, was "widely popular in medieval Europe, and the source of many vernacular versions."¹⁹⁶ Another important work derived from the Pseudo-Callisthenes is the Latin translation made by Archpriest Leo of Naples ca. 950. This translation represents a different recension of the Pseudo-Callisthenes from that used by Julius Valerius, and has come to be known as the Historia de preliis, "one of the most important sources for medieval knowledge of Alexander."¹⁹⁷ Also used by medieval authors was a purported letter of Alexander to Aristotle on the marvels of India, which

¹⁹⁵ Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox, "Introduction: Alexander the Great in the French Middle Ages," in The Medieval French Alexander, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Albany: State University of New York, 2002), 2.

¹⁹⁶ Cary, Medieval Alexander, 10.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

was greatly expanded in the early Middle Ages, the Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotilem.¹⁹⁸ Sections of Paulus Orosius' universal history, the Seven Books of History Against the Pagans, were also used as sources of material on Alexander.

One of the most popular medieval works on the life and conquests of Alexander was Walter of Châtillon's Latin hexameter poem, the Alexandreis, written 1171-1181.¹⁹⁹ Like the Aeneid, the Alexandreis was a commonly used school text, and it is likely that it helped its readers form opinions about Alexander.²⁰⁰ "In the thirteenth century, Eberhard's *Laborintus* and Hugo of Trimburg's *Registrum multorum auctorum* listed the poem among the standard school texts, while Henry of Ghent complained that it had displaced the reading of the classical poets in grammatical study."²⁰¹ The Alexandreis differs from the texts I will be treating in this chapter, the Roman de toute chevalerie and the Wars of Alexander, in genre as well as sources. Unlike these works, a romance and an alliterative poem, the Alexandreis is an epic and "describes the life of Alexander in heroic vein, and is full of the inevitable rhetorical digressions and mythological interventions of a Latin epic."²⁰² It is also based on different sources: of the many Alexander texts available to medieval writers, Walter drew principally on the biography of Alexander by the early imperial author Quintus Curtius Rufus, which

¹⁹⁸ For an overview of the Epistola, see Andy Orchard, Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript, rev. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 116-139. Appendix IIa contains an edition of the Latin text of the Epistola, pp. 204-223; Appendix IIc contains a translation of the Old English Epistola, pp. 224-53.

¹⁹⁹ Over 200 manuscripts survive of "the most popular of all medieval Latin epics," 62. Cary, Medieval Alexander.

²⁰⁰ See A. C. Dionisotti, "Walter of Châtillon and the Greeks," in Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition: Essays in Medieval and Renaissance Literature, ed. Peter Godman and Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 73-96.

²⁰¹ Walter of Châtillon, The Alexandreis of Walter of Châtillon: A Twelfth Century Epic, trans. David Townsend (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), xv. "Nor was Walter's poem simply copied and read widely: it was studied intensively as a standard text of the literary curriculum, as a plethora of glosses in many surviving manuscripts attests," xii.

²⁰² Cary, Medieval Alexander, 63. See Townsend's introduction to the Alexandreis, xviii-xx, for a discussion of how Walter used and refashioned epic conventions.

survived into the Middle Ages missing the first two of its ten books; Walter used an interpolated version, which filled in these missing books.²⁰³ Walter's Alexander is obsessed with conquest, power and world domination, and Walter adds battle sequences not found in Curtius.²⁰⁴ Like the Aeneid, the Alexandreis was a widely read text which probably influenced readers' ideas about Alexander, just as the Aeneid may have shaped medieval opinions about the Greeks at Troy.

Treachery, *Engin* and Religious Typology in the Roman de toute chevalerie

One of the two Alexander texts I will examine in this chapter, Thomas of Kent's Roman de toute chevalerie was written at approximately the same time as Benoît de Sainte-Maure's Roman de Troie, and perhaps at the same place: the court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine.²⁰⁵ A comparison between their two visions of ancient Greeks is useful, considering the proximity in time and geography of the two works. Of the many Alexander traditions, Thomas based his work primarily on the Zacher Epitome of Julius Valerius' Res gestae Alexandri Macedonis. This was a popular ninth century abridgement of Julius Valerius' work, and named after its editor, Julius Zacher. From the Jewish Antiquities of Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, Thomas also incorporates the Jerusalem episode, where Alexander visits the Jews in Jerusalem.²⁰⁶ This incident was known to the Middle Ages through Rufinus' sixth-century translation of Josephus.

Material on Alexander was popular not only in the twelfth century, but also in the fourteenth and beyond. As proof of the continuing influence of works on

²⁰³ See Edme R. Smits, ed. "A Medieval Supplement to the Beginning of Curtius Rufus's Historia Alexandri: An Edition with Introduction," Viator 18 (1987): 89-124.

²⁰⁴ Dionisotti, "Walter of Châtillon and the Greeks," 81.

²⁰⁵ See Gosman, La légende d'Alexandre le Grand, esp. 143-167, for views of Alexander in the twelfth century. See also Cary, Medieval Alexander, esp. 208-209.

²⁰⁶ For a study of the sources of the Roman de toute chevalerie, see Johanna Weynand, Der Roman de toute chevalerie des Thomas von Kent in seinem Verhältnis zu seinen Quellen (Bonn: Carl Georgi, 1911).

Alexander, the Monk of Chaucer's "Monk's Tale" declares that "'The storie of Alisaundre is so commune/ That every wight that hath discrecioun/ Hath herd somewhat or al of his fortune" (743-745).²⁰⁷ Medieval Alexander texts, in both their Latin and vernacular forms, were influential, whether they served as school texts or were commissioned at a royal court. The other Alexander text on which I focus belongs to the Middle English Alexander tradition: the relatively little-studied alliterative Wars of Alexander draws on different sources than does the Roman de toute chevalerie, though it also includes the Jerusalem episode from Josephus.

The Roman de toute chevalerie represents the first flowering of vernacular Alexander literature, while the Wars of Alexander illustrates the continuing popularity of Alexander into the later Middle Ages. An examination of these two texts together provides a useful comparison: though they share the Jerusalem episode in common, the change in the perception and use of Alexander by medieval authors is apparent. For instance, Alexander is a proto-Christian in the Roman de toute chevalerie, and an unrepentant polytheist in the Wars of Alexander. Alexander is portrayed ambiguously in both texts; his depiction is never wholly positive nor completely negative, and he seems to play different roles depending on the needs of the particular author. The ambiguity and malleability of Alexander, "[t]he powerful legendary matrix resulting from this blend of history and myth . . . [which] retains a remarkable elasticity, capable of accommodating an astonishing variety of contrastive, and sometimes contradictory, worldviews," make his life and deeds a useful tool for writers.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Monk's Tale," The Canterbury Tales, in The Riverside Chaucer. ed. Larry D. Benson. 3rd ed (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1987).

²⁰⁸ Maddox and Sturm-Maddox, "Introduction," 1.

The ambiguous characteristics of Alexander, like those of the Greeks at Troy, can be explored using the ideas of *translatio imperii* and supersession. Alexander plays a crucial role in Orosius' conception of *translatio imperii*: in Orosius' quadripartite schema, Alexander holds, or takes care of, the authority of world empire as it moves in succession from Babylon in the East, to Carthage in the South, to Macedon in the North, and finally to Rome in the West. Alexander is the caretaker of empire for a brief, intense period, providing a model of world dominion for Augustus Caesar in particular, and for Rome, which in its Christianity will be the fulfillment of all empires. Alexander, like the Greeks at Troy, is an agent by which Christian empire can finally be born, and is also himself superseded. The Greeks at Troy, as I have shown above, are the movers of *imperium* from Troy to Rome, and are surpassed by their victims, the Trojans, who found the Roman people, a lineage that will eventually form the Christian Roman Empire.

Though he is a pagan in the Roman de toute chevalerie, Alexander recognizes the power and authority of the God of the Jews in Jerusalem, an act that led medieval authors and readers to view him as a proto-Christian: he realizes the truth of God, and had he been born after the Incarnation, a medieval audience would have reckoned, he would surely have become a Christian. Despite Alexander's move towards monotheism, he is superseded by Christian Rome. Walter of Châtillon captures the threat posed to the Romans by Alexander. Had Alexander's empire and lineage persisted, Rome would never have had a chance to thrive:

Qui si senio non fractus inermi
 Pollice Fatorum notros uixisset in annos,
 Cesareos numquam loqueretur fama triumphos,
 Totaque Romuleae squaleret gloria gentis:
 Preradiaret enim meriti fulgore caminus
 Igniculos. . . . (1.5-10)

[Had sufferance of the Fates
allowed this man to live till our own day,
unbroken by the ravages of age,
Fame never would have sung the victory-song
for Caesar, and all glory of Rome's race
would lie abject, the great blaze of his worth
engulfing that pale flame.]²⁰⁹

While he provides a model for Christian empire, Alexander and his lineage cannot last to provide a competitor for Rome. Alexander leaves no heirs and his empire collapses after his death.

Added to the complexity of Alexander's character is the uncertainty of his nationality. While some recent scholars refer to him as Macedonian, it is not always clear whether Alexander should be called a Greek, a Macedonian, or both.²¹⁰ In the Roman de toute chevalerie, Thomas of Kent refers to Alexander as both Greek and Macedonian. In the Wars of Alexander, Alexander self-identifies as a Greek and Greeks and Macedonians are referred to as different peoples, though sometimes the terms are used interchangeably. In both texts, Alexander speaks Greek, and Macedon is treated like a province of Greece. I argue that Alexander's national heritage as represented in literature relates to the various authors' designs for Alexander: as a Macedonian, Alexander fits into the Orosian paradigm of history, where empire is transferred from Babylon, to Carthage, to Macedon, to Rome. In this providential framework of history, Macedon functions as the placeholder of empire and paves the way for Christian empire; in this role, though, Alexander simply provides a model for empire and disappears after Rome is established. When Alexander is called "Greek," however, he

²⁰⁹ Walter of Châtillon, Alexandreis, ed. Marvin Colker (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1978). Translation found in Walter of Châtillon, The Alexandreis, trans. David Townsend, 1.7-13.

²¹⁰ Particularly Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas and Laurence Harf-Lancner in their introduction to their Modern French translation of Thomas of Kent's Le Roman d'Alexandre ou Le Roman de toute chevalerie (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2003).

can be associated with the Greek language, Greek learning, and perhaps most importantly with regard to the literary depictions of Greeks, the ambiguous, inborn characteristics of “the Greek,” which can be seen in the Greeks at Troy. Being Macedonian places Alexander in a providential framework of history, while being Greek associates him with both the good and bad aspects of the ancient Greeks.

The ambiguity and malleability of the Greek character, as seen in Alexander’s bipartite nationality, is also reflected in medieval chroniclers’ views of his life. For instance, the seventh-century chronicler Fredegar traces Alexander’s heritage to one branch of the Trojans fleeing Troy who settled in Macedon. This not only establishes Alexander as being of the same stock as Europeans, but distances him from any association with the Greeks at Troy, since he is descended from their enemies, the Trojans. Other later chroniclers, especially those of the twelfth century, place Alexander within an eschatological framework. The crux of chronicles and universal histories at this point was the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, established after the First Crusade; according to views of many authors, the establishment of this Christian kingdom in the Holy Land was the last step before the end of time. Alexander’s empire plays a crucial role for Fulcher of Chartres’ chronicle of the First Crusade: Alexander was one of the rulers to have subjugated and ruled the Holy Land before the Romans, a pagan ruler who respected the God of the Jews and provided a model for the Romans, and later the crusaders. Otto of Freising’s Two Cities, written after the fall of Edessa and influenced by the failure of the Second Crusade, is arguably the most apocalyptic of the chronicles. Otto locates Alexander in a vision of *translatio imperii* that differs from that of Orosius, one that brings Alexander closer to Rome and anticipates the end of the world.

Within the Wars of Alexander and the Roman de toute chevalerie we can see various aspects of Alexander's heritage, character and place in history emphasized. His multifaceted character allows the different stances taken by different authors: he can be a proto-Christian, a pagan, a proto-Saracen, a Trojan; he can reject treachery, be a model for chivalry, and fall prey to Oriental temptations. Alexander's differing nationalities complicate his role in *translatio imperii*, supersession, and the foundation of Christian empire. Though he sometimes strives to distance himself from the other ancient Greeks of medieval literature, the Greeks at Troy, he cannot help sharing their fate. Despite his best efforts, he too is a tool in the movement of empire, a model, a flawed predecessor that can be the subject of retrospection, but who, according to the demands of *translatio imperii* and supersession, must not survive to rival his European "descendants."

Though the Greeks who besieged Troy and Alexander play similar roles in the movement of empire, the medieval depiction of Alexander, beginning especially in the twelfth century, is radically different from the portrayal of the Greeks of the Trojan War.²¹¹ In both the Wars of Alexander and Roman de toute chevalerie, Alexander eschews the trait most associated with the other Greeks, treachery; he wins battles by both ingenuity and military might; he is the epitome of a knight, courteous, honourable, noble and extremely well educated. He even worships the God of the pre-Incarnation Jews, an episode that helps to shift the depiction of Alexander from epic conqueror to proto-Christian hero. Though largely regarded in the twelfth century as a mirror of princes, a heroic, royal and worthy exemplar for the powerful, Alexander is nevertheless in his own way as ambiguous as the Greeks of the Trojan War, from whom he distances himself.

²¹¹ Martin Gosman argues that twelfth century texts show a more positive view of Alexander, La Légende d'Alexandre le Grand, 57.

The ambiguity of the depiction of Alexander, which could make him appealing or outrageous to a medieval reader, has been noted by numerous critics.²¹² His character contains many facets, as he is the son of a dubious Oriental magician, but he is an invincible strategist and warrior who conquers an almost universal empire. He is the student of Aristotle and wishes to explore the Orient and understand its mysteries, but he is also an excessive hero who drives his army in his personal quest for power. The ambiguity of Alexander in the Roman de toute chevalerie attests to the fact that ancient Greeks do not have a set scheme of “national characteristics” or traits inherent to the Greek nation: both Alexander and the Greeks of the Trojan War share aspects of the depictions of Jews and Saracens. This “variable characterization” means that Alexander can be typologically recognized *in bono*, as a prefiguration of the Christian community, or *in malo*, as the post-Incarnation Jews, or as Saracens. While the Greeks of the Trojan War are *in malo* because they embrace the treachery commonly associated with Judas and post-Incarnation Jews, Alexander can be seen *in bono* as a virtuous pre-Incarnation Jew. Instead of embracing the treachery that links the Greeks at Troy with post-Incarnation Jews, Alexander actively rejects the use of these methods by himself or by his men. Because Alexander visits Jerusalem and worships the God of the Jews, though not necessarily converting to Judaism, as well as eschewing the typically post-Incarnation Jewish trait of treachery, Alexander proves himself to be in some ways the antithesis of the Greeks at Troy: he can be seen not only as a righteous pre-Incarnation Jew, but as a proto-Christian conqueror.

²¹² Such as Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox, and Gaullier-Bougassas and Harf-Lancner, who state that Alexander has “autant de facettes—parfois difficiles à concilier, d’où la naissance d’ambiguïtés.” Le Roman d’Alexandre ou Le Roman de toute chevalerie, vii. Gaullier-Bougassas notes Alexander’s “visages différents et parfois contradictoires” in Les Romans d’Alexandre: aux frontières de l’épique et du romanesque (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998), 312.

Alexander's attitude towards treachery can best be understood by an examination of three exemplary scenes from the Roman de toute chevalerie. In these episodes, he pardons a Persian soldier who disguises himself as a Greek and tries to kill Alexander by stabbing him in the back. Alexander also punishes the betrayal of one of his men by another, a betrayal of the type practiced by the Greeks at Troy.²¹³ While Alexander will not suffer treason in his ranks, he punishes treachery that benefits him: he executes the treacherous murderers of his enemy, King Darius. It seems that Alexander has a clear sense of what constitutes treason, and refuses to have any part in it. However, the death of Alexander, discussed below, complicates an exploration of treason in the Roman de toute chevalerie: Alexander dies by poison at the hand of another Greek, Antipater. Though Alexander benefits from positive facets of Greek identity, the tutelage of Aristotle and Greek *engin* used constructively, and though he distances himself from other ancient Greeks and treachery, he cannot escape that negative facet of the Greek nature that he denies.

In the first instance of treachery explored here, Alexander leaps fully armed into the River Tigris and becomes deathly ill. His physician, Philip, gives Alexander a medicine so effective that he is able to walk again. Philip, however, "ot un enemy. . ./Parmenion oy cel malveis apeller" [has an enemy. . . Parmenion is the name of this scoundrel (2796-7)].²¹⁴ This traitor Parmenion takes the opportunity of Alexander's illness to falsely accuse Philip of treason. Parmenion writes a letter to Alexander stating

²¹³ In particular, the treachery of the Greeks after the fall of Troy, exemplified by Ajax Telamon and Ulysses arguing over the possession of the Palladium, the statue sacred to Troy. When Ajax will not give up his claim, Ulysses secretly kills him and leaves during the night (Roman de Troie, 26591-27182).

²¹⁴ All references in my text to Thomas of Kent's Roman de toute chevalerie refer to The Anglo Norman Alexander (Le Roman de toute chevalerie) by Thomas of Kent, ed. Brian Foster and Ian Short, 2 vols., Anglo-Norman Text Society 29-33 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1976-1977). All translations mine.

that Philip has been bribed by Alexander's enemy, the Persian King Darius, and wishes to kill Alexander by poisoning his medicine:

“Roy Daire l’ad fet en fin ta mort jurer;
Sa soer e demy son regne ly doit il doner;
.....
Pernez autre mire si vous fetes saner.” (2800-2805)

[“King Darius ordered him to kill you; [Darius] will give him his sister and half his kingdom; choose another doctor if you wish to be healed.”]

Alexander, wishing to find out the truth of Parmenion's accusation “Par mult sotil engin” [by an ingenious strategy (2815)], waits until Philip has prepared and offered him a medicine to show Philip Parmenion's letter. Because Philip betrays no guilt when confronted with this letter, Alexander knows that the accusation of treachery is false, and that both he and Philip have been betrayed by one they trusted: “Il te quida honir e moy bien decevoir. / Contre leal servise ne doit haur valoir” [He wanted to dishonour you and deceive me. Hatred must not prevail over loyal service (2842-2843)].

Alexander, clearly upset at this event, orders that “En le mal qu’il overe doit bein par droit chaoir” [Justice demands that he endure the suffering that he manufactured (2845)]. Parmenion is brought forth in chains “pendre cum felon e puis en poudre ardoir” [to be hanged as a traitor then burned to ashes (2847)]. Curiously, the “traître” (2848) Parmenion is called a “felon,” a word associated with the treacherous ancient Greek Peleus in the Roman de Troie, a character who plots the death of his nephew. Alexander is totally intolerant of treachery, unlike the Trojan Greeks, and also uses his *engin* differently than these Greeks: to root out treason, rather than perpetrate it.

Alexander's definition of treachery can be further understood from a battle scene between the Greeks and Persians not long after Parmenion's betrayal. To motivate his soldiers, Darius offers half his kingdom and his sister in marriage to whomever defeats

and kills Alexander. In response, a very ingenious (“durement enginus,” 3141) unnamed Persian soldier takes the armour from a dead Greek and “D’une grant felonie a purpenser se prist” [he started to plan a great treachery (3147)]: to kill Alexander when he is unaware. As we have seen in the context of the Roman de Troie, *engin* and treachery can be related: when *engin*, as a facet of the mind, is directed towards good, it is used for creative, positive ends; when directed towards negative ends, it is used to trick and betray.²¹⁵ When *engin* is used by the Greeks of the Trojan War, it means treachery and deceit; Alexander, however, uses it in a positive, constructive way in the invention of battle strategies and items such as a war machine. These details might lead the reader to associate the Persians with the Greeks of the Trojan War and expect an act of treachery: in fact Thomas calls it “la traison” (3151) when the disguised Persian, in the midst of the Greeks, strikes Alexander in the back. Alexander, thinking he has been struck by one of his own soldiers, declares that “‘par grant traison feru m’as laidement!’” [through treason you have basely struck me (3168)].

The next day, Alexander sits in judgement with his barons over the soldier. The Persian, in reply to Alexander’s accusation that he is a traitor, says that not only was he enticed by the things that Darius promised, but he has no debt of loyalty to Alexander: “Car ne vous doy fey, leauté ne amisté,/Ne de mortel haur [ne] fu vers vous iré,/Mes la terre Dayre e l’onur ay coveité” [I do not owe you faith, loyalty or friendship, and I do not hold mortal anger towards you, but I coveted honours and the land of Darius (3242-3244)]. Contrary to Antiochus l’Ostage, Marc de Rome and others, Alexander’s trusted friend Ptolemy asserts that what the Persian did was not treason, since what he did was to avenge his country, “Car de son enemy deust prendre vengeance/En tot[e]

²¹⁵ Hanning, The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance, 111.

manere sanz fere traison" (3268-3269); he did not kill Alexander in his sleep or poison him, and he owes no loyalty to Alexander. Alexander follows Ptolemy's advice and sends the Persian back to his own camp unharmed and with riches. By his judgment, Alexander clarifies the rules of war and defines treachery as the breaking of faith. Though his life was endangered by the Persian's attack, Alexander pardons him because a Persian owes a Greek no loyalty; enemies can defend their homeland in any manner, but allies must not deceive each other. This episode highlights Alexander's clemency and understanding of treachery, and shows that the actions of the Greeks at Troy to be treachery, since they had entered into a false peace treaty with the Trojans before they sacked the city.

It is worth noting that while Alexander punishes treachery within his own ranks, he also rejects his enemy's treachery even when it benefits him. After a decisive battle won by Alexander, Darius sends a message to Alexander saying that he will become Alexander's vassal and go into exile. When Alexander does not respond to his entreaty, Darius pleads with Porrus, king of India, that he come to Darius' aid against the Greeks. Two Persian traitors tell Alexander of Darius' appeal to Porrus and Alexander takes his army into Babylon, but arrives too late: Darius has been killed by two of his fellow Persians. Thomas explains that though one may vanquish one's enemies, there is no way to avoid traitors:

Ore est le roy Daire mort; par el ne poet eschaper.
Prodome se put bien defendre e tenser,
E de agait e de enemy son corps deliverer;
De traison de soens ne se put nul garder
Quant cil le traist qe le deveroit aider. (3654-3657)

[Darius is already dead; he cannot escape death. A nobleman can defend himself and fight, and escape the ambushes (tricks) of his enemy, but he cannot defend himself against the treason of his own men because a traitor is someone who should have helped him.]

Thomas states that Darius is killed by Besas and Barzane, two of Darius' serfs to whom he was kind:

Parlé ont ensemble de lur seignur trahir.
Alisandre quident par ceo a gré servir,
Si quident a honur e hautesce venir. (3663-3665)

[They spoke together about betraying their lord. They believed they could serve Alexander according to his wish by this, and they thought they would have honour and glory.]

The traitors attack Darius and leave him to die: "De deus espees ly vont laidement ferir, / E del cheval l'abatent e le lessent gesir" (3672-3673). When Alexander reaches Babylon, he laments over the dying Darius, whom he has come to pity. Alexander declares that he will reward the people who have killed Darius. When the two serfs come forward, Alexander's reward is riches, robes, and execution. Though the two traitors have delivered Persia into Alexander's hands, they have treacherously slain their lord, who had trusted in them, an act Alexander despises. While the Greeks at Troy exploit the Trojan traitors, including Aeneas and Antenor, Alexander shows that ancient Greeks can disdain their enemies' treason, as well as treachery within their ranks.

By eschewing treason, Alexander rejects a practice often associated with the Greeks at Troy, and with post-Incarnation Jews, who were assumed to be treacherous, owing to the fact that Judas, the prototypical medieval traitor, had betrayed Christ to the Romans in return for money. While Alexander rejects the post-Incarnation Jewish trait of treason, he resembles a righteous pre-Incarnation Jew when he honours the Jews, and their God, in Jerusalem. This curious and important episode, which appears in several medieval Alexander texts, is taken originally from Josephus' Jewish

Antiquities.²¹⁶ Flavius Josephus was a first-century CE Jewish historian who survived and recorded the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE.²¹⁷ This work was known to the Middle Ages through the Latin version attributed to Rufinus of Aquileia, who translated Josephus' works, Jewish Wars and Jewish Antiquities at the behest of Cassiodorus.²¹⁸ After its translation by Rufinus, it was included in the 1st recension of the Historia de preliis and gained an even wider audience by being included in the popular Historia scholastica of Petrus Comestor, ca. 1170. Of the three extant complete manuscripts of the Roman de toute chevalerie, the episode appears only in the Durham manuscript (Cathedral Library, C. IV. 27 B), which was used as the base manuscript for the edition by Brian Foster and Ian Short.²¹⁹

In the Roman de toute chevalerie, Alexander's dealings with the Jews are split into two distinct episodes. The first Jerusalem episode, lines 1249-1270, occurs before the defeat of Persia when Alexander is besieging Tyre: in need of provisions, he sends a messenger to nearby Jerusalem to demand armed men, supplies, food, and the tribute equal to that which the Jews would normally give to Darius. The Jews refuse him, saying that they cannot break their oath that they will not harm Darius while he lives: "Venir a l'encontre n'osent, ceo sachez,/ Car lur ley ne soeffre qe facent fausetez" [Know that they do not dare to declare war, since their law forbids treachery (1266-1267)]. One

²¹⁶ The episode is not included in one of the most popular French Alexander texts, the massive twelfth-century Old French Roman d'Alexandre of Alexandre de Paris.

²¹⁷ See D. J. A. Ross, Alexander historiatus: A Guide to Medieval Illustrated Alexander Literature, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1988). For the popularity of this episode in medieval Alexander texts, as well as a detailed discussion of later medieval illustrations of the episode, see Christiane Raynaud, "Alexandre et Jérusalem," in Le mythe de Jérusalem du Moyen Âge à la Renaissance, ed. Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore (Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 1995), 123-151.

²¹⁸ See Heinz Schrekenberg, Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition in Antike und Mittelalter (Leiden: Brill, 1972) and the introduction to Franz Blatt's The Latin Josephus. I: Introduction and Text (Århus: Universitetsforlaget Århus, 1958).

²¹⁹ For an examination of the manuscript tradition, see the introduction of Foster and Short's edition, as well as Brian Foster's article, "The Roman de toute chevalerie: Its Date and Author," French Studies 9.2 (1955): 154-158.

of the main distinguishing features of virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews can easily be seen here: the Jews, by refusing to betray their allegiance with Darius, reject the treachery associated with Judas, post-Incarnation Jews, and with the Greeks at Troy. It is curious that although Alexander also eschews treachery, he becomes angry at the Jews' refusal, ("trop devient irrez," 1268), and swears to come back and avenge himself ("Et dit q'il serra de cele gent vengez/Qe pur le roy Dayre ainsi l'ont refusez," 1269-1270), which may point to the excess ascribed to Alexander in many medieval texts.²²⁰

In the second episode (lines 3778-3921), Alexander and his army return to Jerusalem after Darius is dead and Persia has been conquered. When the news of his impending arrival reaches Jerusalem, Jadus, "prince des Jewes" (1249), tells the fearful Jews to pray that God will pity them and protect them from Alexander's wrath. That night Jadus has a dream wherein a voice tells him to adorn the city with rich cloths of gold, open the gates of the city and have the entire population process out to meet Alexander. The next day, Alexander arrives in Jerusalem and encounters Jadus and the Jews, who have indeed decorated the city and filed out of the gates to greet him. Instead of taking revenge, Alexander does something surprising for a pagan to do—he honours the Jews and their God:

Quant lui rois Alisandre les ad regardez
 Et vit tant de genz en albes revestez,

 Le prince de prestres bien aparaillez,
 En l'estole jacintine, la mitre al chief posez,
 E en la plate d'or le non Dieu lettrez,
 Tantost du destrer descendit a piez,
 Si ad le non Dieu devotement adhourez. (3839-3846)

[When the king Alexander had seen them, and saw many men dressed in albs, [and] the prince of the priests richly dressed in his ruby stole, the mitre on his head and the name

²²⁰ See Cary, *Medieval Alexander*, esp. 99-105.

of God written on a gold plate (on the mitre), he immediately stepped down from his horse and worshipped the name of God.]

In many manuscript illuminations of this scene, Alexander is depicted as kneeling down before the bishop of the Jews, who is holding the tablets on which are written the Ten Commandments.²²¹

Jadus and the Jews could here be seen by a medieval audience as all the worthier of honour because of the anachronistic Christian details given in their description: they are called “evesques” (bishops), and wear Christian liturgical garments such as stoles and mitres. These pre-Incarnation Jews are virtuous and have the potential to be Christians: they have the trappings of Christianity, but live before the Incarnation. When Judaism is superseded by Christianity at Christ’s birth, these Jews, because of their already-present Christian attributes, can be expected to abandon their old, empty religion and be receptive to the fulfillment of the Mosaic law by Christianity.²²² By giving the Jews Christian details, Thomas makes it clear to the reader that Alexander recognizes the God of the Chosen People, a people who have the potential to become Christians.

Alexander’s men, understandably surprised, “quident qe le rois i est enginez” [think that the king has been tricked / beguiled (3854)] and wonder how the most powerful king bows before the prince of the priests. Alexander explains that he prostrates himself not before Jadus, but before God: “Einz a Dieu qi prince de prestres est appelez / Fesoi la reverence e me sui abessez” (3864-3865). He goes on to explain that while he was still in Greece, a man dressed like Jadus had appeared to him in a dream

²²¹ See Raynaud, “Alexandre et Jérusalem,” for examples of these illustrations.

²²² For a discussion of the hermeneutics of supersession, see Boyarin, “The Subversion of the Jews,” 27, and “This We Know to be the Carnal Israel,” 482. See Narin Van Court, “The Siege of Jerusalem and Augustinian Historians,” 167, 169, for an examination of how supersession functions in a literary text.

and said that he, Alexander, would take Persia with the help of God. Recognizing that the God of the Jews has given him victory over Darius, Alexander makes sacrifices in the Temple in Jerusalem “Solonc lur ordinance” (3887), according to the Jewish rites. The bishop then shows Alexander the Book of Daniel in which is a prophecy that a man born in Greece will crush the Persian empire (Daniel 11:4). In a touching scene, Alexander takes heart from this prophecy: “s’en est reconfortez;/ Il entent qe de lui fu ceo prophetez” [he is reassured; he understands that this prophecy is about him (3893-3894)]. On the next morning, Alexander gives the Jews whatever they ask him: in Jerusalem and in Babylon, the Jews can preserve the laws of their fathers, and they are exempt from tribute for seven years. Some Jewish men offer to join Alexander’s army, and he sets off on his next venture, to conquer India.

The Jerusalem episode is important to the characterization of Alexander in the Roman de toute chevalerie: because of his experience in Jerusalem, he is, at least for a brief span, a monotheist and can be likened to the virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews he honours. Though he seems to be a pagan, Alexander worships the God of the Jews, and the name of God at that, rather than an idol or the person of the bishop, Jadus. The recent translators of the Roman de toute chevalerie assert Alexander’s conversion to Jewish monotheism: “Pour célébrer Alexandre comme élu et instrument de Dieu, Thomas insiste longuement sur sa conversion au judaïsme.”²²³ Though Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas states that Alexander converts to Judaism or perhaps even Christianity,²²⁴ it seems more probable that in worshiping the God of the Jews, Alexander is recognizing the divine. His veneration is not assimilation to the Jewish religion, but rather recognition of the power of God. Alexander’s reverence for the God

²²³ Le Roman d’Alexandre ou Le Roman de toute chevalerie, lvii.

²²⁴ Gaullier-Bougassas, Les Romans d’Alexandre, 500.

of the Jews would lead a medieval audience to believe that if Alexander had been born after the Incarnation, he would likely have been a Christian.

Alexander continues to call upon the God of the Jews for aid throughout his later conquests. When he and his troops suffer a violent storm on a mountain, Ptolemy tells Alexander that God has given the Greeks these trials so that they can see the weakness of vanity, pride and *chevalerie* against the strength of God: “Depriom Dampnedieu e sa chere semblance/Qu’il ait merci de nous e doint nos se creance,/E des tormenz qe nous avom nous face demorance” [Let us pray to God and his dear exterior form to have mercy on us and let us believe in him, and to deliver us from our torments (5852-5854)]. The phrase “sa chere semblance” suggests that God has both a spiritual existence and also a physical form, and makes Ptolemy seem like he is referring to Christ. Another anachronistic detail that points towards the possibility of Alexander being a pre-Incarnation Jew, or even a proto-Christian, is his recourse to “divine page” (940) or Holy Scripture: “‘Dieu,’ dit il, ‘cria home e forma a sa ymage,/Dona ly feu e eir e terre e ewage’” [“God,” he says, “created man and made him in His likeness, and gave [him] fire and air and earth and water” (938-939)]. This language is similar to that which Benoît de Sainte-Maure has the Trojans use in the Roman de Troie; there, too, the reader can link the Trojans with Christians, or at least monotheists, though both Trojans and Greeks are pagan.

Intending to demand tribute from the terrestrial Paradise, “where God made Adam, our first father” [Ou Dieu forma Adam, nostre piere ancien (5539)], Alexander realizes the power of the God he worshiped in Jerusalem:

“Cele terre n’est pas moy, ne jamés ne serra,
Mes cil q’en Macedoigne en songe me conseilla
E me promist conquerre trestot quant qe y a;
Le powoir de Perse a moy baillera;

Fiablement mon host ileqes amenera
Pur qi amur les Jewes nul des miens greva,
Einz les desportai e assez honura." (5611-5617)

["This land is not mine and never will be, but belongs to the one who came to me in a dream in Macedon and advised me and promised that I would conquer all the world; He gave me power over Persia; He brought my army here safely and for love of Him, none of my soldiers mistreated the Jews, and I freed them and treated them with honour."]

The monotheist, and even Christian terms that Alexander uses would lead a medieval audience to believe that if Alexander had been born after the Incarnation, he would have been a Christian. In fact, there are a few works which make Alexander's birthday December 25th.²²⁵ But having been born at an unfortunate time, before the birth of Christ, Alexander is the best a pagan can be. These are only a few examples of Alexander worshipping, and seeking aid from, the God of the Jews, who in some cases seems anachronistically to be the Christian God.

Alexander in some ways seems to be favoured by God, and can even be seen to play a role in Christian eschatology. After his sojourn in Jerusalem, Alexander's exploration of the East is interrupted when a messenger comes from the North and begs Alexander to contain the unclean races of Gog and Magog.²²⁶ These tribes are of the lineage of Nimrod, who built the Tower of Babel in Babylon, and are monstrous: they eat not only humans, but dogs, wolves, toads and frogs (5963-5986). Alexander ventures to the northern mountains, since "Having established the borders of the known world through conquest, [he] also must bear the burden of maintaining the

²²⁵ For example, the fifteenth-century Prose *Alexander* of Robert Thornton.

²²⁶ See Andrew Runni Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1932). On the identification of Gog and Magog with the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, see Andrew Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age, 1200-1600* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995) and "Gog and Magog on *Mappaemundi* and Early Printed World Maps: Orientalizing Ethnography in the Apocalyptic Tradition," *Journal of Early Modern History* 2 (1998): 61-88. See also Scott D. Westrem, "Against Gog and Magog," in *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages*, ed. Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 54-75.

order of the territory within."²²⁷ Since he realizes he cannot be victorious over Gog and Magog by his own skill and might alone, Alexander makes sacrifices on Mount Chelion: "Alisandre se atorne en sa paiene guise, / Cum l'onor Dampnedieu fet don le sacrifi[s]e" [Alexander dresses in pagan robes and celebrates the sacrifice to the honour of God (6495-6)]. It is curious that while sacrificing to a single deity here, Alexander is still described as a pagan. The voice of God instructs him as to how to enclose the monstrous races, and Alexander constructs metal columns reinforced with bitumen, with which he walls up the tribes in an enclosure, "Ainz le temps Antecrist n'istront il pas" [from which they will not emerge until the time of Antichrist (6578)]. During his "mission civilisatrice et apocalyptique que Dieu lui assigne face aux peuples maudits de Gog et Magog," Alexander not only protects the current inhabitants of his dominions, but also all future inhabitants until the end of the world.²²⁸

The enclosure encompasses aspects of Christian apocalypticism, as I will discuss, and the features of one of the tribes make Alexander appear to be a proto-Christian crusader. Included in the tribes of Gog and Magog are the Turks, the opponents of the crusaders. As Akbari notes, "Thomas gives special attention to the Turks. . . . They are 'cruel e dure' ['cruel and hard'], given to 'lecherie e chescune luxure' ['lechery and every wanton behavior (6019-20)]."²²⁹ These are characteristics typical to Saracens in literature: Jeffery Jerome Cohen states that, apart from the cruelty noted in relation to the Saracens, "superabundant wealth, plentiful luxuries, and hedonism of the Saracens were medieval commonplaces."²³⁰ When Alexander encloses these tribes of Gog and

²²⁷ Akbari, "Alexander in the Orient," 117.

²²⁸ *Le Roman d'Alexandre ou Le Roman de toute chevalerie*, lvii.

²²⁹ Akbari, *Idols in the East*, Ch. 2, p. 28.

²³⁰ Cohen, "On Saracen Enjoyment," 113-146.

Magog, including the Turks, he can be seen as fighting a specifically Saracen group; he seems to be a crusader-before-the-fact who participates in Christian eschatology.

Both the presence of the Turks and the apocalyptic element of the enclosure of Gog and Magog make Alexander seem like a proto-Christian hero. For this legendary episode, Thomas draws on the Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius and the Cosmographia of Aethicus Ister.²³¹ According to Marjorie Reeves, the interpretation of Gog and Magog as future enemies of the Kingdom of God was central to prophecies of Joachim of Fiore and the concept of the Antichrist.²³² As Michael argues, “[b]y walling up the continuing threat to civilization represented by Gog and Magog, Alexander was idealized by the early Christian historians. The episode has eschatological implications, in that a temporary and worldly type prefigured Christ’s coming.”²³³ This emphasis on Alexander’s apocalyptic role “reaches its height in the account of Thomas of Kent; later vernacular versions of the Alexander romance sharply reduce the apocalyptic import in favor of an Alexander whose exemplary status is social and political rather than eschatological.”²³⁴ Though he was necessarily not a Christian, being born before the Incarnation, Alexander not only recognizes the power of the God of the Jews, but even plays a role in the Christian conception of the Apocalypse; he exemplifies the best of the typical traits of virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews, and goes even further towards proto-Christianity in his enclosure of Gog and Magog.

²³¹ See Akbari, Idols in the East, Ch. 2, for a discussion of Thomas of Kent’s sources for Gog and Magog.

²³² Marjorie Reeves, The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism, rev. ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), esp. Part Three: Antichrist and New World Emperor.

²³³ Ian Michael, “Typological Problems in Medieval Alexander Literature: The Enclosure of Gog and Magog,” in The Medieval Alexander Legend and Romance Epic: Essays in Honour of David J. A. Ross, ed. Peter Noble, Lucie Polak and Claire Isoz (Millwood, NY: Kraus International Publications, 1982), 134.

²³⁴ Akbari, Idols in the East, Ch. 2, pp. 26-27.

Though he is set apart from the Greeks of the Trojan War in his refusal of treachery and his reverence for the God of the Jews, Alexander remains ambiguous. He recognizes the power of the God of the Jews and is an instrument of God, but sacrifices to other gods. This could be the result of habit, since the environment in which Alexander grew up, as described by Thomas of Kent, is certainly pagan. In a scene reminiscent of episodes of Saracen idolatry in other texts, his father Philip is shown worshiping the statues of various gods, though Thomas does not make it clear which:²³⁵

As dieus fet sacrifices de tors e de motons,
D'or e d'argent, riche[s]s prezenc e dons,
Puis [s]'est acuté al temple a geneillons,
Si fet ses prieres e dit ses oreisons.
De la dotance qu'il ad, as dieus fet questions.
Par une voiz d'ymage ad oye le respons. (512-517)

[He made sacrifices of bulls and sheep to the gods, gold and silver and rich presents and goods, then he kneels in the temple and recites his prayers. Then he asks the gods questions about that which he fears. He hears the answer from a voice coming from the statue.]

Well after his visit to Jerusalem, though he does sometimes also pay homage to the God of the Jews, Alexander, like his father, retains a reverence for other gods. For example, Alexander takes apart the pillars of Hercules at the Eastern edge of the known world to find out the material from which they are made. He puts them back together, then “Sacreffises lur fist pur apaiser lur otrages” (5404), does sacrifices to the gods, Hercules and his “father,” in whose images the pillars were made, to make up for the insult he has done them. At the burning mountain in Ethiopia, Alexander makes sacrifices to the gods, thanking them for allowing him to have dominion over the whole world, and asking whether he will return to Greece:

²³⁵ The tradition of Saracens worshiping idols is widespread: see Akbari, “Imagining Islam.” See also Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens*; Paul Bancourt, *Les Musulmans dans les chansons de geste*; and Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

les dieus somont
 Qu'il li face[ent] respons. . . .
 De diverse manere i fet sacrifier,
 E puis dit en conseil: "Toi, dieu, doi mercier,
 Qe jeo, Alisandre, qui tot doy justiser,
 Les homes terrianes e les regnes conseiller,
 Car sur tot le mond m'avez fet eshaucer,
 Si cum vous estes dieux puissant e droiturer,
 Dites moy si je doy en Grece repeirer
 E veer ma miere e mon mestre qui ay cher

 E eshaucer Macedoigne e ses lois adrecer. . . ." (6887-6898)

[he calls on the gods to answer him. . . . He sacrifices in many ways, then secretly asks: "I must thank you, god, that I, Alexander, am ruler of all things, that I rule the men and kingdoms of the world, you elevated me over the whole world, and since you are powerful and just gods, tell me if I will return to Greece and see my mother and my master whom I hold dear. . . and elevate Macedon and correct its laws."]

Alexander also asks his fortune of the oracular Trees of the Sun and Moon, who are male and female; one speaks Indian and the other speaks Greek.²³⁶

Alexander seems to value different gods for the different benefits they can give him. He honours the God of the Jews because he has proven his efficacy: "A l'aide de Dieux ai jeo Dayre outreiez, / Par qui jeo espoire fournir mes volentez / De toutes autres choses qe jeo ai enpensez" [I defeated Darius with the help of God, and I hope through him to reach my desires in all the other ends that I have thought of (3880-3882)].

Alexander can be seen as a collector of gods: he will worship a god if that god can benefit him and his goals. Despite honouring multiple gods, Alexander seems like a virtuous pre-Incarnation Jew because he not only spurns treachery, but worships the God of the Jews. Because of this, and because of his role in the walling up of Gog and Magog, Alexander would have been a good candidate for Christianity, along with the righteous, God-fearing Jews in Jerusalem. He lives before the Incarnation, though; he does not have the opportunity to know Christ's truth, and so to a medieval audience,

²³⁶ On the Trees of the Sun and Moon, see Akbari, *Idols in the East*, Ch. 2, pp. 31-33.

cannot be saved. He does not become a Jew, and he cannot be a Christian, so he does the next best thing: he worships the God of the Jews to the best of his ability, though he continues sacrificing to other gods. Catherine Croizy-Naquet, writing about the Faits des Romains, notes that “Christianization provides a rational explanation of Alexander’s failure, attributable to his status as a pagan deprived of the light of Revelation, rather than to his status as a pagan guilty of greed and excess.”²³⁷ In Alexander’s time, this is the closest he can come to God.

Ambiguous Alexander: Crusade, Apocalypticism, Orientalization and Nationality

Though Alexander can be recognized as *in bono* with regard to his pre-Incarnation Jewish traits, which make him seem to be a proto-Christian and provide a clear break from the Greeks at Troy, he remains ambiguous. Alexander can be seen *in bono* as a crusader fighting the Persian King Darius, who is depicted as a Saracen. At the same time, though, Alexander is *in malo*, as he takes on some of the same Saracen characteristics seen in his enemy. The crusade framework of the Roman de toute chevalerie is not surprising, considering the era in which it was composed: like the Roman de Troie, the romance was written between the Second and Third Crusades, a time when there was anxiety about the state of the Holy Land and the beginnings of propaganda for a new crusade. Having Alexander, as Western conqueror, defeating Darius, the powerful Eastern Saracen, would have been a topical, and probably popular, move. While contemporary events suggest a crusade sentiment for the poem, the characteristics of the characters also show this to be true.

²³⁷ Catherine Croizy-Naquet, “Alexander and Caesar in the Faits de Romains,” in The Medieval French Alexander, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 164.

In a detail which does not appear in other works, here Alexander's fiercest enemy, the Persian King Darius III, is portrayed as a Saracen. Just as Alexander can be seen as a proto-Christian because he displays Christian traits but lives before the birth of Christ, Darius is depicted as a proto-Saracen: he, too, lives before the founding of the religion he seems to espouse. Darius claims to be part of the Saracen "pantheon," the trinity of Apollin, Muhammad, and Tervagent, typical to *chansons de geste* and romances, including the Chanson de Roland.²³⁸ Darius is the "roy des roys e cosin Tervagent,/ Parent Mercurie e Apolin le vaillant" [the king of kings and cousin of Tervagent, relative of Mercury and the brave Apollin (1391-1392)]. As well, the army Darius commands is described as consisting of Saracens, all of whom believe in Apollin:

La est Dayres assis e cent mil Sarazin –
 Il n'i ad cely qui ne croit en Apolin --
 Toz de Inde majur desqu'al mont Taurin
 E d'Aufrique la grant tote la gent Darin.
 Ne remist Turc n'Escler, Caldeu ne Barbarin
 Ne vienge a cest bosoing, si trop nen est frarin. (1604-1609)

[Darius is seated there with one hundred thousand Saracens—there was no one there who did not believe in Apolin—they came from Greater India up to the Taurus mountains and from immense Africa, and all were the vassals of Darius. Turks, Slavs, Chaldeans and Berbers, all came to him because he needed them, except those who did not have the strength.]

Like Saracens in many works about the crusades, the Saracens Darius commands do not speak a real language, but grunt like dogs: "Home ne parole greu, caldeu ne latin./ Ensement glatissent cum fussent mastin" [They do not speak Greek, Chaldean or Latin. They all bark as if they were dogs (1615-6)]. Saracens in crusade works are described in the same manner: in the Chanson d'Antioche, the Emperor of Constantinople describes the Saracens as making noises like chained-up dogs ["Il

²³⁸ On the "gods" of the Saracens in the *chansons de geste*, see C. and Y. Pellat, "L'Ideé de Dieu chez les Sarrasins des chansons de geste," Studia Islamica 22 (1965): 5-42; Akbari, "Imagining Islam"; and Tolan, Saracens, esp. Ch. 5, "Saracens as Pagans," 105-134.

demenront tel noise com chiens encaanés" (1087)]. In the Chanson de Roland, often considered to have a crusade sentiment, some Saracens from Argoille bark like dogs ("cume chen i glatissent," 3527). And like the Saracens in the Chanson de Roland, Darius' forces are from many diverse nations: Africa, India, the cities of Ascalon and Saba; they are Turks, Slavs, Chaldeans and Berbers (1606-1613). The multi-racial Saracen troops in the Chanson de Roland are also comprised of Berbers (1236), Africans (1550), Turks and Arabs, among others.

Darius can also be seen as a Saracen because of the setting in which Thomas places him. Surrounded by rich trappings in a grove outside Babylon, he receives messengers and hears the counsel of his barons:

Dehors Babiloine en l'ombre d'un pin,
 Sur l'ewe de Tigre [en]coste un gardin
 Ou gelofre crest, opyvere e comin,
 Un vert prael i ot, un perin marbrin
 E un paille gisant e un siege d'or fin.
 La est Dayres assis e cent mil Sarazin. (1599-1604)

[Outside of Babylon, in the shade of a pine tree, on the bank of the Tigris, beside a garden where cloves, pepper and cumin grow, there is a small green meadow. Marble steps are covered in a silk cloth and a gold throne sits atop. There Darius sits surrounded by one hundred thousand Saracens.]

This is strikingly similar to the scene in the Chanson de Roland in which the Saracen emir of Spain, Marsile, receives the messengers he sent to Charlemagne:

Un faldestoet out suz l'umbre d'un pin,
 Envolupet fut d'un palie alexandrin.
 La fut li reis ki tute Espaigne tint,
 Tut entour lui vint milie Sarrazins. (407-410)

[There was a throne in the shade of a pine tree, covered with a silk cloth made in Alexandria. The king who held all of Spain was there, twenty thousand Saracens came all around him.]

This echo, noted by the translators of the Roman de toute chevalerie, makes Darius appear to be a Saracen, even before he claims to be related to Tervagant, Mercury and

Apollin. It is striking that Alexander's name should appear in the Chanson de Roland in reference to a cloth from an exotic and, to a medieval reader, Saracen location. Having a city that Alexander founded and named after himself connected with Saracens might hint at Alexander's own appropriation of Saracen characteristics. Because of Saracen features found in other crusade works, Darius' connection to the Saracen trinity, the multi-ethnic character of Saracen troops, and the fact that these troops bark like dogs, it seems certain that Darius is meant to be seen as a threatening Saracen, in contrast to the proto-crusader Alexander.

Since Darius the Saracen and Alexander are in opposition, Alexander takes on the role of a crusader, a characterization heightened by Alexander's veneration of the God of the Jews. Akbari asserts that Alexander is portrayed as a crusader king, "identifiable with the contemporaneous European Christian effort to take the Holy Land,"²³⁹ because of his association with a Saracen Darius. A number of other critics have noted that Alexander plays the role of a crusader, including Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox, who observe that particular episodes in Alexander texts were recast "so as to appropriate the classical hero's engagements as a prefiguration of the conflicts of the Crusade era."²⁴⁰ In their edition of the text, Brian Foster and Ian Short argue that in the Roman de Toute Chevalerie, Alexander is portrayed virtually as a Christian hero.²⁴¹

Just as Darius has similarities to Saracens in crusade literature, Alexander has a definite connection to Charlemagne, the epitome of a Christian military leader, who is viewed as a crusader in many works, including the Chanson de Roland, Fierabras, and

²³⁹ Akbari, "Alexander in the Orient," 114.

²⁴⁰ Maddox and Sturm-Maddox, "Introduction," 3.

²⁴¹ Thomas of Kent, The Anglo Norman Alexander, ed. Brian Foster and Ian Short, vol. 2, 66.

the Middle English Sege of Melayne.²⁴² In the Roman de toute chevalerie, Alexander possesses a sword that is likened to Durendal, the famous sword of Charlemagne's best-known peer, Roland ("Unc ne fu mielde espee, for sul Durendal," 4150).²⁴³ Having the best sword except for the Roland's, Alexander foreshadows the valiant and noble Roland, nephew of Charlemagne, who fought Saracens to the glory of Christendom. The connection between Alexander and Charlemagne's lineage adds to the notion of Alexander as a crusader.

The portrait of Alexander as a proto-Christian crusader in the Roman de toute chevalerie can be better understood through an examination of medieval chronicles. Contemporary chronicles, especially those of Fulcher of Chartres and Otto of Freising, both of which include eschatological elements, provide a wider historical framework for this conception of Alexander. These chronicles give insights into contemporary ideas about Alexander, and also help to explain how Alexander could work as a model for crusaders, especially in an apocalyptic framework. Lambert of St. Omer's Liber Floridus, an early twelfth-century world chronicle, can help illuminate how Alexander functions as a crusader in the Roman de toute chevalerie. The Liber Floridus includes an early version of Fulcher's crusade chronicle, the Historia Hierosolymitana, and incorporates Alexander into a twelfth-century apocalyptic schema.²⁴⁴ The early twelfth-century apocalypticism of the Liber Floridus, it should be noted, is different from that

²⁴² See Tolan, Saracens, 125-126.

²⁴³ In some medieval texts, Alexander, like Charlemagne, has "Twelve Peers," trusted noblemen who give him counsel. This detail is first found in the Old French Roman d'Alexandre, and is not confined to literary works, as it is mentioned in Alexander Neckham's De naturis rerum, 2.189. See Alexandru Cizek's article, "Alexandre le Grand et 'li douze pers de Gresce' du Roman français d'Alexandre dans une perspective comparatiste," in La Représentation de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge. Actes du colloque des 26, 27 et 28 mars 1981, ed. Danielle Buschinger and André Crepin (Vienna: Karl M. Halosar, 1982), 169-201.

²⁴⁴ See n. 256. For Lambert's use of Fulcher's apocalyptic chronicle and its relation to Alexander, see Albert Derolez, ed. The Autograph Manuscript of the Liber floridus: A Key to the Encyclopedia of Lambert of Saint-Omer. Corpus Christianorum Autographa Medii Aevi IV (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), esp. 112-122.

found in later twelfth-century texts explored here, such as that of Otto of Freising. Like the enclosure of Gog and Magog, Alexander's visit to Jerusalem in the Liber Floridus has eschatological overtones, as the Christian victory over the Muslims in the First Crusade and the foundation of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem were seen by some, including Lambert of St. Omer, as a necessary step towards precipitating the culmination of world history, the Last Judgement. When Christians controlled the Holy Land and the earthly Jerusalem, some medieval writers thought, Christ's second coming was near: this was "a kind of golden age for European Christians punctuated by the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 and the fall of Edessa to the Muslims in 1144, a period when it really seemed as though the end of things was near at hand."²⁴⁵

Lambert, writing in a time of optimism close on the heels of the crusaders' victory in the Holy Land and the foundation Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, places the material taken from Fulcher's crusade chronicle directly after an adaptation of the Epistola Methodii de Antichristo of Adso of Montier-en-Der, which links the crowning of a Christian king in Jerusalem to events leading up to the arrival of Antichrist.²⁴⁶ Albert Derolez argues that Lambert, in his inclusion of Fulcher's chronicle, was interested in both the recovery of Jerusalem from the Saracens, and the "eschatological dimension of this unique event in world history."²⁴⁷ After Fulcher's chronicle, Derolez suggests that Lambert's next inclusion is the Epistola Alexandri Magni ad Aristotilem, a text comparable to Fulcher's, "another famous military expedition to the East, and likewise one with eschatological connotations," and an addition that cements the

²⁴⁵ Akbari, Idols in the East, Ch. 2, p. 9.

²⁴⁶ Derolez argues that "Through the combination and arrangement of these texts, Lambert emphasizes the eschatological significance of the events of his own time," the crusades. The Autograph Manuscript of the Liber floridus, 113.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 118.

parallels between Alexander and the historical and apocalyptic framework of the crusades.²⁴⁸ As it seems that Lambert purposely juxtaposes his Alexander material with Fulcher's crusade chronicle and apocalyptic materials like Adso's, Alexander can be positioned as a typological prefiguration of a crusader-king like Godfrey of Boulogne. In Akbari's view, "Alexander's time in Jerusalem foreshadows the rule of the Christian kings of Jerusalem in the twelfth century. His conquest of Darius the Persian is echoed in the crusaders' defeat of the Saracen armies."²⁴⁹ This typology recalls how Alexander prefigures Augustus in the work of Orosius, as I treat below, but with a strong apocalyptic import.

Fulcher of Chartres' Historia Hierosolymitana or Gesta Francorum Hierusalem expugnantium, the twelfth-century crusade chronicle included in the Liber Floridus, contributes to this sense of Alexander as crusader. Fulcher places Alexander in Jerusalem in a position very much like that of a conquering crusader:

Nabugodnoser enim, tam Chaldaeus quam Babylonius rex, et obsedit et cepit Hierusalem. . . . post temporum autem intervalla venit Alexander rex, qui Tyrum obsedit et cepit, subiugata Sidone, prius autem Damasco. . . . ad civitatem Hierosolymam festinavit. honorifice susceptus, principem sacerdotum, nomine Iaddum, plurimis honoribus prosequitur, habentem cidarim super caput eius et stolam auream hyacinthinam et super laminam auream, in qua nomen Dei scriptum erat, solus adiens diligenter adoravit. et dosposita Hierosolyma, ad reliquas civitates exercitum suum convertit. post annorum plurimum spatia, peccatis Iudaeorum exigentibus, Antiochus Epiphanes legem eorum impugnans, Machabaeos valde coartavit. post hunc venit Pompeius, qui Hierusalem infeliciter dissipavit. ad ultimum vero Vespasianus cum Tito filio suo venit, qui penitus eam destruxit. (3.30.5-6)

[Nebuchadnezzar, King of Chaldea as well as of Babylon, besieged and took Jerusalem. . . . Moreover after an interval of time came King Alexander, who besieged and took Tyre, subjugated Sidon and before that, Damascus. . . . Then Alexander hastened to the city of Jerusalem. Since he was received with honors he conferred great honors upon the high priest, Jaddua by name. Alexander, approaching alone, did scrupulous

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 122.

²⁴⁹ Akbari, Idols in the East, Ch. 2, p. 22.

reverence to Jaddua, who wore a *cidaris* upon his head, a robe of hyacinth and gold, and a golden plate on which the name of the Lord was written. After arranging the affairs of Jerusalem, Alexander led his army against other cities. After the space of many years, because the sins of the Jews called for it, Antiochus Epiphanes challenged their law and harshly constrained the Maccabees. After him came Pompey, who overthrew the people of Jerusalem in most melancholy fashion. Finally came Vespasian with his son Titus, and the latter destroyed Jerusalem completely.]²⁵⁰

This list of the conquerors of Jerusalem places Alexander in a continuum of rulers, which includes the Roman emperors who destroyed Jerusalem and who, to medieval readers, brought religious *imperium* to Rome. This continuum culminates in the First Crusade, and makes Alexander seem like a prefiguration of those crusaders: he is a crusader-before-the-fact.

Along with Lambert and Fulcher, a later twelfth century chronicler places Alexander within an eschatological framework, though a framework that has changed. Otto of Freising wrote his chronicle, The Two Cities, between the First and Second crusades (*ca.* 1143-1147) and revised it in 1157, a time when some Christians anticipated the end of the world.²⁵¹ Indeed, Otto states that “Nos enim circa finem eius positi id, quod de ipso predictum est, experimur futurumque in proximo quod restat timendo expectamus” [we who live in the closing days of that kingdom are experiencing that which was foretold concerning it, and expect that what we have yet to fear will soon

²⁵⁰ Fulcher of Chartres, Historia Hierosolymitana (1095-1227), ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1913). English translation in Fulcher of Chartres, A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095-1127, ed. and introd. Harold S. Fink, trans. Frances Rita Ryan (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969), 260-261.

²⁵¹ Charles Mierow notes that Otto’s apocalypticism “is not, however, a purely personal opinion but one widely prevalent at the time in which he lived,” citing the examples of a Florentine synod of 1105 which had to declare that Antichrist had not yet appeared; Pope Lucius’ expectation of Antichrist; Bernard of Clairvaux’s opinion that Abelard was a forerunner of Antichrist; and Hugh of St. Victor’s belief that the development of the world is from East to West, and that the West is synonymous with the end of the world, as seen in his De vanitate mundi. Otto of Freising, The Two Cities: A Chronicle of Universal History to the Year 1146 A.D., ed. Austin P. Evans and Charles Knapp, trans. Charles Christopher Mierow (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 59.

take place (2.13)].²⁵² Otto's eschatology is, unlike Lambert of St. Omer's, based on a sense of misery, rather than hopefulness. While Lambert celebrates the victory of the crusaders in Jerusalem and the founding of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem as events necessary in the preparation for the end of the world, Otto "is cheered by the constant misery of human existence."²⁵³ Otto seems to have considered the fall of Edessa to the Seljuk Turks in 1144, when the Christians' hold on the Holy Land was slipping, and the failure of the Second Crusade to have been yet more dire events that precipitate the end of the world. For Otto, the material world only becomes worse, and will be remedied by the appearance of the heavenly Jerusalem at the end of time.

Otto brings Alexander into this eschatological frame by locating him in a vision of *translatio imperii* that differs from that of Orosius, one that brings Alexander closer to Rome and anticipates the end of the world. As I shall argue below, in Otto's conception of *translatio imperii* the empire of Alexander leads directly to that of the Romans, without the intermediacy of Carthage. The Greeks and Latins, according to Otto, join into one people after the foundation of Rome, and since Otto believed that the Roman empire would last until the end of the world, which was at hand, Alexander's empire had prepared the way for the Apocalypse and was in some ways still in force, due to the joining of Greeks and Romans.²⁵⁴

As we have seen, medieval chronicles place Alexander in the historical and eschatological framework of the crusades, and the characterization of Darius as a Saracen is an argument for seeing Alexander as a proto-crusader. As I will argue,

²⁵² Otto of Freising, *Otonis episcopi frisingensis Chronica; sive, Historia de duabus civitatibus. Editio altera*, ed. Adolfus Hofmeister (Hanover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1912). Translation in Otto of Freising, *The Two Cities*, 167-8.

²⁵³ Otto of Freising, *The Two Cities*, 57.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

Alexander's education and exemplary qualities also make his depiction as a proto-crusader in the Roman de toute chevalerie plausible. Alexander begins his life as the epitome of a Western Christian hero. The West is, as Akbari has noted, "abstemious and rational," a fitting description of Alexander at the beginning of the Roman de toute chevalerie.²⁵⁵ At the age of eight, Thomas says, Alexander is already fit to be a king ("Itant crust en oyt aunz qe bien pot roy servir," 428). He has ten masters who teach him all he should know in terms of proper behaviour, how to fight, how to debate, and how to play instruments:

Dont li uns l'aprent sey chaucer e vestir,
 Ly autre a parler e cum se deit contenir,
 E li autre a juer, chevaucher e eskirmir
 E a porter armes e a cheval seir,
 Poyndre e ate[i]ndre e a trere e ferir.
 Li set ly apernent les [set] arz retenir,
 Cum li deit aposer e argumenz falir,
 Chanter par musique e de toz mals garir,
 E cum deit parler a trestoz a pleisir,
 E longur e hautur mesurer par avir. (430-439)

[The first master teaches him how to put on his shoes and how to dress himself; the second how to speak and how to behave properly; the third how to play war games, ride and skirmish, how to bear arms and sit on his horse, how to spur, meet the enemy, draw his sword and strike. The seven others teach him the seven liberal arts, how to pose and refute arguments, how to sing with music and cure all illnesses, how to speak to all pleasantly and how to measure length and height by guessing.]

By an early age, Alexander is prepared for the rulership of an empire, and is a model for medieval Western readers.

Alexander's main teacher is the great philosopher, Aristotle, some of whose works were newly rediscovered, studied and revered in the twelfth century. In a charming footnote that points to the value placed on Aristotle's thought, Thomas of Kent asserts that Aristotle is recognized as the wisest man before Christ: "Ceo fu le plus

²⁵⁵ Akbari, "Placing the Jews," 228n7.

sage, ceo sievent clerc e prestre, / Qe unques fut el siecle for Jesu le celestre" (456-457).

Alexander's education, emphasized in all of the medieval French Alexander romances, "vise à faire du futur roi un homme 'complet,' a la fois un chevalier et un lettré."²⁵⁶

Gaullier-Bougassas argues that since the twelfth century, many authors of "mirrors of princes" "cite the example of Alexander to illustrate their encomia of scholarly monarchs and to show the beneficial effect of learned culture on the exercise of power."²⁵⁷ On account of his education, Alexander becomes "one of the literary heroes who best embodies the ideal union of *clergie*, royalty, and chivalry."²⁵⁸

While still a young boy in Macedon, Alexander is abstemious and admirable, a perfect Western prodigy and example for princes. Thomas notes that Alexander is so busy learning that he does not have the opportunity to be drunk or idle. In fact, he barely has time to eat, drink and sleep: "D'estre yvre ou jolifs n'ot il point de leisir; / A peine put il manger, beivre ou dormir" (441-442). It is clear that Alexander is a Western monarch: he has a classical, Western education, and is the recipient of Aristotle's wisdom, an enviable position from the point of view of the Western twelfth century. As the student of Aristotle, "we may therefore regard Alexander as exemplary of the best and most desirable education."²⁵⁹ Alexander also abstains from things that are typically Oriental and Saracen to medieval authors and readers: drunkenness and leisure, the things that make the Orient dangerously appealing.

²⁵⁶ *Le Roman d'Alexandre ou Le Roman de toute chevalerie*, 41n1.

²⁵⁷ Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, "Alexander and Aristotle in the French Alexander Romances," in *The Medieval French Alexander*, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 57. Gaullier-Bougassas argues that medieval clerics did not have precise information about the contents of Aristotle's teaching or the relationship between Aristotle and Alexander.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

²⁵⁹ Douglas Kelly, "Alexander's *Clergie*," in *The Medieval French Alexander*, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 41.

Alexander is an ideal and idealized leader, a model of medieval chivalry from the very beginning of his life, and has the potential to be a proto-Christian crusader.

Alexander's upbringing links him to the West and its hunger for the works of the great Greek philosophers; this, combined with his visit to Jerusalem and the Saracen character of his enemy, Darius, stands to make him an admirable leader and proto-crusader. He is at first a character with whom Western readers could identify and on which they could model themselves. He is a well-ruled ruler, just as he is instructed to be in the popular legendary work written for him by Aristotle, the Secretum Secretorum. This work, which provides a template of conduct for medieval readers, is supposed to have been compiled in Syriac in the eighth century, into Arabic in the ninth century, and into Latin around 1125, then translated into numerous vernacular languages.²⁶⁰ The longest and most famous of the letters said to have been sent between the two men is the Letter from Alexander to Aristotle on the Marvels of India, which "shows the profit drawn by the king from his instruction."²⁶¹ Alexander's ambiguity is never absent, however; in the course of the Roman de toute chevalerie he progressively takes on the characteristics seen in his greatest enemy, Darius. The process of Alexander's adoption of these characteristics begins when he defeats the Persian empire of Darius. The Greeks are the sworn enemies of the Persians: this is shown not only in the threatening and mocking letters that Alexander and Darius send to one another, but also in more permanent form. The funeral statue of Philip, Alexander's father, is described as threatening the Orient, reaching its sword out to the East: "E manace orient

²⁶⁰ See Cary, Medieval Alexander, 21-22. For a full description of the traditions of the text, see the Introduction in Volume 1 of Secretum Secretorum: Nine English Versions, ed. M. A. Manzalaoui, 2 vols., EETS OS 276 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), ix-l.

²⁶¹ Gaullier-Bougassas, "Alexander and Aristotle in the French Alexander Romances," 58. Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotilem de miraculis Indiae, ed. W. Walther Boer (Meisenheim am Glan: A. Hain, 1973).

tant cum brant li dure" (1039). Ironically, as Philip threatens the East, Alexander conquers then embraces it.²⁶²

When he ventures into the East, defeats Persia and takes Darius' place as king of Persia, we see the "transformation of Alexander into an Oriental king."²⁶³ In subduing Persia, Alexander becomes ruler of a luxurious, Saracen nation. Alexander is not simply Darius' conqueror, but also his heir: he becomes ruler of Persia and commander of the Persian army, and also punishes the murderers of Darius and takes care of Darius' widow, mother and daughters.²⁶⁴ Darius, at the point of death, even asks Alexander to marry his wife. While Thomas does not mention whether Alexander does this, the suggestion draws Alexander further into the East and makes him closer to the Oriental monarch that Darius had been. As Akbari asserts, "Alexander becomes, after the death of Darius, part of the Orient he now rules."²⁶⁵ Ruling over rich lands, incorporating Saracen Persians into the ranks of his army and looking after the family of the Persian king, Alexander immerses himself in the Orient, and begins to acquire Saracen characteristics. He is in a tenuous position: he is at once the king of Macedon, and the ruler of a vast and heterogeneous empire, full of Oriental temptations.

We can see Alexander as an Oriental king more clearly as he travels farther into the East. The first true marvel that Alexander and his army encounter is the marvelous Indian city of Faacen, ruled over by King Porrus. Thomas of Kent takes over one hundred lines to describe the riches of the city: it is filled with gold, jewels, carvings, marble, and has mosaics in the vaults of its ceilings. Alexander is stunned by this

²⁶² Gaullier-Bougassas and Harf-Lancner have noted the similarities between this funeral statue of Philip and the tomb statue of the Trojan hero Hector in the *Roman de Troie* which brandishes its sword at the Greeks (16786-16798). *Roman d'Alexandre ou Le Roman de toute chevalerie*, 87n2.

²⁶³ Akbari, "Alexander in the Orient," 113.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 113.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

wealth and marvels at the luxury of Faacen: “De ceo merveille le roy utre mesure” [The king marvels at this exceedingly (4288)]; “Merveille sey le roy e dit a celes:/’Quanques ay veu envers cest ne pris treis darees!’” [The king marvels and says to himself: “All that I have seen is hardly worth anything compared to this” (4318-9)]. Compared with the wealth of the East, Macedon seems rather barren. Aside from a few instances, such as the gifts given to Queen Olympias for her birthday at the very beginning of the romance, Alexander’s fine clothes and King Philip’s tomb, we do not get a sense that Macedon is opulent.

Unfortunately for Alexander and his men, the Oriental luxury of Faacen inspires acquisitiveness in Alexander. Tempted by the marvelous riches, Alexander distributes the goods of Faacen among his armies, but forces them to carry all of the booty, as well as their supplies, through inhospitable territory. Alexander ignores the counsel of his own companions, trusts instead in the advice of perfidious native guides who wish to harm him, and forces men and animals to march through a desert in pursuit of King Porrus (especially lines 4524-4538). The luxury of the Orient contributes to Alexander’s desire to have all and accomplish everything, which Alexander comes to realize only when he sees his army and animals dying of thirst. As I will discuss later, his new devotion to luxury is also a factor in his much-prophesied death: though in his childhood he is so busy with his education that he has neither the time, opportunity or will to be drunk, he dies by drink in Babylon, which had long been associated in Christian writing with sin, and was a place ruled by Saracens in the medieval imagination.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ Drunkenness, though of course forbidden in Islam, is a trait typically ascribed to Saracens. See Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “On Saracen Enjoyment,” 125; and Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens*, 50.

Aside from an inordinate desire for luxury, a characteristic commonly attributed to Saracens, Alexander also shows what can be construed as lechery, one of the most stereotypical Saracen traits. Near the end of his life, he develops a sudden and unexpected desire for the Oriental Queen Candace. This new desire is both an expression of courtly love, in which Alexander plays the role of proper lover of a lady, and also an example of Oriental lust, on account of Candace's age and the location of the dalliance, the Orient. Candace is so beautiful, "*belle e blanche*" (6943), that Alexander is obsessed with her: "*tant la pareime qu'il ne siet qe face. / Mande a la dame cum s'amur l'enlace. / Si plus tost nel socurst, de vivere n'ad espace*" [he loves her so much that he does not know what to do; he has to tell the lady how love ensnares him. If she does not save him soon, he will not live long (6946-6948)]. Alexander's plea, the conceit of the lover perishing from longing, would be well known to readers of courtly love poetry. When Alexander does visit Candace, the two spend many nights together. Although the private chamber in which Candace and Alexander meet is familiar to a reader of romance "because it is a place where the knight Alexander can play at 'fine amour' with a lady who is both 'beautiful and white,'" it is also strange.²⁶⁷ Candace is herself part of the excessive, luxurious Orient: in her first communication with Alexander she offers riches and marriage, despite the fact that she has never met him. She also has grown children who are themselves married, and is pursuing a man who is undoubtedly her junior.

Another suggestive, and to a medieval reader, troubling, example of Alexander's nascent Oriental characteristics is that he seems to pretend to be a god. This is highly suggestive of Darius' behaviour: he claimed to be of the same family as the Saracen

²⁶⁷ Akbari, "Alexander in the Orient," 120.

pantheon, and demanded to be obeyed by Alexander. We see Alexander's pretended divinity only after the fact rather than in action. After the prophetic Trees of the Sun and Moon tell Alexander that he will die within the year in Babylon, he orders his men not to tell anyone, lest the image of his divinity be shattered, a belief that has not hitherto been mentioned. It seems that he is believed to be a god by some people because of his power, and when the news of his impending death does leak out, he laments that the Indians will now think he is mortal: "'Si ert mon los chaet e ma deité perie./Ke mortaus hom soie nul Yndien ne quie'" ["Now my reputation has fallen and my divinity is destroyed. The Indians will take me for a mortal man" (C96-7)]. We do not see Alexander demanding to be worshipped as a god in the same manner as Darius, but rather, Alexander seems to have encouraged people in thinking that he was a god so that they would obey and be afraid of him. These examples are just a sampling of the ways in which Alexander becomes Orientalized after his victory over Darius. He controls Persia, a Saracen empire, along with India, Ethiopia and other nations; he grows desirous of luxury and becomes greedy; he does nothing to stop himself from being thought of as a god when it benefits him; and he is beset by a desire that is reminiscent of lechery, a stereotypical Oriental trait.

The Oriental traits that Alexander acquires culminate in his death, a topic that has been much discussed by critics.²⁶⁸ Instead of travelling home to Macedon, an abstemious, Western location, Alexander returns to his new centre of Babylon after his

²⁶⁸ See W. J. Aerts, Jos M. M. Hermans and Elizabeth Visser, eds. Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Ten Studies on the Last Days of Alexander in Literary and Historical Writings. Symposium, Interfacultaire Werkgroep Mediaevistiek, Groningen, 12-15 October 1977 (Nijmegen: Alfa Nijmegen, 1978). Christiane Raynaud discusses the death of Alexander, and those of Antipater, Philip, Pausanias, Darius and Lysie in "Une criminalité d'exception: les meurtres royaux dans le Roman de toute chevalerie," in Histoire et criminalité de l'Antiquité au XXe siècle: nouvelles approches. Actes du colloque de Dijon-Chenove, 3, 4 et 5 octobre 1991, ed. Benoît Garnot (Dijon: Éditions universitaires de Dijon, 1992), 47-59.

dalliance with Candace; there he dies by drinking poisoned wine offered by a treacherous vassal: “par le duc ly fu ly venimes presentez. / . . . / Alisandre prent la cupe si en beit bonement. / Li beiveres fut ague, e si chet trenchantment” (7911, C180-181). Wine and drunkenness are associated with Saracen luxury and wantonness; though forbidden in Islam, drunkenness was considered to be a typical Saracen trait in medieval works. This aspect of Alexander’s death fits with his progressive adoption of Saracen traits: as we have already seen, when Alexander was a youth, he did not have the time, nor presumably the desire, to drink wine. Both the means of his death and the geographical location link Alexander to typical Saracen characteristics: to a medieval audience, the city of Babylon is associated with Saracens, all worldly vices and the enemies of God. When the Roman de toute chevalerie was written, Babylon often referred to Cairo, a city held by the Saracens.²⁶⁹ For instance, the Muslims who conquered Spain were described by early Spanish chroniclers as “Chaldeans, who ruled from Babylon, and whose oppressive reign was ordained by God to punish the sins of the chosen people.”²⁷⁰ Though it is not described in negative terms in the Roman de toute chevalerie, the city of Babylon had negative connotations for Christians, as seen from other medieval sources. It was “the despised enemy of the Old Testament, the Babylonians who in their arrogance constructed the tower of Babel and later destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem and led the Jews into captivity.”²⁷¹ Ian Michael states that “No theologian nor historian could have been in any doubt that Babylon represented the Tower of Babel, the harlot, the city of the Devil and the world.”²⁷² While Babylon is not criticized in the Roman de toute chevalerie, the city’s scriptural and literary

²⁶⁹ For example, Cairo is identified as “Babylon” in the thirteenth-century Destruction de Rome (78, 204).

²⁷⁰ Tolan, Saracens, 100.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁷² Michael, “Typological Problems in Medieval Alexander Literature,” 132.

associations with Saracens and the enemies of God would have coloured a medieval reader's opinion of the eastern city.

We have seen that Alexander assumes the typically Saracen characteristics of luxury and lechery. The spectre of Saracen cruelty, seen in the Greeks of the Roman de Troie, is also present in Alexander. When the proud people ("mult par fut orgoillus," 2113) of the rich city of Thebes resist Alexander's desire to enter the city, he besieges it and eventually kills every living thing in Thebes, then burns the city (2262 ff.).²⁷³ This may, however, be more than Alexander being unable to refrain from the same wanton destruction typically perpetrated by both Saracens and the Greeks at Troy. Alexander may in fact be attempting to efface his legendary origins. At the siege of Thebes, a rich and educated Theban begs Alexander to spare the inhabitants of the city because Alexander is of the lineage of Hercules, who participated in the first sack of Troy and whose legendary birthplace was Thebes:²⁷⁴

"Roy puissant,
Aiez merci de nous, sire, par ton comant,
Ne destruez la cité ne leu si avenant.
Hercules i fu né e Amphion regnant.
Vostre meillur parent i furent tuit menant;
Ton parenté nous dust par droit estre garant." (2256-2261)

[“Powerful king, have mercy on us, lord, do not by your command destroy the city and this marvelous site. Hercules was born here and Amphion reigned here. Your greatest ancestors all lived here; your ancestors must by right save us.”]

Perhaps wishing to distance himself from Hercules, a Greek who sacked Troy,

Alexander goes too far: he destroys the city utterly.²⁷⁵ In this, he reenacts a scene of

²⁷³ Gaullier-Bougassas and Harf-Lancner note that for the destruction of Thebes, Thomas follows the Epitome of Julius Valerius, Bk. 1, 46-47. Le Roman d'Alexandre ou Le Roman de toute chevalerie, 177n1.

²⁷⁴ It is worthwhile to note that the Old French Roman d'Alexandre of Alexandre de Paris attributes the reconstruction of Thebes to Alexander (Branch I, 1.125-128).

²⁷⁵ Christine Chism has noted a similar phenomenon in the Wars of Alexander, where Alexander, in an “effacement of this oriental origin,” rejects his parentage by the Egyptian magician, Nectanabus. Alliterative Revivals (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 125.

destruction also performed by the Greeks at Troy, whose memory he is destroying. The ancestors of the Greeks at Troy, their fathers and relatives, also destroyed Thebes, though at an earlier time, in order to eradicate a corrupt lineage, this time, that of Oedipus. Try as he might, Alexander cannot escape his similarities and connections to the Greeks.

The dual aspect of Alexander's characteristics, the fact that he is portrayed both as a proto-Christian crusader and as a proto-Saracen, may be a function of his being Greek. His identity works on these two valences because as a "Greek," he is susceptible to Oriental and Saracen traits. Perhaps the nation into which he is born is his flaw: he is not necessarily "Orientalized" because the potential to have Oriental, Saracen traits is latent within him. As part of his complicated nationality, which I discuss below, he is both the king of Macedon, and a Greek, and also the ruler of an empire of heterogeneous nations. He is in a tenuous position of temptation: his Eastern and exotic holdings have Oriental characteristics that he can subsume and integrate or resist. Though he rejects the trait for which Greeks are best known, treachery, it seems that he cannot help but assimilate the Oriental features of the people he rules. Like the Greeks at Troy, he is ambiguous, and comprised of both admirable and negative characteristics. Alexander's connection with the Greeks at Troy through Hercules, a connection he tries to efface, is telling: he is like them, but does not seem to realize it. His later adoption of negative, Saracen characteristics, despite an outstanding education and reverence for the God of the Jews, proves that the potential for Orientalization is always already present. Though Alexander is a paragon of leadership and military prowess, and is as close to a Christian conqueror, or crusader, as a classical hero can be, he, like the Greeks at Troy, is never entirely good nor entirely bad; the Greek nature is inherently dual.

Alexander's inescapable Greekness can also be seen through his use of *engin*, the inborn capacity that can be turned towards creative, constructive ends, or, as the Greeks in the Roman de Troie use it, towards gain through deceit. In the Roman de toute chevalerie Alexander is described as using *engin*, an attribute that applies almost exclusively to Greeks, but he uses it in a much more positive way than do the Greeks of the Trojan War. Alexander turns his natural attribute towards constructive purposes: instead of the typical use of *engin* by the Greeks, treachery and deceit, Alexander uses it in a positive, constructive way. Alexander uses his *engin* to test the loyalty of his men, devise battle strategies and visit his enemies in the guise of a messenger; these are productive, creative uses, unlike the deceit and trickery of the Greek *engin* we have seen in the Roman de Troie.²⁷⁶

Alexander wins battles not by scheming and deceiving, as do the Greeks at Troy, but by military prowess and natural wisdom and cunning. He uses his *engin* in a manner akin to the Trojans: in the Roman de Troie, the term is applied to the wisdom and skill involved in constructing the marvellous buildings of Troy, such as the exotic *Chambre de Beautés*, which is called "engeignos" since it was constructed with such art and skill. Similarly, the men who construct Hector's wondrous tomb are called three wise engineers ("trei saive engigneur," 16650). Alexander also has *engin*, but directs it towards constructive endeavors; he is clever, but not deceitful. As discussed above, Alexander uses "mult sotil engin" [a very cunning ruse (2815)] to discover whether his physician Phillip has poisoned him. Even as a boy, he is "Hardiz estoit e conqueranz, sages e enginus" [He is bold and victorious, wise and ingenious (31)]. Thomas states

²⁷⁶ In the Roman de toute chevalerie, it is Nectanebus, Alexander's father, who uses *engin* in a typically Greek way. Nectanebus "Atorne ses engins cum vassal deceivant" (338) and appears to the Macedonians as a dragon, one of the guises of the god Ammon, to trick Philip and convince him that Olympias' child was fathered by Ammon himself, rather than a man.

further that Alexander “[b]ien siet. . . / . . . / De lettrure e d’engin. . . / Car li bons Aristotle fu sur trestoz son mestre” [he knows learning and ingenuity well because the good Aristotle was his master (452-454)]. These two instances link *engin* with learning: the fact that Alexander has *engin* but uses it constructively could be due to his intensive education from Aristotle and his other masters.

Alexander’s use of *engin* in battle differs from that of the Greeks at Troy. While the Greeks trick (“engeigné”) and surprise the unsuspecting Trojans by coming to Troy by night (6979), Alexander wins his military victories by skill and strategy rather than treachery. Alexander is described as being “enginus” (2234) when seeking a way to enter the besieged city of Thebes. He does not break into the city in secret, by deceit or the treachery of the Thebans, but finds a way through the walls using a machine built of wood. In his dealings with the Persians, Alexander uses his *engin* again, though it is not given this term: he pretends to be a messenger and visits Darius’ palace to tell him that Alexander is ready to fight the Persians (3329 ff.). His aims are to learn how Darius and his men conduct themselves, and to enjoy himself (“Pense coment puisse fere alcun[e] envoisure,” 3381), enjoyment heightened by the danger he faces. Alexander does not harm the Persians, but intimidates them by letting them know that he is clever enough to make his way into their midst without detection. Later in the poem Alexander plays a similar trick on Porrus, king of India, again pretending to be a messenger and visiting the royal court (5237-5300). Gaullier-Bougassas and Harf-Lancner similarly argue that Alexander’s use of *engin*, comprised of both military strategies and trickery, does not

discredit him: he uses tricks to intimidate his enemies, and disguises himself to make fun of his enemies, as seen in the cases of Darius and Porrus.²⁷⁷

It is noteworthy that while Alexander turns his *engin* towards creativity, and even humour, treachery and *engin* are used against him by the Persians and the Indians. For instance, the Persian soldier who kills a Greek to steal his armour and attempt to kill Alexander is called “durement enginus” (3141). In the case of the Indians, native guides in India want to lead Alexander astray: “S’il poient, il voudront tote l’oste enginer / As destreiz de[s] deserz, de chemin forveer, / Car contre le roy Porre ne li volent aider [If they could, they would deceive the whole army at the beginning of the desert, they would steer them off the road, since they do not want to help anyone who works against King Porrus (4486-4488)]. Indian soldiers also use Greek *engin* when they fight using unfair and ignoble means, using trickery rather than military might. In battle, these Indians use poisoned weapons against Alexander’s army: “Molt i ot de soens occis e damagez. / Par une aventure furent laidement enginez” [They killed and injured many of his men. By chance they were basely deceived (5656-5657)]. Like the Trojans who use “Greek *engin*,” these non-Greek enemies of Alexander do not prevail, but are all defeated by Alexander.

While Alexander uses *engin* honourably, he is killed by the treason of a Greek who uses *engin* in a typically Greek manner. Alexander’s death is first prophesied in a dream of Philip’s in which a dragon hatches from a pheasant egg and cannot get back into the egg; the dragon circles the egg and dies. Antiphon, a wise man, interprets the dragon to represent the son of Olympias who will hold all the world, represented by the

²⁷⁷ As Gaullier-Bougassas and Harf-Lancner argue, “Incarnation de l’*engin*, l’Alexandre de Thomas de Kent s’illustre tant par son intelligence pratique que par son sens de ruse.” Le Roman d’Alexandre ou Le Roman de toute chevalerie, liv.

egg, in subjection, but the son will die young outside his homeland. Antiphon goes on to tell Philip that not only will Alexander die young, but he will not die a natural death: “Jovenes e conquerant morra par traison/E hors de son pais” (382-383). The agent of Alexander’s oft-prophesied death is Antipater, who is described by Thomas as a typical Greek, as medieval readers would have come to expect from the Aeneid and the numerous works on the Trojan War: “estoit de Grece justisers,/Un fel, un orgoillus, un juger[e]s parlers,/E enginers e de mal fere costumers” [He was a governor of Greece, a wicked man, a haughty man, a slanderous judge, he was deceitful and accustomed to doing evil things (7894-7896)]. These are some of the same traits, including *engin*, as we see in the Greeks at Troy, and these are the traits that Alexander does not have.

Olympias sends a letter to Alexander in Babylon warning him of Antipater’s hatred and his desire to kill Alexander. Alexander subsequently replaces Antipater in his position as governor. Knowing he will be justly accused, Antipater travels to Alexander’s court in Babylon and “De meinte felonie s’est ly quens purpensez” [The count plans many treacheries (7905)]. Using the trait typical of the Greeks at Troy, Antipater plots to present Alexander with the instrument of his death, poisoned wine. Antipater brings the poisoned wine to the court as a gift to Alexander, who incautiously drinks it. Alexander immediately realizes what has happened, but he and his doctors are powerless to stop the effects of the poison: “Antipater m’ad mort par son felon present” (C189). Like the deceitful gift of the Trojan horse given by treacherous Greeks, Antipater’s gift of poisoned wine kills the recipient, one who, just as the Trojans, should have known better than to accept a gift from someone who is known to be an enemy. It seems like Alexander, though he tries to efface his Greek origins by destroying Thebes, and though he eschews the typically Greek trait of treachery, cannot escape what his

people are inherently like: they are treacherous and cruel. Even if he uses his *engin* in a useful manner, Alexander cannot escape the inborn traits of the Greeks. Greekness, for Alexander, is inescapable.

As we have seen, Alexander's ambiguity is apparent in his rejection of some typical Greek traits and assumption of Saracen traits. Alexander's dual nature is also reflected in his nationality: in many medieval texts, including the Roman de toute chevalerie, Alexander can be described, to varying degrees, as a Greek and as a Macedonian. Martin Gosman has pointed out the difficulty in differentiating between the terms Macedonian and Greek in relation to Old French Alexander texts. Gosman notes this confusion of Alexander's nationality and states that it is not clear what the difference might be between the terms Greek and Macedonian.²⁷⁸ In two texts in which he has found this ambiguity, the Roman d'Alexandre and the Roman de toute chevalerie, the distinction between Greeks and Macedonians can be unclear. In these works, Alexander is called both "king of Macedon" and "ruler of Greece"; he addresses his soldiers collectively as Greeks, then Macedonians, and sometimes it seems that the two groups are actually separate. Though Alexander's identity seems uncertain, the presence of these two nationalities in the Roman de toute chevalerie is in keeping with Alexander's ambiguity: his identity is always working in two valences, and his different nationalities can be seen to reflect different facets of his character.

Alexander's ambiguous heritage is emphasized throughout the Roman de toute chevalerie. Even before he inherits the kingship of Macedon from his father, Alexander identifies himself as a Greek: when Darius demands tribute from Philip, Alexander says to Darius' messenger "Car Gregois ne deivent servir par hontage/Ne jeo ensurketut ne

²⁷⁸ Gosman, La légende d'Alexandre le Grand, 7n15.

hom de mon parage / A prince ne a roy de terre sauvage" [That no Greek, and certainly not me nor any part of my family, should have to suffer the dishonour of serving a prince or king of a foreign land (948-950)]. He again claims to be a Greek when he tells the messenger that "Roy greu ne deit unc sur li aver hontage" [A Greek king should never be shamed (952)]. Thomas also notes that Alexander writes various letters to Darius in Greek (1463). Philip is called the king of Macedon, "Mort est li rois qui tint de Macedoigne l'empire" (1040), and Alexander is shortly thereafter called the king of Greece: "roys est de Grece" (1045). At some points, Alexander refers to himself and his troops as Macedonians, and he thinks of Macedon as his homeland. Alexander's troops are sometimes referred to as Macedonians (1259), sometimes as Greeks (1355); they sometimes seem to be two different groups within Alexander's larger army, made up of "those of Macedon, Egyptians and Greeks" [cil de Macedoigne, Egypcien e Greu (2191)] as well as soldiers from other lands that Alexander has conquered. Alexander's national heritage can reflect the author's designs for Alexander: each nationality has specific associations, and has Alexander playing specific roles.

Each of Alexander's nationalities has its own distinct characteristics. When Alexander is called "Greek," he can be associated with differing concepts including the Greek language as well as Greek learning and philosophy; he is called a Greek in early works about his life; his ambiguous character incorporates the inborn characteristics of "the Greek," which we have seen in the Greeks at Troy. "Greek" could have positive connotations in the medieval West: it was both the language of the New Testament, and was associated with the medical and philosophical knowledge of ancient Greece, as mediated through Arabic and Hebrew. The connection of Greek to Christianity, philosophy and learning is integral to Alexander in the Roman de toute chevalerie:

Alexander is not only depicted as a proto-Christian, but he is renowned for his learning and has Aristotle as his chief teacher and mentor. Alexander's education is stressed in many medieval texts, and his connection to Aristotle, and Greek philosophy, would have been an admirable feature to a medieval audience. Alexander's Greek nationality is ambiguous, however: nearly all ancient reports of Alexander, such as those of Arrian and Plutarch, claim that he is a proud descendent of the Greeks who sacked Troy. As we have seen, though Alexander distances himself from the Greeks at Troy in the Roman de toute chevalerie, he can be seen *in bono* as a proto-Christian, and also *in malo*, like the Greeks at Troy because he shares the typical traits of Saracens. As a Greek, Alexander is part of the language, culture and philosophy that would make Rome great, and is a recipient of an education that would be valued in the twelfth century, but he also retains the negative association with the Greeks of the Trojan War.

Alexander's Macedonian nationality has to do with his ethnic parentage, and with the role he is seen as playing in history. When Thomas of Kent calls Alexander a Macedonian, it can indicate who Alexander's family was and his place of birth: he was born in Macedon as the son of Philip, the king of Macedon. Like his Greek identity, though, Alexander's Macedonian heritage is ambiguous. Alexander is the son of the Macedonian King Philip, and in Orosius' conception of world events, Alexander and his empire were called Macedonian. In the Orosian paradigm of history, *translatio imperii*, which I will treat below, Alexander acted as God's instrument, holding imperial legitimacy on its way to its final destination, Rome. In this providential framework of history, Alexander's Macedon functions as the placeholder of empire and paves the way for Christian empire, Rome; in this role, though, Alexander simply provides a model for empire but has no lasting physical heritage.

Another aspect of Alexander's multifold nationality can help to explain his character. Alexander seems to distance himself from the Greeks of the Trojan War in the Roman de toute chevalerie: he eschews treachery, uses his *engin* in a constructive, rather than deceitful manner, and destroys Thebes, the birthplace of his Greek forefather. Related to Alexander's dissociation with the Greeks at Troy is the nationality given to him by the seventh-century chronicler, Fredegar, who traces Alexander's heritage to one branch of the Trojans fleeing Troy who settled in Macedon. In his chronicle of Frankish Gaul, Fredegar is the first to transpose the Trojan foundation myth found in Virgil to northern Europe. This Trojan lineage, used by Virgil to give the Roman emperor Augustus, his patron, imperial legitimacy and a place in the Trojan genealogy, was used in a similar way by many nations of Europe who claimed, embellished and expanded Virgil's account of Aeneas in their own chronicles. According to Fredegar, along with Aeneas, some other Trojans flee the sack of Troy by the Greeks, and find themselves in Europe, where they split into two different groups: some Trojans stay in the Eastern regions, while some venture to the West, where they found the nation of the Franks, named after their leader, Francio. The Trojan foundation myth became so popular because it supports the idea that not only does Rome derive its right to rule from the mighty city of Troy, but so do other European nations—it allows other nations of Europe to be founded by Trojans as well, and to be practically coeval with Rome. These other nations become less like children of Rome, and more like brothers.

In Fredegar's telling of the Trojan foundation myth, one of the two groups of Trojans finds themselves in Macedon, a region which is oppressed by neighboring peoples. The Trojans are invited to stay by the Macedonians, so that they can help the

Macedonians against their neighbours. The Trojans settle there, and intermarry with the inhabitants; the Macedonians become fierce fighters because of their Trojan blood. From this newly rejuvenated nation springs the lineage of King Philip and his son, Alexander the Great.²⁷⁹ Thus, the Trojans not only found the Frankish people in Europe, but also begin the line that ends with Alexander. Europeans could feel a sense of pride that they were in some way related to Alexander through their noble Trojan lineage.

Alexander's Trojan origins not only link him to the heritage of Europe, but also distance him from the Greeks, whom the Trojans were fleeing. Seeing Alexander as a Greek is not necessarily desirable in the Middle Ages, and most medieval accounts are unwilling to present him as being allied with the deceitful, treacherous and cruel Greeks at Troy. The myth that Trojans founded European nations would have been a reason not to depict Alexander as a Greek, but rather as a worthy descendant of the Trojans. Fredegar's chronicle adds another layer to Alexander's Macedonian nationality: as a Trojan Macedonian, he is a hero and conqueror and brother to the Franks. This not only establishes Alexander as being of the same stock as Europeans, but distances him from any association with the Greeks at Troy, since he is descended from their enemies, the Trojans. Fredegar's chronicle brings another strand into the history of Europe: Alexander is ethnically Trojan, so is doubly worthy of preceding the Roman empire: Aeneas founded the Roman people, while Alexander, his fellow Trojan, held *imperium* on its way to Rome in Orosius' schema.

²⁷⁹ "Exinde origo Francorum fuit. Priamo primo regi habuerunt; postea per historiarum libros scriptum est, qualiter habuerunt regi Friga. Postea partiti sunt in duabus partibus. Una pars perrexit in Macedoniam, vocati sunt Macedonis secundum populum, a quem recepti sunt, et regionem Macedoniae, qui oppremebatur a gentes vicinas, invitati ab ipsis fuerunt, ut eis praeberent auxilium. Per quos postea cum subiuncti in plurima procreatione crevissent, ex ipso genere Macedonis fortissimi pugnatores effecti sunt; quod in postremum in diebus Phylipphy regis et Alexandri fili sui fama confirmat, illorum fortitudine qualis fuit." Fredegarii et aliorum chronica, 45-46.

In addition to the Trojan lineage attested by Fredegar, Alexander has another Trojan connection, which first appears in literature several hundred years later. He figures among the three pagans of the late medieval canon of heroes, the “Nine Worthies,” appearing in the list after the Trojan hero, Hector. The other pagan hero is Julius Caesar, while the Jews are Joshua, David, and Judas Maccabeus; the Christian heroes are Arthur, Charlemagne and Godfrey of Boulogne. This theme of heroes was itself introduced in an Alexander romance, the Voeux du paon of Jacques de Longuyon, ca. 1312. Not only does this list link Alexander to the greatest Trojan hero, but also to valorous pre-Incarnation Jews, and to two Christian heroes to whom he is equated: Charlemagne, and the crusader and first Latin King of Jerusalem, Godfrey of Boulogne.²⁸⁰

In the Roman de toute chevalerie and other medieval Alexander texts, the multiple nationalities of Alexander are another indication of his ambiguous character: he is a Greek who can be linked to Aristotle and admirable Greek philosophy and learning and the language of the New Testament, but who is associated with the Greeks at Troy. Alexander the Macedonian is part of providential history, where he is the temporary holder of world dominion and plays a divinely sanctioned role, though he himself is sometimes an odious character, as discussed below. As a Trojan, Alexander is a brother to Europeans, coming from the same Trojan stock that founded the Romans, the Franks and other nations. Alexander is ambiguous: his nationalities have meant numerous, even contradictory things. Ambiguity seems to be a fundamental part of his character, as he is often more than one thing in a single text.

²⁸⁰ See Laurence Harf-Lancner on Jacques de Longuyon’s Voeux du paon in “Alexandre et l’Occident médiéval,” in Alexandre le Grand dans les littératures occidentales et proche-orientales: Actes du Colloque de Paris, 27-29 novembre 1997, ed. Laurence Harf-Lancner, Claire Kappler and François Suard (Paris: Centre des Sciences de la Littérature, Université de Paris X, Nanterre, 1999), 19.

Alexander's identity as a Macedonian is tied to his role in Orosius' formulation of *translatio imperii*. The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans was written at the behest of St. Augustine and featured Alexander in a crucial role. Orosius' aim was to give a history of the world from Adam to Rome in order to counteract popular opinion and prove that the sack of Rome and the calamitous events of the fifth century were not the result of the abandonment of the old gods in favour of the Christian God. Rather, God had foreordained all of the events of history: the "Orosian providential theology of history. . . sought to make ethical and theological sense of the arbitrariness of history."²⁸¹ In Orosius' plan of history, Alexander, as the head of the Macedonian empire, plays a divinely-sanctioned part in the transferral of rulership, and, as I will argue, in the foundation of a Christian Rome.

In Orosius' quadripartite schema of *translatio imperii*, the movement of imperial domination from East to West, Alexander holds, or takes care of, the authority of world empire as it moves in succession from Babylon in the East, to Carthage in the South, to Macedon in the North, and finally to Rome in the West, the permanent home of *imperium*:

Praeterea intercessisse dixeram inter Babylonium regnum, quod ab oriente fuerat, et Romanum, quod ab occidente consurgens hereditati orientis enutriebatur, Macedonicum Africanumque regnum, hoc est quasi a meridie ac septentrione breuibus uicibus partes tutoris curatorisque tenuisse. (3.17-18, 7.2.4)

[Moreover, I had said that between the Babylonian Empire, which was in the East, and the Roman Empire (which, arising in the West, was nourished by the heritage of the East), there intervened the Macedonian and African Empires. That is to say, they held, it seems, in the South and North the roles of guardian and protector for a short time.]

²⁸¹ Brenda Deen Schildgen, Pagans, Tartars, Moslems, and Jews in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001), 24.

These empires follow each other in succession; as one falls, the other rises: “*siquidem sub una eademque conuenientia temporum illa cecidit, ista surrexit. . . tunc orientis occidit et ortum est occidentis imperium*” [thus, at the same moment, the one fell and the other arose. . . thus the empire of the East died and the empire of the West was born (1.87-88; 2.2.10)]. Alexander is described by Orosius in quite unflattering terms: he is bloodthirsty and his methods are brutal. For instance, Orosius claims that Alexander killed all of his relatives before setting off for Persia (“*Inde profecturus ad Persicum bellum omnes cognatos ac proximos suos interfecit*,” I.164, 3.16.3) and is a bloody overlord (*cruentumque ultro dominum*, I.173, 3.20.8) who held much of the world in fear. Orosius says that Alexander, “*humani sanguinis inexsaturabilis siue hostium, siue etiam sociorum, recentem tamen semper sitiebat cruorem*” [insatiable as he was for human blood, whether of his enemies or of his own allies, was always thirsty for fresh slaughter (I.170, 3.18.10)].

Though he is depicted as a bloodthirsty tyrant, Alexander is still part of providential history. In Orosius’ quadripartite schema, Alexander is the custodian of imperial authority as it moves in succession from Babylon to Rome: he is the caretaker of empire for a brief, intense period, providing a model for world dominion to Rome, which in its Christianity, will be the fulfillment of all empires. The three earlier empires, Babylon, Macedon and Carthage, are part of God’s plan for the world. They ended at their appointed times after they had played their historic roles; they were full of warfare and bloodshed, and led up to the Roman Empire, which was the setting into which Christ was born and saved the world. As Dionisotti notes, Orosius uses the Eusebian doctrine “that the Roman Empire had been ordained by God to further and

maintain Christianity.”²⁸² Alexander plays a key role in paving the way for Rome, and hence for Christian empire; in Orosius’ framework, Alexander is an actor in God’s plan for the salvation of the world and an agent by which Christian empire could finally be born.

Alexander’s role in the movement of *imperium* is important to an understanding of his character in the Roman de toute chevalerie. As Akbari has noted, Thomas of Kent, to a certain extent, follows Orosius’ quadripartite schema in his description of Alexander’s conquests. Orosius’ account of *translatio imperii* moves from East, North, South, to Rome in the West; in a similar pattern, Alexander, after the defeat of Darius, ventures to India and beyond in the East, travels North to the lands of Gog and Magog, then heads South to Ethiopia. However, Alexander does not travel West, Thomas says, since the West contains only the sparsely populated lands of Spain Britain, and Ireland. As Akbari posits, “the absent voyage into the West signals Alexander’s role as a harbinger of imperial conquests to follow: the conquest of the known world by Rome, the great city of the West, and the subsequent rise of European might in the far western regions.”²⁸³ Though Alexander is a bloodthirsty tyrant, he is “a fitting counterpart to the Roman emperor who achieved universal peace and concord, preparing the way for the establishment of Christianity on the foundations of the Empire.”²⁸⁴ While Alexander is a prefiguration of Augustus, Augustus “perfects, not simply repeats, Alexander’s triumphs”: as Orosius notes, the Scythian and Indian ambassadors, finding him in Spain, transferred to Augustus the glory of Alexander.²⁸⁵ In spite of Alexander’s achievements, Alexander died in Babylon, while Augustus exercised imperial power so

²⁸² Dionisotti, “Walter of Châtillon and the Greeks,” 86.

²⁸³ Akbari, “Alexander in the Orient,” 110.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 110.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 111.

complete that all the world was at peace: “At that moment, the world is prepared for the crucial moment in salvation history: that is, the Incarnation.”²⁸⁶ Patterned on Orosius’ scheme of *translatio imperii*, the Roman de toute chevalerie shows a conqueror who is mighty but flawed; who provides a model for empire, and worships the God of the Jews, but who unfortunately lives before the Incarnation. Alexander was not meant to travel to the West or to conquer Europe: that was the role of Augustus and the Romans, under whose *imperium* Christ would be born and whose empire would one day be Christian.

Though at first Alexander the Great and the Greeks at Troy seem to be irreconcilable opposites, they in fact play similar roles: they move *imperium* to Rome, and prepare the way for Christian empire. In the Roman de Troie, we saw how the Greeks were instrumental in moving *imperium* from Troy to Rome and Western European countries and providing these nations with legitimacy. Alexander is also a mover of *imperium*, but in a different framework, that of Orosian *translatio imperii*. We can understand Alexander within the same frames of reference in which the Greeks at Troy function: they are agents by which Christian empire can finally be born. The Greeks at Troy are a “dead end,” a pagan people who die off and from which no Christian line springs, a similarity they share with another nation they have vanquished, the Thebans. The Greeks are the movers of *imperium* from Troy to Rome, but are surpassed by their victims, the Trojans, who supersede the Greeks by founding the Roman people, a lineage that will eventually form the Christian Roman Empire. Alexander performs a similar function as a mover of *imperium* in the Orosian schema. Though pagan, he recognizes the power and authority of the God of the Jews in

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 111.

Jerusalem, an act that led medieval authors and readers to view him as a proto-Christian: he realizes the truth of God, and in the view of medieval people, had he been born after the Incarnation, he would most likely have become a Christian. Despite Alexander's move towards monotheism, his empire is not perfected by the light of Christ and he is only a placeholder. In Orosius' formulation of providential history, *imperium* travels inexorably to Rome and Alexander's empire must be demolished for the next to arise. While Alexander provides a model for Christian empire, his lineage cannot last to provide a competitor for Rome. Alexander leaves no heirs and his empire collapses after his death.

The twelfth-century chronicler, Otto of Freising, picks up on Orosius' succession of empires in his chronicle, The Two Cities, and can provide another way of understanding the Alexander of the Roman de toute chevalerie. Where Orosius states that the right to rule moves from Babylon to Macedon to Carthage to Rome, according to Otto, *imperium* moves from Babylon, to Persia, to Greece, to Rome.²⁸⁷ While Orosius calls Alexander and his empire Macedonian, Otto instead calls the empire Greek. Because he believes that Rome is the final holder of *imperium* and will last until the end of the world, Otto has had to come up with some creative ways of getting around the sack of Rome and the rise of other European countries. The right to rule, writes Otto, moves from Rome, after its sack, to other nations that could claim "Roman" *imperium*: the Greeks, the Franks, then the Germans, who as Emperors of the newly refounded Roman Empire had every justification to empire. By "Greeks," Otto here actually means the Byzantine Greeks, who after the fall of Rome, held the sole claim to Empire "sub Romano nomine" [under the Roman name (5. Prol.)]. The right to rule moves, in

²⁸⁷ For the importance of this change, see Fabrizio Fabbrini, Paulo Orosio: uno storico (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1979), 364-365.

Otto's conception, through the Greeks (Alexander) and comes back to the Greeks (Byzantines) again. Like Alexander, a pre-Roman Greek, the Roman Greeks, the Byzantines, play the role of mediators in the passage of empire to the West. It is telling that Otto claims that the Byzantine Greeks held the right to rule *solo nomine*, "in name only": like Alexander, they are only placeholders, and hold imperial rule only for a finite period of time before it is transferred to its rightful place.²⁸⁸ When Otto uses the term "Greek" for both Alexander and the Byzantines, he thereby connects them, both by name and by the transitional mode in which they are depicted.

Otto calls yet another people Greek besides the Byzantines and Macedonians. These are the Greeks who were conquered and subsumed by Rome. Otto explains how Aeneas Silvius was the fourth Latin king, and then makes a striking statement: "Exhinc Greci et Latini quasi in uno semine coalescentes quandam et morum et linguae affinitatem habere ceperunt aliasque gentes tamquam rationis acumine et oris venustate minus utentes barbaros vocare consueverunt" [From this time on the Greeks and the Latins, as if joining into one seed, began to have a certain similarity of customs and language, and they were accustomed to call other races barbarians since they were less familiar with incisive reason and elegant speech (1.27)]. Otto joins the Greeks to the Latins, presumably to incorporate the philosophy and knowledge of the Greeks into the fabric of Roman society. Otto's chronicle complicates the nationality of Alexander: he calls Alexander both a Greek, and a Macedonian, and by using the term "Greek" in other contexts (a term he originally uses for Alexander), Otto links Alexander to the Byzantines and the Greeks conquered by the Romans.

²⁸⁸ "Constantinus, ut dixi, sedem regni Bizancium transtulit. . . . Ex hoc regnum Romanorum ad Grecos translatum invenitur mansitque propter antiquam Urbis dignitatem solo nomine ibi." *Ottonis episcopi frisingensis Chronica*, 4.5.

In a way, by seeing him as a Greek, Otto takes away some of Alexander's importance: the right to rule passed through Alexander's hands, and the hands of the Byzantine Greeks, leaving them, like the Babylonians and Persians, empty of legitimacy. As well, by calling Alexander a Greek, Otto associates him with the Greeks who were conquered by the Romans. The different groups that Otto of Freising calls "Greeks," Alexander, the Byzantine Greeks and the Greeks subsumed by the Romans, inhabit a common transitional space and allow the movement of *imperium* and learning. In contrast to Orosius' four-part, cross-shaped East-North-South-West system, Otto's concept of *translatio imperii* is made up of two parts, East and West, which highlights Alexander's status as intermediary.²⁸⁹ Otto describes how the Greeks and Romans unite, making them one side of the East-West equation: first came the Babylonians and Persians, then the Greeks and the Romans, who fulfill empire by their Christianity. As a result, Akbari argues, "the notion of *translatio imperii* was made more emphatically and more simply a movement from East to West, with Greece as a new middle ground, belonging fully neither to the East nor to the West."²⁹⁰ Otto's East-West *translatio imperii* can be seen in binary terms: instead of *imperium* simply moving from one empire to the next, empire begins in Babylon-Persia, and is fulfilled in Greece-Rome. This movement can be understood in terms of Christian typology and supersession: just as the Jews provide a model for Christianity but are irrelevant after the Incarnation, Babylon and Persia together provide a model for later empire, but cannot last after *imperium* has moved to the next nation; they are surpassed and superseded, and have no relevance in themselves.

²⁸⁹ For a discussion of the Orosius' cross-shaped schema, see Fabbrini, *Paulo Orosio: uno storico*, 364-365.

²⁹⁰ Akbari, "Alexander in the Orient," 111.

Both Orosius' and Otto's formulas of *translatio imperii* help to show how Alexander can be understood in the Roman de toute chevalerie: he is a world conqueror who is flawed, but provides a model for empire that is necessary for the eventual rise of Rome and the perfection of empire in Christianity. In Thomas of Kent's work, Alexander is a model of chivalry, a noble leader who worships the God of the Jews and brings almost the entire world under his power, but who possesses some disquietingly Saracen characteristics. While Alexander functions in providential history for Orosius, as an instrument of God who holds power for a set period of time before it moves to Carthage, he is allied with the Romans in Otto's conception of *translatio imperii*. For Otto, Greeks and Romans become one people, a fact that again highlights Alexander's intermediary role: his empire brings the benefit of Greek learning to Rome, which in turn becomes Christian. Alexander is indeed a "middle ground": he provides a model of empire, but cannot last to compete with Rome. This can be seen especially well in the disintegration of Alexander's empire in the Roman de toute chevalerie.

The aftermath of Alexander's death makes his role in *translatio imperii* even clearer. Alexander's empire does not last after his death; his cities are divided amongst his generals, who attack one another. On his deathbed, Alexander distributes his lands and treasures to those who have served him:

Veanz toz ses barons fet li roys son devis,
E donne ses tresors, realmes e pais
A ses bons compaignons e a ses chers amis.
Chescun ot sa part solum ceo qe ot pris. (7954-7957)

[Before all his barons the king divides his goods and gives his treasures, realms and countries to his good companions and dear friends. Each receives his portion according to his merits.]

The disputes amongst his men begin immediately: the Macedonians, Persians and Babylonians cannot decide on the manner of Alexander's burial:

Au roy ensevelir eurent tençons e estris,
Car cil de Macedoine ont pur le corps tramis,
E cil de Perse volent k'en lur terre soit mis.
Babilonien dient: 'Ainz erent mil occis,
Cent chastels abatuz e mil paleis malmis.' (7962-7966)

[Quarrels and fights arose about the burial of the king, because the Macedonians demanded to have the body, and the Persians wanted it buried in Persia. The Babylonians said: 'We'd rather one thousand men were killed, one hundred castles crushed and one thousand palaces destroyed.']

The disparate nations that Alexander held together by force of arms and personality cannot remain cohesive after his death and the tensions inherent in his empire break out. Alexander has no physical heritage in the Roman de toute chevalerie, or in any other Alexander text. He has no heir, the trusted companions amongst whom he divides his conquests go to war and destroy each other and their lands, and his empire dissolves. Though he has no physical heritage, Alexander does have a political heritage: Alexander provides a model for the empire of Augustus, into whose empire Christ chose to be born. Alexander's empire, though, is inferior to that of Augustus, whose own disparate empire existed in peace even after his death.

This point is supported by Orosius' comparison of the empires of Alexander and Augustus. Alexander receives emissaries from all over the world when he returns to Babylon (I.172; 3.20.3). Correspondingly, emissaries from throughout the world seek Augustus in distant Spain, rather than in his capital of Rome:

Caesarem apud Tarraconem citerioris Hispaniae urbem legati Indorum et Scytharum, toto Orbe transmisso, tandem ibi inuenerunt, ultra quod iam quaerere non possent, refuderuntque in Caesarem Alexandri Magni gloriam: quem sicut Hispanorum Gallorumque legatio in medio oriente apud Babylonam contemplatione pacis adiit, ita hunc apud Hispaniam in occidentis ultimo supplex cum gentilicio munere eous Indus et Scythia boreus orauit. (II.233; 6.21.19-20)

[After having crossed the whole world, the ambassadors of the Indians and Scythians finally found Caesar in Tarraco, a city of furthest Spain, beyond which they could not have continued to seek him, and they transferred to Caesar the glory of Alexander the

Great. In the same way that a legation of Spaniards and Gauls intending to make peace came to him (i. e., Alexander) in Babylon, in the middle of the East, just so the Indian of the Eastern Ocean and the Scythian of the Boreal river beseeched him (Caesar) on their knees in Spain, at the extremity of the West, offering tribute from their peoples.]²⁹¹

In comparison to Alexander's empire, which fragments shortly after his death, Augustus' empire remains whole as it becomes Christian: "ab oriente in occidentem, a septentrione in meridiem ac per totum Oceani circulum cunctis gentibus una pace conpositis" [from the East to the West, from the North to the South, and over the entire circuit of the Ocean, all nations were arranged in a single peace (II.234; 6.22.1)].²⁹²

According to Akbari, "Alexander appears here as both counterpart and harbinger of Augustus. . . . Augustus thus perfects, not simply repeats Alexander's triumphs."²⁹³

Alexander has provided a model for Augustus, whose empire will be the fulfillment of all empires in its cohesion and peace, which make it the ideal site and time for the birth of Christ.

The ending of the Roman de toute chevalerie makes it clear that *imperium* has taken leave of Alexander's Macedonian empire: his generals battle each other until there is no one left. After weeping at Alexander's tomb, the nobles travel to their own lands and cities, assemble knights, fortify their cities, and prepare for war: "de guerre s'atornerent. / Communement par tuit le monde mellerent" (8033-6). The romance ends on a tragic note: more than fifteen realms suffer and are destroyed in this war, and the barons who desire the most suffer in servitude ("Primes se repentirent pur le mal qu'il troverent: / En servage chairent en peur qe nen erent," 8038-8039). The last lines of the Roman de toute chevalerie, though tragic, echo the Trojan diaspora and provide a ray of hope for the future: "La gent en fu destruite e des terres fuirent. / Povere e cheitif lur

²⁹¹ Translation found in Akbari, "Alexander in the Orient," 110-111.

²⁹² Translation found in Akbari, "Alexander in the Orient," 111.

²⁹³ Akbari, "Alexander in the Orient," 111.

herité guerpirent” [The people were massacred and fled from their lands. The poor and the weak lost their heritage (8052-8053)]. Just as Troy has been destroyed and the Trojans flee and bring *imperium* to Europe by founding the Roman people, *imperium* is personified in the people fleeing their cities in the war after the death of Alexander. The right to rule flees his crumbling empire and makes its way to Carthage, or, in Otto’s schema, straight to Rome.

While Thomas of Kent emphasizes Alexander’s worth, which was great enough for him to provide a model for Christian empire, despite his pagan faith, Alexander’s identity can be likened to an empty vessel: depending on who is writing for whom, Alexander can be many things. As Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox have noted, “Medieval implementations of his legend also transformed it into a powerful medium for direct expression or symbolic representation of contemporary social and political aspirations and more commonly—anxieties.”²⁹⁴ Within the Roman de toute chevalerie we can see various aspects of Alexander’s heritage, character and place in history emphasized. For Thomas of Kent, Alexander is an ideal knight, an exemplar of chivalry who provides a model of *imperium*; he is a model of a disciplined ruler, a mirror of princes. Alexander’s character allows the leeway taken by different authors: he can be a proto-Christian, a pagan, a proto-Saracen, a Trojan; he can reject treachery, be a model for chivalry, and fall prey to Oriental temptations. Alexander’s differing nationalities complicate his role in *translatio imperii*, supersession, and the foundation of Christian empire. Christine Chism, writing on the literary representations of alterity, provides a framework in which we can also see Alexander: “Jews, Egyptians, Saracens, even Old Romans die not simply for their usury, past crimes, or reliance on false

²⁹⁴ Maddox and Sturm-Maddox, “Introduction,” 8.

philosophies but because they are too closely related to the emergent Christian or chivalric world orders that their deaths will invigorate.”²⁹⁵ Though he sometimes seems to distance himself from the other ancient Greeks of medieval literature, the Greeks at Troy, he cannot help sharing their fate: despite his best efforts, he too is a tool in the movement of empire.

Alexander in The Wars of Alexander

Alexander’s character and actions can differ in medieval texts from author to author, depending on the current trend in depictions of Alexander, and on the aims of the author²⁹⁶: as W. R. J. Barron notes, “each age remade Alexander in the image of its needs, its interests, its ideals, its morality.”²⁹⁷ It is not surprising, therefore, that the late-fourteenth century anonymous Middle English Wars of Alexander provides a different view of Alexander from that of the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman Roman de toute chevalerie. The Wars of Alexander, the second longest work in the “central corpus” of alliterative Middle English poetry, was written in a Northern Middle English dialect, and exists in two manuscripts, both of which lack the ending of the poem.²⁹⁸ Both of the extant manuscripts were apparently copied in Durham, but the poem was composed farther to the southwest. The Wars of Alexander uses the I³ recension of the Historia de

²⁹⁵ Chism, Alliterative Revivals, 111.

²⁹⁶ See Cary, Medieval Alexander, for a discussion of the changes in the medieval depiction of Alexander, ranging from moralists to theologians to secular writers, esp. pp. 163-259. See Gerrit H. V. Bunt, Alexander the Great in the Literature of Medieval Britain (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1994), 86-88, for a critique of Cary’s method for distinguishing genres of Alexander texts.

²⁹⁷ W. R. J. Barron, “The Wars of Alexander: From Reality to Romance,” in Romance Reading on the Book: Essays on Medieval Narrative Presented to Maldwyn Mills, ed. Jennifer Fellows et al. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), 23.

²⁹⁸ Oxford, Bodleian Library: MS Ashmole 44, and Dublin, Trinity College: MS 213. See Ralph Hanna III’s review of Duggan and Turville-Petre’s edition in Speculum 66.4 (1991): 858-862.

preliis as its main source (a text probably completed before 1150) and shows many interpolations, “mainly of a moralizing nature.”²⁹⁹

While the Wars of Alexander uses sources other than those used by the Roman de toute chevalerie, an examination of these two texts together provides a worthwhile comparison. Though they share in common the episode taken from Josephus of Alexander’s visit to Jerusalem, their depictions of Alexander differ: for instance, while Thomas of Kent’s Alexander seems to be a proto-Christian, this feature is lacking in the Wars of Alexander, where Alexander seems to be simply a pagan polytheist. I will explore Alexander’s religious tendencies as well as other details that contrast with the portrait of Alexander provided by Thomas of Kent, such as differences in the Jerusalem episode, Alexander’s status as proto-crusader and his role in *translatio imperii*.

The Wars of Alexander, like the Roman de toute chevalerie, shows the variable characterization of ancient Greeks. Here, Alexander can be associated with virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews: instead of embracing the treachery that links the Greeks at Troy with post-Incarnation Jews, he is firmly opposed to its use. Alexander’s opposition to the use of typical Greek treachery by his men is apparent in several scenes in the Wars of Alexander, many of which we have seen in the Roman de toute chevalerie. These include the episode involving Parmeon’s false accusation of treason, “gile” (2699) and “trayne” (2707), against Alexander’s physician, Philip, which Alexander punishes by Parmeon’s execution.³⁰⁰ As well, the Persian soldier who wears Greek armour and attempts to stab Alexander “with any sleȝt” (2759) is spared by Alexander because his actions do not amount to treason. The soldier is following orders: Darius had promised

²⁹⁹ Cary, Medieval Alexander, 52. The other Middle English translation of the I³ recension is the prose Alexander of Robert Thornton, written in the mid-fifteenth century.

³⁰⁰ All references in my text to the Wars of Alexander refer to Hoyt N. Duggan and Thorlac Turville-Petre, eds. The Wars of Alexander, EETS SS 10 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

the soldier lands and his daughter in marriage in exchange for Alexander's death (2756-2791).

Alexander likewise rejects treachery that benefits him: he executes the two Persian knights, "Pire traitours on pis trechoure" (3320), who betray and kill Darius and expect a reward from Alexander (3548-3568). In an episode not seen in the Roman de toute chevalerie, a Persian prince defects to the Greeks and offers to hand Darius over to Alexander if Alexander will accompany the prince with ten thousand men, but Alexander refuses to deal with a traitor (2804-2815). By eschewing treachery, Alexander is distanced from the Greeks at Troy and also from post-Incarnation Jews who, through Judas, are so strongly associated with treachery in medieval thought.

While he distances himself from post-Incarnation Jewish traits and thereby signals his similarities to virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews, whose laws prohibit treachery, as the Roman de toute chevalerie states ("lur ley ne soeffre qe facent fausetez," 1267), it is more difficult to see Alexander as a pre-Incarnation Jew or proto-Christian in the Wars of Alexander. He does worship the God of the Jews in Jerusalem, an episode that is shared with the Roman de toute chevalerie, but the account of the Wars of Alexander includes some noteworthy differences. Since they both honour the God of the Jews, the Alexanders of the Roman de toute chevalerie and the Wars of Alexander might be expected to have a similar attitude towards religion in general, and have similar roles as proto-Christian crusaders. Alexander's characterization in the Wars of Alexander, however, is complicated by the poet's depiction of the Jews, the prophecy of an angel, the absence of eschatological sentiment and Alexander's own religious tendencies. These changes in Alexander's depiction can perhaps be attributed to the environment in

which the Wars of Alexander was written, the late-medieval perception of Jews and the effects of unsuccessful crusades.

The attitude towards Jews found in the Wars of Alexander is similarly reflected in the fourteenth-century alliterative Siege of Jerusalem. These two texts are comparable in their time period, language, and form: both are products of the fourteenth-century “alliterative revival.” The depiction of Jews in the Siege of Jerusalem not only echoes the attitudes towards Jews found in the Wars of Alexander but also helps to show an energetic hermeneutics of supersession with regard to Jews in fourteenth-century England, an anxiety not found in the twelfth-century Roman de toute chevalerie. Though Jews in England had been expelled in 1290, Elisa Narin Van Court argues that there was a “very real issue of Jewish presence in Christendom that continue[d] to concern the Christian community even in the absence of Jews.”³⁰¹ As Akbari points out, “medieval Christians used Jewish identity in order to define the borders of Christian community.”³⁰² While the story of the destruction of Jerusalem was once interpreted by Christian writers as being akin to the state of the Christian soul, a reading which urged identification with the Jews, the fourteenth century saw the rise in a “discourse of displacement and supersession” that interpreted the siege of Jerusalem as God’s vengeance on the unbelieving Jews: “historical testimony to Jewish apostasy and supersession.”³⁰³ This fourteenth-century emphasis on the fulfillment of Judaism by Christianity may have to do with a change in the explanation for the Jews’ killing of Christ: “[i]t was not until the advent of the friars and their domination of theological

³⁰¹ Narin Van Court, “The Siege of Jerusalem and Augustinian Historians,” 166.

³⁰² Akbari, “Placing the Jews,” 36.

³⁰³ Narin Van Court, “The Siege of Jerusalem and Augustinian Historians,” 167.

writing that doctrinal view of the Jews were completely revised.”³⁰⁴ Both Duns Scotus and Nicholas of Lyre argued that the Jews were aware of Christ’s divinity, and therefore their crime was intentional; as Bonnie Millar argues, “the traditional policy of the toleration of the Jews was abandoned.”³⁰⁵ One of the ways fourteenth-century Christians defined themselves was as not being Jews, and the depiction of the superseded Jews in the Siege of Jerusalem provides useful insight into the characterization of Jews in the Wars of Alexander.

The Jerusalem episode in the Wars of Alexander is broken up into two parts: first, Alexander’s messenger asks for the tribute the Jews would usually give to Darius, and food and reinforcements for “þe mayntenance of þe Messedoyns & of þe meri Grekis” who are besieging Tyre (1302). Iaudas, the “bisshop” of the Jews (1295), sends a message to the king telling him that the Jews had sworn never to harm Darius during his lifetime. After conquering Tyre, Alexander immediately sets out for the “haly cite” (1580) where the Jews, having heard of his approach, fast and pray for three days: “Ilka frek & ilka fante to fast & to pray,/ To occupy paire oures & orisons & offire in paire temple,/ And call vp with a clene voice to þe kyng of heuyn” (1600-1602). The night before Alexander’s arrival in Jerusalem, an angel comes to Iaudas in a dream and tells him how to avoid the wrath of Alexander by hanging white fabrics around Jerusalem and having the population process out of the city to greet Alexander. Because they are virtuous and live before the Incarnation, the Jews are visited by an angel of the Lord, and by his instructions are able to forestall their destruction, “þe vengeance of þis

³⁰⁴ Bonnie Millar, *The Siege of Jerusalem in its Physical, Literary and Historical Contexts* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 142n5. See pp. 142-147 for further discussion of the changes in the treatment of Jews.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 142n5.

victoure to voide if þai miȝt" (1607), unlike the Christ-denying Jews who perished in Titus and Vespasian's siege of Jerusalem.

The language of vengeance links Alexander's visit to Jerusalem with that of the Roman Emperors, who were described in the Siege of Jerusalem as taking revenge for the Jews' killing of Christ. The Jews whom Alexander wishes to punish, however, do not deserve such treatment: they live before the time of Christ and have not had the chance to know his truth, and they also denied Alexander's request for aid for an honourable reason. While Titus and Vespasian are portrayed as Christians rightfully avenging Christ's death, Alexander's situation is markedly different. Through the advice of the angel, and Alexander's prophetic dream in Macedon in which Iaudas appears, the Jews are spared, making them seem *in bono*, the prefiguration of Christians who deserve mercy, and Alexander seems like a virtuous pagan who realizes the power of the Jewish God.

In a detail taken from the Historia de preliis, the angel who appears in Iaudas' dream also says that Alexander will rule over the whole world then perish by God's anger: "For he mon ride þus & regne ouire all þe ronde werde, / Be lord [of] ilka lede into his laste days, / And þen [b]e diȝt to þe deth of driȝtin[e]s ire" (1625-1627). This statement, which is not found in the Roman de toute chevalerie, provides reassurance to the Jews that they will be protected by God: they are the Chosen People and will remain after Alexander is gone. The angel's statement emphasizes that the God of the Jews has power over conquerors, and also calls into question Alexander's proto-Christianity. It is possible that Alexander does not really recognize the authority of the God of the Jews and is simply a deity-collector after all. Since the ending of the poem is missing, it is tantalizing to guess what Alexander did to merit his death by God's anger.

The Wars poet uses a great deal of Christian language to depict the Jews in Jerusalem. In the Wars of Alexander, there is a “bisshop” who wears a mitre (1664), “prestis,” “prelatis,” “clergy” and clerks who wear vestments (“fanons & stolis,” 1704) and pray not only in a synagogue and temple, but also in a kirk, a word used for a Christian church. The bishop wears what the editors call a cope, a lavishly decorated Christian liturgical garment: “a cape of kastand hewes,/ With riche r[y]b[an]s of gold railed bi þe hemmes” (1660-1661). As Barron has noted, “the ceremonies of welcome include many Christian features”: in fact, some of the Jews who process out of the city carry “sensours & so, with siuiryn cheynes,/ Quareof þe reke aromatike rase to þe welken” (1688-1689), while others carry “releckis full rially, þe richest on þe auutere” (1695).³⁰⁶ The Jews even study dialectic and canon law, “Practisirs & prematis & prestis of þe lawe,/ Of dialiticus & decre, doctours of aythir” (1705-1706), Christian subjects regularly studied in medieval universities.

Christian language is used more frequently to describe the Jews in the Wars of Alexander than in the Roman de toute chevalerie. This use of Christian terms in the Wars of Alexander is greatly expanded from that in its source, the Historia de preliis, where the only similar detail is the use of the term *pontifex*, or bishop, to describe the leader of the Jews. This new Christian language is perhaps a result of the Jewish expulsion from England in 1290; authors in late-medieval England may not have known how the Jews actually worshiped, and might have simply ascribed to them familiar Christian rituals and practices. On the other hand, the use of Christian terms could serve to assimilate Jewish and Christian practice and be a deliberate shift to make the Jews seem more virtuous, like knowing Jews who anticipated Christ by using Christian

³⁰⁶ Barron, “The Wars of Alexander: From Reality to Romance,” 28.

practice before the Incarnation. These Jews show that they would embrace Christianity by having the trappings of Christianity before the Incarnation: when Judaism is fulfilled and superseded by Christianity, a medieval reader could expect them to abandon their old religion and be receptive to Christianity. The mixture of Jewish and Christian details in the Jews' portrayal is actually similar to the depiction of Alexander's religious practices, as shown below: he also sacrifices in a temple, though to his own gods, rather than the God of the Jews.

Christian language used to describe the Jews is not the only surprising feature of the depiction of the Jews in this text. After Alexander has prostrated himself before the name of God (Tetragrammaton) on the bishop's mitre, he sacrifices at the Temple and asks Iaudas if he has any requests that Alexander can grant. As in other Alexander texts, the bishop asks for seven years without tribute and for the Jews to be able to practice their faith. The bishop of the Jews then seems to ask Alexander that the Persians and Medians become Jews:

“And 3it I will, be 3oure [will], a worde & na mare,
 Pat þe men of Medi ma[y], be 3oure leue,
 Lang all in oure lawe lely togedire,
 And þai of Babilon bathe.” (1804-1807)

The source text for the Wars of Alexander, the I³ recension of the Historia de preliis, reads instead “Deinde postulavit pontifex, ut Iudei in Meda et Babilonia constituti suis legibus potirentur” [Then the bishop asked that the Jews living in Media and Babylon take up their (Jewish) laws (23-25, p. 36)].³⁰⁷ This request in the Wars of Alexander could be a mistranslation of the Historia de preliis by the poet or mis-copying of the text by a scribe. If it were intentionally changed, though, it could be interpreted in

³⁰⁷ Die Historia de preliis Alexandri Magni Rezension I³, ed. Karl Steffens, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie, Heft 73 (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1975).

numerous ways. Perhaps the Jews, who practice the most righteous religion before Christ, want to spread their religion through Alexander, who, as an instrument of God, worthy pagan and world-conqueror, can proselytize on behalf of the Jews. This move could also be seen as a prefiguration and justification of Christian evangelism: the righteous Jews practiced it, therefore medieval Christians have a precedent to follow, though it is difficult to see Alexander as a proto-Christian missionary. There is no indication later in the text that this conversion happens; nevertheless, the interpretation of Iaudas' request, unique to the Wars of Alexander, raises questions about the status of the Jews, as well as the status of Alexander.

Though he pays reverence to the God of the Jews, there is no indication that Alexander converts to Judaism in the Wars of Alexander. As we shall see below, he is clearly a polytheist and does not have recourse to the God of the Jews after his visit to Jerusalem. In a telling move, Alexander's visit to Jerusalem is placed before his victory over Darius, while the opposite occurs in the Roman de toute chevalerie. In the Wars of Alexander, Alexander hopes for help from this particular god in this particular matter, though he does not mention the God of the Jews when he has conquered Persia. In the Roman de toute chevalerie he comes to Jerusalem after having defeated Darius and acknowledges that it was the God of the Jews whose aid allowed him to conquer Persia. There has been conflicting thought about Alexander's relationship with the God of the Jews; as Barron notes, "Augustine interpreted Alexander's reverence as an attempt to add Jehovah to his polytheistic pantheon, while others attributed his respect for the city as due to divinely inspired awe of the place – evidence of God's omnipotence over tyrants."³⁰⁸

³⁰⁸ Barron, "The Wars of Alexander: From Reality to Romance," 28.

The Wars of Alexander seems to support both of these positions: Alexander is a polytheist who worships the God of the Jews because he will aid Alexander against Darius, but Alexander is also an instrument of God, whose deeds have been foreordained by providence, a conqueror who does not necessarily have agency. In a striking statement, Alexander uses Christian language to tell the Gymnosophists, “Genosophis,” the reason he has travelled so far and conquered so many peoples and lands: “þe cause at I haue / Is purly gods prouidens; predestayned it is before” (4190-4191). Likewise, Queen Candace tells Alexander in a letter that

“it was purveid apert of þe [prince] of heuen,
 Predesteyned of his prouydence & of his pure miȝt,
 Þat ȝe suld pas into Pers & prese it with armes
 Itale, Egipt & Ynde, & all þire iles ouire.” (5233-5236)

Alexander, though he might not revere the God of the Jews, is nevertheless subject to God’s providence, and has a very different relationship to the God of the Jews in the Wars of Alexander than he does in the Roman de toute chevalerie. The emphasis on providence, the unfolding of history under God’s plan, was a topic treated in other late fourteenth-century works, including Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde. Chaucer and other authors were influenced by the Boethian idea of Providence, found in the Consolation of Philosophy, which contends that everything that occurs, no matter how inexplicable, was thought of in the divine mind and happens for the best. The fact that Alexander is here a part of the divine plan for the unfolding of history complicates his pagan identity.

The episode of the dangerous storm in the mountains emphasizes the tension between Alexander’s polytheism and his providential role: in the Roman de toute chevalerie it is the God of the Jews, who is spoken of in Christian terms, who is testing

the Greeks; in a scene that makes him appear to be a proto-Christian, Alexander recognizes the power of God in the storm. In the Wars of Alexander, by contrast, Alexander tells his men that the storm is not the result of the gods' anger, but it is the approaching equinox that affects the weather. When the weather continues to worsen, he makes sacrifices to the gods and the storm stops (4276-4315). Instead of having recourse to God throughout the text, Alexander here pays homage to the God of the Jews only in Jerusalem, then seems to leave this worship; he continues to revere his multiple gods, but seems nevertheless to be under the control of the God of the Jews.

While the Alexander of the Roman de toute chevalerie sacrifices to the God of the Jews and a few other gods, he seems to continue to venerate these other gods out of habit. Alexander in the Wars of Alexander, however, worships many more gods, and is most often in the position of worshiping familiar gods than foreign gods, even when he is far from Macedon on campaign. After he goes to Africa, Alexander travels to the island of Fantites, where he visits the "synagoge" or "temple" so he and his princes can worship "their own god," Ammon:

Furthe to Frantites he ferd, slike a ferre ile,
Seches þare to a synagoge, himselfe & his princes,
Amon þaire awen god at þai honoure myȝt.
And so to þe temple as he tiȝt with his tid erles. (1181-4)

At "Frigie," or Troy, Alexander "ane þare of his ald gods he honourd in a temple" (2243); at Platea, he and his dukes visit the temple of Diana, a familiar goddess (2426). At the edge of the city of "Batran" or Bactria, he sacrifices to his gods (2799); this happens at almost every city Alexander besieges, though the gods he worships are not specified. At Capho Resey, Alexander seeks divine aid to enter the barred city and "sacrifyce[d] þare efsones to many sere godis" (1207). That same night, "Anothire of his

grete godis" (1209), Seraphis, appears to him in a dream (1208-1235). Asked for a prophecy about the time and manner of Alexander's death, Seraphis says that he will tell Alexander how, but not when he will die. Seraphis leaves it up to the gods of the Orient to tell Alexander those details: "'For outhire out of þe orient sall openly here- eftir/ Vndo þe dreȝt of þi days & þi ded tell'" (1234-1235). The "gods of the orient" who tell Alexander of his death are in actuality not gods, but the Trees of the Sun and Moon in India. Alexander seems to worship gods to get prophecies of his death, as well as to win battles, as he does in the Roman de toute chevalerie, though he seems to forget the power of the God of the Jews once he has left Jerusalem.

Despite Alexander's polytheism and his lack of consistent veneration of the God of the Jews, there are Christian and Jewish details attached to his religious observances. For example, when Alexander is outside Darius' city of Susys, or Susa, Ammon comes to Alexander in a dream "in aung[e]ll[e]s wyse" (2989) and tells Alexander to go to Darius' court in disguise with Ammon's protection. The appearance in a dream of a protective angel sent by a deity is reminiscent of the angel of God who appeared to Iudas in Jerusalem, telling the Jews how to protect themselves from Alexander's vengeance by wearing white clothes and covering the city in white cloths. The similarities between Iudas and Alexander only go so far, however: while the angel sent from God to the Jews is called an "aungell," Ammon's messenger appears "in aung[e]ll[e]s wyse"; one is a real angel, the other only appears to be one, proving the righteousness of one and the faults of the other. Alexander is also linked to the Jews by the fact that the places where Alexander reveres his gods are called "temples" and "synagoges," terms that can also refer to Jewish sites of worship. As well as Jewish terms, Christian language is used for Alexander's rituals: the lavish House of the Sun on

top of a cliff is called a “mynstir” (5025), a large Christian church. The place of worship at Tergarontes is called a “mynstre” (2301) and a “temple” (2302). There, Alexander worships “Sire Appoline & othire ald goddis./To ofire in þat oritorie with honour he wyndis,/ And [of] sum [sprete] to spire how he spede suld” (2303-2305). The mixture of Jewish, Christian and pagan terms is curious: Alexander is at once identified as worshipping “Appoline” and “spretes” at a building called both “mynstre” and “temple,” terms that are also used for the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Alexander’s mode of worship in the text is sacrifice, the focus on which could be meant to emphasize a relationship between Alexander’s worship and Jewish ritual, as Jews practiced animal sacrifices before the destruction of the Second Temple. Sacrifice further complicates Alexander’s depiction, as it also associates Alexander with a particular strand of medieval depictions of ancient Greeks and Romans, which appears in some medieval views of Saracens.³⁰⁹ The curious combination of Jewish, Christian and pagan practice highlights Alexander’s ambiguity; it makes Alexander seem like a polytheist who does the best he can to worship properly, but is unfortunate enough to live before the Incarnation.

One event that is important for seeing Alexander as a proto-Christian in the Roman de toute chevalerie, the enclosure of the tribes of Gog and Magog, is notably different in the Wars of Alexander. In this episode, Alexander walls up twenty-two tyrants and their armies in a narrow valley: “Þan aires furth Sire Alexsandire & with his arte closis/Of terands of þire Tartaryns twa & twenti kyngs./He stekis þam vp with þaire stoures in a strait lawe” (5609-5611). The poet names the tyrants, but there is no

³⁰⁹ For instance, the Saracen king Laban sacrifices animals to his Saracen gods in the Middle English romance The Sowdone of Babylone (676-684), though this practice is not terribly common. See text in Alan Lupack, ed. Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1990.

mention of Antichrist, Turks or Saracen features, or an eschatological role for Alexander.³¹⁰ This truncated episode is perhaps the result of the milieu in which the Wars of Alexander was written: since the last centuries of crusade had been unsuccessful, there was little hope in Europe for a Christian kingdom in Jerusalem, which was believed by some to be necessary to precipitate the end of the world. Perhaps Alexander is not seen by the author of the Wars of Alexander as the prefiguration of a conqueror who plays a role in Christian eschatology and defeats Saracens because this kind of figure had become an unrealistic model in the later Middle Ages. While there was hope for such an occurrence when the Roman de toute chevalerie was written, with its proto-Christian, proto-crusader hero who has a role in bringing about the end of time, the fourteenth century was not so optimistic.

The chronicles of the eras reflect the change in apocalyptic feelings between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries: Fulcher of Chartres, Otto of Freising and Lambert of St. Omer, writing during the beginning of the crusades, believed that with Christians holding the Holy Land, the events preceding the end of the world were happening. A different kind of apocalypticism begins to take shape after Christian defeats in the Holy Land, seen especially in the prophecies of the twelfth-century abbot Joachim of Fiore, who in his Liber de Concordia Novi ac Veteris Testamentis used “Old Testament biblical history as a kind of ‘key’ to the New Testament, his own present time, and the apocalyptic future.”³¹¹ Joachim explained the twelfth-century Saracen threat against Byzantium typologically by using the prophecy of Hosea that Israel would be surrendered to the Assyrians (Isaiah 8:1–10.); he also claimed that the Antichrist was to

³¹⁰ One interesting name amongst those given by the poet is “Gamarody þe goblyn” (5617), though this is the only hint at the perfidy of the tribes of Gog and Magog.

³¹¹ Yeager, “The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis,” 82.

rise from the Church of Rome and believed that past events could predict the Last Judgment.³¹² Marjorie Reeves notes that his work held “special currency in fourteenth-century England as Joachim’s criticism of the Roman Church was employed by the English exegetes.”³¹³

Ralph of Coggeshall and Ranulph Higden, chroniclers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries respectively, reflect Joachim’s apocalyptic prophecies and modify them to suit their times: Ralph of Coggeshall’s Chronicon Anglicanum was influenced by Joachim and attributes the failure of crusaders to reclaim the Holy Land to the poor spiritual state of Europe.³¹⁴ Ralph links the rise of Saracen power in the Holy Land with the reign of Antichrist: Christians cannot resist Antichrist, nor defeat the Saracens, the precursors of Antichrist, because of their own sins.³¹⁵ In his popular Polychronicon, Ranulph Higden borrows from Ralph Coggeshall’s chronicle, and suggests that the failure of Richard I to take the Holy Land was part of God’s plan to chasten Christendom.³¹⁶ Fourteenth-century apocalypticism in England linked the Saracens with Antichrist and moved the centre of events from Jerusalem to Europe: the crusaders no longer held the Holy Land due to the sins of Europeans, and reform was needed not only in the morality of Christians, but in the papacy as well. The dismal later crusades, and the incursions of the Ottoman Turks into Europe, severely hampered European hopes for a Christian Holy Land. The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was but a memory

³¹² Ibid., 83. Joachim of Fiore, Expositio in Apocalypsim (Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1964), fol. 168r.

³¹³ Yeager, “The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis,” 87. See Marjorie Reeves, The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism, rev. ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 82-87.

³¹⁴ Yeager, “The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis,” 89. Ralph of Coggeshall, Chronicon Anglicanum, ed. Joseph Stevenson, Rolls Series 66 (London: Longman, 1857; rpt. Wiesbaden: Kraus, 1965), 69-70.

³¹⁵ Yeager, “The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis,” 90.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 92. Ranulph Higden and John Trevisa, Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden monachi Cestrensis, Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century, ed. J. R. Lumby, Rolls Series 41, 9 vols. (London: Longman, 1865-1886), Bk. 7, Vol. 8, 118.

and there was no need for an eschatological conqueror like Alexander to enclose the Saracens: they had already broken their bounds.

Alexander's relation to eschatology, to the Jews, and to religious practice in the Wars of Alexander is significantly different from that found in the Roman de toute chevalerie. In keeping with Cary's assertion that "Alexander was no longer in the later Middle Ages portrayed as a Christian or under the protection of the Christian God," it is much more difficult to see Alexander as a proto-Christian in this work.³¹⁷ Though the God of the Jews seems to have influence over Alexander, he venerates this god only in Jerusalem; the angel of God says he will die by God's anger; he is clearly a polytheist; and he plays no role in Christian eschatology. Though these factors might have contributed to a negative view of Alexander, in Donna Crawford's view, there is no "uniform evaluation of the limitations of the pagan faith" on the part of the poet.³¹⁸ Crawford argues that the poet "does not provide a moral judgment of the pagan past in which the life of his hero is confined."³¹⁹ W. R. J. Barron expresses a similar sentiment, stating that the poet does not show "contempt for the pagan beliefs involved."³²⁰ The absence of judgement of paganism may be part of the poet's consciousness of the ambiguity of Alexander that his depictions often include. Here, the polytheist Alexander shares Jewish and Christian rites and language, and it seems that religious practice in the Wars of Alexander is assimilated to a combination of Jewish, Christian and pagan terms.

Though his religious rites are described in monotheistic terms and he embodies nearly all the traits necessary for a worthy Western monarch, such as education and

³¹⁷ Cary, Medieval Alexander, 239.

³¹⁸ Donna Crawford, "Prophecy and Paternity in the Wars of Alexander," English Studies 73.5 (1992), 415.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 412.

³²⁰ Barron, "The Wars of Alexander: From Reality to Romance," 26.

military prowess, Alexander is not depicted as the prefiguration of a crusader in the Wars of Alexander. In this “flat, new attitude to Alexander as conqueror,” which Cary links with the absence of courtly details, there are no literary details associated with crusade, such as Roland’s sword, Durendal; and perhaps most importantly for this argument, Alexander’s main enemy, Darius, is not depicted as a Saracen.³²¹ Where Darius identified himself with the Saracen trinity in the Roman de toute chevalerie, Darius in the Wars of Alexander makes no such claims, and says that he is under the protection of his gods, not one of them: “In fang with my faire godis þat I affie maste’” (1849). Darius is clearly a polytheist, as he worships Jupiter (3235), and invokes his own particular “gracious godis & g[o]d[ess]es on erthe / Þat sauys sete & soile & sustaynes þe erthe, / Prayses ay þe Persyns passing all othire” (1872-1874). Just like Alexander, Darius has his own gods whom he venerates, and who are kind to Persia.

Though he does not claim to be a “relative of Tervagant and the brave Apollin,” there are nevertheless several scenes that are suggestive of a Saracen reading of Darius, though it is not as explicit as the Roman de toute chevalerie. We can see this when Darius’ princes call him “Sire Dari, with þi dere godis drised on þi trone / Gouvernoure of ilka gome & god all þiselfe’” (2061-2062). While Darius does not claim to be a member of the Saracen pantheon, the fact that he is described as being on a throne with his gods and is called a god is reminiscent of his declaration of divinity in the Roman de toute chevalerie. The description of a statue in Darius’ city also associates Darius with Saracens. After Alexander escapes from Susys, the statue of Xerxes within the city shatters, foretelling trouble for Darius’ reign:

Pan was an ymage within, as I am enfourmede,
Of Se[r]e[xi]es þat sumquyle þat cite had to welde,

³²¹ Cary, Medieval Alexander, 230.

Forgid all of fyne gold & fettild [in] his seete
Vndire þe souerayne sege þare sett ere þe lawis.
And sodanly þat semylacre, as [sais me] þe text,
It all topaschis into peces & to poudire dryuys. (3120-3125)

The poet calls the statue of Xerxes a “semylacre,” a term also used to describe Saracen idols in medieval literature. This episode is reminiscent of several scenes in Middle English romances which show the ineffectiveness of the Saracen gods; these gods are proven to have no power against Christians, and explode or are thrown down by the disappointed Saracens.³²²

Though there are details that associate Darius with Saracens, the Wars of Alexander contains no claims to Darius’ status as a member of the Saracen pantheon, nor does he have soldiers who worship Apollin and grunt like dogs, features that are typical of Saracens in medieval literature and equate Darius with Saracens in the Roman de toute chevalerie. In fact, Darius speaks in monotheistic terms about Alexander: “Þe grace of þe grete god, I ges, will him help, / Of prise þe hiȝe prouy[de]nce vnto þis prince leues” (2632-2633). Darius’ mother, Rodogoras, makes another monotheist move when she says of Alexander that “godis prouidence apert ay prestly him helpis” (2958). As he is dying, Darius speaks of a god who made man, who knows all things before they happen, and who throws down the mighty and lifts up the meek (3384-3408). The monotheist language used by Darius and his mother shows not only that Alexander is subject to God’s providence, but also that the Persians should not be equated with Saracens: they share Jewish and Christian religious traits, despite their polytheism and worship of idols.

³²² Especially pertinent is the scene in the Sowdone of Babylone where Laban topples his Saracen idols because they have been ineffective in securing victory against the Christian forces (2761-2766). See text in Lupack, ed. Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances.

Darius should not be seen as a Saracen, nor does his kingdom contain the marvelous riches and lecherous behaviour typical of Saracen lands. While the Alexander of the Roman de toute chevalerie can be seen to absorb typical Saracen traits such as opulence and lechery after he conquers Persia, Alexander in the Wars of Alexander presents a different picture. Here, he marries Darius' daughter, Rosan, making him even more an Oriental king than in the Roman de toute chevalerie, where he is asked by Darius to do this, but we receive no indication that the request is honoured. While in a certain way he "becomes part of the Orient he now rules," to use Akbari's phrase, Alexander does not show the same sort of desire or lechery that we see in the Roman de toute chevalerie.³²³ Though he is married to Rosan, he has not yet consummated the marriage, as his experience in India indicates. There, Alexander is allowed to come into the presence of the prophetic Trees of the Sun and Moon because he is "wemles for woman[es] touchinge" (5075): even though he has married Rosan, he is a virgin, a fact that works against seeing Alexander as lecherous. The source of the Wars of Alexander, the I³ recension of the Historia de preliis, includes the same detail.³²⁴ It is curious to note that although Alexander is also a virgin in the Zacher Epitome of Julius Valerius, the main source for the Roman de toute chevalerie, Alexander is not called a virgin in the twelfth-century romance. This detail may point to the changes in the standards of chivalry between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries: where courtly conduct was an important part of chivalry to a twelfth-century audience, by the fourteenth century, depictions of chivalry had shifted to emphasize efforts on the battlefield, rather than adventures in the bedroom.

³²³ Akbari, "Alexander in the Orient," 113.

³²⁴ "Tunc ille [senex] respondit: 'Si mundi estis a commixtione femine, licet vos intrare ipsum locum, qui sedes est dei.' Alexander respondit: 'Mundi sumus.'" Die Historia de preliis Alexandri Magni Rezension I³, ed. Karl Steffens, 156.

The episode where Alexander visits Queen Candace provides more evidence of this shift: unlike the Alexander of the Roman de toute chevalerie, the Alexander of the Wars of Alexander does not have a courtly dalliance with Queen Candace. Here, Alexander does not have an affair with Candace at all, but rather is threatened by her. Cary notes the absence of Alexander's affair with Candace in late-medieval Alexander texts, and points out that "Alexander is stripped of feats and frolics and jousts and love-affairs; he is again the warrior and the man of action."³²⁵ After Candace tells Alexander that she sees through his disguise and knows his true identity, he is so upset that he says he would kill her if he had a weapon (5451-5452). From this episode we can see Alexander's lack of Saracen traits: he is not lustful or desiring, unlike in the Roman de toute chevalerie, and not only does not have an affair, but does not even sleep with his own wife.

Though both Alexander and Darius are polytheists, neither exhibits the kind of Saracen characteristics that are shown in the Roman de toute chevalerie: Darius does not claim to be related to the Saracen pantheon, and Alexander does not take on Saracen attributes like lechery. Because of Alexander's polytheism, the lack of crusade details and the absence of Darius' Saracen identity, it is difficult to see Alexander as a proto-crusader. This lack of crusade feeling in the work may be attributed to the milieu of the poem: unlike the Roman de toute chevalerie, it was not written during the crusades, but later, when the potential for Christian victories over Saracens was weak. In Cary's view, "Alexander has again become a heathen in the Alexander-books, and . . . the sentiment of the Crusading period towards the heathen has worn away with other

³²⁵ Cary, Medieval Alexander, 246.

courtly conventions.”³²⁶ Rather than seeing Alexander as a proto-Christian proto-crusader fighting a proto-Saracen enemy, we have a pagan polytheist battling a pagan polytheist. Perhaps the late medieval English author chose not to invest too much hope in Alexander: having him conquer a Saracen nation is unrealistic in this period, and it is easier to see him as a worthy, but flawed conqueror fighting against enemies who appear similar.

While the absence of the crusader-Saracen conflict constitutes a large difference between the Wars of Alexander and the Roman de toute chevalerie, the two texts nevertheless share aspects of Alexander’s characterization. For instance, racial identity is a factor in Alexander’s ambiguity in the Wars of Alexander, just as it is in the Roman de toute chevalerie. On his accession, Alexander addresses his assembled troops and subjects as Macedonians, Thracians, Thessalonians and Greeks: “maistir[lingi]s of Messedone, sa miȝty men & noble, / ȝe Traces & of Tessaloyne & ȝe þe trewe Grekis” (1109-1110). He then generalizes, saying “we of Grece sall haue þe gree” (1118), making it seem that “Greek” encompasses all of these identities. The poet refers to both Macedonians and Greeks when Alexander is on campaign: for instance, Alexander’s forces are called “Messedones” (1376) when they are foraging at Gadirs, or Gaza, then this same groups is called “þe Messedone[s] & . . . þe many Grekis” (1402). The prophecy in the Book of Daniel read to Alexander by the bishop of the Jews in Jerusalem identifies “How þe gomes out of Grece suld with þaire grete miȝtis / þe pupill out of Persye purely distroy” (1781-1782). The demands of alliterative verse should also be taken into consideration, however: sometimes “Messedones” simply fits better than “Grekis” into the poet’s rather rigid scheme.

³²⁶ Cary, Medieval Alexander, 239.

Alexander's nationality in the Wars of Alexander is similar to that in the Roman de toute chevalerie, where Alexander identifies himself with his homeland of Macedon, but is more often called "Greek" when he is on his expeditions. After Philip is killed, he is called the "king of Macedon"; Alexander immediately afterwards calls himself the "king of Greece," as if to expand his identity and represent the larger Greece on his conquests. Alexander calls himself heir of King Philip, "'fendere of Grece'" (1965), and swears that "'I kepe neuire king to be callid ne cache me þat name/Till all þe barbarine blude abowe to þe Grekis'" (2542-2543). Macedon is clearly Alexander's homeland, as he reasserts to his men his desire for conquest: "'For I make avow at Messedone we sall na mare see/Till all þe barbres vs bow'" (2730-2731). Alexander brings the Greek cities of Athens and Lacedemonia under his control, just like he does cities of foreign lands, yet he still calls himself "Greek." His larger identity, that of "Greek," seems to encompass his Macedonian nationality as well as other Greek kingdoms, and the broad description of Alexander's culture in the Wars of Alexander is Greek.

The description of Alexander's nationality helps to give a sense of his character as he builds his empire, though, unlike the Roman de toute chevalerie, we do not see his empire fall to make way for the next empire in succession. Because the Wars of Alexander is missing the account of Alexander's death, there is not as strong a sense of the inexorability of *translatio imperii* as is found in the Roman de toute chevalerie: we do not see Alexander distributing his many kingdoms to the generals who will eventually destroy each other and his empire, making way for the movement of *imperium*. Though we cannot see Alexander's empire, made up of multiple nations that were held together by the force of Alexander's army and personality, crumble under the weight of multiple rulers, there is nevertheless a hint of the ending. The poem breaks off as the poet is

describing a monumental throne that Alexander has built after he conquers Babylon: “this throne bears witness to glory and to the past; it gleams with gold and is engraved with a long list of names of the places that Alexander has conquered.”³²⁷ From this list of names “Of all þe prouynces & þe places þat he was prince ouire” (5776), some spelled in Latin and some in Greek, we can see what Alexander will lose upon his death; the throne and these cities “can only bear witness to the past.”³²⁸ *Imperium* has moved on, and the cities are to be taken up by the next empire that rises: in Otto of Freising’s schema, Rome. Not only are the names of the cities engraved, but so are the names in “Grekin lettiris/ And titild in þe tried names of his twelfe princes” (5765-5766). Each of the princes’ names is engraved on one of the twelve statues that holds up the throne, each of which is painted to look like one of the princes. These are his generals who will fight amongst themselves after Alexander’s death and bring about the dissolution of his empire.

Alexander’s opulent throne in the Wars of Alexander, with its suggestion of dissolution of empire, contrasts with the description of his golden tomb at the end of the Roman de toute chevalerie. Where the throne, with its depiction of Alexander’s warring generals, can be seen as a symbol of disintegration, Alexander’s tomb can symbolize successful *translatio imperii* to Rome. The tomb, rather than being anchored in one location, is instead carried westward by Alexander’s men from Babylon to the Egyptian city of Alexandria. As Akbari has noted, the movement of the tomb from Babylon, a former Persian city, symbolizes both the transmission of *imperium* from Persia to Macedon, and its movement farther west, to Rome.³²⁹ Alexandria had been a

³²⁷ Crawford, “Prophecy and Paternity in the Wars of Alexander,” 415.

³²⁸ Ibid., 416.

³²⁹ Akbari, “Alexander in the Orient,” esp. 114-115, 121.

foreign land and was absorbed into the Macedonian empire, and was soon to be a Roman province after Alexander's death. Where Alexander's throne can be a hint of the coming destruction of Alexander's empire, we can see in his lavish portable tomb the transmission of rulership from East to West before the remnants of his empire are swept away by internal strife.

Because the poet was writing for an English audience whose sense of world geography and history was scant, Barron argues, "the alliterative poet could hardly be expected to make much of an imperial concept so different in scale and structure from the familiar feudal state; or in an age when the Islamic threat still persists, to approve a fusion of Eastern and Western cultures."³³⁰ Perhaps when the Wars of Alexander was written, Alexander's empire might not be expected to last because of the shadow of current events: the Ottoman Turks threatened Europe, and the chronicles of Ralph of Coggeshall and Ranulph Higden attest to the failure of the crusades, which they attribute to Christian sins. Christine Chism argues that to the audience of the Wars of Alexander, the English provincial gentry, a pressing issue was "the emergent Ottoman empire whose armies besieged the remnants of Byzantine Christianity, harried the borders of eastern Europe, and in 1396 thoroughly trounced at Nicopolis an ill-organized but tremendous crusade of knights from all over Europe."³³¹ As Chism has noted, "[a]fter two centuries of crusading failure, the Christian conquest of the non-Christian world finally becomes a chimera for idealists rather than a widely endorsed military possibility."³³²

³³⁰ Barron, "The Wars of Alexander: From Reality to Romance," 31.

³³¹ Chism, Alliterative Revivals, 121.

³³² *Ibid.*, 116.

The reader of the Roman de toute chevalerie, written during one of the high points of the crusades, could see Alexander as an eschatological figure: his empire is a prefiguration of a Christian empire, and Alexander himself is the prefiguration of a crusader. Alexander's empire, in the Anglo-Norman work, is the source of hope: it is both a placeholder, a step towards the fulfillment of empire in the Christian Roman Empire, and the model for the crusaders who are doing God's work. After Alexander's death in the Wars of Alexander, an empire consisting of so many and so different nations could not be held together; East and West could not coexist for long, which is perhaps why Darius is not portrayed as a Saracen, as Alexander, in conquering Persia, would be conquering and then assimilating a Saracen land. The Wars of Alexander, though it is missing the dissolution of empire that occurs after Alexander's death, seems to lack the triumph of *translatio imperii* implied in the Roman de toute chevalerie: the crusades have failed, Christian empire is under threat, and Alexander is no longer seen as a proto-Christian hero who provides a model for both Augustus and the crusaders.

Chapter 3

The Greek in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde

The next text I will examine to interrogate the place of Greeks in medieval literature, Geoffrey Chaucer's poem Troilus and Criseyde, was written at the same time as the Wars of Alexander, and though the subject matter of Troilus and Criseyde is the Trojan War, it nevertheless shares similarities with Alexander texts. Chaucer mentions Alexander in several of his works, including the "Monk's Tale" and the House of Fame, and may have known Alexander texts such as Kyng Alisaundre, a Middle English translation of the Roman de toute chevalerie, as this work appears in the Auchinleck manuscript, a compilation of texts which some scholars have proposed that Chaucer read.³³³ The reference to Alexander in the House of Fame compares the poet's flight with the eagle to Alexander's famous flight with the griffins (915). The editors of the Riverside Chaucer identify the Wars of Alexander as a point of comparison, and a possible source for this episode.³³⁴ The Monk in his Tale names Alexander in his list of mighty men felled by Fortune, the loss of whose "gentillesse" is lamented (2631-2670).

The common ground between Alexander and Trojan material is a combination of themes, including *engin*, heroism and deviance. The concept of *translatio imperii* holds these texts about different types of Greeks together: Alexander's empire is broken apart and *imperium* moves westward, while in the Troy story, *imperium* moves from Troy to Rome as a result of the Greeks winning the Trojan War. Another theme that links

³³³ Laura Hibbard Loomis proposed that Geoffrey Chaucer read the Auchinleck MS and that it became the inspiration for his Sir Thopas, "Chaucer and the Breton Lays of the Auchinleck MS," Studies in Philology 38.1 (1941): 14-33. See Derek Pearsall's comments on this persistent idea in The Auchinleck Manuscript: National Library of Scotland Advocates' MS. 19.2.1, introd. Derek Pearsall and I. C. Cunningham (London: Scolar Press, 1977).

³³⁴ The Riverside Chaucer, Exp. Notes, p. 984. This episode appears in the Wars of Alexander, but not in Kyng Alisaunder.

Alexander and Troy is mutability, which Chaucer models on a Boethian framework, as I will discuss below. Alexander in the “Monk’s Tale” is an exemplar of a prince who rises to fame and power only to fall, a portrayal comparable to that of Troilus in Troilus and Criseyde. Troilus, who is subject to Fortune, just as Alexander is, is in a more favourable position: though his fortunes sink and he dies in fruitless battle, his people, the Trojans, will go on to found the Roman people who will become Christians and rule over a Christian empire. Alexander’s nation, on the other hand, will be superseded by Rome and provide a model for empire that will eventually be Christian. Though Troilus and Criseyde may at first seem an unusual text in which to examine the place of the Greeks in medieval literature, the thematic links between Alexander and Troy texts and Chaucer’s own knowledge of Alexander prove it to be fruitful.

Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde (1380-1388) is the first version of the Troy story in Middle English. Chaucer drew upon several sources, most immediately Il Filostrato of Giovanni Boccaccio, written *ca.* 1336. Boccaccio excerpts from Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s Roman de Troie the tale of the love affair between the Trojan prince Troilus and Briseida, daughter of the Trojan traitor Calchas, Briseida’s seduction by the Greek Diomedes and her betrayal of Troilus. Chaucer uses Boccaccio’s version of Benoît’s original love story, and takes details of the war from the Roman de Troie, Guido delle Colonne’s Historia destructionis Troiae (1287), a Latin account of the Trojan War based on Benoît’s romance, and Joseph of Exeter’s Ylias Daretis Phrygii, a poetic redaction of Dares’ De excidio Troiae Historia (*ca.* 1185). This chapter will provide a study of the character of Diomedes in Troilus and Criseyde, Il Filostrato and the Roman de Troie, who is the connecting link and primary figure of “the Greek” in these texts.

While Troilus and Criseyde is set during the Trojan War, the conflict does not at first glance seem to be integral to the plot or characters of the work: unlike Benoît, Chaucer does not describe the battles or combatants in any detail. The Trojan War is more than a mere setting, however: Chaucer's description of the enemy, the Greeks, reveals his received, stereotypical ideas about Greeks.³³⁵ His description of Greeks is also linked to his treatment of other national and religious groups in his other works. Greek alterity for Chaucer rests on inherited ideas and biases, and borrowings from the depictions of Jews and Saracens. Though they are not present in Troilus and Criseyde, Jews and Saracens in Chaucer's other works can shed light on how Chaucer constructed "the Greek." In particular, "The Prioress's Tale" and "The Monk's Tale" are important for their Jewish characters, and "The Man of Law's Tale" illuminates Chaucer's ideas about Saracens. Diomedes, the lone and exemplary Greek in Troilus and Criseyde, has traits typical to Jews and Saracens, and also plays a part parallel to that of Sinon in the Aeneid. The character of Sinon, in Virgil, Chaucer and Dante, represents a commonly held literary stereotype about what Greeks are like: lying, treacherous, and unscrupulous. Like Virgil, it appears that Chaucer considered all Greeks to be the same; Virgil argues that one can learn of all Greeks by examining the actions of just one, Sinon. Based on the example of Virgil's Sinon, all Greeks are liars and traitors.

Greek alterity can be understood not only by an investigation of its connections to Jewish and Saracen alterity and its reliance on received stereotypes, but also through

³³⁵ There are various theories on the effect of the Trojan setting; I concur with that of John P. McCall, who argues that "Chaucer adapted the tragedy of Troy as a suitable background for the tragedy of Troilus, and he made the characters, careers and fortunes of the two parallel and even analogous." "The Trojan Scene in Chaucer's *Troilus*," *ELH* 29.3 (1962), 263. For other views on Troy in Troilus and Criseyde, see Malcolm Andrew, "The Fall of Troy in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and Troilus and Criseyde," The European Tragedy of Troilus, ed. Piero Boitani (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 75-93; G. L. Kittredge, Chaucer and His Poetry (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1946); R. D. Mayo, "The Trojan Background of the Troilus," English Literary History 9 (1942): 245-256; and H. R. Patch, "Troilus on Determinism," Speculum 6.2 (1931): 225-243.

an examination of *translatio imperii* and the hermeneutics of supersession. As I will argue, the Greeks move *imperium* from Thebes to Troy, and like the Jews, are superseded by those to whom they are related, the Trojans. The place of the Greeks in Troilus and Criseyde depends on the relation of the story of Thebes to the story of Troy, and of Troy to Rome. The siege of Thebes by Greek heroes and the story of the warring brothers Etioles and Polynices, sons of Oedipus, as described by Statius in his Thebaid (80-92) and the anonymous Old French romance, Le Roman de Thèbes (ca. 1155), make several appearances in Troilus and Criseyde and overshadow the action of the poem in many ways. The Orosian paradigm of the movement of *imperium* from one nation to another in succession helps to explain why the Greeks are the heroes of Thebes, and then the villains of Troy: they are set against a degenerate enemy in the Thebans, and are opposed to a virtuous, heroic enemy in the Trojans. The Greeks at Thebes, whose relatives fight at Troy, move *imperium*, the right to rule, from Thebes to Troy, where it is taken up by the (losing) Trojans and moved to Italy by Aeneas. The right to temporal rule has passed from the Thebans, to the Greeks, to the Trojans, who give rise to the Roman people.

The hermeneutics of supersession help to understand the ending of the poem, where Troilus is killed in battle and looks down at his body from the eighth sphere. The Pauline idea that Judaism is fulfilled and replaced by Christianity can be usefully applied to Diomedes, the Greek who woos Criseyde³³⁶ away from Troilus, and the one Greek figure in Troilus and Criseyde. Diomedes, as the representative of the Greeks at Troy, is superseded by Troilus, representative of the Trojans. When Troilus ascends to the eighth sphere after his death in battle, we can see that he recognizes the vanity of

³³⁶ Named Briseida in the Roman de Troie and Criseida in Il Filostrato.

the world and despises it. Though Diomedes wins Criseyde from Troilus and the Greeks destroy Troy, Troilus has nevertheless superseded the Greeks: although he lives in pre-Christian times, by recognizing the vanity of the world and the perfection of the spheres, he can be seen, typologically, as the prefiguration of a Christian. The Greeks, however, despite their martial victory, do not have the same chance of gaining this kind of knowledge. Like the Christians who supersede the Jews, the Trojans are related to the Greeks, but move beyond them. At the end of the Trojan War, though it is not shown in the poem, Troilus' nation, the Trojans, will venture to Rome, where their descendants will convert to Christianity and found a Christian empire. In the glimpse of Troilus' afterlife given by Chaucer, there are hints of the ethnic and religious foundations of Europe, and the redundancy of the Greek nation and religion. Where the Trojans go on to found what will be a Christian empire, abandoning their pagan past, the Greeks largely fade from history after the siege of Troy. They have performed the task of moving *imperium* from Thebes to Troy to Rome, via the Trojans, but the Greeks' pagan religion is made redundant by the Christianity that the Trojans' descendants will espouse. The Greek nation has been the catalyst of change, but is no longer necessary.

The depiction of Diomedes changes through the various versions of the Troilus story: as I have shown above, Diomedes is cruel and treacherous in the Roman de Troie, though he does seem to have strong emotions and suffers because of his longing for Briseida. Boccaccio's Diomedes, though he seems more courtly and cautious than the others, is most similar to Benoît's. The Diomedes of Troilus and Criseyde is less noble and more treacherous than his two predecessors: he does not burn with love for Criseyde, but rather puts on the guise of a lover in order to pursue her. Diomedes

shows his deceit not in helping to conquer Troy, as he does in the Roman de Troie, but in seducing Criseyde with false words, gestures and even threats. Chaucer's Diomedes can be examined profitably in comparison to other versions of the story, as a stereotypical Greek familiar to Chaucer's audience, and in relation to Chaucer's depiction of Jews and Saracens. Understanding the context and genesis of Diomedes' identity as a Greek can help us to comprehend more fully the enactment of *translatio imperii* and the transitory quality of all success, individual or collective, in Troilus and Criseyde.

Diomedes through time: Benoît, Boccaccio, Chaucer

As discussed above, the character of Diomedes in Benoît de Sainte-Maure's Roman de Troie incorporates many typical Greek traits: he is noble, valorous, deceitful and cruel. His seduction of Briseida, interspersed between battles, does not have the same ominous undertones in Benoît's work as in Troilus and Criseyde.³³⁷ In fact, the scenes of Diomedes' courtship of Briseida can come as a welcome pause from the sometimes drawn-out battles. Diomedes promises his love to Briseida as soon as he meets her, while escorting her from the walls of Troy to the Greek camp. After he falls so quickly in love, Diomedes languishes, but it seems that he might not be entirely sincere. Diomedes is one of Benoît's more rounded Greek characters. Many of his Greeks are treacherous, while others are noble; still others, like Diomedes, are noble, deceitful and courtly lovers.

³³⁷ Gretchen Mieszkowski has written on some of the differences between the Troilus and Criseyde story in the Roman de Troie and Troilus and Criseyde in "R. K. Gordon and the Troilus and Criseyde Story," The Chaucer Review 15.2 (1980): 127-137.

It seems that Diomedes is a courtly lover in Benoît's story, since he is portrayed as perishing and suffering martyrdom ("martire," 15076) for love; he is unable to express his love to Briseida and he is "espris de fine amor" [inflamed by noble love (15020)].³³⁸ Diomedes suffers fevers and chills, is unable to sleep or eat, changes moods frequently, sighs and his face changes colour: it seems that Diomedes is truly in love with Briseida and suffers because of it. Briseida appears to prolong his agony by ignoring and mocking him, while fully aware that he desires her. Diomedes is so smitten with Briseida that he forgets to tell her the things that would profit his case the most ["En ses paroles dit molt meins/Que il ne li sereit mestiers/E dont sereit tenuz plus chers" (15066-15072)].

Benoît's Diomedes is in love with Briseida and makes use of his inborn Greek traits to win her: using his *engin*, he eventually flatters her and does noble deeds enough for her to become fond of him. The reader can expect this of Diomedes, since in the description of the Greek heroes at the beginning of the Roman de Troie, Benoît writes that Diomedes is deceitful in his looks: "La chiere aveit mout felenesse:/Cist fist mainte false pramesse" [His face showed great treachery, he made many false promises (5213-5214)]. With these characteristics, as well as his *engin*, in mind, Diomedes's speeches to Briseida should perhaps be questioned:

Bele, fait sei Diomédés,
Onques d'amer ne m'entremis,
N'amie n'oi ne fui amis.
Or sent qu'Amors vers vos me tire. (13556-13559)

[Diomedes says "Beautiful one, I have never loved before, I've never had a lover nor been a lover. Now I feel that Love draws me to you."]

³³⁸ See Emmanuèle Baumgartner, "Benoît de Sainte-Maure et l'art de la mosaïque," in Ensi firent li ancessor. Mélanges de philologie médiévale offerts à Marc-René Jung, ed. Luciano Rossi, Christine Jacob-Hugon and Ursula Bähler (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1996), 303-304.

If Diomedes had never had a lover, he would presumably not have the practice and skills needed to pursue Briseida. Prone to hyperbole, his language is appealing and he makes many promises to Briseida which we should perhaps doubt that he keeps, especially considering Benoît's description of Diomedes's "many false promises":

Tiel cuer prenez e tiel corage
Que mei prengiez a chevalier.
Leial ami e dreiturier
Vos serai mes d'or en avant
A toz les jorz de mon vivant. (13586-13590)

[Take it into your heart and thoughts that you take me to be your knight. I will be your loyal lover and protector henceforth for all the days of my life.]

Diomedes seems sincere, but based on Benoît's earlier description of him the reader should expect him to use every means at his disposal to woo Briseida. Though he endures the torments of lovesickness, Diomedes uses flattering, false speech in his pursuit of Briseida.

The most striking evidence of Diomedes's "Greekness," though, comes when Briseida recognizes what has been happening to her. In her compassionate reaction to Diomedes's battle injury Briseida realizes that she now cares for Diomedes and as a consequence has betrayed Troilus, the lover she has left behind in Troy. Briseida laments that she feels pity and love for Diomedes, and admits to the power of his promises to her:

Qui leiaument se vueut garder,
Ne deit ja parole escouter:
Par parole sunt *engignié*
Le saive e li plus veizié. (20251-20254, emphasis mine)

[Whoever wishes to loyally guard herself should never listen to speeches; the wise and the oldest are tricked by speeches.]

Diomedes has used his *engin*, his trickery, in a typically Greek way: he has used flattering speech to manipulate Briseida to his will. Though she has been playfully

ignoring him, she is nevertheless eventually tricked by Diomedes's kind words. It is telling that Briseida, after she succumbs to Diomedes's subtle speech, disappears from the story; after the fall of Troy and numerous adventures, Diomedes returns to his kingdom of Argos and his wife.³³⁹ Though Benoît claims that it was Briseida's feminine fickleness that drove her to abandon her noble Trojan lover, it seems likely that she has been seduced and abandoned by a treacherous Diomedes.

Chaucer takes the content and structure of Troilus and Criseyde from Giovanni Boccaccio's Il Filostrato.³⁴⁰ Boccaccio bases his poem on Benoît's depiction of the love between Troilus and Briseida, and Briseida's betrayal of Troilus for Diomedes. To a lesser extent, Boccaccio also uses Guido delle Colonne's Latin version of Benoît's work, the Historia destructionis Troiae.³⁴¹ Boccaccio excerpts the Troilus story from Benoît's larger context of the Trojan War and expands it; he borrows from both Benoît and Guido, but does not follow their accounts faithfully. While Benoît, then Guido, periodically interrupts the hostilities between Trojans and Greeks with details of Troilus and Briseida's affair, Boccaccio combines the episodes into one narrative. Boccaccio, like Chaucer after him, removes nearly all details about the Trojan War, which is "mentioned only briefly and distantly at the beginning and end of the poem, and so this seminal historical conflict achieves little narrative believability."³⁴² This may be the case for Il Filostrato, but as discussed below, the Trojan scene, though not as prominent as in the Roman de Troie, is an important factor in Chaucer's work.

³³⁹ Baumgartner, "Benoît de Sainte-Maure et l'art de la mosaïque," 307n20.

³⁴⁰ For discussion of Chaucer's use of Boccaccio's Filostrato, see Charles A. Owen, Jr., "Troilus and Criseyde: The Question of Chaucer's Revisions," Studies in the Age of Chaucer 9 (1987): 155-172.

³⁴¹ C. David Benson explores Chaucer's use of Guido delle Colonne in his article, "'O Nyce World:' What Chaucer Really Found in Guido delle Colonne's History of Troy," Chaucer Review 13.4 (1979): 308-315.

³⁴² C. David Benson, Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 19.

Boccaccio's Diomedes is less rash in his courtship of Criseida than is Benoît's or Chaucer's character. Diomedes immediately, and secretly, falls in love with Criseida upon seeing her. He waits four days to begin his courtship, when there is an honourable cause for him to visit her:

Ella non era il quarto giorno stata
dopo d'amara dipartenza, quando
cagione onesta a lei venir trovata
da Diomede fu, che sospirando
la trovò sola. (VI.9)³⁴³

[She had not been there for four days since parting from her lover, when Diomedes found an honest cause to come to her, and found her alone, sighing.]³⁴⁴

Diomedes, though madly in love, is concerned not only for Criseida's state of being, but also for appearances: he does not want to seem hasty to her and, presumably, to the other Greeks.

Despite the fact that Diomedes is depicted here, and in the other works, as noble, he thinks that he will not be a good enough lover to woo her away from her first love ("Troppo esser converria sovrano artista/ chi ne volesse il primo cacciar via/ per entrarvi egli," VI.10). Though he is a cautious, and courtly, lover suffering the pains of love ("l'aspre offese/ ch'Amore gli faceva per lei sentire," VI.11), his characterization nevertheless shares similarities with the other depictions of Diomedes: he begins to speak to Criseida of the war, of the differences between Greeks and Trojans, to lull her into intimacy. Criseida's thoughts are of Troilus and she does not perceive Diomedes's cunning ("astuzia," VI.13) in his small talk. Boccaccio and his audience may have had certain expectations of Greeks, as indicated in Boccaccio's description of Diomedes: as

³⁴³ All references in my text to Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* refer to the facing-page edition in Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde: A New Edition of 'The Book of Troilus'*, ed. B. A. Windeatt (London and New York: Longman, 1984).

³⁴⁴ Translation from Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Filostrato*, Italian text edited by Vincenzo Pernicone, trans. and intro. Robert apRoberts and Anna Bruni Seldis (New York and London: Garland, 1986).

well as being tall, young, and strong, he is as graceful of speech as any other Greek ("parlante quant'altro Greco mai," VI.33). Troiolo, when he interprets his dream of Criseida and the boar, reaffirms this stereotype: he knows that the boar represents Diomedes, who has seduced Criseida through his speech ("Questo l'avrà 'l core / col parlar tratto," VII.27). Though he does it more gently, Diomedes remains a manipulator in Il Filostrato through cunning speech, an aspect of Greek *engin* seen in Benoît's work.³⁴⁵

The main characters of Troilus and Criseyde have had critical attention for many years: both Troilus and Criseyde have warranted numerous articles and books, while Pandarus has had less notice, and Diomedes much less still. The work done on Chaucer's Diomedes has focused mainly on comparisons between Diomedes and Troilus, and Diomedes and Pandarus.³⁴⁶ David Collins, for instance, has written on the changes in Diomedes and Criseyde from Benoît's Roman de Troie to Dryden's Troilus and Cressida and considers Diomedes important because he helps to define the changes of Criseyde's character throughout the various versions of the Troilus story.³⁴⁷ While these studies are helpful, none have addressed Diomedes as a Greek, a fact that is essential to his portrayal. I shall argue that Diomedes acts as he does, is deceitful, cunning and manipulative, because he is the only Greek in Troilus and Criseyde and embodies all of

³⁴⁵ My interpretation runs counter to that of C. David Benson, who sees Boccaccio's Diomedes in a much more positive light: "Both [Diomedes and Troiolo] are honourable sons of kings who are smitten with Criseida's beauty and act courteously in pursuit of a sexual relationship. . . . Diomedes never tricks or manipulates his beloved, but, like his predecessor [Troiolo], he is an attractive, well-mannered prince who truly cares for her." Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, 21.

³⁴⁶ A notable exception is Alexandra Hennessey Olsen's "In Defense of Diomedes: 'Moral Gower' and Troilus and Criseyde," In Geardagum: Essays on Old and Middle English Language and Literature 8 (1987): 1-12. Olsen's concern is whether Diomedes was a true lover to Criseyde after his seduction of her; Olsen believes he was, based on evidence from John Gower's Confessio Amantis, Vox Clamantis, Balades and Mirour. I believe her charge that critics express "sentimental vilification of Diomedes that Chaucer never intended" (9) is somewhat inaccurate, based on the negative changes Chaucer made to Benoît's and Boccaccio's Diomedes.

³⁴⁷ David Collins, "The Story of Diomedes and Criseyde: Changing Relationships in an Evolving Legend," Publications of the Arkansas Philological Association 7.2 (1981): 9-30.

the stereotypical Greek traits, a position comparable to that of Sinon in the Aeneid, a symmetry I will treat below.

Chaucer's Diomedes is not as noble as other depictions of Diomedes: he is neither motivated by love nor thrown into suffering by passionate love, but rather "He is the only significant character in the poem whose intentions are unambiguous, while in pursuing them with Criseyde he is consistently disingenuous."³⁴⁸ Chaucer's is the most manipulative, treacherous, deceitful Diomedes: as Anthony E. Farnham notes, "much of Chaucer's expansion also emphasizes and strengthens the elements of deceit and manipulation in his story."³⁴⁹ According to Meech, the "trend of Chaucer's procedure with Diomedes is obviously to establish that he is devoid of all attributes of the courtly lover except that of soldiership."³⁵⁰ However, as I discuss below, Diomedes's prowess in battle is not evident in Troilus and Criseyde, leaving him with few positive features. Diomedes is "an adventurer, a cynical opportunist," motivated "above all by the desire to gain, to win, to conquer."³⁵¹

Chaucer's Greek is calculated and cunning, attributes that are reflected in his speech. In his brief descriptions of the main characters, the narrator says of Diomedes that "som men seyn he was of tonge large" (V.804).³⁵² This is not an entirely flattering comment as it suggests that Diomedes is too free of speech. Fittingly, the conceit of the eloquent Greek applies to the many other Greeks who appear in the Troy story, particularly Ulysses. Diomedes's words to Criseyde in Troilus and Criseyde have been

³⁴⁸ Barry Windeatt, Oxford Guides to Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 295.

³⁴⁹ Anthony E. Farnham, "Chaucerian Irony and the Ending of the Troilus," The Chaucer Review 1.4 (1967), 209.

³⁵⁰ Sanford B. Meech, Design in Chaucer's Troilus (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1959), 412.

³⁵¹ Windeatt, Oxford Guides to Chaucer, 295.

³⁵² All references in my text to Chaucer's work refer to The Riverside Chaucer, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

described as a “debased and dishonest application of that love language we have already heard so sincerely applied by Troilus.”³⁵³ Richard Firth Green similarly argues that “[s]killed love-talking demands a certain ironic detachment; strong emotion and genuine feeling, as Guillaume de Lorris suggests, render a man inarticulate.”³⁵⁴ Unlike Troilus, who with substantial help from Pandarus takes three books to win Criseyde, Diomedes seduces her in a few stanzas. As Ian Bishop puts it, Diomedes’s presence “represents an attitude towards the whole narrative of love which, however unwelcome, cannot be ignored,”³⁵⁵ that of the market analyst; Diomedes “secure[s] the greater return for effort expended.”³⁵⁶ Diomedes is certainly skilled and articulate, and, to use Green’s argument, he lacks the “strong emotion and genuine feeling” that hamper Troilus’ speech to Criseyde.

Diomedes’s duplicity is evident in the clever way he combines words with gestures. As Green states, “feigned love-sickness was a well-used weapon in the armoury of the unscrupulous seducer,”³⁵⁷ a weapon we can see in use by Diomedes when, after boasting to Criseyde of the Greeks being more perfect lovers than the Trojans, he blushes, his voice quavers, he looks down (V.918-931).³⁵⁸ Diomedes’s “language of gesture” in this scene, though it might indicate true emotion, is called into question by his past: as Hermann points out, “previous indications that he is a

³⁵³ Windeatt, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer*, 296.

³⁵⁴ Richard F. Green, “Troilus and the Game of Love,” *The Chaucer Review* 13.3 (1979), 214.

³⁵⁵ Ian Bishop, *Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde: A Critical Study* (Bristol: University of Bristol, 1981), 32.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁵⁷ Green, “Troilus and the Game of Love,” 205.

³⁵⁸ See Windeatt, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer*, 297.

ladykiller might also lead us to question his sincerity.”³⁵⁹ Though Diomedes assures Criseyde that he has never loved a woman before,

“Thus seyde I nevere er now to womman born,
For God myn herte as wisly glade so,
I loved never womman here-biforn
As paramours, ne nevere shal no mo,” (V.155-158)

his words roll out in such a rehearsed, clipped manner that it seems that he may have used these phrases before. Chaucer’s Diomedes, like Boccaccio’s and Benoît’s, exhibits a typically Greek facility with deceitful language; unlike the others, Chaucer’s Diomedes does not feel any sympathy or love for Criseyde, making his use of love language even more manipulative.

The change in Diomedes’s depiction may be due in part to the narrowing of the focus of the story. As Meech points out, the reader sees fewer of Diomedes’s military and diplomatic activities in Boccaccio than in Benoît, and practically none in Chaucer:

there is less emphasis upon combat effectiveness in the portrait of the supplanter adapted from that source [Boccaccio] than in Chaucer’s parallel new one of the first lover. Giving the second the dishonorable advantage of effrontery in love, he does not allow him superiority in warfare, the ultimate test of manliness.³⁶⁰

In the three different works in which the affair appears, the action centres progressively less on the Trojan War and instead focuses more and more on the main characters, Troilus, Briseida/Criseida/Criseyde, Pandarus, Diomedes. Though he makes use of the Trojan scene, Chaucer has taken the centre of the story from the battlefield to the bedroom.³⁶¹ By taking the focus further away from battle and the valiant and

³⁵⁹ John P. Hermann, “Gesture and Seduction in *Troilus and Criseyde*,” in *Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde: “Subit to alle Poesye”: Essays in Criticism*, ed. R. A. Shoaf (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992), 157.

³⁶⁰ Meech, *Design in Chaucer’s Troilus*, 411.

³⁶¹ Although what is happening in the “big world outside the inner sanctum of the love affair is nothing less than the Trojan War. . . ‘all Asia in flames’ in the phrase of Jerome,” John V. Fleming argues that “the casual reader might be forgiven for thinking that the city of Troy and the Greek bivouac alike lack

treacherous deeds done in war, and moving it to love affairs, Chaucer provides less room in the story for Greeks and their actions. Consequently, it is not surprising that Diomedes, whose role is made smaller because of the focus of the narrative, as the lone Greek nevertheless embodies nearly all the characteristics a medieval audience expects a Greek to have.³⁶² Due to the intimate focus of the Trojan scene in the *Troilus and Criseyde* story, “Greekness” becomes treachery in love, rather than war.

Alterity in Chaucer and his Depiction of Greeks

There are several frames of reference through which we can understand the character of Diomedes. In terms of “variable characterization,” as outlined above, Greeks can sometimes be characterized in terms of the religious alterity of Jews, and sometimes in terms of the national alterity of Saracens. In *Troilus and Criseyde* and other of Chaucer’s works, Greeks, such as Diomedes and Sinon, possess treachery like that stereotypically associated with the Jews. Chaucer’s depictions of Jews in the “Prioress’s Tale,” the “Monk’s Tale” and the “Parson’s Tale” provide a framework for looking at his ambiguous “Greek”: the “Prioress’s Tale” highlights the Jews’ innate deceit and penchant for violence; the “Monk’s Tale” contains a positive treatment of virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews; and the “Parson’s Tale” celebrates Jewish patriarchs and

significant population beyond the lovers and their agent or that anything of much consequence ever happens outside the bedroom.” “Deiphobus Betrayed: Virgilian Decorum, Chaucerian Feminism,” *The Chaucer Review* 21.2 (1986), 189.

³⁶² Though Diomedes is the only Greek character to have any description, we can see hints of Greek treachery elsewhere in *Troilus and Criseyde*. Chaucer does not explain the ending of the Troy story, but the reader is supposed to know that Troy falls because of Greek treachery. We can get an even clearer sense of what Greeks are like when Achilles, greatest of the Greek heroes, slays Hector, greatest of the Trojan heroes in a dishonourable and treacherous way: Achilles strikes Hector when he is unaware of Achilles’ approach. It is a far nobler thing to kill a “worthi knyght” (V. 1561) in face-to-face combat than to stab him when he is unaware. If the best of the Greeks does this, it may be an indication that the rest of the unnamed Greeks would do the same thing.

condemns the treacherous post-Incarnation Jews who killed Christ.³⁶³ Chaucer's Greeks, treacherous yet sometimes valorous, can be understood in light of his multifaceted view of Jews. Both groups should be recognized as being prior to and facilitators of Christianity, but they are also redundant and dangerous.

In Chaucer's works, Greeks often possess the cruelty associated with Saracens, a characteristic which stems not from the religion of the Saracens, but is rather a "national" characteristic, an inborn trait inherent to Saracens and springing from their *natio*, their birth or lineage. Chaucer uses some of the same means to depict Greeks as he does to portray the Saracen Sultanness in the "Man of Law's Tale."³⁶⁴ In this Tale, the Sultanness is treacherous and remarkably cruel, but unwittingly helps to spread Christianity and is defeated by Christians in the end. Chaucer's Diomedes is also cruel and treacherous, and his actions cause the ascent of Troilus to the eighth sphere after his death, an event that makes Troilus seem like a proto-Christian. Typical Jews and Saracens in Chaucer's works become linked to the typical "Greek." Greeks have the combined characteristics of two groups usually inimical to Christians, the enemy within and the enemy without.

Suzanne Yeager's work on the Siege of Jerusalem is particularly helpful for an exploration of Jewish and Saracen alterity, and lays the foundation for fourteenth-

³⁶³ The many studies of Chaucer's Jews are useful for an examination of Chaucer's view of the Other, and consequently how Chaucer constructed his "Greek." See Florence Ridley, The Prioress and the Critics (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965); Albert B. Friedman, "The Prioress's Tale and Chaucer's Anti-Semitism," Chaucer Review 9.2 (1974): 118-129; John C. Hirsh, "Reopening the Prioress's Tale," Chaucer Review 10.1 (1975): 30-45; John Archer, "The Structure of Anti-Semitism in the Prioress's Tale," The Chaucer Review 19.1 (1984): 46-54; Louise O. Fradenburg, "Criticism, Anti-Semitism, and the Prioress's Tale," Exemplaria 1.1 (1989): 69-115; Emmy Stark Zitter, "Anti-Semitism in Chaucer's Prioress's Tale," Chaucer Review 25.4 (1991): 276-284; Delany, "Chaucer's Prioress, the Jews, and the Muslims."

³⁶⁴ Chaucer's use of the Saracen Other has been examined in numerous studies such as Susan Schibanoff, "Worlds Apart: Orientalism, Antifeminism, and Heresy in Chaucer's Man of Law's Tale," in Chaucer's Cultural Geography, ed. Kathryn L. Lynch (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 248-280, rpt. from Exemplaria 8.1 (1996): 59-96; and Sheila Delany, The Naked Text: Chaucer's Legend of Good Women (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), esp. pp. 164-186.

century views of Greek alterity that I explore in Troilus and Criseyde. In her discussion of the disparate depictions of Romans and Jews, she writes that “the roles of the Jews and the Romans were not stable and could. . . take on morally interchangeable forms, with either group acting alternatively as antagonists or representatives of Christianity.”³⁶⁵ In the case of the fourteenth-century Siege of Jerusalem, Romans and Jews were interpreted variably, Romans typologically as early Christians and the Jews as the Church and Christian soul, depending on the exegetical context of the work.³⁶⁶ In the case of the variable characterization of Greeks, their positive Jewish, proto-Christian characteristics, combined with negative Jewish and Saracen traits, have more to do with the role of the Greeks as the catalyst of Christian empire. Greeks have a role to play in bringing about the Christian Roman empire, and it is in seeing them as the precursors of Christendom that they have positive, pre-Incarnation Jewish traits. Greeks can be seen to have negative, post-Incarnation Jewish and Saracen characteristics because of their redundancy: after they have performed their role as catalyst, they are no longer needed, and are in fact to be shunned as empty of meaning and superseded.

In this way, the Greeks share similarities with the Saracens as described by Yeager. By capturing Jerusalem, the Saracens are “precursors of Antichrist”: they are “portrayed as pawns involved in a plan against Christendom” in the thought of Joachim of Fiore.³⁶⁷ The power of the Saracens is related to the sinfulness of Christians: according to the fourteenth-century chronicler Ranulph Higden,

the loss of Jerusalem was planned by God himself; the Muslim occupation of Jerusalem was in fact a type of punishment or purification ritual for the Christians. . . . Thus, by enduring the Muslim conquest, western

³⁶⁵ Suzanne Yeager, “England’s Quest for Jerusalem: Fourteenth-Century Literature of Crusade and Pilgrimage.” PhD diss, University of Toronto, 2004, 163.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 185.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 178.

Christians pay a kind of penance and thus progress toward their own heavenly salvation.³⁶⁸

The depiction of Greeks, and Saracens, has less to do with these groups themselves, and more with the roles they play in Christian thought; like the Saracens, the Greeks are fulfilling their role in God's plan for Christendom, and have themselves little agency.

With this in mind, we turn to an investigation of the characteristics Chaucer gives his Greek, Diomedes. Just as in Benoît's work, Chaucer's Diomedes possesses the stereotypical post-Incarnation Jewish trait of treachery. It was a common medieval Christian belief that the treachery of Judas was shared with all other post-Incarnation Jews. As Sylvia Tomasch notes in her discussion of the monastic chronicles such as the Annals of Burton, blameworthy Jews were "thought to be demonic descendants of Judas."³⁶⁹ Adalbert Dessau explains the medieval conception of Jewish treachery with relation to feudal rights and obligations:

Ainsi Satan, par sa trahison envers Dieu, est le chef suprême de tous les traîtres dont il a compris les actes dans son crime, groupant dans les rangs de ses vassaux d'une part tous ceux qui ne sont pas chrétiens et d'autre part les traîtres vis-à-vis de la vassalité, c'est-à-dire aussi bien les Juifs, en tant que meurtriers de Jésus-Christ. . .³⁷⁰

Because Judas betrayed Christ, his lord, to the Romans, he was guilty of treachery and murder; this act was inherently a denial of the divinity of Christ, and because medieval Jews necessarily denied the divinity of Christ, they were viewed by Christians as murderers of Christ and traitors.

Diomedes's treachery recalls that of the "Judaic" Ganelon in the Chanson de Roland who betrays his fellow Christians, Roland, Oliver and Charlemagne, to the

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 183.

³⁶⁹ Sylvia Tomasch, "Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew," The Postcolonial Middle Ages, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 245.

³⁷⁰ Dessau, "L'idée de la trahison," 24.

Saracens. Diomedes's treachery operates in love, rather than on the battlefield: by his deceitful words, he gains Criseyde's affection, but treacherously betrays the loyalty he should owe her as a lover. Diomedes's only goal is to woo Criseyde by flattery and lies; this deceit is obvious from the moment we encounter Diomedes as he escorts Criseyde from the walls of Troy to the Greek camp. When he sees Criseyde, he decides to make her his by any means necessary: "'Al my labour shal nat ben on ydel/If that I may, for somewhat shal I seye,/For at the werste it may yet shorteoure weye'" (V.94-96).

Diomedes's decision happens not because he falls hopelessly in love with her, but because she is beautiful and he enjoys the challenge of wooing a woman who is clearly in mourning for the lover she is leaving, Troilus.

Diomedes cares about Criseyde's distress at having to leave Troy and her nervousness about being among the enemy only insofar as it impedes his progress with her: he "axed whi she stood/In swich disese" (V.108-109), but he does this as a person who "koude his good," who knows what is to his own advantage (V.106). He is looking out for his own interests, as he explains to us as he sees Criseyde leaving Troy: "I have herd seyde ek tymes twyes twelve,/He is a fool that wol foryete hymselfe'" (V.97-98). As soon as he meets her, Diomedes begins to ply Criseyde with false concern and flattery: he tries to convince her that the Greeks are as true and kind as the Trojans, that he has never loved a woman as he loves her, and that he will be her knight and friend. There is no mention of Diomedes's love for Criseyde, but only his inward argument about the best methods he could use to win her, and eloquent verbal declarations of

love based on calculation rather than real feeling. Donald W. Rowe perhaps puts it best when he writes: "Diomedes intends deception; his rhetoric is only words."³⁷¹

Diomedes's treachery can be seen early on in his seduction when he tells Criseyde that he still has to learn to "compleyne aright" (V.161), to speak of love and appeal to her. According to Laila Gross, "This is something one does not learn—Troilus never had to learn it—and it again shows Diomedes's calculated, superficial love."³⁷² It is very important that Criseyde not realize what he is doing, as he states at the beginning of Book Five: "I shal fynde a meene / That she naught wite as yet shal what I mene" (V.104-105). Small talk is Diomedes's weapon of choice in pursuing Criseyde: each time he speaks to her, he begins with "speche / Of this and that" (V. 107-108), which he moves gradually in the direction of love, lulling Criseyde into thinking that he is simply interested in her opinions of the Greeks and the state of the siege. Richard Firth Green calls the "address to Criseyde with which he thinks to 'shorte oure weye' (V.96) . . . a masterpiece of controlled and polished love-talking."³⁷³ In his "unscrupulous glibness," Diomedes moves in the space of some fifty lines "from formal politeness. . . through the ambiguities of urbane social intercourse, to a thinly veiled offer of service."³⁷⁴ Diomedes shows himself to be a practiced manipulator, skilled in deceit and pursuing his own ends.

The narrator gives the reader further cause to doubt Diomedes's sincerity, and wonder about his deceit. The second time Diomedes speaks to Criseyde, he pretends to have some business with her father, Calkas: he "feyned hym with Calkas han to

³⁷¹ Donald W. Rowe, *O Love, O Charite! Contraries Harmonized in Chaucer's Troilus* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1976), 133.

³⁷² Laila Gross, "The Two Wooings of Criseyde," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 74 (1973), 121.

³⁷³ Green, "Troilus and the Game of Love," 210.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 210.

doone;/But what he mente, I shal yow tellen soone" (V.846-847). Unlike Boccaccio's Diomede, who waits four days until he has an honest cause to speak with Criseyde,³⁷⁵ Chaucer's Diomede is abrupt and scheming. As described above, Diomede even uses his gestures deceitfully, which is particularly apparent in a scene immediately after Diomede tells Criseyde that he would rather serve her than be king of twelve Greeces:

And with that word he gan to waxen red,
And in his speche a litel wight he quok,
And caste asyde a litel wight his hed,
And stynte a while, and afterward he wok,
And sobreliche on hire he threw his lok,
And seyde, "I am, al be it yow no joie,
As gentil man as any wight in Troie." (V.925-931)

This seems contrived to convince Criseyde of Diomede's feelings for her and his sensitivity. The rhetorical trope "and...and...and" makes this scene feel mechanical, as if Diomede has a precise formula for seduction that he follows slavishly; his gestures and words are combined in a precise, calculated performance. It cannot be true that Diomede never loved a woman before he loved Criseyde, as the narrator describes him as one "that koude more than the crede/In swich a craft" (V.89-90); he feigns the shyness of a new lover and pretends to be so moved by emotion that he does not have control over his actions, when in fact, he has such complete control that he apparently blushes on command.

Diomede's deceit in Troilus is outwardly different from, but essentially similar to Diomede's treachery in the Roman de Troie: in the latter, he helps to breach the walls of Troy by deceit; in the former, he breaks down Criseyde's defenses by false statements. This parallelism shows that Criseyde is a metonym for Troy itself, though Troilus is frequently referred to as "little Troy" and his death is taken for a representation of the

³⁷⁵ "Ella non era il quarto giorno stata/dopo d'amara dipartenza, quando/cagione onesta a lei venir trovata/da Diomede fu, che sospirando/la trovò sola" (Il Filostrato VI. 9).

fall of the city.³⁷⁶ Criseyde, however, can also be seen as a microcosm of Troy: her fall, her seduction by Diomedes, can be equated with Troy's fall. Criseyde is broken down by Diomedes's performative eloquence just as Troy is conquered by the false promises of Diomedes and the other Greeks. As John V. Fleming has noted, Criseyde can also be seen in a useful analogue with the Palladium, the statue of Pallas that keeps Troy safe. In the Roman de Troie, Diomedes steals the Palladium, allowing the Greeks to conquer the city. Similarly, in Troilus and Criseyde, he steals Criseyde from Troilus, "little Troy": "The loss of Criseyde heralds Troilus' destruction, just as the loss of the Palladium will herald Troy's. Diomedes, who carries off the one, will carry off the other."³⁷⁷ Though he is present in only one book of Troilus, a story that is already limited in scope, it is quickly apparent that Diomedes is the epitome of a Greek: he uses stereotypical Jewish treachery, he lies, acts solely for his own benefit, uses any means he can to advance himself, and is deceitful before all things.

The manner in which Chaucer portrays Diomedes as "Greek" is similar to his depiction of Jews. Louise Fradenburg has aptly summarized the common Western medieval view of Jews as "those infidels most deeply embedded in Christian society."³⁷⁸ Jews provide the foundation on which Christianity is built, but continue to practice their redundant, superseded religion and actually live within the Christian cities of Europe; as Albert B. Friedman has noted, they are "the only resisters of Christianity who lived among Christians."³⁷⁹ Greeks and Jews share the same kind of temporal position with reference to Christianity: just as Jews provide a foundation and model for

³⁷⁶ John V. Fleming notes that Troilus is "a man whose very name reminds us that he is the microcosmic analogue of Great Troy." Classical Imitation and Interpretation in Chaucer's Troilus (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 47.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 127.

³⁷⁸ Fradenburg, "Criticism, Anti-Semitism and the Prioress's Tale," 87.

³⁷⁹ Friedman, "The Prioress's Tale and Chaucer's Anti-Semitism," 127.

Christianity, Greeks are prior to Christianity and Christian empire in linguistic, philosophical and political spheres. In linguistic terms, Greeks are prior to Christians in that the New Testament was written in Greek; Greeks provide an important contribution to medieval Christian culture and scholarship with the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato; and Greeks provide a political model for Christian empire in the *regnum* of Alexander, whose empire was, according to Orosius and other world historians, a keeper of legitimate empire on the way to the Roman empire. But medieval Jews are not simply enemies of Christians, as we can see in Chaucer's contradictory depictions of Jews in his Canterbury Tales. As Sylvia Tomasch asserts, "Chaucer's allusions, ranging from the faintly positive to the explicitly negative, present Jews as proto-Christian prophets, wandering exiles, blasphemers and torturers, and anti-Christian murderers—all familiar depictions of his time."³⁸⁰ In Chaucer's works, Jews, like Greeks, are ambiguous: they can be *in bono* when seen as virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews who have no knowledge of Christ, and *in malo* as treacherous deniers and killers of Christ.

In Chaucer's "Prioress's Tale," set in a city in Asia, the Jews who inhabit the city's jewry are linked with Satan and practice what the Prioress calls "foule usure and lucre of vileynye/Hateful to Crist and to his compaignye" (491-492).³⁸¹ As the Prioress

³⁸⁰ Tomasch, "Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew," 243.

³⁸¹ Other important works on the antisemitism of the "Prioress's Tale" include Lee Patterson, "'The Living Witnesses of Our Redemption': Martyrdom and Imitation in Chaucer's Prioress's Tale," Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies 31.3 (2001): 507-560; Robert Worth Frank Jr., "Miracles of the Virgin, Medieval Anti-Semitism, and the 'Prioress's Tale,'" in The Wisdom of Poetry: Essays in Early English Literature in Honor of Morton W. Bloomfield, ed. Larry D. Benson and Siegfried Wenzel (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1982), 177-188, 290-297; Denise L. Despres, "Cultic Anti-Judaism and Chaucer's 'Litel Clergeon,'" Modern Philology 91.4 (1994): 413-427; William Chester Jordan, "Marian Devotion and the Talmud Trial of 1240," in Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter, ed. Bernard Lewis and Friedrich Niewöhner (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 61-76; Anna Sapir Abulafia, "Twelfth-Century Humanism and the Jews," in Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews, ed. Ora Limor and Guy G. Strousma (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 161-175; Philip S. Alexander, "Madame Eglentyne, Geoffrey Chaucer, and the Problem of Medieval Anti-Semitism," Bulletin of the

tells the company of pilgrims, when a little schoolboy, the “clergeon,” walks through the jewry singing his *Alma redemptoris*, a hymn to the Virgin Mary, Satan enters the hearts of the Jews and compels them to kill him. The Jews hire a murderer who slits the boy’s throat and throws him down a privy. The boy’s worried mother asks the Jews if they have seen the boy, but they deny having seen him. After the boy’s body is found by his mother, led to the privy by his miraculous singing of the *Alma redemptoris*, all of the Jews who knew of the murder are quickly condemned, tortured and executed “with torment and with shameful death echon” (628). This is a just punishment, according to the proctor responsible for judgment, who states that “Yvele shal have that yvele wol deserve” (632). When asked by the abbot, the body of the boy says that Mary told him to sing, and that she put a “greyn” on his tongue (662). When the abbot removes the grain, the boy finally dies and is called a “martir” to the Jews (680): to the proctor, and the Prioress, the Jews who killed an innocent boy who praises Christ’s mother are just like those who killed Christ. These are clearly meant to be post-Incarnation Jews who deny the divinity of Christ and work actively against those who praise Christ and his mother, Mary.

Though they do not share their religion in common, the Jews in the “Prioress’s Tale” have something in common with Diomedes: they are treacherous and deceitful. The Jews, like Diomedes, plot and scheme: the Jews to kill and hide the boy, Diomedes to seduce Criseyde. The Prioress states that “the Jues han conspired / This innocent out of this world to chace” (565-566), a plan that is suggestively similar to Diomedes’s plot to catch Criseyde:

This Diomedes, of whom yow telle I gan,

John Rylands Library 74 (1992): 109–120; Robert Adams, “Chaucer’s ‘Newe Rachel’ and the Theological Roots of Medieval Anti-Semitism,” Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 77.1 (1995): 9–18.

Goth now withinne hymself ay arguyng,
With al the sleghte and al that evere he kan,
How he may best, with shortest taryinge,
Into his net Criseydes herte brynge.
To this entent he koude nevere fyne;
To fisshen hire he leyde out hook and lyne. (V.771-777)

Not only are Diomedes and the Jews single-minded in their intentions, but they employ violence: the Jews hire a murderer to cut the boy's throat, while Diomedes uses language of violence and hunting. The Jews hide their crime by throwing the boy's body in the privy and lying to the mother about the boy's whereabouts, while Diomedes hides his "crime" of loveless seduction under the veil of careful speech, small talk, flattery and threats. While these parallels are not altogether obvious, when the examples are read together, they link Diomedes as a "Greek" to the *in malo* Jews in Chaucer's other works, and make the nature of Chaucer's Greek more understandable.

The connections between the Jews of the "Prioress's Tale" and the character of Diomedes in Troilus and Criseyde become clearer when seen through the lens of the hermeneutics of supersession. Both of the parties seem to be agents of their own supersession: Louise Fradenburg argues of the Jews in the "Prioress's Tale" that the Jews "are brought into the picture as persecutors so that they can serve not as the victims of sadistic desire but as indispensable agents in the saint's progress to heaven."³⁸² The Jews in the "Prioress's Tale," in killing the small boy, both show how inherently evil Jews are, and make it possible for the boy to become a martyr and a saint; they inadvertently attest to the truth of Christianity. When we look at Troilus and Criseyde on the larger scale, the Greeks, by sacking Troy, make it possible for the Trojans to found the Roman people, who will become Christian. On the smaller scale, Diomedes, by seducing Criseyde, makes it possible for Troilus to find the peace of the

³⁸² Fradenburg, "Criticism, Anti-Semitism and the Prioress's Tale," 84.

eighth sphere, a circumstance that makes him seem like the prefiguration of a Christian, an aspect of supersession I will treat below. Using the hermeneutics of supersession as a framework, the post-Incarnation Jews in the “Prioress’s Tale” can be seen as facilitators of Christianity: they are necessary, and also redundant. Although Troilus and Criseyde is not clear about Diomedes’s role in history, by using Chaucer’s depictions of Jews as a model, we can understand him in a similar way: Diomedes inhabits a transitional space and is the agent by which he himself, and his nation, are superseded.

While the “Prioress’s Tale” features scheming, treacherous Jews, the “Monk’s Tale” shows pre-Incarnation Jews who are righteous. The Monk states that King Antiochus of Syria planned to torture and kill the Jews in Jerusalem, and that he was punished by God for this and died horribly. This part of the “Monk’s Tale” is intended as a lesson on the dangers of pride, since “Goddes peple hadde he [Antiochus] moost in hate;/ Hem wolde he sleen in torment and in payne,/ Wenynge that God ne myghte his pride abate” (2588-2590). Unlike the treacherous, post-Incarnation Jews of the “Prioress’s Tale” who deny the divinity of Christ and murder the boy who praises Mary, the Jews of the “Monk’s Tale” are still “Goddes peple”: they are righteous believers in God who have not yet had the chance to witness the incarnation of Christ, and are still the holders of a covenant with God, succeeded by God’s covenant with Christians. Since these Jews are, in the eyes of medieval Christians, potential Christians themselves, it is right and just that God would protect them. On Antiochus’ way to Jerusalem to wreak vengeance on the Jews for defeating two of his generals, God smites him with an acute, incurable illness:

God for his manace hym so soore smoot
With invisible wounde, ay incurable,
That in his guttes so carf it so and boot
That his peynes weren importable. (2599-2602)

In increasingly gory terms, the Monk describes how Antiochus is punished for his pride in trying to kill the Jews, who are here the Chosen People of God, the heroes of the Book of Maccabees, and who should not have been set upon by the Syrian king. These righteous Jews can be seen typologically as Christians, which makes their defense by God understandable to a medieval Christian audience.

This positive depiction of Jews is suggestive of the depiction of Diomedes in that he is not wholly corrupt: he is noble and clever, despite his other faults. As shown above, Diomedes is physically impressive, persuasive in his speech and courageous. Perhaps Chaucer's differing depictions of Jews are due to the fact that the former are post-Incarnation and have refused to acknowledge the divinity of Christ, while the latter are virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews who have necessarily not had the chance to know or worship Christ; as they lived before Christ, they were still the Chosen People and deserved the protection of God. Just as Diomedes, as representative Greek, is not entirely deceitful, the Jews in Chaucer are not entirely without merit: those who live before the Incarnation can be admirable, while those who live after Christ are suspect and treacherous. While the variable characterization of Jews has to do with this temporality, the positive and negative traits co-exist at once in Diomedes, who is treacherous but noble.

Jews in Chaucer's "Parson's Tale" are similarly differentiated: in this Tale the Parson describes both good, Old Testament prophets and evil, contemporary, post-Incarnation Jews. The Parson uses respected and revered pre-Incarnation Jews such as David, Solomon, Job and Ezekiel as authorities for the sermon that serves as his "Tale" to the company of pilgrims. At the same time, he compares people who swear oaths against Christ to the "cursed Jewes" who dismembered Christ (590), and says that

flatterers are like Judas “that bitraysen a man to sellen hym to his enemy; that is to the devel” (615). Here, as in the “Prioress’s Tale,” there is a close link between post-Incarnation Jews and Satan; Jews who refuse to accept the divinity of Christ are allies of the Devil and must be treated as the enemies of Christianity. As Tomasch explains, “The tale makes clear that medieval Jews are abominations to the sacred, embodied community their ancestors are used to authenticate”: the Parson dissociates Jews from their own religion, from their own ancestors, and makes medieval Jews into Others.³⁸³

As we have seen from the “Prioress’s,” “Monk’s” and “Parson’s Tales,” “the Jew’ is never entirely or solely negative; in certain instances the sign can be understood, at least superficially, as philo-Semitic.”³⁸⁴ Tomasch argues that the presentation of the positive and negative characteristics of Jews presents not two different peoples, but one: “every Jew is both evil and good, murderous and charitable,” an indivisible state that Zygmunt Bauman calls “allosemitism.”³⁸⁵ The Jews, like the Greeks, are in a “state of inassimilable difference,” a double role as both founders of what would become Christianity, and “threatening interlopers, enemies of Christ whose exile is deserved.”³⁸⁶ Chaucer’s Jews, being at once both the ancient Chosen People and untrustworthy contemporary Jews, are righteous and treacherous, *in bono* and *in malo*; this is a similar situation to that of Chaucer’s hybrid Greek, who is deceitful, noble and the agent of a Trojan’s ascent to proto-Christianity.

Chaucer was concerned not only with Jews, but also with Saracens. Muslims were on the collective mind of English people while Chaucer was writing Troilus and Criseyde, as Christopher Tyerman asserts:

³⁸³ Tomasch, “Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew,” 249.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 249-250.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 250.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 251.

Crusading in fourteenth-century England was as habitual as it had been in the thirteenth. . . . Motives were traditional too: strategic—the Holy Land remained in Moslem hands, and by the 1360s the threat of the Ottomans to eastern Europe was apparent to all; religious—the “saving of the soul” and the “aid to the faithful” against the Turks. . . and secular.³⁸⁷

As an added reminder of the continuing conflicts with the Turks, rulers displaced by the Ottoman incursions into Europe were at the English court during the 1380s. The military and political events going on around Chaucer, and in which he took part, must have influenced his writings; as Kathryn L. Lynch argues, the “fourteenth-century poet surely reflects the prejudices and protocolonialist attitudes of the Age of the Crusades.”³⁸⁸ Not only were actual Muslims on the minds of Europeans, but there was also a popular literary construction of the exotic, Eastern Other, of which Saracens were a part, and which Chaucer used. As Kathryn Lynch states, “many features of Orientalism were clearly present in Chaucer’s day as well: the Orient, so called even by Chaucer (e.g., Monk’s Tale, line 2314), as monstrous, mysterious, exotic, sensual, sexually deviant.”³⁸⁹ The exotic Orient can be found in many medieval texts, the luxuries of Persia in the Roman de toute chevalerie and the sensuousness of Troy in the Roman de Troie among them. To construct his Saracen characters, Chaucer draws on the typical depictions of Saracens found in works of literature since the Chanson de Roland, and Saracen identity forms another of the frames of reference in which we can understand Diomedes.

As well as the treachery identified with the Jewish religion, Diomedes incorporates aspects of the Saracen national trait of cruelty, but does so differently than

³⁸⁷ Christopher Tyerman, England and the Crusades: 1095-1588 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 259.

³⁸⁸ Kathryn L. Lynch, “Storytelling, Exchange, and Constancy: East and West in Chaucer’s Man of Law’s Tale,” Chaucer Review 33.4 (1999), 409.

³⁸⁹ Kathryn L. Lynch, “East Meets West in Chaucer’s Squire’s and Franklin’s Tales,” in Chaucer’s Cultural Geography, ed. Kathryn L. Lynch (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 77.

does Diomedes in the Roman de Troie. Benoît's Diomedes bloodthirstily demands that the Amazon queen Penthesilea's body be eaten by dogs and thrown in the river, but because of the constraints of Chaucer's narrative, this episode does not appear in Troilus and Criseyde. Rather, Diomedes does what he can in a plot that allows him minimal physical action: he describes to Criseyde the fate of the Trojans when the Greeks have overrun the city. Diomedes boasts about the cruelty of the Greeks, and tells Criseyde that even the god of the lower world, Manes, will be surprised at the carnage. It is clear that the Greeks will have no mercy on their enemy when Diomedes describes how everyone, and we must count among these people Troilus, Priam, the noble Hector, and all of Criseyde's family and friends, will die:

"The folk of Troie, as who seyth, alle and some
In prisoun ben, as ye youreselven se;
Nor thennes shal nat oon on-lyve come
For al the gold atwixen sonne and se.
Trusteth wel, and understondeth me,
Ther shal nat oon to mercy gon on-lyve,
Al were he lord of worldes twiës fyve!" (V.883-889)

This speech is meant to convince Criseyde to give up her hope of returning to Troy; Diomedes wishes to emphasize that there is no point in waiting to return to her lover, since the Trojans are doomed and the Greeks will not spare even one person.

Diomedes himself says that what the Greeks will do will be cruel and shocking, and in fact, this might be the only thing about which Diomedes tells Criseyde the truth:

"Swich wreche on hem for fecchyng of Eleyne
Ther shal ben take, er that we hennes wende,
That Manes, which that goddes ben of peyne,
Shal ben agast that Grekes wol hem shende,
And men shul drede, unto the worldes ends,
From hennesforth to ravysshyn any queene,
So cruel shaloure wreche on hem be seene." (V.890-896)

Diomedes's explanation of the cause and effect of the Trojan War may be slightly excessive and perhaps even humorous at first sight. Diomedes's lesson to Criseyde, and the Greeks' lesson to history, is that because of the vengeance the Greeks wreak on Troy, no one in future will think about kidnapping a queen, a relatively petty act that warrants such great slaughter. But Diomedes is in earnest, and while it is not actual physical cruelty, as the Greeks in the Roman de Troie commit when the streets of Troy are awash with Trojan blood, what Diomedes says to Criseyde can be seen as mental cruelty.³⁹⁰ As Elizabeth Hatcher asserts, although Diomedes's conversation with Criseyde "closely follows Boccaccio, his prediction of doom for Troy has greater impact on a woman who so fears for her safety."³⁹¹ Through Diomedes's dire warnings, Criseyde realizes, and fears, the danger her friends and loved ones face within Troy; according to Hatcher, it is this fear for the fate of Troy that makes Criseyde accept Diomedes.

While violence is spoken of by Diomedes in Troilus and Criseyde, a Saracen in the Canterbury Tales actually does get to slaughter innocents. The Sowdanesse in the "Man of Law's Tale" is one of the only Saracens in Chaucer's works, and is in many ways remarkably similar to Diomedes in her use of typical Saracen treachery and violence.³⁹² These characteristics function as a religious and national marker in the "Man of Law's Tale": the Saracens are cruel and treacherous because of their religion and their nation. In Troilus and Criseyde, however, Diomedes possesses these traits because he is a Greek;

³⁹⁰ In another example of Greek cruelty that is described but not seen, Troilus swears by the cruelty of Agamemnon. Troilus expects rough treatment were he to be put in the prison of "cruel kyng Agamenoun" (II, 382): "stokked in prisoun, / In wrecchidnesse, in filthe, and in vermyne" (II.380-381). This speculation of Troilus is reminiscent of the scenes of stereotypical Saracen cruelty in prisons, where Christian prisoners are chained and tortured in harsh circumstances.

³⁹¹ Elizabeth R. Hatcher, "Chaucer and the Psychology of Fear: Troilus in Book V," ELH 40.3 (1973), 316.

³⁹² Vincent of Beauvais comments upon the cruelty of Muhammad in his Speculum Historiale, which he sees as common to Saracens, esp. 23.43. For the cruelty typical to Saracens in the *chansons de geste*, see Bancourt, Les Musulmans dans les chansons de geste.

the characteristics seem to be markers of national alterity. The Sowdanesse in the “Man of Law’s Tale” is the mother of the Sowdane of Syria, who is engaged to marry Custance, the daughter of the Christian Emperor of Rome. The Sowdane’s conversion to Christianity is a condition of the marriage, a pact that the Sowdanesse abhors; she uses treachery and violence against her own son to stop him, and the entire realm, from converting to Christianity. The Sowdanesse’s treachery is reminiscent of that of the Jews: before Custance arrives by ship for the wedding, the Sowdanesse falsely promises her son that she will convert to Christianity, and in “an act typologically parallel to Judas’ betrayal of Jesus, she ‘kiste hir sone’ (385)” before she betrays him.³⁹³ The Sowdanesse gathers together her counsellors and supporters in order to betray and kill her son and his newly Christian followers at a feast she has planned in their honour.

The Sowdanesse’s treachery can also be seen as similar to that of the Jews in the “Prioress’s Tale” because here, too, it is motivated by Satan, and both groups possess the trait of treachery because of their religion. In his litany of the vices of the Sowdanesse, “roote of iniquitee” (358) and “nest of every vice” (364), the Man of Law accuses Satan of using women, and the Sowdanesse in particular, to sabotage Christians and all of humanity:

O Sathan, envious syn thilke day
 That thou were chaced from oure heritage,
 Wel knowestow to wommen the olde way!
 Thou madest Eva brynge us in servage;
 Thou wolt fordoon this Cristen mariage.
 Thyn instrument—so weylawey the while!—
 Makestow of wommen, whan thou wolt bigile. (365-371)

It seems that the Sowdanesse is able to be swayed by the Devil not only because she is a woman, but also because she is a Saracen who believes in “Makometes lawe” (336), a

³⁹³ Schildgen, *Pagans, Tartars, Moslems, and Jews*, 61. See also Lynch, “Storytelling, Exchange, and Constancy.”

religion, like Judaism, that was believed by Christians to be antithetical to Christianity. The connection between a Saracen and Satan would have been a familiar one to a medieval audience. As Susan Schibanoff has noted, many medieval writers believed that Muhammad was linked with Satan: “For Peter the Venerable, Muhammad is simply ‘this Satan,’ one who advanced all previous heresies. . . . William of Tyre phrases the relationship in familial terms: Muhammad is the ‘first-born of Satan.’ As Satan had seduced Eve, Muhammad ‘seduced’ the Orient.”³⁹⁴ In the works of Chaucer, and in the medieval Christian world-view, the Other is Satan’s instrument and led by him to deceive and destroy Christians.

Though not based on religion or the lures of Satan, as it is in the “Man of Law’s Tale,” treachery in Troilus and Criseyde is based on Diomedes’s innate, inborn traits and a knowledge of what is beneficial to him. The knowledge of what is spiritually beneficial to her also inflects the language the Sowdanesse uses when she speaks to her subjects and argues for treason against her son’s planned conversion and marriage: Islam is beneficial to her, and she will not abandon it because to do so means that she will go to hell.³⁹⁵ Her “olde sacrifices” (325), “hooly lawes” (332) and “lawe sweete” (223) are dear to her and conversion to Christianity would mean betrayal of Islam and the physical and spiritual harm that goes with it:

“What sholde us tyden of this newe lawe
But thraldom to oure bodies and penaunce,
And afterward in helle to be drawe,
For we reneyed Mahoun oure creance?” (337-340)

Treachery seems to come naturally to the Sowdanesse, who thinks nothing of falsely becoming a Christian when she and her confidants and allies feign conversion through

³⁹⁴ Schibanoff, “Worlds Apart,” 257. Schibanoff argues that the main reason for the connection between the Sowdanesse and Satan is that the Sowdanesse is a woman.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 265.

baptism: "We shul first feyne us cristendom to take--/Coold water shal nat greve us but a lite!" (351-352). She plans a feast for the Christians who have come to Syria with Custance where she and her henchmen will kill her son, the Christians who have accompanied Custance to Syria and all the Syrians who have converted to Christianity. Like Diomedes, the Sowdanesse uses flattery to lure the Christian Romans and Custance into trusting her. The Sowdanesse rides out to greet the arriving Romans, feigning gladness and welcome: "The mooder of the Sowdan, riche and gay,/Receyveth hire with also glad a cheere/As any mooder myghte hir doghter deere" (395-397). The Sowdanesse's intentions, like Diomedes's, are obvious to the reader, but unknown to her victim: "But this scorioun, this wikked goost,/The Sowdanesse, for al hire flaterynge,/Caste under this ful mortally to styng" (404-406). Deceit comes naturally to the Sowdanesse, as it does to Diomedes, though the violence she commits is physical, while that he commits is psychological.

The Sowdanesse's treachery, the killing of her son and the converts, and the expulsion of Custance from Syria lead to another bloody clash, this time with the Romans: at the end of the *Man of Law's* story, Custance's father, the Christian emperor of Rome, comes to kill the Sowdanesse and her people in Syria. In a similar pattern, the treachery of the Greeks leads to the Trojan diaspora and the founding of the Roman people, a people that in turn subjugate Greece. Perhaps the Sowdanesse, with her treachery and violence, combined with the history of her nation, is actually patterned on a Greek mold: she is deceitful and cruel, and is eventually subdued. Perhaps, on the other hand, this is wishful thinking on the part of fourteenth-century England: that the Saracens in Syria, who have killed and rejected Christians, will in turn be defeated by crusading armies.

Classical Frameworks: Diomedes in Virgil, Juvenal, and Theban Material

The character of Diomedes in Troilus and Criseyde is limited, both because of the scope of the poem's events, and because he is the only Greek. This is a reduced role for Diomedes, who in the Roman de Troie is a brave and cruel warrior, a lover and seducer, and one of the characters who precipitated Troy's fall. There is less room for military exploits in Troilus and Criseyde, and Diomedes's treachery is reduced to his seduction of Criseyde. Despite the limited space that Chaucer has to describe his lone Greek, he manages to incorporate many clichés about Greeks and draws upon Virgil's Aeneid, a work which also features one main Greek character, Sinon.³⁹⁶ Chaucer's Diomedes becomes a caricature, unlike Benoît's Greeks, who are more rounded and not entirely unscrupulous. As the single Greek, Chaucer has Diomedes encompass all the Greek stereotypes within the limited space of the Troilus story, a story that reduces him to a lover but provides him with opportunities to show his treachery and remorselessness.

Diomedes is the only Greek given any description or dialogue by Chaucer. Diomedes tells Criseyde that he is noble, as he is the son of King Tydeus, who perished at the siege of Thebes. He seems noble, strong and war-like, though he does not get the chance to display these traits in battle, their natural setting:

This Diomedes, as bokes us declare,
Was in his nedes prest and corageous,
With sterne vois and myghty lymes square,
Hardy, testif, strong, and chivalrous,
Of dedes, like his fader Tideus.
And some men seyn he was of tonge large;

³⁹⁶ For a discussion of Chaucer's use of the Aeneid in Troilus and Criseyde, see Charles Blyth, "Virgilian Tragedy and Troilus," Chaucer Review 24.3 (1990): 211-218. Though Virgil mentions other Greeks, such as Achaemenides, the Greek sailor on the island of the Cyclops (Book 3); Greeks in the underworld (Book 6); the Greek allies of Turnus (Book 7); and Diomedes's refusal to participate in war (Book 11), Sinon is the only Greek who merits a large share of speech and action.

And heir he was to Calydoigne and Arge. (V.799-805)

Diomedes's only foray onto the battlefield in Troilus and Criseyde results in a wound given him by Troilus (V.1045-1046), though the incident actually benefits Diomedes, as Criseyde weeps over and cares for him. Diomedes is noble and presumably a fine warrior, though his actions on the battlefield are limited. He possesses nearly all of the characteristics of the Greeks in the Roman de Troie, and Chaucer's Diomedes is the representative of the stereotypical Greek as modeled in the works of Virgil and others.

Classical authors such as Juvenal helped to shape the medieval opinion of Greeks. Juvenal's works were well-known in the Middle Ages: as well as influencing *contemptus mundi* literature,³⁹⁷ they were known at least in part by Dante, who uses Juvenal's tenth Satire in his Convivio IV, 13.³⁹⁸ In the twelfth century, Juvenal was

a well known author among educated men of the celebrated "twelfth-century renaissance," both in cathedral and cloistered schools. Not only were his verses widely anthologized in *florilegia*, but his place in the academic curriculum has been established beyond question.³⁹⁹

As William Kupersmith and Robert E. Jungman have argued, Juvenal's Satires were known by Chaucer, who employs conventions of Juvenal's tenth Satire in his "Physician's Tale" and "Knight's Tale."⁴⁰⁰ Chaucer also cites Juvenal in Troilus and Criseyde (IV.197-201) and has the Wife of Bath quote Juvenal in her Tale (1193-1194) and uses the same lines of Juvenal in "Boece" (2. pr 5. 181-184).

³⁹⁷ See Ronald E. Pepin, "Juvenal, X. A Paradigm for Medieval *Contemptus mundi* Poems," Latomus 49.2 (1990): 473-478.

³⁹⁸ J. H. Sacret, "Dante's Knowledge of Juvenal: Note on the Identity of the "Savio" of Convivio IV, 13," Romanic Review 28 (1937): 307-310.

³⁹⁹ Pepin, "Juvenal," 474.

⁴⁰⁰ Robert E. Jungmann, "Chaucer's 'The Knight's Tale' 2681-82 and Juvenal's Tenth Satire," The Explicator 55.4 (1997): 190-192; and William Kupersmith, "Chaucer's Physician's Tale and the Tenth Satire of Juvenal," English Language Notes 24.2 (1986): 20-23. Kupersmith argues that Chaucer actually read Juvenal's tenth Satire, rather than relying on a *florilegium* of selected quotations.

In another of Juvenal's Satires, his Satire 3, he speaks about Greeks in Rome who flatter, are deceitful, and will do anything to prosper. This Satire was especially influential in the twelfth century, when "medieval writers imitated the themes and borrowed the sharp phrases of his . . . exposé of the perilous life at Rome."⁴⁰¹ Juvenal despises the fact that the Romans have adopted Greek dress and manners, accusing the Greeks in Rome of being flattering and deceitful. As Juvenal's protagonist of Satire 3, Umbricius, states, the Greeks are

dictumque petunt a vimine collem,
viscera magnarum domuum dominique futuri.
ingenium velox, audacia perdita, sermo
promptus et Isaeo torrentior: ede quid illum
esse putes? quemvis hominem secum attulit ad nos:
grammaticus rhetor geometres pictor aliptes
augur schoenobates medicus magus: omnia novit
Graeculus esuriens. . . .
.....
Quid quod adulandi gens prudentissima laudat
sermonem indocti, faciem deformis amici. . . .
.....
rides, maiore cachinno
concutitur; flet, si lacrimas conspexit amici,
nec dolet. . . .
.....
scire volunt secreta domus atque inde timeri. (III.71-113, emphasis mine)

[ready to worm their way into the houses of the great and become their masters. Quick of wit and of unbounded impudence, they are as ready of speech as Isaeus, and more torrential. Say, what do you think that fellow there to be? He has brought with him any character you please; grammarian, orator, geometrician; painter, trainer, or rope dancer; augur, doctor or astrologer. . . . [T]hese people are experts in flattery, and will commend the talk of an illiterate, or the beauty of a deformed. . . . If you smile, your Greek will split his sides with laughter; if he sees his friend drop a tear, he weeps, though without grieving. . . . These men want to discover the secrets of the family, and so make themselves feared.]⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Pepin, "Juvenal," 474.

⁴⁰² Juvenal. Juvenal and Persius, trans. D. D. Ramsay, rev. ed. (London: William Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 37-41.

It is telling that the *Graeculi* Juvenal describes, a pejorative term meaning “ugly little Greeks,” use their *ingenium* to manipulate others, a stereotypically Greek use of *ingenium*, their inborn talent for deceit. When used in a positive, constructive way, *ingenium* can refer to cleverly constructed buildings or machines. In Benoît’s Roman de Troie *ingenium* is translated as *engin*, a talent used by the Greeks to deceive and betray the Trojans. In Juvenal’s Satire 3 and in the Roman de Troie, when the Greeks cannot gain what they want by force, they use their *ingenium* to trick and deceive others into submitting to their will.

Besides the common use of Greek *ingenium*, there is a further link between the first-century Greeks at Rome whom Juvenal depicts and the Greeks at Troy. As Kirk Freudenburg notes, the character of Umbricius in Juvenal’s Satire 3

seethes over the scrappy life he has been forced to live in Rome. He claims to have been squeezed out onto the margins of a ‘free’ existence by a massive influx of Greek freedmen and slaves. In his grand, epic imagination, Rome, like Priam’s Troy, has been raided and plundered by an army of nefarious Greeks. He is a refugee of war, a poor man’s Aeneas, setting off to find a new home for gods and family.⁴⁰³

Juvenal’s character feels himself besieged by Greek immigrants to Rome. Unable to make a living for himself because Greek flatterers have taken the positions he had, he finds himself forced to “flee” Rome, like Aeneas fleeing Troy, in order to survive. The anti-Greek sentiments of Juvenal’s Satire 3, along with the description of Greeks using their *ingenium* to manipulate, influenced medieval thinking about Greeks. Although Chaucer did not use Juvenal’s third Satire, which contains virulently anti-Greek rhetoric, it is clear that he did use the tenth Satire. Chaucer definitely knew some Juvenal, such as his Satire 10, 2-4 that Chaucer quotes in Troilus and Criseyde IV.197-

⁴⁰³ Kirk Freudenburg, Satire of Rome: Threatening Poses from Lucilius to Juvenal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 267.

201, though, as Bruce Harbert argues, “this does not imply that he had read the whole of Juvenal.”⁴⁰⁴ Juvenal’s satires and anti-Greek sentiments were well-known in the twelfth century, and may have influenced Chaucer’s depiction of his lone Greek, Diomedes.⁴⁰⁵

Virgil, even more widely read and influential in terms of opinion on Greeks than Juvenal, writes scathingly about the Greeks of the Trojan War in his Aeneid. Virgil “adapted mythology to his particular concerns,” and his model of the Trojan War was a dynastic exercise: it saw the fleeing Trojans founding not only the Roman people, but the lineage of Caesar Augustus.⁴⁰⁶ The Aeneid portrays the Greeks as the victors at Troy, but also as the eventual losers: they conquer Troy only to have the Trojans found Rome. Historically, these Greeks were later conquered themselves by the Romans, who thought themselves descendants of those same Trojans. In Virgil’s work, Greeks represent what the fleeing Trojans, and hence Romans, are not: treacherous, cruel, unscrupulous, a people who deserved to be conquered.

Virgil’s portrayal of Greeks is concise and damning. The only Greek described in the Aeneid, Sinon, appears in Book II, the section of the poem devoted to the sack of Troy and Aeneas’ escape from the city. In a scene not present in other well-known Troy

⁴⁰⁴ Bruce Harbert, “Chaucer and the Latin Classics,” Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. Derek Brewer (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1974), 141. “There were available many collections of excerpts from the classics, called *florilegia*. It may have been in such a book that Chaucer found these lines,” 141.

⁴⁰⁵ Among other twelfth-century poets who used Satire 3, Gilbert Highet finds that Walter Map echoes it in his poem De Palpone et Assentatore. Juvenal the Satirist (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 309n4. As well, William of Conches wrote glosses on Juvenal, and Walter of Chatillon used Juvenal’s satires in his works. “The frequency of citations from and allusions to Horace, Persius and Juvenal among the satirists of the twelfth century establishes that they were curriculum authors of wide appeal. Certain phrases and whole lines from their poems recur so often as to be conventional and proverbial. . . . Furthermore, the classical satirists were subjects of numerous commentaries which presented them as eloquent reprovers of vice, as moralists addressing not only ancient Rome, but all times. Surely this is why John of Salisbury designated Horace and Juvenal as ‘ethici’ moralists.” Roland E. Pepin, Literature of Satire in the Twelfth Century: A Neglected Medieval Genre (Lewiston, Queenston: Edwin Mellen, 1988), 3-4.

⁴⁰⁶ John P. McCall, Chaucer Among the Gods: the Poetics of Classical Myth (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979), 5.

stories, including Dares, Dictys, Benoît de Sainte-Maure, Guido delle Colonne, Joseph of Exeter and Boccaccio, Sinon allows himself to be captured by the Trojans and pretends to have been mistreated by the Greeks. Because he claims that he hates the Greeks whom he says plotted treacherously against his life, Sinon gains the sympathy and then the trust of the Trojans. By pretending to have defected from the Greeks, Sinon convinces the Trojans to allow the huge wooden horse, supposedly an offering made by the Greeks to Pallas to atone for their theft of the Palladium, the statue of Pallas that protected Troy, within the city walls. Sinon tells the Trojans that if they demolish their walls and drag the horse inside the city, they will be protected by Pallas once again. Because the Greeks seem to have sailed away, the Trojans are convinced that that the siege has ended and see no harm in allowing their walls to be dismantled. When the Trojans have drawn the horse within the city and are exhausted by their celebration of the war's end, Sinon frees the Greeks hiding within the horse, who raze Troy and kill nearly all its inhabitants.

Sinon epitomizes Greek treachery, and is a more negative and one-sided model of a Greek than that found in Benoît's or Boccaccio's work. Chaucer's references to the treachery of Sinon in four of his works, the "Squire's Tale," "Nun's Priest's Tale," House of Fame, and Legend of Good Women, show that he was influenced by Virgil's attitude, and that perhaps his Diomede is fashioned not only after the Diomedes of Boccaccio and Benoît, but also after Virgil's Sinon as well.⁴⁰⁷ Virgil's influence can perhaps be seen most directly in Chaucer's House of Fame and its characterization of

⁴⁰⁷ The Legend of Good Women is one of the instances in which Chaucer "made substantial use of Vergil": though he "may have relied on an epitome for his knowledge of some of Vergil's poem," in lines 143-465 of the Legend, Chaucer summarizes the whole action of Virgil's Aeneid, proving that he had some knowledge of Book II, in which Aeneas describes how the Greeks sack Troy. Harbert, "Chaucer and the Latin Classics," 144.

the “false Sinon.” In this famous episode, the narrator-dreamer of the dream vision poem casts the blame for the fall and destruction of Troy entirely on Sinon:

First sawgh I the destruction
Of Troye thurgh the Grek Synon,
[That] with his false forswerynge,
And his chere and his lesyng,
Made the hors broght into Troye,
Thorgh which Troyens loste al her joye.
And aftir this was grave, alas,
How Ilyon assayled was
And wonne, and kyng Priam yslayn. (I.151-159)

Sinon, arguably one of the worst Greeks in medieval literature, appears to be quite similar to Diomedes: both swear falsely (one to the Trojans, one to Criseyde), both use their gestures and appearances to deceive, and lie to achieve their own ends.

The “false Sinon” appears rather unexpectedly in another of Chaucer’s works: it is apparent from the description of the fox in the “Nun’s Priest’s Tale” that Chaucer again uses the Aeneid to structure his model of the hidden traitor. The Nun’s Priest uses typical names of traitors for the fox who conceals himself and lies in wait for the rooster:

O false mordreour, lurkyng in thy den!
O newe Scariot, newe Genylon,
False dissymulour, o Greek Synon,
That brightest Troye al outrely to sorwe! (3226-3229)

These are types of traitors typical to medieval literature, all modeled on the figure of Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ to the Romans for thirty pieces of silver. Judas, who stands synecdochically for his community,⁴⁰⁸ becomes the medieval example of the treacherous Jew and provides a template for other traitors. This Jew who betrayed Christ is the model on which is patterned the Greek who betrays the trust of the Trojans, and the Christian knight, Ganelon, who betrays the noble knights Roland and

⁴⁰⁸ Archer, “The Structure of Anti-Semitism,” 50.

Oliver to the Saracens. In his Inferno, Dante puts Sinon in the bottom of the eighth circle of Hell, the second lowest circle, that of the falsifiers; near Sinon in the Inferno are Judas, who betrayed Christ, and Brutus and Cassius, who murdered Caesar. The lying, treacherous, and unscrupulous Sinon, who represents a commonly held literary stereotype about what Greeks are like, is Chaucer's paradigmatic traitor, and Sinon's actions and place in the Aeneid are very similar to Diomedes's, who betrays Criseyde by his false speech.

Just as Sinon is the lone Greek in the Aeneid, Diomedes is the lone, and representative, Greek in Troilus and Criseyde. Both characters, since there are no other Greeks in these works, must show the full range of typical Greek characteristics: nobility and courage, cruelty and treachery. Diomedes's description is slightly better than that of Sinon, in that he is noble, handsome and outwardly chivalrous. Though he is not as appealing in Troilus and Criseyde as in the Roman de Troie, Chaucer does ascribe to him some virtues. In Chaucer's catalogue of his main characters' qualities, Diomedes comes out quite well: he is courageous, physically imposing (having "myghty lymes square," V.801), chivalrous and the son of a king. In fact, in this catalogue, Diomedes's physical description is quite similar to that of Troilus, who is "Young, fressh, strong, and hardy as lyoun" (V.830). However, like the Greeks in the Roman de Troie, there is an invisible defect in Diomedes that sets him apart from the virtuous Trojan. Where Troilus is "Trewhe as stiel in ech condicioun;/ Oon of the beste entecched creature/ That is or shal whil that the world may dure" (V.831-834), Diomedes is "in his nedes prest and corageous" (V.800). Where Troilus is true, Diomedes is prompt and eager to get what he desires, and has means at his disposal to achieve his goals: like Benoît's and Boccaccio's Diomedes, and like Sinon, Chaucer's Diomedes has the Greek

ability to use persuasive speech. Chaucer notes of Diomedes that “som men seyn he was of tonge large” (V.804), which can be seen in Diomedes’s facility at deceiving Criseyde into believing he is sincere in his courtship. Although outwardly, Diomedes is virtually indistinguishable from the noble Trojan Troilus, he is, like Sinon, ultimately flawed, sinister, untrustworthy and unscrupulous.

Chaucer’s Diomedes, like Virgil’s Sinon, possesses nearly all the typical Greek traits because of the constraints of the Troilus and Criseyde story that force the action to occur outside of battle. We do not see Greeks on the battlefield, nor deceiving the Trojans with a false peace treaty: Chaucer describes very little of the fighting that occurs over the ten years of the Greek siege, and he only alludes to the ultimate perfidy of the Trojan horse. Based on the model provided by Virgil and other authors, perhaps even Juvenal, Diomedes, son of King Tydeus, would have been a typical Greek, and his actions would have been unsurprising for Chaucer’s audience. “Greek” to Chaucer and his readers had become a cliché: there was an expectation of ancient Greeks based on the work of Virgil, Troy romances, and the medieval “Homer,” the *Ilias Latina*. As Virgil, Benoît, Boccaccio and Chaucer attest, Greeks are noble, but fatally flawed; they are courageous, but treacherous. By Chaucer’s time, being “Greek” means a set of mores, habits, and inborn traits. Chaucer, having only one real Greek to work with and a limited storyline, does not give as detailed a description of Greeks as Benoît, who, describing the whole Trojan War, has more rounded Greek characters. Chaucer’s portrayal of the ancient Greek is in one way flattened and simplified because of the limitations of the story and the influence of Virgil; in another, though, Chaucer’s Greek is complicated by a comparison of the “Greek” to Jews and Saracens in Chaucer’s other works. One of the reasons that Diomedes plays a predetermined role in *Troilus and*

Criseyde, where he must function as the sole and representative Greek, is because of the shared cultural assumption in Western Europe about what Greeks in literature were like, an assumption based at least partially upon their depiction in classical literature.

As well as the works of Virgil and possibly Juvenal, Chaucer used another classical frame of reference to structure his Trojan and Greek material: the matter of Thebes. The place of Diomedes in Chaucer's poem becomes clearer through the comparative place of the siege of Thebes with relation to the siege of Troy. One of Chaucer's sources for the *Troilus and Criseyde* story, the Roman de Troie, was written within ten years of the Roman de Thèbes, an Old French redaction of the Thebaid, both of which Chaucer used as sources for Troilus and Criseyde. We can see the continuity in the characters from one work to the next, especially in the figure of Diomedes, son of one of the great Greek heroes of the Theban war. Both Benoît and Chaucer have Diomedes explain that he is the son of Tydeus, who perished in an untimely fashion at Thebes. Medieval authors viewed the two events as being only one generation apart: it was imagined that the grandfathers and fathers of those at the siege of Troy had been involved in the siege of Thebes. Troy and Thebes are close to each other in time, being only one generation removed from each other, and they also share a destiny—they are great civilizations and cities that are besieged and completely destroyed.

Chaucer uses Theban material to prophetic ends: like other medieval poets, he uses the destruction of Thebes to prophecy the destruction of Troy.⁴⁰⁹ The story of Thebes is a known model of history, and the stories of both cities are linked by characters, such as Diomedes, and events: both cities are won by siege by specifically Greek armies, and the Greeks in the Roman de Thèbes even plan a mock withdrawal

⁴⁰⁹ Battles, The Medieval Tradition of Thebes, 116.

from Thebes to draw out the Thebans, just as the Greeks do successfully at Troy. The links between Thebes and Troy are remarkable because their stories are so similar; as Fleming suggests, Troy mirrors Thebes, another world “of which it is at once the echo and the supererogator.”⁴¹⁰ The Theban war also began because of a theft: not a theft of a person, like Paris’ theft of Helen, but the theft by Etiocles of the throne and rulership of Thebes.⁴¹¹ Chaucer, like others, has the siege of Thebes happen only one generation before the siege of Troy; allies of Polynices who besieged Thebes had sons and grandsons who besieged Troy. The siege of Thebes also functions as a premonition of the destruction of Troy: the first interaction between Pandarus and Criseyde occurs in Book II, when he interrupts Criseyde listening to the story of Thebes and tells her to “Do wey youre book, rys up, and lat us daunce” (II.111). Criseyde had been listening to the story of a siege of a city very like her own, but when Pandarus interrupts, he does not let Criseyde hear the end of the story, the destruction of Thebes. The warning that could have come from the tale of Thebes is not allowed to happen. Both in the references to Thebes and in the person of Diomedes himself we can see the pressure that the story of Thebes exerts on the story of Troy; as Fleming asserts, “Chaucer calls Diomedes ‘sone of Tideus’ at important moments in the text, forcing us to bear, as the characters in the poem themselves must bear, the oppression of a tragic past that controls the present.”⁴¹²

The image of the sibling rivalry of the Theban War, of Etiocles fighting his brother Polynices for the throne of Thebes, itself characterizes the Trojan War. This internecine strife brings to mind the close relationship of the Greeks and Trojans: as

⁴¹⁰ Fleming, *Classical Imitation and Interpretation in Chaucer’s Troilus*, 47.

⁴¹¹ David Anderson, “Theban History in Chaucer’s *Troilus*,” *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 4 (1982), 118-119.

⁴¹² Fleming, *Classical Imitation and Interpretation in Chaucer’s Troilus*, 127.

Benoît makes clear in the Roman de Troie, the Greeks and Trojans are related to one another, they are cousins and are descended, if Antenor is to be believed, from the same ancestor. This overt connection between the enemies is not present in Troilus and Criseyde, but there is a kind of struggle between relatives, this time Criseyde and Diomedes. As I will discuss below, if her genealogy as obliquely presented by Chaucer is to be taken literally, she is the cousin of Diomedes through her Theban lineage: if her mother is indeed Argia, she is the sister of Diomedes's mother, Deiphyle. Diomedes pursues and deceives Criseyde, though he knows that she does not want his attentions. This is admittedly not the same kind of rivalry as Etioles and Polynices or the Greeks and the Trojans; Diomedes, though, does use the language of hunting and war to pursue Criseyde, his potential relative.⁴¹³ Where other warriors use spears and swords to vanquish their relatives, Diomedes uses his weapon of choice and the typical tool of the Greeks, words, to seduce and manipulate Criseyde.

Having noted the continuity in the characters of these works, it is important to look at the character of the "enemy" of the first conflict, the Thebans. The main characters in the siege of Thebes are the warring sons of Oedipus, Etioles and Polynices. As I discuss in Chapter 1, because of the patricidal and incestuous deeds of their famous father, who murdered his father and married his mother, the Thebans are of a tainted stock that was doomed to be destroyed. The Greeks fight on the side of Polynices, who has been denied his patrimony; although the exiled Polynices has a strong reason to wage war on Etioles, both brothers are killed in battle and the walls of Thebes are razed in the end by the duke of Athens, Theseus. The polluted royal family

⁴¹³ For an in-depth discussion of Diomedes's use of hunting and war language, see Gross, "The Two Wooings of Criseyde."

of Thebes, a “royal line with its characteristic brand of criminality,”⁴¹⁴ is gone and the city itself is destroyed. Though the Greek heroes, the Seven Against Thebes, died, they participated in the purification of Thebes: the Thebans disappear from history, and the Greeks carry on to their next conflict, the siege of Troy.

While the Greeks fought nobly in the right at Thebes, the Trojan War is the opposite in many ways. Etioles and Polynices, because of the acts of their father, Oedipus, were violent and wrathful; they had to perish in order for their cursed lineage to end. The Trojans, however, are clearly the superior force in the Trojan War: they are not only noble and handsome, but fight valiantly and for the most part fairly. According to Benoît, it is the Greeks’ fault that the war occurred: if they had not taken Priam’s sister during the first sack of Troy and refused to give her back, Paris would not have taken Helen in retaliation. Not only was the war the fault of the Greeks but they used treachery and cunning, the Trojan horse, to win it. Clearly, and for many reasons, the Greeks at Troy are the villains, quite unlike the Greeks who valiantly fought the Thebans.

Another means to explain how the Greeks are the heroes of the Theban war and the villains of the Trojan War is through *translatio imperii*, or transference of empire. This concept was most famously used by Orosius, who listed the empires that came to power one after another: first Babylon, then Macedon, Carthage and Rome. Because of the myth that many Western European nations had been founded by fleeing Trojans, *translatio imperii* came to mean a transferal of authority from Troy to Europe. The Greeks in the *romans antiques*, which include the Roman de Thèbes, Roman de Troie and the Roman d’Enéas seem to function as “carriers” of authority: Thebes is a morally

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.,115.

corrupt power, and the superior Greeks defeat the Thebans. Later, their sons sack the superior city of Troy, forcing some Trojans to flee and establish European nations. Though they are the nominal winners of the Trojan war, the Greeks fight amongst themselves, are killed, and disappear from history. The succession of kingship begins with Thebes, moves to Troy, then to Rome and other European nations as the fleeing Trojans reach Europe.

Through an examination of the character of the Thebans, the character of the Trojans and the role of the Greeks in the transferal of authority, we can see the fundamental ambivalence in the portrayal of Greeks: depending on whom they are set against, they can be depicted positively or negatively. When set against the cursed and treacherous Thebans, they are heroes; when set against the staunch and heroic Trojans, they are villains who use treachery to win. This “variable characterization” complicates the depiction of Greeks in medieval texts and leads to ambivalence and uncertainty on the part of the reader about the fundamental characteristics of Greeks. Though Chaucer was influenced by classical anti-Greek models such as Virgil’s Sinon and possibly Juvenal’s anti-Greek satires, he nevertheless gives his lone Greek a few positive characteristics: Diomedes’s traits are largely negative, but his nobility and physical stature point to an ambiguity that becomes typical for Greeks.

Acting “Greek”

Diomedes, a typical Greek who deceives and lies in order to obtain his desires, is strikingly similar to another character. Though they are on opposite sides of a war, Diomedes shares goals and methods with Criseyde’s uncle, Pandarus. This has been noted by many critics who have observed that Diomedes and Pandarus play the same

role: both court Criseyde by trickery, Diomedes for himself, Pandarus for Troilus. When he describes Pandarus' thought processes, Chaucer indicates how Pandarus shrewdly plans how to win Criseyde for Troilus:

For everi wight that hath an hous to founde
Ne renneth naught the werk for to begynne
With rakel hond, but he wol bide a stounde,
And sende his hertes line out fro withinne
Aldirfirst his purpos for to wyne.
Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte,
And caste his werk ful wisely or he wroughte. (I.1065-1071)

In this passage quoting the Poetria nova of Geoffrey of Vinsauf, we can see that Pandarus' calculations are similar to Diomedes': both characters plot how best to achieve their goals before they begin to court Criseyde. Nothing is done rashly by either character, as it would be by someone in the throes of love or desire, but rather every detail of the courtship is planned ahead of time so as to have maximum effect on Criseyde's emotions. The difference between the Greek Diomedes and Pandarus, who is acting "Greek" in his treachery and cunning, is that Pandarus is motivated by emotion, love and sympathy for Troilus' plight, while Diomedes in his calculations is disinterested and acts for his own benefit rather than to satisfy any emotional need.

Pandarus woos Criseyde for Troilus, who is inexperienced in love. As well as instructing Troilus on the proper etiquette for a lover, Pandarus fabricates stories about Troilus that make Troilus sound nobler to Criseyde and lies to Criseyde in order to bring Criseyde and Troilus together in the same place at the same time. Just as Diomedes is more interested in the challenge of wooing Criseyde than in her well-being, Pandarus, skillfully courting Criseyde on behalf of Troilus, seems to enjoy the thrill of the hunt as well. Ian Bishop has noted

the cynical moral that the man who is most likely to win a lady's 'herte' for himself will be one who has no genuine feelings of *fine amour* or

romantic love. A similar discrepancy between the act of loving and the art of winning a lady's love is implied, though in a more delicate and oblique way, in the behaviour of Pandarus.⁴¹⁵

Pandarus, in a similar manner to Diomedes, manipulates the facts and Criseyde's emotions to make sure she accepts a new lover, Troilus. Both players are skilled in the "art," but have no interest in the "act." In Pandarus' deceit and manipulation, he can be seen as "acting Greek," a performance encompassing both eloquence and "engyn," an attribute I shall discuss below.

Pandarus feigns emotions in a manner very similar to Diomedes. When Pandarus has finally revealed the secret to Criseyde that Troilus loves her, he rushes immediately to counter any objections that Criseyde may have. Pandarus tells Criseyde that should she reject Troilus, both Troilus and Pandarus will commit suicide, a threat the reader knows is empty:

"But if ye late hym deyen, I wol sterve—
Have here my trouthe, nece, I nyl nat lyen—
Al sholde I with this knyf my throte kerve."
With that the teris breste out of his yën,
And seide, "If that ye don us bothe dyen
Thus gilteles, than have ye fisshed fayre!" (II.323-328)

What Pandarus is doing, of course, is lying to Criseyde, both in his words and in his feigned emotions. Pandarus does not mean for anyone to die, but rather for the performance of his false sorrow and pain to move Criseyde to accept Troilus.

We can see Pandarus as acting "Greek" when he is set against another Trojan, Troilus. Deception and small dishonesties do not come naturally to Troilus: when he falls in love, he does not at first think of ways of manipulating Criseyde in order to win her. He is subject to the Trojan convention of erotic desire, as seen in the figure of his brother, Paris, who not only chose Venus, the goddess of love, as the most beautiful of

⁴¹⁵ Bishop, *Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde*, 36.

the three goddesses, but stole Helen from her husband because he lusted after her. When Troilus is struck by Cupid's arrow and falls in love with Criseyde, "his behavior echoes that of his brother and contributes to the same disastrous result": "the sorry triumph of sensuality over rationality."⁴¹⁶ But Troilus deceives Criseyde only at the suggestion, and demand, of Pandarus. The differences between Troilus and Pandarus can be felt from the very beginning of the work: Troilus, the sincere lover, learns the game of seduction from Pandarus, who, playing "Greek," is even willing to threaten Criseyde to obtain her love for Troilus. When set side by side with Diomedes, a real Greek, the differences between a Trojan and a Greek are even clearer: Troilus acts in the heat of passion, whether love, anger or sorrow, while Diomedes acts in cold calculation.

Barry Windeatt has noted the symmetrical 'doubling' Chaucer employs in Troilus and Criseyde, "a device of thematic structuring that links together the progress of the ascending and descending action, bracketing episodes together within books, and from book to book, suggesting parallels, comparisons, and contrasts."⁴¹⁷ Windeatt uses the examples of the wooing of Criseyde by Troilus and later by Diomedes, and the exchange of Troy for the Greeks by Calcas and then by Criseyde. To this list we could add the "doubling" of acting Greek: first by Pandarus, then by Diomedes. In Laila Gross' view, "Pandarus's and Diomedes's approaches are clearly the same, except in speed."⁴¹⁸ I argue, however, that their approaches are similar, but with crucial differences that point to the differences between Diomedes's and Pandarus' motives, skills and "Greekness." Pandarus and Diomedes differ with regard to the extent to which each is involved emotionally: Pandarus manipulates both Criseyde and Troilus,

⁴¹⁶ Fleming, Classical Imitation and Interpretation in Chaucer's Troilus, 114.

⁴¹⁷ Windeatt, Oxford Guides to Chaucer, 188.

⁴¹⁸ Gross, "The Two Wooings of Criseyde," 116.

but he is also clearly emotionally involved with both of them. We can see a homosocial bond between Pandarus and Troilus, wherein the two will do anything for each other. The presence of Pandarus' emotional bonds is perhaps due to the convention of Trojan desire, found most clearly in the figure of Paris, whose lust spurs him to steal Helen away from Menelaus and precipitate the Trojan War. Conversely, Diomedes performs his treachery alone: he is wholly uninvolved with Criseyde, logical and coldly treacherous. While he and Pandarus use some of the same methods and devices to seduce Criseyde, Diomedes deceives without any attachment; he does not care about Criseyde's emotions, and does not even feel any for her himself.

Criseyde's two courtings, one by Pandarus and one by Diomedes, follow the same pattern: Pandarus manipulates Criseyde into comfort, then curiosity, then acceptance of Troilus' affection for her, while Diomedes does the same on his own behalf. When he visits Criseyde for the first time in Book II, Pandarus uses friendly conversation, gives a description of Troilus' nobility and military prowess, then a confession that Troilus loves her and an account of Troilus' love pains and worthiness. Diomedes's steps to winning Criseyde follows much the same "schedule": this includes "putting Criseyde at ease with friendly conversation, offerings of friendship and services (as a strong warrior to a helpless lady), sudden confession of his love, elaboration of his worth and honor with emphasis on the fact that he is a king's son."⁴¹⁹ Pandarus, like the Greeks in the Roman de Troie, has "engyn" (II.565, III.274), the inborn trait that Greeks use towards deceitful ends. "Engyn" is not a term used to describe the actions of Diomedes, but he exemplifies its meanings both of "deceive" and "seduce": as Larry Bronson has argued, "Diomedes's motivations are entirely prompted by shrewd mental calculations and are

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 115.

not in the slightest way related to his heart."⁴²⁰ By these similarities and others, we can see retrospectively that Pandarus, in his seduction of Criseyde on behalf of Troilus, is being "Greek": he uses manipulation and lies to woo Criseyde, an act that is less for Criseyde's benefit than for his own, and Troilus', gratification. The real Greek, however, experiences no gratification: for Diomedes, there is simply gain.

Pandarus and Diomedes use the same convention of small talk at the beginning of their conversations with Criseyde to make her comfortable. Pandarus and Criseyde speak "with many wordes glade.../.../Of this and that" (II.148-150), while Diomedes "gan fallen forth in speche/Of this and that" (V.107-108). As well, both men provoke her curiosity by not telling all they know at once. In his first visit to her in Book II, Pandarus leads Criseyde on for stanza after stanza, telling her he has a secret, saying that he has to leave, telling her that what he has to tell her requires time, and so on, before finally telling her that Troilus loves her and that she must love him, too. When Diomedes is leading Criseyde from Troy, he uses a similar tactic: he says that since they've reached Calcas' tent, he should stop talking: "'I wolde of this yow telle al myn entente--/But this enseled til another day'" (V.150-151). Like Pandarus, though, Diomedes does go on to tell her most of his "entente." Diomedes and Pandarus have language, means and skills in common.

Among the similar tactics Diomedes and Pandarus use in their separate pursuits of Criseyde is the cultivation of friendship with a view to seduction. Pandarus assures Troilus that he has won Criseyde's friendship for him as the first step in seducing her: "Hire love of frendshipe have I to the wonne" (II.962). Diomedes also wants to be Criseyde's "frend" before declaring his affection; first he swears "To ben youre

⁴²⁰ Larry Bronson, "The 'Sodeyn Diomedes'—Chaucer's Composite Portrait," Ball State University Forum 25.2 (1984), 15.

frend"(V, 128), then considers their relationship cemented and immediately asks Criseyde to "taketh naught my frendshipe in despit" (V.135). He wants to reassure her of his "gentil," courtly feelings towards her before he eases into talk of love.

"Friendship" for these two characters is not a state unto itself, but a preliminary stage of intimacy leading to sexual union. According to Wood, "Chaucer ironically uses friendship as a euphemism for seduction."⁴²¹ Neither Pandarus nor Diomedes actually wish to be a true friend to Criseyde; in their deceit and manipulation of her beliefs and feelings, both display stereotypically Greek characteristics.

As well as tactics such as gaining "friendship," both Pandarus and Diomedes use some of the same words and phrases in reference to their strategies for winning Criseyde. For instance, Pandarus counsels Troilus to write his first letter to Criseyde; Troilus is clearly in need of assistance, so Pandarus directs him as to style and content. One of Pandarus' pieces of advice is not to "make it tough," or put on airs (II.1025): Criseyde will not respond in the intended, positive manner to the letter if Troilus is too haughty. Diomedes uses this same phrase when he sees Criseyde riding through the gates of Troy: "'Certeynlich I am aboute nought, / If that I speke of love or make it tough'" (V.100-101). Diomedes too knows that he will waste his time and have little chance of success if he acts too boldly with Criseyde. As well, Diomedes knows once he sees Criseyde that "'Al my labour shal nat ben on ydel'" (V.94): he is confident of his success if he gets the chance to get close to Criseyde. Pandarus uses the same phrase when counselling Troilus: be moderate in your actions, "'Or elles al oure labour is on ydel" (I.953-955). This phrase can help show how different Diomedes and Troilus are, and how similar Diomedes and Pandarus can be. Diomedes shows his self confidence in

⁴²¹ Chauncey Wood, *The Elements of Chaucer's Troilus* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1984), 110.

his use of the phrase, while Pandarus uses it as a warning to Troilus to temper his feelings and actions or risk failure; Pandarus, like Diomedes, knows how to proceed with the seduction, while Troilus is in need of instruction. As we have seen, unlike Troilus, Diomedes does not need Pandarus' advice and lessons: he already has the knowledge of how to woo a woman, he is confident, and knows not to be too obvious in his pursuit. Troilus has to be told to act for his own benefit, to take Criseyde out of Troy after it is announced that she must join her father in the Greek camp, to "help this self anon./Bet is that othere than thiselven wepe'" (IV.590-591). Diomedes, though, knows that he "koude his good" (V.106): he will not forget his self-interest.

Pandarus and Diomedes may even have the same motives in trying to win Criseyde: the thrill of the hunt, the pleasure of conquest. Diomedes wants the challenge of courting an already involved woman, and Pandarus seems to overly enjoy manipulating Criseyde and Troilus into becoming a couple. Criseyde's relationship with Troilus is obvious to Diomedes as soon as he sees her, but he decides to pursue her in spite of, or because of this:

"For douteles, if she have in hire thought
Hym that I gesse, he may nat ben ybrought
So soon away; but I shal fynde a meene
That she naught wite as yet shal what I mene." (V.102-105)

Diomedes says nothing here of Criseyde's beauty or other attributes, but wishes to pursue her for the sake of the pursuit. Similarly, Pandarus enjoys the experience of conquest, but vicariously; he seduces Criseyde not for himself but for Troilus, but seems to enjoy it nevertheless. After he has manufactured an opportunity for Troilus to ride triumphantly by Criseyde's open window, Pandarus feels that Criseyde is starting to give in to his wiles and "on his wey ful faste homward he spedde,/ And right for joye he felt his herte daunce" (II.1303-1304). Pandarus clearly wants to please Troilus by

seducing Criseyde for him. Pleasing Troilus pleases Pandarus, who “desirous to serve/His fulle frend” (I.1058-1059) also seems to please himself with his skills, though they are used to bring a woman to another’s bed. Here Chaucer gives us an indication of how, aside from wanting Criseyde, Troilus and Diomedes are polar opposites, and it is Pandarus and Diomedes who share characteristics.

Among the terms that Pandarus and Diomedes use in common is the language of the hunt. Terms for the chase appear numerous times throughout Troilus and Criseyde, occurring most often when Pandarus is speaking to Troilus about Criseyde, and when Diomedes is thinking about Criseyde. In one of the first instances of this type of language, Pandarus tells Troilus that he must act appropriately, and Pandarus will secure Criseyde for him: “Lo, hold the at thi triste cloos, and I/Shal wel the deer unto thi bowe dryve” (II.1534-1535). Pandarus also uses this metaphor in conversation with Criseyde. Convincing her to come to dinner at his home, Pandarus tells Criseyde that she will not escape his plan for her: “And finally he swor and gan hire seye,/By this and that, she sholde hym nought escape,/Ne lenger don hym after hire to cape” (III.556-558). Pandarus tells Criseyde that she is being “caped” or hunted, an unsettling admission. Diomedes, too, uses hunting metaphors to describe his seduction of Criseyde. We can see this from the narrator’s report of Diomedes’s thoughts, when he

Goth now withinne hymself ay arguynge
With al the sleghte and al that evere he kan,
How he may best, with shortest tarynge,
Into his net Criseydes herte brynge.
To this entente he koude nevere fyne;
To fisshen hire he leyde out hook and lyne. (V.772-777)

The combination of deceit (“sleghte”), dogged determination and hunting and fishing terminology make it clear that Diomedes, “presented as a determined hunter,” will do

whatever is necessary to win Criseyde.⁴²² Fishing metaphors, in Bishop's opinion, "imply a certain shiftiness on the part of the person to whom they are applied."⁴²³ Both Pandarus and Diomedes show this "shiftiness," though we might label it as their shared trait of treachery, commonly associated with Greeks. These are two seemingly very different characters, but their use of the same language compels a comparison between the two.

The critical attention to the similarities between Pandarus and Diomedes is neatly summarized by Laila Gross, who argues that while Pandarus enjoys the "game" of seducing Criseyde for its own sake,

Diomedes, on the other hand, concentrates fully on the outcome of the game. He is an uncomplicated character: he knows what he wants and goes after it with singular lack of deviation. An indication of his uncomplicated nature is shown by the lack of scholars' consideration of him, whereas Pandarus commands everyone's attention. Most critics are struck by the phrase "this sodeyn Diomedes" and feel that his epithet justly summarizes and unveils his character.⁴²⁴

The critical conception of Diomedes as an uncomplicated character misses an important issue. Diomedes shows the ambiguous traits typical to Greeks in other versions of the Troy story: he is noble and attractive, single-minded in his pursuit of Criseyde, deceitful, and acts always in his own interest, despite its being ignoble. Pandarus is likewise a "highly manipulative person"⁴²⁵ and a "lying, deceitful character";⁴²⁶ his treatment of Criseyde is much like his treatment of Troilus: "a little flattery, a little mockery, a little physical prodding, and a great deal of manipulation and coercion through threats, promises and lies."⁴²⁷ Pandarus can be seen, in a retrospective glance,

⁴²² Gross, "The Two Wooings of Criseyde," 118.

⁴²³ Bishop, *Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde*, 33.

⁴²⁴ Gross, "The Two Wooings of Criseyde," 120-121.

⁴²⁵ Wood, *The Elements of Chaucer's Troilus*, 143.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁴²⁷ Wood, *The Elements of Chaucer's Troilus*, 150.

to be acting “Greek.” He is successful in bringing Troilus and Criseyde together through manipulation, but he cannot keep them together when faced with the effect of Diomedes’s deceit: Criseyde’s betrayal of Troilus. Pandarus’ behaviour toward Criseyde can be seen as “an act of irresponsibility, even of treachery,” a betrayal of his duty as her uncle.⁴²⁸ This is very much like Diomedes’s actions towards Criseyde: though he promises to be her “frend” and gains a position of trust, he threatens, manipulates and deceives her.

Interestingly, after we meet Diomedes, Pandarus largely disappears from the action of the poem: his role as seducer and manipulator has been usurped. Pandarus had been successful in obtaining Criseyde for Troilus, and now Diomedes uses the same tactics, the same language and the same skills for the same ends. I have tried to show how similar Pandarus and Diomedes are, and I suggest that since Diomedes is representative of a treacherous Greek, perhaps Chaucer constructed Pandarus’ character on a Greek model, as a sort of Trojan Greek. Recalling other non-Greeks who take on Greek characteristics will help to put Pandarus’ situation into perspective. When Priam and Hecuba assume Greek treachery in order to fight the Greeks and Trojan traitors in the Roman de Troie, they eventually pay for this with their lives and the lives of their children. Pandarus’ “Greekness” does not bring about such harsh consequences: he is successful in his manipulation of Criseyde, then loses his position and his friend. Troilus, having been Criseyde’s lover through Pandarus’ machinations, does not need Pandarus as much once Criseyde is in the arms of Diomedes and resents that Pandarus should suggest loving another woman when Criseyde is gone. Pandarus, because of the love for Criseyde that he has fostered in his friend, loses him: when

⁴²⁸ Marjorie Curry Woods, “Chaucer the Rhetorician: Criseyde and her Family,” Chaucer Review 20.1 (1985), 32.

Troilus knows the truth of Criseyde's betrayal, he recklessly meets his end in battle. Pandarus is noticeably absent from the narrative after Diomedes has begun his seduction of Criseyde: the role of "Greek" has been taken over by Diomedes, the real Greek who has no time for Pandarus' games.

As well as Pandarus, Criseyde can be accused of acting "Greek": like both her uncle and Diomedes, she possesses the characteristically Greek trait of deceit. Aside from the fact that as a woman she is conventionally unstable and deceitful, this may be better understood by the fact that, based on the lineage given her by Chaucer, Criseyde may actually be half Greek and therefore have an inborn propensity towards treachery. Though Criseyde finds her love for Troilus diminishing while she is in the Greek camp, she nevertheless sends him letters promising to return to Troy, claiming that she is and will remain his lover, pledges she knows she will not keep. Within an unspecified length of time Criseyde transfers her affection to Diomedes, and when she realizes the depth of her feelings for Diomedes and that she has betrayed Troilus, Criseyde laments her unfaithfulness. Criseyde's betrayal of Troilus is a topic that has been frequently and thoroughly treated by critics; I will not delve too deeply into the discussion of her motives for abandoning Troilus, but rather focus on her "Greek" actions and language. Like Pandarus and Diomedes, as Marjorie Curry Woods states, Criseyde's "central actions" are "manipulation and betrayal."⁴²⁹

Criseyde is "Greek" in her keen awareness of what is to her own advantage. Donald W. Rowe asserts that Diomedes and Criseyde share the "similar unwillingness to forget [themselves]"⁴³⁰: Diomedes sees an opportunity to woo a beautiful woman, while Criseyde (eventually) sees that she will not be able to return to Troy, that she is virtually

⁴²⁹ Woods, "Chaucer the Rhetorician," 31

⁴³⁰ Rowe, *O Love, O Charite!*, 134.

alone in the Greek camp, and needs a protector, so cedes to Diomedes's courting. The parallel between Criseyde's words and Diomedes's shows their self-interest: mulling over whether to love Troilus or not, Criseyde says "He which that nothing undertaketh,/Nothyng n'acheveth" (II.807-808). In a parallel scene, when Diomedes decides to woo Criseyde despite her love for Troilus, he thinks that "he that naught n'asaieth, naught n'acheveth" (V.784). Both characters share the sentiment of "nothing ventured, nothing gained"; they are pragmatic, and will take advantage of the situation in which they find themselves.

Criseyde shows her typically Greek "engyn" again when in Book IV she plots to outwit her father, Calkas, who has arranged for her to be traded in a prisoner exchange to the Greek camp. Criseyde states that "I shal hym so enchaunten with my sawes" (IV.1395): she plans to beguile Calkas into allowing her to do whatever she wants, namely to return to Troy, though she is ultimately unsuccessful in manipulating her father. As Curry Woods notes, "these sayings resemble those which Pandarus, in his first scene in the poem, tried on Troilus to cheer him up. . . and they are what Criseyde herself uses in her speech to Troilus in Book IV, trying to convince him that she will return."⁴³¹ In manipulating Troilus into believing she will return to Troy, Criseyde is "constructing a pleasant fabrication"; she does this to allay his fears, but her actions still amount to manipulation.⁴³² It is almost like Criseyde cannot help her treachery: as Christopher Gillie notes, "When we look at the action, we find that Criseyde is set in circle within circle of betrayal, and it is against these circumstances of treachery that she plights her eternal faith."⁴³³

⁴³¹ Woods, "Chaucer the Rhetorician," 32-33.

⁴³² Woods, "Chaucer the Rhetorician," 33.

⁴³³ Christopher Gillie, *Character in English Literature* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), 50.

From the beginning of her forced exile in the Greek camp Criseyde intends to find some way to return to Troy and keep her promises of fidelity to Troilus. She plans to return as she has sworn to do, as she proclaims that

“natheless, bityde what bityde,
I shal to-morwe at nyght, by est or west,
Out of this oost stele in som manere syde,
And gon with Troilus where as hym lest.
This purpos wol ich holde, and this is best.” (V.750-754)

Criseyde is determined to return, though she realizes after only a short time in the Greek camp that she will be unable to leave: she cannot flee her ever-watchful father Calkas, and she fears the rape and abuse she would probably suffer if she were caught attempting to leave (V.694-706). Immediately after she swears to return to Troy, however, the narrator makes it clear that she will never go back:

But God it wot, er fully monthes two,
She was ful fer fro that entencioun!
For bothe Troilus and Troie town
Shal knotteles thoroughout hire herte slide;
For she wol take a purpos for t’abide. (V.766-770)

Diomedes quickly seduces Criseyde through promises of service, threats of harm to the Trojans, and manipulation. In the end, Criseyde gives in to Diomedes’s seduction:

Retornyng in hire soule ay up and down
The wordes of this sodeyn Diomedes,
His grete estat, and perel of the town,
And that she was allone and hade nede
Of frendes help; and thus bygan to brede
The cause whi, the sothe for to telle,
That she took fully purpos for to dwelle. (V.1023-1029)

Diomedes “refte hire of the grete of al hire peyne” (V.1036), and Criseyde gives him gifts, tends to the battle wounds given him by Troilus, and the narrator tells us that “Men seyn—I not—that she yaf hym hire herte” (V.1050). Though she knows she is unable,

and increasingly unwilling to leave, thanks to her capitulation to Diomedes's wiles, Criseyde continues to keep up Troilus' hope by means of letters.

Criseyde's letters begin only after she has given herself to Diomedes, and after the allotted time has passed for her to return to Troy. She deceives Troilus by making him believe that she still loves him and that she intends to return. In response to Troilus' first and lengthy letter complaining of his pain at her absence, Criseyde replies that

also sone as that she myghte, ywys,
She wolde come, and mende al that was mys.
And fynaly she wroot and seyde hym thenne,
She wolde come, ye, but she nyste whenne. (V.1425-1428)

Criseyde even goes so far as to make "swich festes/That wonder was, and swerth she loveth hym best,/Of which he fond but botmeles bihestes" (V.1429-1431). Her promises are obviously false: to her despair, she does not love the noble Troilus any more, but swears she does to keep his hope alive that she will return.

In her last letter to Troilus before his death, Criseyde pretends that the letter may be intercepted, and therefore states that she cannot say why she cannot yet return to Troy (V.1602-1603). This tactic saves her from being obliged to explain that she will never return, and the reason why. Criseyde deflects Troilus' criticism by mentioning rumors she pretends to have heard about his behaviour in their relationship: "And beth nat wroth, I have eke understonde/How ye ne do but holden me in honde" (V.1615). Even though she quickly adds "But now no force. I kan nat in yow gesse/But alle trouthe and alle gentillesse" (V.1616-1617) and seems to brush these false accusations away, the fact that she has indirectly accused Troilus of the infidelity that she is suspected of would place Troilus on the defensive, having to explain behaviour that he has never considered and that Criseyde knows he did not commit. Criseyde's

dissimulation and veiled accusations are suggestive of Diomedes' and Pandarus' behaviour: all three characters use deceit and manipulation to achieve their goals.

Criseyde embodies several of the same "Greek" traits as Diomedes and Pandarus: she is deceitful and manipulative, betraying Troilus' love, manipulating him by her letters, and intending to deceive her father. She also has a "Greek" sense of knowing what is to her own advantage, whether it be a relationship with a Trojan prince or a Greek prince, staying in Troy or remaining in the Greek camp. A factor in acting "Greek" for Criseyde, unlike for the other characters, may be that since she is a woman, she is conventionally unstable and cannot help betraying and deceiving. Many medieval writers portrayed women as fickle creatures, constantly changing their expressions, emotions and loyalties.⁴³⁴ Benoît de Sainte-Maure's depiction of Briseida fits this medieval schema: Benoît has his Briseida enjoy taunting the lovesick Diomedes, then coldly abandon Troilus for Diomedes. Briseida admits that "Fause sui e legiere e fole" [I am unfaithful, inconstant and foolish (20249)]; like many other women in medieval texts, she gives her heart lightly and is changeable. Criseyde, though she does not admit this, likewise quickly turns her affection from Troilus to Diomedes.

Criseyde's changeability and ability to betray may come both from her gender and also from her Greek identity. Chaucer, unlike Benoît, suggests a Greek heritage for Criseyde. Complicating Criseyde's identity further, Greek identity is also changeable: it can be both positive and negative, noble and treacherous. Through her gender, and her

⁴³⁴ For instance, Andreas Capellanus in his twelfth-century work on courtly love, *De amore*, calls women fickle and capricious: "Inconstans etiam mulier regulariter invenitur, quia nulla mulier tanta super aliquo negotio soliditate firmatur, cuius fides modica suasionem cuiusque non efficiatur in brevi spatio alterata" [Woman is also found fickle as a general rule. There is no woman so firmly determined on anything that her reliability cannot be soon dispelled by slight persuasion from someone (3.83, p. 312-313)]; "Sed mulieres omnes cuncta quae dicunt in cordis scimus dupliciter narrare, quia semper alia corde gerunt quam ore loquantur" [We know that everything every woman says is spoken with inner deceit, for they always have thoughts different from the words they say (3.86, p. 312-313)]. Edition and translation in *Andreas Capellanus on Love*, ed. and trans. P. G. Walsh (London: Duckworth, 1982).

nation, Criseyde cannot help but manipulate, deceive, and act “Greek.” The first definite information on her parentage comes in Book IV, when Criseyde invokes her mother: ““O moder myn, that cleped were Argyve”” (IV.762), a detail that is given by Chaucer alone. The name “Argyve,” a synonym for “Greek” in Homer and elsewhere, also appears in Cassandre’s interpretation of Troilus’ prophetic dream about Criseyde caressing the boar. Cassandre sees that the boar in Troilus’ dream represents Diomedes, who has taken Criseyde’s heart from Troilus. To explain Diomedes’ lineage, she gives a summary of the siege of Thebes, in which Diomedes’ father, Tydeus, was one of the Greek heroes who fought on the side of Polynices. Cassandre mentions “Argyves wepyng and hire wo” (V.1509): here, Argyve, or Argia, is the wife of Polynices, brother of Etioles and son of Oedipus. If this were taken at face value, it would mean that Criseyde’s mother, the Greek daughter of King Adrastus of Argos, had been married to one of the heroes of the siege of Thebes, presumably before she married Calkas and Criseyde was born; it also makes Criseyde distantly related to Oedipus. The impiety and degeneracy inherent in the Oedipal lineage, and the combination of this condemned line with Greek stock might make her actions and plight more understandable

Another connection among Criseyde, Argyve and the Greeks comes in the form of a brooch which Criseyde gives Troilus after they have consummated their relationship: “a broche, gold and asure,/In which a ruby set was lik an herte/Criseyde him yaf” (III.1370-1372). This brooch bears a resemblance to the “broche of Thebes” mentioned in Chaucer’s Complaint of Mars, “So ful of rubies and of stones of Ynde/That every wight, that sette on hit an ye,/He wende anon to worthe out of his mynde” (II.245-47). The brooch of Thebes, according to Statius, one of Chaucer’s

sources on Thebes, was passed down from Harmonia, the first queen of Thebes, to Argia, when she married Polynices, son of Oedipus. The seer Amphiarius foretold his own death in the siege of Thebes and would not join Polynices' warriors, then went into hiding. Polynices ordered Argia, his wife, to bribe the wife of Amphiarius with the brooch to reveal his hiding place (Thebaid IV.187 ff.).

Because Chaucer is the only author to have made Criseyde's mother's name "Argyve" and because the brooch of Thebes in the Complaint of Mars is similar, but not identical to Criseyde's brooch in Troilus and Criseyde, her connection with Thebes and the possibility of Greek origins has been a subject of debate for many critics. David Anderson posits that Chaucer "invented a genealogy for Criseyde" in which Criseyde's mother "Argyve" is really supposed to refer to the wife of Polynices and that Criseyde has clear links to the Greeks at Thebes.⁴³⁵ Dominique Battles counters Anderson's argument, stating that because Chaucer is the only author to specify who Criseyde's mother was, the reader is left uncertain; though Chaucer makes these Theban allusions, Battles argues that he obscures the information he gives the reader, and fills gaps in historical detail with fiction.⁴³⁶ Catherine Sanok similarly rejects the literal association of Criseyde with Argia, arguing that it has more to do with Chaucer's aim to imitate the tone of Statius' Thebaid.⁴³⁷ Susan Schibanoff contends that Chaucer invented a "literary" mother for Criseyde, and that "Argyve" is actually an allegorical figure representing *providentia*.⁴³⁸ We are left with tantalizing speculation about the lineage of Criseyde, a character who acts "Greek," and may actually be half Greek. The prospect

⁴³⁵ Anderson, "Theban History in Chaucer's Troilus," 125.

⁴³⁶ Battles, The Medieval Tradition of Thebes, 127.

⁴³⁷ Catherine Sanok, "Criseyde, Cassandre, and the Thebaid: Women and the Theban Subtext of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde," Studies in the Age of Chaucer 20 (1998): 41-71.

⁴³⁸ Susan Schibanoff, "Argus and Argyve: Etymology and Characterization in Chaucer's Troilus," Speculum 51.4 (1976), 647.

of her potential relation to the Greeks at Thebes make Criseyde more compelling: she has a history of betrayal from her mother Argia, and an inborn talent for betrayal from her Greek heritage.

Acting “Greek” for Criseyde, and for Pandarus, brings only temporary benefits. As in the Roman de Troie, the Trojan characters in Troilus and Criseyde who use “Greek” means to further their interests get into trouble: Pandarus is successful in manipulating both Troilus and Criseyde, but ends up with a missing niece and a useless, then angry, then dead benefactor and friend. Criseyde betrays and manipulates Troilus, but, if we take the model seen in the Roman de Troie to apply to Troilus and Criseyde, though Diomedes promises protection and service, Criseyde is presumably abandoned by Diomedes after the fall of Troy. It seems that some of the behaviour of Criseyde and Pandarus is based on Chaucer’s model of typical Greek behaviour, though these characters, like other Trojans in the Roman de Troie, are not completely suited to their assumed characteristics.

Religion, *Translatio imperii* and the Hermeneutics of Supersession

It is harder to see one side as Christian, or Jewish, and the other side as Saracen in Troilus and Criseyde than in the Roman de Troie: there is no discernable crusade framework that makes the Greeks seem like Saracens besieging Trojan Christians, nor are there any characters like Huners fiz Mahon, who make it possible to see the Greeks as Saracens. Likewise, a character like the Pharaoh is missing, a figure whose presence makes the Greeks in the Roman de Troie seem both like Saracens, and like Old Testament Egyptians, and the Trojans seem like virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews and like besieged Christians. Greek alterity in Chaucer’s work is not overtly based on the nature

of Greek allies, as it is in the Roman de Troie, nor is it based on the religion practiced by the Greeks: as C. David Benson has shown, both Greeks and Trojans, as in all Troy stories, are pagans.⁴³⁹ Benson notes that the characters of Troilus and Criseyde “refer easily and often to the pagan deities,” bringing a sense that Troy exists in the ancient past.⁴⁴⁰ In a similar vein, A. J. Minnis observes that “The pagans in *Troilus and Criseyde* avidly observe the ‘rytes’ of their heathen religion and ‘honoure hir goddes ful devoute.’”⁴⁴¹ The characters visit temples, venerate the Palladium, an image of Pallas Athena which fell from heaven and protects Troy, and visit seers. In fact, in the Troy stories of Benoît, Guido and Chaucer, the Trojan priest and seer Calkas, Criseyde’s father, defects to the Greeks because he is told of the fall of Troy by the oracle of Apollo on Delos, and in Benoît’s and Guido’s versions, is told to aid the Greeks.⁴⁴²

There are, however, some Christian references in Troilus and Criseyde, just as there are in the Roman de Troie. In many instances, Christian terms are substituted for pagan: for example, when speaking about the pagan underworld, many characters in Troilus and Criseyde use the word “helle”; as well, Criseyde uses the Christian title “bisshop” in reference to the seer Amphiarius of the Seven Against Thebes (II.104). Benson explains that since Chaucer’s narrator is necessarily medieval, he is “historically justified in making Christian comments like ‘God foryaf his death, and she al so’ (III.1577), however remarkable the phrase may be in other ways.”⁴⁴³ This phrase is remarkable as the narrator is here comparing Christ forgiving his crucifixion to Criseyde forgiving her uncle’s schemes to bring her and Troilus together. According to

⁴³⁹ Benson, Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, 64.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁴⁴¹ A. J. Minnis, Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), 69.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 78-79.

⁴⁴³ Benson, Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, 69.

T. P. Dunning, however, Chaucer is “careful not to put specifically Christian sentiments into the mouths of his characters.”⁴⁴⁴ Though numerous characters make reference to saints’ lives, heaven, hell and God, “the divinities actually named are all pagan and the saints never Christian.”⁴⁴⁵ In the view of Benson and others, Troy is presented by Chaucer as ancient and pagan, and the rarity of any specifically Christian allusion testifies to that fact. Chaucer uses some Christian language to place “ancient” Troy within a recognizable framework, as he emphasizes the similarities between Troy’s paganism and Christianity by using religious terms that would have been familiar to a medieval audience, though he also uses the names of pagan gods. Greeks, however, do not refer to “helle” or to the Christian God, as Trojans do; while some Trojans use obliquely Christian terms, Greeks are undoubtedly pagan.

Though it has been posited that the Christian references in Troilus and Criseyde are a function of the necessarily medieval, Christian narrator, the ending of Troilus and Criseyde is arguably a prefiguration of Christianity, and makes a case for Trojan religious *translatio imperii*, an opportunity not offered to the Greeks. As Minnis argues, after the consummation scene, Troilus “rises above the general level of fatalism and polytheism to formulate the most enlightened pagan philosophy offered in the poem, a monotheistic vision of divine harmony (III, 1744-71).”⁴⁴⁶ Added to this potentially monotheistic sentiment is the fact that at his ascent to the eighth sphere after his death,

⁴⁴⁴ T. P. Dunning, “God and Man in Troilus and Criseyde” in English and Medieval Studies Presented to J. R. R. Tolkien on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday, ed. Norman Davis and C. L. Wrenn (London: Allen & Unwin, 1962), 171. Cited in Benson, Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde, 69.

⁴⁴⁵ Benson, Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde, 69.

⁴⁴⁶ Minnis, Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity, 94..

looking down from “hevene” to his body on the earth, Troilus becomes aware of the limitations of earthly joy and beauty.⁴⁴⁷

And in hymself he lough right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his deth so faste;
And dampned al oure werk that foloweth so
The blynde lust, the which that may nat laste,
And sholden al oure herte on heven caste;
And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
Ther as Mercurye sorted hym to dwelle. (V.1821-1827)

When Troilus’ *contemptus mundi* sentiments, which Claudia Rattazzi Papka calls “by no means a Christian topos,”⁴⁴⁸ are juxtaposed with the narrator’s plea that follows shortly thereafter to

Repeyreth hom fro worldly vanyte,
And of youre herte up casteth the visage
To thilke God that after his ymage
You made, (V.1837-1840)

the reader might wonder if Troilus’ newfound rejection of transitory worldly life could have similar Christian overtones. John M. Steadman has noted that the “blynde lust, that may nat laste” (V.1824) that Troilus damns may be a Christian allusion, as it “may signify both pleasure and concupiscence. In the former sense it recalls Boethius’s condemnation of the transitory nature of worldly pleasure (*voluptas*), but in the latter sense it is reminiscent of St. John’s dehortation against love of the world (I John 2.17).”⁴⁴⁹ The writings of Boethius, as I argue below, are also important in their influence on Chaucer’s view of providence, as evidenced in Troilus’ death. In Steadman’s view, “in

⁴⁴⁷ There has been much discussion surrounding whether Chaucer meant the seventh sphere or eighth sphere, and how he numbered the planets. See John M. Steadman, *Disembodied Laughter: Troilus and the Apotheosis Tradition. A Reexamination of Narrative and Thematic Contexts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), especially pp. 1-4.

⁴⁴⁸ Claudia Rattazzi Papka, “Transgression, the End of Troilus, and the Ending of Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*,” *The Chaucer Review* 32.3 (1998), 273. Papka argues for both Christian and pagan meanings of Troilus’ apotheosis, noting that “it is possible that a pagan world can produce a Christian morality, if you read it right. But the morality which is suggested in the last stanzas of the *Troilus* is not strictly Christian,” 276.

⁴⁴⁹ Steadman, *Disembodied Laughter*, 166.

contrasting divine fidelity with the world's fickleness, and divine stability with earthly vicissitudes, . . . Chaucer exploited a commonplace that belonged to Boethian and biblical traditions alike."⁴⁵⁰ Having reached the fixed stars and seen the mutability of the world, Troilus has reached "a steadfast good common to both classical and Christian traditions."⁴⁵¹

Although his soul is entrusted to Mercury, Troilus' beliefs about the futility of earthly striving and lust and the superiority of heaven, as well as being standard Greek philosophy, are another instance of Christian details as they echo Christian dogma. As Minnis states, "This is the height of philosophical wisdom": "At last he realizes that one cannot trust earthly things because of their ephemeral nature, and that the human emotions connected with them are vain."⁴⁵² There has been much scholarly discussion over whether Troilus merits salvation by doing the best a good pagan can,⁴⁵³ but it seems that because he recognizes the futility, vanity and emptiness of the world's snares, even though his soul ascends to wherever Mercury decides, he can be seen as the prefiguration of a Christian. The potentially Christian elements of Troilus' own ascent can point to his supersession of Diomedes and the Greeks: he is the best he can be before the Incarnation, while Diomedes will remain a pagan. This smaller, Boethian supersession of the individual, that of Diomedes by Troilus, can be seen in light of the larger, Orosian concept of the rise and fall of empires, *translatio imperii*, represented here by the Greeks and Trojans.

That Troilus is as near to Christianity as a pagan can be is explained by the "synthesis of pagan and Christian concepts of immortality" Chaucer uses in describing

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 167.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 167.

⁴⁵² Minnis, *Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity*, 104.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 105.

Troilus' ascent to the eighth sphere.⁴⁵⁴ The concepts of immortality and numerology were easily available to pre-Christian Greeks and Romans, and according to John W. Conlee, the Christian symbolism of the number eight, well known in the Middle Ages, provides meanings very similar to pagan immortality: "[t]he principal meanings for *eight* which emerged from the numerous Biblical passages containing *eight* or *eighth* were the completion of a cycle or a return to the beginning; purification and immortality, eternity, and eternal salvation."⁴⁵⁵ The association of the number eight with immortality and completion was made by medieval exegetes, such as Isidore of Seville, because of the appearance of the number in biblical events: for example, Christ was crucified on the eighth day after his entry into Jerusalem, Christ appeared to his disciples eight days after his resurrection, Christ's transfiguration occurred on the eighth day after the first announcement of his sufferings, and eight people survived the Flood in Noah's Ark.

The combination of pagan and Christian concepts of immortality in Troilus' ascent after his death in battle, along with Chaucer's plea immediately after Troilus' death that young people give up worldly life to worship Christ, make it possible to view Troilus as the prefiguration of a Christian. Troilus is purified by his ascent to heaven and no longer cares for the concerns of the world, exemplifying Chaucer's exhortation that the young give up the fleeting joys of the world for the lasting joy of eternal life in Christ. Commenting upon Troilus' ascension to the eighth sphere, A. J. Minnis states that

The transformation of Troilo the prostrated lover into a gentile philosopher capable of wise speculation about the nature of the universe

⁴⁵⁴ John W. Conlee, "The Meaning of Troilus' Ascension to the Eighth Sphere," Chaucer Review 7.1 (1973), 27.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

was a personal stroke of genius by Chaucer, quite unprecedented in previous versions of the story though perfectly comprehensible in view of late-medieval interest in the extent to which virtuous heathen had anticipated some of the truths of Christianity.⁴⁵⁶

Susan Schibanoff echoes this assessment of Troilus' transcendence: Chaucer's "characters remain pagan in their religion, but the poet perceives for us the underlying essence of that religion and re-interprets it in meaningful Christian terms: the eighth sphere of Troilus's pagan 'hevene' becomes, in the end, the 'hevene' in which the Christian deities sit."⁴⁵⁷ The ending of Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus' laugh at those weeping at his death signals that he, and the Trojans, can be seen as proto-Christians and, as I argue, the Greeks will remain pagan polytheists.

We must remember that Diomedes is instrumental in Troilus going to heaven: Troilus is so distraught at the knowledge that Diomedes is Criseyde's new lover that he seeks death in battle: "'From hennesforth, as ferforth as I may, / Myn owen deth in armes wol I seche'" (V.1716-1717). Troilus wishes to have the chance to slay Diomedes, and although they do meet on the field, Troilus does not kill him. Instead, Diomedes lives and Troilus is killed by the "fierse Achille" (V.1806), and his soul ascends to the eighth sphere. As many critics have argued, Troilus represents Troy in miniature, Troy in microcosm: his death echoes the fall of the city, the destruction which is known to the reader but outside of Chaucer's version of the text. In Troilus and Criseyde, Diomedes is the embodiment of the Greek treachery that Chaucer leaves unmentioned, the Trojan horse and the false truce, that precipitate the fall of the city. Diomedes ostensibly "wins," just as the Greeks do: he seduces and wins Criseyde by manipulation and

⁴⁵⁶ Minnis, Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity, 93.

⁴⁵⁷ Schibanoff, "Argus and Argyve," 658.

deception, the Greeks trick and sack Troy. The victories of Diomedes and the Greeks, however, lead to the ultimate victory of the Trojans.

The importance of Troilus' death and Diomedes' empty victory can be understood using the hermeneutics of supersession: as Chaucer knew from his reading of Virgil, when the Greeks sack Troy, the noble Trojan lineage in the person of Aeneas flees the city and founds the Roman people. The Romans eventually become Christian, then control a Christian empire, but the Greeks are not afforded this opportunity to become Christians, and in the traditional ending of the Troy story, many die on their return home. This Orosian framework, which explains the rise and fall of empires, gives way in Troilus and Criseyde to a Boethian supersessionist framework, which explains the rise and fall of individuals. When Troilus' soul leaves his body and recognizes the vanity of the world and the joy of heaven, he is a model of a virtuous pagan. By his renunciation of the material world, which can be construed as a Christian sentiment, Troilus supersedes Diomedes, who although he wins Criseyde, does not have the opportunity Troilus does to become the best a pagan can be before the Incarnation. In the limited scope of Chaucer's Troy text, we can still see the religious, though not military, victory of Troilus over the scheming Greek: Troilus, even before the Incarnation, recognizes worldly vanity, just as the Trojan lineage will at Rome when they embrace Christianity.

When Troilus is seen as a virtuous pagan, and even a proto-Christian, the role of the Greek in Troilus and Criseyde can also be understood as functioning in the binary movement of supersession. Just as the Jews are superseded by Christians, Greeks are superseded by Trojans and made redundant: the Greeks provide a model that the Trojans surpass. The Greeks act as a catalyst of change, making it possible for the

Trojans to become Christian through the siege of Troy. Though each side in the Trojan War is pagan, there are small Christian details given to the Trojan side amongst the classical gods and goddesses, a “classicizing of the medieval or medievalizing of the classical,” in McCall’s terms.⁴⁵⁸ These Christian terms and rites, combined with Troilus’ proto-Christian recognition of the vanity of the world after his death, make it seem that the Trojans have an opportunity to be Christians, while the Greeks do not. Because of the Greeks’ treacherous sack of Troy, the Trojans supersede the Greeks by founding a dynasty that will become Christian. Similarly, Diomedes treacherously steals Criseyde from Troilus, which leads to Troilus’ death in battle and his acceptance of beliefs that are suggestive of Christian thought. Troilus is a microcosm of Troy, and his near-conversion after death is comparable to the supersession of the Trojan Romans over the Greeks. The place of Diomedes in Troilus and Criseyde shows that negative ideas about Greeks persisted into Chaucer’s time, and also that Europeans still viewed the Trojans as their ancestors, and the Greeks merely as tools. There is no place for Greeks after the fall of Troy; they are redundant like Jews, and potentially dangerous like Saracens. Diomedes and the Greeks, though they triumph through treachery, will not become Christian; they have been superseded by the Trojans and remain mired in the past and redundant.

The hermeneutics of supersession, which help to explain the fulfillment of Troilus’ pagan beliefs and the general supersession of Trojans over the similarly pagan Greeks, work in concert with *translatio imperii*, the movement of empire, here between Troy and Rome. The connection between Troy and Thebes that is present in Troilus and Criseyde provides a model for this *translatio imperii*: the Greeks at Thebes were

⁴⁵⁸ McCall, Chaucer Among the Gods, 25.

fighting on the side of the exiled Polynices, one of the sons of Oedipus, who was justifiably warring against his brother Eteocles. In the case of the cursed and doomed Theban lineage of Oedipus, the Greeks had an unworthy enemy, an enemy who had to be destroyed; the Greeks, though they were killed in the assault on Thebes, were therefore the conquering heroes and clearly in the right. The Greeks at Troy, though they are related to the Greeks at Thebes, are this time in the wrong: according to Benoît and other authors, the Greeks were at fault for beginning the Trojan War, and their enemies are the noble Trojans who will become Romans and Europeans. The Greeks seem to have moved *imperium* from the polluted city and lineage of Thebes and brought it to Troy; the Greeks are the instruments by which the Trojans found the Roman people, though they themselves are redundant after this point and largely disappear from history. *Translatio imperii*, the process by which *imperium* is transferred from one empire to another, is a sequential movement: as we have seen, the Greeks act as a catalyst of change and move *imperium* from Thebes to Troy, but do not actually have custody of it themselves.

John P. McCall's reading of the end of Troilus and Criseyde in which he states that "the imperial dominion will pass from Troy to Greece, as Criseyde passes from Troilus to Diomedes" is partially correct: Criseyde does pass from Troilus to Diomedes, but imperial dominion moves not to Greece, but to Rome.⁴⁵⁹ Though it happens after the action of the poem ends, through *translatio imperii*, through the instrumentality of the Greeks, the Trojans move worldly authority to Rome, and prepare the way for a Christian world empire. The Greeks win the war, but they do not figure in the history of Europe and Christianity, except to be the means by which Rome and other cities and

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 102.

nations are founded. Fleming perhaps puts it best when he describes the Trojans who have fled Troy to found the Roman people and Europe as “the lineal descendants of Aeneas, now sanctified by the grace of redeeming Christianity.”⁴⁶⁰

The ending of Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde can be usefully examined in terms not only of Boethius’ model of supersession, in which individuals are taken up and brought down by Fortune, but his view of providence. As many scholars have noted, Chaucer was influenced by Boethius’ Consolation of Philosophy: his Boece is an English translation of the work, and several aspects of the Consolation of Philosophy can be seen in Troilus and Criseyde.⁴⁶¹ This includes an echo of the Boethian idea of Providence found in the Consolation of Philosophy that everything that occurs, no matter how inexplicable, was thought of in the divine mind and happens for the best. As Lady Philosophy explains in Book Four of the Consolation of Philosophy, every event is directed by God’s Providence: “Quo fit, ut, tametsi vobis hunc ordinem minime considerare valentibus confusa omnia perturbataque videantur, nihilo minus tamen suus modus ad bonum dirigens cuncta disponat” [Therefore, even though things may seem confused and discordant to you, because you cannot discern the order that governs them, nevertheless everything is governed by its own proper order directing all things toward the good, (4.Pr. 6.21)].⁴⁶² When we take into account the influence of Boethius’ thought on the form and content of Troilus and Criseyde, it becomes apparent

⁴⁶⁰ Fleming, Classical Imitation and Interpretation in Chaucer’s Troilus, 196.

⁴⁶¹ As John V. Fleming asserts, “the principal originality of [Troilus and Criseyde] entirely unanticipated by his predecessors is its formal philosophical seriousness commanded by the extensive and often explicit presence of Boethian language and themes.” Classical Imitation and Interpretation, 91. See also Minnis, Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity; Frank Grady, “The Boethian Reader of Troilus and Criseyde,” The Chaucer Review 33.3 (1999): 230-251; Monica E. McAlpine, The Genre of Troilus and Criseyde (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978); Martin Camargo, “The Consolation of Pandarus,” The Chaucer Review 25.3 (1991): 214-228.

⁴⁶² Boethius, Consolatio philosophiae, ed. James J. O’Donnell (Bryn Mawr, PA: Thomas Library, Bryn Mawr College, 1984). Translation found in The Consolation of Philosophy, trans. Richard Green (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962).

that Diomedes's vaunted double victory is rendered redundant and is subsumed within the Boethian view of the providential unfolding of history. Diomedes's victory leads to Troilus's Boethian ascent to the eighth sphere after his death and his proto-Christianity, but Diomedes's role as catalyst of change is modified by the working of Providence. Troilus's death and ascent to the eighth sphere, and the Trojans's role as the forerunners of the Roman people, are events planned by God's Providence; they must happen, and Diomedes is the means by which Troilus's enlightenment and the Trojans's flight from Troy is made possible.

My discussion of the variable characterization of the Greeks depends on cycles of history, Orosian or Boethian: Greeks can be seen as pre-Incarnation Jews, or as post-Incarnation Jews and Saracens, depending on their instrumentality in bringing about Christian empire. Understanding Diomedes's Greek identity in Troilus and Criseyde helps us to follow the course of *translatio imperii* and comprehend the transitory quality of all success, individual or collective. Though Diomedes, through his Greek traits of manipulation and deceit, seduces and wins Criseyde, just as the Greeks deceive and win Troy, their victories are fleeting: the Trojans, defeated in the war, are the victors in eternity. The Trojans supersede the Greeks by becoming the forebears of Christian empire, a fact necessary in the Boethian providential framework. When Troilus ascends to the eighth sphere after his death and looks disparagingly at the vanity of the earth, he can be seen as a proto-Christian, a conversion that will be fulfilled in the Trojans after their flight to Italy. The Greeks are the catalyst of *translatio imperii*: they move the Trojans to Rome, where they become Christians. The Greeks's successes and instrumentality are subsumed in the Boethian view of Providential history, a feature that has been noted in Troilus and Criseyde: since all events happen in the divine mind

and occur for the best, the Greeks are here the tools of divine Providence; their victory is hollow, since their role is to move *imperium*, and the nation that will become Christian, to its rightful place, to Rome. Diomedes, and the other Greeks, must be superseded to allow Christian Rome to be born.

Conclusion

The literary depictions of the Greeks who besieged Troy and Alexander the Great, both very popular subjects in the Middle Ages, at first seem dissimilar: the Greeks who besieged Troy are notoriously treacherous, while Alexander is the paragon of princes, powerful, educated and courtly. A closer look, however, proves that both types of ancient Greeks are depicted ambiguously and share characteristics that make them typically Greek. The depiction of the Greeks who besieged Troy and Alexander is due in part to the shared cultural assumption about what Greeks were like, gleaned in the Middle Ages from works by popular authors such as Virgil and Juvenal, both of whom had negative views of Greeks. At the same time, there were positive attitudes towards Greek philosophical, medical and scientific works, known from late classical and twelfth-century translations. Given these factors, perhaps it is not surprising that the medieval depiction of ancient Greeks should be ambivalent, emblemized by the binary relationship of Sinon, who epitomized treachery, and Aristotle and Alexander, who epitomized learning and princely power. What is remarkable, however, are the templates on which the depiction of Greeks is based: “variable characterization”; the depiction of Jews, and relatedly, the depiction of Saracens; the hermeneutics of supersession; Orosian *translatio imperii*. All of these frameworks are useful for understanding what “Greek” means, and the transitional role Greeks play, whether they are treacherous or noble.

In the Roman de Troie, the Greeks who besieged Troy are depicted by Benoît de Sainte-Maure as handsome, noble, brave in battle, deceitful and treacherous. In their ambiguous depiction, they possess both admirable and alarming features as well as

engin, an inborn trait which the Greeks use to deceive others. The Trojans, conversely, use their *engin* to constructive ends, such as the building of Hector's wondrous tomb. The Greeks also possess typical aspects of both Jewish and Saracen characterization. In their false gift of the Trojan horse, the negotiations with Trojan traitors, and Diomedes's seduction of Briseida, the Greeks show the treachery ascribed by Christians to the post-Incarnation Jews who have denied the divinity of Christ. Benoît's Greeks make false promises, both in love and in war.

The Greeks can also be seen as Saracens because of their typically Saracen cruelty. A telling example of Greek cruelty can be found in Pyrrhus' murder of Priam at his altar in Troy, and the wholesale slaughter of innocents once the Greeks have breached the walls of Troy; both of these scenes have parallels to the Destruction de Rome, an Anglo-Norman text in which the Saracen Fierabras performs similar cruel deeds on Christians. In addition, Greeks can be seen as Saracens and the Trojans as Christians or virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews because of the crusade framework of the Roman de Troie. This is particularly evident in Benoît's addition of several characters to his story, including "Huners, fiz Mahon," Hunier, son of Muhammad (9495), whom the Greeks have on their side. With a character such as this fighting for the Greeks, the siege of Troy can be likened to the siege of a Christian city by Saracens.

Because of the legends that the Trojan Aeneas, fleeing the Greek sack of Troy, founded the Roman people, who later become Christians, the Trojans themselves can be looked back on as a proto-Christian group. Most of the Greeks, though they triumph at Troy, are killed during or after their return home to Greece from Troy, and do not have the same potential to be Christians; they are superseded by their victims and disappear from history. We can see Orosian *translatio imperii* working in the transfer of legitimate

power from Troy to Rome and other Western nations, which will become Christian. For a medieval audience, the place of the Greeks in the Troy story is primarily as the catalyst for the foundation of Western European nations.

In the twelfth-century Roman de toute chevalerie, Alexander at first does not resemble the Greeks at Troy: he rejects the use of treachery, associated in the medieval imagination with post-Incarnation Jews. This can be seen especially well in the death of Alexander's enemy, Darius, the king of Persia, who is killed by Persian traitors. The traitors expect rewards from Alexander, since they have delivered Persia to him, but instead are executed, as Alexander eschews all treachery. While Alexander rejects the post-Incarnation Jewish trait of treason, he resembles a righteous pre-Incarnation Jew when he honours the Jews, and their God, in Jerusalem. Alexander's reverence for the God of the Jews would lead a medieval audience to believe that if he had been born after the Incarnation, he would likely have been a Christian. This portrayal is heightened by the fact that Darius is portrayed as a Saracen, making Alexander seem like a proto-Christian crusader. Contemporary chronicles also depict Alexander like a crusader on account of his time in Jerusalem. In these chronicles, he plays role in eschatology, since a Christian kingdom in Jerusalem was believed by some to be a necessary step towards the Apocalypse. This apocalyptic role is similar to that found in the Roman de toute chevalerie, where Alexander contains the unclean tribes of Gog and Magog who will not venture out until the time of the Antichrist. Alexander is a courtly and chivalric hero, and a paragon of learning, being the student of Aristotle. Alexander, however, like the Greeks at Troy, is ambiguous: he continues his worship of other gods, and as he ventures east after conquering Persia, he begins to assume the typical Saracen

characteristics of luxury and lechery. Alexander accumulates wealth, to the detriment of his troops, and has a courtly dalliance with queen Candace.

Alexander, like the Greeks at Troy, participates in *translatio imperii*. In Orosius' quadripartite schema, Alexander is part of providential history: he is the guardian of imperial authority as it moves in succession from Babylon to Rome, providing a model for world dominion to Rome. Alexander, according to Orosius, is the prefiguration of Augustus, under whose *imperium* Christ is born; Alexander's empire provides a model for and is superseded by the Roman Empire, which in its Christianity, will be the fulfillment of all empires. Added to the complexity of Alexander's character is the uncertainty of his nationality: in the Roman de toute chevalerie, he is called a Greek, a Macedonian, or both. "Greek" is a term associated with the Greek language, Greek learning, and the ambiguous, inborn characteristics of "the Greek." Alexander is also called a Macedonian, which fits into the providential Orosian paradigm of history, where he is a placeholder of empire and paves the way for Christian empire, but disappears after Rome is established.

Like the Greeks at Troy, Alexander is a tool in the movement of empire, a model, who, according to the demands of *translatio imperii* and supersession, must not survive to rival Rome. Though he is set apart from the Greeks of the Trojan War in his refusal of treachery and his reverence for the God of the Jews, Alexander remains ambiguous. He does not become a Jew, and cannot be a Christian, so he does the next best thing: he worships the God of the Jews to the best of his ability but sacrifices to other gods. In Alexander's time, this is the closest he can come to God. Alexander is proto-Christian crusader and proto-Saracen; Macedonian and Greek. His positive characteristics provide evidence for him being a "middle ground," providing a model of empire; his

negative characteristics can prove why his empire should not last to compete with Rome. We can understand Alexander within the same frames of reference in which the Greeks at Troy function: they are agents by which Christian empire can finally be born.

The fourteenth-century Wars of Alexander, by contrast, shows an Alexander who is not a proto-Christian crusader, nor a proto-Saracen. Alexander is not depicted as the prefiguration of a crusader, nor is he courtly and chivalric; his main enemy, Darius, is not depicted as a Saracen, but as a pagan. Alexander spurns typical Jewish treachery and venerates the God of the Jews, but only while he is in Jerusalem, and does not take on Saracen features as he ventures East. In Jerusalem, an angel tells the “bischof” of the Jews, that Alexander will die by God’s anger; the angel’s statement emphasizes that the God of the Jews has power over conquerors, and also calls into question Alexander’s proto-Christianity. Alexander is an instrument of God, whose deeds have been foreordained by providence, a conqueror who does not necessarily have agency.

In Alexander’s enclosure of Gog and Magog, there is no mention of Antichrist or an eschatological role for Alexander. This is perhaps the result of the milieu in which the Wars of Alexander was written: since the last centuries of crusade had been unsuccessful, there was little hope for a Christian kingdom in Jerusalem, which was believed by some to be necessary to precipitate the end of the world. Perhaps Alexander is not seen in the Wars of Alexander as the prefiguration of a conqueror who plays a role in Christian eschatology and defeats Saracens because this kind of figure had become an unrealistic model in the later Middle Ages. This change also corresponds with a change in apocalypticism since the twelfth century: fourteenth-century apocalypticism in England moved the centre of events from Jerusalem to

Europe. Writers such as Ranulph Higden believed that the crusaders no longer held the Holy Land due to the sins of Europeans, and reform was needed both in the morality of Christians, and in the papacy as well.

The surviving manuscripts of the poem lack the ending, so there is not as strong a sense of *translatio imperii* through the crumbling of Alexander's empire in the Wars of Alexander as in the Roman de toute chevalerie. However, the depiction of Alexander's throne, including statues of his generals, hints at the people who with their infighting will fracture his empire after his death. The *translatio imperii* implied in the Roman de toute chevalerie, where Alexander is a valorous, courtly proto-Christian whose empire provides a worthy but flawed model for both Augustus and the crusaders, is missing from the Wars of Alexander. Here, Alexander remains ambiguous, but is rather simply a conqueror, a pagan polytheist who happens to venerate the God of the Jews and become an instrument of God's providence.

As we see in Troilus and Criseyde, a work contemporaneous with the Wars of Alexander, Greek alterity for Chaucer rests on received, stereotypical ideas about Greeks, and borrowings from the depictions of Jews and Saracens. One of Chaucer's inherited biases can be seen in the figure of Sinon, who as lone Greek in Virgil's Aeneid, plays a similar role to Diomedes in Troilus and Criseyde: both must incorporate all the stereotypical Greek traits. Diomedes in Chaucer, like in the Roman de Troie, is treacherous, but because of the limitations of the Troilus and Criseyde story, he does not get to participate in the fighting. He does not help to break down Troy by deceit or participate in battle, therefore, his post-Incarnation trait of treachery and Saracen trait of cruelty have only one outlet: his seduction of Troilus' lover, Criseyde. His cruelty,

associated with Saracens, is not seen on the battlefield, but in his threats to Criseyde that the Greeks will kill everyone in Troy.

Diomedes here is not motivated by love, as he is in Benoît's work, but by self-interest. It is clear that he does not love Criseyde, but enjoys the game of seduction; his actions are mechanical rather than emotional, and he uses his inborn Greek talent of eloquence and the treachery associated with Greeks and post-Incarnation Jews in his quest. Both Pandarus and Criseyde also act "Greek," as Priam and Hecuba do in the Roman de Troie: they are treacherous and deceitful, and use Greek *engyn* to their detriment. Like Diomedes, Pandarus uses false words to seduce Criseyde, but does it for Troilus, with whom he has an emotional involvement; Diomedes has no such personal investment. Criseyde uses deceit to fool Troilus into believing she will return to Troy, after she knows she will not. Criseyde's "Greekness" can be explained by the fact that she may actually be half Greek, if the lineage suggested by Chaucer is true.

Jews and Saracens in Chaucer's other works help to understand his "Greek": in the "Prioress's Tale," the post-Incarnation Jews are depicted as deceitful and violent. Conversely, the "Monk's Tale" depicts virtuous pre-Incarnation Jews, while the "Parson's Tale" describes virtuous Jewish patriarchs and treacherous post-Incarnation Jews who killed Christ. Diomedes, who is treacherous yet noble, can be understood in light of Chaucer's multifaceted view of Jews. Both groups should be recognized as being prior to and facilitators of Christianity, but they are also redundant and dangerous. Chaucer uses some of the same means to depict his Greek as he does to portray the Saracen Sowdanesse in the "Man of Law's Tale." In this tale, the Sowdanesse is treacherous and remarkably cruel, but unwittingly helps to spread Christianity and is defeated by Christians in the end.

Translatio imperii can be seen in the limited scope of Troilus and Criseyde in the heritage of Thebes as well as the movement of *imperium* from Troy to Rome. Chaucer calls Diomedes the son of Tydeus, who fought at Thebes, and there are strong parallels between the sieges. The Greek heroes, the Seven Against Thebes, participated in the purification of Thebes: the degenerate Thebans disappear from history, and the sons and grandsons of the Greeks carry on to their next conflict, the siege of Troy. While the Greeks are the heroes of the Theban war, they are the villains of the Trojan War, a fact which can be better understood through *translatio imperii*. The Greeks seem to function as movers of authority: the Greeks defeat the corrupt Thebans, then the Greeks' descendents besiege Troy, forcing some Trojans to flee and establish European nations. Though they are the victors of the Trojan war, the Greeks fight amongst themselves and are killed. The succession of kingship begins with Thebes, moves to Troy, then to Rome and other European nations as the fleeing Trojans reach Europe.

The ending of Troilus and Criseyde points to a proto-Christian identity for Troilus and for the Trojans, and the supersession of the Greeks by the Trojans. When Troilus ascends to the eighth sphere after his death, he recognizes the vanity of the world and despises it; as well as being standard Greek philosophy, these sentiments echo Christian dogma. Though Diomedes wins Criseyde from Troilus and the Greeks destroy Troy, Troilus has nevertheless superseded the Greeks and Diomedes' victory is rendered redundant and is subsumed within the Boethian view of the providential unfolding of history. Although Troilus lives in pre-Christian times, by recognizing the vanity of the world and the perfection of the spheres, he can be seen, typologically, as the prefiguration of a Christian. The Greeks, despite their martial victory, do not have the same chance of gaining this kind of knowledge. Like the Christians who supersede

the Jews, the Trojans are related to the Greeks, but move beyond them. This smaller, Boethian supersession of the individual, that of Diomedes by Troilus, can be seen in light of the larger, Orosian concept of the rise and fall of empires, *translatio imperii*, inferred in the absent ending of the tale, in which Aeneas ventures to Rome.

In Troilus and Criseyde, despite the limitations of the tale and being the lone Greek, Diomedes can be seen as a representative of ancient Greeks: he is a catalyst of *translatio imperii* and supersession. The Greeks as a nation move the Trojans to Rome, where they become Christians, and Diomedes himself causes Troilus' proto-Christian revelation. The Greeks' successes and instrumentality, however, are subsumed in the Boethian view of providential history: since all events occur for the best, the Greeks are here the tools of divine providence; their victory is hollow, since their role is to move *imperium* and the nation that will become Christian to its rightful place, to Rome. Diomedes, and the other Greeks, must be superseded to allow Christian Rome to be born.

As an avenue of further research into the necessity, agency and redundancy of Greeks with regard to *imperium* is the applicability of this model to Byzantine Greeks. Sharon Kinoshita's recent work on Robert de Clari's La Conquête de Constantinople argues that these Greeks were also viewed as liminal in medieval literature.⁴⁶³ Perhaps the justification of the sack of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade of 1204 could have been the facilitation of *translatio imperii*: the "Greeks" claimed the remnants of imperial power, which had its rightful place in France and Germany. As one medieval chronicler argued, Constantinople is not the "real" Roman empire: Otto of Freising claimed that the Byzantine Greeks held the right to rule "solo nomine," in name only.

⁴⁶³ Kinoshita, Medieval Boundaries.

Chroniclers of the Fourth Crusade such as Geoffroi de Villehardouin could provide evidence as to whether the Western crusaders felt that one of their justifications in sacking Constantinople, and fellow Christians, was to bring *imperium* to its final destination.

Greeks can be seen as pre-Incarnation Jews, or as post-Incarnation Jews and Saracens, as a function of their instrumentality in bringing about Christian empire. Rome, the seat of this Christian empire, is a crucible: it is the site of the blending of the two strands of European nations. The lineage of European nations comes from Troy and the “Trojan diaspora,” facilitated by the Greek siege. Its religious lineage comes from Jerusalem after its siege and diaspora, which moved religious *imperium* to Rome, an empire which has for its model the empire of Alexander, who is the prefiguration of Augustus. Sylvia Tomasch’s argument about the ambiguous presentation of Jews in literature is key to understanding the medieval depiction of ancient Greeks. The positive and negative characteristics of Jews present not two different peoples, but one: “every Jew is both evil and good, murderous and charitable.”⁴⁶⁴ The Jews, like the Greeks, are in a “state of inassimilable difference,” a double role as both founders of what would become Christianity, and “threatening interlopers, enemies of Christ whose exile is deserved.”⁴⁶⁵ Jews, being at once both the ancient Chosen People and untrustworthy contemporary Jews, are righteous and treacherous, *in bono* and *in malo*. Saracens, whose depiction in medieval literature is based on that of the Jews, represent a return to the superseded Mosaic Law: they can be lecherous, luxurious and cruel. The depiction of ancient Greeks having typical Saracen qualities signals that despite the favourable qualities of the Greeks, they are dangerous and should be superseded and

⁴⁶⁴ Tomasch, “Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew,” 250.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 251.

rejected. The literary depictions of Jews and Saracens provide a model for the ancient Greek of medieval literature, who is treacherous, noble and the agent by which Rome, and Christian empire, came into being.

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