

Geoffrey of Monmouth and the De-Judaized Crusade

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Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannie* presents Britain as the product of a de-Judaized crusade. Geoffrey's Anglo-Norman ecclesiastic and aristocratic readers were familiar with both crusading chronicles and contemporary debates about Jewish-Christian relations. Against this backdrop, a number of episodes resonate as instances of crusading rhetoric divorced from its Judaic connotations. This program is darker, more disturbing, and more fundamental than are the desires to break free of monastic modes of thought or to sow 'mischief' in the world of historiography upon which so many critics have concentrated.

Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannie* (c. 1138), most scholars of medieval historiography would seem to agree, is revolutionary in its rejection of the Augustinian and monastic worldview, in which God directs human affairs, and its embrace of a more Virgilian, erotic, and secular approach to history.¹ In arguing this case, Robert Hanning, for instance, points out that 'Geoffrey could easily have found a model for his opening section in the book of Exodus, but at no point does he intimate a parallel between his own narrative and salvation history',² an observation whose force derives from the commonplace comparison of their subjects with the Israelites by Bede, Gildas, and Nennius before him.³

¹ Antonia Gransden remarks that in King Stephen's reign 'only Geoffrey of Monmouth abandoned the Christian intention of historical writing' (*Historical Writing in England c. 550–c. 1307* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 187); see further Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain: From Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), pp. 121–72, and Francis Ingledew, 'The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History: The Case of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*', *Speculum*, 69 (1994), 665–704.

² Hanning, p. 157.

³ Gildas, for instance, says that reading the Book of Exodus prompted him to write of Britain's woes (*The Ruin of Britain and Other Works*, ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom (London: Phillimore, 1978), I. 3–4: see the Index of Biblical Quotations, p. 156), and goes on to compare the martyr Alban's leading of a thousand men to a divine sanctuary across a river to the crossing of the Jordan (XI. 1).

The lure of identifying secularisation in twelfth-century works is perhaps too strong to resist, but as its medieval readers surely recognized, the *Historia*'s affinities with decidedly regressive histories of very recent events in Palestine were at least as powerful as were those with recent British histories.

This article traces those affinities, arguing that the *Historia regum Britannie* presents Britain as the product of a crusade that is supposedly purified of its inherently Judaic connotations. Geoffrey's British creation responds to an anxiety about the 'certain Judaization of Christian thought, at least as concerns the Holy War' that Paul Rousset identified in 1945 as an inherent element of crusade ideology.⁴ Rousset here refers to crusade propaganda's presentation of the crusade as the historical fulfilment of Old Testament eschatological prophecies and its focus on the terrestrial Jerusalem, site of the Jews' fallen temple, rather than the heavenly city.⁵ Thus, while Geoffrey employs rhetoric with powerful crusading resonances, he strips it of its contemporary and necessarily Judaic connotations. Brutus, for instance, leads an 'exodus' from slavery to freedom not in Jerusalem, embodiment of Jewish carnality, but rather in the *patria* of Britain. It is Geoffrey's attempt to write Israel wholly out of historical consciousness that generates what we have understood as his program of secularisation – a program that is much darker, more disturbing, and, I would argue, more fundamental than are the desires to break free of monastic modes of thought or to sow 'mischief' in the world of historiography upon which so many critics have concentrated.⁶

The *Historia regum Britannie*'s crusading rhetoric will occupy us fully in due course, but we need not even appeal to that work's content to identify the

⁴ *Les Origines et les Caractères de la Première Croisade* (Geneva: Albert Kundig, 1945), p. 191 (my translation).

⁵ This is something of a commonplace of crusade historiography; e.g., Paul Alphandéry, 'Les Citations Bibliques chez les Historiens de la Première Croisade', *Revue de L'Histoire des Religions*, 99 (1929), 139–57 (p. 141); Rousset, *Les Origines*, pp. 97–100, 187–92; and Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), pp. 135–52.

⁶ On Galfridian 'mischief' see, for example, Christopher Brooke, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth as a Historian', in *Church and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to C. R. Cheney On his 70th Birthday*, ed. C. N. L. Brooke and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 77–91 (Geoffrey 'can have intended nothing but mockery and mischief' (p. 82)), and Valerie I. J. Flint, 'The *Historia Regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth: Parody and Its Purpose. A Suggestion', *Speculum*, 54 (1979), 447–68 ('mischief': pp. 454, 460, 461, and 462).

powerful crusading connotations that it surely had for its early readers. The social milieu of the *Historia*'s intended audience, and the works with which it would be juxtaposed in many of its manuscripts, first point us to these connotations. In writing the *Historia*, Geoffrey sought to ingratiate himself with a group of Anglo-Norman aristocrats closely aligned with the conquest of Jerusalem so fresh in communal memory. The manuscripts of the *Historia* record four forms of dedications: one omits the names; the others are to Robert, Earl of Gloucester; to Robert and Waleran, Count of Meulan; and to King Stephen I and Robert.⁷ All three of these figures had close ties to the crusade. Stephen was son of Stephen of Blois (who infamously fled the east before the sack of Antioch, but redeemed himself by taking the cross again in 1100);⁸ both Stephen and Robert were nephews of Robert of Normandy and cousins of Robert of Flanders, two other major leaders of the First Crusade;⁹ and about a decade after the completion of the *Historia*, Waleran would join Louis VII on the failed Second Crusade.¹⁰ Anglo-Norman polity was by nature indebted to the same impulses that brought about the First Crusade. Both the Norman Conquest and the crusade, after all, were instrumental to the papacy's reformist programs, the former even being

⁷ The fullest accounts of the dedications and their implications for dating are David N. Dumville, 'An Early Text of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* and the Circulation of Some Latin Histories in Twelfth-Century Normandy', *Arthurian Literature*, 4 (1985), 1–36 (pp. 19–29); and Julia C. Crick, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth, IV: Dissemination and Reception in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1991), pp. 113–20.

⁸ James A. Brundage, 'An Errant Crusader: Stephen of Blois', *Traditio*, 16 (1960), 380–95. That the dedication to Robert and Stephen survives only in Bern, Burgerbibliothek MS 568 might lead some readers, especially those who see the *Historia* as critiquing Stephen (as did one of *Parergon*'s reviewers of my article; see also note 36 below), to dismiss its importance as evidence that Geoffrey sought Stephen's favour. But the dedication remains a historical fact. Moreover, as Dumville has remarked, this unique survival 'is no indication that the branch of the textual history which it represents failed to circulate, as has sometimes been concluded' (p. 17); given the political turmoil of the era, copies with this dedication would surely have been particularly susceptible to destruction and censorship.

⁹ John S. P. Tatlock, 'Certain Contemporaneous Matters in Geoffrey of Monmouth', *Speculum*, 6 (1931), 206–24 (p. 210).

¹⁰ See David Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins: The Roots and Branches of Power in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 65–69.

declared a holy war by the pope's grant of the banner.¹¹ Moreover, 'a unitary sense of Frankishness became an element of crusade ideology', leading Marcus Bull to identify 'interesting parallels here with the manner in which the conquest of England was retrospectively explained and justified by notions of Norman prowess and readiness to fight for the church'.¹² Geoffrey thus had good reason to call upon crusading rhetoric in narrating the history of British kings, a program that would be materialized in the *Historia's* juxtaposition with crusading narratives in a number of manuscripts.¹³

But the attention of Geoffrey's social and intellectual milieu was not wholly occupied by the crusade to Jerusalem: there was plenty of room in their thinking and their books for the Jews, as well. I am not referring to the community that was beginning to form in Oxford as Geoffrey undertook his book in that city, for his statement that 'Britain is inhabited by five races of people, the Norman-French, the Britons, the Saxons, the Picts and the Scots' (p. 54; chap. 5),¹⁴ after all, is most likely in keeping with the mentality of his aristocratic audience in its occlusion of their neighbours. William the Conqueror had brought Jews to England in 1066 to serve as money-lenders to the crown, and by the 1130s they seem to have been establishing a community in Geoffrey's home.¹⁵ Rather, I am referring to the 'idea' of the Jews, that is, to the Hebrew language, and Christianity's relationship with Israel, topics upon which intellectuals expended

¹¹ See Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of the Crusade*, trans. Marshall W. Baldwin and Walter Goffart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 57–94 on the reform movement and the crusade, pp. 154–55 on the conquest of England.

¹² *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade: The Limousin and Gascony, c. 970–c. 1130* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), p. 7.

¹³ Crick cites the *Historia's* 'affinity with crusading histories' as manifested in its manuscripts (*Dissemination and Reception*, p. 219); see also the list of works concerning the East that appear more than once in *Historia* manuscripts, p. 308, and the manuscripts listed in Crick's *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth, III: A Summary Catalogue of the Manuscripts* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1989), index, s.v. 'Crusades and the East' and 'Mahomet and Islam'.

¹⁴ Translations are from *The History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), and are cited by page number; the Latin is from *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth, I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS. 568*, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: Brewer, 1984), and is cited by chapter.

¹⁵ There is evidence for their existence in Oxford by 1141, but it is second-hand: see Cecil Roth, *The Jews of Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), pp. 1–3, and Kevin T. Streit, 'The Expansion of the English Jewish Community in the Reign of King Stephen', *Albion*, 25 (1993), 177–92 (pp. 188–89).

much energy in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.¹⁶ In particular, some of the earliest examples of the medieval genre of the ‘dispute’ or ‘debate’ between a Christian and a Jew are strongly and directly connected to Geoffrey’s milieu.

‘One of the most influential medieval polemics against the Jews’ was the *Disputatio Iudei et Christiani* (c. 1093) written by Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster, with a little help from his mentor, Anselm of Bec (soon to become Archbishop of Canterbury).¹⁷ Twenty of its 32 extant copies date from the twelfth century; Jacob ben Reuben incorporated passages from it into his own Hebrew disputation *Milhamot Ha-Shem* (‘Wars of the Lord’, c. 1170); and Alan of Lille would plagiarize it in his *Contra Hereticos* (c. 1185–95). Gilbert, says R. W. Southern, ‘belonged to the distinguished family which, of all others, had the most intimate connexion with the monastery at Le Bec’,¹⁸ in whose library at least two of the earliest copies of Geoffrey’s *Historia* would be found a few decades after Gilbert had been Anselm’s student there.¹⁹ This connection between the *Historia* and Gilbert’s beloved Bec shows clearly, if it were needed, the overlap between the ecclesiastical and aristocratic milieux I have been discussing, for it is very likely, as David Dumville has suggested, that it was Philippe de Harcourt, principal dependant of Waleran of Meulan and chancellor of King Stephen in 1140–41, who transmitted Geoffrey’s history to the monastery.²⁰

¹⁶ See, for instance, Aryeh Grabois, ‘The *Hebraica Veritas* and Jewish-Christian Intellectual Relations in the Twelfth Century’, *Speculum*, 50 (1975), 613–34, and Jeremy Cohen, ‘Scholarship and Intolerance in the Medieval Academy: The Study and Evaluation of Judaism in European Christendom’, *American Historical Review*, 91 (1986), 592–613.

¹⁷ David Berger, ‘Gilbert Crispin, Alan of Lille and Jacob ben Reuben: A Study in the Transmission of Medieval Polemic’, *Speculum*, 59 (1974), 34–47 (p. 34), the source of the information about Alan and Jacob in the next sentence. On Anselm’s involvement, see R. W. Southern, ‘St Anselm and Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster’, *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, 3 (1954), 78–115 (pp. 81–92). The work has now been edited by Anna Sapir Abulafia in *The Works of Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster*, ed. Abulafia and G. R. Evans (London: Oxford University Press, 1986), which contains the information about the extant manuscripts.

¹⁸ Southern, p. 78.

¹⁹ That is, the copy that Robert of Torigni showed to Henry of Huntingdon in January 1139 (which provides the *terminus ante quem* for the initial completion of the work), and Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, MS B.P.L. 20 (Crick’s no. 76): see Dumville, ‘An Early Text of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae*’, pp. 2–6.

²⁰ Dumville, pp. 25–26.

Gilbert Crispin's influence was also manifest in the *Dialogus inter Christianum et Iudaeum de fide Catholica*, whose anonymous author 'must have been connected in some way or other with Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical circles'.²¹ This work was dedicated to Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, the 'man of the greatest religion and wisdom' (p. 170; chap. 109) who, Geoffrey reports, requested that he write the prophecies of Merlin. The probable origin of this dialogue was Laon, where the other Anselm oversaw the theological school, and with whose intellectual currents Anglo-Norman aristocratic circles had close connections. When nine canons of Laon toured England in 1113, they visited not only with Alexander, then still a member of the Bishop of Salisbury's household (he would become archdeacon of Salisbury in 1121 and bishop of Lincoln in 1123), but also with, in J. S. P. Tatlock's phrase, 'persons of quality' who had important roles at the heart of power, including the chief officer of the king's household.²² The traditions that these canons encountered on their journey, moreover, 'are of the first importance in the history of Arthurian matters': these visitors were informed that they were in *terra Arturi*, were shown Arthur's chair and oven, and witnessed an argument about whether King Arthur was still alive.

The imagined audience of the *Historia*, then, had an investment both material and pious in the crusade chronicles that were then circulating, and were also conversant with the debates about the Jews emanating from northern France. Awareness of these genres would have sharpened their sensitivity to Geoffrey's program of divesting rhetoric with strong crusading or Judaic overtones from its original referent. He instead imbues his book with what we have come to call, rather too generally, a 'secularized' or 'anti-Augustinian' tone. Take, for instance, Geoffrey's account of the celestial wonders that occurred upon Aurelius's poisoning:

While these things were happening at Winchester, there appeared a star of great magnitude and brilliance, with a single beam shining from it. At the end of this beam was a ball of fire, spread out in the shape of a

²¹ Anna Sapir Abulafia, 'Jewish-Christian Disputations and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance', *Journal of Medieval History*, 15 (1989), 105–25 (p. 123). This article is the source of this paragraph's materials on the dedication to Alexander and association with Laon (pp. 122–23).

²² 'The English Journey of the Laon Canons', *Speculum*, 8 (1933), 454–65 (p. 458); the remarks on Arthur quoted next are on p. 455.

dragon. From the dragon's mouth stretched forth two rays of light, one of which seemed to extend its length beyond the latitude of Gaul, while the second turned towards the Irish Sea and split up into seven smaller shafts of light. (pp. 200–01; chap. 133)

Tatlock comments: 'As to comets and appalling appearances in the sky ... one can hardly open a chronicler without finding their match, usually felt to be vaguely significant.'²³ But after 1095, the significance accorded such events was quite specific, and usually related precisely to events in the Levant: nearly every crusade chronicler associated the celestial wonders of the late eleventh century with the Christian victory in Jerusalem.²⁴

Taken on its own, the Merlin episode would not bear the interpretive weight I am placing upon it; if it had been anomalous, even those twelfth-century readers who did identify this revised crusade might well have forgotten it quickly. But this is not the case at all. Merlin's subsequent call for Uther, the king's brother, to lead a campaign against the Saxons to avenge Aurelius's death as betokened by the celestial dragon, and Uther's subsequent defeat of the Saxons 'by the grace of Christ' (p. 202; chap. 134), continue the programmatic invocation of crusading rhetoric (which will occupy us further in due course). But of course, here and elsewhere such rhetoric is divorced from the divinely sanctioned liberation of Jerusalem, its source of power in crusade chronicles. As a result, Geoffrey's treatment of Merlin has recently been identified as an 'overdetermined expression of the felt need for a key to post-biblical secular history', without any notice of the eschatological and crusading resonance of the magician's abilities.²⁵ On the contrary, the earliest readers of the *Historia* were conditioned to see such abilities as manifestations of divine (if post-biblical) sanction; what would have struck them as remarkable, though, is the replacement of Jerusalem with Britain as the site of this Christian desire, an

²³ *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae and Its Early Vernacular Versions* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950), p. 369.

²⁴ On this phenomenon see especially John O. Ward, 'The First Crusade as Disaster: Apocalypticism and the Genesis of the Crusading Movement', in *Medieval Studies: In Honour of Avrom Saltman*, ed. Bat-Sheva Albert and others (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1995), pp. 253–92, and, for its enormous impact on the life of a single soul, this article's companion, my 'Obadyah the Proselyte and the Judaizing Crusade', forthcoming in the journal *Medieval Encounters*.

²⁵ Ingledew, 'The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History', p. 667.

early instance of what Ernst H. Kantorowicz identified as the ‘new secularism’ of the twelfth century, which thrived ‘on ethical values transferred back from the *patria* in heaven to the polities on earth’.²⁶ Geoffrey participates in this program, as R. William Leckie has shown, in large part by granting the Britons a much longer and more extensive reign over Britain, the *patria*, than that described by earlier historians, and by casting the Saxons and Romans as cruel foreign invaders.²⁷ However, the impact of this revolutionary British historiography is not confined to the issue of the passage of dominion, for Geoffrey also employs it so as to cash in on crusading prestige while he substitutes this British, non-Judaic *patria* for the crusades’ *raison d’être*, Jerusalem, site of the Jews’ Temple.

The inextricable relationship between Geoffrey’s projects of rewriting British history and of establishing an insular de-Judaized crusade is most clearly manifested in an episode recently identified as foundational to the *Historia*’s anti-Augustinianism. The foundation narrative of Brutus’s wanderings from Troy to Albion, amounting to a full-scale institution of what Francis Ingledew calls ‘the Book of Troy’ within British historical consciousness, conjures the exodus, that biblical prefiguration of the crusade. The outline of the Brutus legend appears in the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum* attributed to ‘Nennius’, and fantasies of Trojan genealogy had long been promulgated among western clans and nations. Geoffrey, however, expands on it dramatically, in large part by teasing out the inherent similarities between the books of Virgil and Moses.²⁸

Brutus, Aeneas’s great-grandson, so the story goes, was expelled from Italy for mistakenly killing his father in a hunting accident. The Trojan exile journeys to Greece, where he discovers a community of his countrymen whom the Greek king, Pandrasus, has enslaved. Brutus quickly becomes their leader, and demands that Pandrasus free the Trojans. Appalled by this presumption, the Greek king prepares to crush his slaves by force of might. The Trojans defeat their captors in the ensuing battle on the banks of the River Akalon, but this is not enough

²⁶ *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 235.

²⁷ *The Passage of Dominion: Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Periodization of Insular History in the Twelfth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 29–72.

²⁸ Edmond Faral’s discussion of the Brutus narrative delineates its many debts to Virgil’s *Aeneid* (*La légende arthurienne: Études et documents*, 3 vols (Paris: Champion, 1929), II, 69–92).

for total victory; Pandrasus then besieges the castle Sparatinum, where he thinks the Trojans are holding his brother Antigonus captive. The desperate Trojans in Sparatinum send a messenger to seek help from Brutus; since the leader does not have enough troops to battle his enemies, he ‘relied instead upon a cunning plan’ (p. 59; chap. 11), forcing a Greek prisoner, Anacletus, to tell his countrymen’s sentinels outside the castle that he has rescued Antigonus and hidden him in a nearby forest. When the sentinels go to retrieve Antigonus, the Trojans slaughter them, proceeding to Sparatinum, where they massacre the Greeks after Brutus has seized Pandrasus’s tent. Brutus thus wins the Trojans’ freedom, as well as the defeated Greek king’s respect (and daughter): ‘I take some comfort in the knowledge that I am about to give my daughter to a young man of such great prowess ... Who other but he could have freed from their chains the exiles of Troy, when they were enslaved by so many mighty princes?’ (p. 63; chap. 15). In the Trojans’ subsequent wanderings, Diana grants him the island of Albion, the *promissam insulam* (p. 71; chap. 20), which he and the Trojans eventually occupy, and which Brutus names ‘Britain’ after himself.

The compelling parallels between Brutus and Moses, the Trojans and Israelites, and Britain and the Holy Land have prompted a number of scholars to claim that Geoffrey seeks ‘to characterise the Britons as God’s chosen people’.²⁹ Such claims carefully cite as precedents the invocations of the ‘chosen people’ motif by Gildas, Bede, and Nennius. However, as Hanning notes in the remark cited at the beginning of this article, Geoffrey quite explicitly does not draw the connection to the exodus that such scholars so readily identify. Here, we have a solid basis for identifying a purposeful silence that calls for recognition – the refusal to draw connections that both historical circumstance and genre demand. This silence is all the more powerful because it registers against not only the Gildan British tradition, upon which scholars have focused, but also the crusading accounts that were being widely disseminated when Geoffrey was writing. In Baldric of Dol’s account, for instance, Urban II tells his listeners at Clermont that the children of Israel ‘prefigured you in the crossing

²⁹ Fiona Tolhurst, ‘The Britons as Hebrews, Romans, and Normans: Geoffrey of Monmouth’s British Epic and Reflections of Empress Matilda’, *Arthuriana*, 8(4) (Winter 1998), 69–87 (p. 69). Tolhurst here rehearses a point often made; e.g., David C. Fowler, ‘Some Biblical Influences on Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Historiography’, *Traditio*, 14 (1958), 378–85 (p. 379 and note).

of the Red Sea’;³⁰ likewise, in Robert of Reims’s chronicle, which appears together with Geoffrey’s *Historia* in three manuscripts, Bohemond asks, ‘O warriors of God and unfailing pilgrims of the Holy Sepulcher, who has led you to this pilgrimage site, if not he who led the sons of Israel from Egypt through the Red Sea, which he dried up for their footsteps?’³¹

Even if twelfth-century readers did not recognize the exodus motif, they would have found in Geoffrey’s *Historia* a number of parallels with crusade chronicles, from the use of the Greek prisoner to set a trap, which recalls the means by which Bohemond secured victory in Antioch;³² to the siege of Sparatinum, an event that would have reminded his readers of the victories at Nicaea, Antioch, and Jerusalem;³³ to the slaughter of the Greeks in the River Akalon, an event (and name) that re-enacts another famous battle at a river near

³⁰ Baldric of Dol, *Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens occidentaux* (hereafter *Recueil*), 5 vols (Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1844–95), IV (1879), 14; ‘The Speech of Urban: The Version of Baldric of Dol’, trans. A. C. Krey, in *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Material*, ed. Edward Peters, 2nd edn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), p. 31 (hereafter Peters). The use of the exodus in crusading rhetoric receives ample treatment in D. H. Green, *The Millstätter Exodus: A Crusading Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 228–71.

³¹ *Recueil*, III (1866), 747; my translation. The manuscripts that include both Geoffrey’s and Robert’s histories are Paris, BN MS Lat. 5508 (Crick’s no. 186), and Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MSS Pal. Lat. 962 and Vat. Lat. 2005 (Crick’s nos. 196, 199; the latter is a very early manuscript, possibly mid-twelfth century).

³² At Antioch in 1098, Bohemond received the assistance of a Turkish chief who sent his son to the crusading leader as a hostage before the crusaders’ siege of the city as assurance that he would betray it to the crusaders (Faral, *La légende arthurienne*, II, 73–74; see in general Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades, Volume One: The First Crusade and the Foundations of the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), pp. 231–35).

³³ ‘The earliest historical medieval sieges to be fully described are those of Nicaea, Antioch and Jerusalem by the crusaders in 1097–9’, reports Tatlock, who goes on to note: ‘The most notable point in Geoffrey’s siege of Sparatinum is the use of *Greus ignis* by the Trojan defenders [p. 58; chap. 11], probably poured from the walls to burn the wooden siege-engines and the miners working them. This was unknown in the West before the first crusade. ... It appears constantly (though not always so named) in crusade-chronicles’ (*Legendary History*, pp. 322–23).

Antioch.³⁴ The absence of Jerusalem and the Israelites from Geoffrey's Brutus narrative was already striking, given the invocation of the standard exodus motif; it now appears all the more so in light of the alignment of Brutus's journey with that of the crusaders, who were prefigured, after all, by the Israelites en route to Palestine.

The Galfridian project of de-Judaizing the crusade reaches its pinnacle, unsurprisingly, in the trajectory of the *Historia* that focuses on the House of Constantine and the reign of Arthur. Arthur's great enemy Lucius, Procurator of the Roman Republic, calls upon 'the Kings of the Orient' to join in battle against the Christian king (p. 236; chap. 163); the ensuing campaign of Lucius, Mustensar of Africa, Ali Fatima of Spain, et al., 'is an inverted crusade', notes Tatlock, 'with reigning sovereigns of various peoples allied to recover an alienated region. On the other hand Arthur, fighting the orientals, has himself the nimbus of a crusader without ever leaving the Atlantic.'³⁵ The force of Tatlock's rhetoric is precise; the *Historia* unmistakably presents its heroes as righteous crusaders, and their enemies as vaguely associated with Islam, but the very purpose of the crusades – the reclamation of the Holy Land – disappears within that shadowy landscape surrounded by the Atlantic.

This project of Britainising the crusade, as it were, had already taken hold in the earlier episode of Aurelius's speech before the Britons' battle against Vortigern and Hengist, which echoes Pope Urban's rhetoric and matches its effectiveness. Aurelius, having landed in Britain to avenge Vortigern's betrayal of his father Constantine, urges his men towards battle against the traitor, who has befriended the hated Saxons. The future king cites the enemy's sully of pure Christian blood and of British lands:

³⁴ The Trojans' massacre of the Greeks recalls the battle on the road to St Symeon on 6 March 1098, in which as many as 1500 Turks were drowned in the river Orontes. In coining the name 'Akalon' (no such river exists in Greece), Geoffrey probably distorted those of important sites of the First Crusade: Askalon, Accaron (Acre), and perhaps 'Moscholo', which Stephen of Blois seems to have thought was the name of the Orontes: see Faral, *La légende arthurienne*, II, 73–74, and, adding 'Accaron' to Faral's proposals, Tatlock, *Legendary History*, p. 112. See Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, pp. 226–28 on this battle, and 216–17n on the crusaders' confusion over the name Orontes (though this note does not mention 'Moscholo').

³⁵ Tatlock, 'Certain Contemporaneous Matters', p. 220; this article as a whole shows that the *Historia* exhibits 'minute knowledge' about Muslims that 'is unparalleled, in a British writer at any rate, before Geoffrey' (p. 207).

there is one aspect of all this which everyone must regret: that this evil man, through the heathen whom he invited over, has exiled the nobility, laid waste a fertile country, destroyed the holy churches and virtually obliterated Christianity from one sea to the other [*fertilem patriam deuastauit, sacras ecclesias destruxit, et christianitatem fere a mari usque ad mare deleuit*]. Act, then, like true men, my fellow-countrymen [*ciues*], and take your first vengeance upon him by whose agency all these things have come about. After that we must turn our arms against the enemies who beset us, and free our homeland [*patriam*] from their hungry maw! (p. 188; chap. 119)

Aurelius's hatred of the Saxons strongly calls forth the chronicle accounts of Urban II's appeal to liberate Jerusalem:

An accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God ... has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire; ... it has either entirely destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of its own religion.³⁶

But of course the echo is especially striking in that it is now the *patria* of Britain rather than the Holy Land that has been sullied – now that the crusade can be enacted without the need for Christians to cross the channel.

Aurelius's emphasis on cleansing the homeland of its invaders calls forth a particular aspect of crusade rhetoric's reliance upon Old Testament models in general and the exodus in particular, one that is explicitly anti-Judaic – the motif of 'out-doing the Israelites', which becomes more prominent in the *Historia* as it progresses. According to Guibert of Nogent, the crusaders are fighting 'to cleanse the churches and propagate the faith', as Aurelius's soldiers would do

³⁶ 'The Speech of Urban: The Version of Robert of Reims', trans. D. C. Munro, in Peters, p. 27; *Recueil*, III, 727. According to Fulcher of Chartres, the pontiff develops this emphasis by lamenting that the Turks 'have overthrown churches, and have laid waste (*vastando*) God's kingdom' (*Recueil*, III, 324; *The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres, Book I*, trans. Martha E. McGinty, in Peters, p. 53). Sián Echard remarks that Geoffrey's depiction of Vortigern resembles John of Salisbury's description (*Policraticus*, VI. 18) of King Stephen as 'a foreign man ... whose cause was founded on iniquity and perfidy' (*Arthurian Narrative in the Latin Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 44), which, if granted, offers compelling evidence that British commentators in Geoffrey's wake adapted crusading rhetoric to insular causes. But see also above, note 8.

a few decades later, while the Maccabees had fought merely ‘for rituals and the Temple’ and ‘for circumcision and abstinence from pork’;³⁷ other second-generation chroniclers of the First Crusade, like Fulcher of Chartres (‘these [Franks] are not unequal to those Israelites or Maccabees’³⁸) and Baldric of Dol (the Christians will engage the enemy ‘even more successfully than did the sons of Jacob of old’³⁹), likewise considered it imperative to distance themselves from any sense of implication in the ‘Jewishness’ of their new exodus.

A pronouncement by Bishop Eldadus after the defeat of Vortigern (the battle Aurelius had urged upon the Britons), which includes the *Historia*’s only reference to the Jews as a people,⁴⁰ powerfully gives voice to this anxiety about the Judaized crusade. After the battle, Hengist’s son, Octa, asks for mercy from the victorious Christians. In responding, Eldadus employs the motif of ‘out-doing the Israelites’ with specific regard, as in the crusade chronicle, to Joshua’s ancient campaigns to re-claim the Promised Land:

Aurelius was filled with compassion; and he ordered a decision to be made on what should be done with the Saxons. When the others had expressed conflicting opinions, Bishop Eldadus rose to his feet again and gave his own advice in the following words: ‘The Gibeonites came of their own free will to seek mercy of the Children of Israel, and they received that mercy. Shall we Christians be harder than the Jews, and refuse mercy to these men? It is mercy they are asking for: let them have mercy, I say. (pp. 193–94; chap. 126)⁴¹

³⁷ Quoted in Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, p. 141. Green, *The Millstätter Exodus*, pp. 250–58, discusses ‘the fact that the Christian army regarded itself as more than just repeating the deeds of Israel and, instead, as transcending this earlier achievement, fulfilling those prophecies whose realisation had not been granted to the Hebrews’, a phenomenon whose basis is the ‘conviction of superiority [that] lies at the heart of the relationship between Christianity and Israel’ (p. 250).

³⁸ *Recueil*, III, 319; trans. McGinty, in Peters, p. 48 (brackets McGinty’s). For other remarkable instances in Guibert’s works, see Riley-Smith, p. 141.

³⁹ *Recueil*, IV, 15; trans. Krey, in Peters, p. 32.

⁴⁰ I say ‘the Jews as a people’ to distinguish such rhetoric from the many places where Geoffrey establishes chronology by mentioning who is ruling or prophesying in Israel, or where characters mention figures from the Old Testament.

⁴¹ The story of the Gibeonites is in Joshua 9. Neil Wright argues that Geoffrey might here be influenced by Gildas: ‘Geoffrey of Monmouth and Gildas Revisited’, *Arthurian Literature*, 4 (1985), 155–63 (pp. 159–60). If this is indeed the case, then it is all the more striking that Geoffrey suggests that the British are God’s new ‘chosen people’ in such a cryptic way, when Gildas had offered a model for clarity in this respect.

Eldadus's premise here is that 'Jewishness' is a pollution to be purged, a notion that was becoming so central in the crusade chronicles circulating in the years surrounding the appearance of the *Historia*.

Archbishop Dubricius's speech before the Battle of Bath is the culmination of Geoffrey's program of employing crusading rhetoric for decidedly British, rather than Judaic, ends. In doing so, it cements the importance of the fact that *Jerusalem* was the usual referent of Aurelius's term, *patria*. In the wake of Kantorowicz's discussion this episode has become, together with the *Chanson de Roland*, a *locus classicus* for those interested in early expressions of crusading ideology outside crusading chronicles.⁴² Following upon King Arthur's own exhortation of his troops:

the saintly Dubricius, Archbishop of the City of the Legions, climbed to the top of a hill and cried out in a loud voice: 'You who have been marked with the cross (*professione insigniti*) of the Christian faith, be mindful of the loyalty you owe to your fatherland and to your fellow countrymen! If they are slaughtered as a result of this treacherous behaviour by the pagans, they will be an everlasting reproach to you, unless in the meantime you do your utmost to defend them! Fight for your fatherland (*pro patria uestra*), and if you are killed suffer death willingly for your country's sake. That in itself is victory and a cleansing of the soul. Whoever suffers death for the sake of his brothers offers himself as a living sacrifice to God and follows with firm footsteps behind Christ Himself, who did not disdain to lay down His life for His brothers. It follows that if any one of you shall suffer death in this war, that death shall be to him as a penance and an absolution for all his sins, given always that he goes to meet it unflinchingly.' (p. 216; chap. 147)

The crusading resonances are clear and powerful. The phrase *professione insigniti* calls forth the etymology of the word 'crusader', 'one signed with the cross'. The archbishop's promise of absolution and emphasis on 'brotherly love', too, echo the defining characteristics of the crusade, as articulated in Pope Urban II's letter to the Spaniards: 'No one must doubt that if he dies on this expedition

⁴² See Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, pp. 239–41, where he remarks that Dubricius's speech 'was perhaps patterned after sermons of crusade preachers' (p. 241); this has since become a commonplace, but usually without acknowledgment of Kantorowicz.

for the love of God and his brothers his sins will surely be forgiven and he will gain a share of eternal life through the most compassionate mercy of our God.⁴³

Yet even this, Geoffrey's most explicit appropriation of crusading rhetoric, itself the culmination of an extensive program, does not serve the idea of the Holy Land or even the heavenly Jerusalem that awaits the Christian warriors. Two historical and intellectual developments of the early twelfth century help us pinpoint the specifically de-Judaizing effect of Geoffrey's historiographical project, which has been identified simply, and inadequately, as one of 'secularisation' and 'mischief'. First, immediately after the victory of 1099, propagandists frequently juxtaposed the city in Palestine with the Heavenly Jerusalem in 'a rather unsubtle attempt to exploit the brilliant aura surrounding the First Crusade and the regained Jerusalem to the profit of the Church's internal problems', as Norman Housley observes, going on to cite the second historical development pertinent to our topic: 'By 1128 this was no longer possible, as the aura was fading, nor was it necessary, as the Church was gaining enough confidence in the juristic validity of its internal holy wars to dispense with the camouflage.'⁴⁴

Housley sees this latter development at work in Orderic Vitalis's *Ecclesiastical History* of c. 1135, which reports that in 1096 Count Helias of Maine had taken great umbrage at William Rufus's designs on his lands. Helias, Orderic relates, did not flinch from telling King William that he would defend Maine from the king's encroachments, a war that replaced his intended crusade to Jerusalem:

My desire was to fight against the infidel in the name of the Lord, but now it appears I have a battle nearer home against the enemies of Christ. Every man who opposes truth and justice proves himself an enemy of God, who is truth itself and the sun of justice. ... I will not abandon the cross of our Saviour which I have taken up as a pilgrim, but will have it engraved on my shield and helmet and all my arms; on my saddle and

⁴³ 'Urban's Letter to the Counts of Besalú, Empurias, Roussilon, and Cerdaña and Their Followers', trans. Louise Riley-Smith and Jonathan Riley-Smith, in Peters, p. 46. Cf. Kantorowicz, p. 241. On 'brotherly love' and the crusade, see Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'Crusading as an Act of Love', *History*, 65 (1980), 177–92; on the promise of absolution, see Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'Death on the First Crusade', in *The End of Strife*, ed. David Loades (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984), pp. 14–31.

⁴⁴ 'Jerusalem and the Development of the Crusade Idea, 1099–1128', in *The Horns of Hattin*, ed. B. Z. Kedar (London: Variorum, 1992), pp. 27–40 (p. 36).

bridle also I will stamp the sign of the holy cross. Fortified by this symbol I will move against the enemies of peace and right, and defend Christian lands in battle. So my horse and my arms will be clearly marked with the sign of the cross, and all the foes who attack me will fight against a soldier of Christ.⁴⁵

Insofar as the Saxons can be called ‘heathens’, Bishop Dubricius is closer to Urban at Clermont than to Orderic’s Count Helias. But more important is the fact that both Geoffrey and Orderic transfer the idea of fighting under the sign of the cross to western lands, far removed from the Levant, and in neither case are the Muslims the enemy. Even if Orderic evinces a confidence that enabled Christian propagandists to ‘dispense with the camouflage’ that was Jerusalem, he still aligns Helias’s threats explicitly with the recent campaigns in the east; the war in France takes on the veneer of the one in Jerusalem. Yet Geoffrey, never one to be accused of lacking confidence in any arena, dispenses even with this camouflage. The warriors who took the cross and achieved absolution on the battlefield in Jerusalem, he implies, were merely repeating the earlier heroics of Arthur’s men. It is as if Geoffrey were positing Britain’s glorious past so as to offer a legitimating model for the crusade, one that can substitute for the Old Testament model favoured by so many other historians of the early 1100s.

There are great and obvious ironies in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s response to the crusade and to the re-institution of Jerusalem, the earthly *patria*, as primary locus of Christian desire. For one, the parallels between the Israelites’ and Trojans’ forms of exodus are undermined by the simple fact that the former were returning from exile to their true homeland, whereas the latter were exiled from their home in order to settle Albion. The *patria* of Britain, in other words, is in this context a diasporic settlement, akin more to the status of the Jews living in Oxford than to the ancient Israelites in whose journey to Jerusalem Christians saw a figure for baptism.⁴⁶ Furthermore, at a structural level, the historiographical mode of the *Historia regum Britannie* is nothing if not literalist, a mode inextricably connected with the Jews in Christian thought from the days of St Paul forward. The prominence of both crusade propaganda and the renewed

⁴⁵ *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969–80), V (1975), 231; discussed in Housley, p. 37.

⁴⁶ On the exodus and baptism, see, e.g., Jean Daniélou, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers*, trans. Wulstan Hibberd (London: Burns & Oates, 1960), pp. 175–201.

Christian interest in the *Hebraica Veritas* brought such ‘Judaizing’ modes of thought into the mainstream of the increasingly anxious intellectual life of the twelfth century,⁴⁷ a phenomenon in which we must now identify Geoffrey’s project, as well, as a major player. In privileging the ‘letter’ of history, divorced from the Augustinian paradigm of the cities of God and man, after all, Geoffrey ‘Judaizes’. For Geoffrey, Troy is the origin of the de-Judaized crusade that he is at pains to institute on British soil, whereas for Augustine, by contrast, it manifests the ‘the city of man’ together with the two Jewish cities par excellence, Cain’s Enoch and the terrestrial Jerusalem.⁴⁸

The carnal, erotic impulses traditionally associated with such Judaizing literalism were brutally manifested in the crusaders’ slaughter of Jewish communities in the Rhineland in 1096, as they headed towards Jerusalem.⁴⁹ The conquest of Jerusalem itself, too, was marked by a horrifying massacre, celebrated by Fulcher in verse: ‘With drawn swords, our people ran through the city; / Nor did they spare anyone, not even those pleading for mercy. / The crowd was struck to the ground, just as rotten fruit / Falls from shaken branches, and acorns from a wind-blown oak’ – a massacre, he stresses, that ‘cleansed’ the city.⁵⁰ According to Ibn al-Qalanisi’s *Damascus Chronicle*, the Jews of Jerusalem sought refuge in their chief synagogue, but the Christians, since they believed they Jews had helped the Muslims, torched the house of worship, killing them all.⁵¹ By the time of the Crusade to Constantinople of 1204, when

⁴⁷ See the works cited in note 16 above, and my article on Obadyah the Proselyte. A major reassessment of the status of the literal (though without reference to ‘Judaizing’) is Rita Copeland, *Pedagogy, Intellectuals, and Dissent in the Later Middle Ages: Lollardy and Ideas of Learning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 55–98.

⁴⁸ Augustine posits Enoch as a prototype of the city of man in *The City of God*, XV. 1, and elaborates upon the significance of its founding in XV. 5–8. On the terrestrial Jerusalem, see XV. 2. Augustine does not identify Troy per se as a ‘city of man’, but he does equate Rome’s founding by a fratricide with Enoch’s in his discussion of the cities of God and man (XV. 5), and he connects the Trojan narrative with Romulus’s fratricide in his discussion of the fall of Troy (III. 6). On the structural importance of ‘the Book of Troy’ to Geoffrey’s anti-Augustinianism, see Ingledew, ‘The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History’.

⁴⁹ Accounts of these pogroms, from both Jewish and Christian perspectives, are gathered in Peters, pp. 109–39. See especially Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 50–84.

⁵⁰ *Recueil*, III, 360; trans. McGinty, in Peters, pp. 91–92.

⁵¹ ‘The Firanj Conquer Jerusalem: The Version of Ibn al-Qalanisi’, trans. H. A. R. Gibb, in Peters, p. 275.

Geoffrey's *Historia* had become firmly ensconced in the historical imagination, Troy itself would be the city whose divine status called for redemption; a nobleman in Robert of Clari's chronicle says that Christians are seeking to conquer this land so as to re-gain Troy, which had belonged to their ancestors.⁵²

Here, as in its other manifestations, the consummation of the exodus entails the purgation of the land via the displacement and slaughter of those who came before.⁵³ And while some compelling recent post-colonial readings of the *Historia*, focusing on its treatment of the Welsh, have suggested that 'Geoffrey's colonizing historiography also invites counterconquest',⁵⁴ they must confront the fact that among the 217 extant manuscripts 'there is nothing to imply that this perceived subversiveness and ambiguity was communicated to the work's audience'.⁵⁵ Moreover, such readings are comprehensible only because the Welsh have a homeland, and the conquest is literal. It is difficult to see, though, how the *Historia* allows for Judaic counterconquest when Israel has been written out of historical consciousness altogether, and when its subjugation is enacted by the appropriation of its own narrative of liberation and conquest, the exodus, in purely Trojan terms.⁵⁶ Such, at least, are the fantasies of the leaders of those

⁵² Robert of Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Philippe Lauer (Paris: Champion, 1924), p. 102.

⁵³ On this topic see Regina M. Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 55–62.

⁵⁴ Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain, 1100–1300* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 58; cf. Patricia Clare Ingham, *Sovereign Fantasies: Arthurian Romance and the Making of Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p. 28.

⁵⁵ Crick, *Dissemination and Reception*, p. 222; the 217 manuscripts are listed in Crick, *Catalogue*, with additions in her 'Two Newly Located Manuscripts of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie*', *Arthurian Literature*, 13 (1995), 151–56. The desire to find themes 'counter' to the dominant ones of the *Historia*, or 'mischief', or 'subversiveness', permeates modern scholarship; Crick is here responding to Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 203–04.

⁵⁶ Obadyah the Proselyte's scroll, however, does seek to reclaim the exodus narrative for the Jews, and thus to turn crusading rhetoric against itself; see the final section of my article on Obadyah.

who have taken on the mantle of Pharaoh, whether they be the marauding crusaders, the leaders of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, or, not least, Geoffrey of Monmouth and his Anglo-Norman milieu.⁵⁷

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⁵⁷ I would like to thank Rita Copeland, David Wallace, John O. Ward, and the two anonymous readers for *Parergon* for helpful feedback on earlier stages of this article.