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The *Sege of Melayne* and the *Siege of Jerusalem*: National Identity, Beleaguered Christendom and Holy War during the Great Papal Schism

The question of the great papal Schism in the later fourteenth century has received less than its fair share of attention from modern cultural and literary historians.¹ This is surprising given the pointed interest of late-fourteenth century poets, chroniclers and polemicists after 1378, when after the appointment of the troublesome Urban VI in Rome, Clement VII was soon elected as antipope to settle in Avignon, triggering a pan-European schism that was to end only in 1414-18 with the Council of Constance.² In what follows I am less concerned with the Schism as a historical event in the narrow sense, with its political causes and consequences, than with the Schism's psychological impact on contemporary mentalities,³ particularly in terms of the conceptualisation of corporate identity. The Schism appears to have opened up an imaginative space, a metaphorical battleground for the articulation of a shifting, threatened sense of identity that in England was fed by a whole range of other, more localised forms of collective identitarian anxiety and conflict: social unrest and rebellion, the troublesome reign of Richard II, the stalemate with France in the war, and the rise of Lollardy—the latter sometimes understood as a direct effect of the Schism by contemporaries such as John Gower.⁴ All of this nourished a much more diffuse yet intense sense of decline and fear of an impending apocalypse at the end of the fourteenth century, in a “world [...] the which welnyh is wered oute.”⁵ Within this climate the Schism could easily become both catalyst and overarching symptom of generalised anxiety and self-doubt.

Few contemporaries addressed the question of the Schism as directly as John Gower, who repeatedly, even obsessively evokes the ‘divisioun’ of Christendom in his poetry, particularly in the Prologue to the *Confessio Amantis*.⁶ The two poems discussed in what follows, both written between the 1370s or 90s, do not thematise the split of the

papacy as such, but display a deep concern with shifting paradigms of collective identity that, I argue, resonate deeply with the Schism. Both *The Sege of Melayne*⁷ and *The Siege of Jerusalem*⁸ (hereafter *Melayne* and *Jerusalem*) attempt to react against the anxiety engendered by the internal fracture of the Christian West by means of militant crusading narratives, aiming to reconstruct a sense of unified Christian identity by pitching it against that of an imagined religious other, Saracen in the case of *Melayne*, Jewish in the case of *Jerusalem*. As argued also by proponents of constructivist theory in international relations, the idea of crusade is an extremely powerful ‘generator’ of identity in medieval culture,⁹ but is far from possessing a stable, transhistorical significance. Thus crusading itself underwent dramatic changes during this period, as has emerged from recent discussions of literary texts informed by historical work on the ‘later’ crusades.¹⁰ Hence the use of crusading rhetoric in English Romances in the period is in need of being historicised more tightly and differentially, in the present case particularly with reference to the context of the Hundred Years War between England and France.¹¹ The latter arguably was the earliest example of sustained warfare between rival European ‘Nations’,¹² and the conflict was doubtless exacerbated by the Schism, with England immediately declaring allegiance to the Roman pope and France to the Avignonese candidate. While both siege-poems wish to restore a sense of unified Christian identity threatened by the Schism, I argue that they end up exacerbating divisions by grafting a universalist, religious rhetoric of holy war onto more local and divisive struggles between the rival European nations of France and England.

The present study also seeks to transcend the binarism implicit in the very terms of ‘nation’ vs. ‘religion’, by arguing that these are not so much rival discourses, but rather overlapping sites for the identity construction that rely on largely analogous dynamics. Both siege-poems highlight the problematic ways in which these two discourses interpenetrate in the period, marking the Schism as a crucial stage in the gradual,

conflicted emergence of something like an English ‘national’ identity, never fully emancipated from earlier and more broadly inclusive ideas of community based on religion.¹³ This converges with suggestions made by Anthony Smith, who observes that the emergence of a modern sense of *national* belonging is ultimately best understood in terms of essentially *religious* identitarian structures.¹⁴ Similarly David Wallace, in his recent European literary history from 1348 to 1418, also stresses how the ‘capacious and slippery’ late medieval sense of nation can be seen to crystallize precisely within the overarching religious concerns of the Council of Constance, which marks end of the Schism with a protracted effort to contain internal, national differences.¹⁵ Surprisingly specialists of Nationalism Studies like Smith devote little attention to the Schism and to the fourteenth century in general,¹⁶ but historians of later crusading have equally highlighted how the discourses of nation and religion blur and overlap in the period, and indeed the Schism has been identified as marking a key stage in the advent of ‘national crusades’.¹⁷ I would like to build on such analyses to argue that the concept of a ‘national crusade’ also usefully encapsulates the identitarian paradoxes of the period in terms of a blurring of the identity-conferring discourses of nation and of religion.¹⁸

* * *

The discourse of holy war crystallises in both *Melayne* and *Jerusalem* through the framing metaphor of the ‘Siege’, which I take to be a particularly revealing fantasy of warfare that can yield considerable insight into the psychological and social dynamics of identity construction.¹⁹ ‘Siege’ was of course a familiar feature of the Hundred Years War between France and England.²⁰ But the state of siege—although it is not used explicitly

and deliberately as allegory—also functions as a symptomatic figure for a particular existential condition, for a sense of threatened, beleaguered identity, characterised by vulnerability and anxiety, and therefore expressed in terms of metaphorical conflict, stasis, enclosure, fortification and entrenchment.²¹ To develop the metaphor a little further, the figurative walls of the besieged cities in both poems serve the purpose of literally building up, containing and stabilising identity, by providing a defining barrier between a fragile, threatened and/or aggressive self and the other against which that self is defined. The alluringly simple binarism implied by all narratives of holy war—Christian and Heathen, right and wrong, ‘them and us’—hardens into a static, defensive figure of ‘siege’ that attempts to buttress identity against the self-doubt fostered by an internally divided Christendom. It is revealing that both poems seek to exorcise contemporary identitarian anxieties through denial and projection, choosing to represent a besieged and eventually annihilated religious other rather than a beleaguered Christian self.

I am not the first person to associate the two siege-poems with the Schism.²² Robert Warm has already suggested that the rhetoric of holy war found *Melayne* should be read as “an antidote to the reality of an increasingly fragmented Christian meta-state” produced by the papal Schism.²³ In this sense the poem resonates with Philippe de Mézières’ suggestion of a crusade against the Turk, jointly led by the Kings of England and France, as a remedy to restore Christian unity, put an end to the Schism and mark the end of the Hundred Years War.²⁴ Yet the poem, apart from imagining a crusade in order to restore what Warm calls a sense of “unitary Christendom by fostering a sense of metanational identity,”²⁵ is also nourished by more local, topical interests. Indeed the poem is not simply characterised by its supposedly transhistorical crusading discourse,²⁶ but entertains a much more immediate, and more problematic relationship with its historical context. As already noted by Andrea Oliver, the poem appears to be commenting rather directly on a very specific episode of the Hundred Years War, namely

the Despensers' crusade from 1383.²⁷ In what follows I will build on Oliver's topical reading, but would also like to expand it by exploring how both the poem and the Despensers' Crusade itself point towards much deeper and more pervasive contemporary identitarian dilemmas conditioned by the Schism.

The Despensers' Crusade itself is only the tip of the iceberg, the most revealing and most extreme manifestation of contemporary anxieties and contradictions. The crusade was enabled by Urban VI's proclamation of crusading indulgences against supporters of the rival pope almost immediately after the Schism in 1378. The English eventually seized the opportunity by launching two crusades against Clementist supporters, in 1383 with the Despensers' crusade in Flanders, and in 1386 with John of Gaunt's crusade in Castille, thus invoking the rhetoric of holy war to justify otherwise unmistakably political and dynastic aspirations as part of the Hundred Years War.²⁸ In many ways the Despensers' campaign—the first 'national crusade' in western Christendom—illustrates how the universalising religious discourse of crusading could be transformed and adapted to aggrandize clearly secular aspirations, and how it thereby contributed to feed a nascent sense of English 'national' identity.

Both the overall plot and specific details in the poem resonate with the Flanders campaign and the controversies it generated. The poem centres on the city of Milan, captured by Saracen forces. The ousted Christian Lord of Milan, Allantyne, appeals for aid to Charles, and the righteousness of the mission is confirmed by the apparition of an Angel who entrusts Charles with a sword. Turpin is in favour of the mission but Charles is dissuaded by Ganelon, who advises him to send only Roland with a small army instead of leading a risky full expedition himself. Roland fails to take Milan, and the handful of survivors return to Paris, but again Ganelon dissuades the King from leading the force, and it is eventually Turpin who takes over as its leader, cursing and excommunicating Charles for his refusal to embark on the crusade against the heathen. Turpin eventually

bullies Charles into joining the campaign, but it is the former who is given the charismatic role of the leader during the siege that ensues. Against all odds and dripping with blood, the Christ-like Bishop leads the Christian forces to what we presume will be a Christian triumph, as the manuscript breaks off before the climax.

To someone looking for a topical significance this almost seems too good to be true: a battle-thirsty bishop overrules an indolent, young and inexperienced king to go on crusade, in a scenario closely reminiscent, for instance, of Walsingham's rendering of the contemporary tensions surrounding the Despenser crusade.²⁹ Despite the divine call to arms, Charles seems to prefer spending his time "appon Pilgremage" (565) while his forces get butchered outside Milan—not unlike the Richard II painted with disapproval by Walsingham, constantly engaged on some sort of 'gyration' through the various shrines and abbeys of his realm instead of waging important wars abroad—which had notably been the case in 1383 just before the Flanders *débâcle*.³⁰ Against this soft, effeminate form of Christianity reminiscent of Richard's piety,³¹ the poem pitches the ideal of a muscular faith that finds its fullest and most unambiguous expression in sanctified warfare. The more precise circumstances that surround Charles' own hesitation to embark on crusade also reverberate with the arguments invoked in 1383 against a royal expedition to Flanders by the newly appointed Chancellor De la Pole and the more cautious commons:³² under constant Scottish threat from the North and French invasion from the south, the defence of the realm now becomes a central concern. The reasons voiced by the over-cautious Ganelon and the spineless peers in the poem are almost identical: "Þay prayede þe Kynge on þat tyde / Þat he hym selfe at home walde byde, / To kepe þat lande riȝt thare." (199–201; also 181–85) Later, after the Christians' first defeat outside Milan, Ganelon recommends that Charles in fact pay homage to the superior forces of the Sultan, to prevent them from overrunning and devastating all of France (589–600). Outraged by the suggestion, Turpin on the contrary urges massive

mobilisation under Royal leadership “Bot at home, sir kynge, þou sall keep nanne, / Bot alle thy gud men with the tane / Þat worthy are & wighte.” (607–9) Turpin commits himself to mobilising all of the clergy, yet amid the general excitement of the preparations for the crusade, does not forget to display his own papal bull that—like Despenser’s second bull, *Dudum cum filii Belial*—entitles him to absolve the clergy from their usual duties for this extraordinary occasion.³³

‘And alle þe Clergy vndir-take I

Off alle Fraunce full sekerly

Þay sall wende to þat were.

Of þe Pope I haue pouste:

Att my byddyngge sall þay bee,

Bothe with schelde and spere.’

The Bischoppe sendis ferre & nere

To monke, Chanoun, Preste and frere (emphases mine; 613–20)

Indeed the poem is particularly defensive about the canonical legitimacy of the inclusion of clerics among fighting men on crusade, particularly through Turpin’s own observation (625–27; 736–7; 766–8). In this clearly partisan poem such comments presumably coincide with the author’s own position, which thus stands in clear contrast to the numerous contemporary condemnations of Despenser’s controversial recruitment strategies and his granting of absolutions on an unprecedented scale.³⁴

A number of further echoes may be found in the text, and leave little doubt about the poet’s favourable attitude to Despenser’s crusade. But it is worth exploring the poem’s intervention in its context in some more detail. The poem is not so much a piece of propaganda, but an apologetic rewriting of the Despenser campaign. It seeks to

vindicate the righteousness of the disgraced and impeached battling bishop after the disastrous outcome of the campaign,³⁵ by providing a heavily edited, indeed fictionalised version of the events. So in the poem the crusaders triumph, and Charles eventually joins the crusade, whereas his real-life counterpart Richard II did not, and according to Walsingham the King even attempted to recall the crusade before it set sail.³⁶ By eventually involving the reluctant Charles in the campaign, the poem performs the one political act that in the mind of many contemporaries could have saved the Flanders campaign from failure. Yet especially after the setbacks in Flanders, with the French assembling their 30'000-strong army north of Arras, back in England it was felt that sending a royal force as reinforcement was both strategically and politically unwise: it was simply impossible to assemble the necessary forces in such short time, and further campaigning threatened to involve the King and nation even more deeply in an expedition that was clearly heading for disaster.³⁷

In the imaginative world of the poem, however, concerned to construct a counter-model to historical events, there is no place whatsoever for such tactical and diplomatic considerations. Strategy, negotiation, and 'false councill' (682) are rather the lowly instruments favoured by the treacherous Ganelon (e.g. 169–92; 649–60), in league with the enemy. The poet here may well be signalling his disapproval of the intensified efforts to find a peaceful diplomatic solution to the war with France under Richard II, in a major break from the policy of his predecessor Edward III. The poem's hero Turpin, then, embodies an ideal of ultimate self-sacrifice in the face of incredible odds, which resonates with echoes of an *imitatio christi*:³⁸ with his side pierced by a Longinus-like lance after a Christ-like three-day battle (1579–80), the Bishop embodies the very picture of Christ that he himself had earlier invoked (701) to persuade Charles to participate in the campaign:

The Bischoppe es so woundede that tyde
With a spere thorowe owte the syde (1303–4)

Queried by an incredulous Charles, the bishop retorts that his wounds are mere scratches in comparison with Christ's, thus insisting once more on the analogy:

‘What! wenys þou, Charls,’ he said, ‘þat I faynte bee
For a spere was in my thee,
A glace thorowte my syde.
Criste for me sufferde mare.’ (1345–8)

The poem goes further: as Suzanne Akbari has argued, battle is not merely sanctified, but fully sacramentalised through Turpin's celebration of the sacrifice of the Eucharist on the battlefield.³⁹ Turpin celebrates the mass as an immediate prelude to battle, where the focus on the Eucharistic “fayre oste of brede” (893) invites a sacramental understanding of the battling army, the “Cristen Oste” (970) engaged in the extermination of the Saracens. Turpin's explanation to “þe hoste with lowde steven / how brede & wyne was sent fro heuen” (904-5) once more reiterates the correspondence between Eucharistic body and the sanctified body of the Christian forces. This places battle at the heart of religious experience, and makes it the central, sacramental act enabling the embodied restoration of a unified Christian identity. Following the poem's logic, then, Turpin's body, the host of the sacrament and the Christian army are all imagined as complementary yet concrete realisations of *Corpus Christi*. This reading gains further power if we accept Phillipa Hardman's supposition that the lost ending of the poem would have included an account of the miraculous healing of the dying Turpin, whom we last see “fastande dayes three” (1581) before his truncated ‘resurrection’.⁴⁰ In

Melayne holy war is not merely a military campaign justified by pious motives, but becomes the central, inherently religious mystery, the sacramental performance through which embodied Christian identity is established and maintained.

However, the Christ-like image of Turpin's Eucharistic body in battle is not merely a transhistorical affirmation of militant Christianity, or a vindication of Despenser's personal crusading vision, but also acts as a vindication of Papal prerogative, indicative of the poem's wider concern with issues of papal authority raised by the Schism. The poem is in fact specifically concerned with restoring papal authority from the very beginning, presenting Sultan Arabas in Milan as the man who "Robbyde þe Romaynes of their rent / Þe popys pousty hase he schente." (16–17). Papal authority is again an issue when Turpin ostentatiously wields his papal bull (613–20), Despenser-like,⁴¹ to assemble an army of clerics. Furthermore it is clear from the company he keeps as he raises his army—"a Cardynall of Rome," (638)—that this is not just the authority of *any* pope, but of a specifically *Roman* one.

Yet the poem conducts a curious, duplicitous game with its readers, simultaneously multiplying the number of topical allusions to its historical context and yet also attempting to dissimulate its own act of rewriting, which amounts to a fictionalisation of contemporary historical events. When more tightly framed within its historical context, the exalted, nearly delirious fiction of a Christian triumph raises a number of problematic questions—questions that the poem does not answer or even confront, but that it cannot avoid evoking. In particular the poem cultivates a referential slipperiness around the identity of its religious 'other', and thus reveals its incapacity to fully confront the challenges posed by the schism; the poem thus both evokes and occludes its historical context. Indeed, whereas Turpin, Charles and their actions contain rather transparent allusions to real historical figures and events, the poem's enemies are thoroughly fictional: they are not the schismatic Clementists targeted by the Flanders

campaign, but stereotyped Saracens indulging in the customarily improbable idolatry (28), burning of the cross (433 ff.), and loose sexual mores (841–76). If one half of the poem functions nearly like a *roman à clef*, with recognisable historical referents, the other half functions like a complete, radical orientalist fantasy.

Far from corresponding to the usual portrait of the ‘noble Saracen’, then, the Sultan’s forces in *Melayne* are represented in a radically phobic manner. No affinity, let alone possibilities of encounter or assimilation are contemplated, as is the case in many other English Charlemagne romances,⁴² and the declared objective of the Christian forces is the annihilation of the enemy, a highly unusual scenario.⁴³ Yet curiously, while the assimilation of Saracens within the Christian army is never contemplated, the poem repeatedly worries about the reverse: Christian defection and submission to the Sultan. This equally unusual feature further highlights the essentially defensive posture of the poem: rather than actively constructing identity through the more usual, expansionistic fantasies of empire and incorporation, the poem essentially strives to exorcise fears about a *loss* of identity. It is also revealing that this loss of identity is conceived in terms that blur religious and feudal terms of reference, evoking in particular notions of fealty and homage—highly sensitive issues at the time, given their central role in bringing about the split between England and France at the start of the Hundred Years War. The possibility of subjection to Saracen overlordship is first introduced at the very beginning of the poem, with the Sultan’s offer of conversion and feudal subjection (49–51). Later Ganelon advises, “These landes of hym I rede þe halde, / Or he will kindill cares ful calde,” (595–96), and resistance to Saracens is urged in similarly feudal terms: “halde þour felde and þour rygthtis.” (353). Yet Turpin, outraged by the prospect of Charles agreeing terms with the Sultan, steps in to remind us that “to make homage to Saraþene” (604), automatically entails apostasy and heresy: “What! sall he [Charles] nowe with sory grace / Be-come ane Eretyke?” (671–2). Charles’s reluctance to go into battle even earns

him excommunication (691ff), and in Turpin's words he is now "[...] werre þan any Saraþene, / Goddes awenn wedirwyne" (694–95).

The frequency with which the possibility of Christian apostasy is contemplated in the poem is uncanny, and the imperceptible blurring of feudal and religious vocabulary reveals still deeper concerns about the impossibility of differentiating between national and religious identity in the context of the Schism. The manner in which here a feudal, political rapprochement proposed by the Sultan is shown to conceal the much greater threat of apostasy also functions as an apt commentary on the evolution of the Franco-English conflict from a late fourteenth-century perspective: beginning as a dynastic-feudal disagreement over issues of sovereignty, it gradually developed into a conflict between 'nations', and with the Schism finally escalated into a religious war against schismatic heretics. With its radical rejection of any form of diplomatic negotiation with the Saracen enemy, the poem reveals opprobrium at the possibility of finding a peaceful solution to the conflict with enemies that are no longer merely French, but are suddenly also 'infidels'. Such a peaceful solution was an increasingly likely scenario given the policy of a Franco-English rapprochement pursued by chancellor De la Pole and the English King himself during the 1380s,⁴⁴ particularly after the *débâcle* of the Despenser crusade. Of course in the imaginary world of the poem a peaceful solution amounts to defeat, and thus constitutes a double loss of identity, both political and religious. The poem therefore insistently equates military retreat with apostasy: the chief taboo here is to "torne," signifying both military retreat from battle—as in Turpin's declaration that "This day no saraþene sall I see / Sall gerre me *torne* my stede," (1457–58)—and apostasy, made all the more threatening by the very ease and frequency with which this possibility is contemplated: Allentyne ponders whether it would be wise "The hethyn lawe to *torne* too," (83) and again during battle Charles is invited to "*torne* vn to oure lawes & take þam to." (1039) [emphases mine].

The poem's determination to oppose its imagined enemies with such fervour is thus determined largely by their very proximity, which renders them all the more threatening: the intractable, problematic, dangerously close yet conceptually unfamiliar category of Christian schismatics fought during the Despensers' crusade is thus reinvented as a horde of demonic Saracens. Viewing contemporary events through the deforming lens of twelfth-century *chanson de geste* the poem manages to perform an identitarian short-circuit, and succeeds in 'precipitating' the identity of contemporary schismatic Christians within that of comfortably fictional, two-dimensional Saracens. The poem thus attempts to purge its self-doubt by resorting to the familiar trick of demonising, or rather fabricating an external other upon which the most profound and intimate anxieties of the self can be projected.⁴⁵ It is through such a historically unsubstantial fantasy that the poem manages to bolster a sense of unified corporate identity, while simultaneously evading the problematic ethical, cultural and judicial implications of a 'national' crusade against Christian schismatics on mainland Europe. The very fervour of the poem ultimately exposes the frailty of the ostensibly absolute identitarian boundary separating the Christian self from the Saracen other in the poem.⁴⁶

Indeed, for all its fervent commitment to restore a unified identity, the poem seems rather confused about what *kind* of collective identity it wants to construct. The poem's insistent, nearly obsessive use of expressions such as "our(e) men / knyghtis / cheualrye / Barons / lordis" (e.g. 224, 259, 266, 347, 389, for a total of over 30 occurrences) is rhetorically powerful yet conceptually diffuse. As the recent critical history of the poem has shown, such evocative yet slippery expressions allow for a variety of interpretations, ranging from broadly inclusive 'religious' readings ('Oure Cristen knyghtis', e.g. 428) to localised 'national' ones ('Oure Bretons', e.g. 1496, an expression pointing to 'Britain' as opposed to 'Brittany' according to Elizabeth Berlings).⁴⁷ It is precisely the instability of such an obsessively invoked identity that

reveals the poem's intense, desperate desire for unity, but also exposes its helplessness, its inability to define such unity in any precise, historically viable fashion. The identity of what should be an unmistakably Christian force is anything but clear, unified and monolithic, as *Melayne* would have us believe, and rather fosters a defensive, unstable model of identity by blurring the distinctions between national and supra-national communities. This has the advantage of stabilising imagined group identities; yet by collapsing real, historical Christian schismatics with utterly fictional Saracens, the poem ultimately exacerbates the internal fracture of the Western Christian self that it seeks to heal. Its ostensibly federating crusading fantasy conceals an unspoken, possibly unconscious yet deeply divisive agenda.

The depth of this internal fracture is further accentuated by the fact that the idea of the 'Saracen' in the poem becomes a malleable, sprawling and indefinitely extensible psychological category that allows the inclusion of a whole range of 'others', since such imagined "reference groups" targeted by fantasies of warfare tend to be "multiple or serial."⁴⁸ It is thus legitimate to wonder whether the poem's obsessive insistence on a very 'real', bodily presence through its Eucharistic symbolism on the battlefield, together with its defence of crusades with extensive clerical participation, should not also be interpreted as a rebuttal directed against yet another group of heretics, the homegrown Lollards—no great enthusiasts for either the real presence or clerical crusades like Despenser's.⁴⁹ Paradoxically, then, a whole range of complex, deviant identities may be hiding behind the fiction of an apparently simplistic Saracen 'other', which in reality may subsume Clementists and Lollards along with Turks—and even 'eretykes' who fail to respond to the divine call to arms, like the excommunicated, Richard-like Charlemagne himself.

* * *

In the *Siege of Jerusalem* we find a further poem, produced in the same period, that on the surface appears to use the framing metaphor of the siege to construct similarly polarised identities. The poem is a rendition of the historical siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman forces led by Titus and Vespasian, and at first sight nothing appears to invite a topical reading: the events take place quite literally long ago and far away, in Jerusalem under Roman rule around 70 AD. More sophisticated and learned than *Melayne*, the poem entertains a more oblique, brooding relationship with its historical context. It also goes much further in confronting at least some of its internal anxieties and contradictions, instead of evacuating them by constructing a two-dimensional religious ‘other’. Accordingly the lively recent critical history of the poem emphasises the poem’s ambivalence and complexity, highlighting the numerous ways in which the seemingly uncompromising anti-Judaism is complicated, questioned or even undercut from the inside.

Earliest in date, Ralph Hanna argued for a rather broader understanding of the poem’s ‘other’, which he saw as being essentially Jewish, but as reflecting on other forms of “unreconstructed paganism”, such as the Romans’ own pagan practices, condemned for instance at ll. 237-48, which may have invited further assimilation of the Lollard heresy.⁵⁰ In the same year Mary Hamel proposed a reading of the work in the light of the conventions of crusading literature, a suggestion also picked up by Roger Nicholson who places the work more firmly in the context of the revival of the crusading ideal during the 1390s, when the Jewish identity of the besieged may have functioned as a trope for the Turkish threat.⁵¹ More recent readings, while they also acknowledge the slipperiness of the identity of the poem’s Jews, have tended to react against this tendency to take the Jewish identity of the poem’s ‘other’ as a mere trope, and have instead explored the poem’s sympathy for its victims *qua* Jews. In Christine Chism’s words, “[b]y continually

soliciting sympathy for its victims, the poem underscores their humanity and threatens its initial paradigm, in which the Jews are perfidious Christ-killers and the Romans are sympathetic Christian heroes.”⁵² Particularly the work of Elisa Narin van Court, Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Suzanne Yeager explores the various rhetorical strategies employed by the poem to achieve a complex and ambivalent representation of the Jews.⁵³

Yet as Suzanne Yeager has pointed out, “[t]he work of [...] scholars has done much to address the role of the Jews in the text. Curiously, however, comparatively little has been done to explore the role of the Romans, who are characterised in variable ways.”⁵⁴ The relationship between Romans and Jews in the poem thus cannot be reduced to the simplistic, oppositional binary terms pursued by *Melayne*. In comparison with the former, *Jerusalem* is conspicuous for its lack of a clearly localised ‘identity’ that subsumes the poem’s readers within a larger, imagined community of ‘oure men’. Instead, events are presented unaccompanied by “the language of automatic antisemitism” that characterises the poem’s sources,⁵⁵ and accordingly it becomes difficult to localise firmly authorial sympathy in the poem.

Indeed the Jews are not only humanised, but individualised specifically in terms of familiar social identities that would have applied to any besieged city in the Christian West during the phase of intensified siege-warfare that characterised the Anglo-French conflict in the later fourteenth century: as they take refuge in the city before the siege begins, the Jewish community is differentiated as being made up of “Princes and prelates and poreil of þe londe, / Clerkes and comunes of contrees aboute.” (317–18)⁵⁶ Furthermore, as Akbari has remarked, “the Jews are simultaneously characterised in terms that are not merely ‘sympathetic’ (as van Court has suggested), but that explicitly identify them with the Christian protagonists of the Crusade chronicles—not the Muslim antagonists. [...]. Jews are simultaneously the object of identification for the Christian reader and that which must be abjected.”⁵⁷ This invitation to identify with both Jews *and*

Romans thus destabilises the reader's ability to project his own allegiance into the narrative, ultimately splitting his identity between the besieger and the besieged, simultaneously offering to the poem's late-fourteenth century Christian readers the roles of victims and tormentors.

The poem opens with a powerful evocation of Christ's passion, which like elsewhere in the tradition of the *vengeance nostre seigneur* becomes the initial justification for the violence visited upon the Jews in the narrative that follows. Yet while this evocation of Christ's crucifixion technically justifies the ensuing violence, the description is carefully orchestrated to suggest a series of uncomfortable parallels between the martyred body of Christ and the tormented bodies of the Jews. So just as Christ "al on rede blode ran, as rayn in þe strete," (12) during the siege the imagery of a torrent of blood is reversed and applied to the Jews, as "Baches woxen ablode aboute in þe vale / And goutes fram gold wede as goteres þey runne," (563–64) or again "so was þe bent ouerbrad, bloody byrunne." (603) Particularly the capture and execution of Caiaphas seem conceived as a retributive re-enactment of Christ's own sacrifice: whereas for Christ "a pyler pyȝt was doun, vpon þe playn erþe, / His body bonden þerto, and beten with scourgis:" (9–10) so the Roman knights "Bounden þe bischup on a bycchyd wyse / Ðat þe blode out barst ilka band vndere." (589–90) Finally the description of Caiaphas' execution is replete with the staple imagery and vocabulary of the crucifixion: he is judged and condemned ("Domesmen vpon deyes demeden," 697), hung upon the gallows for all to see ("honget on an hep vpon heye galwes / [...] alle folke to byholden," 700–1), "with persched sides," (707) "tourmented on a tre." (710)

But the analogies are not confined to the moment of the execution, and the very structure of Jewish religious life and belief is uncannily reminiscent of Christian practice: Caiaphas is presented as their "bischup," (589) accompanied to his martyrdom by his "bew-clerkes," (591) "twelf maysteres ma of Moyses lawe," (586) echoing Christ's

disciples, already introduced by the poem earlier: “semeliche twelue / Pore men and noȝt prute, aposteles were hoten.” (141–42) Ultimately Caiaphas himself is being presented as an inverted mirror-image of Christ—literally inverted, since he is crucified head-down, “þe feet to þe firmament,” with his twelve learned clerks (700-1). The inverted symmetry that is being drawn up between the two religious traditions is not only a retributive enactment of the familiar supersessionist view of Christian history, but ultimately also reveals a profound and problematic continuity, a fundamental affinity between the Old and the New Law.⁵⁸

The poem thus remains clearly divided in intent, and in parallel to these rather unsettling affinities it also mobilises much more exoticizing elements to try and keep its victims at arm’s length, constructing them as “hethen” (561) who ride on “olyfauntes,” (449) “dromedarius” (453) and “Cameles.” (457) Yet as it turns back to Caiaphas, the poem’s rendering of Jewish learning in particular becomes surprisingly positive. The descriptions of “his clerkes twelf,” (725) the “lettered ledes,” (696) the “lered men of the lawe” (709) almost obsessively reiterate their superior learning. In the hands of a poet who was almost certainly a learned cleric himself, this reverberates with a peculiar undertone of regret and sympathy, revealed also through the ruefully presented detail of the suicide of seven hundred Jews “for sorow of here clerkes” (714) – hardly the act of “Feithless Folke.” (597) The poet’s admiration is also betrayed by his nearly fetishizing veneration of “the rolles that they redde on, and alle the riche bokes / They broghte myd the bischup” (595-6) — books, incidentally, which Vespasian’s as yet nascent Christian empire can not yet counter with books of its own.

In the poem’s literal historical time—set in 70 AD—the destruction of the threateningly familiar ‘other’ represented by the Jewish tradition appears as a necessary step for the consolidation of an as yet fragile, nascent Christian empire. Crucially, it is not the Jews’ radical otherness that necessitates their utter annihilation, but precisely their

proximity to a Christian culture as yet in search of its identity. At the end of the poem, Jerusalem is pillaged, razed to the ground, the earth sowed with salt and the Temple despoiled (1253–96), but most importantly the gold, jewels and precious stones that adorn the Temple are torn down and brought back to Rome: “Þe Romayns renten hem doun and to Rome ledyn.” (1272) Together with the equally “riche bokes” of the Jews, the jewels, attributes and trappings of the Temple thus become the double, economic and cultural capital that is brought back to Rome to provide the raw material to fashion a new, unified and purified Christian empire. Thus, by cultivating an ultimately ambivalent picture of Judaism, both decried and revered, the poem remains radically torn between its desire to annihilate the other, and the recognition of an inverted image of the self within that very other it is destroying.

If we frame this logic more firmly within the poem’s immediate historical context the narrative acquires an extremely powerful dimension of additional meaning. In the context of the Schism the return to Rome develops a polemical edge,⁵⁹ and indeed the city’s role as the one and only setting of papal authority is amply elaborated in the poem by the miraculous events that occur there, precisely, at “Þat tyme Peter was pope and preched in Rome.” (205–64, here 205) The narrative as a whole also recounts the defeat of a religious ‘other’ characterised not so much by its remoteness and inhumanity, but rather by its uncanny proximity to the social structures and religious practices of the western Christian self, clearly a troubling statement in the context of crusades against fellow Christians on mainland Europe. While I would not wish to argue that this poem is *about* the papal Schism or even the Hundred Years War in any narrow or immediate sense, its ambivalent and divided representation of both Jews and Romans resonates deeply with the identitarian crises associated with these historical events.

The poem here provides more sustained reflection on its own internal divisions and contradiction than the *Melayne*. Suzanne Yeager has brought to bear on the poem a

number of apocalyptic traditions running through Joachim da Fiore, Ranulph Higden and Ralph of Coggeshall, according to which the destruction of Jerusalem, as figure of *Sinagoga*, also becomes a typological figure for the impending disintegration of *Ecclesia* in the later fourteenth century.⁶⁰ Indeed the Schism had the effect of intensifying the attention to such troubling exegetic traditions and the related prophecy of the rise of Antichrist from within the papacy,⁶¹ and the motif of a destroyed Jerusalem was often employed by contemporaries such as Eustache Deschamps to evoke the state of the Western Church divided by the Schism.⁶² A number of apocalyptic anxieties and the corresponding prophecies thus attached themselves to the Schism,⁶³ and it did not help that earlier commentators like Arnold of Villanova, in turn echoed by Jean de Roquetaillade and others, had predicted the rise of Antichrist from within the papacy for 1378.⁶⁴ Thus supporters of both the Avignon and the Roman popes appropriated the eschatological tradition to demonise the rival party as followers of Antichrist.⁶⁵ In England not only the Lollards seized on apocalyptic rhetoric to condemn the institution of the papacy altogether as the work of Antichrist, as exemplified by the anonymous *Opus Arduum* from 1389–90,⁶⁶ but even decidedly mainstream commentators like Walsingham contributed to the currency of such apocalyptic speculations when evoking the early stages of the Schism.⁶⁷

The currency of such eschatological speculations produced a highly polarised perception of contemporary politics, and prophecies were easily manipulated and often acquired a distinctively national character.⁶⁸ But given their slipperiness such speculations also helped to produce a wider climate of apocalyptic anxiety and uncertainty, particularly in England, sustained as they were by the indigenous threat of Lollard heresy and the political troubles and social unrest of Richard II's reign.⁶⁹ Within the dramatically reconfigured political context of the European Schism, the ultimate apocalyptic nemesis was no longer identified solely with conveniently remote, demonic Saracens or the

‘absent presence’ of ‘spectral Jews’,⁷⁰ but now also embraced schismatics as well as Lollard heretics—‘others’ that had formerly been culturally, ethnically and geographically subsumed within a wider Christian corporate self, and accordingly were outwardly indistinguishable.

The paradox is well illustrated by a drawing depicting the two papal armies in a Manuscript of Honoret Bovet’s *Arbre des Batailles* (written in 1386-7; MS date after 1394), discussed by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski: “the fact that the opponents otherwise appear identical leads the viewer to the conclusion that there is no ‘other’ here, as might be the case for an opposing Muslim army,”⁷¹ In the light of this referential *aporia*, other commentators like the influential conciliarist Pierre d’Ailly, Chancellor of the University of Paris, employed the same storehouse of apocalyptic imagery for less partisan ends, attempting to warn Western Europe of its impending implosion: in his *Epistola diaboli Leviathan ad pseudoprelates Ecclesie pro scismate confirmando* from 1381, he depicts the Devil rejoicing over the troubled state of Christendom, imagined as the internally divided city of Jerusalem, torn asunder by rival factions.⁷²

The image of the city of Jerusalem torn apart by factional strife finally also invites us to reconsider the implications of the fundamental spatial metaphors used to define identity in the two siege-poems. If, as was suggested at the start, the figurative state of siege really serves the purpose of constructing identity by erecting a barrier between the threatened self and an imagined, hostile other, then the strategy fails in both poems: D’Ailly’s figure of an internally dismembered Holy City undermines conveniently rigid dichotomies of inside-outside, self and other, revealing instead how rival ‘proto-national’ identities clash and interpenetrate in a common space that is internally self-divided. Neither of the two poems can maintain the separation it wishes to establish, and in *Jerusalem* the walls of the besieged city are literally permeable: after the departure of Vespasian to rule Rome, Titus falls suddenly ill, it is only assistance from within the

besieged city that can restore him to health. This takes the form of medical assistance provided by Josephus himself (1025–60), eyewitness and author of the original historical account of the siege. This detail is unique to *Jerusalem*: the source for this section, the life of Saint James the Apostle in the *Legenda Aurea*,⁷³ places Josephus already with the Romans, and the alliterative poem adds the detail of Josephus’ arrival from the city to heal Titus. If it is true, as David Lawton suggests, that the *Jerusalem*-author “sees in the figure of Josephus a mirror of himself as poet,”⁷⁴ then here both the identities of the poet and that of the imagined Christian reader are irreconcilably divided between the two camps, glimpsed in an image of healing through cultural contact that shows identitarian barriers to be permeable despite the poem’s fervent effort to erect and police such boundaries. Tellingly such contact is both necessary and abhorred, since it is precisely through such a ‘contaminating’ encounter that healing can be achieved: the remedy for Titus’ ailments is simply to indulge in even greater hatred of his enemy, a “man [...] þat he moste hated” (1047). The man is identified as Titus’ slave in the *Legenda*, but is left unidentified here, which further underscores the erosion of firm, clear dichotomies. In a final paradoxical twist the man becomes “þy foman þat frendschup haþ serued,” (1060) and is eventually pardoned and freed for having enabled Titus’ recovery.

The poem’s handling of the ubiquitous notions of illness and healing is accordingly troubled and ultimately self-contradictory. This would have resonated uneasily with readers during the period of the Schism, which was itself figured as a major illness and affliction of Christendom by Mézières and others.⁷⁵ The poem’s desire for healing through violence is inherently self-defeating in the light of the affinity, even interchangeability of the identity of Jews and Christians in the poem, and of Urbanist and Clementist schismatics outside it. By pursuing the imaginative destruction of the other (*Sinagoga*) the also provides what is necessarily a typological meditation on, and contribution to, the impending destruction of the self (*Ecclesia*) in the late fourteenth

century apocalypse.⁷⁶ The self in the poem is ultimately too uncannily mirrored, too deeply and actively implicated in the construction of that ‘other’ it dreams of destroying not to realise that such violence simultaneously feeds and erodes the self, at once constructing identity and dismantling it. Yet the violence persists unabated, heightening as the poem tries to fight its way out of the identitarian dilemmas it sets up for itself to resolve. Curiously, then, the very siege-metaphor that was designed to enable the construction of identity ultimately ends up achieving the opposite, and reveals an advanced erosion of identity that can no longer be contained within the fiction of a dualistic state of ‘siege’.

Even *Melayne*, despite its seemingly simplistic and schematic charting of identity, displays similar contradictions. Here too the trope of bodily affliction and regeneration, in the form of the miraculous healing and ‘resurrection’ of Turpin’s Christ-like body as image of the ‘host’—sacramental, military, communitarian—is inextricably intertwined with the notion of self-sacrifice, even self-destruction. The poem best visualises this paradox of identity-formation-through-destruction by means of images of salutary, purgative blood-letting: ‘our knights’ are not only bent on annihilating their ‘other’, but are also wading in, and literally drinking their own, pseudo-Eucharistic blood mixed with the blood of their enemies:⁷⁷

Bot one þe murne þe Cristen stode
A thowsande ouer theirre fete in theirre blode
Of theirre awenn wondes wanne.
Othere refreschynghe noghte many hade
Bot bloody water of a slade,
Pat thurghe þe Oste ran. (1204–9)

Here too imagined violence functions as a strategy to short-circuit the irreducible contradictions of the poem's identity politics, in the attempt to exorcise its internal anxieties. The very violence that 'our' heroes sacrificially inflict upon themselves on the battlefield thus becomes an inverted mirror image of the problematic violence inflicted upon an uncomfortably close, ultimately 'internal' other—a violence for which the poem is simultaneously trying to atone by casting its own heroes as Christ-like martyrs.

By pursuing the terminal annihilation of such an uncomfortably close religious 'other', both poems finally compromise the very terms that can enable the construction of identity of any sort. The murderous zeal of both poems threatens the very existence of a necessary other against which the self can be defined in the first place.⁷⁸ The poems thus are not just self-contradictory but self-divided in their intent: on the one hand they employ familiar oppositional strategies of identity construction that necessitate the existence of an enemy; on the other they pursue the abolition of that enemy in the hope of bringing about a radically different mode of existence, an internally unified form of being that could transcend and consume the very notion of identitarian duality. While both poems thus conduct an experimental *bricolage* of identity in the shifting context of late-fourteenth anxieties, they cannot be said to exemplify the pursuit or consolidation of *national* identity in any simple fashion. To adopt Anthony Smith's terminology, ultimately the poems enact not so much a "national" but rather an "apocalyptic" model of identity: "Nationalism is a distinctly this-worldly movement and culture. Unlike millennialism, which wishes to flee a corrupt world, nationalism seeks to reform the world [...]"⁷⁹ By sharing in millennialism's expectation of "imminent supernatural intervention to abolish the existing order",⁸⁰ the two siege-poems do not so much attempt to *construct* any particular identity—proto-national or other—but rather seek to *explode* the unmanageable difficulties and contradictions of identity-construction in the later fourteenth century.

Crusading no longer functions as a 'generator' of identity, but in its most excited manifestation becomes instead an apocalyptic 'solvent' of identity.

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¹ The notable exception is the work Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, especially *Poets, Saints and Visionaries of the Great Western Schism, 1378–1417* (University Park, 2006). A useful overview of recent approaches is provided in *A Companion to the Great Western Schism 1378–1417*, ed. Joëlle Rollo-Koster and Thomas M. Izbicki (Leiden, 2009). Two chapters specifically address the wider impact of the Schism on contemporary consciousness: Philip Daileader, "Local Experiences of the Great Western Schism," 89–121, and Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "The Conceptualization and Imagery of the Great Schism," 123–58.

² The classic studies on England during the Schism are Edouard Perroy, *L'Angleterre et le Grand Schisme d'Occident: étude sur la politique religieuse de l'Angleterre sous Richard II* (Paris, 1933); Margaret Harvey, *Solutions to the Schism: A Study of some English Attitudes 1378–1409* (St Ottilien, 1983), who concentrates on ecclesiastical, political and diplomatic sources; and R. N. Swanson's *Universities, Academics and the Great Schism* (Cambridge U.K., 1979), who also comments on the wider and deeper impact of the crisis on contemporaries, e.g. 7–21.

³ Of course there is wide variation in the significance attached to the Schism by different actors at different moments. As suggested by Daileader, "Local Experiences," 92–3, echoing Noel Valois' *La France et le Grand Schisme d'Occident*. 4 vols (Paris, 1896–1902), 4:496–7. As time passed both sides developed strategies to live with the division, but the early years appear to have caused particular concern.

⁴ John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, Prologue ll. 869–70; references to the *Confessio* are to *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. GC Macaulay, EETS ES 81 and 82 (London, 1900 and 1901). Further see Margaret Harvey, "Lollardy and the great Schism: Some Contemporary Perceptions," in *From Ockham to Wyclif*, ed. Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks (Oxford, 1987), 385–96.

⁵ Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, Prologue ll. 346–51.

⁶ See Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, Prologue l. 851; further examples of Gower's concern with division and fragmentation are found at ll. 127, 333, 576, 830, 880, 893, 896, 967–end.

⁷ Throughout I quote from *The Siege of Melayne and the Romance of Duke Rowland and Sir Otuell of Spayne*, ed. S.J. Herrtage. EETS ES 35 (London, 1880).

⁸ *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. Ralph Hanna and David Lawton. EETS OS 320 (Oxford, 2003). For the TEAMS edition, *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. Michael Livingston (Kalamazoo, 2004), see

<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/tmsmenu.htm>

⁹ See especially Tal Dingott Alkopher, “The Social (And Religious) Meanings That Constitute War: The Crusades as Realpolitik vs. Socialpolitik,” *International Studies Quarterly* 49 (2005): 715–37, emphasizing the importance of imagination and general *mentalités*; and Andrew A. Latham, “Theorizing the Crusades: Identity, Institutions and Religious War in Medieval Latin Christendom,” *International Studies Quarterly* 55 (2011): 223–43, with greater attention to the establishment of identity-conferring institutions, particularly the clergy.

¹⁰ See for instance Lee Manion, “The Loss of the Holy Land and *Sir Isumbras*: Literary Contributions to Fourteenth-Century Crusade Discourse,” *Speculum* 85 (2010): 65–90, at 67–8; Robert Warm, “Identity, Narrative and Participation: Defining a Context for the Middle English Charlemagne Romances,” in *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Romance*, ed. Rosalind Field (Cambridge U.K., 1999), 87–100; Marco Nievergelt, “Conquest, Crusade and Pilgrimage: the Alliterative *Morte Arthure* in its late Ricardian Crusading Context,” *Arthuriana* 20 (2010): 89–116.

¹¹ See especially J.J.N. Palmer, *England, France and Christendom, 1377–99* (London, 1975).

¹² See for instance Christopher Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War c. 1300–c. 1450* (Cambridge U.K., 1988), 136–50, at 141. I use the term ‘nation’ with reservations, seeking rather to interrogate the relevance of the concept as applied to this particular historical moment rather than endowing it with any stable, clearly defined significance. In this sense my approach is influenced by Ardis Butterfield's otherwise rather different, but similarly cautious treatment of the idea of nationhood ‘in the making’ as manifested through language in *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford, 2009). For an earlier influential contribution to the debate about England and nation in the period, see John Barnie, *War in Medieval Society: Social Values in the Hundred Years War 1337–99* (London,

1974), 97–116. For a literary study see Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290–1340* (Oxford, 1996). More specifically on romance and nation, see below, n16.

¹³ In her study of the role of fictional Saracens in constructions of English ‘National’ identity at an earlier stage in the Anglo-French conflict, Siobhan Bly Calkin similarly stresses that “[a]lthough the centrality of religion in the Middle Ages has often been identified by theorists of nation as impeding or precluding nation formation in the period, medieval texts themselves clearly indicate that religion can be a crucial element in crafting a sense of identity that imaginatively binds together the members of a political community.” See Siobhan Bly Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity: The Auchinleck Manuscript* (London, 2005), especially 7–10, 13–60, here at 10.

¹⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford, 2003). Smith also develops his earlier theories of warfare as productive of national identity in terms of a sacrificial “moral community”, for which see especially John Hutchinson, “Warfare, Remembrance and National Identity,” in *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism: History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations*, ed. Athena S. Leoussi and Stephen Grosby (Edinburgh, 2007), 42–53, and Anthony D. Smith. “War and Ethnicity: the Role of Warfare in the Formation, Self-images and Cohesion of Ethnic Communities,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4 (1981): 375–97.

¹⁵ David Wallace, ed., *Europe: A Literary History, 1348–1418* (Oxford, forthcoming 2014), chapter 82, ‘The Nations of Europe’. I would like to thank Prof. Wallace for kindly sharing an advance copy of the chapter with me.

¹⁶ Literary scholars seem to have been more attentive to such developments than historians, particularly in paying close attention to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. See especially Suzanne Conklin Akbari’s lucid, seminal discussion of the relevance of Middle English romance to the study of ‘Nation and Religion’, in “The Hunger for National Identity in *Richard Coer de Lion*,” in *Reading Medieval Culture: Essays in Honour of Robert W. Hanning*, ed. Robert M. Stein and Sandra Pierson Prior (Notre Dame, 2005), 198–227, especially 218–20. More broadly on nationhood in romances see also Thomas Crofts and Robert Rouse, “Middle English Popular Romance and National Identity,” in *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance*, ed. Raluca L. Radulescu and Cory James Rushton (Cambridge U.K., 2009), 79–95; Geraldine Heng, “The Romance of England: *Richard Coer de Lyon* and the Politics of Race, Religion, Sexuality and Nation,” in her *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York, 2003), 63–113; Diane Speed, “The Construction of the Nation in Medieval English Romance,” in *Readings in Middle English Romance*, ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge U.K., 1994), 135–57.

¹⁷ See especially Christopher Tyerman, *England and the Crusades 1095–1588* (Chicago, 1988), 332–40; Norman Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe, 1400–1536* (Oxford, 2002), 26–29; Norman Housley, “France, England and the ‘national crusade’, 1302–1386,” in his *Crusading and Warfare in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Aldershot, 2001), study VII; Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades: 1274–1580: From Lyons to Alcazar* (Oxford, 1992), 247–8.

¹⁸ A similar, enlarged understanding of the concept of ‘National Crusade’ is also proposed in a different context by Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge U.K., 1997), 190.

¹⁹ My reading converges with Suzanne Conklin Akbari’s suggestions that “siege poems stress [...] the factors that threaten to tear the community apart,” in, “Incorporation in *The Siege of Melayne*,” in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester, 2004), 22–44, at 38, 31–2. For a more general study of the motif in a wide range of genres see Malcolm Hebron, *The Medieval Siege: Theme and Image in Middle English Romance* (Oxford, 1997).

²⁰ Jim Bradbury, *The Medieval Siege* (Woodbridge, 1992), 156–63; Peter Purton, *A History of the Late Medieval Siege, 1200–1500* (Woodbridge, 2010), 130–41.

²¹ On the logic of spatial representation in the construction of identity see Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, “Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era,” in *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (Durham N.C., 1997), 1–29. More specifically on Nation see Timothy Brennan, “The National Longing for Form,” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London, 1990), 44–70.

²² On *Melayne* see especially Warm, “Identity, Narrative and Participation.” On *Jerusalem* see Michael Livingston’s introduction to his edition, pp. 24–30; Suzanne M. Yeager, *Jerusalem in Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge U.K., 2008), 78–108.

²³ Warm, “Identity, Narrative and Participation,” 88.

²⁴ See Philippe de Mézières, *Letter to King Richard II*, ed. G.W. Coopland (Liverpool, 1975). See also discussion in Palmer, *England, France and Christendom*, 180–91; Nievergelt, “Conquest, Crusade and Pilgrimage,” 104–5. For Mézières’s poetic imagery and thinking about the Schism in the *Lettre* and the *Songe du Vieil Pèlerin*, see Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries*, 106–21.

²⁵ Warm, “Identity, Narrative and Participation,” 99.

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- ²⁶ Stephen H. A. Shepherd, “‘This grete journeye’: *The Sege of Melayne*,” in *Romance in Medieval England*, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows and Carol M. Meale (Woodbridge, 1991), 113–131.
- ²⁷ Andrea Oliver, “Battling Bishops: Late Fourteenth-Century Masculinity Admired and Decried,” in *Medieval East Anglia*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, 2005), 272–86.
- ²⁸ There are of course earlier examples of crusades against Christians, but only the Schism enabled the more or less systematic and persistent adoption of crusading rhetoric to stigmatize political enemies as part of a large-scale territorial war between emergent ‘nations’. See especially work by Norman Housley, e.g. “France, England and the ‘national crusade’;” “The Bishop of Norwich’s Crusade, May 1383,” *History Today* 33 (1983): 15–20; *The Later Crusades*, 247–8 and *passim*. For the two crusades see also the respective sections in Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Volume III: Divided Houses* (Philadelphia, 2009), 456–510, 559–623.
- ²⁹ For an overview of the reactions to the Despensers’ Crusade in contemporary sources, literary and historical, see my “Conquest, Crusade, Pilgrimage,” 99–103.
- ³⁰ *The St Albans Chronicle: ‘The Chronica Maiora’ of Thomas Walsingham, v.1: 1376–1394*, ed. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs and Leslie Watkiss (Oxford, 2003), 688–90, 702–4; *The Westminster Chronicle*, ed. and trans. L.C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey (Oxford, 1982), 42–4.
- ³¹ Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven, 1997), 303–11.
- ³² Palmer, *England, France and Christendom*, 8–11 and *passim*.
- ³³ On Despensers’ public display of papal Bulls to generate consensus for his proposed venture, see Perroy, *L’Angleterre et le Grand Schisme d’Occident*, 176; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War*, 3: 470–2; *St Albans Chronicle*, 1: 626ff.
- ³⁴ Perroy, *L’Angleterre et le Grand Schisme d’Occident*, 201. Even Walsingham, elsewhere sympathetically disposed towards Despensers, was ambivalent about clerical participation, see *St Albans Chronicle*, 1: 680–1, 686–7.
- ³⁵ Margaret Aston, “The Impeachment of Bishop Despensers,” *Historical Research* 38, No. 98 (1965): 127–48.
- ³⁶ *St Albans Chronicle*, 670–71; Palmer, *England, France and Christendom*, 49.
- ³⁷ See variously Aston, “The Impeachment,” 141–7; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War*, 3: 456–510, esp. 505–7; *The Westminster Chronicle*, 48.
- ³⁸ For these comments see also Shepherd, “‘This grete journeye’,” 127–8.
- ³⁹ See Akbari, “Incorporation in *The Siege of Melayne*,” and Shepherd, “‘This grete journeye’,” 128–9.

⁴⁰ Phillipa Hardman, “*The Siege of Melayne: a Fifteenth-Century Reading*,” in Field (ed.), *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Romance*, 71–86, here 83.

⁴¹ See above n33.

⁴² See especially the overview of Marianne J. Ailes and Phillipa Hardman, “How English are the English Charlemagne Romances?” in *Boundaries in Medieval Romance*, ed. Neil Cartlidge (Cambridge U.K., 2008), 43–56; and Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity*, 22–31, 42 and *passim*.

⁴³ Akbari, “Incorporation in *The Siege of Melayne*,” 31–2.

⁴⁴ See especially Palmer, *England, France and Christendom*.

⁴⁵ See for instance G.J. Brault, “Le Portrait des Sarrasins dans les chansons de geste, une image prospective?” in *Au carrefour des routes de l'Europe, la Chanson de geste*, 2 vols (Aix en Provence, 1987), 1: 301–11.

⁴⁶ This slippage or even breakdown of binary cultural difference produces a situation of identitarian liminality that reveals the “uncanny of cultural difference” envisaged by Homi Bhabha’s postcolonial critique of the “historical certainty and settled nature” usually associated with concepts of nationalism and national identity; see Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994, repr. 2005), 200 and *passim*; and Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, “Beyond ‘Culture’: Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference,” in Gupta and Ferguson, *Culture, Power, Place*, 33–51, at 49.

⁴⁷ The first critic to comment on the feature was Shepherd, “‘This grete journeye’,” 130–31. See further Hardman, “*The Siege of Melayne: a Fifteenth-Century Reading*,” 75; Elizabeth Berlings, “*The Siege of Melayne: A Comic Romance; or, How the French Screwed Up and ‘Oure Bretonns’ Rescued Them*,” in *Boundaries in Medieval Romance*, ed. Cartlidge, 57–70, here 60–61.

⁴⁸ Smith, “War and Ethnicity,” 378.

⁴⁹ On the Eucharist see e.g. Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford, 1988), 281–90. On Lollard opposition to the Despenser crusade and crusades more widely, see Elizabeth Siberry, “Criticism of Crusading in fourteenth-century England,” in *Crusade and Settlement*, ed. P.W. Edbury (Cardiff, 1985), 127–34, at 127–29; *English Wycliffite Sermons*, ed. Anne Hudson and Pamela Gradon, 5 vols (Oxford, 1983–1996), 4:146–51; Harvey, “Lollardy and the great Schism,” 387–88.

⁵⁰ Ralph Hanna, “Contextualizing *The Siege of Jerusalem*,” *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 6 (1992): 109–21, at 112 and 119–20.

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- ⁵¹ Mary Hamel, "The Siege of Jerusalem as a Crusading Poem," *Studies in Medieval Culture* 30 (1992): 177–94; Roger Nicholson, "Haunted Itineraries: Reading the Siege of Jerusalem," *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 14.2 (2002): 447–84.
- ⁵² Christine Chism, "The Siege of Jerusalem: Liquidating Assets," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 28.2 (1998): 309–40, at 327.
- ⁵³ Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'Placing the Jews in Late Medieval England,' in *Orientalism and the Jews*, ed. I. Davidson-Kalmar and D.J. Penslar (Waltham MA, 2005), 32–55, reworked and extended as "The Place of the Jews," in her *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1500* (Ithaca, 2009), 112–54; Elisa Narin Van Court, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Augustinian Historians: Writing about Jews in Fourteenth-Century England," *The Chaucer Review* 29 (1995): 227–48; *ibid.* "Socially Marginal, Culturally Central: Representing Jews in late Medieval English Literature," *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 12.2 (2000): 293–326; *ibid.* "The Siege of Jerusalem and Recuperative Readings," in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. McDonald, 151–70; Suzanne M. Yeager, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis: Writing about Romans in Fourteenth-Century England," *Chaucer Review* 39 (2004): 70–102. See also Bonnie Millar, "The Role of Prophecy in *The Siege of Jerusalem* and its Analogues," *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 13 (1999): 153–78; *ibid.* *The Siege of Jerusalem in its Physical, Literary and Historical Contexts* (Dublin, 2000); Alex Mueller, "Corporal Terror: Critiques of Imperialism in *The Siege of Jerusalem*," *Philological Quarterly* 84 (2005): 287–310.
- ⁵⁴ Yeager, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis", 71.
- ⁵⁵ Van Court, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Augustinian Historians," 237–8.
- ⁵⁶ See also Van Court, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Recuperative Readings," 156–7, and Yeager, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis," 75.
- ⁵⁷ Akbari, "Placing the Jews," 36–7.
- ⁵⁸ On the issue see especially Akbari, "The Place of the Jews," in her *Idols in the East*.
- ⁵⁹ See also Yeager, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis," 72.
- ⁶⁰ Yeager, "The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis." The ideas are developed further by Yeager in a more recent article, "Jewish Identity in the *Siege of Jerusalem* and Homiletic Texts: Models of Penance and Victims of Vengeance for the Urban Apocalypse," *Medium Aevum* 80 (2011): 56–84, where the siege metaphor is also evoked as a familiar figure for representing beleaguered English identity in the period of the Hundred Years War, e.g. 56, 72–3.

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- ⁶¹ Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London, 1976), 79–82.
- ⁶² Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, “Dramatic Troubles of *Ecclesia*: Gendered Performances of the Divided Church.” in *Cultural Performances in Medieval Europe: Essays in Honor of Nancy Freeman Regalado*, ed. E. Jane Burns, Eglal Doss-Quinby, and Roberta Krueger (Woodbridge, 2007), 185–98, especially 189–91.
- ⁶³ See especially Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries*, particularly 165–200.
- ⁶⁴ Swanson, *Universities, Academics and the Great Schism*, 21; Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford, 1969), 323–4, 417–18.
- ⁶⁵ Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries*, 172–4; Norman Housley, “The Eschatological Imperative: Messianism and Holy War in Europe, 1260–1556,” in his *Crusading and Warfare in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, study III, especially 127, 133–5; Yeager, “*The Siege of Jerusalem* and Biblical Exegesis,” 87, 91–92, 95.
- ⁶⁶ See especially Curtis V. Bostick, *The Antichrist and the Lollards: Apocalypticism in Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Leiden, 1998), 76–113. Further see also Harvey, “Lollardy and the Great Schism,” 386–88; Yeager, “*The Siege of Jerusalem* and Biblical Exegesis,” 87 n64.
- ⁶⁷ Yeager, “*The Siege of Jerusalem* and Biblical Exegesis,” 92; Walsingham, *St. Albans Chronicle*, 1: 254.
- ⁶⁸ Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries*, particularly 165–6 and *passim*. On the influence of prophetic traditions on contemporary English politics, see also Lesley Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2000), especially 121–56, although Coote does not specifically develop connections with the Schism.
- ⁶⁹ See especially Harvey, “Lollardy and the Great Schism,” 392–5.
- ⁷⁰ See respectively *Chancer and the Jews: Sources, Contexts, Meanings*, ed. Sheila Delany (New York, 2002), ix; Steven F. Kruger, *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis, 2006); Miriamne A. Krummel, *Crafting Jewishness in Medieval England: Legally Absent, Virtually Present* (New York, 2011).
- ⁷¹ “The Conceptualization and Imagery of the Great Schism,” 130; for further discussion see also *ibid.*, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries*, 133–40.
- ⁷² Blumenfeld-Kosinski, “The Conceptualization and Imagery of the Great Schism,” 155–58; *ibid.*, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries*, 198–200.

⁷³ I follow Livingston's note to l. 1047 in his edition. For the relevant section see Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan, with an introduction by Eamon Duffy (Princeton, 2012), § 67, 'St James the Apostle', pp. pp. 269–77 at 274–5.

⁷⁴ David Lawton, "Titus Goes Hunting and Hawking: The Poetics of Recreation and Revenge in *The Siege of Jerusalem*," in *Individuality and Achievement in Middle English Poetry*, ed. O. S. Pickering (Cambridge U.K., 1997), 105–17, here 115.

⁷⁵ Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries*, 5, 119–21 and passim; *ibid.*, "The Conceptualization and Imagery of the Great Schism".

⁷⁶ See Yeager, "*The Siege of Jerusalem* and Biblical Exegesis" and "Jewish Identity in the *Siege of Jerusalem*".

⁷⁷ See also Shepherd, "This grete journee," and Akbari "Incorporation in *The Siege of Melayne*," 33–4.

⁷⁸ E.g. David Snow, "Collective Identity and Expressive Form," originally published in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, ed. Neil Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 2001), 2212–19, also available electronically at

<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/2zn1t7bj;jsessionid=1A49DDB244BCBADFF1D2444C616F3372>

[consulted 20.2.2013].

⁷⁹ Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 15.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*