TRANSLATIO STUDII ET IMPERII: THE TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE AND POWER IN THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR

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Abstract

This thesis is an examination of English evocations of *translatio studii et imperii* during the Hundred Years War. According to the myth of *translatio*, intellectual and martial superiority were entwined and together moving ever-westwards, from Athens, to Rome, to Paris, and thence – the English claimed – to England. This study contributes to an understanding of how late-fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English aristocrats and clerics understood and legitimized their cultural struggle with France not only as a martial battle but also as an intellectual competition. It also explores how this struggle contributed to the cultural authority of libraries and book collections.

The first chapter of this thesis traces the development of the *translatio studii et imperii* tradition from its ancient origins to its zenith in the reign King Charles V "the Wise" of France. This chapter serves to establish the historiographical implications of the *translatio* myth as well as the French *translatio* tradition to which the English responded. The second chapter of this study is devoted to a literary analysis of texts which explicitly evoke the *translatio* topos and which were composed or copied in England during the Hundred Years War, such as Bishop Richard de Bury's *Philobiblon* and Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, as well as Oxford and Cambridge university foundation myths. The third chapter explores the extent to which late-medieval England's book culture resonated with English evocations of *translatio*. Central to this exploration is the underhanded acquisition of Charles V's monumental French royal library by the English regent of France, John, Duke of Bedford. As is attested in the writings of French court scholars, the monumental French royal library was held to symbolise France's cultural superiority over England during the Hundred Years War. Bedford's manoeuvre can be seen as a bid to transfer Europe's seat of learning, and by extant of power, to England. This thesis concludes with a consideration of the *translatio* myth's ambivalent implications for contentious master narratives such as the rise of nationalism and of the English language in late-medieval England.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The transfer of knowledge and martial power, *translatio studii et imperii*, was a celebrated theme in medieval Europe that was repeatedly employed to legitimate regnal authority. As Chrétien de Troyes proudly affirms in the proem to *Cligès* (c.1176), study and imperial dominion were believed to be entwined and moving together ever-westwards, from Athens to Rome, to Paris.[1] Under the reign of King Charles V "the Wise" (b.1338, d.1380), the University of Paris and the French royal library, largely composed of richly illuminated vernacular translations, came to symbolize France's cultural superiority over England at the time of the Hundred Years War. By November 1415, however, the English had won the great battle of Agincourt and seized Paris. Henry V was eager to consolidate his claim on the French crown and, in 1425, the king's brother and English regent of France, John, Duke of Bedford, cunningly acquired Charles V's library for half of its estimated worth. Viewed through the lens of *translatio studii et imperii*, Bedford's manoeuvre can be seen as an act of literary war, a bid to transfer Europe's seat of learning, and by extant of power, to England. Despite this cultural offensive and the wealth of scholarship on French evocations of the *translatio* topos, medievalists have not given serious consideration to the possibility that English courtiers and intellectuals were purposefully enacting a *translatio studii et imperii* in their engagement with

[1] Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, edited by Pierre Kunstmann (Lyon: École normale supérieure de Lyon, 2009), ll. 28-39: "Ce nos ont nostre livre apris / Qu'an Grece ot de chevalerie / Le premier los et de clergie: / Puis vint chevalerie a Rome / Et de la clergie la some, / Qui or est an France venue. / Dex doint qu'ele i soit maintenue / Et que li leus li abelisse / Tant que ja mes de France n'isse / L'enors qui s'i est arestee. / Dex l'avoit as altres prestee, / Car des Grezois ne des Romains." ("Ancient books tell us all / We know of ancient history / And what life was like, back then. / And we've learned from those books that in Greece / Knighthood and learning ranked / Above all other things. / Ancient learning, like knighthood, / Passed from Greece to Rome, / And has reappeared, now, / In France. God give us the gift / To keep learning alive in a land / He smiles on, so France will never / Give up the honor she's won.") English translation from Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, translated by Burton Raffel (London: Yale UP, 1997).

French culture and that the symbolic value of the book in England was defined in part by the kingdom's fraught intimacy with France. Without reducing the Hundred Years War to a single topos, my exploration of English *translatio* contributes to an understanding of how late-fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English aristocrats and clerics understood and legitimized their efforts to supplant France's perceived cultural superiority.

Such a study must grapple with the controversial question of proto-nationalism in the Middle Ages, confronting both Benedict Anderson's widely-accepted argument that there was no such thing as nationalism in the Middle Ages as well as the recurrent appropriation of the Middle Ages by nationalist extremist groups.[2] Like the work of Andrea Ruddick, this thesis rejects Anderson's "self-perpetuating platitude" that nationalism is a purely modern phenomena.[3] All the same, it resists the politics of nationalism and the pernicious notion of an original, autonomous "Englishness" by demonstrating how the myth of *translatio*, while it was evoked chauvinistically, in and of itself foregrounds England's connection to Continental Europe.

Admittedly, to recover with certainty the opinions and intentions of medieval individuals is an onerous and often impossible task. As we shall see, the bishop Richard de Bury is

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[2] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), in which Anderson argues that feelings of nationalism only emerged in the sixteenth-century. Anderson thus denies that nationalism was a medieval phenomena, and his thesis has been accepted by many modern historians. However, a number of medievalists have commandeered his model of "imagined communities" as a means of describing pre-modern ideas about nationhood. Andrea Ruddick explains that "an Andersonian focus on perceptions of nationhood has reinforced the contention of medieval historians that these medieval 'imaginings' need not necessarily fit modernist criteria in order to have validity," *English Identity and Political Culture in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 10. See also Ardis Butterfield's discussion of the influence of Anderson's ideas on Medieval Studies in *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009), 28-30. For the appropriation of the Middle Ages by nationalist extremist groups see below 10-11; 91, esp. n. 343.

[3] Ruddick, *English Identity,* 2.

exceptional in this regard as he left for posterity a clear exposition of his thoughts on the politics of book collecting and on *translatio studii et imperii* in his *Philobiblon*, composed shortly before his death in 1345. Still, it is exceedingly difficult to trace the direct influence of Bury on his contemporaries. As for Bedford, there survives little indication of the duke's plans for the French royal library and, upon his death 1435, his fellow Englishmen dispersed the collection a mere decade after having obtained it. Thus, the English had hopelessly bungled whatever show of cultural supremacy Bedford may have envisioned when he plundered France's symbolic library. In fact, the majority of the English libraries considered in this study were similarly dispersed after their patrons' deaths, notably those of Bury and of Bedford's brother, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. Speaking pragmatically, manuscripts were expensive – the lavish ones enormously so – and great libraries were always at risk of being sold off piecemeal in order to settle the debts of their late owners. Executors could thus be fickle in their commitment to libraries as symbolic storehouses of knowledge and authority when offered the immediate power of the purse. The fitfulness of the late-medieval English nobility's cultural ambitions must be reckoned with in a discussion of their interest in enacting *translatio studii et imperii* and in figuring themselves as the successors to France's military and scholastic dominance.

However, of more importance to a cultural historian than individual actors or their abandoned projects are the "timebound, meaning-making structures" employed by a given group.[4] I borrow here from Paul Strohm's *England's Empty Throne* in my methodology. Poised between history and literary studies, Strohm's work explores the self-legitimizing strategies of the Lancastrian regime in the period of anxiety following Henry IV's usurpation of the throne in

[4] Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 2006), 129.

1399. In this work, Strohm insists on the ability of texts to shape their social world and "employs literary hermeneutics in pursuit of historical understanding."[5] Texts are both the products and agents of their social world, Strohm argues, and they are "indispensable (albeit unreliable) sources of knowledge about the status and implications of past events."[6] In others words, texts – with the web of ideas, themes, myths, and anxieties they betray and elicit (or "social discourse," to use the phrase of Marc Angenot) – permit historians to recapture the symbolic value of actions and historical events for those who would have witnessed them.[7] As John Watts explains in his powerful foreword to the second edition of *England's Empty Throne,* Strohm lays bare the implications of political actions "in a linguistic and cultural world that was shaped by a particular range of recurring and interwoven themes."[8] The goal for Strohm is thus less to recapture the motives of individual actors but rather to explore "the linguistic patterning of early Lancastrian England […] as well as its particular biases and tendencies – the actions it facilitates, the options it discourages or forecloses."[9] In my study of the English discourse of *translatio studii et imperii*

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[5] Ibid., xvi. Gabrielle Spiegel takes a similar approach in her discussion of "textual agents." Spiegel writes: "All texts occupy determinate social spaces, both as products of the social world of authors and as textual agents at work in that world, with which they entertain often complex and contestatory relations. Texts both mirror *and* generate social realities, are constituted by *and* constitute social and discursive formations, which they may sustain, resist, contest, or seek to transform depending on the individual case," *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: California UP, 1995), 10. See also Spiegel's discussion of her approach to the study of texts as both the products and agents of a particular social world in "History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 65, no. 1 (1990), 59-86.

[6] Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, xvi.

[7] Marc Angenot, *1889: Un état du discours social* (Montréal: Balzac, 1989). Angenot defines "social discourse" as "tout ce qui se dit et s'écrit dans un état de société ; tout ce qui s'imprime, tout ce qui se parle publiquement ou se représente aujourd'hui dans les média électroniques," 13. By considering the sum total of a society's textual production, Angenot argues, one can disentangle "les systèmes génériques, les répertoires topiques, les règles d'enchaînement d'énoncés qui, dans une société donnée, organisent le dicible – le narrable et l'opinable," 13.

[8] John Watts, foreword to Strohm, *England's Empty Throne,* xii.

[9] Ibid.

during the Hundred Years War, I likewise hope to shed light on how "imaginatively pre-structured […] popular discourses" functioned at an "underexplored level of political causation."[10]

Indeed, while there has yet been no sustained inquiry on insular variations of *translatio studii et imperii*, much fascinating work has been done on the topos from its pre-Christian origins up to its popularity in late-medieval France. Étienne Gilson, Serge Lusignan, François Hartog, and Enrico Fenzi, among others, have demonstrated the pervasiveness of the *translatio* topos throughout continental Europe, not only as a literary trope but as a legitimizing historiographical concept.[11] The myth of *translatio*, which implied both geographical transfer and linguistic translation, was habitually evoked by medieval rulers to link their regimes, however imaginatively, to the authority of the classical world. Contrary to Marc Bloch's infamous statement that the medieval mindset was characterised by "a vast indifference to time," medieval thinkers were in fact extremely historically aware and anxious of their temporal place in God's providential design.[12] The concept of *translatio* is crucial to understanding how medieval regimes figured themselves in history and how they legitimized their role in it; Jacques Le Goff

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[10] Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, 129, cited in Watts, forward, xi; Watts, forward, xii.
[11] See, for instance, Étienne Gilson, *Les idées et les lettres* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1955), 183-85; Serge Lusignan, "*Translatio Studii* and the Emergence of French as a Language of Letters in the Middle Ages," *New Medieval Literatures* 14 (2012), 1-19 (among Lusignan's multiple works on the *translatio* topos); François Hartog, *Chronos: L'Occident aux prises avec le temps* (Paris: Gallimard, 2020); and Enrico Fenzi, "'*Translatio studii*' e '*translatio imperii*': Appunti per un percorso," *Interfaces* 1 (2015), 170-208. For a helpful introduction to *translatio*'s European variations, see also Adrian Gerard Jongkees, "*Translatio studii*: Les avatars d'un thème medieval," in *Miscellanea mediævalia in memoriam Jan Frederick Niermeyer* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1967), 41-51.
[12] Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, translated by L. A. Manyon (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 74.

considered it "the guiding thread of the medieval philosophy of history."[13] The tradition was perhaps at its most culturally significant in medieval France, where *translatio* was resoundingly echoed by the great thinkers of the Carolingian Renaissance, the scholars of the twelfth and thirteenth-century University of Paris, and afterwards by the court of King Charles V. By the Hundred Years War, France's prosperity was popularly credited to the flourishing of its learning in Paris, a "new Athens" home to the French royal library and the renowned University of Paris.[14] Following the model of Notker's portrait of Charlemagne as a scholar king, Charles V "the Wise" embodied the cultural myth of *translatio,* which was the pride of French scholars and nobility. This study tasks itself with discovering the extent to which the English of the same period were similarly (even imitatively) invested in the discursive matrix of *translatio* and the consonance between knowledge and power.

Up to this point, scholars have largely dissociated these complementary aspects of the *translatio* tradition, knowledge and power, in their discussion of insular texts and cultural history. With the exception of Lusignan's insightful discussion of university foundation myths at Oxford and Cambridge and Emily Steiner's work on Richard de Bury, scholarship has focused solely on *translatio imperii* as a facet of England's legendary Trojan origins.[15] Indeed, while the succession of Athens, Rome, and Paris was the foremost model of *translatio* in the later Middle

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[13] Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization 400-1500,* translated by Julia Barrow (Hoboken: Blackwell, 1992), 171.
[14] Serge Lusignan, "Les mythes de fondations des universités au Moyen Âge," *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome – Moyen-Âge* 115, n. 1 (2003), 454.
[15] See Lusignan, " Les mythes" and Emily Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature: Richard de Bury's *Philobiblon* and the Forms of Literary History," in *The Medieval Literary: Beyond Form,* edited by Robert Meyer-Lee and Catherine Sanok (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2018), 243-65.

Ages, other models, such as London's filiation with Troy, remained influential.[16] As recorded in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (c. 1136), the Troy myth recounts how Aeneas' great-grandson Brutus founded London as a "Troia Nova."[17] This legendary lineage implied for London a version of *translatio* centered on Trojan martial *imperium* rather than on Athenian *studium*. As the work of Nicholas Birns, Sylvia Federico, Francis Ingledew, and Lee Patterson has demonstrated, the Troy myth was recurrently employed by English rulers as a powerful ideological instrument in their fantasies of empire.[18] To note but one example, in addition to ordering a lavish copy of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, King Henry V personally commissioned Lydgate's *Troy Book* to foretell that he would rule peacefully over both England and France.[19] But, while the transmission of Trojan *imperium* was thus certainly an important component of English *translatio*, research on its wholly martial themes has tended to neglect the penetrating link between wisdom and authority in the Middle Ages as well as England's book culture, which served as a physical means of combined *translatio studii et imperii*.[20] In England

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[16] A Trojan foundation myth was equally influential in France and Burgundy, for which see Lusignan, "Les mythes," 467, esp. n. 70.

[17] For Geoffrey of Monmouth's version of the myth see *History of the Kings of Britain*, translated by Sebastian Evans (New York: Dutton, 1958), book I, chaps. III- XVIII.

[18] See Nicholas Birns, "The Trojan Myth: Postmodern Reverberations," *Exemplaria* 5, no. 1 (1993), 45-78; Sylvia Federico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in The Late Middle Ages*, (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2003); Francis Ingledew, "The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History: The Case of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*," *Speculum* 69, no. 3 (1994), 665-704; Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1991), esp. 84-98, 161-63; as well as Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1987), esp. 157-62, 168-180.

[19] Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, 93, 161.

[20] For a discussion of the link between learning and power in late-medieval culture and the phrase "a prince without learning is like a crowned ass," see Bernard Guenée, "The Image of the Prince," in *States and Rulers in Later Medieval Europe*, translated by Juliet Vale (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), esp. 69-74. See also Jacques Krynen, *Idéal du prince et pouvoir royal en France à la fin du Moyen Âge (1380-1440): Étude de la littérature politique du temps* (Paris: Picard, 1981).

at this period, manuscripts were prized possessions in which to immortalize one's name, instruments of social climbing, as well as symbols of cultural refinement and humanist erudition. As Steiner notes, the *Philobiblon* offers stark evidence that Bury, one of the first great English book collectors and the secretary of King Edward III, "regard[ed] collecting [books] as a distinctly nationalist endeavor embodying the *translatio* of learning to England, and specifically to Oxford, in the wake of the war with France."[21] As we shall see, Bury was not alone.

In order to fully grasp English evocations of *translatio studii et imperii* we must first understand both the historiographical implications of the long tradition of *translatio* as well as the French variations of the myth to which the English were responding. The first chapter of this thesis is therefore dedicated to an exploration of the development of the *translatio* myth from its ancient origins up to its adoption by the circle of Charles V. As we will uncover, *translatio* was more than a simple literary paradigm employed by courtiers to flatter power-hungry rulers; it was a conception of time, knowledge, and earthly power which had a discernable influence on how medieval thinkers and rulers understood their world.

The second chapter of this study is devoted to a literary analysis of texts such as the *Philobiblon* which explicitly evoke the *translatio* topos and which were composed or copied in England during the Hundred Years War. Patterson and Federico, among others, have studied in detail the Troy myth's version of *translatio imperii* in works such as Monmouth's *Historia*; the *Roman d'Eneas*; Chrétien's *Érec et Énide*; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; Gower's *Vox clamantis* and *Confessio amantis*; Chaucer's *The House of Fame* and *Troilus and Criseyde*; Maidstone's *Concordia*; as well as Lydgate's *Troy Book*.[22] Although this scholarship serves as

[21] Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 262.
[22] See also the studies listed above at n. 18 as well as David Carlson, *John Gower, Poetry and Propaganda in Fourteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012).

an invaluable context for my own research, I instead examine less canonical texts which are more immediately politically engaged or propagandistic and which appeal to both *translatio studii* and *imperii*. In addition to Bury's treatise on the love of books, these texts include Ranulf Higden's Latin retelling of the life of King Alfred the Great in the *Polychronicon*; John Trevisa's English translation of Higden; as well as fourteenth-century Oxford and Cambridge university foundation myths and poems. While Lusignan, Steiner, and James Parker have shed light on the theme of *translatio* in certain of these texts, many of them remain understudied despite their cultural significance in the context of England's war with France.[23] Studying these sources as textual agents, I move outward from literary analysis toward cultural history in order to consider how these texts functioned as actors shaping their age's linguistic and political worlds.

In the third chapter, we shall turn from textual agents to book collectors in order to explore how late-medieval English book culture was informed by the myth of *translatio studii et imperii*. It is here that I delve into Bedford's underhanded acquisition of the Charles V's royal library and similar intellectual offensives by the English, such as Henry V's seizure of over a hundred volumes at Meaux in 1422. Focusing on the English royal library and the collections of the dukes Bedford and Humphrey as well as the aristocratic patronage of Oxford and Cambridge, I combine codicology with cultural history in order to recover the political significance of these monumental collections. This chapter thus follows David Rundle's approach to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester's book collecting.[24] Based on library catalogues, ownership inscriptions, and

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[23] See Lusignan "Les mythes," esp. 457-79; Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature"; and James Parker, *The Early History of Oxford, 727-1100: Preceded by a Sketch of the Mythical Origin of the City and University* (Oxford: 1885), 1-62.

[24] David Rundle, "Good Duke Humfrey: Bounder, Cad and Bibliophile*," Bodleian Library Record* 27, no. 1 (2014), 36-53; and "Habits of Manuscript-Collecting: The Dispersal of the Library of Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester," in *Lost Libraries,* edited by James Raven (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 106-24.

patterns of manuscript circulation and use, Rundle has established that Duke Humphrey was extremely ostentatious in his pursuit of learning and that, in at least one of the volumes Bedford sent to him from the library of Charles V, the duke grandiloquently inserted his *ex libris* above that of the French king using the same formula.[25] Was Humphrey's pointed eclipse of Charles "the Wise" informed by the concept of *translatio*? Were Bedford's acquisition of the French royal library or the fitful growth of the English royal collection similarly inspired? In the case of Bury, who was "perhaps the most powerful man in England" in the early decades of the Hundred Years War, the *Philobiblon* leaves little doubt that he considered book collecting as "academic warfare on nationalistic grounds."[26] No such definitive indication of motive survives for any of the other patrons of this study, though, as will be made clear, their book culture resonates remarkably with the *translatio* discourse permeating their age.

This study concludes with a consideration of *translatio*'s ambivalent implications for English proto-nationalism, the promotion of the English language, and the very notion of "Englishness." As Andrea Ruddick notes, for much of the post-war twentieth century "the very discussion of national identity in the middle ages was regarded as potentially ideologically suspect."[27] While today most medievalists would agree that the political doctrine of nationalism is a distinctly modern phenomena, contemporary scholarship is torn on the matter of whether precursors of this doctrine can be located in the Middle Ages. On the one hand, scholars such as Ardis Butterfield argue that the Middle Ages were a "pre-national" period in which "the huge variety of articulations of identity" precluded the development of nationalism; to "locate

[25] Rundle, "Habits of Manuscript-Collecting," 109.
[26] Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 244, 262.
[27] Ruddick, *English Identity*, 7.

retrospectively a generalizing impulse of nation" is therefore anachronistic.[28] On the other hand, in the last few decades, there has been an increasing number of medievalists who defend the existence of medieval concepts of nationhood all the while striving to "maintain a dissociation between historiography and nationalist ideology."[29] The present study of English *translatio studii et imperii* situates itself as part of this effort to explore medieval sentiments of nationalism on their own terms and adopts the qualified designation of "proto-nationalism" to differentiate medieval attitudes from their modern counterparts. This conclusion gives special consideration to the role of language in fostering a sense of national identity and reflects on how the existence of two dominant vernaculars in England, both French and English, complicated the kingdom's appeals to *translatio studii et imperii*.[30]

Making full use of the multidisciplinarity of medieval studies, this thesis explores *translatio studii et imperii* from a variety of perspectives, each shedding new light on England's anxious relation to France during the Hundred Years War. Despite cultural offensives such Bedford's acquisition of the French royal library and the multiple studies on French evocations of *translatio*, medievalists have largely overlooked the degree to which English courtiers and intellectuals of the period were invested in the consonance between knowledge and power and in superseding France in its lineage with Athens and Rome. This study takes us to the heart of the

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[28] Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy*, 35, xxix. Derek Pearsall equally resists the idea of "Englishness" in the Middle Ages, arguing that this sentiment emerged fully only the reign of Henry VIII. See Pearsall, "The Idea of Englishness in the Fifteenth Century," in *Nations, Court, and Culture: New Essays on Fifteenth-Century English Poetry*, edited by Helen Cooney (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), 15-27.

[29] Ruddick, *English Identity*, 7.

[30] For a discussion of the condition of these vernaculars in mid-fourteenth century England, see Mark Ormrod, "French Residents in England at the Start of the Hundred Years War: Learning English, Speaking England and Becoming English in 1346," in *The French of Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Jocelyn Wogan-Browne*, edited by Thelma Fenster and Carolyn Collette (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), 190-205.

intellectual trends of the late Middle Ages and contributes to an understanding of how late-fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English aristocrats and clerics themselves comprehended the cultural politics of their war with France.

Chapter 1

The Origins of *Translatio*: From Athens to Paris

In order to understand English evocations of *translatio studii et imperii* during the Hundred Years War, we must first look back at least as far as the Hebrew Bible – what became for medieval Christianity the Old Testament.[31] This foundational Judeo-Christian work was composed sporadically between the eight and first centuries BCE, at which time *translatio* still "constitute[d] the axis of ancient historical thought."[32] From its very beginnings, Christianity was thus in dialogue with *translatio*, and the Christian Old Testament borrowed manifestly from the earlier tradition. The *translatio* myth of a succession of kingdoms was closely entwined with Greek conceptions of time as a series of cycles rising, falling, and recommencing for all eternity, although the notion of *translatio* itself predates even Classical Greece. As far as can be traced, the myth appears to have been primordial, viscerally rooted in the cyclical rhythms of our world. Tullio Gregory has shown that legends of cyclical transfers of knowledge and power existed long before Plato and Aristotle's metaphysical theories on time's "rhythmical periodicity and eternal return." [33] Later, in the Hellenistic period (323 – 30 BCE), myths circulated that the Greeks had perfected the knowledge they had acquired from northern barbarians and eastern thinkers as well as fables styling the Egyptians as the "heirs and imitators" of Greece.[34] Ancients were equally

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[31] Ingledew, "The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History," 679, n. 60.
[32] Tullio Gregory, "*Translatio Studiorum*," in *Translatio Studiorum: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Bearers of Intellectual History*, edited by Marco Sgarbi (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 3. For a recent study of historiographical conceptions prior to and beyond the Middle Ages in the West, see Hartog, *Chronos*.
[33] Gregory, "*Translatio Studiorum*," 3.
[34] Ibid., 2. Gregory notes that Greece was also the "heir and imitator" of Egypt as the Greeks recovered much of their unwritten and lost ancient wisdom from Egyptian records.

invested in conceptualizing intellectual lines of succession, such as that linking Zoroaster to Pythagoras then Plato.[35]

The most immediately influential of these stories on the Christian Old Testament was that of the five empires which developed in the East during the Hellenistic period.[36] According to this eschatological legend, earthly history would consist of a sequence of five universal kingdoms (that of the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, the Macedonians, and the Romans), each following one another in succession until the fifth, which would last until the end of the world.[37] For those familiar with the Christian Old Testament, the parallel with the Book of Daniel is evident. Indeed, the prophecy of the five kingdoms was adopted both by Roman pagans and by early Christians, though with significantly different implications. The tension between these two interpretations long reverberated through medieval historiography, and it concerned the notion of progress.

Like the suggestion that there was any idea of nationalism in the Middle Ages, the suggestion that there was any idea of progress is one of the most rigidly observed taboos in Medieval Studies. Medievalists are right to forego placing value judgements on the past and to avoid anachronisms. However, in our anxiety to dissociate our work from the frequently harmful socio-political ideologies of progress which have emerged since the eighteenth century, we have often been too eager to deny the existence of medieval understandings of ameliorative advancement. For over a century, J. B. Bury has held sway in his judgement that "the idea of the universe which prevailed throughout the Middle Ages and the general orientation of men's

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[35] Ibid.
[36] Theodor E. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of the City of God," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12, no. 3 (1951), 348.
[37] Ibid.

thoughts were incompatible with some of the fundamental assumptions which are required by the idea of progress."[38] Despite this commonplace, multiple studies have persuasively demonstrated that progress (while distinct from its modern connotations) was indeed a significant concept for medieval and ancient peoples.[39] In the following discussion of *translatio*, "progress" can be defined simply as a gradual development towards an improved and preferable stage or condition. Fundamentally, progress implies that history is causal, purposive, and linear. It also implies that the world can be bettered through mankind's moral, intellectual, or material innovations.

For Romans of the Republic, the eastern myth of the five earthly kingdoms combined with this progressive model of history resulted in a myth of *translatio studii et imperii,* which inextricably linked martial power with morality and wisdom.[40] Voicing Romans' core understanding of *translatio,* Sallust wrote in *The Conspiracy of Catiline* (c. 43–40 BCE) that dominion is legitimately secured by means of industry, moderation, and equity and is lost through sloth, covetousness and pride.[41] He concludes that "the fortune of a state is altered together with its morals; and thus [that] authority is always transferred from the less to the more

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[38] J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1920) qtd. in Mommsen, "St. Augustine," 356. Patterson notes that, still today, "[i]t is a truism that the development of a secular, causal historiography is impeded in the Middle Ages by the radical devaluation of both historiography and the historical life entailed by the spiritual imperatives of Christianity," *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, 86.

[39] Notably, see Mommsen, "St. Augustine"; Ludwig Edelstein, *The Idea of Progress in Classical Antiquity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1967); Leslie Sklair, *The Sociology of Progress* (London: Routledge, 1970), esp. 3-15; Antoinette Novara, *Les idées Romaines sur le progrès d'après les écrivains de la République: Essai sur le sens Latin du progrès*, 2 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1982-83); J.R. Webb, "'Knowledge Will Be Manifold': Daniel 12.4 and the Idea of Intellectual Progress in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 89, no. 2 (2014), 307-57; and Fenzi, "'*Translatio Studii*.'"

[40] Fenzi, "'*Translatio studii*,'" 176.

[41] Ibid.

deserving."[42] As Fenzi explains, Sallust thus considered transfers of power as amelioratory over time.[43] Greek conceptions of time as cyclical and repetitive had thus been replaced by a linear understanding of history in which *translatio* represented a progression of empires, each better than the last. Following this logic, Rome, the eternal city and last of the five earthly kingdoms, was the most moral and deserving of all empires, as seemed confirmed by the Pax Romana (27 BCE – 180 CE).[44]

Given the consubstantial nature of wisdom and virtuous rulership in Roman ideology, Rome also necessarily stood at the pinnacle of human knowledge. As Cicero (106 – 43 BCE) affirms, it was the duty of the Romans

> to wrest from the now failing grasp of Greece the renown won from this field of study [philosophy] and transfer it to this city [Rome], just as our ancestry by their indefatigable zeal transferred here all the other really desirable avenues to renown.[45]

Centuries later, Boethius (c. 477 – 524 CE), the great Roman translator responsible for the early preservation of Plato and Aristotle in the West (who became immensely influential for the medieval understanding of *translatio*), similarly "depict[ed] his own projects of philosophical *transfero* – both linguistic translation and intellectual transfer – as culturally transformative and politically charged."[46] As Brooke Hunter has demonstrated, Boethius was keenly aware of the

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[42] Ibid. English translation from Sallust, *Conspiracy of Catiline*, translated by John Selby Watson (New York: 1899), chap. 2, 5-6.
[43] Fenzi, "'*Translatio studii*,'" 176-77. For Sallust's ideas on progress see also Novara, chap. 9, "Rome et ses progrès selon Salluste: Le terme de 146," in *Les idées Romaines sur le progrès,* vol. 2.
[44] Mommsen, "St. Augustine," 373.
[45] Cicero qtd. in Fenzi, "'*Translatio studii*,'" 177. English translation from Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, translated by J.E. King, Loeb Classical Library 141 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), chap. 2, 5.
[46] Brooke Hunter, *Forging Boethius in Medieval Intellectual Fantasies* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 63.

link between knowledge and authority and as a result "declare[d] his intellectual work to be a form of political service equal to his consular duties."[47] Strikingly, the statesmen and historian Cassiodorus (487 – 584 CE) praised Boethius' duty so exuberantly as to declare that, "if the Greek authors could compare their own works with Boethius' translations, they would prefer the translation to the original."[48] In this way, although Boethius and Cassiodorus were in fact both Christians, they were deeply indebted to the pagan Roman ideology of ameliorative *translatio studii et imperii*.[49]

The Book of Daniel

For many early Christians, this possibility of human-driven and secular progress was deeply troubled by the Book of Daniel. As we shall disentangle, there were conflicting understandings of the Book of Daniel and its version of *translatio* among believers (Boethius and Cassiodorus attest to this complication), yet the scriptural interpretation which became orthodox among Christians offered a historiographical conception which was disdainful of secular power,

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[47] Ibid. Hunter substantiates this observation with the following passage from Boethius' *In Categorias Aristotelis*: "… it seems largely pertinent to the care of the republic to go above and beyond to instruct citizens in the doctrine of these things. Nor shall I merit the ill will of my fellow-citizens [in doing so], since the former power of the men of other cities transferred mastery and imperium to this one republic, I, even so, in what remains, will instruct the customs of our citizens in the arts of Greek wisdom. Wherefore, not even the office of the consul is unoccupied with this, since with the Romans it has always been the custom to honor whatever is beautiful and praiseworthy of a foreign nation with ever greater imitation," 201B.

[48] Édouard Jeauneau, *Translatio Studii: The Transmission of Learning, a Gilsonian Theme* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1995), 9. Jeauneau paraphrases from Cassiodorus, *Variarum* 1, Ep. 45, 3-4.

[49] The extent of Boethius' Christian beliefs has long been a matter of debate and his secular works were often overtly Christianised in the Middle Ages. Hunter explains: "Although Boethius was a Christian, his translations and commentaries in pagan authors, especially Aristotle, corroborate his link to pagan antiquity in the Middle Ages. Much of Boethius' work, then, positions him within a largely secular, pagan intellectual lineage that could be figured as separate from, but not opposed to, ecclesiastical and monastic intellectual histories. Even the conspicuously Christ-free *Consolatio* situates itself within a pagan philosophical lineage that […] could be Christianized or not as explicators saw fit," *Forging Boethius,* 61.

dismissive of human progress, and emphatically apocalyptic.[50] As Daniel explains to Nebuchadnezzar, the king's dream of the awesome statue with the head of fine gold, the chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, and its feet partly of iron and partly of clay represents the degeneration of his kingdom.[51] When the corrupted feet shatter and cause the rest of the statue to collapse, all the materials are "broken to pieces together," disintegrated, and "carried away by the wind" so that no trace of them was found, thus prophesying the ruin of Nebuchadnezzar's realm and reminding him of the impermanence of earthly achievements.[52] This apocalyptic vision is extended to the rest of the world in Daniel's own dream, where four great beasts, representing four earthly empires, come out of the sea and are successively destroyed to give way to God's everlasting kingdom.[53] The beasts, naturally, are gruesome, but the fourth is emphatically so, as from its ten horns it will "speak words against the High One, and shall crush the saints of the most High: and he [the beast] shall think himself able to change times and laws." [54] The fourth beast then, will attempt to overcome the impermanence of earthly power and therefore the will of God, He who "changeth times and ages: taketh away kingdoms, and establisheth them: giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that have understanding."[55] Wisdom and earthly power thus derive entirely from the will of God and, though Ecclesiasticus tells us that "[a] kingdom is translated from one people to another because

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[50] See Lorenzo DiTommaso, "The Four Kingdoms of Daniel in the Early Mediaeval Apocalyptic Tradition," in *Four Kingdom Motifs Before and Beyond the Book of Daniel*, edited by Andrew Perrin and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 205-50.
[51] Dan. 2:1-45. The description of the statue is at Dan. 2:31-33. The translation of the Bible used throughout is *The Holy Bible: Challoner's Revised Douay-Rheims Version* (Project Gutenberg, 2011), https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1581/1581-h/1581-h.htm#chap27.
[52] Dan. 2:34-35.
[53] Dan. 7:1-28.
[54] Dan. 7:25.
[55] Dan. 2:21.

of injustices, and wrongs, and injuries, and divers deceits" at God's discretion, in time the accumulating sins of men will precipitate the Apocalypse.[56]

As Saint Jerome (c. 342-47 – 420 CE) tells us, the four kingdoms, or beasts, of Daniel's dream are to be interpreted as Babylonia, Persia, Greece / Macedonia, and, finally, Rome.[57] The essential ambivalence of the Apocalypse as both the harsh atonement for human sin and the welcomed coming of Christ's everlasting kingdom meant that Rome, the preceding earthly empire, acquired a binary legacy which lasted well into the Middle Ages. While for many the image of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream suggested the general decline of secular power and the corruptness of Rome (the feet of clay which caused the statue to crumble), there was an alternative school of thought, Eusebism, which became prominent in the second century of our era and which was most powerfully expressed by the eponymous Roman historian and exegete Eusebius (260-65 – 339-40 CE). It is in Eusebism that the Roman ideal of progressive *translatio studii et imperii* most permeated the Christian model of history. In brief, Eusebians were Roman apologists who held that biblical monotheism and the eventual coming of Christ's kingdom were closely linked to the uniting power of the universal Roman empire, which, beginning in the reign of Constantine the Great (306 – 337 CE), also disseminated Christian doctrine.[58] Mommsen further notes that "Eusebius and the other Christian progressivists of the fourth century […] strongly stressed the coincidence of the birth of Christ and the reign of Augustus."[59] Saint Jerome was one of those who participated in this favourable stylisation of Rome's prophetic purpose in the unification of the world. He wrote in his commentary on *Isaiah*:

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[56] Ecclesiasticus 10:8; Fenzi, "'*Translatio studii*,'" 172.
[57] Fenzi, "'*Translatio studii*,'" 172.
[58] Ibid., 174.
[59] Mommsen, "St. Augustine," 373.

> Before the coming of Christ each nation had its own king, and no one was able to go from one nation to another. Under the Roman Empire all things became unified.[60]

As Fenzi among others observes, Jerome here posited that Rome had "created conditions quite new and qualitatively superior" to those of previous earthly empires and that this was achieved in anticipation of the universality of Christ's kingdom.[61] The pagan vision of Rome as the universal and eternal pinnacle of human civilization thus became Christianised in Eusebian thinking and, when Rome was sacked in 410 CE, it was understood (in the words of Jerome) that "the whole world ha[d] perished in one city."[62]

Evidently, the Eusebian model is not that which became orthodox in the Middle Ages. This was largely as a result of Saint Augustine's vehement rejection of it in *The City of God* (c. 426 AD). The conception of time and history which Augustine propounded had its roots in Hebrew and early-Christian ideas; it was disdainful of earthly power, hostile in its treatment of Rome, and dismissive of secular accomplishments.[63] Mommsen explains that, for Augustine, "the Christian idea of progress" was "truly problematic and the most objectionable theory of history."[64] In agreement, Lee Patterson adds that Augustine forcefully rejected "the claim that *any* moment of secular history, no matter how momentous, can be understood in terms of a providential purpose" and that, as a result, he abhorred the Eusebian stylisation of the Roman Empire as "underwritten by God for special historical purposes."[65] Indeed, while Augustine's

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[60] Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah*, 5, 19, 23 qtd. in Fenzi, "'*Translatio studii*,'" 173. Translation from St. Jerome, *St. Jerome: Commentary on Isaiah*, translated by Thomas P. Scheck (New York: Newman, 2015), 266.
[61] Fenzi, "'*Translatio studii*,'" 173. See also Mommsen, "St. Augustine," 349-50.
[62] Jerome, *Preface* to Ezekiel I qtd. in Mommsen, "St. Augustine," 349.
[63] Ibid., 370. Mommsen offers a bibliography for the Hebrew and early-Christian influences on Augustine's thinking on p. 355, n. 15.
[64] Ibid., 356.
[65] Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, 89.

student Orosius (385 – 420 AD) would modify his master's legacy by analogizing Rome to Babylon, Augustine himself strictly denied a prophetic purpose even to Rome's fall.[66] Instead, he believed that is was "entirely improper" and "[i]n vain" to "attempt to compute and determine the years which remain to this world" and repeatedly emphasised the instability of earthly, material achievements.[67] He propounded that "because of the mutability of things human no security will ever be given to any nation."[68]

This earthly instability was understood neither as part of the Greek, cyclical model of *translatio* nor as part of the Roman, progressive lineage of empires. According to Augustine's theory of history, time had begun with the Creation, would end with the Last Judgement, and could be divided into six ages of man, each of which marking a spiritual enlightenment through God's gradual revelations of divine truth (usually via prophets).[69] Augustine characterized these ages as infancy, childhood, adolescence, young manhood, mature manhood, and old age, which had begun with birth of Christ. The Church Father did thus have a certain sense of progress, but it was entirely spiritual, of the heavenly city, and in no way earthly or tied to human achievements or intellectual advances.[70] Humanity had become increasingly enlightened, but

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[66] Ibid.; Mommsen, "St. Augustine," 350-51.
[67] Augustine, *Acts*, 1, 7 and *The City of God*, 18, 53, A-B qtd. in Mommsen, "St. Augustine," 350-5.
[68] Augustine, *The City of God*, 17, 13, C qtd. in ibid., 373.
[69] Ibid., 372.
[70] Mommsen notes that, while Augustine believed that "there is not true 'progress' to be found in the course of human history," he "was, of course, well aware of the fact that 'the human genius has invented and put to practical use many and great arts […] and that human industry has made wonderful and stupefying advances' (*City*, 22 24 K-L)." Yet, in his opinion, these advances caused as much (or more) destruction as development: "And for the injury of men, how many kinds of poison, how many weapons and machines of destruction have been invented" (*City*, 22, 24, A), "St. Augustine," 374.

without agency and solely through God's intervention. This dismissal of causal historiography and worldly events is the legacy which Augustine left to the Middle Ages.

Although Augustine's model of history was a foundational Christian doctrine, it was nevertheless undermined, or at the least circumvented, by medieval rulers who evoked *translatio studii et imperii* as a tool of empire. For, while the myth of *translatio* lay at the heart of the Book of Daniel, when secular rulers proclaimed their legitimacy through lineages of empires, they evoked not the biblical, apocalyptic version of the myth, but a progressive Roman, or Eusebian, model. This later understanding glorified the past as a source of authority and conferred to history itself the political power to legitimate; however, it also embraced the possibility that the pagan wisdom of the ancient world could be surpassed by new, Christian empires.

A Carolingian Tool of Empire

Throughout the Carolingian Renaissance of the late-eighth and ninth centuries, royal fantasies of empire were shaped by the myth of *translatio studii et imperii*. During this revival of classical learning, the great Carolingian court scholars, including Alcuin of York, Raban Maur, Claude de Turin, and John Scotus Eriugena, radically extended the *translatio* tradition to include the Franks in order to bolster Charlemagne and Louis the Pious' ambitions of cultural ascendency. As was fixed in French historiography by Notker of St. Gall (c. 840-912) in his *Gesta Karoli*, Charlemagne was a man of letters, poet, and philosopher, and it was under his guidance that knowledge had completed its journey from Athens, to Rome, and finally to Francia.[71] Notker radically rewrote the Book of Daniel in his proud statement that:

> After the omnipotent ruler of the world, who orders alike the fate of kingdoms and the course of time, had broken the feet of iron and clay in one noble statue, to

[71] Fenzi, "'*Translatio studii*,'" 185.

> wit the Romans, he raised by the hands of the illustrious Charles the golden head of another, not less admirable, among the Franks.[72]

In Notker's version of *translatio,* the succession of kingdoms thus continued past the fall of Rome onto Charlemagne's realm, which rose from the ashes of the ancient world as the golden pinnacle of human civilization. The Frankish kingdom's lineage with Rome was championed still further when Charlemagne was crowned the official "Emperor of the Romans" by Pope Leo III in the year 800.

Notker did not specify a capital seat for the wisdom and power of Charlemagne's empire, though Alcuin identified it as Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen), for which he emphasized a connection with Athenian learning rather than Roman imperium:

> … a new Athens is being created in France, indeed a far finer one. For that which is ennobled by the teaching of our Lord Christ surpasses all academic education; that which had only Plato's teaching owed its reputation to the seven arts, while ours is enriched by the seven-fold Spirit and so excels all earthly wisdom.[73]

In other words, Aix could eclipse the profane wisdom of Athens because it was illuminated by the knowledge of God. Alcuin's vision is invested by a heady tinge of Christian – and more specifically Carolingian – superiority.

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[72] Notker qtd. in ibid., 186. English translation obtained via A. J. Grant, editor and translator, "The Monk of Saint Gall: The Life of Charlemagne, 883/4," in *Early Lives of Charlemagne by Eginhard and the Monk of St. Gall* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1926), 59-183, at 59.

[73] Alcuin of York, *Alcuin of York, C. A.D. 732 to 804: His Life and Letters*, translated by Stephen Allott (York: William Sessions, 1974), 93. Hunter notes that Alcuin was so enthralled by the idea of a French Athens that he and his fellow scholars "styled themselves on ancient models" and "adopt[ed] pagan nicknames in their letters (Alcuin was Flaccus and Theodulf [of Orléans] was Pindar)," *Forging Boethius*, 59.

The Carolingian Renaissance was indeed a period of great intellectual optimism, and, as J. R. Webb observes, its thinkers "did not always retain the apocalyptic tenor of the [Danielic] prophecy."[74] Instead, they used the Book of Daniel "to support an optimistic view of human epistemological achievements and potential; they were advocating in some form an idea of intellectual progress."[75] The notion of Danielic apocalypse had thus been overshadowed by that of progress in the Carolingian discourse of *translatio*, as the passage from Alcuin so blatantly demonstrates. Of course, optimistic statements of Carolingian intellectual superiority such as Alcuin's were also inherently political; the threads of *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* were early entwined in medieval France. [76]

For Carolingians, the symbol which most powerfully embodied this coalescence of wisdom and authority was the material book. As we shall explore in Chapter 3, Carolingian rulers and scholars were the first great secular European book collectors.[77] The cultural reforms promulgated by Charlemagne and his successors had firmly placed the written word at the center of the Carolingian world, and Charlemagne's own personal interest in scholarly pursuits, including accumulating a personal library, had cemented the book as a symbol of his wise-rulership and authority. Books, especially those which were lavishly illuminated and encrusted with jewels, had become part of the royal regalia and, from as early as the ninth century, they

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[74] Webb, "'Knowledge Will Be Manifold,'" 309. Interestingly, Webb notes that a key scriptural passage on which Carolingian thinkers drew to support their notion of intellectual progress was concealed within the Book of Daniel itself: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," 12:4.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Serge Lusignan, "L'Université de Paris comme composante de l'identité du royaume de France: Étude sur le thème de la *translatio studii*," in *Identité Régionale et Conscience Nationale en France et en Allemagne du Moyen Âge à l'Époque Moderne*, edited by Rainer Babel and Jean-Marie Moeglin (Sigmaringen: Verlag, 1997), 59.

[77] See the discussion below at 64-68.

came to be regarded as not only as instruments of learning and religious devotion, but also as ostentatious displays of status and prestige.[78] In effect, books as physical embodiments of knowledge and power had become movable symbols of *translatio studii et imperii*.

Charles V, The University of Paris, and The French Royal Library

The Carolingian developments of the *translatio* tradition long endured in the French discourse of royal power. By the thirteenth century, Paris had long replaced Aix as the seat of royal power, but Carolingian concepts of French cultural authority were not forgotten.[79] The *Grandes Chroniques de France* (c. 1250 – 1461) in large part translated Notker's *Gesta Karoli* into the vernacular, though styled Paris, not Aix, as the new Athens home to French wisdom. The *Grandes Chroniques* – the official history of France written and updated by the monks of Saint-Denis since the reign of Louis IX (r. 1226 – 1270) – constituted a powerful historiographical intervention by French monarchs and was far more sophisticated than any English propaganda effort of the period. In addition to reinforcing the portrayal of Charlemagne as a scholar-ruler who guided learning from Athens to France, these chronicles promulgated the claim that the emperor himself had founded the University of Paris and that the good fortune and political power of France depended on the kingdom's cultivation of learning and its benevolence towards its scholars.[80] These ideas quickly took hold among Parisian scholars, and, increasingly, they tied the power of Capetian and later Valois monarchs to that of the renowned University of Paris.[81]

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[78] See the discussion below at 64-65, 68 as well as Rosemond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), esp. 147-49.
[79] For the textual history for Paris' gradual apparition in French evocations of *translatio* see Lusignan, "L'Université de Paris," 61-62.
[80] Ibid., 62; Lusignan, "Les mythes," 452-54. As Lusignan traces in detail, the earliest text to have claimed that Charlemagne had founded the University of Paris was Vincent de Beauvais' *Speculum historiale* (1235-64).
[81] Lusignan, "L'Université de Paris," 60. For texts of *translatio* circulating among the thirteenth century French scholars see Lusignan, "Les mythes" and ""L'Université de Paris," as well as

The link between French kings and the University was at its most ideologically potent during the Hundred Years War, in the reigns of king Charles V "the Wise" (r. 1364 – 1380) and Charles VI (r. 1380 – 1422).[82] As Lusignan has amply demonstrated, intellectual wisdom, with its implication of justice, was central to the exercise of royal authority at this period.[83] The University of Paris here served Charles V as an essential "pivot in the relationship between power and knowledge."[84] Indeed, the university did much to bolster Charles V's persona of scholar-king and to fuel his cultural projects, such as the translation of many important texts into the French vernacular.[85] Under Charles V, an increasing number of graduates also filled administrative positions at court, and the university benefitted from the auspices of both the king and his aristocrats, for whom it was *à la mode* to found royal colleges.[86] Charles V's patronage of the university (popularly known as his "well-loved daughter") equally encouraged comparisons between the Valois king and the school's legendary founder, Charlemagne.[87] The memory of Charlemagne as the scholar-ruler who had transported knowledge and power from Athens to Paris animated intellectuals of the Valois court such as Jean Corbechon, Raoul de

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Hunter on the Boethian forgery *De disciplina scolarium* (c. 1230-40), which recounts pseudo-Boethius' movements from Rome to Athens to Paris, in *Forging Boethius*, 61. See also Alexander Murray's discussion of "Fountain of all Sciences" (c. 1243), which prophesies that the French will replace the Greeks and become "the most honoured people of this world and the most wise," in *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 252-53.

[82] Lusignan, "L'Université de Paris," 60.

[83] Serge Lusignan, "Université, savoir et langue Française: l'Exercice du pouvoir sous Charles V," in *Traduire au XIV^e siècle: Evrart de Conty et la vie intellectuelle à la cour de Charles V*, edited by Joëlle Ducos and Michèle Goyens (Paris: Champion, 2015), 59-72.

[84] Ibid., 26, my translation.

[85] Ibid., 37.

[86] Ibid., 26.

[87] Ibid., 65-66.

Presles, Jean Golein, and Nicolas Oresme, who recurrently associated Charles V with his Carolingian predecessor and triumphantly evoked the theme of *translatio studii et imperii*.[88]

In addition to the University of Paris and the legacy of Charlemagne, Charles V's reputation as an intellectual was tied to his royal library, which served as a physical embodiment of the king's wisdom and authority.[89] Lusignan notes that "[l]a seule présence de la Librairie royale dans le palais du Louvre semble avoir constitué aux yeux des contemporains une preuve de la sagesse du roi et un gage de son bon gouvernement."[90] Christine de Pizan, the famed moralist and political thinker of the following generation, affirms as much in her *Livre des faits et bonnes mœurs du Roi Charles V le Sage*:

> Comment ne pas évoquer à propos de la sagesse du roi Charles V le grand amour qu'il avait pour l'étude et le savoir? C'est que montre à l'évidence sa belle collection de grands livres et la magnifique bibliothèque où il avait réuni les volumes les plus remarquables qu'aient composés les meilleurs auteurs.[91]

A large portion of the volumes in Charles V's royal library were richly illuminated French vernacular translations commissioned by the king himself. As Nicolas Oresme tells us in the

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[88] Ibid.

[89] For Charles V's royal library see Léopold Delisle's seminal *Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V*, 2 vols (Paris: Champion, 1907) and Marie-Hélène Tesnière, "La librairie de Charles V: Instructions, organisation et politique du livre," in *Traduire au XIV^e siècle: Evrart de Conty et la vie intellectuelle à la cour de Charles V*, edited by Joëlle Ducos and Michèle Goyens (Paris: Champion, 2015), 363-78.

[90] Lusignan, "Université, Savoir et Langue Française," 33.

[91] Christine de Pizan, *Le livre des faits et bonnes mœurs du Roi Charles V le Sage*, edited by Eric Hicks and Thérèse Moreau (Paris: Stock, 1997), 216-17. Christine's portrait of Charles V is clearly indebted to the Carolingian *translatio* tradition; she notes that, during the rule of Charlemagne, "[i]l arriva alors d'Angleterre un très grand érudit du nom d'Alcuin ou Aubin, qui enseigna au roi tous les arts libéraux. Voyant le grand amour que Charlemagne avait pour les sciences, ce grand maître, sur les instances de son élève, usa de toute son intelligence pour effectuer la translation des études de Rome à Paris, tout comme jadis on avait transféré de la Grèce à Rome l'étude de ces sciences," 219.

prologue to his French translation of Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*, Charles V's translation efforts are the ultimate expression of *translatio studii*.[92] For, Oresme contended, just as the Romans translated Greek wisdom into Latin, so too Charles V now translated wisdom from Latin into French, the new language of learning.[93] Jean Golein, another translator of the Valois court, similarly held that the king's library merited France's addition to the long lineage of worldly empires.[94] Golein went so far as to declare that France's victories against the English in the Hundred Years War were due to Charles V's unrivalled intelligence:

> Par son estude et sa sapience [Charles V] ha conquis a l'ayde de Dieu pluseurs terres, villes et citez sur son anemi le roy d'Angleterre, si comme est la conté de Pontieu en Picardie, et en Acquitaine, Caours, Montauban, Figiach, Lymoges, et oultre la moitié de Gascoigne.[95]

Thus, the myth of *translatio studii et imperii* shaped Valois France's very understanding of kingship and of their war with England. Alexander Murray summarizes the sentiment of this period in France bluntly is his statement that "the French were best because they were more intelligent."[96]

In turning to consider the English, we may ask ourselves how much of the French *translatio* tradition crossed the Channel. To what extend did the Carolingian legitimatizing lore and the historiography of the *Grandes Chroniques* reach England? Did English thinkers realize

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[92] Serge Lusignan, "La topique de la *translatio studii* et les traductions françaises de textes savants au XIV[e] siecle," in *Traductions et traducteurs au Moyen Âge*, edited by Geneviève Contamine (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1989), 303-15, at 310-11.
[93] Ibid. For an edition of Oresme's prologue, see Nicole Oresme, *Maistre Nicole Oresme: Le livre de Ethiques d'Aristote*, edited by Albert Douglas Menut (New York: G.E. Stechert, 1940).
[94] See Tesnière's discussion in "La Librairie de Charles V," 367.
[95] Jean Golein, prologue to his translation of Jean Cassien's *Collations*, qtd. in Lusignan, "Université, Savoir et Langue Française," 33-34.
[96] Murray, *Reason and Society*, 252.

that the French claimed Charlemagne had founded the University of Paris, and did this spur their own counter-myth that Alfred the Great had founded the University of Oxford? In the age of Charles V, did the English give credence to the myth that France's martial power and political dominance grew in tandem with its intellectual advances? Was Bedford aware of the symbolic importance of the French royal library when he claimed it for England? Although I cannot hope to provide firm answers to all these questions, the English literary sources and book culture we shall explore in the following chapters strongly suggest that the English apprehended, at least in part, the rhetorical manoeuvres of French *translatio*. For, at every level, English evocations of *translatio studii et imperii* appear designed precisely to respond to their French counterparts, reminding their rival that the time had come for England, the next kingdom in the lineage of worldly empires, to surpass its French forebearer.

Chapter 2

Lukewarm Philosophy and Languishing Soldiery: From Paris to Oxford

"Admirable Minerva seems to bend her course to all the nations of the earth, and reacheth from end to end mightily, that she may reveal herself to all mankind. We see that she has already visited the Indians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians and Greeks, the Arabs and the Romans. Now she has passed by Paris, and now has happily come to Britain, the most noble of islands, nay, rather a microcosm in itself, that she may show herself a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians. At which wondrous sight it is conceived by most men, that as philosophy is now lukewarm in France, so her soldiery are unmanned and languishing."

– Richard de Bury, *Philobiblon*, Chap. IX

The *Philobiblon*, or *The Love of Books*, contains the most elaborate treatment of *translatio studii et imperii* written on the English side of the Channel during the Hundred Years War. Composed by Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham, shortly before his death in 1345, this Latin treatise demonstrates that one of King Edward III's most-trusted advisors conceived England's war with France not only as a martial conflict but also as an intellectual contest. Bury's portrait of Minerva, the goddess of strategic warfare, wisdom, and civilization, travelling across the earth before finally settling in Britain is the very personification of the *translatio* myth; the author is adamant that martial and intellectual power are entwined and that both have abandoned the shores of France for Britain. As we will uncover in this chapter, Bury was by no means the only Englishman to understand war with France as a manifestation of *translatio studii et imperii*. The *translatio* topos circulated widely in England among nobles, chroniclers, and university students. All the same, Bury's rank, diplomatic duties, intimacy with Edward III, rapacious book collecting, and lengthy embellishments on our historiographical myth render his *Philobiblon* the

natural place to begin our study of English *translatio* texts both as products and agents of their social world.

Bury's *Philobiblon*

Cast as an apologia for book collecting, the *Philobiblon* consists of twenty chapters which variously expound the importance of books, lament their ill-treatment, and explain how to properly manage a lending-library. The treatise is in many ways conventional (Beryl Smalley notes that "Bury was as deeply 'clerical' as any medieval bishop could be"), although the text's moralistic complaints and strict adherence to the rules of *dictamen* [the formal precepts of letter-writing] are livened by the author's exuberant confessions of bibliophilia, autobiographical anecdotes, and grotesque personification of books.[97] For instance, in chapter VIII, titled "Of the Numerous Opportunities We Have Had for Collecting a Store of Books," Bury boasts that he has rescued (read pilfered) manuscripts from the cabinets of the most famous monasteries, where they laid attacked by moths "in sackcloth and ashes, given up to oblivion."[98] Elsewhere in the treatise, it is the books themselves which voice the horrors to which they are subjected by the clergy, possessioners, mendicants, and wars: "We suffer from various diseases, enduring pains in our backs and sides; we lie with our limbs unstrung by palsy, and there is no man who layeth it to heart, and no man who provides a mollifying plaster."[99] As Steiner has shown, the personified manuscripts "call to attention all the ways that books resemble bodies"; they bewail their loose bindings as "limbs unstrung by palsy" and their yellowed pages as flesh "diseased with

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[97] Beryl Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960), 71. Smalley offers a discussion of Bury's sources at 70-72.
[98] Richard de Bury, *Philobiblon*, translated by E. C. Thomas (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), 83.
[99] Ibid., chap IV, 45.

jaundice."[100] The imaginative force of Bury's treatise may in part explain its popularity. The text was widely circulated and survives in over thirty manuscripts as well as in a multitude of early printed editions.[101] Noël Denholm-Young tells us that the *Philobiblon* "was known at Oxford in 1358, and [that] in the fifteenth century, if not earlier, [it] achieved a considerable reputation upon the Continent."[102]

Although the *Philobiblon* is written in Bury's name and presents itself as an autobiographical treatise, doubts have been raised concerning the text's authorship as in seven manuscripts it is attributed the Dominican theologian Robert Holcot.[103] Holcot was one of a group of scholars under Bury's patronage who enjoyed access to the bishop's extensive library.[104] This lends credence to the possibility that Holcot may have assisted Bury in some way with the composition of the treatise, even if only as an amanuensis, compiler, or editor.[105] While Smalley holds that "[n]o stylistic argument can be used" to differentiate the authorship of the two men and that "[w]e shall never know, therefore, how much of *Philobiblon* is Holcot's and how

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[100] Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 254.
[101] For a list and discussion of these manuscripts, see E. C. Thomas, Introduction to Richard de Bury, *Philobiblon* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), xxxvii-lxxiii. The earliest extant manuscript is datable to c. 1370, about 25 years after Bury's death.
[102] Noël Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury (1287-1345) and the *Liber epistolaris*," in *Collected Papers of N. Denholm-Young* (Cardiff: Wales UP, 1969), 33. The first printed edition of the *Philobiblon* was published in 1473 in Cologne, and the text was first printed in England in 1598.
[103] See Smalley's discussion in *English Friars*, 66-67 as well as Michael Maclagan's note on authorship in his foreword to Thomas' edition of the *Philobiblon*, lxxiv-lxxxiii, esp. lxxv-lxxvi. See also the discussion in John Slotemaker and Jeffrey Witt, *Robert Holcot* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016), 130-31.
[104] Slotemaker and Witt, *Robert Holcot*, 133.
[105] Smalley, *English Friars*, 66-67. Maclagan suggests that the attribution of the *Philobiblon* to Holcot in certain manuscripts may be because these were derived from a copy of the treatise written (and signed) in Holcot's own hand. Maclagan cautions, however, that, by 1344, "Holcot was already a person of enough importance in his own right to leave such tasks [as copying] to the Bishop's then staff," foreword to the *Philobiblon*, lxxvi. Smalley makes a similar observation in *English Friars* at page 67.

much de Bury's," Denholm-Young argues that the careful attention to *cursus* (rhythm) throughout the text suggests "that the style is not that of Robert Holcot."[106] Given the personal anecdotes corresponding to Bury's life interspersed throughout the *Philobiblon*, it is today generally agreed that the bishop was the author, even if it remains unclear how much he was assisted by the scholars he supported, notably Holcot.[107]

The *Philobiblon* is Bury's only surviving literary work, though earlier in his career he compiled a formulary of over 1,500 letters now known as the *Liber epistolaris*. This collection is extant in only one manuscript (Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Brogyntyn MS II.7), which Bury is believed to have copied himself early in his career as a royal official, c. 1324.[108] While the *Liber epistolaris* contains almost nothing composed by Bury himself, the magnitude and choice of letters he compiled as well as the care he took writing them reveals a great deal about his disposition.[109] As Denholm-Young observes, formularies at this period "were valuable to aspiring men, and the scope of this one may be taken as the measure of the compiler's ambitions."[110] The letters of Bury's collection range from the twelfth century to 1324, though they are for the most part undated and arranged in no particular order. The content of the letters are also wide ranging; there are student-like pairs (such as letters of consolation with alternative

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[106] Ibid., 67 and n. 4 of that page; Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury," 35.
[107] Slotemaker and Witt, *Robert Holcot*, 131.
[108] Denholm-Young proposes that the manuscript may have been written in Bury's own hand given his access to the letters transcribed and the quality of the penmanship ("Bury was a professional scribe," he reminds). The manuscript is also attributed to Bury in an inscription (c. 1400) on its first flyleaf. See "Richard de Bury," 6; in this chapter Denholm-Young also offers a detailed description and analysis of the manuscript and its contents. Some five hundred of the formulary's letters are transcribed by Denholm-Young in Richard de Bury, *The Liber epistolaris of Richard de Bury*, edited by Noël Denholm-Young (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1950). Over three hundred previously published letters are also calendared by Denholm-Young, who provides full indexes.
[109] Ibid., 5.
[110] Ibid., 6.

forms of reply), love notes, missives from an angry father to his lazy son, messages between friends, chancery letters, and many more besides. However, the majority of the *Liber epistolaris* appears to have been compiled from correspondence written under the great seal of England to either Rome or Gascony. These important diplomatic documents were eloquent models, highly stylised and composed in the rhythmical prose of the papal chancery (*cursus curie romane*) which Bury later employed in the *Philobiblon*.[111] Denholm-Young notes that, with this foreign correspondence, Bury "was not collecting mere *formulae* but, as he might have said himself – *belles lettres*." [112] The historian adds that, while the *Liber epistolaris* is written in a clear and beautiful hand, Bury was a rather "careless copyist" in terms of the letters' contents, signalling that he may have "sometimes thought more about how he wrote than what he was writing."[113] On the whole, the *Liber epistolaris* leaves the impression of an ambitious man who spent

[111] Ibid., 5.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Denholm-Young, introduction to *The Liber epistolaris,* xi; Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury," 5. Denholm-Young remarks that, in editing Bury's *Liber epistolaris*, "a constant watch has been kept for passages which might seem to have some echo in the *Philobiblon* – itself couched in the form of a letter – but with no success," *The Liber epistolaris,* xix-xx. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that one of the letters copied by Bury, a missive sent from Edward I to Pope Boniface VIII, contains a strain of the *translatio studii et imperii* tradition. In this letter, King Edward asks the pope for *ius ubique docendi* on behalf of the University of Oxford, which would permit Oxford graduates to teach in all universities without further examination. This was a privileged which had already been granted to the University of Paris, and King Edward pointedly reminds the pope that French scholarship originated from Englishmen. As Lusignan observes, Edward here appears to allude to the presence of Alcuin and of other English scholars at Charlemagne's court and to imply that Charlemagne's great University of Paris was in fact founded by Englishmen (see Lusignan's discussion in "Les mythes," 466). While this particular variation of the *translatio studii et imperii* tradition claiming that French study is indebted to English intelligence is not mentioned by Bury in the *Philobiblon,* it does reappear in multiple other English texts, such Higden's *Polychronicon* and Cambridge university foundation myths, for which see the discussion below at 61-62. Bury's transcription of Edward I's letter is calendared in Denholm-Young, *The Liber epistolaris,* no. 107 and appears in full in George Haskins, "The University of Oxford and the 'Ius ubique docendi,'" *The English Historical Review* 56, no. 222 (1941), 281-92.

countless hours cultivating his eloquence and letter hand. In some ways the formulary thus lends credence to what has often been remarked of Bury: that he may have been more preoccupied with his own magnificence and display of intelligence than with the true pursuit of knowledge.[114] Whatever the true caliber of Bury's intellect, it is clear that the bishop recognized erudition as a source of personal distinction and authority.

In the *Philobiblon*, Bury employs the topos of *translatio studii et imperii* to create a similar correspondence between knowledge and political authority, though this time with a distinctly proto-nationalistic current. While Bury readily admits that Paris was once "the Paradise of the world," home to Athenian wisdom and "delightful libraries, more aromatic than stores of spicery," he insists that the impudence of young scholars and their "baneful haste" to earn their diplomas has sullied Parisian learning.[115] The subtleties (or refinements) of learning are now to be found in England:

> Alas! By the same disease which we are deploring, we see that the Palladium of Paris has been carried off in these sad times of ours, wherein the zeal of that noble university, whose rays once shed light into every corner of the world, has grown lukewarm, nay, is all but frozen. There the pen of every scribe is now at rest, generations of books no longer succeed each other, and there is none who begins

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[114] Smalley notes that Bury "advertised the fact" that he befriended scholars and had many books and that the bishop "both was and saw himself as being 'magnificent,'" *English Friars*, 66. Steiner further recalls that "[t]he fourteenth-century chronicler Adam Murimuth (1347) disparages Bury's collecting as compensation for lack of true erudition," "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 246. For Murimuth's disparagement of Bury see Adam Murimuth, *Continuatio chronicarum: Robertus de Avesbury de gestis mirabilibus regis Edwardi tertii*, edited by Edward Maunde Thompson (London, 1889), esp. 171. See also Denholm-Young's discussion of the caliber of Bury's learning in "Richard de Bury," 27-28.

[115] Bury writes that in the new-Athens of Paris "there are lounges of Athens; walks of the Peripatetics; peaks of Parnassus; and porches of the Stoics," *Philobiblon*, chap. VIII, 85; chap. IX, 105.

> to take place as a new author. They wrap up their doctrines in unskilled discourse, and are losing all propriety of logic, except that our English subtleties, which they denounce in public, are the subject of their furtive vigils.[116]

Bury here alludes to the rise of Oxford logic (for instance the theories of Thomas Bradwardine) and to the bitter rivalry between the universities of Oxford and Paris at this period.[117] Despite Bury's boasting at the preeminence of insular thought, he cautions that it too is threatened by the increasing number of students "fastening to their untried arms the Icarian wings of presumption."[118] Still, the bishop hedges, English subtlety remains "illuminated by the lights of former times [and] is always sending forth fresh rays of truth."[119]

In essence, Bury's "fresh rays of truth" and entire understanding of *translatio studii et imperii* are Eusebian. As we have seen, the Eusebian model of *translatio* Christianised the notion of earthly progress and strongly stressed the providential purpose of Rome as the first universal empire.[120] So too Bury holds that it was "Julius [Caesar] the invader of Rome and of the world, who, first in war and arts, assumed universal empire under his single rule."[121] Moreover, while the bishop's emphasis on the gradual accumulation of knowledge and the transfer of ancient scholarship from one master to another is reminiscent of Bernard of Chartres' (d. c. 1124) metaphor of dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants, Bury adds to this scholastic vision the

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[116] Ibid., chap. IX, 105-106.
[117] For the rise of Oxford logic see J. A. Weisheipl, "Ockham and the Mertonians," in *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 1, edited by T. H. Ashton and J. I. Catto (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 607-58. For Oxford's rivalry with the University of Paris, see the discussion below at 52-53, 57-58.
[118] Bury, *Philobiblon*, chap. IX, 103.
[119] Ibid., chap. VIII, 91.
[120] For Eusebism see the discussion above at 19-20.
[121] Bury, *Philobiblon*, chap. I, 17.

notion of a lineage of empires.[122] The bishop's sense of history is vividly expressed in his conviction that Roman achievements built on those of Greeks: "What would Vergil, the chief poet among the Latins, have achieved, if he had not despoiled Theocritus, Lucretius, and Homer, and had not ploughed with their heifer?," Bury asks.[123] Moreover, "[w]hat could Sallust, Tully, Boethius, Macrobius, Lactantius, Martianus, and in short the whole troop of Latin writers have done, if they had not seen the productions of Athens or the volumes of the Greeks?"[124] However, neither were the Greeks themselves the fountainhead of knowledge. "For not even Aristotle, although a man of gigantic intellect," could have "sucked from his own fingers" the entirety of his learning.[125] "[O]n the contrary," Bury continues, "with lynx-eyed penetration [Aristotle] had seen through the sacred books of the Hebrews, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Chaldæans, the Persians, and the Medes, all of which learned Greece [sic] had transferred [*transtulerat*] into her treasuries."[126] Having received the insights of this ancient lineage of *translatio studii*, the Grecian "smoothed away their crudities, pruned their superfluities, supplied their deficiencies, and removed their errors."[127]

At times, Bury's vision of progress develops into what might almost appear a sense of scientific advancement. In the chapter titled "On the Gradual Perfecting of Books," the author confesses:

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[122] John of Salisbury records Bernhard of Chartres' metaphor thus: "We are as dwarves seated on the shoulders of giants, that we may see more and further than they do, not because we are sharp-sighted or physically distinguished, but because the size of the giants raises us higher," qtd. in Giancinta Spinosa, "*Translatio Studiorum* through Philosophical Terminology," in Translatio Studiorum: *Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Bearers of Intellectual History,* edited by Marco Sgarbi (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 73-89, at 76.
[123] Bury, *Philobiblon*, chap. X, 111.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid., 109.
[126] Ibid., 109-111.
[127] Ibid.

> While assiduously seeking out the wisdom of the men of old […] we have not thought fit to be misled into the opinion that the first founders of the arts have purged away all crudeness, knowing that the discoveries of each of the faithful, when weighed in a faithful balance, makes a tiny portion of science, but that by the anxious investigations of a multitude of scholars, each as it were contributing his share, the mighty bodies of the sciences have grown by successive augmentations to the immense bulk that we now behold.[128]

Bury continues that, when students continually reassess the doctrines of their masters ("passing them again through the furnace"), the product is "refined gold tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times to perfection, and stained by no admixture of error or doubt."[129] While Bury's vision of progress might thus seem almost modern in its idea of cumulative knowledge and the need to continually retest received wisdom, we must not forget that the fourteenth-century bishop's very conception of *scientia* was inseparable from his faith. All knowledge was knowledge of a divinely established universe, and all progress was oriented towards Christianity: "As Rome, watered by the streams of Greece, had earlier brought forth philosophers in the image of the Greeks, in like fashion afterwards it produced doctors of the orthodox faith."[130] Still, Bury was a

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[128] Ibid., 109. When Bury notes that English subtlety is "illuminated by the lights of former times [and] is always sending forth fresh rays of truth," he concomitantly declares that Paris "is now more zealous in the study of antiquity than in the subtle investigation of truth," ibid., chap. VIII, 91. One implication appears to be that the progress of Parisian learning has been stunted by an undue commitment to ancient wisdom and an inability to develop advancements or "fresh rays of truth." English learning, on the other hand, is rightly informed by ancient wisdom without being limited by it.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., 113. Steiner adds that Bury's conception of knowledge "is committed to protecting clerical status and privilege; to him, 'suffering' refers simultaneously to the lay appropriation of learning and the mishandling of books by all classes, ages, and genders," "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 258. See Bury's complaint against the handling of books by laymen and women in the *Philobiblon*, chap. IV, esp. 41, 51.

far cry from Saint Augustine in this regard. Unlike the Church Father's spiritual notion of gradual divine revelation, Bury's version of progress emphasized humanity's agency in discovering hidden truths and was not at all disdainful of worldly achievements. In fact, using the myth of *translatio*, Bury promoted the view that knowledge – linked as it was with martial power – was a tool of earthly empire.

As the *Philobiblon* argues, the means for empires to accumulate, preserve, and flaunt their knowledge is through books. England's accession in the lineage of worldly empires, Bury reasons, is due to its great number of manuscripts: "What and infinite host of books lie at Paris or Athens, and at the same time resound in Britain and in Rome!"[131] Bury himself went to great lengths to preserve and increase his kingdom's store of books. Although no inventory survives of the bishop's library, he has often been considered the foremost English book collector of his age. He is depicted in the *St. Albans Chronicle and Register of Benefactors* (c. 1380) holding three volumes, and the fourteenth-century chronicler of the bishopric of Durham, William de Chambre, records that Bury had more books than any other bishop in England.[132] According to Chambre, Bury also had a library at every one of his residences, and his bedchamber was so strewn with books that one could hardly move without stepping on one.[133] In a frequently quoted passage, the chronicler Adam Murimuth further notes that Bury had more volumes than could be transported in "five large carts."[134] As Steiner wryly observes, Murimuth's comment does little

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[131] Bury, *Philobiblon*, chap. IV, 41.
[132] The illustration of Bury in the *St. Albans Chronicle and Register of Benefactors* (British Library, Cotton MS Nero D. vii, fol. 87r) is reproduced in Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 251. Chambre appears to have been writing twenty-odd years after Bury's death. For Chambre's continuation of the *History of Durham*, including his account of Bury, see "Continuatio historiae Dunelmensis," in *Historiae Dunelmensis scriptores tres*, edited by James Raine (London: 1839), 124-56, esp. 125-30.
[133] Chambre, "Continuatio historiae Dunelmensis," 130.
[134] Murimuth, *Continuatio chronicarum*, 170.

to quantify Bury's collection unless we know the size of the carts in question and how many books each could carry.[135] Still, the sense remains that Bury's collection was exceptionally large. In the *Philobiblon,* the bishop divulges the many (often underhanded) ways in which he accumulated his collection and the great sums of money he has lavished on books, treasures which have possessed his mind since boyhood.[136] Bury tells us that a number of his volumes were created by his own atelier of copyists, scribes, binders, correctors, and illuminators.[137] He also shamelessly admits that others were given to him as bribes while Chancellor and Treasurer. He writes: "we were reported to burn with such desire for books, and especially old ones, that it was more was more easy for any man to gain our favour by means of books than of money," and so, "there flowed in, instead of presents and guerdons, and instead of gifts and jewels, soiled tracts and battered codices, gladsome alike to our eye and heart."[138] We have already noted that the bishop equally enjoyed privileged access to England's finest monastic libraries and that he regularly carried off whatever manuscripts he saw fit.[139] On the whole, the *Philobiblon* reveals that Bury's book collecting was nothing if not obsessive.

However, the bishop heartily avows that his fanatic collecting stemmed not from greed but rather from the hope of bolstering English learning and glorifying the English crown. This

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[135] Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 247-48.
[136] Bury writes that "the [o]vermastering love of books has possessed our mind from boyhood, and to rejoice in their delights has been our only pleasure," *Philobiblon,* chap. XI, 117.
[137] Ibid., chap. VIII, 95.
[138] Ibid., 83.
[139] Bury confesses: "when we prospered in the world and made acquaintance with the King's majesty, we obtained ampler facilities for visiting everywhere as we would, and of hunting as it were certain most choice preserves, libraries private as well as public, and of the regular as well as of the secular clergy […] there was afforded to us, in consideration of the royal favor, easy access for the purpose of freely searching the retreats of books," ibid., 81. Steiner further notes that the bishop managed to pilfer fourteen books from the Royal Wardrobe and that, "[a]pparently, no library was safe from the prying hands of Richard de Bury," "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 248, 251.

Bury intended to do by founding a college at Oxford in honour of Edward III and Queen Philippa and by endowing it with his library.[140] Despite his intentions, Bury's immense debt – accrued in large part through book collecting – prevented this project from coming to fruition. The bishop's library was sold-off piecemeal to settle his accounts upon his death, and today only a handful of volumes are known to have once belonged to him.[141] This is a sorry end to the library of a man who insisted that "[a] library of wisdom […] is more precious than all wealth."[142] Throughout his *Philobiblon,* Bury reiterates the inestimable worth of manuscripts as materializations of knowledge necessary for the transmission of learning through time and space.[143] In other words, books, for Bury, were priceless agents of *translatio studii* necessary for England's ascendency.

As agents of *translatio studii,* books are also unavoidably implicated in the violence of *translatio imperii*. As Steiner has demonstrated, the *Philobiblon* reminds its readers at every turn of "the larger cultural history of violence of which books and book-collecting are integral parts."[144] On the one hand, the treatise deplores how books fall casualty to warring nations. Bury's sustained personification of manuscripts renders their destruction all the more horrific,

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[140] Bury writes: "*Imprimis*, we give and grant all and singular the books, of which we have made a special catalogue, in consideration of affection, to the community of scholars living in … N… Hall at Oxford, as a perpetual gift, for our soul and the souls of our parents, and also for the soul of the most illustrious King Edward the Third from the Conquest, and of the most pious Queen Philippa, his consort to the intent that the same books may be lent from time to time to all and singular the scholars and masters of the said place, as well regular as secular, for the advancement and use of study," *Philobiblon,* chap. XIX, 169.

[141] For these volumes see Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury," 37, n. 4; Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 250, n. 26; as well as N. R. Ker, "Richard de Bury's Books from the Library of St Albans," *Bodleian Library Record* 3 (1950–1), 177-79.

[142] Bury, *Philobiblon,* chap. II, 29.

[143] See, for instance, Bury's account of the legendary Roman king Tarquin the Proud who realizes that wisdom has no price, ibid., chap III, 33. Bury concludes this tale thus: "the vessels of wisdom, holy books, exceed all human estimation; and as Gregory says of the kingdom of Heaven: They are worth all that thou hast?"

[144] Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 252.

for to burn a library is a "hapless holocaust, where ink is offered up instead of blood" and "where the devouring flames consum[e] so many thousands of innocents."[145] The bishop laments that much of ancient wisdom has been irretrievably lost because of such destruction.[146] On the other hand, however, Bury positions books themselves as instruments of competition and conflict between empires, notably between England and France. As Steiner affirms, the bishop "regards [book] collecting as a distinctly nationalist endeavor […] in the wake of the war with France."[147] While books were commonly understood as symbols of both wisdom and wealth in the late Middle Ages, Bury employs the topos of *translatio studii et imperii* to add further layers of significance to their possession. In the *Philobiblon*, books are emblems of national superiority and foretellers of martial victory, for, just as the scribes of Paris have stilled their quills and "generations of books no longer succeed each other" in France, so it is provident that England should overmaster its rival both in study and in war.[148]

Bury's Cultural Legacy

Having witnessed Bury's proto-nationalistic evocations of *translatio studii et imperii* in the *Philobiblon*, we may ask ourselves of the popularity and political currency of the bishop's ideas. Were Bury's opinions simply the recondite musings of an old bibliophile, or did they reflect a social discourse that informed how the English conceived their war with France? Did the bishop disseminate his ideas beyond his treatise, and can they – however intangibly – be linked to specific cultural or political activity during the Hundred Years War? After all, Steiner

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[145] Bury, *Philobiblon*, chap. VII, 75.
[146] Bury explains that "if only baleful conflicts had spared the books of the ancients," "Aristotle would not have missed the quadrature of the circle" and "would not have left the problem of the eternity of the world an open question," ibid., chap. VII, 77. See also Bury's lamentation of the burning of the library of Alexandria, chap. VII, 73-75.
[147] Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 262.
[148] Bury, *Philobiblon*, chap. IX, 105-106.

argues that, "[i]n the 1330s and 1340s, Bury was perhaps the most powerful man in England."[149] While Steiner may be slightly overstating the bishop's influence, Mark Ormrod has persuasively demonstrated that Bury was extremely well trusted by Edward III and that, in his successive roles as the king's secretary, keeper of the privy seal, and chancellor, he held considerable sway in multiple spheres, such as "the general operation of domestic government, the management of the king's council and parliament, and the pursuit of international diplomacy."[150]

Indeed, Bury made multiple diplomatic trips to France in the lead up to the Hundred Years War. In 1325-6, he accompanied the future Edward III, then still prince, to France, and it is likely that as keeper of the privy seal he travelled again with Edward in 1331, when the king infamously visited Philip VI disguised as a pilgrim.[151] Bury also undertook the king's "secret business" at the papal court of Avignon in 1331 and 1333, where he famously met Petrarch and discussed the location of the legendary "Ultima Thule."[152] Again in 1336, Bury was trusted to go to France with Bishop Orleton and others to negotiate pivotal matters such as the status of

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[149] Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 244.
[150] Mark Ormrod, "The King's Secrets: Richard de Bury and the Monarchy of Edward III," in *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles, c. 1150-1500*, edited by Chris Given-Wilson et al. (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2008), 163-78. For Bury's career, see also Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury," 24-32.
[151] Ormrod, "The King's Secrets," 175. Ormrod notes that it is uncertain whether Bury accompanied Edward to France in 1329 to give homage to the newly coronated Philip VI.
[152] Ibid. Ultima Thule (lit. "farthermost land") was believed in ancient and medieval times to be the most extreme northern island of the earth and was sometimes understood metaphorically as either a place beyond the known world or the utmost limit of discovery. According to Petrarch's letters, Bury told him that he could locate this legendary land once he returned home to his books and that he would write back to him. However, despite Petrarch's repeated letters, Bury seems to have never responded. Petrarch's papers also reveal that he found Bury a "man with a sharp mind and considerable knowledge of letters" who "since his youth was unbelievably curious about hidden things," qtd. in Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 263 (Steiner also compares Petrarch's bibliophilia with Bury's throughout the chapter). Denholm-Young suggests that in fact Petrarch's praise of Bury seems to be "qualified" as he calls the bishop "*literatus,* but only *sufficienter*." See Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury," 27-28.

Aquitaine, the prospect of a joint Anglo-French crusade, and the proposals for Anglo-Scottish peace.[153] Later that year, realizing that the peace negotiations with France were at an impasse, Bury was involved in organizing the reconnaissance of Philip VI's suspected plans for a double assault of England, where one French armada would attack the south coast and another would head north to support the Scots.[154] In June 1338, Bury was commissioned to go to France for a final time, ostensibly for peace negotiations with king Philip, although Ormrod suspects that this diplomatic mission was intended as a cover both for Edward's war preparations with the Low Countries and to spy on the French.[155] After his return to England, the bishop was chiefly concerned with establishing and maintaining truces for the Anglo-Scottish border.[156] From this overview of Bury's political career, it is clear that the bishop was "closely involved in confidential diplomacy, the management and communication of royal government, and the organization of the opening stages of the Hundred Years War."[157] What remains less certain is how Bury's firsthand participation in the high-stakes politics of the Hundred Years War may have been influenced (or, conversely, may have influenced) his preoccupation with *translatio studii et imperii*.

We do know that, when on home soil, the bishop zealously promoted English learning and had "a central role in the communication and confirmation of royal policy and patronage."[158] We have already seen that Bury repeatedly invoked the glory of king Edward in the *Philobiblon*, and he also often acted on behalf of the king during royal inquires and visitations at Oxford and

[153] Ormrod, "The King's Secrets," 175.
[154] Ibid., 176.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid., 177.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid., 168.

Cambridge.[159] As Smalley remarks, Bury enjoyed calling attention to his promotion of learning and seems to have consciously "erect[ed] patronage into an ideal."[160] It was under Bury's guidance, for instance, that Sir Philip de Somerville founded six theological fellowships at Balliol College in 1340.[161] Ormrod moreover suggests that the bishop may have been "instrumental in setting up the recruitment stream that brought an increasing number of university men into clerical and diplomatic agencies of the state in the 1330s."[162] Ormrod notes elsewhere that Edward III's own patronage as well as his "understanding of the role of the universities" in royal administration and "respect for the authority and value of higher learning" bespeak Bury's legacy.[163] The king bought at least one book from Bury's vast collection and it is easily conceivable that he may have received more from the bishop as gifts.[164]

Scholars have often debated the degree of Bury's influence on the king and of his involvement in Edward's early education. The chronicler William de Chambre recorded that, before becoming bishop, Bury served as tutor to prince Edward (then the earl of Chester).[165]

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[159] Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury," 27, 37.
[160] Smalley, *English Friars*, 66.
[161] Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury," 37. See also the discussion in T. H. Ashton and Rosamond Faith, "The Endowments of the University and Colleges to *circa* 1348," in *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 1, edited by T. H. Ashton and J. I. Catto (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 265-310, at 294.
[162] Ormrod, "The King's Secrets," 166.
[163] W. Mark Ormrod, *Edward III* (New Haven: Yale UP 2012), 309-10. In addition to his patronage of religious houses, Edward re-founded his father's King's Hall at Cambridge in 1337 and established two new colleges of secular canons at Winsor and Westminster in 1348. For Edward's patronage, see also J. R. L. Highfield, "The Early Colleges," in *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 1, edited by T. H. Ashton and J. I. Catto (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 225-64, at 239.
[164] For the book purchased by Edward see British Library, MS Cotton Nero C viii, fol. 211v, noted by Ormrod, "The King's Secrets," 165, n. 9.
[165] Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury," 4. We do know with certainty that Bury began his career in royal service as a clerk in prince Edward's household in October 1316. For Chambre's chronicle see above n. 132.

While Denholm-Young is inclined to believe Chambre's history and that Bury was indeed in charge of Edward's education sometime between 1323 and 1326, the majority of scholars tend to consider Bury less as the prince's official tutor and more as his intellectual and political mentor.[166] Bury remained exceptionally loyal to his pupil throughout his career and was even involved in Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer's plot to depose Edward II and install the fourteen year old Edward III on the throne.[167] Afterwards Bury participated again in Edward's plot to overthrow his mother and her lover in 1330.[168] In short, Bury was indispensable to Edward and was granted a great many benefices in return for his constant service and mentorship.[169] Even if Edward's legacy is not that of a scholar king, it would be difficult to imagine that, in their many decades working closely together, Bury did not find time to explain to the young king the topos of *translatio studii et imperii* nor to inspire in him some sense of intellectual competition with France.

Beyond his royal offices, Bury was at the heart of England's most prestigious academic network and would have had no shortage of scholars with whom to discuss the combined transfer of intellectual and martial superiority from France to England. The bishop housed a large group of chaplains and clerks "who shared with him the daily readings at table, and the disputations

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[166] Ibid. Denholm-Young adds that "it may indeed be no chance that Edward was the first English king whom we know to have been able to write," 33.
[167] Ormrod, "The King's Secrets," 168. Ormrod notes that "it ought particularly to be stressed that Bury accompanied the young Edward on the fateful journey to Paris with Queen Isabelle in 1325-6. He was therefore directly implicated in the refusal of the queen and prince to return to England, and, by extension, in the invasion plan that Isabella and Mortimer hatched during the summer of 1326."
[168] Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury," 25.
[169] Ormrod notes that in a letter to the exchequer in 1332 Edward III writes that Bury's outstanding accounts must be handled by proxy as "the king cannot be without him," "The King's Secrets," 169. A list of Bury's preferments is appended in Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury," 39-41.

after dinner."[170] Many of these men would become some of the foremost minds of fourteenth-century England. In addition to Holcot, they included the young Thomas Bradwardine, later Archbishop of Canterbury; Walter Burley, the philosopher who reportedly tutored the Black Prince; Richard de Kilvington, later archdeacon of London; and three future bishops: Richard Bentworth, Walter Segrave, and Thomas Fitz-Ralph.[171] The majority of these men were fellows of Oxford's Merton College, which was a preeminent centre of philosophy and theology in Europe at this period.[172] Indeed, Denholm-Young argues that the bishop's patronage and encouragement of the remarkable group of scholars who gathered at Merton in the mid to late fourteenth century has too often gone unnoted.[173] It is not clear to what college Bury himself belonged when he earned his Master of Arts (and likely a Bachelor of Divinity) at Oxford in c. 1302-13, nor upon his unusual return to university as a canon in c. 1333-36.[174] However, financial accounts indicate that, as a royal commissioner on visitation to Oxford, Bury stayed at Merton at least once, further suggesting his attachment to the college.[175] Unfortunately, though we know that Bury was a mentor to his Merton fellows, as Smalley notes, "we do not know what form his encouragements took."[176] Thus, it is impossible to know with certainty to what extent Bury imparted his fascination with the *translatio* to his protégés nor how much the topos bore on their later ideas, for instance on Bradwardine's jingoistic *Sermo epinicius* (1346), which insisted

[170] Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury," 36.
[171] For a list of scholars associated with the bishop, see ibid., Appendix II, 39.
[172] See Weisheipl's discussion of Merton's dominance in the fourteenth-century in "Ockham and the Mertonians. "
[173] Denholm-Young, "Richard de Bury," 36.
[174] Ibid., 2, 28-29. Denholm-Young proposes that Bury returned to university (with special dispensation from the pope) to study theology as he later confessed his dislike of law.
[175] Ibid., 29.
[176] Smalley, "English Friars," 67.

on the predestination of England's victories against Scotland and France.[177] However, as J. A. Weisheipl affirms, it is without doubt that "[t]he camaraderie of colleges such as Merton and households such as Bishop Richard of Bury's at Durham tended to give English intellectuals of the period a sense of self-confidence hitherto unexpressed."[178] In other words, Bury promoted a sense of English academic pride, one which the *Philobiblon* positions as explicitly proto-nationalistic and anti-French.

Everything considered, Bury was one of the most powerful and vocal proponents of *translatio* in fourteenth-century England, and he regularly performed symbolic acts to substantiate this proto-nationalistic myth. Beyond the blatant statements of *translatio studii et imperii* in the *Philobiblon*, Bury mentored the foremost scholars of his generation, fostered English academic pride at Oxford, encouraged a sense of intellectual rivalry with Paris, and zealously collected books to physically manifest the transfer of learning to England. Given that the bishop also had the ear of the king and was directly involved in the royal preparations at the outset of England's war with France, further research considering Bury's political career alongside his cultural agenda may yet reveal additional insights on how the discourse of *translatio studii et imperii* shaped the opening stages of the Hundred Years War.

However, beyond Bury's patronage, the legacy of his *Philobiblon* at Oxford remains somewhat difficult to trace. E. C. Thomas notes that a passage from Bury's complaint against the mendicants appears in a somewhat altered form in the Oxford chancellor and proctor's book

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[177] For Bradwardine's sermon see Edith Wilks Dolnikowski, "Thomas Bradwardine's *Sermo epinicius*: Some Reflections on its Political, Theological and Pastoral Significance," in *Medieval Sermons and Society: Cloister, City, University*, edited by Jacqueline Hamesse et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 357-70.

[178] Weisheipl, "Ockham and the Mertonians," 644.

under the year 1358.[179] Despite the thirty-odd extant manuscripts of the *Philobiblon* and thus the text's apparent popularity, the next direct allusion to Bury's treatise by an Oxonian comes, to my knowledge, only in the sixteenth century, in Thomas Caius's *Assertio antiquitatis Oxoniensis academiae* (1566).[180] Caius' Latin tract proudly argued that the university at Oxford is more ancient than that at Cambridge, thus making it superior. Within two years, Thomas Caius' text was bitterly denounced in a tract written by his Cantabrigian counterpart, John Caius, who insisted that his university was the oldest and most renowned in Britain.[181] The two Caiuses were likely of no familial relation. Both, however, were curiously eager to declare that they had read the *Philobiblon*. Thomas Caius claimed that "he had read in the library of Durham College, Oxford, during the reign of Henry VIII (1509 – 1547), the very copy of the *Philobiblon* which Richard de Bury gave in his lifetime to that library."[182] Unfortunately, this copy of the *Philobiblon* was likely destroyed in 1550, when the libraries of all Oxford colleges except Lincoln were plundered by Edward VI's reformers and great piles of Catholic books were burned in the marketplace.[183] It may well be that more early Oxford copies of the *Philobiblon* were destroyed during this pillaging. As for John Caius, he claimed to have owned a manuscript of

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[179] Thomas' observation is absent from any modern edition of his translation, though is cited in Richard de Bury, *The Philobiblon of Richard de Bury*, translated by Andrew Fleming West (New York: 1889), 130, n. 79. See West's note for the passages concerned from the *Philobiblon* and the chancellor and proctor's book.

[180] Andrew Fleming West, "The Text of the *Philobiblon*," in Richard de Bury, *The Philobiblon of Richard de Bury*, translated by Andrew Fleming West (New York: 1889), 35-101, at 61, n. 1. Caius was likely a Latinization of the name Kay, Key, or Keys.

[181] There is no modern edition of either Thomas or John Caius' tract, though a digitization of a sixteenth-century edition of both texts is available via ProQuest at https://www.proquest.com/docview/2240888526/pageLevelImage/16D001C842C242B2PQ/1?accountid=14701&imgSeq=1, accessed 21 October 2021. For an excellent discussion of these treatises, see James Parker, *The Early History of Oxford 727-1100: Preceded by a Sketch of the Mythical Origin of the City and University* (Oxford: 1885), 20-33.

[182] West, "The Text of the *Philobiblon*," 92.

[183] Ibid.

Bury's treatise (also since lost) which contained a copy of the foundation deed of Durham college.[184] Though Thomas and John Caius' tracts are most evidently concerned with the rivalry between Oxford and Cambridge, both are implicated in the English universities' prolonged competition with French learning. As we shall see, in addition to drawing on Bury, the Caiuses incorporated other versions of the *translatio* myth which circulated at Oxford and Cambridge in the late Middle Ages in order to bolster English learning at the expense of the French.

There are other late-medieval Oxford texts which resonate remarkably with the *Philobiblon* even if they do not directly cite Bury's treatise. One such text is a poem known as the "Planctus universitatis Oxoniensis" (c.1356-7) concerning the St Scholastica Day riot of 1355. This Latin poem of nearly three hundred lines takes the form of a dialogue between a student and the University of Oxford, which "speaks as the spirit of learning and civilization in general."[185] Like Bury's admirable Minerva, this spirit of knowledge has travelled westwards across the globe, always bringing with it military courage and power over the world ("Mihi consenciit semper milicia, / Et mecum transiit mundi potencia").[186] The spirit recounts that it has abandoned the great empires of the ancient world one after another because of their licentiousness, laziness, savagery, and hatred of priests.[187] Having passed by the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and thence the Gauls and the Germans, the spirit came at last to Oxford, where it reflourished for a long time ("Tandem Oxoniis diu reflorui").[188]

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[184] Ibid., 61, n. 1. Durham College was the school that Bury wished to found and endow with his library. Ultimately, the college was established by his successor, Thomas Hatfield, Bishop of Durham, in 1381.
[185] "Planctus universistatis Oxoniensis," edited by Henry Furneaux, in *Collectanea*, vol. 3, edited by Montagu Burrows (Oxford: 1896), 169-79, at 177, n. 205.
[186] Ibid., ll. 219-20.
[187] Ibid., ll. 203-216.
[188] Ibid., l. 221.

However, the spirit laments that it will soon be despised at Oxford and that faults appear everywhere ("in novissimus fiam despectui […] Patet in occulis defectus macula").[189] The University's number of clerks dwindles; it is corrupted by fraud and bribery, and its students quarrel with the laity.[190] Recalling Bury's warning that the subtleties of English thought may be ruined (like those of the French) by the impudence of young scholars, the spirit cautions that it could fly still further to the west and find a new, unspoilt race to distinguish.[191] However – unsurprisingly – the spirit decides to stay in Oxford. For, of all the nations it has tried, the spirit of learning reverences this place and the English the most ("Quamvis experior omnem progeniem, / Fili, plus vereor Anglorum speciem. / Dat locus eciam summam temperiem / Hic ergo capiam aeternam requiem.").[192]

Another similar Oxford poem is "Tryvytlam de laude universitatis Oxoniae," tentatively dated to sometime between the St Scholastica Day riot of 1355 and the first reign of Henry VI (1422-61).[193] While the author, a Franciscan friar named Richard de Trevytlam, on the whole offers the university more censure than praise, he too employs the image of the wandering Minerva, who is here coupled with her Greek counterpart, Pallas. The poet recounts how Oxford has been perfectly endowed by these goddesses of wisdom and strategic warfare ("Tamen perfeccius dotata diceris / Minervae munere, donoque Palladis") and that the time of Athens and

[189] Ibid., ll. 224-29.
[190] Ibid., ll. 225-44.
[191] Ibid., ll. 245-48: "O si respiciam plagas occiduas / Et sic praeficiam gentes residuas; / Hae forsan salient in vires strenuas, / Ad tempus capient laudes praecipuas" ("Oh if I would look upon the western quarters, I would place other nations in authority; These will perhaps jump into vigorous strength and receive temporary distinguished praises," my translation).
[192] Ibid., ll. 273-76.
[193] Richard de Trevytlam, "Tryvytlam de laude universitatis Oxoniae," edited by Henry Furneaux, in *Collectanea*, vol. 3, edited by Montagu Burrows (Oxford: 1896), 188-209, at 189.

Rome has passed.[194] Oxford is now the greatest glory of the English ("maximam Anglorum gloriam") and better informed than even Paris.[195] Thus, the poet continues, the University of Oxford influences the virtue of the entire world ("Sic toti seculo virtutem influis").[196] By implication, it must purify itself of its recent evil doings, notably the university's persecution of its own students at the hands of the lay mob.

Whether the authors of either the "Planctus universistatis Oxoniensis" or the "Tryvytlam de laude universitatis Oxoniae" drew directly from Bury or rather from a broader social discourse of *translatio studii et imperii* at Oxford is impossible to know. It is clear, however, that the *translatio* myth and the image of the wandering Minerva were familiar to a number of scholars at Oxford in the late Middle Ages, among them Bury, and that these tropes were employed to bolster a sense of English academic pride.

Translatio in the University of Oxford's Foundation Myths

In the remainder of this chapter, let us turn to explore other versions of the *translatio* myth which circulated at Oxford, notably those concerning the university's foundation. Remarkably, all the origin stories we shall discuss in the following pages emerged only in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the majority were written specifically in the reign of Edward III (r. 1327 – 1377). On the whole, these myths functioned to bolster Oxford's reputation in the opening stages of the Hundred Years War, a period of particularly bitter rivalry between

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[194] "Quicquid [sic] ediderit pulcra Parisius, / Ut verum fatear, informas melius," ("Whatever beautiful things Paris has produced, to confess the truth, you produce better," my translation), ibid., ll. 31-32. On Athens and Rome Tryvytlam writes: "Athenas Cecropis fatebor sterilem, / Et Achademiam urbem inutilem, / Quae quondam dederat doctrinam uberem. / Pallebit livida domus Romulea, / Impar putabitur eius sciencia" ("I will admit that Athens is barren, and the academy is a useless city, which once had given plentiful teaching. The spiteful house of Romulus will pale, its knowledge will be considered inferior," my translation), ll. 42-46.
[195] Ibid., ll. 7, 66-68.
[196] Ibid., l. 91.

English scholars and the University of Paris. As is attested in an Oxford statute from the early fourteenth century, there were attempts at the University of Paris and other institutions to prevent Oxford degrees from being recognized.[197] In retaliation, Oxford declared that it would not receive graduates from these antagonizing universities. However, despite the efforts of certain Parisian scholars to shut out Oxonians, by the first half of the fourteenth century, English philosophy had taken hold of Europe and "the schools of Oxford attained a reputation throughout the academic world that they never quite equalled before or after."[198] Thus, "English scholars […] claimed that the earlier fame of Paris had by the fourteenth century passed to Oxford."[199] While Bury envisioned this *translatio* of learning as a linear succession (Minerva flew from France to England), the Oxford foundation myths promote an alternate version of *translatio studii et imperii* in which England supersedes France not by inheriting its rival's wisdom but by inheriting the wisdom of the ancient world directly. In these retellings, English learning is the result of an early divergence from the well-known lineage of worldly empires and is thus independent from French scholarship.

The first version of the Oxford foundation myth to which we turn is that promulgated by the university itself in the "Chancellor's Book," which appears to have been compiled late in the reign of Edward III (c. 1375).[200] James Parker notes that myth, commonly called the Oxford *Historiola*, also appears in two iterations of the university's "Proctor's Book," one copied in 1407 and the other in 1477, as well as in British Library, Cotton MS Claudius D viii, which

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[197] J. M. Fletcher, "The Faculty of Arts," in *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 1, edited by T. H. Ashton and J. I. Catto (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 369-400, at 398.
[198] Ibid., 608.
[199] Ibid., 398.
[200] A transcription of this origin myth is provided in "Translatio universitatis de loco in locum," in *Munimenta academia, Or Documents Illustrative of Academical Life and Studies at Oxford*, edited by Henry Anstey, vol. 2, Roll Series (London: 1868), 367-69.

appears to have been copied directly from the Chancellor's Book sometime in the early fifteenth century.[201] The *Historiola* recounts:

> By the concurrent testimony of several chronicles, many places throughout different parts of the world are said at various times to have gained repute in the promotion of the study of the various sciences. But the University of Oxford is found to be earlier as to foundation, more general in the number of sciences taught, firmer in the profession of Catholic Truth, and more distinguished for the multitude of its privileges, than all other *Studia* now existing amongst the Latins. Very ancient British Histories imply the priority of its foundation, for it is related that amongst the warlike Trojans, when with their leader Brutus they triumphantly seized upon the island, then called Albion, next Britain, and lastly England, certain Philosophers came and chose a suitable place of habitation in this island, on which the Philosophers who had been Greek bestowed a name which they have left behind them as a record of their presence, and which exists to the present day, that is to say Grekelade [an ancient name for Oxford].[202]

The *Historiola*'s foundation myth is plainly one of *translatio studii et imperii*; for, when Brutus colonized Britain, he brought with him "warlike Trojans" as well as Greek philosophers who established the earliest and best university of the Latin-speaking world at Oxford. Notably, the myth implies a direct transfer of power and learning from the ancient world to England. France is entirely circumvented.

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[201] Parker, *The Early History of Oxford*, 307. Parker offers a useful discussion of the myth at 10-12.

[202] Ibid., 10. The passage is translated by Parker from the text of the Chancellor's Book (a transcription of the original Latin text is offered at 367). For a possible explanation of the etymology of Grekelade, see ibid., 11-12.

A second, more popular Oxford origin story is that which attributed the university's foundation to King Alfred the Great (b. 849 – d. 899). The earliest surviving account of Alfred's creation of the University of Oxford comes to us in Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon,* written c. 1327-64 during the reign of Edward III. In the opening of Book VI, Higden summarizes Alfred's life thus:

> He put together psalms and prayers into one little book which he called a manual, that is handbook, and carried it carefully about with him. He attained but a very imperfect knowledge of grammar for the reason that at that time there did not exist throughout the whole kingdom a teacher of grammar. Wherefore by the counsel of S. Neot the Abbot, whom he frequently visited, he was the first to establish schools for the various arts in Oxford; to which city he granted privileges of many kinds. Moreover he permitted no illiterate person to be promoted to any ecclesiastical dignity.[203]

This account circulated widely in the late-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; the *Polychronicon* was exceptionally popular and survives in over one hundred and twenty manuscripts.[204] In 1352, Higden was even called to court to present a copy of his text before the king.[205] As early as 1387, the text had been translated into English by John Trevisa for his patron Lord Berkeley.[206]

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[203] Higden translated by Parker in *The Early History of Oxford*, 47.
[204] Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England: 550-1307*, vol.1 (London: Routledge, 1997), 43-44.
[205] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 14.
[206] For an analysis of Trevisa's translation in comparison with Higden's original Latin, see David Fowler, *The Life and Times of John Trevisa, Medieval Scholar* (Seattle: Washington UP, 1995), 176-89. For a discussion of Lord Berkeley's patronage and the context of Trevisa's translation, see Ralph Hanna III, "Sir Thomas Berkeley and His Patronage," *Speculum 64*, no. 4 (1989), 878-916.

Another anonymous translation was made in the fifteenth century, although it was Trevisa's text which was printed by both William Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde.[207]

Given the popularity of the *Polychronicon*, it is unsurprising that Higden's Alfred story quickly became part of the English canon of myths. The tale was early taken up and expanded by a host of late-medieval chroniclers, for instance by John Rous in his *Historia Regum Angliae* (c. 1480-86).[208] Rous liberally embellishes the *Polychronicon*'s account and splices it with the Greek mytho-history of the Oxford *Historiola*. Higden's myth appears again in Thomas Rudborn's *Historia Major* (c. 1440), and it is repeated almost verbatim in the late-fourteenth-century *Brampton Chronicle*, also known as the *Chronicon Journallense*.[209] Parker adds that the same story is alluded to in a number of the University of Oxford's legal proceedings in the late-fourteenth century, usually as a bid to remind the king that the university had been founded by his predecessor and thus deserves royal protection.[210] In the sixteenth century, the accounts that Alfred had founded the University of Oxford were picked up once again by Thomas and John Caius in their infamous feud, in which the Cantabrigian John Caius bitterly argued that these stories were "certainly nothing else but mere figments, composed for the sake of glorifying the University of Oxford."[211]

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[207] Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 52. For a facing page edition of Higden's Latin text, Trevisa's translation, and the anonymous fifteenth century translation, see C. Babington and J.R. Lumby, editors, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden monachi Cestrensis; Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century* (London: 1865). In addition to the narrative of *translatio* animating Higden's account of Alfred, the chronicler at one point curiously notes that Roman *imperium* passed from the French to the Germans. Trevisa translates this unusual lineage of empires passage thus: "þe empere of Rome passede from þe Grees to Frensche men, and þanne to Germans," *Polychronicon*, 241.
[208] See Parker's discussion of the Oxford foundation myth in Rous' chronicle in *The Early History of Oxford*, 5-17, 50-52.
[209] Ibid., 48-49.
[210] Ibid., 52-57.
[211] John Caius quoted in ibid., 32.

Of course, John Caius was correct. The Alfred legend is completely historically implausible.[212] Still, it was disseminated as fact by generations of late-medieval English chroniclers no doubt eager to put Oxford on par with "Charlemagne's" University of Paris. As we have seen in Chapter 1, the myth that Charlemagne had founded the University of Paris (proclaimed as early as the mid-thirteenth century in the *Grandes Chroniques de France*) was a powerful historiographical intervention by French monarchs.[213] In addition to bolstering Charlemagne's legacy as a scholar king who guided learning from Athens to France, the myth encouraged the ideological link between the power of French rulers and the learning of Parisian scholars. By the reign of Charles V, it was popularly held that France's good fortune and political might depended on the kingdom's wisdom and the University of Paris. When the English belatedly claimed that Alfred had founded the University of Oxford, they were blatantly imitating French mytho-history and positioning their ascendant university in direct rivalry with the famed University of Paris.

Moreover, despite this clear imitation of the French, the Alfred myth implied for Oxonians a distinctly English intelligence. Indeed, Antonia Gransden notes that Higden's embellishment of Alfred's legacy reflects the chronicler's patriotic tendency to "glorify the Anglo-Saxon past."[214] King Alfred's Englishness is especially emphasized in Trevisa's preface to his translation of Higden, in which he pronounces that "Kyng Alured [Alfred], þat foundede þe vnyuersite of Oxenford, translated þe beste lawes into Englysch tonge and gret del of þe

[212] Ibid., 3.
[213] See the discussion in Chapter 1, 24-27.
[214] Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 52.

Sauter out of Latyn into Englysch."[215] Here explicitly, Alfred translates the wisdom of ancient sources directly into English, without the intermediary of French. He is thus an agent of distinctly English *translatio studii* and the legacy of his learning – and of Oxford – is pointedly independent from French scholarship. As we shall return to consider at the end of this study, Trevisa's insistence that Alfred the Great had translated the bible into English must be situated amid the rise of the Wycliffite movement and of efforts to justify the compilation of an English bible in the fourteenth century.[216] Trevisa's preface foregrounding the interrelation of *translatio* and translation raises the question of how other insular authors negotiated the linguistic implications of the *translatio* tradition amid the multilingualism of late-medieval England. Did English evocations of *translatio* always promote English as the language of insular learning?

Another point worth noting is that, although the Alfredian myth seems to have emerged fully only in the reign of Edward III with Higden, the story was in fact indebted to Asser's *De Rebus Gestis Ælfredi*, or *Life of Alfred* (c. 893).[217] In this biography, Alfred's court scholar Asser takes great care to recount the king's well-known literary talents, patronage, and promotion of

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[215] Qtd. in Ronald Waldron, "Trevisa's Original Prefaces on Translation: A Critical Edition," in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, edited by Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron, and Joseph Wittig (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1988), 285-99, at 292.
[216] See the discussion below at 93-98 as well as Ronald Waldron, "John Trevisa and the Use of English," in *Proceedings of the British Academy LXXIV* (1988), 171-202 (the King Alfred story is considered at 176-77); Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), esp. 411-13; Fowler, *The Life and Times of John Trevisa*, esp. chap. 5 "The English Bible," 213-34; and Emily Steiner, "Radical Historiography: Langland, Trevisa, and the Polychronicon," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 27 (2005), 171-211.
[217] See Lusignan's discussion of Asser's life of Alfred in "Les mythes," 457-61. For an English translation of Asser's text, see Asser, *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources*, translated by Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983). For the original Latin see Asser, *Life of King Alfred together with the Annals of Saint Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser*, edited by William Henry Stevenson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1904). See also Ad Putter's discussion of the Alfred myth in "King Arthur at Oxbridge: Nicholas Cantelupe, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Cambridge's Arthurian Foundation Myth," *Medium Ævum* 72, no. 1 (2003), 63-81, esp. 66-67.

vernacular culture. Nothing is said of Oxford.[218] However, Asser does recount that Alfred compiled the Anglo-Saxon law code, could read and write in Anglo-Saxon, and had psalms and important theological works translated into the vernacular. According to Asser, Alfred's cultural program was thus founded on some of the principles of *translatio studii*.[219]

Remarkably, Asser's account of Alfred's cultural renaissance bears a great resemblance to the slightly earlier *Vita Karoli Magni* (c. 817-33), the *Life of Charlemagne* written by Einhard.[220] Although it was previously believed that Einhard's text was not known in England in this period, the similarities between the two works are striking, and in multiple places Asser seems even to quote from Einhard.[221] For instance, it appears that the Englishman may have modelled his portrait of Alfred's court school on Einhard's description of Charlemagne's palace school. Both texts moreover portray their corresponding ruler's efforts to attract court scholars and their promotion of the vernacular (French for Charlemagne, Anglo-Saxon for Alfred) along very similar lines.[222] Lack of room precludes a detailed comparison of the texts here, though let us content ourselves with noting that the scribe who copied the Cottonian manuscript of Asser's *Life of Alfred* became so confused between the stories that at one point he wrote "Karoli" instead

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[218] Although Asser does not mention Oxford at all, in an early seventeenth century edition of the work, a passage was fraudulently added claiming that Alfred had founded the university, for which see Parker, *The Early History of Oxford,* 39-47.
[219] Lusignan, "Les mythes," 459.
[220] Ibid. See also Keynes and Lapidge's discussion in *Alfred the Great*, 54-55.
[221] Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, 55. Keynes and Lapidge suggest that Asser's knowledge of Einhard's text may simply have been via discussion with the Frankish monk (and later saint) Grimbald, a fellow scholar of Alfred's court, 55.
[222] Lusignan, "Les mythes," 460. Keynes and Lapidge further note that "Asser's account (in chapters 79 and 81) of the circumstances in which he entered King Alfred's service is curiously similar to the account given in the anonymous *Vita Alcuini* […], written in the 820s, of how Alcuin entered the service of Charlemagne," *Alfred the Great*, 265, n. 195.

of "Alfredi" before correcting himself.[223] Both Alfred's promotion of Anglo-Saxon learning as well as the similarity of Asser and Einhard's texts are important to our study as they bespeak the multiple layers of *translatio studii et imperii* and of competitive imitation bound up in the myth that Alfred founded Oxford.[224] For, while Alfred would be remembered in the late Middle Ages as an agent of distinctly English *translatio*, Asser's very *Life of Alfred* appears to have been modelled on Einhard's account of Charlemagne's cultural renaissance. Four hundred-odd years later, so too did the Alfredian Oxford myth model itself on the proud French legend that Charlemagne had founded the University of Paris.

A Note on Cambridge

In consideration to the Cantabrigian champion John Caius, let us conclude the chapter with a brief note on the presence of the *translatio* tradition in the University of Cambridge's foundation myths. For, while Oxford was the preeminent seat of English learning in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and thus Paris' primary rival, Cambridge too employed the topos of *translatio studii et imperii* as a means of vying of prestige. For instance, the Cambridge *Historiola*, thought to have been written by Nicholas Cantelupe (d. 1441), claims that Cambridge was founded by a Spanish king named Cantaber who studied at Athens and encouraged the Greek philosophers Anaximander and Anaxagoras to come to England.[225] Just as the Oxford *Historiola*, the Cambridge text claims for its university an ancient lineage of *translatio studii* which pointedly circumvents France. Cantelupe's account appears to have "enjoyed something

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[223] Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, 240, n. 53. The manuscript (Cotton, Otho A. xii) was the only extant medieval manuscript of Asser's *Life* until 1731, when a fire broke out in the Cottonian library, and it was destroyed.
[224] Lusignan, "Les mythes," 461-2.
[225] Parker, *The Early History of Oxford*, 34. Parker offers detailed treatment of this and other Cambridge foundation myths at 25-38.

of a vogue, even beyond university circles."[226] Interestingly, the myth was taken up by the devoted Lancastrian propagandist John Lydgate in his "Verses on the Foundation of the University of Cambridge" (c. 1440).[227] Lydgate was well acquainted with the political value of the *translatio imperii* tradition, having used the England's Troy myth to bolster the Lancastrian regime in the *Troy Book* (1412-20) commissioned of him by the future Henry V. Did Lydgate similarly consider the Cambridge *translatio studii* myth a point of prestige for the Lancastrian crown? Although there can be no definitive answer to this question, it is worth noting that the poet appears to have written his verses on Cambridge in the same year that his patron, Henry VI, endowed this university with a large donation of books.[228]

A second noteworthy myth which circulated at Cambridge is one which implied that French learning was indebted to Cambridge scholars. The *Brompton Chronicle* tells us that, in the time of King Alfred,

> according to the opinion of some, and the common saying of both ancient and modern writers, it is thought that a University [*studium*] was founded at Grant-chester near Cambridge by the venerable Bede: which can very readily be believed, both for and from the fact that afterwards in the time of Charles the

[226] Putter, "King Arthur at Oxbridge," 64.
[227] A transcription of Lydgate's poem is appended in James Bass Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge from the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535* (Cambridge: 1873) 635-37. Remaining fairly faithful to Cantelupe, Lydgate recites that "Cantebro, as it well knoweth, / At Atheynes scholed in his yought, / Alle his wyttes greatlye did applie / To have acquayntaunce by great affection / With folke experte in philosophie. / From Atheines he brought with hym downe / Philosophers most sovereigne of renowne / Vnto Cambridge, playnlye this is the case, / Anaxamander and Anaxagoras / With many other myne Aucthours dothe fare, To Cambridge…" (vv. 8-9). However, in a flattering account of reverse-*translatio studii,* Lydgate adds that, after having conquered Britain, Julius Caesar brought back a number of Cambridge scholars to Rome, where they greatly distinguished themselves (v. 13).
[228] For Henry VI's donation of books to Cambridge see below 73, n. 276.

> Great, King of France, one reads that a seat of learning was transferred from Rome to Paris by one Alquin, an Englishman, a disciple of Bede, exercised in all learning as will hereafter be told more fully.[229]

The proto-nationalistic pride invigorating this passage is unmistakable. Here explicitly we are reminded that Alcuin, the renowned scholar central to Charlemagne's *translatio studii*, was "an Englishman" and at that a Cantabrigian.[230] Thus, without English scholarship, the flourishing of Carolingian learning at Paris would have been impossible. In other words, the English University of Cambridge is both more ancient and more distinguished than the University of Paris. It is England, therefore, not France, that is the most learned and that takes pride of place in the lineage of worldly empires.

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[229] Qtd. in Parker, *The Early History of Oxford*, 14. This story was also taken up in John Caius' case that Cambridge is more ancient than Oxford.

[230] A similar passage recalling that Alcuin, an Englishman, was responsible for Charlemagne's *translatio studii* is found in Higden's *Polychronicon*. Trevisa translates the passage thus: "Þat ȝere Albinus an Englissheman, þat heet Alcuinus also, a connynge man of clergy passed over [þe] see into Fraunce […] and he brouȝte to Parys studie þat þe Grees hadde somtyme i-chaunged to Rome," *Polychronicon* (ed. by Babington and Lumby), 293.

Chapter 3

Translatio Studii et Imperii and the Libraries of Princes

In the previous chapter, we explored the variety of *translatio studii et imperii* myths circulating in late-fourteenth and fifteenth-century England. Let us now consider to what extent late-medieval English book culture may have been informed by this *translatio* tradition. Of central importance to our investigation will be John, Duke of Bedford's (b. 1389, d. 1435) underhanded acquisition of the French royal library in 1425. We have seen that, in the reign of Charles V "the Wise," this royal library embodied the wisdom of France's scholar king and became a powerful emblem of French cultural superiority over the English. Bedford's manoeuvre may thus by seen as symbolic of the struggle for intellectual preeminence taking place alongside the martial conflict of the Hundred Years War. Although no record survives of the duke's ultimate plans for the library, never has there been a more blatant symbolic transfer of French learning, and by extent of power, to England. In addition to Bedford's physical *translatio* of the French royal collection, we must equally bear in mind the status of the book in late-medieval English culture and the nature of private libraries in England at this period, for instance that of Bedford's brother, the Duke of Gloucester. For, although Christopher de Hamel has argued that "[t]he possession of many books […] was not regarded as a symbol of sophistication or wealth" in England until the Renaissance, the examples we shall witness in the following pages point to the need for more nuance.[231] While it is true that the English allowed the French royal library to be dispersed a mere decade after having obtained it, the high nobility of the late-

[231] Christopher de Hamel, "Books and Society," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. II, edited by Nigel J. Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008), 1-21, at 18-19.

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries increasingly revered books as objects of cultural capital, accumulated their own private book-collections, and endowed the libraries of academic centers such as Oxford and Cambridge. The English *translatio studii et imperii* myths which emerged in the reign of Edward III reflected these cultural developments and, moreover, distinctly positioned book collecting as a form of "academic warfare on nationalistic grounds."[232]

The Carolingian Legacy and the Book as a Symbol of Status

In terms of the value accorded to books as a symbols of status, late-medieval England was catching up to developments in court culture which had taken place centuries earlier in France, under the Carolingians. Indeed, Carolingian rulers and scholars were the first great secular European book collectors, and, from as early as the late-eighth century, they regarded manuscripts as symbols of wealth, prestige, and authority.[233] It was by no means a coincidence that the myth of *translatio studii et imperii* had so flourished in France at this period. As Rosemond McKitterick has amply demonstrated, it was under the Carolingians "that some of the most important and influential developments took place in people's attitudes to books and their treatment of them."[234] Never before in medieval Europe had the book been imbued with so much power. The liturgical, administrative, judicial, educational, and artistic reforms promulgated by Charlemagne and his successors, Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald, firmly placed the written word at the center of the Carolingian world. As John Contreni explains:

> At the heart of the [Carolingian] reforms was a profound respect for the power of books and their texts to lead Europeans to truth. Carolingian political and intellectual leaders thought in deliberate and imaginative ways about texts and

[232] Steiner, "Collecting, Violence, Literature," 262.
[233] McKitterick, *The Carolingians*, 148-49.
[234] Ibid., 150.

> assigned them a key role in their efforts to shape society. Books mattered. Learned people and political leaders thought about books, their creation, preservation, correction, and dissemination. Books were treasure, real and spiritual, and were sold and handed down from parent to child.[235]

Several Carolingian rulers themselves accumulated substantial personal collections, and they were enthusiastic patrons of religious centers, whose libraries expanded greatly at this period. Indeed, despite the extreme costliness of manuscripts, which were often bound in jewelled-encrusted covers and lavishly gilded, Carolingian monastic and cathedral schools often accumulated remarkably large book collections.[236] For instance, Lorsch Abbey housed over 360 volumes in the mid-ninth century.[237] In the same period, the monasteries of Reichenau, St. Riquier, and St. Gall held approximately 415, 242, and 428 books respectively, while the more humble cathedral school of Laon counted 125 codices.[238] Such monastic and episcopal schools would remain the preeminent seats of European leaning for centuries, and, in part, the reputation of a center was tied to the size of its library. One early ninth-century monk from St. Gall named Ekkehart IV tells us that his abbot, Gozbert, "ordered a large number of books to be written, correcting a serious shortage so that by the number of books alone the cloister increased its

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[235] John Contreni, "Learning for God: Education in the Carolingian Age," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 24 (2014), 89-129, at 101.
[236] For the economic dimension of the production and possession of books at this period see McKitterick, *The Carolingians*, 135-57.
[237] Eva Schlotheuber and John T. McQuillen, "Books and Libraries within Monasteries," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monasticism in the Latin West*, vol. 4, edited by Alison I. Beach and Isabelle Cochelin (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2020), 975-997, at 991.
[238] For the library catalogues of Reichenau, St. Riquier, and St. Gall see Buford Scrivner, "Carolingian Monastic Library Catalogs and Medieval Classification of Knowledge," *The Journal of Library History* 15, no. 4 (1980), 427-44, 428. For the books at Laon see John Contreni, *The Cathedral School of Laon from 850 to 930: Its Manuscripts and Masters* (Munich: Bei der Arbeo-Gesellschaft, 1978), 32-33.

reputation not a little."[239] Karl Christ further notes that a priest assuming a new post was "likely to be criticized" if he did not increase the size of his new centre's book holdings.[240] Monastic and cathedral schools appear to have constantly sought to expand their libraries, whether through their own scriptorium or, often, by commissioning a volume from a neighbouring center specialized in book production.[241] As McKitterick has shown, Carolingian schools also sought to grow their collections by circulating their library catalogues.[242] This allowed centres to compare their holdings and determine both which books they lacked and which books they could borrow as exemplars for the production of their own copies. Bibliographical handbooks such as *De viris illustribus* and *De libris recipiendis* were also commonly used as checklists for the proper stocking of a library.[243] The final way Carolingian monasteries and cathedrals could expand their libraries was through noble patronage.

Indeed, already at this early period in France, the spiritual and symbolic power of the book in ecclesiastical communities had permeated the lay world. Charlemagne himself served as the primary model for noble patronage. In addition to his momentous educational reforms, the emperor was the benefactor of multiple ecclesiastical centers and often personally commissioned manuscripts both as gifts and for his own palace library at Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen).[244]

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[239] Qtd in Karl Christ, *The Handbook of Medieval Library History*, revised by Anton Kern (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1984), 133.
[240] Ibid., 128.
[241] Taking the example of Laon, Contreni has shown that, while the cathedral school did copy a portion of its own manuscripts, the majority of its library was commissioned at nearby centers (notably, Rheims, St. Amand, and Corbie) specialized in book production; see Contreni, *The Cathedral School of Laon*, 141-44.
[242] McKitterick, *The Carolingians*, 193-94.
[243] Ibid., 200-10.
[244] For Charlemagne's library see Bernhard Bischoff, "The Court Library of Charlemagne," in *Manuscripts and Libraries in the Age of Charlemagne*, translated by Michael Gorman (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 56-75.

Charlemagne was also the patron of the so-called palace school, where his most-esteemed scholars worked to establish standardized versions of texts to disseminated to his vast realm. Many of the codices Charlemagne gifted to centers such as Lorsch, Benedictbeuren, Munster, Grossmünster, Aniane, and Ile-Ste. Barbe were likely copies of such standardized texts edited under his patronage.[245] The emperor equally expected his courtiers to participate in his cultural project of *translatio studii et imperii* and to demonstrate a befitting interest in books and learning.[246] Many Carolingian courtiers, both men and women, were literate and owned substantial private book collections.[247] We know, for instance, that Louis the Pious' son-in-law, Eberhard of Friuli (d. 864), owned approximately fifty books and that the nobleman Eccard of Mâcon (d. c. 876) owned almost thirty.[248] Louis the Pious' librarian, the aristocrat Gerward of Lorsch (d. c. 860), had a private collection of twenty-seven volumes, which he left to the monastery at Lorsch.[249] The books of these men were instruments of learning and religious devotion, but they also functioned as ostentatious displays of wealth and status, such as the gospel book Hincmar of Rheims (d. 882) commissioned to be written in gold and silver with bindings encrusted with gold and pearls.[250] The patronage of a scriptorium or the gift of a manuscript to an ecclesiastical center similarly functioned to bolster both one's spiritual

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[245] Christ, *The Handbook of Medieval Library History*, 125.
[246] See McKitterick's discussion in *The Carolingians*, 222.
[247] See ibid., 211-65 as well as Pierre Riché's two articles on the matter: "Les bibliothèques de trois aristocrates laïc Carolingiens," *Le Moyen-Âge* 69 (1963), 87-104 and "Trésors et collections d'aristocrates laïcs Carolingiens," *Cahiers archéologiques* 22 (1972), 39-46.
[248] Riché, "Les bibliothèques de trois artistocrates," 100-103.
[249] McKitterick, *The Carolingians*, 251.
[250] Ibid., 147. Hincmar was the archbishop of Rheims but also an aristocratic courtier who was the friend, advisor, and propagandist of Charles the Bald. McKitterick notes that the gospel book is but one of many gilded and bejewelled volumes he had commissioned.

salvation and social rank. In short, books were symbols of holiness and greatness, and libraries were "the proper appurtenances of kings."[251]

It was on this Carolingian legacy and the memory of Charlemagne as a scholar that Charles V drew when he assembled his own royal library in the north-west tower of Louvre Castle in 1368.[252] As we saw in Chapter 1, late-fourteenth-century writers such as Jean Corbechon, Raoul de Presles, and Jean Golein encouraged the identification of Charles V with the studious Charlemagne and argued that the Valois king's immense book collection substantiated his unsurpassed intelligence and legitimacy as a ruler.[253] At this period in France, the symbolic power of the book remained undiminished or had been rediscovered, and intellectual wisdom had become central to the exercise of royal authority.[254] Indeed, the reign of Charles V was characterized by a resurgence of the *translatio studii et imperii* myth and of the cult of Charlemagne as a scholar-ruler.[255] Alongside the renowned University of Paris, Charles V's royal library – largely composed of French vernacular translations – testified that the power and learning Charlemagne had transferred from Rome to Paris remained firmly in French hands. For Jean Golein explicitly, French victories against the English at Ponthieu, Picardy, Aquitaine, and elsewhere were the result of Charles V's unrivaled wisdom.[256] By this reasoning, the king's

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[251] McKitterick, *The Carolingians*, 144, 149.
[252] Lack of room unfortunately precludes a consideration of whether there might have been cultural continuity in the French commitment to *translatio studii et imperii* from the Carolingian period up to the reign of Charles V, in which Valois courtiers clearly reached back to Carolingian models. It is worth noting that Carolingian libraries often became the basis for cathedral schools in the tenth and eleventh centuries, as C. Stephen Jaeger has shown in *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania UP, 1994).
[253] See the discussion above in Chapter 1, 25-27.
[254] Lusignan, "L'Université de Paris," 66.
[255] Ibid., 65-66. Lusignan notes that, in the reign of Charles V, "[l]e souvenir carolingien se fait alors très vif," 65.
[256] For Golein see above p. 28 as well as Tesnière, "La librairie de Charles V," 366-67.

library – an inexhaustible storehouse of knowledge – promised France's continuing dominance over the English, whom Frenchmen recurrently considered their unsophisticated imitators.[257] What did it signify then, when this symbolic royal library fell to the English?

Before we consider the implications of this surprising turn of events, let us briefly assess the state of aristocratic book culture in England at this late-medieval period. We have already noted that the social status of the book in England was somewhat less than it was in France. Of course, English monastic communities revered books immensely and had accumulated impressive libraries. By the fourteenth century, the abbey of Bury St. Edmunds had a collection of over two thousand volumes, and St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury housed nearly 1900 volumes in the early-fifteenth century.[258] Yet, until the mid-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, English monarchs and lay aristocrats appear to have taken less interest in accumulating private libraries and in patronizing academic centers than their French counterparts, for whom books were unequivocally symbols of status and wealth. Jenny Stratford and Teresa Webber note, for example, that, compared to the 160-odd surviving inventory catalogues of aristocratic libraries in

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[257] Richard Firth Green notes that "[t]he French in fact seem to have taken for granted a lack of originality in their English neighbours: a French knight taunts Sir John Chandos before the battle of Poitiers with the words, 'You can never think of anything new yourselves, but when you see something good you just take it!'" in *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: Toronto UP, 1980), 10.

[258] For the library at Bury St. Edmunds, see Jennifer Summit, *Memory's Library: Medieval Books in Early Modern England* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2008), 20-29 and Rodney Thomson, *The Archives of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1980). For the library of St Augustine's Abbey see B. C. Barker-Benfield, ed., *St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues 13, 3 vols. (London: British Library in association with the British Academy, 2008). For Monastic libraries in England more generally, see Teresa Webber, "Monastic and Cathedral Book Collections in the Late Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, edited by Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), 109-25 and, in the same volume, James Carley, "The Dispersal of the Monastic Libraries and the Salvaging of the Spoils," 265-91.

late-medieval France, "relatively few inventories listing large English book collections are known."[259] The growth of the English royal library itself was notoriously fitful, and, despite some intermittent efforts by earlier monarchs, it is usually considered to have been properly founded only in the late fifteenth-century by Edward IV (r. 1461 – 1470, 1471 – 1483).[260] While the paucity of extant medieval library records in England compared to France may in part be due to differences in administrative procedures (such as the frequency with which library inventories were compiled), never did the English royal library achieve the same cultural significance as the French royal collection, and no English monarch since Alfred the Great could rival Charles V's legacy of learning.[261]

There is however a sense that, in the mid-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the English nobility began to take greater interest in the symbolic power of books, libraries, and universities.[262] For instance, in 1401-2, shortly after usurping the crown, Henry IV (b. 1367, d.

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[259] Jenny Stratford and Teresa Webber, "Bishops and Kings: Private Book Collections in Medieval England," in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, edited by Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), 178-217.

[260] For a summary of the fitful growth of the English royal library, see Jenny Stratford, "The Early Royal Collections and the Royal Library to 1461," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, edited by Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 255-66 and, in the same volume, Janet Backhouse, "The Royal Library from Edward IV to Henry VII," 267-73.

[261] Stratford notes that documentary evidence for private English libraries is "notoriously difficult to assemble and to interpret" when compared to French libraries for two main reasons. Firstly, "there are no formal inventories in England before the Tudor period," and, secondly, "by the second half of the fourteenth century, the Chamber, the department which after 1318 had come increasingly to deal with the personal expenditure of the Crown, was accountable only to the King, and was exempted from accounting at the Exchequer." See Stratford, "The Early Royal Collections," 255-57. See also J. J. G. Alexander's discussion in "Painting and Manuscript Illumination for Royal Patrons in the Later Middle Ages," in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. V. J. Scattergood and J. W. Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), 141-62, esp. 160-161.

[262] As Strohm and John Fisher have argued, this cultural development may partially be explained by the Lancastrian regime's efforts to legitimize its authority in the period of anxiety following

1413) furnished a "novum studium" (new study) attached to his chambers at Eltham palace, one of his favourite residences, and hired the first English royal librarian, or "custos librorum" (keeper of the books).[263] Henry's new study had a fireplace, wooden ceiling, stained-glass windows, and two desks, one of which was fitted with bookshelves. Stratford and Webb note that "[t]here are many points of similarity" between king Henry's study and "the 'estude' of Charles V at Vincennes, his favourite palace to the east of Paris."[264]

To what extent Henry IV was inspired by Charles V remains unclear, though it is telling that the English king attempted to persuade Christine de Pizan to join his court. Christine was of course the famed moralist of the French royal court who had eulogised Charles V "The Wise" at length in her *Livre des faits et bonnes mœurs du Sage Roi Charles V*.[265] Richard Firth Green remarks that Henry IV was likely eager to entice the celebrated author to come to England in "the hope that her presence would bolster the prestige of his shaky court."[266] The king seems to have tried to convince Christine to become his court poet by threatening the safety of her son, Jean du Castel. The sixteen-year-old boy had been a companion to the son of the Earl of Salisbury before the earl was killed in 1400 defending Henry IV's rival, King Richard II.[267] Having usurped the throne, Henry IV then pointedly brought Christine's son into his own household and asked the poet to join them at his court. However, Christine was not outwitted by the English king's manipulations. She writes in her autobiographical *The Vision*:

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the usurpation. See Strohm, *England's Empty Throne* (discussed above at 3-5) and John Fisher, "A Language Policy for Lancastrian England," *PLMA* 107, no. 5 (1992), 1168-80.
[263] Stratford and Webber, "Bishops and Kings," 209.
[264] Ibid.
[265] For a modern edition of this text and a consideration of Christine's indebtedness to the *translatio* tradition in her depiction of Charles V, see above 27, n. 91.
[266] Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, 179.
[267] Kate Langdon Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* (London: Routledge, 2017), 73.

> Under the circumstances, and as the prospect did not tempt me in the least, I feigned acquiescence in order to obtain my son's return. To get straight to the point, after laborious maneuvers on my part and the expedition of some of my works, my son received permission to come home so he could accompany me on a journey I have yet to make.[268]

As Kate Langdon Forhan has shown, this passage reveals both Christine's personal distrust of Henry IV, "a ruler whose character she believed questionable," and her general dislike of the English, whom she considered "enemies who had caused great harm to France."[269]

Despite Christine's disdain for Henry IV, this king evidently instilled his recognition of the importance of books, learning, and patronage in his sons, all four of whom were, as Gower put it, "wel boked."[270] In the pages that follow, we shall explore in detail the exceptional libraries and cultural politics of Henry IV's two younger sons, John, Duke of Bedford, and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. However, we should not neglect to note the guiding hand of Henry V (b. 1386, d. 1422) himself on English book culture.[271] In his short and industrious life, Henry V found the time to endow the libraries of multiple religious houses, including those he had founded at Syon and Sheen.[272] His last will, written in 1422 and rediscovered at Eton only in

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[268] Christine de Pizan, *The Writings of Christine de Pizan,* edited by Charity Cannon Willard (New York: Persea, 1994), 19, qtd. in ibid., 74.
[269] Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan*, 74.
[270] Qtd. in Stratford and Webber, "Bishops and Kings," 211. Stratford and Webber note that Henry's IV's second son, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, also "seems to have loved books as well as music" before he was killed in a rash attack at Baugé in 1421.
[271] For further discussion of Henry V's books and patronage see Stratford, "The Early Royal Collections," 262-65; G. L. Harriss, "Appendix C: Henry V's Books," in K. B. McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights*, edited by G. L. Harriss (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1972), 233-8; as well as Alessandra Petrina, *Cultural Politics in Fifteenth-century England: The Case of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 167-74.
[272] Stratford, "The Early Royal Collections," 262.

1978, also ordered that, apart from a few individual bequests, "the whole residue" of the king's books of sermons and books for meditation were to be left to the monastic libraires at Syon and Sheen.[273] A codicil further specified that neither monastery was to be given any duplicate volumes, a sign, Stratford and Webber argue, "of the number of books Henry possessed."[274] The king moreover intended to leave all his scholastic and legal books to the "common library" of the University of Oxford.[275] Lastly, the 1422 will stipulated that all the king's remaining personal books (those within the royal household and chapel) were to be left to his unborn child, the future Henry VI, "pro libraria sua" (for his own library).[276] It may well be that Henry V intended these books to form the core of an enduring royal library. Only months before his death, Henry added greatly to the number of volumes his son would inherit, seizing over a hundred manuscripts from the French town of Meaux in April 1422.[277] In her biography of Henry V, Margaret Wade Labarge notes that, at Meaux, Henry "took special interest in books as his share of the booty" and that, likewise, after the siege of Caen, the only loot Henry kept for himself was

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[273] Ibid. For Henry V's final will see Patrick Strong and Felicity Strong, "The Last Will and Codicils of Henry V," *The English Historical Review* 96, no. 378 (1981), 79-89.
[274] Stratford and Webber, "Bishops and Kings," 210.
[275] This bequest was not carried out and, by 1437, the university had still not received Henry's books, ibid.
[276] Ibid. This article reads: "volumus quod omnes libri nostri, cuiuscumque fuerint facultatis aut materie, in nostro testamento aut codicillis non legati, filio nostro remaneant pro libraria sua," Strong and Strong, "The Last Will and Codicils of Henry V," 100.
[277] Stratford and Webber, "Bishops and Kings," 137. See also G. L. Harriss, "Appendix C: Henry V's Books," 233 and Jeanne Krochalis, "The Books and Reading of Henry V and his Circle," *The Chaucer Review* 23, no. 1 (1988), 50-77, esp. 61, 68. Harris remarks that the one hundred and nine volumes Henry V stole from Meaux were almost certainly looted from the town's religious houses (the books in this case would have been mostly religious and legal tracts in Latin). He further suggests that Henry V intended to endow his own religious foundations, such as Sheen, with these books. However, when Henry V died shortly after the siege of Meaux, the books were inherited by Henry VI, who eventually donated seventy-seven of them to King's Hall at Cambridge and twenty-seven to All Souls at Oxford. For the Meaux books donated to these colleges see Stratford, "The English Royal Library," 264, n. 32.

a single "goodlie French booke."[278] In many ways, Henry V thus set the tone for the book politics of subsequent generations of English rulers and aristocrats: the king of England was to have his own library and to endow those of religious houses and universities alike.[279] Books in England had become symbols of royal magnificence, wisdom, and authority; thus, they were valuable war booty.

Bedford and the "grete libraire that cam owte of France"

In light of this cultural context, it is well within reason that Bedford might have acquired the French royal library as a means of *translatio studii et imperii*, a physical transfer of learning, and by extent of power, to the English. Given the famed symbolic nature of the Charles V's library, it is indeed difficult to conceive that the duke would have been naïvely unaware of – or even indifferent to – the cultural implications of his actions, which for hundreds of years the French denounced as an outrageous act of cultural sacking.[280] Already in 1443, only seven years after the Valois monarchy had recaptured Paris, Jacques Jouvenel (the future archbishop of Rheims and first president of the *Chambre des Comptes*) argued that the French crown should

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[278] Margaret Wade Labarge, *Henry V: The Cautious Conqueror* (New York: Stein and Day, 1976), 3, 130. For Larbarge's account of the siege of Meaux see 175-81, and for Caen see 125-31.

[279] For English rulers' and nobles' increasing interest in endowing the university libraries Oxford and Cambridge see Roger Lovatt, "College and University Book Collections and Libraries," in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, edited by Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), 152-77 and M. B. Parkes, "The Provision of Books," in *The History of the University of Oxford, Vol. 2: Late Medieval Oxford*, edited by J. J. Catto and R. Evans (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 407-83. See also Perina, *Cultural Politics*, esp. 224-58.

[280] Jenny Stratford observes that "[i]t is difficult to know how Bedford's acquisitions were viewed in the part of France under Anglo-Burgundian government during the regency," however that "Frenchmen by the mid-fifteenth-century (as well as in succeeding centuries, in particular the nineteenth), undoubtedly thought of Bedford as despoiling the French royal collections." See Stratford, *The Bedford Inventories: The Worldly Goods of John, Duke of Bedford Regent of France* (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1993), 125.

confiscate some of Bedford's goods due to the late duke's crime of *lèse-majesté* (an offence against the monarch or state).[281] Jouvenel claimed that his argument was self-evident as "Bethfort a pris et eu des biens, meubles, joyaulx et livres, plus que ne valent les joyaulx dont est question. La chose est si notoire…".[282]

Indeed, although much remains murky about the transfer of the royal library (then numbering over 840 volumes), Bedford's purchase appears to have been notoriously opportunistic, if not downright underhanded. Following the death of Charles V, momentum in the Hundred Years war had shifted from France to England, and, by 1420, Henry V had begun to consolidate his claim to the French crown. However, in August 1422, Henry V died, and Bedford was created regent of France for the length of Henry VI's minority. Only a few months afterwards, in October 1422, Charles VI died and, as regent, Bedford became his executor. Acting as both English regent of France and executor to the late French king, Bedford claimed for himself many royal treasures, including the great library at the Louvre, which was officially purchased by the duke in late June 1425.[283] Bedford appears to have paid only 1200 *livres* for the books, just over half of their estimated market worth (2323 *livres* 4 sous *parisis*) according to the 1424 library inventory.[284] As Stratford notes in her monumental study of the duke's inventories, it remains possible that Bedford paid further sums at other times and that records of these transactions are no longer extant.[285] Still, given Bedford's authority over the sale of the library as

[281] Ibid., 125-26. Jouvenel's argument may have partially been fueled by a personal contempt for Bedford as the duke also stole books from Jouvenel's own father, Jean Jouvenel, while this man served as *prevôt des marchands* de Paris.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid., 95.
[284] Ibid.
[285] Ibid.

executor and regent, it seems unlikely that he would have paid market price for the books.[286] Few would have had the power to oppose the duke or to prevent the private sale of the library. The books appear to have remained at the Louvre until October 1429, when Bedford relinquished the captaincy of Paris and moved his primary residence to a castle in Rouen; it is almost certain that he moved the books there are well.[287]

Unlike Bury, who wrote a clear exposition of his cultural vision and book acquisition policy in the *Philobiblon*, Bedford left us no indication of his ultimate intentions for the royal books. It is possible that the duke simply wished to keep the volumes as an inordinately large private collection at Rouen. It is also possible that he planned to have them transferred to the English royal library or to endow the Norman University of Caen, which he had founded in 1432.[288] Bedford died in 1435 before making his intent clear.

It is discernable, however, that the duke prized the French royal manuscripts as symbols of social prestige and considered them befitting of his position as regent. Bedford is of course remembered as a lover of fine books and a great patron of the arts. He gives his name to the Bedford Hours and of the Bedford Psalter, which, along with several more of the most splendidly illuminated French manuscripts of the fifteenth century, are attributed to the so-called Bedford Master. Yet, beyond his patronage, there is little evidence that the duke took a personal interest

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[286] Stratford notes that Bedford claimed many French royal treasures (including over 4683 *livres tournois* worth of jewels and plate) without payment, though that these goods were most likely repayment for the money the regent had spent on the war. Stratford continues that "[t]he documentary survival is too patchy to determine whether some of Bedford's other acquisitions made without payment were also related to his expenditure on the war," ibid., 125.

[287] Ibid., 95-96. Within two days of relinquishing the captaincy of Paris, Bedford also discharged the Louvre's official keeper of the books, therefore implying that Bedford brought the books with him to Rouen.

[288] M. J. Barber, "The Books and Patronage of a Fifteenth-Century Prince," *The Book Collector* 12 (1963), 308-15, at 311.

in his books either as instruments of learning or as emotional mementos. Although Bedford did on occasion give books to his family members, none of the volumes known to have been owned by the duke contain an inscription in his own hand and neither do any of the surviving manuscripts from the French royal library.[289] Bedford's lack of ex libris is unusual, especially in comparison to the habits of his brother, Humphrey, whose detailed ownership inscriptions survive in forty codices.[290] One thus wonders if the lack of surviving ex libris from Bedford signals that the English regent of France during the Hundred Years War was simply too busy on either side of the Channel to have been a bookworm, as opposed to Humphrey, with his stunted political career. Still, Charles V himself found the time to inscribe at least nine of his volumes.[291] Bedford's somewhat impersonal approach to his books as well as his equal interest in other objects of adornment (fine jewels, vestments, plate, etc.) gives the impression that the duke was primarily interested in books as a means of social ostentation. Stratford observes that "[i]n the books, as in the other possessions made for him, Bedford may have been primarily concerned to appear in the great state fitting to him as regent."[292] Alessandra Petrina concurs that Bedford likely purchased books "essentially [as] a financial investment, and an acquisition of prestige."[293]

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[289] Bedford appears to have sent a handful of books from the French royal library to Humphrey (see below 89, n. 338) and gave at least one royal volume (Isabeau of Bavaria's "Book of the Queen," now British Library, Harley MS 4431) to his second wife, Jacquetta of Luxembourg.
[290] Humphrey at times even inscribes a single volume more than once. For Humphrey's ex libris, see the discussion below at 87-90.
[291] These volumes are items I, II, XI, XII, XXXIII, XLI, LXXIII, LXXVIII, and XCVII in Delisle, *Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V*, vol.1.
[292] Jenny Stratford, "The Manuscripts of John, Duke of Bedford: Library and Chapel," in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1986 Harlaxton Symposium,* edited by Dante Williams (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987), 329-50, at 350.
[293] Petrina, *Cultural Politics*, 215. M. J. Barber similarly concludes that "the evidence we have reviewed cannot be stretched to make any special case John, Duke of Bedford, as a man of letters or even as a bibliophile," in "The Books and Patronage of a Fifteenth-Century Prince," 315.

Given that Bedford was regent of France, his personal prestige and the grandeur of his court were symbolic of the permanence of England's hold in France in the years following the death of Henry V. Stratford observes that the duke's fineries, including the manuscripts from the French royal library, "fulfilled an important purpose" as they "were outward symbols of the stability of the English presence in France."[294] J. J. G. Alexander similarly argues that "Bedford's purchase of the French royal library may have been due not so much to a love of learning and books for their own sake as in order to acquire a prestige possession of the French crown."[295] In other words, the regent may have sought to authorize his rule by seizing Charles V's royal library, a renowned symbol of French wisdom and authority. Whether or not Bedford thought explicitly in terms of *translatio studii et imperii*, his actions resonate remarkably with the discourse of *translatio* permeating his age.

Despite Bedford's concerted efforts to embody the role of French king both administratively and symbolically, England's power in France severely deteriorated from 1429 onwards.[296] In September 1435, Bedford died and the Treaty of Arras was signed, resulting in catastrophic consequences for the English and eventually in their expulsion from France. This turn of events left the French royal library (under Bedford a stark reminder of English occupation) in a precarious position. It seems that the English managed to transport the majority of Bedford's books and other valuable from Rouen to London, where the most powerful of the

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[294] Stratford, *The Bedford Inventories*, 126.
[295] Alexander, "Painting and Manuscript Illumination," 161.
[296] One way in which Bedford acted symbolically as French king was to perform ceremonial duties. Stratford notes that "Bedford visited the Sainte-Chapelle on various ceremonial occasions, and on Good Friday 1424, performed the traditional duty of the King of France in displaying the relics to the people." Bedford then had this significant scene illuminated in one of his chapel books, the so-called "Pontifical of Poitiers." See Stratford, "The Manuscripts of John, Duke of Bedford: Library and Chapel," 344-45.

duke's executors, his uncle Cardinal Beaufort, took them into his possession. Much of the library was lost to history at this point; of the 843 volumes Bedford acquired, only roughly 120 manuscripts are now known to survive. It is likely that Beaufort claimed at least some of the royal books for himself, as he is reputed to have been a book collector (though hardly any evidence of his library survives).[297] It is probable that the "grete librarie that cam owte of France" (as it is called in the inventories drawn up after Bedford's death) was dispersed either by the Cardinal or his executors, both by sale and by gift.[298] For example, Louis de Gruuthuse, the great Flemish bibliophile, ambassador, and friend of Edward IV, eventually acquired about a dozen books having once belonged to Charles V.[299] Whatever the fates of the manuscripts now lost, it is likely that the royal collection was scattered gradually over a series of years after having been brought to England, as a portion of Bedford's books was still in his wardrober's hands several years after the duke's death. [300]

Thus, merely a decade after having claimed the French royal library as their own, the English had lost it, sorely fumbling what seems Bedford's attempted *translatio studii et imperii.* There was of course nothing unusual in selling off a late magnate or ruler's possessions in order to pay off their debts (or to make a profit). Most great medieval private libraries were dispersed upon the death of their patrons. Charles V had been exceptional in putting measures in place to ensure that the majority of his collections, including his symbolic library, survived intact for his son.[301] However, already in the reign of Charles VI, this new king sold many of his father's

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[297] Ibid., 339.
[298] Stratford, *The Bedford Inventories*, 96; Stratford, "The Manuscripts of John, Duke of Bedford," 332.
[299] Stratford, "The Manuscripts of John, Duke of Bedford," 341.
[300] Ibid.
[301] Stratford, *The Bedford Inventories*, 124.

valuables and let the royal library dwindle from 970-odd manuscripts to only 843.[302] The cultural vision of *translatio studii et imperii* which had so animated the court of Charles V and which had likely inspired Bedford was, after all, enormously expensive and appears to have held little sway with pragmatic executors.

"Cest liure est a nous Homfrey Duc de Gloucestre"

Another great library dispersed upon the death of its patron which may provide evidence that book collections were recognized as a source of political prestige was that of Bedford's younger brother, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (b. 1390, d. 1447). Humphrey was a noted book-lover and collector often cited for his patronage of Oxford and John Lydgate as well as for his overarching contribution to the first generation of English humanism. He was one of the foremost scholar-princes of his age, though perhaps a self-promoting one, with questionable Latin and a particular love of French romances. Whatever the true level of Humphrey's learning (much ink has been spilt on this subject), the duke and his library are important to our study of *translatio studii et imperii* as he was deeply invested in the political power of the book and of learning.[303] Jennifer Summit observes that "Duke Humfrey's Library emerges as an institution whose founding purpose was not merely to accumulate books but actively to shape their uses and interpretations toward specific political goals."[304] Studies of Humphrey up until this point have tended to situate his library and patronage amid English domestic politics; Humphrey was, after all, Lord Protector of England during the minority of Henry VI, while Bedford handled

[302] Delisle, *Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V*, vol. 1, 30.
[303] For discussion of Humphrey's level of learnedness see Roberto Weiss, "Portrait of a Bibliophile xi: Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester, d.1447," *Book Collector* 13 (1964), 161-70, esp. 168-69; Petrina, *Cultural Politics*, esp. 181-90; and Susanne Saygin, *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (1390-1447) and the Italian Humanists* (Boston: Brill, 2002), esp. 135-36.
[304] Summit, *Memory's Library*, 31.

international diplomacy as Regent of France.[305] Summit has argued, for instance, that Humphrey's monumental library should be studied as part of his large-scale military and cultural campaign against Lollardy, in which he "reasserted literacy as tool of the ruler over the ruled."[306] It has also long been the consensus that, in fashioning his persona as "scholar-prince," Humphrey followed the model of Italian humanists.[307] A wealth of scholarship has demonstrated that the duke corresponded regularly with important Italian thinkers, employed a number of them in his household, and seems to have relied on their advice for stocking his immense library.[308] In the following pages, I reframe this well-known material on Humphrey in order to consider whether the duke's book collecting and patronage might have been informed by the discourse of *translatio studii et imperii* and a sense of cultural competition with France.

Humphrey was certainly invested in one of the key elements of the *translatio* topos: the consonance of knowledge and power. No book in Humphrey's vast library epitomized this cultural vision better than his copy of Plato's *Republic* (now British Library, MS Harley 1705), which was translated for him into Latin by Pietro Candido Decembrio, the secretary of the Duke of Milan. Humphrey tells us this himself on the book's final folio: "Cest livre est A moy

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[305] Humphrey is of course infamous for his "rigorously anti-Burgundian policy," which recklessly jeopardised the key Anglo-Burgundian alliance brokered by Bedford. While Humphrey "style[d] himself as a valorous defender of Lancastrian interests against Burgundy and France," he became increasingly unpopular and politically sidelined by Henry VI after the autumn of 1437 and was ultimately imprisoned for treason by his nephew (and perhaps also murdered). For Humphrey's involvement in English and foreign politics see Saygin, *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester*, esp. Part One, 9-130 (the passages qtd. are at 71, 258).

[306] Summit, *Memory's Library*, 34.

[307] On this subject see, notably, Saygin, *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester* and Alfonso Sammut, *Unfredo Duca di Gloucester e gli umanisti italiani* (Padua: Antenore, 1980).

[308] Petrina notes that Humphrey "seems to have relied in particular on Pier Candido Decembrio [the secretary of Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan] in the choice of manuscripts to acquire" and even wrote directly to the Duke of Milan requesting the inventory of his famed Visconti library, *Cultural Politics*, 217-28.

Homfrey duc de gloucestre du don P. Candidus secretaire du duc de Mylan."[309] The duke and Decembrio were regular correspondents, and, in one surviving letter, the Italian promises Humphrey that Plato's text "will impart to you the form of a good and true prince."[310] Upon receiving Decembrio's translation, the duke replied in Latin:

> We have received your longed-for letters with the books of Plato, which have given us much pleasure. Nothing could give us more pleasure, especially since they will reflect honour and glory on us, as you say. […] [S]uch is the dignity and grace of Plato, and so successful is your interpretation of him, that we cannot say to whom we owe most, to him for drawing a prince of such wise statesmanship, or to you for labouring to bring to light this statesmanship hidden and almost lost by our negligence.[311]

The portrait of the "prince of such wise statesmanship" to which Humphrey refers occurs in the fifth book of the *Republic*, in which Plato famously has Socrates pronounce his ideal of the philosopher-king:[312]

> Unless philosophers becomes kings in our cities, or unless those who are kings and rulers become philosophers, so that political power and philosophic

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[309] British Library, "Detailed Record for Harley 1705," Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, 4 May 2011, https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=3533&CollID=8&NStart=1705.

[310] Qtd. in Summit, *Memory's Library*, 35. The correspondence between Humphrey and Decembrio is transcribed and treated in detail in Mario Borsa, "Correspondence of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester and Pier Candido Decembrio," *The English Historical Review* 19 (1904), 509-26 (for the copy of the *Republic* see esp. 510 n. 7, 511-12, and 525-26).

[311] Translated in Kenneth Vickers, *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester: A Biography* (London: Archibald Constable, 1907), 360-61. This letter is transcribed in Humphrey's original Latin in Borsa, "Correspondence of Humphrey," 513-14.

[312] Summit, *Memory's Library*, 35. Summit notes that Decembrio first translated and sent the fifth book of the Republic to Humphrey in order to advertise the text's merits.

> intelligence converge, and unless those lesser natures who run after one without the other are excluded from governing, I believe there can be no end to troubles, my dear Glaucon, in our cities or for all mankind. Only then will our theory of the state spring to life and see the light of day, at least to the degree possible.[313]

As Summit observes, "Plato's philosopher-king dovetailed with Humfrey's own self-cultivated persona as a learned statesman, which he attempted to project at home and abroad through his patronage."[314] Like Charles V, Humphrey "inhabited a culture where political power and learned wisdom were perceived as necessary partners" and promoted a personal mythology rooted in the link between *studium* and *imperium*.[315] Both in Italy and in England, the duke's sycophants eagerly adopted this nomenclature.[316] The Venetian humanist Piero del Monte, for instance, dedicated a moral treatise to Humphrey in which he compared the duke to heroes such as Caesar "who fought and judged by day, and wrote books by night."[317] Summit notes that Lapo de Castiglionchio likewise dedicated his treatise *Comparatio studiorum et rei militaris* to the duke, praising him both as a soldier and scholar.[318] In his *Fall of Princes*, Lydgate also admires Humphrey for being "bothe manli and eek wis" and compares him at length to Caesar:[319]

> For in the tyme off Cesar Iulius,
>
> Whan the tryumphe he wan in Rome toun,

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[313] Plato, *The Republic*, 5.473d qtd. in ibid.
[314] Summit, *Memory's Library*, 35.
[315] David Rundle, "Of Republics and Tyrants: Aspects of Quattrocento Humanist Writings and their Reception in England, c.1400-c.1460," PhD diss. (University of Oxford, 1997), 102.
[316] While it does not deal with the patronage of Duke Humphrey, for analogous cases of Italian humanists flattering their English patrons, see David Carlson, *English Humanist Books: Writers and Patrons, Manuscript and Print, 1475-1525* (Toronto: Toronto UP, 1995).
[317] Vickers, *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester*, qtd. in Summit, *Memory's Library*, 35.
[318] Summit, *Memory's Library*, 35.
[319] John Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, edited by Henry Burgen, vol. 1 (London: Oxford UP, 1924), 1.407.

He entre wolde the scoole off Tullius
And heere his lecture off gret affeccioun;
And natwithstandyng his conquest & renoun,
Vnto bookis he gaff gret attendaunce
And hadde in stories ioie and gret pleasunce.

Eek in this land, I dar afferme a thyng:
There is a prynce ful myhti off puissaunce,
A kyngis sone and vncle to the kyng
Henry the Sexte, which is now in Fraunce,
And is lieftenant, and hath the gouernaunce
Off our Breteyne […]

Duc off Gloucestre men this prynce calle,
And natwithstandyng his staat &dignite,
His corage neuer doth appalle
To studie in bookis off antiquite,
Therin he hath so gret felicite
Vertuously hymsilff to ocupie,
Off vicious slouthe to haue the maistrie.[320]

Thus, as Caesar, Humphrey's "corage neuer doth appallle" either in statesmanship or in scholarship; he is the ideal scholar-prince of the *translatio* tradition.

[320] Ibid., 1.365-78, 1.393-99.

Like Charles V, Humphrey's persona of scholar-prince was underpinned by his monumental library and patronage of a university. For instance, upon receiving a large donation of books from the duke, the University of Oxford once again compared Humphrey to Caesar, proclaiming in an official letter of thanks that, just as "Julius Caesar founded a library at Rome to preserve by books the fame of his conquest of the world," so too the duke's library at Oxford "will be an everlasting monument of your fame."[321] Ultimately, this ingratiating letter proved prophetic as Duke Humphrey's Library (nicknamed the "librair vniuersal" by one of the duke's clerks) remains the oldest reading room in the Bodleian.[322]

While Humphrey's reading room still stands, the vast majority of the duke's books, including those he donated to Oxford, are now lost. No complete inventory survives of the duke's collection, though certain of the volumes he bestowed to Oxford were recorded in the university's registrar. These records list 274 Latin manuscripts donated by Humphrey between the 1430s and 1444.[323] A will redacted shortly before Humphrey's suspicious death further instructs that the remainder of his "Latyn bokes" be bequeathed to Oxford, suggesting that his

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[321] Qtd. in Summit, *Memory's Library*, 35.

[322] Thomas Norton, a clerk in the Humphrey's service, writes of the duke's library at Oxford: "At Oxenford thys lord his bookis fele / Hath euery clerk at werk. They of hem gete / Metaphisic; physic these other feele; / They natural, moral they rather trete. / Theologie here bye is with to mete; / Hem liketh loke in boke historial. / In deskis xij hymselue, as half a strete, / Hath boked thair librair vniuersal," qtd. in Summit, *Memory's Library*, 49-50. These verses appear in Norton's English translation of Palladius' *De re rustica,* which was commissioned by Humphrey himself. For further discussion see A. S. G. Edwards, "Duke Humfrey's Middle English Palladius Manuscript," in *The Lancastrian Court: Proceedings of the 2001 Harlaxton Symposium*, edited by Jenny Stratford (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2003), 68-77.

[323] David Rundle, "Good Duke Humfrey: Bounder, Cad and Bibliophile," *Bodleian Library Record* xxvii, n. 1 (2014), 36-53, at 37. For a critical edition of Humphrey's donations to Oxford, see Rodney Thomson, *The University and College Libraries of Oxford*, vol. 1 (London: The British Library, 2015), 1-58. See also Petrina's discussion of the many studies of Humphrey's donations in *Cultural Politics*, 224-58.

personal collection was astonishingly large.[324] David Rundle estimates that Humphrey's personal library, housed at his manor, Plesaunce, in Greenwich, could have held somewhere between 500 and 600 volumes.[325] Although Humphrey hoped to bequeath the majority of his books to Oxford, the duke died (ostensibly of a stroke) only few days after being arrested for treason by Henry VI. Henry then proceeded to claim his uncle's impressive library as his own.[326] It appears that the king kept a number of Humphrey's most preciously illuminated French manuscripts for himself, though he repurposed a large portion of the duke's books as a donation to his own recently founded King's College at Cambridge.[327] The remainder of Humphrey's manuscripts appear to have been sold off piecemeal by the committee of executors appointed by Henry VI. Rundle suggests that these executors (many of whom were later accused of embezzlement) pilfered some of the manuscripts for themselves.[328] In one volume (Cambridge, Gonville and Caius, MS 183/216), the executor John Somerseth seems to have erased Humphrey's ex libris in order to

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[324] Petrina, *Cultural Politics*, 256.
[325] Rundle, "Good Duke Humfrey," 38. The same estimate is made by Roberto Weiss in "The Private Collector and the Revival of Greek Learning," in *The English Library Before 1700*, edited by F. Wormald and C. E. Wright (London: Athlone, 1958), 112-35, at 118.
[326] Petrina, *Cultural Politics*, 258. For the dispersal of Humphrey's library see also David Rundle, "Habits of Manuscript-Collecting: The Dispersal of the Library of Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester," in *Lost Libraries*, edited by James Raven (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 106-24.
[327] Petrina, *Cultural Politics*, 256-58. Petrina explains that on the very day of Humphrey's death, 23 February 1447, Henry VI decided to endow his recently founded King's College at Cambridge with all the property Humphrey had held in the ward of Baynard's Castle in London. One month later, on 21 March 1447, the provost of the college successfully petitioned the king for first choice "of alle such goodes afore eny other man and in especiall of alle maner Bokes ornementes and other necessaries as nowe late were perteyning to the Duke of Gloucestre." Just two days after the Cambridge petition, Oxford boldly sent its own letter to the king, protesting in vain that Humphrey had already promised the remainder of his Latin books to their university library.
[328] David Rundle, "Two Unnoticed Manuscripts from the Collection of Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester: Part II," *Bodleian Library Record*, 16/4 (1998), 299-313, at 306.

proudly present the book as his own donation to Cambridge.[329] Even the majority of the books which Humphrey successfully imparted to Oxford before his death are now lost. These were perhaps burned during the Reformers' visitations of the university in 1535 and 1549 or, if the books survived these ordeals, they might have been sold off when the University Library was closed down in the aftermath of the 1549 visitation.[330] All together, only forty-seven of Humphrey's books are today known to survive.[331]

Remarkably, of these surviving manuscripts, all but seven bear one or more inscriptions written in the duke's own distinctive hand. Many of Humphrey's ex libris record more than simply his name but also when, where, and from whom he bought or was given a manuscript. For instance, in Oxford, Oriel College, MS 17, the duke records: "Cest livre est a moy, Homfrey, duc de Gloucestre, du don Jehan Capgrave quy le me fist presenter a mon manoir de Pensherst la jour de l'an [M] CCCCXXXVIII [1438]".[332] Such unusually detailed ex libris strongly suggest that, unlike Bedford, Humphrey cared about books as personal mementos. Rundle notes that Humphrey's inscriptions "often stress the human associations of his manuscripts" and act as "the deposit of a social relationship."[333] Indeed, in at least three manuscripts, Humphrey indicates that he purchased the volume at hand from the executors of an acquaintance, demonstrating that he

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[329] Ibid.
[330] Rundle, "Good Duke Humfrey," 41-43. Rundle notes that, "[o]f the 274 listed in the [Oxford] University Register, only 14 are presently identifiable: a survival rate of 5%," 38. Rundle adds that the earliest account we have that Humphrey's Oxford library was burned dates only to the 17th century and that, in fact, the library may have survived the visitations and have been closed due to "decades of decline." He writes: "This was not a death by a single catastrophe or deluge; it was a death drip by drip, made by a lack of attention that inspired others to pay the Library disrespect," 43.
[331] Humphrey's surviving manuscripts are listed in ibid., 36-53.
[332] Sammut, *Unfredo duca di Gloucester*, 117-18, n. 28.
[333] Rundle, "Habits of Manuscript-Collecting," 119, 110.

attached emotional significance to individual books as relics of the deceased.[334] Interestingly, twenty-one out of forty of Humphrey's inscriptions have since been effaced and are now only visible under ultraviolet light. These erasures appear to support Rundle's suggestion that the duke's library was dispersed in part by foul play. We have already noted that at least one of the executors appointed by Henry VI erased Humphrey's ex libris in order to pass a manuscript off as his own. It is reasonable to assume that more of the duke's inscriptions were similarly erased to conceal the provenance of stolen books.

In addition to revealing the duke's personal attachment to his manuscripts, Humphrey's numerous ex libris also betray a desire to advertise his preeminence as a scholar-prince. We have seen that the duke persistently cultivated his persona as "wise statesman," and his lengthy ownership inscriptions appear to have functioned in part to this end. Rundle argues that Humphrey's ex libris were "recondite, if self-serving, plaudits for his ostentatious book-collecting."[335] In other words, Humphrey hoped to flaunt to his impressive book-collecting by writing his name in as many volumes as possible. Given the estimated survival rate of the duke's manuscripts and the percentage of surviving books which bear his inscription, it is entirely possible that Humphrey would have signed hundreds of books to secure his legacy as the greatest bibliophile and patron of his age.

Strikingly, Humphrey may have been borrowed this strategy of self-aggrandizement directly from Charles V. Rundle notes that both the duke and king have similar lengthy ex libris, in which they habitually record whether a book has been commissioned, purchased, or received

[334] These volumes are Cambridge, Gonville and Caius, MS 183/216; London, British Library MS Cotton Nero E v; and London, British Library MS Royal 16 G vi.
[335] Rundle, "Habits of Manuscript-Collecting," 107.

as a gift as well as when the volume was obtained.[336] Rundle observes that "it could not have escaped [Humphrey's] attention that his style of *ex libris* had a royal pedigree" and that it was "recently used by Charles V of France"; the duke had acquired at least a handful of French royal books (all likely via Bedford or his executors), some of which bore Charles V' ex libris.[337] For instance, one surviving manuscript (a preciously illuminated Livy in French translation), is inscribed both "Cest livre de Titus Livieus est a nous Charles, le V^{e} de notre non, roy de France, et le fimes escrire er enluminer et parfere" and "Cest livre fut envoye des parties de france et donne par mons. le regent le royaume, duc de Bedfort, a mons. le duc de Gloucestre, son beau-frere, lan mil quatre cens vingt sept."[338]

In one surviving volume in particular, Humphrey's ex libris seems designed precisely to eclipse the legacy of Charles V. This manuscript (today British Library, Royal MS 19 C iv) is a lavishly illuminated presentation copy of *Le Songe du Vergier,* a French translation of the Latin *Somnium Viridari* commissioned by Charles V. This French manuscript explaining the relationship between spiritual and temporal powers encapsulates Charles V's cultural program and includes multiple illuminations of the monarch, including one of the author presenting the

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[336] Ibid., 109. For instance, in the great bible at Girona Cathedral, Charles V inscribed: "Ceste Bible est a nous Charles le Ve de notre nom roy de France, et l'achetames de Saint Lucien de Biauvez, lan Mil CCC LXXVIII [1378]. Escrit de notre main: CHARLES," Delisle, *Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V*, vol.1, 142.

[337] The surviving volumes once owned by both Charles V and Humphrey are Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9627-8; Paris, Bibliothèque de Sainte Geneviève, MS franç. 777; London, British Library, Royal MS 19 C iv and Royal MS A xx. It is well within reason to assume that further French royal books (many no longer extant) would have passed through Humphrey's hands, including London, British Library, Royal 14 E iii, whose next certain owner was Humphrey's ward, Sir Richard Rous.

[338] Paris, Bibliothèque de Sainte Geneviève, MS franç. 777, f. 433v. Charles V's inscription (now erased) is noted in Amédée Boinet, *Les manuscrits à peintures de la Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève de Paris*, vol. 5 (Paris: Société française de reproductions de manuscrits à peintures, 1921), 89.

king with his work. The book was clearly significant to Charles V, who signed the final folio with his own hand. Upon obtaining this volume, Humphrey proceeded to grandiloquently insert his *ex libris* above that of the French king.[339] Both inscriptions have since been erased, though under ultraviolet one can read: "Cest livre nomme le Songe du Vergier est a nous Charles V^{e} de ce nom roy de France et le fimes compiler translater et escrire lan mil ccc lxxviii. Charles R" and above " Cest liure est a nous Homfrey Duc de Gloucestre" (f. 247v).[340] Humphrey's ex libris is in a rather unnatural place, sandwiched between the final line of text and Charles V's inscription, suggesting how eager the duke was to place his name prominently above that of the French king. Humphrey's pointed eclipse of Charles "the Wise" on the final page of this magnificent volume is but one more instance of the English efforts to supersede French cultural authority.

Everything considered, it appears likely that Humphrey would have thought of the Anglo-French war along these lines. While Humphrey undeniably modelled himself in part on the Italian humanists with whom he eagerly corresponded, the duke was clearly not indifferent to the legacy of Charles V or of his symbolic French royal library, which Humphrey's own brother claimed for the English. We have seen that Humphrey was deeply invested in the consonance of knowledge and power and that, in many ways, his persona of scholar-prince emulated and rivaled that of Charles V. Whether or not the duke thought explicitly in terms of *translatio studii et imperii*, his cultural politics resonate remarkably with the topos; Humphrey was an avid patron of English learning at Oxford and strove to create a monumental library in England which could surpass those of either Italy or France.

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[339] Ibid.

[340] The inscriptions are transcribed in British Library, "Detailed record for Royal MS 19 C IV," Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, 4 May 2011, https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8536&CollID=16&NStart=190304.

Conclusion

Translatio, Translation, and Proto-Nationalism

In the course of this thesis, we have explored how the myth of *translatio studii et imperii* permeated the cultural politics of the Hundred Years War. We have considered the ancient origins, Christian variations, and historiographical implications of the myth. We have equally witnessed how it was appropriated by the thinkers of the Carolingian Renaissance to glorify Charlemagne's cultural reforms and have traced the development of the French *translatio* tradition from this early period to its zenith in the reign of Charles V "the Wise." Then, we examined the emergence of *translatio studii et imperii* myths in England during the Hundred Years War and how these responded to their French counterparts. In this section, we focused our attentions on Bury's *Philobiblon*, a proto-nationalistic exhortation on the importance of book-collecting, and on Oxford university foundation myths, which countered the legend that Charlemagne had founded the famed University of Paris. Finally, in the last chapter, we ascertained the extent to which late-medieval England's book culture resonated with English evocations of *translatio* and unpacked the cultural implications of Bedford's infamous acquisition of the French royal library. Through this study of *translatio studii et imperii*, a greater understanding has been gained of how the English comprehended and legitimized their efforts to supplant France's perceived cultural superiority during the Hundred Years War. What remains is to begin a discussion – one which exceeds the bounds of this thesis – on what *translatio* reveals of the broader cultural developments taking place in England in the late-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Notably, what light – if any – does *translatio* shed on contentious master narratives such as the rise of nationalism and of the English language in late-medieval England?

As we have already noted, nationalism is one of the most highly fraught subjects in contemporary Medieval Studies. Since nationalism as a political doctrine is undeniably a modern development, recent generations of medievalists have been reluctant to locate precursors of this ideology in the Middle Ages.[341] This reluctance can partially be explained by "the general history of political thought about nations and nationalism and its impact of historiography."[342] Much self-reflexive work on the origins and nature of Medieval Studies has revealed the extent to which our discipline has been shaped by nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalistic metanarratives as well as the propensity with which, still today, pseudo-medievalism is used to legitimize chauvinism.[343] Contemporary scholars' eagerness to dissociate their work from the recurrently violent and exclusionary politics of nationalism is, of course, commendable. Yet, this "post-national" trend in scholarship has sometimes led authors to discredit medieval expressions of proto-nationalism in favour of accounts of "the highly plural, contested, and reticulated identities of medieval culture(s)."[344] This cultural plurality, I argue, does not negate the existence of proto-nationalistic sentiments, certainly in late-medieval England. As Kathy Lavezzo explains, "[t]he Middle Ages did not see the birth of a unified English community, but instead witnessed the construction of multiple, contingent, and conflicting 'Englands' each geared

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[341] A notable exception in this regard is Valérie Toureille, who argues in *Le drame d'Azincourt : Histoire d'un étranger défaite* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2015), that the momentous French defeat at Agincourt sparked "le premier embryon du sentiment national et les fondements de la France moderne," 12.

[342] Ruddick, *English Identity*, 2.

[343] See, for instance, János Bak, Jörg Jarnut, Pierre Monnet, and Bernd Schneidmüller, editors, *Uses and Abuses of the Middle Ages: 19th-21st Century* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2009); Amy Kaufman and Paul Sturtevant, *The Devil's Historians: How Modern Extremists Abuse the Medieval Past* (Toronto: Toronto UP, 2020), esp. Chap. 2 "Nationalism and Nostalgia"; and Kathy Lavezzo, "Introduction," in *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, edited by Kathy Lavezzo (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2004), vii-xxxiv.

[344] Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy*, xxx.

toward the respective needs of different social groups (monarchic, Lollard, monastic, etc.) engaged in national discourse."[345] Thus, there were a "variety of nationalisms present in medieval England."[346] This thesis has sought to recover one medieval concept of nationhood – that expressed by the myth of *translatio studii et imperii* – on its own terms. In doing so, I have attempted, like Ruddick,

> to steer a course between the Scylla and Charybdis of, on the one hand, modernist critiques that discount the notion of pre-modern national sentiment on the basis that it fails to fit modern definitions and, on the other, the triumphalist Whig narratives of the past that traced an inevitable linear progression from the medieval kingdom of England to the modern nation-state.[347]

Closely entwined with the prickly subject of English proto-nationalism are narratives which trace the "rise" of the English vernacular in the late Middle Ages. Up until the late twentieth century, it was largely the consensus among cultural historians that the increasing use of English by the nobility and Chancery in late-medieval England was a crucial step towards the development of an English national consciousness. In *England the Nation* (1996), Thorlac Turville-Petre influentially argues that a number of authors writing in Middle English in the fifty years before the Hundred Years War consciously constructed their audience as fellow members of an English nation.[348] More provocatively, John Fisher holds that the "sudden burst" of textual production in English after 1400 was due to a "deliberate" promotion of English by Lancastrian kings in order to "engage the support of Parliament and the English citizenry for a questionable

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[345] Lavezzo, "Introduction," xix.
[346] Ibid.
[347] Ruddick, *English Identity*, 308.
[348] Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), esp. 27-28.

usurpation of the throne."[349] Fisher situates the reign of Henry V's specifically as the "turning point of establishing English as the national language of England." [350] While they remain powerful studies, neither the works of Turville-Petre nor Fisher fundamentally challenge the account of the "rise" of English as a national language offered in Albert C. Baugh's *A History of the English Language*, first published in 1935.[351]

In the last two decades, however, there has been increasing academic pressure to reject not only the nationalistic implications of the increasing use of English but also the very idea of the "rise" of English and concomitant "decline" of French in late-medieval England. Authors such as Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Ardis Butterfield have problematized easy equations between English and England by foregrounding the "French of England" and insisting on the *longue durée* of English Francophonie.[352] Their research has potently demonstrated the nuances of medieval England's multilingualism. However, the urge to reject old historiography and to advance complex anti-foundational narratives has sometimes resulted in a reticence to accept the

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[349] Fisher, "A Language Policy for Lancastrian England," 1170.
[350] Ibid., 1171.
[351] Albert C. Baugh, *A History of the English Language* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1935). The sixth edition of Baugh's work, edited by Thomas Cable, was published in 2013 and largely maintains its original narrative of the rise of English.
[352] See Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Carolyn Collette, Maryanne Kowaleski, Linne R. Mooney, Ad Putter and D. A. Trotter, editors, *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c.1100-c.1500* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2009); Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Thelma Fenster, and Delbert W. Russell, editors, *Vernacular Literary Theory from the French of Medieval England: Texts and Translations, C. 1120-C. 1450* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), esp. 401-13; Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy* as well as her chapter "National Histories," in *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History*, edited by James Simpson and Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), 33-55. See also Malcolm Vale, *The Ancient Enemy: England, France and Europe from the Angevins to the Tudors 1154-1558* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), esp. 73-88.

very large practical and functional difference between the use of French and the use of English in fourteenth-century England.[353]

The study of *translatio studii et imperii* thus finds itself implicated in the debate over the "rise" of English as this myth implies not only geographic transfer but linguistic translation. I have argued, for instance, that part of the French royal library's symbolic value lay in that it was largely composed of French vernacular translations of Greek and Latin texts. According to the intellectuals of the court of Charles V, the library thus bolstered French (or, more specifically, Francien, the dialect of the Île-de-France region) as the new European language of scholarship and high culture.[354] Did the English think similarly about the English language when evoking the *translatio* myth?

One Englishman who clearly did think of translation as a form of *translatio* was John Trevisa. As we saw in Chapter 2, Trevisa was the English translator of Ranulf Higden's Latin *Polychronicon*, the fourteenth-century universal history containing the earliest surviving account that Alfred the Great had founded the University of Oxford.[355] In a preface to the English

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[353] Butterfield argues that "[i]t seems inherently unlikely that there was very much practical and functional difference between the two sides [England and France] linguistically in the fourteenth century," *The Familiar Enemy*, 169. She holds, for instance, that the increasingly common Insular French grammars "are not so much a sign of an imperfect or fading grasp of French trying vainly to resurrect itself as a lively knowledge, but rather of a radical desire to re-ground an existing lively oral knowledge of French as a knowledge capable of being transmitted *through writing*," 335. William Rothwell advances the more plausible argument that, by the fourteenth century, "[t]he pupils using these works cannot be assumed to possess a good grasp of the elementary grammar of French" nor to have had "a French family background," "The Teaching and Learning of French in Later Medieval England," *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* 111, no. 1 (2001), 1-18, at 16-17.

[354] See Lusignan's account of the increasing use of French in intellectual and royal circles in late-medieval France in *Parler vulgairement: Les intellectuels et la langue Française aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles* (Montreal: Montreal UP, 1986).

[355] See above Chapter 2, 55-58.

Polychronicon titled "Dialogue between a Lord and a Clerk upon Translation," Trevisa emphasizes King Alfred's role as an agent of English vernacular *translatio studii*:

> Aristoteles bokes and oþere bokes also of logyk and of philosofy were translated out of Gru [Greek] into Latyn. Also atte prayng of Kyng Charles, Iohn Scot translated seint Denys hys bokes out of Gru ynto Latyn. Also holy wryt was translated out of Hebrew ynto Gru and out of Gru into Latyn and þanne out of Latyn ynto Frensch. Þanne what haþ Englysch trespased þat hyt myȝt noȝt be translated into Englysch? Also Kyng Alured [Alfred], þat foundede þe vnyuersite of Oxenford, translated þe beste lawes into Englysch tonge and gret del of þe Sauter out of Latyn into Englysch, and made Wyrefryth, byschop of Wyrcetre, translate Seint Gregore hys bokes Dialoges out of Latyn ynto Saxon.[356]

Just as Carolingian kings (here Charles the Bald) had Greek and Latin texts translated into French, so too King Alfred had ancient wisdom – even the bible! – translated into English. This passage was written by Trevisa amid contemporary debates on the translation of the scriptures and the early stages of the Wycliffite movement. His insistence on King Alfred's translation of the psalter has thus often been read as a signal of Trevisa's Wycliffite sympathies and even of his potential participation in the translation of the bible into English.[357] David Fowler notes that

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[356] Transcribed in Waldron, "Trevisa's Original Prefaces on Translation: A Critical Edition," 292 (critical notations have been omitted). Waldron notes in "John Trevisa and the Use of English" at 179 that the line "Also holy wryt was translated out of Hebrew ynto Gru and ou of Gru into Latyn" is omitted in multiple other copies of Trevisa's text (including the version printed by Caxton), likely as a result of eyeskip.

[357] See the discussions Trevisa's Wycliffite sympathies noted above at 58, n. 216. Hudson notes in *The Premature Reformation* that "[c]ritics have sought to associate Trevisa with the Wycliffite translation of the bible. The only firm piece of evidence which antedates the Reformation is the statement of Caxton, who in his preface to his edition of Trevisa's Polychronicon translation noted that Trevisa had translated it, together with 'the byble and Bartylmew de Proprietatibus Rerum' at the request of Thomas, Lord Berkeley. Historiographers from [John] Bale onwards

Trevisa's defence of the translation of scripture reoccurs "in almost the same words […] in the preface to the later version of the Wycliffite Bible itself":[358]

> …and not oneli Bede, but also king Alured, that foundide Oxenford, translatide in hise laste daies the bigynning of the Sauter into Saxon, and wolde more, if he hadde lyued lengere. Also Frenshe men, Beemers, and Britons han the bible, and othere bokis of deuociouni and of exposicioun, translatid in here modir langage, whi shulden not English men haue the same in here modir langage.[359]

Ronald Waldron adds that Wycliffe includes another strikingly similar passage in his *De officio pastorali*.[360] The myth of *translatio studii et imperii* thus offers a new and unexplored context for the English translation movement of the late-fourteenth century, which was above all concerned with the English translation of the bible.

However, the myth of *translatio* does not easily correspond to narratives of the "rise" of English or to the idea of English as a national language. For Bishop Bury and the Oxford poets writing in the wake of the St Scholastica's day riots, the language of English *translatio studii et*

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repeated, and embroidered, this story […]; they did not, however, uncover any new evidence to support or amplify Caxton's claim," 395. Still, Hudson continues, there remains a "nagging suspicion" among scholars that Caxton main have been right, largely due to that fact that Trevisa was a known translator clearly interest in the idea of biblical translation and that, in addition to being associated with men of Wycliffe's circle at Oxford, he owned a number of books "relevant to his possible involvement in biblical translation," 396. These books and Trevisa's likely exposure to Wycliffe's ideas while at Oxford are discussed at length in Fowler, *The Life and Times of John Trevisa*, Chap. 5, "The English Bible," 213-34.

[358] David Fowler, "John Trevisa," in *Authors of the Middle Ages: Volume I, Numbers 1-4*, edited by David Fowler, J. A. Burrow, and Michael C. Seymour (London: Routledge, 1994), 69-99, at 86.

[359] Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden, editors, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal Books, in the Earliest English Versions Made from the Latin Vulgate John Wycliffe and his Followers*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1801), 59.

[360] "Also þes worþy reume of Fraunse, notwiþstondinge alle lettingis, haþ translatid þe Bible and þe Gospels, wiþ oþere trewe sentensis of doctours, out of Lateyn into Freynsch. Why shulden not Engliȝschemen do so?", qtd. in Waldron, "John Trevisa and the Use of English," 179.

imperii was definitively Latin. Duke Humphrey too considered Latin the language of English learning and donated only Latin books to the University of Oxford. Moreover, while Lord Protector, Humphrey had harshly repressed the Wycliffite movement and its translation efforts. Despite his patronage of English authors such as John Lydgate, what evidence remains of the duke's impressive library also suggests that he held French as the language of aristocratic high-culture and was extremely interested in accumulating prestigious French-language volumes. One must also note that, as English regent of France, Bedford attempted to solidify the English presence in France by acquiring the largely French-vernacular library of Charles V. Naturally, Humphrey and Bedford's French book collecting complicates Fisher's argument for Henry V's "language policy for Lancastrian England."

A point which should not go unnoted is that, though *translatio studii et imperii* was recurrently evoked nationalistically to bolster the fantasy of an English (though not necessarily English-speaking) hegemony, the myth in its very nature resists the politics of nationhood by foregrounding England's indebtedness to the classical world and to its French rival. As Joseph Bowling observes, myths of *translatio* "were never fully extricated from their international, European context" and, even when they were evoked nationalistically, they betrayed "an international longing."[361] Thus, when the English used the *translatio* tradition to boast that they had surpassed the power and learning of France, they were nevertheless asserting a lineage and commonality between themselves and their opponent. The *translatio* tradition is not one which sustains the pernicious notion of an original, autonomous "Englishness."

[361] Joseph Bowling, "Famed Communities: Trojan Origins, Nationalism, and the Question of Europe in Early Modern England," PhD diss. (City University of New York, 2018), iv.

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