

21 l. 27: "I have another lover."

22 ll. 32-3: "He encircled my right hand and also my neck / with precious stones and with shining jewels"

23 ll. 43-8: "His bridal-bed is prepared for me now already with joys. / His maidens sing to me with melodious voices. / From his mouth I received milk and honey / now already I am embraced with his pure arms / his fair body is united to mine / and his blood has adorned my eyebrows."

24 ll. 58-62: "When I love Him I am entirely pure / when I touch Him I am unstained / when I receive Him I am yet a maiden / and there no child falls on the bridal. / There is conception without sorrow and everlasting fruitfulness."

LINEAGE AND WOMEN'S PATRONAGE: MARY OF WOODSTOCK AND NICHOLAS TREVET'S *LES CRONICLES*

Nicholas Trevet wrote his Anglo-Norman prose chronicle in about 1328-1334. Best-known as the source for Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale*,¹ the chronicle is dedicated in the four earliest manuscripts to Mary of Woodstock, a daughter of Edward I of England, who was a nun at Amesbury. Mary's role has been seen in quite passive terms, with the prominence of the "Tale of Constance" and other accounts of women in the text attributed to Trevet's efforts to please and educate an unworldly and pious woman. We have long known, however, of Mary's active role outside the convent at the royal court. She can be placed in the Queen's entourage in 1305, and was the visitor of her order, the important abbey at Fontevrault, for England. She also travelled frequently among her own properties and on pilgrimages. Her piety we cannot determine, but unworldly she was not.²

More recent work allows us to re-evaluate the role that aristocratic women such as Mary of Woodstock played in medieval culture and politics through their patronage of historical texts like Trevet's chronicle. Plantagenet women especially were very much involved in choosing content and in influencing the composition process. Perhaps because "history" is traditionally conceived as a masculine arena, the activity of women in the production of this genre may seem surprising or unexpected. However, once we consider women's social roles as educators within their families and as the caretakers of the dead, their attention to memorializing the past in textual form makes sense. Aristocratic women were in fact particularly well-positioned to promote an awareness of the past that would popularize the lives and deeds of the family's ancestors. Among other studies, Gabrielle Spiegel has demonstrated how Yolande, Countess of Saint-Pol, sponsored the first vernacular translation of the *Pseudo-Turpin* and John Carmi Parsons has documented the extensive patronage activity of Eleanor of Castile, the mother of Mary of Woodstock.³ Far from passive dedicatees, these women had a strong motivation to create history that promoted their family's ancestors and lineage in turbulent political times.

But memorializing the past also provided female patrons with an opportunity to include women in history. Miriam Shadis has found that in her patronage of the abbey of Fontevrault, Eleanor of Aquitaine supervised the design and iconography of burial monuments that favorably portrayed her own place in history as well as that of her family. Shadis demonstrates that this practice was taken up by Eleanor's daughters and granddaughters when their marriages took them to other royal houses. These Plantagenet women, through their control of patronage, not only furthered the public power of their families, but also, by insuring their own insertion into public displays of their lineage, were able to preserve a record of their positions for their descendants to perceive.⁴ This essay will argue that Mary of Woodstock, following in a family tradition of female patronage, produced a version of her family's lineage that preserved and favorably portrayed aristocratic women's important roles in history.

As a universal history, Trevet's chronicle narrates vast segments of ancient, biblical, and European history, using long lists of events with few subordinate stories or descriptive details. Chunks of events are linked together by repeated themes and cross-references, such as papal history and events in the Holy Land, as well as the Anglo-Norman and Saxon successions. Trevet's structuring devices are primarily genealogies; for instance when explaining the generations of Noah, he links them to the Saxons, and vice versa. In many sections where Trevet discusses lineage, however, female figures achieve prominence: his account of the Nativity becomes the lineage of St. Anne, the Empress Matilda is cast as an important link in the Plantagenet line, and his patron Mary, as well as her sisters, find a place in the public unfolding of their family's deeds.⁵

Including women in genealogies is an important structural choice for a historical narrative. Gabrielle Spiegel has shown that in its repetition of father-to-son sequences, genealogy makes procreation a metaphor for historical change. This metaphor is a masculinized one, because the pivotal roles that women play are concealed by most genealogical moments. According to Spiegel then, genealogy serves to naturalize patriarchy and the assumptions concerning gender it brings within the text's narrative structure.⁶ Using Spiegel's formulation, it is possible to argue that the female figures included in Trevet's history not only preserve a record of women's prominent roles in the past, but by their inclusion, they challenge patriarchal hegemony over the past and could have provided rhetorical positions from which courtly women readers could in some part resist the inscription of this kind of genealogical history.⁷

The patronage context of *Les Cronicles* makes such a reading of the text particularly tantalizing. Although a dedication alone, as is the case with *Les Cronicles*, does not prove a patronage relationship existed, Ruth Dean argues that the early date of the dedicatory rubric shows that the text during its writing was intended for Mary.⁸ John Parsons also concludes that Mary requested this chronicle because Trevet as "Prior of the London Dominicans and an internationally renowned scholar, had no need to court Mary's patronage with an unsolicited work."

Documents surrounding Trevet's other histories indicate that he enjoyed a collaborative relationship with his sponsors. The dedicatory letter of Trevet's second Latin history indicates that he worked closely with the patron of that work, Hugh, Archdeacon of Canterbury and incorporated his suggestions. Trevet relates that he presented Hugh with an early version of the *Historia*, but upon his patron's urging, added more to the account and especially added much Roman history from Livy. This dedicatory letter reveals that Trevet's historical interests (he had previously written a commentary on Livy) meshed with those of this patron and that Trevet adapted his text to suit them both.⁹

Mary also had access to examples of active patronage among her female relations. Her mother, Eleanor of Castile, exerted great control over her own private scriptorium. Among other texts, Eleanor commissioned a vernacular history of Brabant for one of her daughters who was to marry the son of the duke there. Mary's grandmother, Eleanor of Provence, with whom she entered the convent, was also known as a patron of arts and literature.¹⁰ Karen Jambeck argues that this pattern of relation is notable because, especially in England, literary patronage was a practice by which women defined themselves and their social roles, and that this practice was passed on cognitively. Mothers and daughters, as well as grandmothers, sisters, aunts, nieces, and cousins, formed female networks of patrons, who learned and reinforced the production of texts among themselves.¹¹ With the examples of her close relatives before her, Mary of Woodstock stood in the midst of a network of female patronage.

Given these clues into not only how patronage functioned among the Planagenet women, but also Trevet's working relationship with another dedicatee, *Les Cronicles* was perhaps written both for Mary of Woodstock and according to her wishes. Trevet and Mary could have worked together in a kind of collaborative authorship to produce this history.¹² The text of *Les Cronicles* itself also suggests that Trevet did indeed write gender in a way that would have suited the political needs of his patron. In his history, Trevet presents and explores the pivotal roles women play in the politics of succession and dynastic marriage. Once included within a genealogical narrative, women could legitimate and further history's aims through reproduction, but could also occupy spaces for themselves to have powerful roles.

Perhaps the most important genealogical moment in a Christian history is the birth of Christ. Trevet's account presents the Nativity as the story of the birth of an heir, foregrounding Christ's mother Mary who gives him his human lineage through his matrilineal ancestry as the progeny of his grandmother St. Anne. After briefly listing eight generations of ancestors for Joseph, the chronicle turns to Jesus' mother, Mary, to list in titles in the Middle English "NOWE WE MUST SEY OF THE LINAGE OF OURE LADY SEYNT MARY OF HER FADER SIDE" (119). After listing the generations from David to Mary, another heading in the Middle English, describes "NOWE HERE FOLOWETH THE LYNAGE OF

OUR LADY ON HER MODER SYDE" (120).¹³ This section explains that Mary the mother of Jesus was born of Anne's first marriage with Joachim; the text then lists two other marriages for Anne and the children she bore who in their turn gave birth to children who become Biblical heavyweights: Joseph, Judas, Thaddeus, Simon, James the lesser from Anne's second marriage and John the Evangelist and the apostle James from the third marriage. And finally, the text explains the lineage of John the Baptist, born to Elizabeth, the daughter of St. Anne's sister.

Pamela Sheingorn has observed that many medieval treatments of the birth of Christ used the Tree of Jesse to eclipse Mary's maternal role. Sheingorn emphasizes that this choice meant that

Christ's genealogy was deliberately being seen in terms of patriarchy. Choices were made that deemphasized the basic truth that, in order for Christ to have a divine father, his other, human parent had to be a woman. Apparently unwilling to give full recognition to the fact that a female link had been forged into the patriarchal chain at an especially crucial point, most makers of such images in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries chose instead to trace the lineage of Christ from the male founder, Jesse, through a male line of patriarchs and kings to the male child, Christ.

Given this context, Sheingorn concludes that depictions of Christ's lineage through St. Anne and the Holy Family, much like the one found in Trevet's account of the nativity, can be read as "conscious rebuttals of the patriarchal Tree of Jesse."¹⁴ Christ may be God made man, but his bodily self comes to him from the feminine, his mother and her female relations. In the midst of his history, Trevet foregrounds matriliney to include and celebrate Mary's role in the most key moment of human history.¹⁵ Trevet's version of the nativity shows that Mary and Anne's acts of reproduction are ones that cannot be glossed over in the genealogy and in the history of the world because their bodies provide the human material for this divine child.

Plantagenet historiography focused very much on creating origins such as Troy or King Arthur to legitimate its rule. Trevet's description of the descent of the Plantagenet family also looks back to an origin, a matrilineal one in the person of the Empress Matilda, the mother of their founder Henry II, who fought against Stephen over her father's throne. Trevet addresses the complexity of the succession by not only emphasizing how Matilda provides Henry II with his claim to the English throne, from her father, Henry I, but how in Trevet's eyes, she also gives him a Saxon lineage. It takes Trevet several pages to explain how the descendants of the sons of Edmund Ironsides, sent to Hungary under the reign of the Danish King Knut, manage to become connected to the Scottish royal line, and to provide a bride to William the Conqueror, an ancestor of Matilda, thereby giving Henry II Saxon blood. Trevet can then proclaim "thus failed the

Normans to reign in England for all way. And the full noble blood of Saxons in the realm of England restored on the mother's side of this king Henry of England" (332).¹⁶ Henry II is called "Henry, the Empress's son" in a later, fourteenth-century chronicle, the prose *Brut* and this emphasis on his maternal lineage surfaces in Trevet's history.¹⁷ In Trevet's recounting, Matilda's claim—and through her, Henry II's—provides the one of the sources for the legitimacy and origins of the Plantagenet family line.

Through the generations of Plantagenets, Trevet includes his patron's female relatives, describing who they marry and what children are born to them, including Mary and her own four sisters. In fact, some of the Anglo-Norman manuscripts include diagrams of the family of Edward II.¹⁸ Although not presented as a matrilineal pattern of descent, including so many female connections creates broad sections of cognatic kinship within the larger agnatic succession. As David Herlihy defines these types of lineage, agnatic lineage "becomes a kind of fellowship of males, stretching backwards and forwards over time. Women no longer serve as the nodules through which pass the surest kinship ties. The daughter is treated as a marginal member of her father's lineage and after her marriage, her children will leave it entirely." The cognatic system, as opposed to the agnatic, is "ego-focused," that is, focused on the first-person, nominative position (Latin *ego*) as the starting point for determining lineage, and "the lines of relationship run forth from ego in both directions, through males and females to the accepted limits of kinship . . . the *cognatio* surely defined a domain of affective ties as well." Herlihy observes that although Georges Duby describes the agnatic form supplanting the cognatic, the older form never completely dies out, and the two co-exist in the later middle ages.¹⁹

This combination of lineage types is a salient feature in Trevet's descriptions of Mary's immediate ancestors. These sections trace the marriages of sons and daughters, as well as their offspring. For example, in tracing the relations of Edmond, a son of Henry III, upon his being made Duke of Lancaster, Trevet writes:

he wedded furst the daughter of the Earle of Danmark and hys Eyre and he had by her III chyldren the whych died within age and anon after dyed the countes, her [their] moder. Than after this Edmond was wedded to quene of Navarn, Blanche the Suster to the Erle of Artoys and by her he had III sonnes, Thomas, Harry, and John. Thys Thomas was after hys fader Erle of Lancaster and took to his wife Alyse the doughter and eyre [heir] of Lacy Erle of Lincoln and he had by thys Alyse II erledoms. The earledom of Lincoln be her fader syde and the erledom of Salysbury by her moder syde but they had never none issew togeder. Than Harry the brother of thys Thomas was made lorde of Monemowe wedded Isabell the doughter and Eyre [heir] of Partyk of Chaworth and begate a son called Harry. And also he begate of her VI doughteres, Blaunch, Isabell, Maude, Jehane, Alianore, and Mary (355-56).²⁰

This section continues for another twenty-four lines of text tracing the marriages of these sons and daughters, as well as their offspring. Bound up in this lists are accounts not only of political status, but of dynastic marriage, procreation and property. Certainly many of the female figures are included because they are heiresses, but the text is exhaustive in recording the details of this family tree, explaining what happened to each of the people. Plantagenet women are not marginal here and do not exit the family tree. They bring important new alliances through their marriages and their children remain actors in the family story.

Given the cognatic aspects of these family descriptions, it is not unreasonable to imagine an affective response on the part of these aristocratic readers to a description of their kindred and blood ties. Mary of Woodstock and her fellow readers may have felt profound recognition and pleasure at going over the family peerage. Mary would have found herself listed in such a sequence of royal marriages and births that appears between a narrative concerning the Welsh and Scottish campaigns and another explaining how Pope Innocent followed Pope Gregory (Rose 365–74/ Rutherford 2.337–352). Mary appears in this section of the chronicle three times. At the first, the primary topic is her father and his marriage. In a list of his offspring, Trevet points out Mary and her sisters with a cross-reference, “Bot of these daughters we woll say hereafter” (366).²¹ The second mention recounts the entrance of her grandmother into Amesbury in 1285, accompanied by Mary, then a young girl of seven or eight, and goes on to describe Mary’s own taking of the veil (Rose 368/Rutherford 2.346–47). Finally, Mary and all her sisters resurface in a section that elaborates upon each of them, their marriages and the births of their children. Like all parts of *Les Cronicles*, this section appears disjointed and very long to a modern reader, with only the barest connectives such as “then” or “and” weaving events together, and the phrase “nowe wyll we turne ageyn un to the engendrure of kyng Edward the son of Harry before sayde” (372)²² somewhat arbitrarily introducing the discussion of the family. Through perusing the text, however, a medieval reader like Mary might re-read and recreate the lives of her own sisters and nieces and nephews. As she is herself included in this narrative:

the fourth doughter was dame Mary of whom it ys before sayde that she wedded herself unto the hygh king heaven. And in so moche as hit ys trewly sayde of her and notably this worthy text of holy scripture: *optimam partem elegit ispi Maria que non auferetur ab ea*. The whych ys as moche to say “As Maria hathe chosyn the best party to her the whych shall not be done away from her” (374).²³

The entry detailing Mary’s life and her family’s offspring is included in the middle of accounts of succession problems and the high politics of Edward I, as yet another item on a long, paratactic list of events and people. While the female figures in these genealogical lists are not emphasized, per se, neither are they subordinated. I would argue, however, that Mary and the other female readers of this history could take pride in finding their own lives situated within the

retelling of great events performed by the “fellowship of men” that is agnatic lineage, and that they could find pleasure in seeing their own relatives and how they were connected spelled out within this national context, as persistent elements of cognatic lineage. Each reader, upon finding herself in the narrative, could construct her own *ego*, her own starting point in lineage and trace her blood relations cognatically through the pages of this history. Perhaps through the collected genealogical connections drawn by this chronicle, such readers could have imaginatively traced their line back through Matilda, the mother of the Plantagenets, to the figurative mothers of all Christians, Mary and St. Anne and their holy family. For these women, reading lineage could have offered them ways to identify with the figures of powerful women in the past, creating a sense of subjectivity that would give them a place in the political world.

Mary of Woodstock and Nicholas Trevet, as patron and author, produced this family history for the Plantagenets, a courtly reading audience. By regularly inserting women in recountings of lineage, both Biblical and Plantagenet, cognatic and agnatic, *Les Cronicles* allowed an aristocratic woman like Mary of Woodstock to display her power and to preserve a record of women’s status for her descendants and their peers to read. Mary could be both patron and politician in an era where family and politics were the same arena.

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1 For the ways in which Mary’s patronage of Trevet’s chronicle can change our perceptions of Chaucer’s changes in the *Man of Law’s Tale*, see my “Women’s Power in the ‘Tale of Constance,’” *Medieval Perspectives* XV (2000): 27–34.

2 M. Dominica Legge writes of her “extravagant taste in plate and furniture and for gambling.” See *Anglo-Norman Literature and Its Background* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963) 299. Eileen Power relates that Mary was seduced by the Earl of Surrey; see *Medieval English Nunneries, c. 1275–1535* (Cambridge University Press, 1922) 455. Ruth J. Dean notes simply that Trevet must have chosen French for the chronicle because he doubted his patron’s ability to read Latin. See her “Nicholas Trevet, Historian,” in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays presented to Richard William Hunt*, edited by J.J.G. Alexander and M.T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976) 339.

3 Gabrielle Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 53, 70–71. John Carmi Parsons, “Of Queens, Courts, and Books: Reflections on the Literary Patronage of Thirteenth-Century Plantagenet Queens,” in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, edited by June Hall McCash. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996) 175-201.

4 Miriam Shadis, “Piety, Politics, and Power: The Patronage of Leonor of England and Her Daughters Berenguela of Leon and Blanch of Castile,” in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women* 203–17.

5 While this essay will discuss only these three segments of *Les Cronicles*, the history casts many other female figures as taking important roles in determining how lineage will be created. “The Tale of Constance” is its centerpiece, the biblical Rebecca is portrayed as masterminding her son Jacob’s usurpation of Esau’s place as Isaac’s heir, and the daughters of Lot choose to seduce their drunken father so that the family line will not end with the death of their mother.

6 Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "Genealogy: Form and Function in Medieval Historical Narrative" *History and Theory* 22 (1983): 47–51.

7 On the concept of the resisting reader, see Judith Fetterly, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978) xiii, xxiii. A more theoretical perspective is offered by Teresa DeLauretis, who writes that "the work of narrative, then, is a mapping. . . of sexual difference into each text; and hence, by a sort of accumulation, into the universe of meaning, fiction, and history . . . and all the texts of a culture. But we have learned from semiotics that the productivity of the text. . . engages the reader, viewer, or listener as a subject in (and for) its process." A reader then becomes involved in the creation of social ideas about gender by her reading, ideas that in a strict patrilineal history could be restrictive. Rather than leaving her on her own to resist this process, however, I would argue that Trevet's history sometimes provides positions for a woman reader to imagine herself in the thick of events. See Teresa DeLauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) 121. For a similar estimation of the readers of French romance see, Roberta L. Krueger, *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

8 Ruth J. Dean, "Nicholas Trevet," 339. John Carmi Parsons, "Of Queens," 199, n. 55. Trevet dedicated the text to Mary with the four earliest of the nine extant, fourteenth-century, Anglo-Norman manuscripts including the dedicatory rubric: "Ci comencent les cronicles qe frere Nichol Trevet escrit a ma dame Marie la fille mon seigneur le roi d'Engleterre, le fitz Henri" (Rutherford v. 2.1).

There is some disagreement among scholars regarding dedications and what they may signify about patronage practice. Some accept dedications as proof of patronage, but Diana B. Tyson urges that more evidence be required such as "mention by author of payment, record of payment, praise of the patron, introduction or epilogue addressed to him, internal evidence such as structure or treatment of subject matter, existence of a presentation copy, illumination, and most important of all, a statement by the author that he was asked to write the work." See "Patronage of French Vernacular History Writers in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries" *Romania* 100 (1979): 184–85. McCash comments that Tyson's high standards of evidence are certainly desirable, but that realistically, a dedication is often the only clue scholars have to patronage, and that it is "probably stronger for women than for men, for writers would have little else to fall from most female dedicatees than their patronage." McCash also points out that given the time consuming nature of literary production in the middle ages, dedications "would scarcely have been made lightly" (2–3). See her introduction to *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*. It is, however, important to read a dedication to a female patron as a complex social act for, as Roberta Krueger points out in her study of Old French romance, the presence of dedications to women does not prove for romance at least, that "individual female patrons exerted a formative influence . . . or that the genre promoted women's interests." In fact, "women's privileged status in the frame of the romance accompanied her *displacement* from legal and social society." See her *Women Readers* 2–3.

9 Ruth J. Dean, "Nicholas Trevet," 336.

10 John Carmi Parsons, "Of Queens," 178.

11 Karen K. Jambeck, "Patterns of Women's Literary Patronage: England 1200-ca.1475," in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women* 236, 242.

12 See Joan M. Ferrante's *To the Glory of her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts* (Indiana University Press, 1997) in which she adds collaboration to the more established categories of authorship and representation as means by which women participated in medieval textual cultures.

13 From the Middle English translation of 1400 in Christine M. Rose, "An edition of Houghton Library FMS 938: The Fifteenth-Century Middle English Translation of Nicholas Trevet's "Les Cronicles," with "Brut" Continuation" (Diss. Tufts University, 1985). Lines from this Middle English translation will henceforth be cited parenthetically. In Trevet's French, the lines read "ore dirroms del linage Nostre dame Seinte Marie del part son pere" (2.113) and "ore dirroms del linage Nostre Dame Seinte Marie de la part sa miere" (2.114). Lines in Old French will be listed in the notes, and taken from Alexander Rutherford, "The Anglo-Norman Chronicle of Nicholas Trevet: Text with Historical, Philological, and

Literary Study." (Diss. University of London, 1932). The translation follows this manuscript closely, and in the lines cited in this essay, is nearly identical. Other editions include Brock who provides a French edition of only Trevet's "Tale of Constance," with a facing page translation in modern English. See Brock, Edmund. "The Life of Constance (the source of Chaucer's 'Man of Law's Tale') from the Anglo-Norman Chronicle of Nicholas Trivet." In Furnivall, F. J., Edmund Brock, and W. A. Clouston. Eds. *Originals and Analogues of Some of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*. Second Series nos 7, 10, 15, 20, 22. (London: Richard Clay and Sons, Ltd.) 1–53. Schlauch gives an edition of Trevet's "Tale of Constance" in her article on the *Man of Law's Tale* in *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*. Edited by W. F. Bryan and G. Dempster. 1941; rpr. (NY, 1958) 155–206; this edition is most commonly used by Chaucerians, but gives no indication of its immediate context or the character of the chronicle from which it is taken. Robert Correale plans to publish a complete text of Trevet's *Les Cronicles* for the Chaucer Library based on Rutherford's edition. See Correale, Robert M. "Chaucer's Manuscript of Nicholas Trevet's *Les Cronicles*." *Chaucer Review* 25.3 (1991): 238–65.

14 Pamela Sheingorn, "Appropriating the Holy Kinship: Gender and Family History," *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society*, edited by Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990) 171.

15 Sheingorn goes further with this argument, stating that the prominence of St. Anne may point to an alternate matrilineal trinity that emphasized Christ's physical body as opposed to the divine soul. This incarnational theology would privilege a maternal family on earth, glorifying motherhood and making it a female role to be respected even by the convent-bound. Sheingorn cites David Herlihy's *Medieval Households* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) 122–24, as illustrating the growing status of motherhood in the late middle ages, both in demographic evidence as well as in the portraits in didactic literature and saints' lives.

16 "Et issint failent les Normaundz regner en Engleterre par touz jours, et le tres noble sanc regal des Sessons en le regne d'Engleterre restore de part la miere cist Henri, roi d'Engleterre" (2.306-307).

17 Brie, Friedrich W. D., ed. *Brut, or the Chronicles of England*, Early English Text Society OS 131, 136. (London: Kegan Paul, 1906–1908).

18 My thanks to Christine Rose for sharing her knowledge of these manuscripts with me. See also Ruth J. Dean, "Nicholas Trevet," 345, as well as her "The Manuscripts of Nicholas Trevet's Anglo-Norman Chronicles," *Medievalia et Humanistica* XIV (1962): 95–105; 104, regarding these genealogies.

19 David Herlihy, *Medieval Households*, 82, 83. The agnatic kinship can be further distinguished from the cognatic as a system regulating inheritance, rather than blood relation. Herlihy and most historians also see the culture surrounding this family narrative as very much focused on origins and family pride. For a detailed discussion of these lineage types and their relation to social change and marriage practice, see Herlihy's *Medieval Households*, 79–111. For Georges Duby's conclusion that the patrilineal agnatic lineage supplanted the cognatic form, see *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest: The Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France*, Translated by Barbara Bray (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

20 "Et esposa primes la fille le counte d'Aumarle [Albamarle, cf Danemark in ME] et son heir, et avoit de lui deux enfanz qe morurent deinz age, et tost apres morust la countesse lour mere. Puis se maria a la reine de Nauvarre Blanche, la seor le count d'Artoys, et de lui avoit trois fitz Thomas, Henri et Johan. Cist Thomas estoit apres son pere counte de Lancastre, et prist a femme Aleyse, la fille et l'air Henri de Lacy, counte de Nichole, et avoit par ceste Aleise deux countez, le countee de Nichole par son pere et le countee de Salesburs par sa mere, mes n'avoient ensamble nul heir. Henri, le frere cist Thomas, fu fait seignour de Monemewe [Mombrey] par le douz Edmund son pere, et prist a femme la fille et le heir Patriz de Chaworthe, et de lui engendra un fitz Henri et sis filles, Blanch, Isabel, Maude, Johane, Alianore, et Marie" (2.327-328).

21 "Mes de cestes dirroms apres" (2.338).

22 "Ci fest a retourner a l'engendrure le roi Edward, le fiz Henri avaunt dit" (2.350).

23 "La quarte fille fu dame Marie, de qi est avaut dit qe se maria al haut roi de ciel, et en taunt est de li veritablement dit; "Optimam partem elegit sibi Maria, que non auferetur ab ea," qe fait taunt a dire; "La tres bone part s'en ad eslu Marie, qar cele part qe est Dieux meismes james ne lui tollet serra" (2.351). Trevet plays on Mary's name a bit here, praising her connection to two Biblical Marys: the mother of God who wed the king of Heaven, and Mary, the sister of Martha, who chose the contemplative life of listening to the words of Jesus, unlike Martha who cooked and prepared meals for the apostles.

SCATOLOGY, SEXUALITY AND THE LOGIC OF LAUGHTER IN MARGUERITE DE NAVARRE'S *HEPTAMERON*

First published in 1558 under the title of *Histoires des amans fortunés*, Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* has remained until recently a relatively unexplored masterpiece of the early modern period. The only separately published bibliography devoted to Marguerite de Navarre and her works appeared in 1983 and within this slim volume, the total number of *Heptaméron* studies comprises fewer than 200 entries (Clive entries 95–22 and 148–52). There is no doubt that the 500th anniversary of Marguerite de Navarre's birth in 1992 fueled a long-overdue revival of sustained critical attention to her collection of 72 novellas. And certainly, current interest in early modern women writers has also helped. Since 1993, for example, close to 100 critical works (articles, monographs) have appeared on the *Heptaméron*. Yes, we are moving in the right direction; but there still remains a remarkable imbalance favoring the tragic over the comic tales. Of the significant number of commemorative conferences, to my knowledge only the Five-College International Renaissance Colloquium, held in Amherst, Massachusetts, addressed this issue.

This article's goal is to explore further some of the directional paths suggested there and to look more methodically at laughter in the *Heptaméron*. I will begin by dealing with gender and genre in the early modern period as a way to explain the relative critical silence concerning Marguerite de Navarre's comic novellas. Then, in order to make a case for the need for more systematic studies, I will analyze novellas 11 and 49 and show the complex ways in which women's laughter functions. As my point of departure I challenge the following seductive yet misleading conclusion: "Le rire dominant, celui qui revient sans cesse dans l'*Heptaméron* . . . [c]'est un rire de joie simple, qui exprime spontanément l'accord des humains avec leur nature . . ." (Delègue 39) [The dominant laughter, the one that comes back repeatedly in the *Heptameron* . . . is a laughter of simple joy which expresses spontaneously the harmony between human beings and their nature; my translation]. Before we can arrive at any generalizations it is imperative to address some crucial questions. For instance, what differences can we observe that depend on who is doing the laughing? And what if it is a woman who laughs? My goal is to examine textually coded laughter, that is, moments where the word "rire" (laugh), or a variant of it, appears and is linked to the female protagonist's actions. I have chosen novellas 11 and 49 because they fall into the category of comic tales and share important structural similarities related to my project. Each involves scenes where men are initially the laughers. At the end of each laughter shifts to the mouth of the woman. I