Introduction: texts and contexts

O England great cause thou hast glad for to be
Compared to the Land of Promise, Sion,
Thou attainest grace to stand in that degree
Through this gracious Lady's supportacion,
To be called in every realm and region
The Holy Land, Our Lady's Dowry:
Thus art thou named of old antiquity.
– from the "Walsingham Ballad"[1]

Jerusalem has been represented for more than two millennia as a recurrent object of travelers' desire. Viewed as the cradle of three faiths – Christianity, Islam, and Judaism – the city serves simultaneously as the home of the Holy Sepulchre, the Dome of the Rock, and place of the Temple. In all cases the sacred city held and, for some, continues to hold value as the locus of scriptural and devotional imagination for the People of the Book. This study explores texts made by English medieval Christian writers who characterized the holy city in a multiplicity of ways. By the fourteenth century, English authors had, readily available to them, fully developed symbolic terms with which to describe Jerusalem. This terminology, enriched for over a millennium by figures such as Augustine, John Cassian, Gregory the Great, Bede, and many others, contributed to the theological refinement of the city's many senses. Likewise, in the hands of English, fourteenth-century writers, the holy city was like a palimpsest ready for inscription. Drawing from a rich inheritance of symbolic interpretation, these authors represented Jerusalem as many things, including the image of heaven, the Christian soul, the home of first-century Hebrews, the Christian Church, the cloister, crusader holding, object of competition, peace among Christians, scriptural mnemonic, and symbol of one's homeland.

In identifying England with the Holy Land, the aforementioned "Walsingham Ballad," widely known to fifteenth-century English pilgrims,

illustrates one of the interpretations of place important to Christian devotion considered in this book. English writers were not alone in identifying their country with the Holy Land; indeed, contemporary French authors maintained a tradition that associated their own audiences with that region from the time of Charlemagne. Similar tropes appear in later English medieval writing: in the works studied here, England's relationship with Jerusalem was crucial to perceptions of English political authority and religious morality. The following chapters assess medieval narratives that illustrate English medieval desire for this site of devotion. The nine texts whose associations with the holy city are discussed here circulated in fourteenth- through early sixteenth-century England. These selected pilgrim guidebooks, romances, prose narratives, devotional poems, and items of political correspondence were among the most popular works of their day; in addition, some less well-known pieces included here held great influence over public policy makers. By examining all of these texts, it becomes clear that Jerusalem-inspired crusade rhetoric was disseminated broadly in late medieval England, and that this discourse worked to define the Christian audience there as sacred and politically authoritative. In each case, these narratives borrow the tropes of crusading to create an expression of the militant zeal with which Jerusalem must be won. As this study shows, English ideals of communal identity were shaped by this rhetoric that would define England as a most holy nation, foremost among its European peers. The language originally developed to promote crusade was deployed by later English writers to describe conflicts between England and France, justifying the English position in the Papal Schism and sanctioning the violence of the Hundred Years War. In the uses of crusade rhetoric and Jerusalem's image recast, we see how religious desire and political discourse are brought together in the context of the sacred.

IMAGINING JERUSALEM IN FOURTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

European Christian perceptions of Jerusalem's numinous qualities heightened the competition for this religious resource, for the city was perceived by many as a relic in its own right. The basis of this belief stems from medieval theology which stipulated that everyday objects, such as cloth and soil, became imbued with divine power once they had touched the original remains of a sacred body. These "contact relics" could include pieces of tombs, oil from funerary lamps, and the dust in and near burial sites.[2] While Jerusalem itself did not constitute the physical remains of a

certain saint or Christ, it was perceived to derive its holiness from the biblical figures who had inhabited it, and through its role in the Passion. For instance, one anonymous medieval visitor wrote that the pit where Helena discovered the true cross received the same reverence as that accorded to pieces of the original.[3] Dust from the tomb of the Holy Sepulchre enjoyed particular popularity as a relic and souvenir ever since Augustine had observed that miracles were worked by it.[4] Also desirable were flasks of oil said to be exuded from surfaces at the sacred sites.[5] Some travelers chipped away stone from important monuments, necessitating the shrines' physical protection by human guards or sturdy coverings.[6] Pilgrims also were known to take exact measurements of the Tomb of the Holy Sepulchre in order to aid their memories and devotions regarding their pilgrimage. Some visitors created their own contact relics: devotees placed boards on the holy sites, cut these planks to the exact size of the object they revered, and brought the copy home with them.[7] As I find in this study, some pilgrim narratives were regarded as contact relics of a special kind.

Jerusalem was prized by many Christians as a witness of biblical history, providing concrete evidence of Christ's existence, devotional contact with Christ himself, and an interactive landscape in which to earn spiritual rewards. Because Christ had chosen that place as his earthly home, it was considered blessed by God and the prophets.[8] Eschatologically, the Bible predicted that the Last Judgment would take place near there. As mentioned earlier, the city also served as an exegetical representation of the human soul, for, just as Jerusalem had suffered at the hands of its many historical invaders, the Christian soul was perceived as constantly threatened by the wiles of the devil. The city was also viewed as the reflection of the "real," holy, and celestial one.[9] It was this Celestial Jerusalem that all medieval Christians sought; thus every Christian, whether or not he or she visited the earthly city, could imagine his or her life on earth as a pilgrimage.[10] Because of the enormous reliquary value placed on the terrestrial city, many other pilgrimages were of spiritual value only in so far as they were considered an imitation of the journey to Jerusalem. It is true that certain shrines boasted their own particular attractions, such as cures for blindness from the statue of St. Foy at Fécamp, the healing of skin diseases from the waters at Canterbury, or penance fulfilled in Rome. Jerusalem, however, because of its Christological, exegetical, historical, and eschatological significance, was thought to exceed all other pilgrimages in spiritual rewards.[11]

Because of its associations with the life of Christ, Jerusalem came to be used as a mnemonic device recalling biblical events for those reading or

hearing about its description, or actually visiting the sites. Some hoped to follow Christ's footsteps, and so enact a form of compassion with their God. For the devotional exercise of meditation on the life of Christ, this land was ideal for its identifiable landmarks which could, in turn, facilitate memory and devotion. Deploying the *ars memoriae*, visitors could feel they inhabited the events of scripture as they progressed through the Holy Land. This process of remembrance was related to Christian ecclesiastical ideas about memory function as discussed by Augustine in his *Confessiones*. This work categorizes the process of remembering abstractions, such as events and ideas, in relation to physical places, such as "fields" and "spacious palaces" [campos / lata praetoria], allowing for their easier recall.[12] In the mind, objects of memory were to be stored in "certain rather secret receptacles" for later use, when they could be extracted from a "treasury of memory" [in abstrusioribus quibusdam receptaculis / ex . . . thesauro memoriae].[13] Just as memories could be assigned to specific locations such as castles and fields, Mary Carruthers and Jan M. Ziolkowski have shown that biblical structures also were used as storehouses of memory, and that these places served as reminders of scriptural events.[14] Records of pilgrim experience tell us that from at least the fourth century, Jerusalem's visitors received instruction in these memory techniques from their guides who associated abstract scriptural narratives with physical sites. Travelers' texts illustrate that such associations between location and biblical event were handed down with few changes, over time. The standardization of the Jerusalem tour offered the possibility of sharing and regulating the interpretation of the place to the extent that, by the fourteenth century, the practice of imagining the holy city had been codified by the texts which surrounded it. From a later medieval standpoint, the terrestrial city of Jerusalem, along with the maps, literature, and diagrams connected with it, was viewed by western Christians as a concrete representation of their faith, authority, and power. Access to the real, existing structures allowed Christian visitors to share objects in common not only for enabling devotion, but also for systematizing a means of public, communal memory.

ENGLISH PILGRIMS AND THE NEGOTIATIONS OF JERUSALEM TRAVEL

In this study, the works by pilgrims Richard Torkington, William Wey, and an anonymous fourteenth-century author offer a picture of what challenges and rewards the journey involved. The guidebooks they

produced, the early sixteenth-century *Diarie of Englysshe Travell*, the mid-fifteenth-century *Itineraries*, and the fourteenth-century *Itinerarium cuiusdam Anglici, 1344–45*, respectively, illustrate how readily English writers adopted portions of pre-existing accounts into their narratives, accepting other pilgrims as authorities on various holy sites, sometimes without corroborating the evidence themselves. That this textual community included a broad spectrum of European authors is seen in the cross-pollination of itineraries originating from England and the Continent, and also from Jerusalem, where, beginning in the fourteenth century, a standard written source may have been circulated in many languages by the Franciscan friars. Likewise, portrayals of the Islamic presence in Jerusalem were passed down in relatively unchanged form, perpetuating an overtly negative Christian view of Islam. The Islamic groups, universally referred to as "Saracens" in these texts, are depicted as threatening to Christian safety and as adversaries against whom to unify.[15] In fact, the very danger that Muslim peoples represented enabled a specific kind of Christian devotion. These interpretations of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, available to many European medieval audiences by means of guidebooks and other forms, show the influence of crusading ideologies on late medieval writing about the holy city. In recording the challenges that they faced on the road, pilgrims identified themselves with martyrs who had suffered on behalf of their associations with the city, including crusaders, saints, other pilgrims, and Christ himself.

Although the pilgrimage was at once expensive and physically difficult for English travelers – costing an estimated year's wages and lasting several months – many made the journey. Indeed, the English were known as such avid travelers that English medieval writers, inspired by natural philosophers, sought to explain this predilection through scientific means: John Gower, in his fourteenth-century discussion of the elements and their relation to humanity, reasons that the English are wont to travel because they are governed by the moon. He explains that, unlike the French who are ruled by Mercury and therefore lazy and slow to travel, the English are predisposed to wander:

> Bot what man under his pouer
> Is bore, he schal his places change
> And seche manye londes strange:
> And as of this condicion
> The Mones disposicion
> Upon the lond of Alemaigne
> Is set, and ek upon Bretaigne,

Which nou is cleped Engelond;
For thei travaile in every lond.[16]

John Mandeville, too, writes that English people are destined to roam because of the influence of the moon on the seventh climate, which they inhabit:

> And in oure contrey is alle the contrarie, for wee ben in the seuenthe clymat that is of the mone, and the mone is of lyghtly mevynge and the mone is planete of weye. And for that skylle is yeueth vs wille of kynde for to meve lyghtly and for to go dyuerse weyes and to sechen strange thinges and other dyuersitees of the world, for the mone envyrouneth the erthe more hastyly than ony other planete.[17]

Likewise, chronicler Ranulf Higden attributed the natural curiosity of the English to their penchant for travel.[18] Even writers in the later medieval period note – albeit some with less enthusiasm than their predecessors – the English desire to go on pilgrimage.

ENGLISH CRUSADING IDENTITIES: ORIGINS AND CONTEXTS

Pilgrims and crusaders alike recognized Jerusalem's importance; in fact, medieval crusading developed, at least discursively, as a form of itinerant devotion. Almost two hundred years after King Richard I of England deployed his armies in the Middle East, English romance writers referred to his crusade as a "visit to the Lord's Sepulchre," and to Richard as "Goddes owne pilgrim." In present-day terms, the real nature of the campaign appears cloaked in euphemism which substitutes the actions of the bellicose soldier with that of a peaceful pilgrim. However, the conflation of pilgrimage and crusade in medieval practice is not new, and many historians have explored how these seemingly opposing elements often fit together. Hans Eberhard Mayer writes that during the Middle Ages, crusade, known as *expeditio*, *iter in terram sanctam*, or *peregrinatio*, was another type of pilgrimage; only in this case, the pilgrims bore arms.[19] No Latin word for "crusade" entered into use in England or the Continent until the mid-thirteenth century; until then, approximations such as *passagium*, *passagium generale*, and *expeditio crucis* were used.[20] Indeed, it appears that the English word *crusade* in its current usage appeared as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[21] Linguistically, the phenomenon of crusade as distinct from pilgrimage never really existed in the medieval period.[22] Other likenesses related the two

activities; for instance, pilgrims and crusaders both wore similarly distinctive clothing, for the former carried the characteristic scrip and staff while the latter wore the sign of the cross. Also, both groups were distinguished from other travelers by an official liturgical rite. On a legal basis, James Brundage has shown that in the eyes of twelfth-century canonists, crusaders were, for the most part, indistinct from pilgrims, since both enjoyed similar rights and privileges.[23] Nevertheless, substantial dissimilarities existed – most importantly, crusaders were awarded differential indulgences and were expected to bear arms.[24] The focus of this study is not to locate further contrasts between medieval pilgrimage and crusade, but rather to recognize and explore medieval portrayals of militant crusade as they were inflected by devotion, and to note how, in turn, the rhetoric of crusading came to influence late-medieval English writing about Jerusalem.

In the texts discussed here, depictions of the Holy Land adhere to a descriptive mode established around the time of the First Crusade. The several chronicle sources representing Pope Urban II's sermon at Clermont render Jerusalem as heaven on earth, a literal dwelling place for humanity, a sacred object for adoration, and the rightful possession of western Christendom. This portrayal was designed to compel crusading recruitment, and lasted well into the thirteenth century. There is no authoritative account of the pope's sermon of 1095, but there were many chroniclers who wrote of the event, claiming a place as eye-witness, or that they had heard about it from a reliable source. Marcus Bull has outlined the cautions involved with using these reports as accurate accounts of Urban's speech, but also has identified useful patterns among the versions of the sermon, suggesting a dual emphasis on "the circumstances in which the Holy Land, and especially Jerusalem, found itself," and on "the actions and characteristics of the Muslims there."[25] These two topics were woven into subsequent European crusading sermons regarding the Holy Land in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[26] In the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century narratives discussed in this study, this binary continues to influence pilgrim writing, romance, prose works, devotional poetry, and political missives; indeed, these two negotiating points appear repeatedly in the texts mentioned here, to the extent that I propose that they offer a means with which Christian communities defined themselves collectively and individually, by representing their resistance to Islam, and support for Jerusalem.

This militant language, reliant as it was on religious devotion toward the holy city, constitutes part of what I call crusade rhetoric in this study.

These tropes associated with crusading were shaped by early perceptions of divine right. According to the reports of Urban's rationale, because "Deus hoc vult" [God wills it], the Christian armies who pursued the campaign would find immediate success. As Penny Cole has demonstrated, these sentiments about Jerusalem such as those attributed to Urban had been long in the making.[27] Likewise, after Clermont, crusade rhetoric continued to adapt itself to the subsequent fortunes of the campaigns. Following the First Crusade and its successes confirming European beliefs about Christian potency, the Second and Third Crusades brought failure not only in the surrender of Jerusalem, but also through substantial loss of life, territory, and other valued relics. These poor results brought many to ask how these events could align with what had been perceived as God's will. As Cole and others have shown, one of many ecclesiastical responses involved the development of penance-inflected crusade rhetoric, attributing collapses in power to the Christians' immoral behavior.[28] This attempt to assimilate military downfall into a divine plan is especially evident in those sermons that took place after the Fall of Acre, the last Crusader State, in 1291, marking the end of Christian occupation of the mainland. Such discourse subsequently influenced the Jerusalem-related narratives of England, particularly in the ways that authors situated their audiences around crusade, described the city and its inhabitants, and came to promote certain forms of morality.

In addition to the crusade rhetoric that focuses on moral attitudes toward the holy city, other discourses in this vein illustrate ideals of militant behavior, as seen in the language of conquest and chivalry employed in the medieval crusade chronicles and romances. For example, this rhetoric includes chivalric tropes to describe devastation, such as images of cloven bodies and rivers of blood. Suspension of disbelief regarding bellicose feats, such as the knight who single-handedly slaughters one thousand men, are also typical features. Likewise, the term includes military appeals with spiritual undertones, such as exhortations urging Christians to liberate the land of their "heritage," to take back what is "rightfully" theirs.[29] As I hope to show, such rhetoric of crusade comes to describe acts of brutality against non-Christians in a way that, as Cole suggests, can "be thought of as both necessary and laudatory on grounds which were purely religious."[30] These concepts of liberation and religious purgation of Jerusalem were present from the early crusade accounts onwards and continued to have vitality in the fourteenth century. As I show in this study, this range of crusade rhetoric would later be deployed in the literature of the Hundred Years War

to articulate an English communal identity distinguishable from that of their French neighbors.

A study of English communal identity and the literatures of the Hundred Years War necessarily involves discussion of national identity. The term "nation" and its applicability to the Middle Ages is often debated; some scholars such as Perry Anderson and Anthony Giddens restrict use of the term to post-eighteenth-century culture, viewing the French Revolution as the benchmark of the rise of the modern state – the event on which some present definitions of "nation" depend. Other scholars have looked to pre-Enlightenment structures of communal affiliation that also support modern ideas of nation; in this way, evidence of nationhood is seen in those things a community shares in common, including its perception of its past, shared geographical territory, language, codified social organization, and bureaucratic structures such as taxes and laws. Likewise, some theorists who apply the terminology of nation to medieval England localize this application in discourses of Self and Other. Kathy Lavezzo provides a good example:

> The bundle of attributes that the members of a nation are imagined to share are far from stable, but instead can range from the diachronic (territory) to the synchronic (history), from the biological (race) to the cultural (religion, language, etc.) and to the political (the state). Coterminous with the various fantasies of sameness, union and wholeness that nationalism entails are fantasies of difference, the construction of others whom the nation is "not" and whom the nation surmounts . . . [M]aking medieval "England" also depended on the appropriation of strangers both within (women, the poor, merchants) and without (Ireland, France, Italy) its boundaries, even as it excluded those same others.[31]

In addition to Lavezzo, fruitful studies by Marc Bloch, Susan Crane, John Gillingham, Geraldine Heng, Diane Speed, Lynn Staley, Thorlac Turville-Petre, and many others have demonstrated that a discourse of nation and nationhood existed in medieval England. Such work has provided an important basis upon which this book is written. However, the intention of my study is not to expand or affirm the terminology related to nationhood, but rather to discuss English communal identities shaped by religious and political writing about Jerusalem.

THE HOLY CITY AS GUARANTOR OF SACRAL IDENTITY: THE JERUSALEM RELATION

The texts discussed here present physical and spiritual connections to Jerusalem as supremely valuable for a variety of reasons. This association,

which I call the Jerusalem relation, was made by means of armed or unarmed pilgrimage to the holy city, performed in actuality or in the mind. As I discuss, a Jerusalem relation could enhance the perception of one's political authority, for that attachment was considered by many late medieval Christian writers as both a sign and guarantor of divine and earthly power. Access to such entitlements was claimed by both English and French writers during the period of the Hundred Years War, as both sides sought to justify their internecine struggles over ownership of regions of France and its neighboring kingdoms. According to Lynn Staley, unlike the English monarchs of the late medieval period, French leaders Charles V and Charles VI, as the kings before them, could lay claim to a long-established piety and seemingly divine authority – Staley refers to this ideology as "sacral kingship."[32] Her work charts the development of French royal rule as it established a direct link between the king and deity through such programs as civic performance, the coronation *ordo*, making of law, the king's touch (granting the king miraculous healing virtues), liturgical formulae, and other strategies. She points out that, in England, the comparative absence of such sacralized power eventually led to perceptions of weakness in English monarchical command, and became a liability during the Hundred Years War, leaving the king comparatively powerless to hold his kingdom together and to sustain a long-term invasion of France.[33]

Building on Staley's fine study of sacral kingship, I borrow and expand her term, applying it also to England's Christian inhabitants, especially its writers, who were negotiating what I refer to as sacral identity. English literature about pilgrimage and crusade was written by and for people who were defining themselves both as a religious community and as a nation in competition with older, more firmly established European kingdoms. These separate discourses of national identity and Christian identity were intertwined within the notion of sacrality: in particular, English late medieval writing about Jerusalem expresses concerns about national prestige based on England's relationship to the holy city. I hope to bring Jerusalem and the reputation of crusading prowess to the forefront by exploring these elements as tropes employed by English authors for sacralizing kingship and populace. This book therefore examines both the everyday interactions with Jerusalem (as seen in the pilgrim narratives), and the elevated claims to communal power, as articulated in contemporary romances, prose works, and theological writings. In the texts studied here, some late medieval English writers had already taken up the challenge of fashioning England's sacramental presence.