

GENDER AND THE CREATION OF LINEAGE IN GEOFFREY OF  
MONMOUTH'S *HISTORIA REGUM BRITANNIAE*

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Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1136) is a text concerned with British patriotism, with telling the tales of British history that illustrate its great heroes, successful kings, and military campaigns, as well as its noted failures.<sup>1</sup> As such a politically motivated text, the *Historia* participates in a popular literary movement in the late Middle Ages—writing vast recountings of the past that not only entertain courtly and clerical audiences, but also serve to legitimate the current, often recently installed Plantagenets and other Anglo-Norman rulers.<sup>2</sup> Primogeniture was not yet well-established in England, and the royal succession was contested on a number of fronts in the eleventh and early-twelfth centuries. Both William Rufus and Henry I overcame the claims of their older brother, Robert Curthose, and with the death of Henry I in December 1135, Matilda fought for her father's throne against her cousin, Stephen, whose claim came through his mother's family.<sup>3</sup> At the time of Geoffrey's writing, it was far from clear that the Plantagenet line would prevail for the next three hundred years.

The formation of lineage itself was also in transition in the early twelfth century. Cognatic kinship systems, in which family was perceived largely as lateral connections within a generation or two, were slowly being overlaid by agnatic systems, in which kinship was seen more narrowly as the succession of generations and individual heirs over time. David Herlihy asserts that despite Georges Duby's contention that the agnatic form succeeded in supplanting the cognatic, the older form never completely died out, and the two co-existed in the later Middle Ages.<sup>4</sup>

Within these political and social contexts, Geoffrey's familiar medieval narrative form, the genealogy, takes on more significance. The passing of generations provides an important narrative link for this historian and storyteller. Especially in the early books of the *Historia*, the narrative explores questions of lineage and how it affects individuals and the society within which they function. Behind this choice of narrative

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structure also lie important assumptions about gender and how filial succession can structure the shape of reality. Gabrielle Spiegel points out that “through the imposition of genealogical metaphors on historical narrative, genealogy becomes for historiography not only a thematic ‘myth’ but a narrative *mythos*, a symbolic form which governs the very shape and significance of the past.” Speigal theorizes that this “filiative structure,” in fact, can make readers see procreation as a metaphor for historical change.<sup>5</sup> When a text such as Geoffrey’s repeats lineage after lineage, it naturalizes and embeds patriarchy and the assumptions concerning gender it brings within the text’s narrative structure.

The political interests of patriarchy and of the emerging agnatic kinship systems demand a smoothly flowing genealogical narration—if kings beget true sons who take over the reins of government smoothly, society is represented as stable and the system that rules it as unproblematic. But this form has very narrow requirements. The son, the object of the first clause, must be transformed into a new father, the subject of the next clause, and in order to meet this criterion, the text must cut out or suppress other political and narrative possibilities such as multiple sons or female heirs. The subject of genealogy is the production of generations, and to accomplish this task, it often elides the place occupied by mothers both in reproduction and in the politics of succession. If genealogy makes procreation a metaphor for historical change, it is a metaphor that has been masculinized because the pivotal roles that women play are concealed by most genealogical moments. Submerging women’s roles can be, in fact, integral to the smooth passing of generations and the accomplishment of narrative itself.<sup>6</sup>

Geoffrey’s use of his genealogical historical form is not so simple, however. In the *Historia*, gender represents a site where patriarchal power is often explored, questioned, and contested. Geoffrey’s text, while sometimes suppressing mothers, also explores the way they are submerged and the roles they can play when they do become visible. Rather than shutting down or containing these critical moments, the text exploits them to narrative advantage, exploring how the gendered aspects of these crises can both legitimate and question the operations of genealogy and the patriarchal *mythos* it masks. In the *Historia*, gender does become what Joan Scott calls “one of the recurrent references by which political power

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has been conceived, legitimated, and criticized.” Although genealogy often seems “sure and fixed,” through including mothers in its political tales, the text denaturalizes its form, both confronting the threat and affirming the possibilities that these maternal figures offer.<sup>7</sup> In a narrative in which the sequences of father-to-son progression would seem to exemplify the emergence of an agnatic succession for the Plantagenets, the treatment of the figures Ignoge, Judon, and Tonuvenna in the early books of the *Historia* illustrates the persistence and power of cognatic connections for the kings of Britain.

The *Historia Regum Britanniae* occasionally works mothers into its genealogical sequence by means of pronouns, so while many genealogies remain patterns of father to son, others give mothers something of the role of agent or instrument by including them in ablative phrases such as “ex illa.”<sup>8</sup> However, in the case of Ignoge, the wife of Brutus, the text actually represents the process by which the future mother of the British line is absorbed into her new husband’s Trojan lineage. Brutus, however, is a hero whose own lineage is in question: he has killed both his father and his mother and has been cast out of Italy by his Latin relatives. When he arrives in Greece in the first book of the *Historia* and joins a group of enslaved Trojan refugees, he is effectively a man who has cut off his own family ties, a man without lineage. In the wars that follow, in which Brutus leads the Trojans against their Greek king, Pandrasus, he not only creates himself as a masculine hero but also erases his legacy of parricide by identifying himself with the Trojan lineage of his great-grandfather, Aeneas. He becomes a Trojan to lead Trojans out of bondage.

Brutus may claim Trojan descent through his father, Silvius, but his mother was clearly a Latin, a niece of Lavinia. The three sons who are later born to him and Ignoge are also seen as heirs to a Trojan legacy. The mixing in these kinds of unions points to an interesting social and mythic process—a hero like Brutus can marry a woman of a different nationality such as Ignoge to gain political alliances and to conclude peacefully the war with the Greeks. However, in order for Brutus’s people to claim the privileged genealogy of “Trojanness” for their progeny and become the wandering people who ultimately establish Britain, Ignoge’s family ties must be obliterated from the genealogical and historical record. As the

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*Historia* represents this contradiction, women possess blood ties for the purposes of marriage and political alliance, but those ties are obscured in subsequent accountings of lineage. Brutus's Trojan people are quite a mixed race of Trojan, Latin, and Greek, but this history creates a myth of "Trojanness" by submerging the blood ties borne by the women and privileging the family line borne by the men.<sup>9</sup>

The *Historia* dramatizes not only this progression of patriarchal lineage but also the moment of female loss, when the woman who has entered a dynastic marriage faces the erasure of her own lineage and racial identity. When the Trojans sail away from Greece, Geoffrey writes, "At Innogen in excelsa puppi stans inter brachia Brutusi in extasi collabitur. Fusisque cum singulti lacrimis parentes ac patriam deserere conqueritur. Nex oculos a litore avertit dum litora oculis patuerunt" 'Ignoge stood on the deck and from time to time fell fainting in the arms of Brutus. She wept and sobbed at being forced to leave her relations and her homeland; and as long as the shore lay there before her eyes, she would not turn her gaze away from it.'<sup>10</sup> The concern here is explicit: Ignoge is leaving her "Greekness" behind in the form of both family and country and must face being absorbed into this Trojan dynastic venture. Critics have interpreted this extended treatment as merely an example of *pathos*. For instance, Robert Hanning describes these pathetic moments as involving a "bystander or helpless victim of national crisis" and observes that "all are women." Of Ignoge's lament, he writes that "history is forgotten and attention is focused on the timeless problem of wives and lovers."<sup>11</sup> History, however, is not forgotten in a scene like this; women are in history and the text's attention to Ignoge's sorrow at her loss shows how critical a juncture this is for Brutus's dynastic and nationalistic enterprise.

The creation of Brutus's nouveau-Trojan line requires that Ignoge be a certain kind of female figure. Anthropologist Gayle Rubin describes marriage systems based on the exchange of women between kinships, saying "it would be in the interests of the smooth and continuous operation of a [kinship] system if the woman in question did not have too many ideas of her own about whom she might want to sleep with. From the standpoint of the system, the preferred female sexuality would be one that responded to the desire of others, rather than one which actively desired and sought a response."<sup>12</sup> Because of her father's bargain to give her to the victorious

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Brutus as part of the peace treaty, Ignoge must marry Brutus and go away from her homeland. But what if she could have refused? Such a refusal would have broken this Trojan dynastic enterprise just as surely as Brutus's actions did when he inadvertently killed both of his parents.

The text does not go so far as to allow Ignoge the choice of refusal; it only dramatizes her loss of lineage and her absorption into the narrow requirements of genealogy. Ignoge's only vocalization, her weeping, ends in silent sleep, and her only subsequent mention in the text is at the opening of Book Two, when Geoffrey relates that Brutus consummated his marriage with her and that "ex ea, genuit tres inclitos filios" 'by her, he had three famous sons.'<sup>13</sup> Although her role in childbearing is preserved in that genealogical moment, the Greek princess has become a Trojan mother present only in the phrase "ex ea" embedded in her husband's genealogy.

Not every mother becomes elided by the text, however, for other prominent figures intervene in the workings of genealogy. One figure, Judon, intercedes violently in the politics of succession.<sup>14</sup> After six generations pass smoothly, two brothers, Ferrex and Porrex, fight about who should succeed their senile father. Theirs is the typical intrigue: Porrex tries to ambush Ferrex, who flees to France, returning with a Frankish army. In the ensuing battle, Ferrex is killed, leaving Porrex free to take the throne. The genealogical needs of the narrative seem to have been met—one son remains to rule Britain. But the text illustrates the dire consequences of this conflict by dramatizing the reaction of their mother, once news of Ferrex's death reaches her. Although both sons were equal in their claims to the throne, their Fury-like mother "commota in odium alterus versa est. Diligebat namque illum magis altero" 'was consumed with hatred for Porrex for she had loved Ferrex more than him.' Judon becomes a practically tragic figure when she "unde tanta ira ob mortem ipsius ignescebat ut . . . nacta ergo tempus quo ille sopitus fuerat aggreditur eum cum ancillis suis et in plurimas sectiones dilaceravit" 'became so unbalanced by the anguish which the death of Ferrex had caused her that . . . she chose a time when Porrex was asleep, set upon him with her maid-servants and hacked him to pieces.'<sup>15</sup> The text portrays Judon as out of control in her need for vengeance, but this murder also gives her a decisive role in Britain's royal genealogy. Unlike Ignoge, she

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is more than just a silent mother who bears the next generation of princes; instead, she decides which of the two heirs she prefers and forcefully acts to prevent the other from becoming king even after the murder of her favorite. This text comments tersely on her actions, and shows how Judon has decisively destroyed the succession, by explaining that “exinde” ‘as a result of this’ five kings of no name divided Britain and the people endured civil war for years to come.<sup>16</sup> By including this mother’s story, the *Historia* exploits an opportunity to tell a sensational tale, but it also shows just how dangerous and threatening including a mother in a genealogy can be.

While the intervention of Judon has succeeded in destroying the royal line, the *Historia* immediately provides a counter-example of a mother whose intervention not only saves her husband’s dynasty but also, by negotiating peace between her two sons, makes Britain so powerful that its kings go on to conquer Rome itself. Tonuvenna is the mother of Belinus and Brennius, whose struggles over the British succession dominate the early section of Geoffrey’s history. After an alliance with the Danes and a battle on the high seas, Brennius finally invades his brother’s British kingdom, leading a French army. But at this battle, their mother, Tonuvenna, plays a crucial role that is diametrically opposed to the course that Judon took in the conflict between her sons. As the battle lines are drawn up, a dramatic scene unfolds, with Tonuvenna hurrying through the ranks, approaching Brennius with trembling steps, “estuabatque filium videre quem multo tempore non aspexerat” ‘passionately keen to see the son on whom she had not set eyes for so long.’<sup>17</sup> The text describes how mother’s love drives her to hug and kiss him and finally to bare her breasts before him to make an impassioned plea for peace between her sons. Unlike Judon, whose passion for revenge has overturned genealogical succession and cast Britain into chaos, when the *Historia* gives space to this mother, her passion serves narrative and national interests. Her explosive remonstrance preserves the dynastic line.

In her speech itself, however, one of the few in direct quotation accorded to a female figure, Tonuvenna elaborates a different concept of generational succession, one that emphasizes common family ties, the cognatic model, over the hierarchical interests of royal succession. She emphasizes the role her own body has played in creating this familial

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drama, exhorting Brennius to “memento fili memento uberum istorum quae suxisti matrisque teu uteri quo te opitex rerum in hominem ex non homine creavit unde te in mundum produxit angustiis mea viscera cruciantibus” ‘remember these breasts which you once sucked. Remember the womb of your mother, in which the creator of all things fashioned you as a man from stuff that was not yet human, bringing you forth into the world while the birth pangs tore at her vitals because of you.’<sup>18</sup> The invocation of her maternal body not only gives her the authority to compel Brennius to make peace with his brother, but it also gives them a shared origin as her sons, thereby disrupting the hierarchy of inheritance and lineage. Although they both contest for their father’s power, their mother changes their legacy to one of commonality and equality. Tonuvenna stresses this connection later in the speech when she argues that, with one the King of the Allebrogues and the other the King of Britain, Brennius and Belinus are equals. Both brothers accept their mother’s arguments and authority and so make plans to invade Gaul and conquer Rome together.

In the genealogical schema, only one son can inherit his father’s place, but through the intercession of Tonuvenna, two sons co-exist in the narrative and bring Britain to unheard-of prominence by eventually conquering Rome itself. Including a mother in a pivotal space in this narrative has indeed reaffirmed the political needs of genealogy, but Tonnuvenna has modified its operations to offer a creative transition of power from a father to both of his sons. Maternal intervention allows Geoffrey of Monmouth to use his genealogical narrative in a new way, so that British history does not fall once again to its own vices, but rises to new prominence when two heirs fight on the same side, on equal terms, instead of against one another for the right to succeed their father.

With its genealogical form, the *Historia Regum Britanniae* narrates history, creating generations of kings and their successors. The text investigates not only the traditional political problems of how to be a proper king and lawgiver, but also the question of how history encodes the roles women, especially mothers, play. In the story of Ignoge, we see laid bare the process by which a woman is absorbed into lineage, and in the later stories of Judon and Tonuvenna, the narrative confronts both the social threat posed and the narrative possibilities offered by women who

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intervene in the politics of inheritance. By including the stories of these mothers, Geoffrey breaks the comforting sequential patterns of patrilineal genealogy;<sup>19</sup> he exploits these gendered moments to probe the effectiveness of what we now see as two different systems of social regulation, agnatic and cognatic kinship. Stephen's and Matilda's claims to the throne were also complicated and contested. Stephen was Henry I's sister's son and Matilda his legitimate, but female heir. With the wars between the two just beginning as Geoffrey completed the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, the text explores these complexities of lineage, showing how including women in the genealogical and political schema can enable the succession as well as destabilize the narrative.

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### Notes

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<sup>1</sup>In addition to the criticism cited above that attempts to put the *HRB* into its political context, scholars have taken various approaches to the *Historia*. In discussing Geoffrey's purpose in writing, Antonia Gransden's indignation is typical of historians who take exception to the generic mix of the text: "Geoffrey was a romance writer masquerading as a historian. No historian today would object to him if he had avowedly written a historical novel . . . or a romance epic. But on the contrary, he pretended to be writing history. . . . [T]he way he treats his known sources corroborates the view that he was capable of intellectual dishonesty" (*Historical Writing in England, c. 550-1307* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1974] 202-03). In contrast see Patricia Clare Ingham, *Sovereign Fantasies: Arthurian Romance and the Making of Britain* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2001), who argues that "accounts of early British history that pit the excesses of Monmouth's extravagant fiction against other more sober truths implicitly encode fears about the popularity and the cultural powers of his text" (22). For more on Geoffrey as historian see also Christopher Brooke, "Geoffrey of Monmouth as a Historian," *Church and Government in the Middle Ages*, ed. Christopher Brooke, D. Luscombe, G. Martin, and D. Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge UP: 1976) 77-91. More generally, see Nancy F. Partner, *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1977). Valerie Flint has argued that Geoffrey wrote the *Historia* as a parody of historiographic discourse within twelfth-century academic centers, while Robert Hanning asserts that this text demonstrates the first removal of the writing of national history from the earlier model of salvation history. See Valerie I. J. Flint, "The *Historia Regum*

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*Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth: Parody and its Purpose: A Suggestion," *Speculum* 54 (1979): 447-68; and Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain from Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Columbia UP, 1966). Philosophical issues concern some critics, with Maureen Fries exploring Boethian themes by arguing that the text shows that faulty self-rule exiles the individual, the king, and the nation from their true home, and with Susan M. Shwartz arguing against Hanning by saying that *HRB* is still sacred history because its pattern of founding, betrayal, and diaspora is based on New and Old Testament models. See Maureen Fries, "Boethian Themes and Tragic Structure in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*," *The Arthurian Tradition: Essays in Convergence*, ed. Mary Flowers Braswell and John Bugge (Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 1988) 29-42; and Susan M. Shwartz, "The Founding and Self-Betrayal of Britain: An Augustinian Approach to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*," *Medievalia et Humanistica: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture*, ns 10 (1981): 33-54. Other critics such as M. Victoria Guerin continue to work with sources ("The King's Sin: the Origins of the David-Arthur Parallel," *The Passing of Arthur: New Essays in Arthurian Tradition*, ed. Christopher Baswell and William Sharpe [New York: Garland, 1988] 15-30), while critics such as Nancy Vine Durling and Lister M. Matheson trace the rich influence Geoffrey's text had upon subsequent French and English romances and histories. See Nancy Vine Durling, "Translation and Innovation in the *Roman de Brut*," *Medieval Translators and Their Craft*, ed. Jeanette Beer, *Studies in Medieval Culture* 25, Medieval Institute Publications (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan UP, 1989): 9-40; and Lister M. Matheson, "King Arthur and the Medieval English Chronicles," *King Arthur Through the Ages*, ed. Valerie M. Lagorio and Mildred Leake Day, vol. 1 (New York: Garland, 1990) 248-74. More recent theoretically based approaches include Francis Ingledew, "The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History: The Case of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*," *Speculum* 69 (1994): 665-704, which characterizes the *HRB* as a Vergilian narrative that encodes genealogy, prophecy, and *eros* within its imperial design; Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain, 1100-1300* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2000), which argues that the *HRB*

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represents an ambivalent colonial fantasy; *Arthuriana* 8.4 (Winter 1998), a special edition, which surveys current theoretical approaches to Geoffrey's work; and Geraldine Heng, "Cannibalism, the First Crusade, and the Genesis of Medieval Romance," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 10.1 (Spring 1998): 98-174, which argues that the romance tales in the *HRB* negotiate the social and political traumas of recent Anglo-Norman history through the development of a narrative of fantasy.

<sup>2</sup>Lee Patterson writes that "the disruptions of medieval political history were typically healed with the soothing continuities of a founding legend, and insecure rulers bolstered their regimes by invoking honorific if legendary precedents. The degree to which these political imperatives determined the kind of literature that was produced in the Middle Ages is not sufficiently appreciated nor is the even more important fact that this literature continued throughout its medieval life to concern itself with essentially historiographic issues" (199). See Patterson's "The Romance of History and the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*" in his *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, 1987) 197-230. Richard Waswo writes more generally of the political use of origin myths in "The History that Literature Makes," *New Literary History* 19 (1988): 541-64 and "Our Ancestors, the Trojans: Inventing Cultural Identity in the Middle Ages," *Exemplaria* 7 (1995): 269-90. Stephen Knight emphasizes a different aspect of the political environment, arguing that the *Historia* not only justified the Norman Conquest but also explored contemporary political anxieties by echoing contemporary political figures (e.g., Cordelia as Henry I) and probing contemporary political issues such as the problem of inheritance. The text became for its Norman audiences a sort of wish fulfillment, safely exploring political problems. See Knight's "'So Great a King': Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannia*" in his *Arthurian Literature and Society* (London: Macmillan, 1983) 38-67. Jean Blacker, however, maintains that Geoffrey's purposes are nationalistic and show that even though their Trojan heritage legitimated British rule, they lost that rule because they fought among themselves; this is a lesson to the contemporary Norman kings. See Jean Blacker, "Transformations of a Theme: The Depoliticization of the Arthurian World in the *Roman de*

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*Brut*," ed. Mary Flowers Braswell and John Bugge, *The Arthurian Tradition: Essays in Convergence* (Birmingham: U of Alabama P, 1988) 54-74; also see Blacker, *The Faces of Time: Portrayal of the Past in Old French and Latin Historical Narrative of the Anglo-Norman Regnum* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1994). Fiona Tolhurst has recently argued that Geoffrey's use of Biblical and Roman stories supports Matilda's claim to the British throne. See Fiona Tolhurst, "The Britons as Hebrews, Normans, and Romans: Geoffrey of Monmouth's British Epic and Reflections of Empress Matilda" *Arthuriana* 8.4 (Winter 1998): 69-87.

<sup>3</sup>Marjorie Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother, and the Lady of the English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 64.

<sup>4</sup>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 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. The cognatic system, as opposed to the agnatic, is "ego-focused; the lines of relationship run forth from ego in both directions, through males and females to the accepted limits of kinship. . . . [T]he traditional purpose of the *cognatio* was the enlargement of the kindred. . . . [I]t continued to define the domain of the blood relationships, . . . and the *cognatio* surely defined a domain of affective ties as well" (*Medieval Households* [Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1985] 82-83). 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*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Pantheon, 1983).

<sup>5</sup>Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "Genealogy: Form and Function in Medieval Historical Narrative," *History and Theory* 22 (1983): 48. See also her *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1993).

<sup>6</sup>See Teresa De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982).

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<sup>7</sup>Scott adds that gender “refers to but also establishes the meaning of the male/female opposition. To vindicate political power, the reference must seem sure and fixed, outside human construction, part of the natural or divine order. In that way, the binary opposition and social process of gender relationships both become part of the meaning of power itself; to question or alter any aspect threatens the entire system” (Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* [New York: Columbia UP, 1988] 48).

<sup>8</sup>See for example: “ex illa genuit duos filios” (257); “ex ea” (253). An astonishing variation explains the generations of Ebraucus with “genuit etiam xx ex xx coniugiibus quas habebat filios necnon & xxx filias” (259), that is, he had twenty sons by his twenty wives and also thirty daughters. Latin quotations are taken from Acton Griscom, ed., *The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth* (London: Longmans, 1929), long the edition of this text used by scholars in English. English translations are adapted from Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin, 1966), which is based on Griscom. A new edition beginning to be favored is Neil Wright, ed., *The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 568* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1985).

<sup>9</sup>An interesting exception is the case of Assaracus, a bastard son of a Greek noble and his Trojan concubine. Although his deceased father has provided castles for Assaracus, the legitimate heir refuses to grant his half-brother’s claim. In this instance, Assaracus invokes his mother’s lineage, forming an alliance with Brut not only to unseat Pandrasus, but to regain his own patrimony (Griscom 225; Thorpe 56).

<sup>10</sup>Griscom 237; Thorpe 64.

<sup>11</sup>Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain from Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Columbia UP, 1966) 162.

<sup>12</sup>Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women,” *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Press Review, 1975) 182.

<sup>13</sup>Griscom 253.

<sup>14</sup>Peggy McCracken examines how infanticide by mothers is always motivated by revenge like Judon’s in “Engendering Sacrifice: Blood, Lineage, and Infanticide in Old French Literature,” *Speculum* 77 (2002):

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55-75. For more generalized overviews of the ways mothers function in the Middle Ages see John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, eds, *Medieval Mothering* (New York: Garland, 1996) and John Carmi Parsons, *Medieval Queenship* (New York: St. Martin's, 1993).

<sup>15</sup>Griscom 273; Thorpe 88.

<sup>16</sup>Griscom 273.

<sup>17</sup>Griscom 284; Thorpe 95.

<sup>18</sup>Griscom 285; Thorpe 98.

<sup>19</sup>Hayden White argues that sequence in medieval histories is a form of signification unto itself. The passing of each year or generation in textual form creates a principle of continuity and even plentitude. There is, he writes, "no scarcity of the years: they descend regularly from their origin, the year of the Incarnation, and roll relentlessly on to their potential end, the last Judgement. . . . [T]he narrative strains for the effect of having filled in all the gaps, of having put an image of continuity, coherency, and meaning in place of the fantasies of emptiness, need, and frustrated desire that inhabit our nightmares about the destructive power of time" (*The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1987] 11).