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A Sense of Place: The 'London' Cityscapes of BL, Royal MS. 13 A. III

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In the British Library, there exists a somewhat understudied manuscript containing a copy of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannie*.[1] Known as British Library Royal MS. 13 A. III, scholars have long noted that it was likely produced in southeast England in or around London between the late thirteenth century and the first quarter of the fourteenth century.[2] One of but thirteen of the around 200 surviving copies of the text that are illuminated, it is the only one with an extended series of illustrations. These take the form of bas-de-page drawings and likely date to the fourteenth century, though the matter is the subject of some debate.[3] The drawings are in lead and ink on vellum; these are often made up of two layers – fine under-drawing and darker, thicker over-drawing – and at times display some discrepancy.[4] The drawings depict cities, kings, scenes from history and coats of arms, some

[1] The manuscript also contains the prologue to the Prophecies of Merlin and the Epistle to Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln. Citations and transcriptions of the manuscript's text (Latin and English), unless otherwise indicated, follow Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, ed. Michael D. Reeve, tr. Neil Wright (Woodbridge, 2007).

[2] The manuscript is described in H. L. D. Ward and J. A. Herbert, *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3 vols (London, 1883-1910), vol. i, p. 237; and George F. Warner and Julius P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections*, 4 vols (London, 1921), vol. ii, pp. 74-5. For notes regarding the textual content, see Julia C. Crick, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, III: *A Summary Catalogue of the Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 1989). The manuscript is cited in this work (no. 109); Julia C. Crick, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, IV: *Dissemination and Reception in the Later Medieval Ages* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 94, 140 n. 43, 162 n. 23, 178. Within about a century of the book's initial production, it was in the possession of Lodovico da Ponte, a classics scholar who died in Bologna in 1520. His name is found on the first page of the manuscript.

[3] Early assessments granting that the text and sketches are contemporary are almost certainly erroneous – if for no other reason than the bas-de-page placement and scaling of the drawings does not suggest the scribe left specially reserved space for illustration. Cesar Caine, 'Our Cities: Sketched Five Hundred Years Ago', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, iv (1898), pp. 319-21 (p. 319), suggested that the sketches are by the manuscript's scribe. Warner and Gilson, *Catalogue of the Western MSS in the Old Royal and King's Collections*, vol. ii, p. 75, also argue for an early fourteenth century date for the drawings. H. J. D. Astley, 'Mediaeval Colchester: Town, Castle and Abbey from Manuscripts in the British Museum', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, viii (1903), pp. 117-19 (pp. 117-18), argued that 'the drawings, though certainly ancient, are not so old as the MS.,' attributing the drawings instead 'to some possessor of the book somewhere in the fifteenth century, who thought he would embellish the margins of his book in this way.'

[4] Abigail Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England* (York, 2004), p. 74, n. 145, suggests that the sketches 'seem to me more complicated than these simple datings allow.' She notes that there are several places where discrepancies occur between the under- and over-drawing, citing specifically the depiction of London on folio 14r, where the silver under-drawing often shows romanesque-style window features whereas the over-drawing changes these to a gothic style (as she notes, these details are not typically discernable in reproductions but are clear from observation of the manuscript itself). Such changes, according to Wheatley, may suggest that the images are the production of two different artists, working at different periods and reflecting architectural changes that have taken place.

with inscriptions identifying their subjects. Among the sites and buildings illustrated are London, York, Edinburgh, Carlisle, Canterbury, Bath, Winchester, Leicester, and Colchester.

Viewers would be remiss to overlook the illustrative nature of the images; nonetheless, it might be suggested that the draftsman's sketches both construct and preserve a certain memory of the major urban centres he treats. Frances Yates and Mary Carruthers have both made important studies of the use of architectural structures as frameworks for rhetorical, mnemonic and devotional purposes.[5] What I propose here, though, is much more literal. I wish to consider the sketches on folios 14r and 28v, respectively, as these are commonly considered by modern scholars to represent medieval London (figs 1-2). I want to consider, or really reconsider the nature of these identifications – and to contextualize them as, alternately, real and 'archetypal' urban spaces.

As we will see, the draftsman's choices were mediated by complex patterns of influence and artistic conventions – including literary and artistic tropes, such as Ovid's House of Fame, biblical references to the Temple of Solomon and the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the popular gothic theme of the 'Castle of Love', no less than the mythical, Trojan associations Geoffrey of Monmouth's text asserts. However, this discussion explores more specifically how the folios codify, even re-arrange structures the draftsman likely knew in order to render the city less real. In short, I wish to consider how and why the draftsman drew upon but also knowingly manipulated his 'real' knowledge of London to produce sketches that recall the original, but in strikingly unreal ways.

The draftsman

The London drawings of Royal 13 A. III suggest that the draftsman showed both proficiency with a range of sources and a certain amount of liberty. Indeed, the sketches here discussed are at times identified very differently in various commentaries, as this essay will examine. Neither simple reflections of real spaces or straightforward illustrations of the text, the London's cityscapes of Royal 13 A. III bear examination at once literary, historical and legendary.

The Rev. Cesar Caine, in an essay he presented to the British Archaeological Association in November of 1898, offered what is among the earliest descriptions of the manuscript's contents.[6] Endeavouring to bring the manuscript's cityscapes to wider attention, he offered the following assessment:

> One characteristic of this manuscript is the addition to the text of numerous drawings of persons and places. Nor can the scribe be charged with filling up his margins with purely fancy sketches. Turning over these ancient vellum leaves, and carefully conning the sketches which embellish them, the student will be persuaded, gradually but fully, that the draughtsman was well acquainted with the places of importance between London and Edinburgh; that he had travelled about the country, and always with his eyes open.[7]

This appraisal may be contrasted to one offered by the British Museum, which included the manuscript in an exhibition of early topographical and landscape drawing in England in the middle of the twentieth century.[8] The catalogue entry relates that the manuscript's bas-de-

[5] Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London, 1966); Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 101.

[6] Caine, 'Our Cities,' pp. 319-21.

[7] Ibid.

[8] *The Beginnings of English Topographical and Landscape Drawing: An Exhibition held in the Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum, 1949-1950* (London, 1949), no. 1.

page sketches 'are in good Gothic style, but appear to be quite imaginary. Their interest lies in the fact that they show a connexion [*sic*] between a type of illustration used in maps and textual illustration.'[9] That is, unlike Caine, who suggested that the bas-de-page scenes represent both the draftsman's lived experience – his 'acquaintance' with the places he drew – as well as the quality of his memories of these places, the catalogue suggests that the sketches are 'quite imaginary' and of perhaps limited interest.

To some extent, the catalogue's pronouncement has proved true, at least on the latter point. Though mentioned in a number of scholarly studies on a wide range of topics relevant to the study of medieval London, the manuscript's bas-de-page sketches have received relatively limited art historical engagement. Those scholars who have, over the past generation, seriously examined the iconographic content of the sketches have largely reinforced the contention that the draftsman was indeed familiar with a number of the locations he sketched, most notably London – even if certain aspects of his cityscapes do seem at least partially based on promotion of special features more so than careful, 'scientific' observation of the complexities of the real urban space.

The London sketches are of particular interest, I suggest, in that the artist likely lived and worked not only in London but more specifically near St Paul's Cathedral – the appearance of which informs aspects of both folios here discussed. This suggestion will hardly register as surprising, given London's long-acknowledged status as the centre of the medieval British book trade. As Michelle Brown, James Raven, Sonja Drimmer and others have noted, many London artists involved in the nascent book trade worked in or around Paternoster Row, near St Paul's Cathedral.[10] From the late thirteenth century onwards, this road, along with the properties fronting St Paul's Churchyard, was one of the major European publishing hubs, its book trade rivalling that of the leading university towns of its day. Indeed, St Paul's, with its theological and legal schools, formed a natural focus of drawing for those engaged in the production of books and the arts similar to Paris, Oxford and Bologna.[11]

Of course, such contentions broach the issue of the draftsman's experience from the perspective of probability rather than forensic fact – i.e., it is 'probable' that he was based near St Paul's and so knew that area particularly well, because so many involved in the early British book trade were. But the cityscape sketches themselves corroborate this supposition to a meaningful extent, as I will discuss below.

London, as fact and symbol

The 'London' folios are not contiguous. The first, folio 14r, contains a drawing in the lower margin of the city of London with a number of churches bearing banners, with Old St Paul's Cathedral rendered prominently in the centre, and the Tower at right (fig. 1). The second, which shifts perspective to something more akin to a bird's eye view, occurs in the lower margin of folio 28v (fig. 2). It consists of a curved city wall surrounding a number of structures, a church at the centre prominently rendered, with a tower prominently portrayed outside of, but seemingly attached to, the city walls.

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[9] Ibid.

[10] On the book trade in the vicinity of St Paul's, see James Raven, 'St. Paul's Precinct and the Book Trade to 1800', in *St. Paul's: The Cathedral Church of London 604-2004*, ed. Derek Keene et al. (New Haven and London, 2004), pp. 430-1; C. Paul Christiansen, *Memorials of the Book Trade in Medieval London: The Archives of Old London Bridge* (Cambridge, 1989); M. A. Michael, 'English Illuminators c. 1190-1450: A Survey from Documentary Sources', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, vol. iv (1993), pp. 62-113; Sonja Drimmer, *The Art of Allusion: Illuminators and the Making of English Literature, 1403-1476,* Series: Material Texts (Philadelphia, PA, 2019), pp. 21-52.

[11] Michelle P. Brown, *The Holkham Bible Picture Book: A Facsimile* (London, 2007), p. 20.

Fig. 1. Drawing of London in lead and ink, probably fourteenth century. London, British Library, Royal MS. 13 A. III, f. 14r.

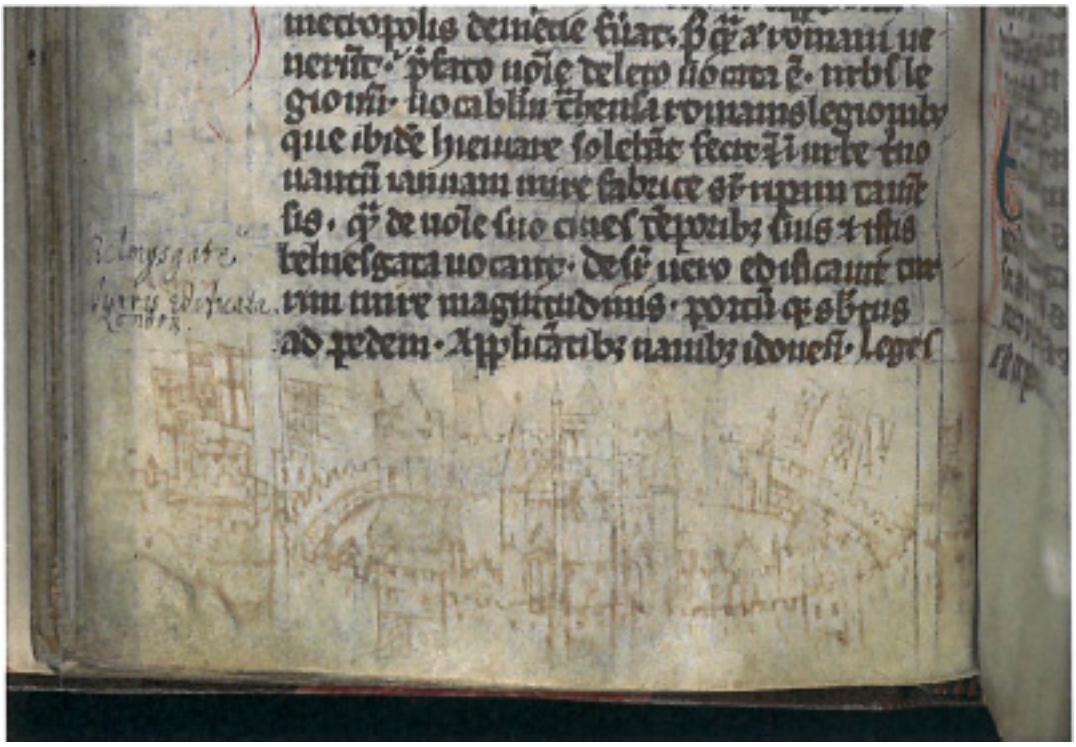

Fig. 2. Drawing of Caerleon (alternately described as London) in lead and ink, probably fourteenth century. London, British Library, Royal MS. 13 A. III, f. 28v.

These sketches, given their myriad differences, deserve separate consideration. Before examining either, though, it is useful to consider certain other early extant representations of

London. For instance, it is tempting to judge the efforts of the draftsman against, for instance, Anthonis van den Wyngaerde's sixteenth-century London Panorama drawings. His renderings of the Tower and St Paul's are generally touted as sophisticated, careful records – his impression of the cathedral's spire before its destruction in 1561 is of particular importance (fig. 3).[12] Wyngaerde also captures the essence of London as a jostling, crowded, populous urban space. Caine, for instance, in his early description of the drawings of Royal 13 A. III, seems to have had this kind of later, more 'realistic' method of recording place and space in mind when he deemed the representation of the Tower on folio 14r 'an abortive attempt'.[13] It most certainly differs from Wyngaerde's representation of the same (fig. 4).

Fig. 3. Anthonis van den Wyngaerde, St. Paul's Cathedral, part of the artist's London Panorama, 1540s. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum [Accession Number: WA1950.206.5]. Drawing in pen and ink. Image © Ashmolean Museum.

[12] Anthonis van den Wyngaerde, working c. 1557-1572, Section of the Long View of London, Facsimile of the drawing in pen and ink in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Sutherland-Clarendon, vol. 103a, p. 18.). This section shows Old St Paul's (with the spire that was removed after the fire of 1561), St Mary Overy (the present Southwark Cathedral) in the foreground, London Bridge, and the Tower on the right. See also *The Beginnings of English Topographical and Landscape Drawing: An Exhibition held in the Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum, 1949-1950*, no. 7.

[13] Caine, 'Our Cities,' p. 320.

Fig. 4. Anthonis van den Wyngaerde, the Tower, part of the artist's London Panorama, 1540s. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum [Accession Number: WA1950.206.11]. Drawing in pen and ink. Image © Ashmolean Museum.

Yet, far from abortive, the draftsman follows conventions typical of his era. As such, his efforts should be placed in the context of other late medieval representations of London, which likewise tend toward greater idealization and a less densely inhabited representation of space.

Among the earliest recorded 'cityscape' representations of London are those found on the Seal of the Barons of London of c. 1220, impressions of which survive.[14] The seal would have been used to authenticate documents made by the City of London authorities. The reverse shows the city, resplendent with spires, presided over by St Thomas Becket surrounded by men and women of London (fig. 5).[15] The obverse, which shows St Paul with a banner above the walled city, is rather different. It renders the city's topography as not just schematic, but harmonious and symmetrical – with paired towers at either end of the walled enclosure likely representing Baynard's Castle and the Tower of London, respectively, as well as a number of churches spread evenly within.[16] Above St Paul is an inscription reading: 'SIGILLVM: BARONVM: LONDONIARVM' (seal of the barons of London).[17] The idealized appearance of the city here, and its relationship to both earlier textual descriptions of London and

[14] The dating of the seal is ambiguous: it was likely engraved around 1219, but its design may date from the brief period in 1191 when the citizens of London were recognized as a commune. See P. D. A. Harvey and Andrew McGuinness, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (London, 1996), p. 107. John Cherry, 'Imago Castelli: The Depiction of Castles on Medieval Seals', *Château Gaillard*, xv (1992), pp. 83-90, suggests a specific link between the seal and FitzStephen's description of London, which I offer below. See too Wheatley's discussion of the seal in *The Idea of the Castle*, pp. 68ff.

[15] Derek Keene, 'Text, Visualisation and Politics: London 1150–1250', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, xviii (2008), pp. 69-99 (p. 78), suggests this may refer to FitzStephen's text, which juxtaposes an account of the dignity of the citizens to a statement in praise of London's matrons as *ipsae Sabinae*.

[16] Cherry, 'Imago Castelli', p. 85; Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle*, pp. 68-9; Keene, 'Text Visualisation and Politics', p. 77.

[17] See *Age of Chivalry. Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, Royal Academy of Arts Exhibition Catalogue, ed. J. G. Alexander and Paul Binski (London, 1987), p. 273, no. 193.

archetypes such as Jerusalem, Rome and Troy has been discussed elsewhere in detail.[18] Most notable at present, perhaps, is that such a clearly abstracted or ‘unreal’ image could be taken as a good enough representation of the real thing to serve as a sign of the city for its own citizenry, who must have been intimately aware of its disjointed spacial realities.[19]

Fig. 5. Seal of the Barons of London, reverse (St Thomas Becket) and obverse (St Paul), c. 1220. Society of Antiquaries of London. LDSAL2022.D8.14.1-2. © The Society of Antiquaries of London.

[18] See, most notably, Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle*, pp. 53-63, especially her discussion on p. 53 of the association drawn between Trojan legend and Britain’s founding in the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum*, often attributed to Nennius. See too H. Nearing, ‘The Legend of Julius Caesar’s British Conquest’, *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, lxiv (1949), pp. 889-929; and John Clark, ‘Trinovantum – the Evolution of a Legend,’ *Journal of Medieval History*, vii (1981), pp. 135-51, especially pp. 141-3.

[19] Wheatley notes that medieval Londoners of this time struggled to retain the large degree of autonomy that must have already existed among London’s elite citizens before the seal’s creation; from the period of the Conquest onwards, London’s castles, with their administrative and military roles within the city, must have been understood as representing these tensions to some degree. As she shows, in the middle of the twelfth century, King Stephen used the constables of the Tower and Baynard’s Castle as instruments of royal authority and control in London. Though indicative, in its imagery, of opposing royal and civic interests, the seal nonetheless creates a vision of what Wheatley calls ‘a harmonious formal relationship’ (p. 70). See too Susan Reynolds, ‘The Rulers of London in the Twelfth Century’, *History*, lvii (1972), pp. 337-57, esp. pp. 338-9. See also Keene, ‘Text Visualisation and Politics’, p. 77.

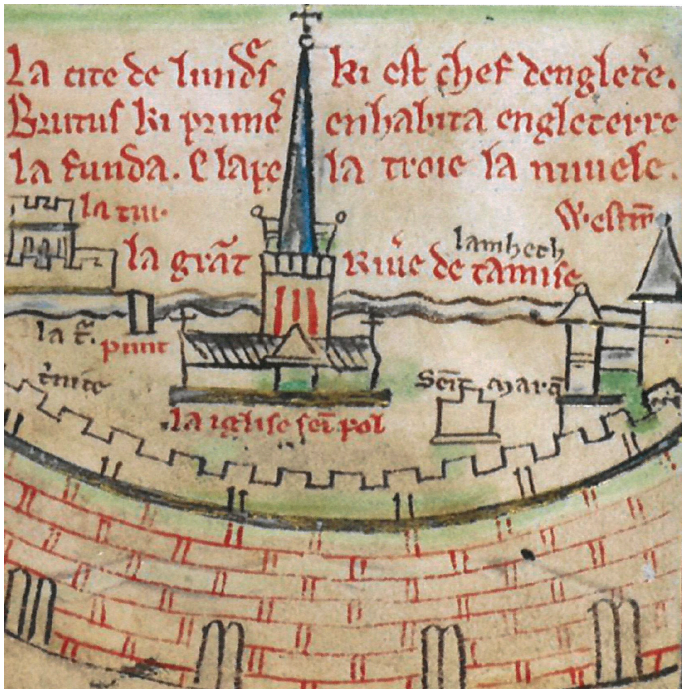

Fig. 6. Detail of London from itinerary (London to the Holy Land), by Matthew Paris, created c. 1252. London, British Library, Royal MS. 13 A. III, f. 2r.

Another commonly cited early representation of London occurs in Matthew Paris's 'strip map' accompanying a pilgrimage itinerary showing the route from London to Jerusalem of the 1250s, now in the British Library (fig. 6).[20] Belying modern conceptions of maps as cartographic representations of real geographical space, it is, as Keene describes it, 'an ideograph'.[21] The image coalesces around key structures such as the Tower of London and St Paul's, radically reducing the complexity of real urban density to give each structure a generous amount of what might be deemed, for lack of a better available phrase, architectural 'breathing room.' This has the effect of suggesting these structures' singular importance as part of London's literal fabric, while rendering them iconic. London is shown encircled by a round circuit wall, with gates spaced evenly along the exterior. Monuments are dispersed evenly within as well, with St Paul's in the centre, its magnificent spire elongated for effect, and the Tower of London (*la tur*) visible to the left. The unreality of this image is striking; curiously, the Tower sits across London Bridge (*punt*). Further, one cannot help but note certain elisions and substitutions. Paris omits Aldersgate in the list of gates below the sketch, though he includes Billingsgate, which was not a gate at all.[22] In short, the image constructs a sense of space and place in an era in which, as P. D. A. Harvey has shown, cartographic maps were practically unknown in the Christian West.[23]

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[20] BL, Royal MS. 14.C.VII, f. 2r, prefacing his *Historia Anglorum*. Compare to Matthew Paris's other London ideograms, such as that found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi MS. 26, f. 1r. See too Suzanne Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris* (Berkeley, CA, 1987), pp. 321-76, and pl. 14.

[21] Keene, 'Text Visualisation and Politics', p. 79.

[22] Ibid.

[23] The Bodleian Library's so-called Gough Map, of presumably somewhat later date, being an exception. See P. D. A. Harvey, *Medieval Maps* (London, 1991).

One might also note the unrealistic 'wholeness' of the city's walls in Paris's sketch. William FitzStephen's twelfth-century description of the city's topography notes that the Roman walls of the city were already deteriorated in many places by his time:

> Habet ab oriente arcem palatinam, maximam et fortissimam, cujus et area et muri a fundamento profundissimo exsurgunt, caemento cum sanguine animalium temperato : ab occidente duo castella munitissima; muro urbis alto et magno duplatis heptapylae portis intercontinuante, turrito ab aquilone per intercapedines. Similiterque ab austro Londonia murata et turrita fuit; sed fluvius maximus piscosus, Thamesis, mari influo refluoque, qui illac allabitur, moenia illa tractu temporis abluit, labefactavit, dejecit. Item sursum ab occidente palatium regium eminet super fluvium eundem, aedificium incomparabile, cum antemurali et propugnaculis, duobus millibus ab urbe, suburbia frequenti continuante.
>
> [It has on the east the Palatine Castle [the Tower], very great and strong, of which the ground plan and the walls rise from a very deep foundation, fixed with a mortar tempered by the blood of animals. On the west are two towers very strongly fortified, with the high and great wall of the city having seven double gates, and towered to the north at intervals. London was walled and towered in like manner on the south, but the great fish-bearing Thames river which there glides, with ebb and flow from the sea, by course of time has washed against, loosened, and thrown down those walls. Also upwards to the west the royal palace is conspicuous above the same river, an incomparable building with ramparts and bulwarks, two miles from the city, joined to it by a populous suburb.][24]

FitzStephen's account was certainly known to thirteenth-century Londoners.[25] Moreover, the tendency to show city walls as circular and unbroken was common enough. Yet the image should still be seen for what it ultimately is: Paris's attempt to render the city not literally but as an archetype.[26] This, as Wheatley has discussed, is further emphasized via his inscription:

> La cite de lundres ki est chef dengleterre. Brutus ki primere enhabita engleterre la funda. Et lapella troie la nuvele.
>
> [The city of London which is capital of England. Brutus who first colonized England founded it. And called it the new Troy.][27]

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[24] William FitzStephen, '*Descriptio nobilissimae civitatis londiniae*', in *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. J. C. Robertson, 6 vols, Rolls Series, lxvii (1877; repr. 1965), vol. iii, p. 3, paragraph 5. This translation follows Charles William Colby (ed.), *Selections from the Sources of English History* (New York, 1899), p. 65.

[25] Keene notes it was used to preface a later collection of the city's customs. He also shows that the last quarter of the twelfth century gave rise to a remarkable proliferation of descriptions of London's landscape, many of them in paean to its economic vitality. See Keene, 'Text Visualisation and Politics', p. 76, and n. 29. See too Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle*, pp. 56-8. John Wacher, *Towns of Roman Britain*, 2nd ed. (London, 1995), pp. 82-111, discusses the archaeological evidence.

[26] Note also that Gervase of Tilbury's account in his *Otia imperialia* discusses London's ancient topography, offering in particular a Trojan description of the Tower. Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle*, pp. 57-8, offers the original text and a very fine translation.

[27] Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle*, p. 71.

In this way, he invites the reader to understand the London of the thirteenth century not only as a 'real' place, but also as an idealized urban space with legendary status: 'the new Troy'.

Drawings that emphasize particular structures in London from fourteenth-century annals might also be cited. For example, a sketch of St Paul's from the west appears in the margin of a volume in Lambeth Palace Library, beside an entry for 1314 (fig. 7).[28] The image accompanies a portion of the text providing an account of the erection of the new cross on the spire, and dimensions of the church. As Diana Greenway has explored, annals and chronicles were generally regarded as a particular form of historical text in that they sought to record actual happenings with accuracy.[29] By extension, the Lambeth Palace manuscript's marginal depiction of St Paul's might be regarded as an attempt to literally illustrate or record the salient architectural features mentioned. In an era in which, as Krautheimer and others have demonstrated, the status of the architectural 'copy' was, for medieval designers, more often a matter of engagement with key features of plan than faithful replication of matters of elevation – at least as far as ecclesiastical architecture is concerned – this is, almost certainly, among the most notable late medieval records of the elevation of this structure.[30] Yet modern viewers cannot help perhaps but remark on the seeming resistance to surface complexity.

Fig. 7. Elevation of St. Paul's Cathedral, c. early fourteenth century. London, Lambeth Palace Library MS. 1106, f. 96v. By permission of Lambeth Palace Library.

[28] LPL MS. 1106. Diana E. Greenway, 'Historical Writing at St. Paul's', in *St. Paul's: The Cathedral Church of London 604-2004*, ed. Keene et al., pp. 151-4, and fig. 84.

[29] Ibid.

[30] On the methodological development of ecclesiastical architecture, see Richard Krautheimer, 'Introduction to an Iconography of Medieval Architecture', in *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York, 1969), pp. 115-50; see too Eric Fernie, 'Archaeology and Iconography: Recent Developments in the Study of English Medieval Architecture', *Architectural History*, xxxii (1989), pp. 18-29. Regarding defensive architecture, for instance, Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle*, p. 14, has suggested: 'There is no common concept of the castle through which the buildings can be compared to the mental and artistic representations.'

Another chronicle in the British Library, Cotton MS. Nero D. II, further demonstrates how the literal and the legendary often coalesce in medieval considerations of space and place. Within this manuscript, one finds a number of topographical representations, as well as images of battles and historical figures including Brutus and King Stephen. Folio 18r preserves a drawing of the elevation of St Paul's within the city of London from the early fourteenth century (fig. 8). The drawing, in this case, accompanies a portion of the text relating the story of the legendary foundation of London – a purpose not at odds with the illustrative nature of the bas-de-page sketches in Royal 13 A. III.[31] Notable, though, is the application of polychrome to the drawing and the incredible attenuation of the spire (here topped with its distinctive cross as well as a bird ornament) – a display of verticality even beyond that offered by Matthew Paris. In sum, the sketch here is ultimately a fitting representation of the leading 'skyscraper' of the era.[32]

Fig. 8. Elevation of St. Paul's Cathedral, c. early fourteenth century. London, British Library, Cotton MS. Nero D. II, f. 18r.

Emphasis on the iconic or symbolic structures of the city of London also informs certain miniatures in the Holkham Bible (BL, Add. MS. 47682), dated to the first half of the fourteenth century. Michelle Brown has shown that the artist borrowed aspects of London's real topography in creating his biblical illustrations.[33] Folio 19v, for instance, sets the Temptation of Christ in the landscape with which the illuminator was familiar (fig. 9). In the left scene, Christ is dared by Satan to cast himself off the highest pinnacle of the Temple, here shown as the towering spire of Old St Paul's. In the right scene, Satan takes Christ to a high place to offer him the world. This is shown as a lush hill topped by a windmill; the buildings,

[31] Caroline M. Barron and Marie-Hélène Rousseau, 'Cathedral, City and State, 1300-1540', in *St. Paul's: The Cathedral Church of London*, ed. Keene et al., pp. 33-4, and fig. 16.

[32] Taken down in 1561 after it was felled by lightening, St Paul's spire was taller than the current Wren dome and would have been the highest building in London until 1964. See Michelle Brown, *The Holkham Bible*, pp. 17-20, pl. 17.

[33] Ibid.

meanwhile, include a tower within an encircling wall that resembles the barons’ seal as well as Matthew Paris’s depiction of the City and Tower of London in his pilgrimage itinerary.

Fig. 9. View of London with London Bridge and the Tower, late fifteenth century. London, British Library Royal MS. 16 F. II, f. 73r.

We might also compare the efforts of the medieval draftsman of Royal 13 A. III to those of the illuminator of a somewhat later image in British Library, Royal MS. 16 F. II. This manuscript contains a selection of poems written by Charles d’Orléans during his captivity in England from 1415 to 1440, and is the only surviving medieval manuscript copy of his work with major illustrations. Folio 73r features a view of London with London Bridge and the Tower (fig. 10). Here, the historic and symbolic meet again: likely executed in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, this London miniature shows the seated author writing as a prisoner in the Tower and in the court, sending a letter. In front is the Traitors’ Gate, and in the background one sees London Bridge, the Customs House, and the city with Old St Paul’s and its majestic spire.[34]

[34] Ibid.

Fig. 10. Satan tempting Christ, c. 1327-35. The Holkham Bible, London, British Library, Add. MS. 47682, f. 19v.

A brief survey of such extant drawings might help to demonstrate at least some of the considerations artists brought to the task of creating geographical and structural representations. London is, such medieval drawings suggest, both a fact and a symbol.

The folios

Of course, this is not to obscure the most obvious purpose of the cityscapes in Royal 13 A. III: to illustrate the text. On folio 14r, a drawing including the Tower of London at right and St Paul's in the centre accompanies Book I of the *Historia*, which details Brutus's legendary founding of the city of London. Though passages from the text are generally referred to in discussions of the image, full quotation of the relevant passage may be useful here:

> Diuiso tandem regno, affectauit Brutus ciuitatem aedificare. Affectum itaque suum exequens, circuiuit tocius patriae situm ut congruum locum inueniret. Perueniens ergo ad Tamensem fluuium, deambulauit littora locumque nactus est proposito suo perspicuum. Condidit itaque ciuitatem ibidem eamque Troiam Nouam uocauit.
>
> [Once the kingdom had been divided up, Brutus desired to build a city. To achieve his aim, he toured the whole extent of the country to find a suitable site. When he came to the river Thames, he walked its banks and found the very spot for his plans. There he founded a city which he called New Troy.][35]

One might surmise that the draftsman was either instructed to depict London in the sketch, or he was able to read the heavily abbreviated Latin text and comprehend its meaning such that

[35] *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Book I, paragraph 22, lines 490-4. The passage can be found about a third of the way down the page [at the initial 'D'].

he added the London cityscape here as a testament to Brutus's accomplishment. In the latter case, we would assume, perhaps, that the marginal notations are made by his own hand – though we likely have no way of knowing this for certain. But if this were the case, then one could assume that the draftsman was a rather sophisticated reader as well as artist. That is, this sketch becomes an annotation of the text in its own right, while also suggesting some invention and artistic choice in terms of what features of salient structures are reproduced.

As Keene and Wheatley have noted, the draftsman's schematic representation of his city follows the seal of the barons of London of c. 1220, discussed above. Wheatley, in particular, suggests that the artist of the bas-de-page sketches in Royal 13 A. III must have known of the depiction on the barons' seal and emulated it. She asserts that the banners on folio 14r are reminiscent of the one St Paul supports on the obverse of the seal. In each instance, she notes further, the Tower of London is portrayed at right as an extended block-like structure. The manuscript also follows the seal in depicting St Paul's in the middle.[36] Nonetheless, there are differences between the barons' seal and folio 14r that should not be overlooked – at the least, one could contend, the draftsman cannot be considered a too devoted copyist. Beyond his elaborations, his bas-de-page sketch on folio 14r eliminates the city wall and, in so doing, renders more clearly the elevations of some of the structures he treats – more akin to the elevations witnessed in the sketches of St Paul's from the Lambeth Palace manuscript or BL, Cotton Nero D. II. Moreover, his rendering of the Tower is highly stylized – recalling popular medieval depictions of the 'Castle of Love' theme, as depicted in a marginal image in the fourteenth-century Luttrell Psalter (BL, Add. MS. 42130) accompanying a passage from Psalm 37 (fig. 11).[37]

Fig. 11. Detail of the Castle of Love, c. 1325-40. The Luttrell Psalter, London, British Library, Add. MS. 42130, f. 75v.

[36] Curiously, there is also a suggestion of a church behind the Tower at right, rendered in sepia tone, that bears a striking similarity with the representation from the west of St Paul's from Lambeth Palace Library MS. 1106. It preserves the flanking west towers and the cross at the apex of the spire, for instance. The question why St Paul's should be doubled in its depiction, and placed as if behind the Tower, bears further study.

[37] Psalm 37:20–21. Of course, the 'Castle of Love' motif and its chivalric associations have received attention in the history of art: see R. S. Loomis, 'The Allegorical Siege in the Art of the Middle Ages', *American Journal of Archaeology*, xxiii.3 (1919), pp. 255-69; Charles Ross, *The Custom of the Castle from Malory to Macbeth* (Berkeley, 1997); and *The Medieval Castle: Romance and Reality*, ed. Kathryn L. Reyerson and Faye Powe (Dubuque, 1984), esp. M. A. Whitaker, 'Otherworldly Castles in Middle English Arthurian Romance,' pp. 27-46, and Barry Gaines, 'Malory's Castles in Text and Illustration,' pp. 215-28.

Indeed, the draftsman of Royal 13 A. III takes creative liberties meant to be, if not idealizing then generalizing – all the more intriguing given his probable familiarity with the real thing. Perhaps this is not so striking, though. As Coulson, Kidson and others have variously shown, ecclesiastical architecture was a medieval art form both inspired by and responsive to varied forms of religious thought, social movements, and intellectual trends.[38] Religious buildings were, in short, often depicted specifically in order to call attention to special, unique, at times local features. By contrast, castles were typically idealized in medieval art.[39]

The creative liberty the draftsman takes with the London cityscape on folio 14r is again apparent if we turn to folio 28v. This drawing accompanies the portion of the *Historia*'s Book III that treats the victories of Brennius and Belinus. Beginning with the initial 'H', the text reads:

> Habita ergo uictoria, remansit Brennius in Italia, populum inaudita tyrannide afficiens […] Belinus uero in Brittaniam reuersus est et cum tranquillitate reliquis uitae suae diebus patriam tractauit. Renouauit etiam aedificatas urbes ubicumque collapsae fuerant et multas nouas aedificauit. Inter ceteras composuit unam super Oscam flumen prope Sabrinum mare, quae multis temporibus Kaerusc appellata metropolis Demetiae fuerat; postquam autem Romani uenerunt, prefato nomine deleto uocata est Vrbs Legionum, uocabulum trahens a Romanis legionibus quae ibidem hiemare solebant. Fecit etiam in urbe Trinouantum ianuam mirae fabricae super ripam Tamensis, quam de nomine suo ciues temporibus istis Belinesgata uocant. Desuper uero aedificauit turrim mirae magnitudinis portumque subtus ad pedem applicantibus nauibus idoneum […] Postremo, cum supprema dies ipsum ex hac uita rapuisset, combustum est corpus eius et puluis in aureo cado reconditus, quem in urbe Trinouantum in summitate praedictae turris mira arte locauerunt.
>
> [Once the brothers had triumphed, Brennius stayed in Italy, where he subjected the people to unparalleled oppression […] Belinus returned to Britain and ruled the country in peace for the rest of his days. He repaired the existing cities where they were dilapidated and built many new ones. Amongst others he built one on the river Usk near the mouth of the Severn, which became the metropolitan city of Demetia and for a long time was known as Kaerusk; after the Romans came, it was called instead Caerleon [The City of the Legions], taking its name from the Roman legions which used to winter there. In the city of Trinovantum, Belinus made a wonderful gate beside the Thames, which the inhabitants now call Billingsgate after him. Above it he built a huge tower and at its foot a port where ships could land […] When death finally carried him off from this world, his body was burned and his ashes placed in a golden vessel, skillfully positioned on the top of his tower in Trinovantum.][40]

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[38] Charles Coulson has advocated for social and ideological interpretations in castle architecture of the Middle Ages. See C. Coulson, *Castles in Medieval Society: Fortresses in England, France, and Ireland in the Central Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 29-63; and C. Coulson, 'Structural Symbolism in Medieval Castle Architecture', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, cxxxii (1979), pp. 73-90. Note too Sheila Bonde's exploration of overlaps between defensive and ecclesiastical architecture in 'Castle and Church Building at the Time of the Norman Conquest', in *The Medieval Castle: Romance and Reality*, ed. Reyerson and Powe, pp. 84-91; and Bonde, *Fortress Churches of Languedoc: Architecture, Religion and Conflict in the High Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1994).

[39] See Sheila Bonde, 'Castle and Church Building', p. 79; Abigail Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle*, pp. 1-17; N. J. G. Pounds, *The Medieval Castle in England and Wales: A Social and Political History* (Cambridge, 1994); and M. W. Thompson, *The Decline of the Castle* (Cambridge, 1987) and *The Rise of the Castle* (Cambridge, 1991); Colin Platt, *The Castle in Medieval England and Wales* (London, 1982); and Tom NcNeill, *English Heritage Book of Castles* (London, 1992).

[40] *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Book III, paragraph 44, lines 212-32.

Geoffrey here describes how Belinus, a legendary king of Britain said to have ruled from about 390 BC, built cities including Kaerusk (Caerleon) and Trinovantum (London), the latter where he supposedly erected London's first fortified water gate. To connect Billingsgate [*Belinesgata*] to Belinus, Geoffrey engages in a kind of etymological word play.

Keene and Wheatley have each noted that the image seems, like Matthew Paris's thumbnail sketch, to depict London with a view south.[41] Keene cites, as additional similarities, the completeness of the city walls and the position of St Paul's at the centre with the Tower to the left; lastly, he suggests a marred structure to the west of the Tower may represent the mythical structure erected by Belinus.[42] Wheatley likewise notes that the image echoes the 'harmonious' view of London on the obverse of the barons' seal, with the curve of the city walls enclosing St Paul's and the demarcating castle.[43] She points, further, to the river wall in the foreground as a detail likely inspired by FitzStephen's description of London, to invoke connection to an earlier, 'mythic' age.[44] Like the seal, the sketch is conjectural – a reconstruction not meant to be taken literally. Wheatley also contends that, in this particular case, the artist here intends the gate and tower erected by Belinus in Geoffrey's description to be interpreted as the Tower of London – a choice on the artist's part that purposely contradicts his inclusion of the Tower in the earlier illustration of London on folio 14r accompanying the text for Brutus's foundation of the city.[45] In this, she follows Tatlock and others who have taken Geoffrey's description of the foundation of a gate and tower under Belinus as a reference to the Tower of London rather than a separate structure.[46]

Certainly, the matter becomes fraught when one tries to understand precisely how the sketch on folio 28v illustrates the text while reflecting London in a meaningfully literal fashion. We must also acknowledge the oddity of the artist's decision to depict London's cityscape not once but twice, on discontinuous folios, and in a contradictory fashion. For instance, these readings do not account for the odd appearance of St Paul's at centre of folio 28v; specifically, one cannot help but note how it is unlike the more typical representation of St Paul's, with jutting spire, found on folio 14r. One explanation why the ever-important spire here is so reduced is offered by Barron and Rousseau, who suggest that the church had to be drawn to fit the available space – an apt point given that the marginal drawings do indeed seem to have been added later than the text and the space in the lower margin is often inadequate.[47] Yet the likelihood that the artist was not just familiar with St Paul's elevation, but that he practically lived and worked in its shadow, makes this difficult to accept. The urge to paraphrase Erwin Panofsky here is irresistible: if the spire of St Paul's is not tall and jutting like the spire of St Paul's, then perhaps it is not St Paul's.

I submit that the image here does not represent London at all, but rather Caerleon. Though this possibility is generally ignored in modern scholarship on the manuscript, the British

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[41] Keene, 'Text Visualisation and Politics', p. 79

[42] Ibid.

[43] Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle*, pp. 70-1.

[44] Wheatley, pp. 71-3.

[45] Wheatley, p. 74.

[46] J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth's 'Historia regum Britannie' and its Early Vernacular Versions* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1950), p. 31; Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, c. 550 to c. 1307* (London, 1974), p. 207. Still, as Keene notes, distinction between the Tower of London and a quasi-mythical Billingsgate 'tower' has informed the interpretations of some to the London sketch of Matthew Paris, for instance. Keene, 'Text Visualisation and Politics', p. 79: 'The mythical "tower of Billingsgate" may be intended by the words *la tur* just west of London Bridge (*punt*), while the Tower of London itself is shown on the other side of the river.'

[47] Caroline M. Barron and Marie-Hélène Rousseau, 'Cathedral, City and State, 1300-1540', in *St. Paul's: The Cathedral Church of London 604-2004*, ed. Keene et al., p. 34, note on fig. 17.

Library's online catalogue entries include just such a suggestion in varying forms. In one place, the catalogue identifies the sketch on folio 28v as follows: 'Caerleon, Billingsgate and St Paul's cathedral, Trinovantium (London).'[48] This seems to imply that the sketch is a representation of features from two separate cities combined beside one another – a kind of geographical splicing. Indeed, there are marginal notations that bear both labels on the folio, and it would not be the draftsman's only attempt to represent multiple settings on a single page (see folio 17v, for instance). However, the matter does seem unresolved, and it is not clear from this catalogue entry just how this 'identity' should be mapped onto the image. Perhaps this is why, elsewhere on the British Library website, the same drawing is identified simply as 'Caerleon' – with no mention of London at all and, again, no suggestion of just how the image can be said to represent this site.[49]

The glibness of a catalogue entry or two aside, the matter invites further consideration. After all, if it is in fact the case that the draftsman intended the bas-de-page sketch on folio 28v be read as Caerleon, it would make it among the earliest extant 'depictions' of the city. Yet I want to be clear that what Keene, Wheatley and others have noted about the similarities between this image and other representations of London should not be discarded.[50] Such similarities, cogently argued and defined, may not be profitably overlooked. I would suggest that the image on folio 28v is, in fact, not meant to be read as London but as instead Caerleon, and that the draftsman merely draws upon the resources scholars have already identified – from FitzStephen's description to the barons' seal – as models to create a representation of a city he had likely never seen. That is, the draftsman allowed the city with which he was most familiar – both the real city of London he likely inhabited and the archetypal understanding of it he gleaned from other sources – to fill his imagination when confronted with a city he knew only from hearsay.

Caerleon

Located on the River Usk, Caerleon was a significant site in history and fiction.[51] In the *Domesday Book* of 1086, it marked the edge of the Norman frontier.[52] In the twelfth century, it was the centre of the Anglo-Norman lordship of Caerleon-and-Usk.[53] During the wars following Henry I's death, it was brought under Welsh lordship by Morgan ab Owain.[54] Though Henry II later re-established control of the lowlands, upland Caerleon remained under native rule until 1171.[55] At that time, Henry took Caerleon Castle from Iorwerth, Morgan's brother; two years later, during the Great Revolt against Henry II, Iorwerth's son

[48] <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_13_A_III> [accessed 10 June 2020].

[49] <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8833> [accessed 10 June 2020].

[50] Keene, 'Text Visualisation and Politics', p. 77-80; Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle*, pp. 63-74; and Michelle Brown, *The Holkham Bible*, pp. 17-20.

[51] Sharon Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia, PA, 2006), p. 121.

[52] Lynn H. Nelson, *The Normans in South Wales, 1070-1171* (Austin, TX, 1966), p. 76.

[53] R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063-1415* (Oxford, 2000), p. 41; Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries*, p. 121 and note 53.

[54] Davies, *Age of Conquest*, p. 467

[55] Davies, *Age of Conquest*, p. 100.

Hywel captured all of Lower Gwent except the castles.[56] In 1175, Henry II forced Richard Strongbow, the Norman earl of Lower Gwent, to restore Caerleon to Iorwerth ab Owain. The following year, Strongbow died without male heirs; his lands remained under royal control until 1189, when a newly crowned King Richard gave them (along with Strongbow's daughter Isabel) to the Anglo-Norman William Marshal, thereafter the 'first' Earl of Pembroke, upon its second creation.[57]

Though in reality medieval Caerleon is synonymous with political turmoil, in contemporary literature, it connotes Arthurian grandeur.[58] Geoffrey, in his *Historia*, asserts Caerleon's importance as a location even before Arthur in that it had an archbishop of such power that it was he who crowned Arthur king:

> Defuncto igitur Vther Pendragon, conuenerunt ex diuersis prouinciis proceres Britonum in ciuitatem Silcestriae, Dubricio Vrbis Legionum archiepiscopo suggerentes ut Arturum filium eius in regem consecraret. Vrgebat enim eos necessitas, quia audito praedicti regis obitu Saxones conciues suos ex Germania inuitauerant et duce Colgrimo ipsos exterminare nitebantur. Subiugauerant etiam sibi totam partem insulae quae a flumine Humbri usque ad Katanesium mare extenditur. Dubricius ergo, calamitatem patriae dolens, associatis sibi episcopis Arturum regni diademate insigniuit.
>
> [On Uther Pendragon's death, British nobles from various regions assembled in Silchester and urged Dubricius archbishop of Caerleon to crown Uther's son Arthur as his successor. They were motivated by necessity because the Saxons, when they learned of Uther's death, had invited in their countrymen from Germany and, led by Colgrimus, were aiming to expel the Britons. They had already occupied all the island from the Humber to the sea at Caithness. Moved by his country's plight, Dubricius and his bishops placed the crown of the kingdom on Arthur's head.][59]

Geoffrey goes on to describe how Arthur held court at Caerleon:

> Cum igitur sollempnitas Pentecostes aduenire inciperet, post tantum triumphum maxima laeticia fluctuans Arturus affectauit curiam ilico tenere regnique diadema capiti suo imponere, reges etiam et duces sibi subditos ad ipsam festiuitatem conuocare, ut et illam uenerabiliter celebraret et inter proceres suos firmissimam pacem renouaret. Indicato autem familiaribus suis quod affectauerat, consilium cepit ut in Vrbe Legionum suum exequeretur propositum.
>
> [Now that the feast of Whitsun was imminent, Arthur, delighted at his great triumph, decided to hold court immediately, wearing the royal crown upon his head, and summoned the kings and dukes subject to him to the same ceremony, to mark it solemnly and to establish lasting peace among his nobles. He put his plan to his advisors, who suggested that the celebrations be held at Caerleon.][60]

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[56] John Edward Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols (London, 1911), pp. 540-1; Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, p. 93; David Walker, *Medieval Wales* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 31.

[57] Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, pp. 271-7.

[58] Kinoshita, *Rethinking Difference*, p. 121.

[59] Book IX, paragraph 143, lines 1-8.

[60] Book IX, paragraph 156, lines 306-12.

In sum, when Geoffrey makes it the site of King Arthur's court, he does not name Camelot. This association between Caerleon and Arthur's plenary court is reiterated in Wace's *Roman de Brut*, and Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval* as well.[61]

Geoffrey continues, noting that Caerleon was beautifully built, such that it 'reminded one of Rome':

> In Glamorgantia etenim super Oscam fluuium non longe a Sabrino mari amoeno situ locata, prae ceteris ciuitatibus diuitiarum copiis abundans tantae sollempnitati apta erat. Ex una namque parte praedictum nobile flumen iuxta eam fluebat, per quod transmarini reges et principes qui uenturi erant nauigio aduehi poterant. Ex alia uero parte pratis atque nemoribus uallata, regalibus praepollebat palaciis ita ut aureis tectorum fastigiis Romam imitaretur. Duabus autem eminebat ecclesiis, quarum una, in honore Iulii martiris erecta, uirgineo dicatarum choro perpulchre ornabatur, alia quidem, in beati Aaron eiusdem socii nomine fundata, canonicorum conuentu subnixa, terciam metropolitanam sedem Britanniae habebat.
>
> [The superior wealth of Caerleon, admirably positioned on the river Usk not far from the mouth of the Severn in Glamorgan, made it the most suitable of all cities for such a ceremony. On one side there flowed a noble river, on which could be brought by boat the kings and princes visiting from overseas. On the other, it was surrounded by meadows and woods, and so fine were its royal palaces that the gold that decked their roofs reminded one of Rome. Site of the third metropolitan see of Britain, it boasted two churches, one of which, in honour of the martyr Julius, was distinguished by a convent of devout nuns, and the other, dedicated to his companion Aaron, housed a group of canons.][62]

Of particular importance for our purposes, though, is Geoffrey's note that the site boasts two churches ('Duabus autem eminebat ecclesiis'). The specific features one sees in the margin drawing of Royal 13 A. III folio 28v include the major fortification to the left, and, amongst the buildings within the circuit wall, two churches – most prominent is the one in the centre, reminiscent of London's St Paul's in its elevation if not its spire. Contrast this with, for instance, Marie de France's *Yonec* of the twelfth century, in which she describes two buildings characteristic of Anglo-Norman conquest at Caerleon: a castle and an abbey: '*Viendrent a un chastel*; / *En tut le mund nen ot plus bel!* / *Une abbeie i ot dedenz* / *De mut religiuses genz*). [They came to a castle; in all the world there was none more beautiful! There was an abbey with many monks.][63]

To return to the drawing of folio 28v, no aspect of the draftsman's 'Caerleon' need be taken literally. Rather, he imagines another archetypal city perhaps much like London in that it has major churches, as well as a fortified tower – here meant to represent the thirteenth-century

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[61] *La Geste du roi Arthur*, ed. and tr. Emmanuèle Baumgartner and Ian Short, Bibliotheque Médiévale (Paris, 1993), pp. 100-20; Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval, Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Daniel Poiron et al. (Paris, 1994), 4003, 4606.

[62] Book IX, paragraph 156, lines 312-22.

[63] *Yonec*, lines 481-4; see discussion of this passage in Kinoshita, *Rethinking Difference*, p. 121-2. The latter, Llantarnam Abbey, was endowed in 1179, by Hywel ab Iorwerth – the native ruler who challenged the earliest Anglo-Norman earls of Pembroke for control of Caerleon. It was associated with Welsh Cistercianism; see Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, p. 197; Walker, *Medieval Wales*, pp. 81-2.

stone tower of Caerleon on the site of the former Norman fortification perhaps, though this is probably just an ideation.[64]

Conclusion

This essay offers no more than a preliminary reassessment of BL, Royal 13 A. III's marginal cityscape sketches; admittedly, the full manuscript awaits further study than I provide here. Nonetheless, this exercise should reveal the extent to which London's historic identity, and the draftsman's likely close association with the city, pervades his sense of what it means to visually 'describe' a city in general. Moreover, the draftsman's familiarity with the seal of London may allow scholars to suggest that he used other early medieval seals, such as the civic seals of Colchester and York, as starting points for his representations of those cities elsewhere in the manuscript – a suggestion Astley has already put forward regarding the manuscript's representation of Colchester.[65] Further study on the banners depicted in the bas-de-page drawings might prove profitable as well – though the matter is admittedly complicated given that numerous coats-of-arms in use in the fourteenth century are unrecorded.[66]

To conclude, the draftsman's sketches of varied places in medieval Britain often serve to illustrate the text – though not, as I have sought to demonstrate, in a fashion that might always be deemed straightforward. In keeping with late medieval cityscape drawing more generally, the draftsman does not depict painstaking panoramas or exacting representations of the cities he treats. Rather, he presents cities via choice sites – and, in so doing, he both records certain features of medieval cities of his day and reinforces the 'iconic' status of particular structures, both secular (defensive and civic) and ecclesiastical alike.

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[64] It might be noted that the stone tower keep is a thirteenth-century replacement of the earlier Norman wooden keep. In the first half of the thirteenth century it was rebuilt from timber to stone, with stone, cylindrical towers and a defensive wall protecting the outer ward. See Jeremy Knight, *Caerleon Roman Fortress*, 3rd ed. (Cardiff, 2003).

[65] Chalkley Gould argued in a note appended to Astley's essay that the Abbey of Colchester was outside of the town walls, and it may be noted that in the drawing the wall is not continued in front of the ecclesiastical building that may be intended for St John's abbey church. Gould's premise is that the drawing was based on observation and was meant to be seen as records of these cities based on specific, real spectator situations. In any case, it leads the modern researcher to broader, more theoretical questions regarding the specificity of such drawings and whether they are meant to demonstrate a real circumstance or an imagined one. See Astley, 'Mediaeval Colchester', pp. 117-19.

[66] Caine called attention to the artist's inclusion of banners upon the churches, castles, and houses of Gloucester, found at the lower margin of folio 41v, for instance, and identified coat-of-arms associated with the Clares, previously Earls of Gloucester. As he describes, the founder of this house was Richard Fitzherbert, a descendant of the ducal house of Normandy, who accompanied the Conqueror to England. The title expired in 1313, when Gilbert de Clare fell in the battle of Bannockburn, leaving no issue. Yet he noted: 'Allowance must also be made for the fact that hundreds of coats-of-arms in use in the fourteenth century are unrecorded. Those belonging to mayors of towns, for instance, became of small importance at the end of their term of office, and were not blazoned in rolls of arms like those of the great and minor nobility. Again, it must be admitted at times, there is reason to suspect that a banner adjunct to a building is purely whimsical.' Caine, 'Our Cities', p. 320. Astley, too, has noted the extent to which the artist displays banners upon castles, churches and houses in the Colchester sketch of folio 47v. Astley, 'Medieval Colchester', pp. 118-19.

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